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**Doctoral Dissertation**

# An investigation of the Local Communities' Perceptions of Dark Tourism Development in a Conventional Leisure Destination

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**Limassol, January 2023**

**Approval Form**

Doctoral Dissertation

An investigation of the Local Communities' Perceptions of Dark Tourism Development in a Conventional Leisure Destination

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Limassol, January 2023

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The approval of the dissertation by the Department of Management and Economics does not imply necessarily the approval by the Department of the views of the writer.

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# ABSTRACT

For the last three decades the concept of dark tourism has attracted academic attention. Concurrently, it is evident that there is an ongoing development of dark tourism sites that include places associated with death and suffering. Nevertheless, there exist significant gaps in dark tourism knowledge, especially with regard to the perceptions and opinions of local communities on the development of dark tourism in leisure destinations. Hence, the overall purpose of this thesis is to address this gap in knowledge. Specifically, dark tourism, as a notion in the views of a local population and its potential development, has been largely disregarded by academics. It has been identified that most investigation on dark tourism research has been conducted from countries situated in the West, or as it is called, from the 'Western' perspective. Hence, there has been little information and awareness with regard to the topics encompassing the perceptions of local communities over the development of dark tourism on islands that have conventionally developed around leisure tourism.

Generally, the literature refers to it as 'dark tourism', which has gained mounting academic consideration, but also significant attention in the mass media. Simultaneously, there is an indication that there is an enduring expansion of dark tourism in the demand and supply of dark tourism sites and attractions, but also to visitor experiences. This also includes war, killing fields, and places of genocide. There are also places that are linked with death that are more connected with education, or that engage in recreation. Accordingly, the demand but also the supply for dark tourism has been increased. The concept of dark tourism visitor experiences has been given diverse explanations around the themes of history, education, and commemoration.

A qualitative approach has been used in this research, employing the research methods of three study groups in the location where the collection of data was conducted. These study groups were: Study Group 1- local residents (informal semi-structured interviews), Study Group 2 – public sector (formal in-depth interviews), and Study Group 3 – private sector (focus groups). This was deemed necessary as a way of bringing forth insightful primary data. Particularly, the research required bringing out the views of the local community, with conceivably diverse perceptions and views. Eight dark tourism sites have been used in the study as a point of reference.

Thematic analysis has been applied to examine and determine the interview data through the use of the software program NVivo. Hence, the research adds a practical dimension to the debate, encapsulating the perceptions of the local community as to whether dark sites have the potential for further development. Specifically, the empirical investigation puts forward the view that dark sites related to death and tragedy can act as a catalyst for further development of the tourism industry. This, in sequence, emerges significant aspects relating to the position of the local community in terms of their involvement in the development process and their ultimate support or otherwise of dark sites. Specifically, the understanding of the views and perceptions of local residents could provide important insights on the topic.

Overall, the local community has supported dark tourism and favoured its development and even its further growth in Cyprus. They have expressed the view that generally, the benefits from dark tourism outweigh any negative connotations. The data collection indicated that there is an abundance of dark sites in Cyprus that are linked with different eras in its long history – most specifically with the post-colonial era, and more recently with the Turkish invasion and accidental events. A selection of eight sites that have been investigated in this study indicate that they have the potential to be developed for tourism purposes. The local community perception was that dark tourism development can contribute to the development of awareness and understanding of the sites that are part of the history and culture of the island, and are linked to humankind's death and suffering. The main constraints to dark site development that reference was made were: financial factors, absentee initiatives by the public and private sectors, lack of consensus on developmental issues for such sites, and some negative social perceptions due to political views.

Recommendations include a course of action to broaden the study to explore further the visitor perceptions outside of the local community, but also to identify new potential commercial opportunities. Specifically, it is recommended to focus on the commercial features of the sites and undertake promotion within the overall scope and character of dark tourism. In synopsis, this investigation contributes to knowledge and understanding of dark tourism development in a conventional leisure destination and within the context

of Cyprus. Finally, the study offers added and original aspects on how dark tourism is perceived by local communities.

**Keywords:** dark tourism, perceptions, development, Cyprus

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# CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the study

There exists a considerable amount of literature around the aim of exploring dark tourism as a foundation for tourism. Yet, there is limited empirical research that has been conducted on the perceptions of local communities (local residents, public and private sectors) over the development of dark tourism in a conventional leisure destination. In other words, there is a deficiency in literature on what and how locals perceive as dark tourism in a destination that has traditionally been popular with leisure tourism.

Even though there is notably increased academic research on the concept of dark tourism, there are still fields that require further investigation and research. According to Séraphin (2017) and Wang (2019), dark tourism can contribute to economic gains for the destination. Other authors emphasise that it can improve the identity of a place for the local residents (Chen et al., 2017 and Wang et al., 2017). Some prior research has identified that local residents would probably view development of dark tourism with optimism, and that it should not be considered as being dishonest (Wang and Luo, 2018; Wang et al., 2020). The deficit in research is most noticeable in regard to studies of local communities at dark tourism destinations. This has been discussed by Kim and Butler (2015), who dispute that there is a lack of research on the awareness of residents at dark tourism destinations.

This thesis explores the perception of the local community of Cyprus on various 'dark' sites' around the country. The choice of sites (8) was based on the 'darkest' to the 'lightest' scale spectrum (Stone, 2009) and includes colonial sites, sites from the Turkish invasion, a tragic accident site, and an ancient burial site. This chapter's aim is to introduce the research. Firstly, it provides an outline and places the context of the thesis. Secondly, it states how the aim has been developed to address the research, and positions the objectives of the research. Thirdly, it clearly sets the rationale for conducting this study. Fourthly, it presents a broad outline of the methodology chosen to conduct the research. Finally, the conclusion provides a summary to the central topics evaluated, and delineates the thesis 'composition.

## 1.2 Overview and Context of the Research

Dark tourism has been investigated a great deal within the last few decades from different perspectives. This is evident from the interest in dark tourism, which has been given much attention by many researchers, especially in the last few decades (examples include Martini and Buda, 2020; Podoshen et al., 2018; Seaton, 2018; Stone et al., 2018;Virgili et al., 2018;Wright and Sharpley, 2018; Wu and Cheng, 2018; Light, 2017;Tang, 2014; Stone, 2012; Tarlow, 2011;Sharpley, 2006; Stone, 2006; Lennon and Foley, 2000; Rojek, 1993). Specifically and since 2013, research on the perceptions, views, and participation of local residents in regard to dark tourism has been increasing (Wang et al., 2020; Wang, 2019; Wang and Luo, 2018; Wright and Sharpley, 2018; Chen et al., 2017;Wang et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2017; Kim and Butler, 2015;Coats and Ferguson, 2013). Nonetheless, the perceptions of local communities over the development of dark tourism have yet to be empirically examined (Wang and Luo, 2018). Academic research based as to whether local residents welcome or otherwise dark tourism development and particularly in a destination that is based on leisure tourism, has not been explored and based on this the thesis aims to fill this gap.

More specifically a certain gap within the dark tourism literature that the thesis will attempt to clarify is the complexity that remains within the discussion of dark tourism development: the obvious lack of consensus around definitions and identification (influenced not least by a perceived, almost unmanageable diversity in the nature and experience of dark tourism activity) might even hinder research progression and development. As Stone (2006, p.146) acknowledges, ‘the dark tourism literature remains both eclectic and theoretically fragile’. Indeed, such eclecticism contributes to that perceived friability of dark tourism research: Stone goes on to concede a recurring and essential dilemma for the dark tourism researcher: given that posited products are ’multifaceted, complex in design and purpose, and diverse in nature’, the issue remains as to ‘whether it is actually possible or justifiable to collectively categorise a diverse range of sites… as dark tourism'. This is another obvious gap in the literature and the thesis will attempt to clarify based on the perceptions of the local community over what dark tourism entails based on its positive or negative connotations on the concept. Moreover, Wright and Sharpley (2018) note that few efforts have been made to reflect on the perceptions of local people regarding dark

tourism. Nonetheless, as more thoroughly discussed in the subsequent section, some aspects of dark tourism, particularly the perception of local communities, still require further study in order to reveal the intricacies of the phenomenon (Wang and Luo, 2018). An array of issues affect residents' perceptions of tourism development, and there are many studies that have explored this (Látková and Vogt, 2012; Nicholas et al., 2009; Andereck et al., 2005; Gursoy et al., 2002). In this study, the investigation will examine the strength of some of these issues, to ascertain if they continue to have an effect on the perceptions of the local community in regard to developing dark tourism. An examination of the perceptions of local communities over dark tourism development may provide tourism planners with an appropriate direction to its development (Wang and Luo, 2018), thus contributing towards the implementation of a community approach in dark tourism development, particularly for destinations such as Cyprus, which have traditionally focused on leisure tourists.

The success of any tourism product, including dark tourism, rests on, among other variables, the perception of the community. As Alwajfah et al. (2019) correctly position, the perceptions and attitudes of residents concerning any tourism development in their locality should be understood, as their support can have an impact on its successful development. Moreover, Peters et al. (2018) point out that residents' perceptions are important, given that they are always the recipients of the development impacts, and collectively, these perceptions affect the success of tourism. According to Gannon et al. (2020), existing literature has put forward that residents in general are welcoming of tourism development in their local community when they recognise its potential positive outcomes. In contrast, Bujosa and Rossello (2007) assert that residents that are more attached to the community (long-term and native residents), are more alert of the negative tourism impacts but also have less favourable attitudes towards tourism. Additionally, Sharpley (2014) argues that although any perceived positive outcomes of tourism could advance the local community's support of tourism development, the perceived harmful impacts could instead induce them to decline any support for tourism development.

The importance of the study rests in the words of Wang and Luo (2018) who stress the importance of comprehending locals' perceptions on the development of dark tourism, as it can guide the presentation of the dark past through development. Furthermore, it is imperative to explore the

perceptions of those people in the community who are both directly or indirectly linked with the tourism industry. Cardoso and Silva (2018) argue that residents with direct associations with tourists have distinct perceptions on the direction and nature of tourism than those that have nothing to do with tourists. Subsequently, even though there have been studies on the topic that state its significance to destinations with regard to its economic or other potential (Stone, 2010), there is still a need for further investigation, especially from the perspective of local communities. Despite the obvious and rather impressive growth of dark tourism literature and research, Kim and Butler (2015) emphasise that there is barely any comprehension of the way local communities that live in dark tourism places perceive, support, but also experience dark tourism. Similarly, Wang and Luo (2018) note that local community understanding of dark tourism is largely neglected.

## 1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of the study is to investigate local communities' perceptions over dark tourism development, in an effort to determine inclusive courses for dark tourism development and recommend specific tourism approaches and polices for dark tourism development. The objectives include:

1) To investigate critically how local communities (local residents, public and private sectors) perceive the concept of 'dark tourism'.

2) To identify awareness within local communities of what constitutes a 'dark tourism' attraction or destination.

3) To explore the perceptions of local communities on developing and promoting dark tourism further in a conventional leisure destination (such as Cyprus).

4) To evaluate how the local community might support/contribute or hinder the development of dark tourism sites and visitor experiences.

## 1.4 Rationale for the Study

The intention of this thesis is to delve into the perceptions of local communities that have known a ‘dark’ past and whose towns, areas, and/or countries contain sites related to death, disasters, and wars. The study aspires to identify the perceptions of local communities towards dark tourism development. In doing so, it contributes to the understanding of the importance of local community perceptions in regard to dark tourism development, which is a research area that has been largely overlooked (Wang and Luo, 2018). This shall contribute to dark tourism development and planning, and dark tourism research in general. Moreover, it underlines the potential for development of the dark heritage that exists in Cyprus as a possible tourism product. Additionally, it seeks to provide useful guidance for tourism stakeholders and highlights the need for local involvement. Based on the findings of the research investigation and the perceptions of the local community, this study seeks to propose a justification and guidance for dark tourism development, particularly for leisure destinations.

In addition to the academic worth in responding to the gaps in the literature, the findings in this research can have a related practical effect for managers or practitioners in comprehending the perceptions of people within this context. This applies to dark tourism and the wider dark tourism business community. At a more practical level, this study aspires to provide specific recommendations for effective strategies and policies that could be a factor in the designing of dark tourism development in a community. For instance, the findings can be supportive by identifying familiar aspects and issues underlined by the local community, and by considering any tools and techniques to be used for further development of dark tourism within the sites investigated. The academic input shapes the justification of the research, which is articulated within the aims and objectives.

Firstly, the researcher analyses the local communities’ perceptions towards dark tourism. Secondly, the researcher recognises and emphasises the aspects of the dark tourism visitor experience that could be exploited in order to identify if there is support for development. Thirdly, the researcher recognises the prospects but also the restraints around dark tourism development in Cyprus. Fourthly, the researcher examines and recommends applicable means to make possible

the participation of local communities in the course of dark tourism development. Finally, the researcher establishes what significance the local community can add to dark tourism sites and how they have evaluated the development of dark tourism sites on the island until now. Since it has been identified that local communities are determined to see the further development of dark sites, the researcher, through further analysis, details proper and fitting strategies to develop dark tourism in a conventional leisure destination based in Cyprus for contemporary and future understanding, appreciation, and development.

## 1.5 Approach to the Research

The third chapter describes the methodology and research design that underpin this research. In particular, it discusses the research methodology, the data collection procedure, and the data analysis method.

In this investigation, a qualitative method was deemed more suitable. Based on Creswell (2009), a main reason for performing a qualitative method is that the research study is exploratory. Particularly, the subject has not been over-investigated – that is, the perceptions of the local community over the development of dark tourism at a conventional leisure destination. The researcher's inquiry was conducted by listening to the interviewees and constructing a comprehension on the basis of what the participants mentioned. The approach used for data collection included informal semi-structured interviews, in-depth formal interviews, and focus groups.

There are various theories that have been used to investigate whether local community perceptions influence and support tourism development. Nunkoo (2016) points out that in an effort to deal with the concerns and present an enhanced explanation of residents' perceptions, researchers have attempted to utilise numerous theories. In fact, there is an abundance of theories that have examined local perceptions towards tourism. Some of the most applied theories are: the attribution theory (Jackson, 2019), the social exchange theory (Pranic, 2012), and the dependency theory (Preister, 1989), among others. These theories seek to investigate the influencing factors and the reasons behind residents' perceptions (Sharpley, 2014). Most studies regarding resident

perceptions have used the social exchange theory – otherwise referred to by the acronym SET, which endeavours to account for the rationale in the wake of these perceptions and identify the factors that influence residents' perceptions (Gannon et al., 2020; Cardoso and Silva, 2018; Nunkoo, 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Pranic et al., 2012; Nunkoo and Ramkisson, 2010; Byrd et al., 2009).

The social exchange theory is more appropriate in this study in the investigation of local community groups' perceptions of dark tourism development since it offers valuable insights into the way the local community perceives development, and it would therefore establish the level of the community recognition of, and support for, dark tourism development. The utilization of SET in this thesis follows a qualitative approach that aims to address the positive or negative views and perceptions of the local community over dark tourism development. As such, the study contributes to existing literature on dark tourism development from the local community perspective considering that in its majority a quantitative stance has been used so far in academic research (Dabb et al., 2019). In more detail, Ogorelc (2009) notes that the foundation of this model was assisted by the residents' support for tourism development, in terms of whether they regard it as positive or negative. The social exchange theory was utilised to investigate, explain, and understand residents' perceptions in the direction of tourism development (Gannon et al., 2020; Alwajfah et.al. 2019). According to this widely used theory, local people are more eager to encourage tourism development when they see more positive results that outweigh the negative ones (Alwajfah et al., 2019). This theory has not escaped criticism. It has been claimed that it is narrow, as it can only be used to understand what the local population view as being positive or negative over their support for tourism development. (Rassolimanesh et al., 2016; 2015). Yet, it has been suggested that local communities' perceptions towards tourism development are considered by past and more recent research as some of the most appropriate considerations for the enduring achievement of tourism in a destination (Cardoso and Silva, 2018). (Further details and justification for using this framework are provided in Chapter 2).

To acquire wide-ranging local community perceptions of dark tourism development, the study includes different community groups. Lundberg (2017) points out that tourism research presents examples where local residents are identified as a homogeneous group in regard to the tourism

industry. Silva et al. (2017) and Sautter and Leisen (1999) have presented residents as stakeholders that include residents, local businesses, tourists, and government organisations. Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) delineate another list that is very much like the previous one and includes stakeholders, but more specific ones: for instance, local businesses in the tourism industry like hotels and restaurants. It is underlined that local communities have evolved into primary stakeholders of the tourism industry (Harun et al., 2018; Lo et al., 2014). Kim and Butler (2014) identify that local communities are eminently suitable for analysing tourism development; this is because the effects of the tourism industry impact the host entity (Wang et al., 2017). Therefore, it is appropriate to include the local community of the island of Cyprus, which has a different degree of power and participation in the island's dark tourism development. These groups include the public sector (high level), private sector (high level) and local residents (low level). In other words, the research adopts three distinct local community groups that are directly or indirectly implicated in the tourism industry.

These are the following:

i. Study Group 1: Local residents
ii. Study Group 2: Public sector- local authority officials, site managers
iii. Study Group 3: Private sector- owners/managers of touristic businesses

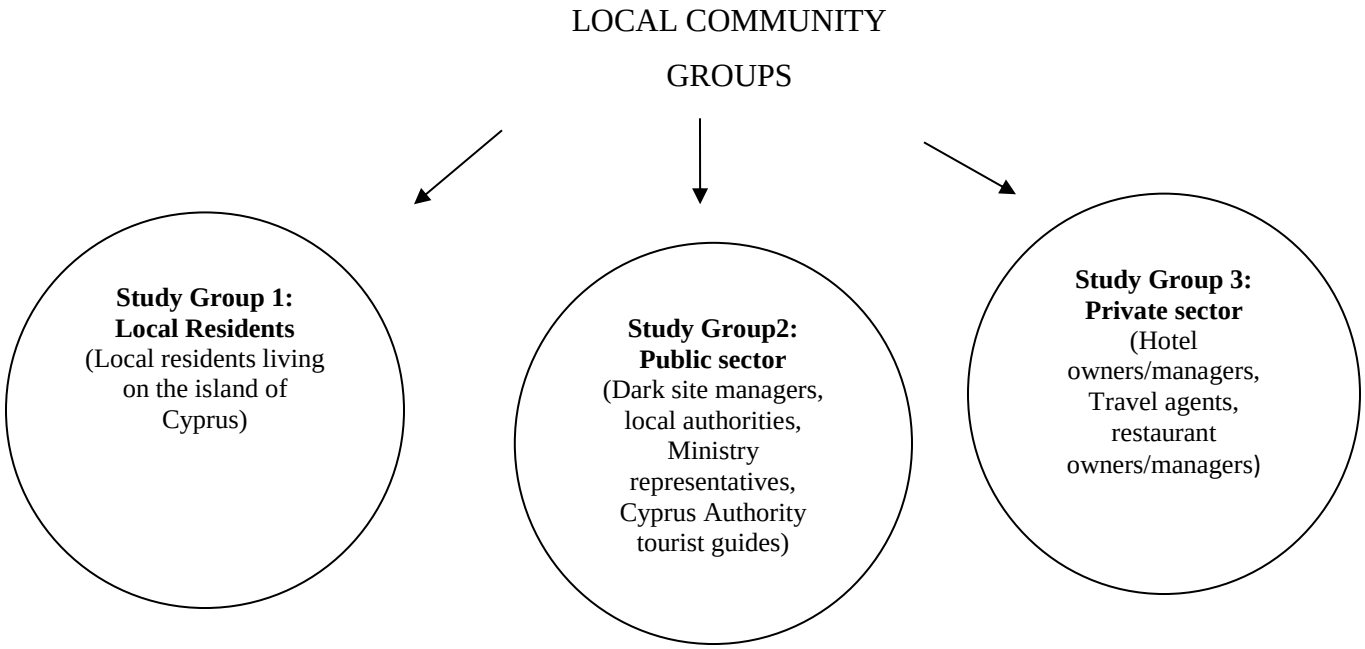



**Figure 1.1 Local Community Groups in the Study**

The research includes the aforementioned groups because of the following reasons:

- Local residents (Study Group 1): In the case of residents, the majority of these are not involved directly in tourism employment as they have been chosen randomly around the sites. Some local residents are not employed in any tourism business or occupation, yet still have to somehow co-exist with tourism development, or accept any political decisions for development. If residents are positive about dark tourism development, this raises the chances for the enduring success of dark tourism at the destination (Vargas et al., 2015). The study will seek to identify whether residents with different pasts (for instance, those directly associated with a disaster/atrocity or not) share different perspectives regarding dark tourism development.
- Public sector (Study Group 2): This group is responsible for planning, coordinating, and policy-making activities, which include development to be undertaken (Tourism Ministry officials, the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, regional/local authorities). This group has been included as it speaks for the views of those who develop policies and make plans for future developments.
- Private sector (Study Group 3): This group includes the owners or managers of those businesses that provide services and facilities to tourists, and are directly dependent on the income from tourists. The private sector will include businesses like accommodation establishments, travel agencies, restaurants/bars and tourism shops. As it has been mentioned by past research the acceptance of dark tourism development will have an effect on the welfare of the community (Ellis and Sheridan, 2015; Tang and Tan, 2015; Tugcu, 2014). This is because as it is recognized dark sites can become places of tourism where economic power can be created (Tang, 2014) and thus have a positive impact on the welfare of the communities.

The choice of the three groups was based on the fact that a combination of their views and perceptions would strengthen the approach in order to meet the aim and objectives of the study. The findings can thus offer a more conclusive interpretation of the views and opinions of people that are directly, indirectly or have nothing to do with tourism and development. According to Creswell (2009) in Çakar (2019) the use of various data collection techniques can benefit the research.

## 1.6 Summary and Research Organisation

Chapter 2 appraises the academic base of dark tourism concepts and dark tourism development, in which dark tourism research is established. The chapter indicates that dark tourism is an especially notorious and disruptive concept, with a range of classifications. In spite of the controversy, the industry of dark tourism provides a base on which a big portion of world tourism depends. It can be used as a means for increasing the financial benefits of world destinations. The wide review of literature undertaken illustrates the depth and breadth of research on the concept, and looks at it from various perspectives.

Yet, not all residents or local community members are in accord with the development of tourism. The literature indicates that residents' perceptions and attitudes to tourism are affected by numerous factors, both personal and non-personal. The development of dark tourism unavoidably entails the following concepts: the local communities' visitor experience includes aspects like learning/education, history/culture, and remembrance/commemoration. Even though these notions are very uncertain, or even ambiguous, and perhaps challenging, they are connected to the progression of dark tourism development and are essential to the discussions on dark tourism and its further development.

Dark tourism demand and supply have increased equally in many regions of the world. Martini and Buda (2020) argue that what is 'unique', as they refer to it, about these locations, is their strength to absorb what is represented with death. According to Kim and Butler (2015), if properly developed, dark tourism could turn to be a very valuable attraction that could benefit the local community. Even though there have been visits to dark sites for many years, it is in the last decade that academic interest has progressed. It is suggested that dark tourism is still a relatively new topic and is under-investigated at this stage. Studies on it reveal that dark sites are varied in nature, as is what they contain. Usually, they offer various distinct experiences for visitors who have diverse intentions and understanding of what they encounter. However, it has been shown that residents' involvement can influence in a positive way their views and opinions over tourism planning and development. Nonetheless, developing dark tourism destinations or sites as attractions for tourism

requires a widely structured plan that will involve the participation of all stakeholders from different levels within tourism production, and even some from outside the tourism industry.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology. It presents the paradigms and approach, but also the methods that have been used to gather and analyse data for the thesis. First, it explores the sequence of the type of research employed, to explain the reason for its utilisation. Second, it offers an indication of the two principal and established philosophical paradigms of scientific research, which are positivism and interpretivism. Third, it evaluates the justification and explanation for embracing the particular strategy used to conduct the research. Fourth, it delineates the data collection means that was used to collect the applicable data for this research study. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology extensively. In summary, the research methodology bases the discussion of the topic on the ontological and epistemological approaches. The research implements a qualitative research method, utilising informal semi-structured interviews, formal in-depth interviews, and focus groups.

Chapter 4 portrays the context of the study, which is the case of Cyprus. It first introduces the island of Cyprus by detailing general information and presenting the sites under investigation. The sites have been chosen on the basis of a 'spectrum', which ranges from the 'lightest' to the 'darkest' form of dark site. Cyprus as a conventional leisure destination has a long history of dark and cultural sites. In order to investigate the further development of the sites, the perceptions of the local community have been explored in order to identify their support of, or even contribution to, the development of dark sites.

Chapter 5 presents the main findings from the research methods. Three study groups were interviewed: semi-structured interviews from local residents (Study Group 1), in-depth interviews from the public sector (Study Group 2), and focus groups with the private sector (Study Group 3). In total, 65 people were interviewed. The interviews were transcribed, and a thematic analysis was conducted to evaluate the information from the data. From the interview transcripts, emergent themes were identified, making use of NVivo software. This allowed the researcher the opportunity to become familiar with what the transcripts indicate, and provides a comprehensive and discerning research set of data findings.

Most local residents out of the 40 interviewed viewed dark tourism positively. The residents were unfamiliar with the specific concept of dark tourism, but they were very aware of what it entails, as most had visited dark sites without realising that they were thus termed. Dark sites were regarded as mostly linked with history, education, and commemoration. However, concerns were raised about the constraints that are evident, and are mostly concerned with the absence of the public sector in the planning of dark development.

Ten in-depth formal interviews were conducted with public sector stakeholders, which included dark site managers, local authorities, and representatives of the public sector. It was agreed that the development of dark tourism resources had the potential to be a magnet that would provide a foundation for the development of special interest tourism. Yet, they mostly associated it with education and learning, rather than as a type of tourism that could bring substantial economic benefits.

The third group of local community members were three focus groups from professionals from the tourism private sector, which included hotel owners/managers, travel agents, and restaurant managers/owners. While the majority of the focus group participants observed that a significant investment should be made in the development of the country's dark sites, there were those who felt that public education is critical, and that any constraints should be removed so that dark tourism can develop further. For instance, local residents could be educated about development opportunities, but this could also pinpoint the importance of heritage and dark heritage on the island. They mostly agreed that it is vital to utilise culture and heritage that is connected with the dark sites, for the development of these places. They emphasised that the public sector should take more initiative for the development of these sites.

Chapter 6 discusses and conducts an analysis of what the findings reveal. The local community of Cyprus has favourable perceptions, views, and attitudes when it comes to dark tourism development. The rationale behind this is that they see potential varied economic and social benefits that may be achieved through such development. They robustly opine that any development has to utilise the dark heritage sites of the country that are linked with the colonial

past and the Turkish invasion, which were two relatively recent events that people still remember. Cyprus has dark cultural resources and sites that are part of its history and culture. Developing Cyprus' dark cultural heritage would create, among other positive impacts, opportunities for employment for the local community, but it could also expand any businesses that might economically advance the community and country in general. There was significant support for the local community to contribute to and profit from the dark sites in Cyprus (especially the colonial sites); this is considered essential for the success of development. The local community argues that dark sites should be preserved and developed as a commemoration for those that have lost their lives, and should be used as attractions for learning and education about the historical events that have taken place.

Chapter 7 contains the conclusions. It assesses and integrates particular processes for dark tourism development, and delineates the aspects of practices for the purpose of addressing the aims and research questions. This has been done through the creation of a conceptual framework for the development of dark tourism. It also focuses on how the research objectives were tackled, taking into consideration the aspect of perceptions and support for dark tourism development. Furthermore, it details particular remarks from interviewees that have resulted from the findings of the research. They imply the interviewees 'general support for dark tourism development in the context of Cyprus. In addition, it summarises particular contributions of the study. The thesis is completed by presenting the limitations of the thesis, and advances several recommendations to be taken into consideration for future research.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present a critical review of the extant literature on dark tourism, framing the theoretical setting for the present research. Firstly, the literature review focuses on the definitions, typologies, chronicles, and historical evolution of dark tourism in the modern, post-modern, and contemporary eras. Secondly, it identifies the demand, supply, and integrated approach to dark tourism. Subsequently, the chapter relates the perceptions of the local community in regard to tourism development and dark tourism development, before introducing the conceptual framework of the study. Each section includes a synthesis of the current literature.

Proceeding to reviewing the particular literature that is related to the objectives of the study, it is first considered essential to position the research in such a way that it can unfold both literature and practice over dark tourism development. In the last 20 years, the study of dark tourism has progressed significantly, and it has also incorporated the development issue as a major aspect of its existence. The central topic of this investigation is the responses of the local community to dark tourism. It is therefore imperative to create the most fundamental academic literature that has been conducted so far. Moreover, an assessment of the involvement and participation of the local community groups in dark tourism development is of great importance in order to contribute to existing knowledge. This area is what the following part of the thesis is concerned with.

## 2.2 Dark Tourism Development

It has been suggested that development seems to resist definition, as it is an ambiguous concept (Cowen and Shenton, 1996). This lack of an acceptable definition and ambiguity make it a concept exposed to various definitions or interpretations that have been investigated from different angles. Sharpley (2000) affirms this by noting that the concept remains indefinite and is suitable for

elucidation. Nonetheless, as Andriotis (2005) notes, development is about the process of change. This change is positive, according to Sharpley and Telfer (2002), and the process concerns the achievement of development itself. Within the literature and academic research, development is viewed as a philosophy. Sharpley and Telfer (2002) point out that development entails modernisation, which in turn involves a Western model of economic growth.

Even though there is no accord about what development accurately signifies within tourism, Hall (2000) argues that there is no argument over its academic significance, or even how communities are affected by it. In addition, according to Lawson (2007), development has two associated strands of value: development as an existing process and as a topic for discussion. Both of these can have an impact on the plans and effects of tourism at a destination (Saarinen, 2004).Tourism is generally considered as a social and economic occurrence that requires practical appraisal in order to assist a positive development course (Tugcu, 2014). As such, development is usually centred on qualitative aspects in destinations, which include economic and social concerns.

Theories about development and tourism have developed at parallel times, and particularly after 1945 when the Second World War came to an end. During the 1950s, schools of development have come forward. This course of change by which development can be explained can be viewed in a number of ways: laissez-faire or modernisation, diffusionism or the neoliberal development paradigm, dependency theory, and sustainability (Andriotis, 2005; Telfer, 2002). Even so, no approach has gained a dominating influence in the literature, and further studies indicate other conflicting options in order to apply them to tourism development. Andriotis (2005) refers to development and tourism fields as including the categories of internal, external, or large and small. Zhang et al. (2006) note that for tourism development to flourish, it depends on the attainment of an agreeable association that links tourists, people, and places, but also the businesses that supply tourism services.

Moreover, Goodwin (2016) argues that tourism development should be a local and not a global issue. Tourism development includes a variety of destinations that have been considered as geographic areas in which tourism take place, and which is assumed to be organised, coordinated, and made competitive (Beritelli and Laesser, 2017). Latterly, development has been linked with

issues concerning societies, cultures, and environment. Along the same lines is the research by Rivera et al. (2016), who note that tourism development is complex, with many dimensions that can also have an effect on the population. It has been emphasised by the literature that tourism development creates profits, but it also entails costs (Andrades and Dimanche, 2017). It is imperative to evaluate both benefits and costs, so that the local community can develop their perception towards tourism. Tourism development generates economic benefits and it can bring about new facilities for residents; yet, a high tourist flow can harm nature, and also the quality of life can be negatively affected (Streimikiene et al., 2021). This is a development predicament for many communities, and as a result they might even be forced to change direction in development. This is not an easy task, as destinations seek economic benefits. Economically, they might even depend on tourism development (Streimikiene et al., 2021). In other words, tourism development includes environmental issues that require special attention (Pjerotic et al., 2017; Telfer. 2002).

The growth in dark tourism industry development has been a result of the expansion in tourism in general. The growth and expanded awareness are because of a range of aspects, as Seaton (1996) notes, including what events have taken place at various destinations. The abrupt amplification of dark tourism can be confirmed by numerous cases. These examples illustrate that there are destinations that practically foster the development of dark tourism. Powell and Kennell (2016) note that Europe has an abundance of dark tourism opportunities, yet they are not conceptualised as dark products, and the categorisation of particular sites can fail to differentiate between them (Powell and Kennell, 2016, p. 304).

The first example of this is the ‘Cambodian Killing Fields’. Within the last decade, many more people have visited them. In the year 2017, the site received more than 800 people per day (Sheppard, 2020), while Dunn (2017) points out that in previous years, the sites would receive only 100 visitors per day. The local residents are very enthusiastically receiving tourism. Another example of a destination fostering the development of dark tourism is the concentration camp Auschwitz, which is located in Poland. The number of visitors at Auschwitz has been increasing. In 2019, more than two million people visited the former concentration camp of the German Nazis (Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, 2020). The locals are welcoming the tourists and are fostering the development of the site for touristic purposes. Ground Zero in New York, where 3,000 people

were killed, is another site that falls into this category. Since the development of the site, it has attracted millions of tourists, and is regarded as one of the main dark attractions worldwide (Minic, 2012).

Based on both the academic and the general attention given to these sites, the great interest in them is an undisputed fact (Farmaki, 2014). More and more destinations are using these sites as opportunities to commercialise and commoditise (Verma, 2013). The main aim is obviously the economic benefit, and for this reason marketing efforts are directed in that way. For this reason, the research identifies the tremendous increase in popularity of these sites (Farmaki, 2014).In addition, Foley and Lennon (1996) cite that increased popularity of a site or event increases its prospects to become an attraction for this type of tourism. Seaton (1996) further states that when the medium of communications takes a significant part in the marketing of these places, it can enhance the attention considerably. For others, nonetheless, these sites exist for touristic purposes. However, not all dark destinations have sites for tourism, and it is underlined that it depends on both people's level of fascination with death and when the sites themselves attempt to satisfy this fascination (Sharpley, 2005). Yet, there are instances where exploitations do take place. For instance, a local farmer in Pennsylvania offers tours to a site of the September 11 terrorist attacks, at which tourists have to pay a fee to explore the site (Aicken et al., 2006).

Furthermore, the locals in Indonesia have asserted that tourists embezzle their cultural antiquities and burial tributes. The funeral processions in Indonesia are visited by thousands of tourists. Coote (2010) argues that because of the large crowds there are instances of thefts from both visitors and locals. Finally, at the Ground Zero Memorial, souvenirs are sold to tourists (Wills, 2020; Croote, 2010).

In recent years, dark tourism has been seen to slowly gain industry attention. For instance, more and more locations in Japan are regarded as dark tourism sites, incepted by World War I and II incidents, but also by natural disasters that have happened in the country (Cornell et al., 2019). It has been suggested that affected sites are witnessing an increasing trend, where visitors see less conventional sites and more places classified as dark tourism sites (Cornell et al., 2019). According to a local professor, the positive effects of tourism are that there is increased awareness of the site, so that people do not forget, even if the sites are about 'grief' (Japan Travel News, 2015, p.1). This

statement offers assurance that dark tourism has the ability to help visitors understand tragedies that took place in the past, in a way that is not forgotten. The country of Japan recognises that dark tourism can contribute to the economy and the people (Cornell et al., 2019).

Dark tourism development can stimulate and empower a community, and its development can be a driver of economic recovery for sites of past disasters or tragedies. It can also provide a significant tourism experience through learning and acquiring new knowledge.

## 2.3 Dark Tourism

Academic work on dark tourism sites, attractions, and tourist visits has expanded, rapidly introducing numerous descriptions, explanations, definitions, and classifications, but it has also been explored from various strands and angles. This section introduces the different types of definitions and typologies around the concept of dark tourism. There is also a list of dark tourism bibliographic references, the chronicles, that categorises them in different sections in order to emphasise the growing issues and themes under the overarching debate of dark tourism. A historical evolution of dark tourism is then presented, and the demand-supply perspectives are also evaluated.

### 2.3.1 The History of Dark Tourism

It is critical to identify and present the surfacing of dark tourism as an inceptive type of tourism, which has the potential to be created or produced by new ideas, new attached meanings, and new information.

The history of dark tourism has roots that go well back in time. It is important to acknowledge that it is not a homogenous phenomenon (Hartman et al., 2018), as different sites can have a different meaning and understanding to both visitors, but also to tourism planners and promoters. The dark tourism origin is featured in the work of Tunbridge and Ashworth (1952), who considered it as an

element of cultural and inherited tourism. Dark tourism was later recognised through the work of Lennon and Foley (2000), who identified it through the scientific lens. Seaton (1996) unleashed a similar concept – that of thanatourism – which refers to tourism in the field of death. This distinction between thanatourism and dark tourism has become blurred. Yankholmes and McKercher (2015) note that both concepts merge, and they can be used interchangeably. Tarlow (2015) regard thanatourism as a 'technical name' of dark tourism, whereas Stone (2005) appraises it as a more 'precise' term. In addition, Johnston (2015) and Dunkley et al. (2007) consider thanatourism to be more neutral, than yet not as recognised as dark tourism. Thanatourism does not have the unfavourable media associations of dark tourism (Friedrich and Johnston, 2013). Moreover, thanatourism has a more acceptable image than dark tourism (Buda, 2015). Yet, in academic and media circles, dark tourism has become the most highly accepted term (Dunkley et al., 2007).

### *The Genesis of Dark tourism*

Even though the genesis of dark tourism goes back a long time, with not even a specific term to define it (Lennon and Foley 2000), it rather evolved as a crude and indiscreet term. Later, it emerged as a field of studies that authors and researchers referred to as 'a rich area of enquiry' (Light 2017). This area of study came about because destinations around the world possess historical and heritage places with the potential to become dark tourism sites. Owing to their anomalous nature, in particular their association with death, tourism sites of such occurrences appear to be a phenomenon that stand apart from other types of leisure travel (Stone, 2006).Exploring or attempting to exemplify a relatively new term like dark tourism undeniably requires a context. Even by taking account of what has been investigated by outstanding academics within the subject area of dark tourism, it still appears harsh to place dark tourism as a sole and separate pattern (Light 2000). Profundity and resonance are necessary to completely acknowledge the evolution of this distinct label. A review of the timeline of dark tourism research is definitely needed in order to locate it in the present day as an imperative observable fact.

It is undeniable that dark tourism can be traced back to ancient times. Yet, Millan et al. (2019) argue that even though people have been fascinated by what has surrounded death fora long time,

this could not be considered tourism but rather a leisure activity. For instance, in the period of the gladiators, when people were spectators of fights between gladiators or by gladiators against beasts, it was considered to be an act of entertainment (Millan et al., 2019). During the medieval period, people often witnessed public executions (by burning or hanging), whereas in the 19th century Europe firms offered excursions to the battlefields of Waterloo, or even visits to morgues (Moufakkir and Burns, 2012). Notwithstanding this, Seaton (2009) notes that a certain type of dark tourism appeared and developed at some stage during the Middle Ages, in the age of the pilgrimages for the Christians (Maignant, 2007). Deprez (2007) recognises that one of the most acclaimed sites for pilgrimages is the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem. Nonetheless, spiritual union was a reason for the pilgrimages (Wynn, 2007). Throughout the Middle Ages, communities were daily subject to disasters, famine, and wars; death was accepted and considered as part of life (Korstanje and Ivanov, 2012).

Lennon and Foley, in Hartmann et al. (2018, p. 271) give examples of sites from the past, for instance the bones in the catacombs of Rome, or the burial sites in the pyramids of Egypt, while the Colosseum in Rome was a spot for spectators to watch killings. Surprisingly, these older sites are not typical dark tourism sites or destinations. Therefore, a question is posed by Lennon and Foley (2000): Does death has to be recent to qualify as 'dark'? It could be stated that this also depends on the motivations, demand, and supply and interpretations of visitors and tourists. Evidently, these interpretations of 'dark' can be both ambiguous and challenging. Thus, it is not surprising that previous research is sparse.

### *Thanatopsis and the Middle Ages*

All the proceeding examples of tourism visits to sites associated with 'dark places' go a long way back in time, yet notable increases in the organisation of tourism in these places did not take place up until the last quarter of the 20th century. Disaster and death have always fascinated humans since the time of pilgrimages, Roman gladiator contests, and public executions in the Middle Ages (Daams, 2007). Dark tourism is rather rooted in practices that were established in the past – through history and heritage, where travel and death attracted attention (Light, 2017). This attention was identified in practices of the past through the so-called term 'thanatopsis'; in other words, the

'contemplation of death' (Light, 2017). Seaton (1996) notes that death has been an aspect of tourism beyond any other kind of heritage, and is one that the public experiences and participates in. In order to comprehend how dark tourism is viewed today, it is imperative to locate it within a historical development and tradition of thanatoptic elements of travel. Seaton (1996) has researched DeQuincey's (1827) essays, which included the 'consideration of murder as one of the fine arts' (Seaton, 1996, p. 234). DeQuincey's essays offer a practical introduction into the subjects of dark tourism and thanatourism. According to Seaton (1996), it developed a premise that bears a resemblance to the one that lies beneath dark tourism; morally it might not be desirable, yet it could be successful as an experience. Thanatopsis was identified with Western European Christian culture, which is connected with a move from industrial to post-industrial stages of development.

Seaton (1996) created a model that included the thanatopsis of dark tourism within the section of thanatology that studies death and whatever else is linked with its practices (Seaton, 1996**).** It has been indicated that Seaton's (1996) conception of the thanatopsis originated from De Quincey's article (1827) "On murder considered as one of the fine arts" (Blackwood's Magazine). Seaton (1996) notes that it basically satirically writes of murder becoming a spectacle. Murder is viewed as an evil and creepy comedy, and not viewed sincerely. DeQuincey's paper can be regarded as an input on the cultural traditions that exist in societies. The mode of portrayal of thanatopsis includes references to tombstones, monuments, and statues. According to Seaton (1996), thanatopsis produces meanings that include the idea of death and how death is understood in regard to one's own death and/or that of others, and the deaths that took place either recently or distantly in another time/place. In other words, death is communicated to people in time and space. Seaton (1996) points out that thanatourism is a facet of thanatopsis. Based on the words of DeQuincey's essay from the Middle Ages until the 19$^{th}$ century, thanatopsis was supported and even generated by symbolic representations and material objects. For rich people, this was through artefacts like 'death's heads' or death masks. For poor people, thanatopsis was encouraged by the church through art, shrines, and moral plays. All these were a constant reminder that their passing was to come.

A principal thanatopic exhibit called the ‘Dance of Death’ became established in European culture by the end of the Middle Ages. Seaton (1996, p. 235) describes it as “a symbolic depiction of Death {...}”. It has to be stressed that the skeleton is still the principal manner of representing death in modern films. Basically, the ‘Dance of Death’ encouraged people to enjoy life before it is taken away. It is obvious that death was something seen in everyday life, and it seems to be frightening. It was a political and religious issue, and this is revealed through books and images that portrayed various types of deaths by Christian martyrs (Seaton, 1996).

Moreover, thanatopsis was a part of pilgrimages; that is, in the travelling to places where death was occurring, and not only through images in books. According to Seaton (1996, p. 236-237),thanatopsis served as a form of catharsis, an experience of fear of death, through which a person would be immunised against its terrors in real life, and it was regarded as a form of spiritual preparation. Violence was not the main concern of thanatopsis, yet violent death was a fact, especially for the saints of the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages ($5^{th}$ to $15^{th}$ Century) were characterised as the era of the Dark Ages, especially in Europe, where life was short and many people were poor. Nonetheless, Seaton (1996) states that it was not about death itself but about the moral behind it. Secondly, aggressive death turned into a product and then into a spectacle like tourism. That was evident during the Romantic period (1770-1830), where travelling, during the great expansion of Europe, incorporated thanatoptic aspects. For instance, there are written records that show that people travelled to watch death and public executions (Seaton, 1996). Dark Romanticism is a subgenre of Romanticism that reflects the irrational and the demonic. It has been identified that in this period the focus was on demolition, castigation for people, but also on stressing mental and emotional consequences that included remorse, shame, and sinfulness. Dark Romanticism was often conflated with Gothicism.

### *Modern 'era' of dark tourism*

According to Light (2017), the chronological development of dark tourism is identified over a period of two decades: 1996 to 2006 and 2006 to 2016. In the first decade, only a small number of academics got involved in dark tourism topics and examined what relation exists between tourism and death. In the second decade, dark tourism involved a more inter-disciplinary engagement. This included awareness of the motivations and experiences of tourists that visited those places. Moreover, it seems that dark tourism has resurfaced as an act of tourism, which includes seeking information and thrills, rather than mourning or grieving. Hartmann et al. (2018) argue that even if it is recognised that dark tourism is linked with historical facts and events, it nonetheless can be grouped under more than one classification, and it can have distinct meanings to different people.

Many authors since the 1990s (when the concept began to be explored) have identified it as a new phenomenon, with various facets. Kim and Butler (2015) argue that dark tourism literature is wide-ranging. This is due to the fact that dark tourism has the tendency to blend or converge distinctive types of sites. The human race's heritage contains a legacy of wars, persecutions, conflicts between nations, tribes, religions, as well as large-scale massacre and genocide (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1996). These have bequeathed a massive array of atrocities. Knudsen (2011) points out potential destinations for thana-tourists, which are places linked with crimes.

Much has been written on dark tourism as a social phenomenon in post-modern society. The debate on modernity and post-modernity has been strengthened considerably in recent decades (1980s and 1990s). This was a time when theories on post-modernism were used that attempted to analyse the post-industrial and globalised consumer world (Giulianotti, 2005). Urry (1990) was one of the first to identify tourism as a post-modern social activity. It was at that time that the concepts 'post-modern tourism' and 'post-modern tourists' were made familiar (Sharpley, 1996).

During that time, the terms 'dark tourism' and 'heritage dissonance' were added to the vocabulary of tourism studies. The modern era began about the middle of the 18$^{th}$ century. This time was a period of the so-called European Enlightenment (Casbeard and Booth, 2012). It was the time of the Industrial Revolution, and modernity prompted compelling changes in society. For instance,

there was a shift of power from the kings and aristocracy to an emerging new middle class. This era brought about urbanisation and industrialisation (Deli-Gray and Arva, 2016). Moreover, society was no longer totally reliant on the church.

Burkart and Medlik (1981) talked positively of industrialisation, which improved education, marketing, and communications. On the same lines, Lennon and Foley (2000) later stressed that modernity brought progress, education, and tourism (for example, the Grand Tour of the 17th century to the pioneering 18th century Thomas Cook excursions).However, there was a time when modernity has had consequences resulting in the disappointment of society on many fronts. There have been incidents in recent history related to dark events that have questioned societies. Lennon and Foley (2000) and Riding (2003) refer to several instances of this challenging of modernity. The following examples from events that have taken place resulted, according to these authors, in this breach of modernity. For instance, the sinking of the Titanic questioned the technology of the time; the Holocaust instilled doubt about people's humanity; presidential assassinations questioned liberal democracies; and the Chernobyl accident challenged science, knowledge, and consciousness.

As a result, society started to fill with doubt and anxiety, including the tourism sector, which began a process of transformation. The media played an important factor in generating this change, and the media has accelerated the process of public awareness about death and related topics. Best (2007) notes that media and technology has exposed the world to news on death, conflict, and suffering. Various authors have identified the media's role in public awareness over tragedies and atrocities. For instance, Foley and Lennon (2000, p.8) have recognised the media's role in publicising disaster tourism, starting from the Titanic. The Holocaust in the 1950s documentary 'Concentration Camps' is said to be one of the most video-recorded human disasters ever made. Moreover, Kennedy's assassination and its aftermath was a media focus (Lennon and Foley, 2000).

Martini and Buda (2020) note that what is 'unique' about these sites of death or disaster is their capacity to represent death. This 'uniqueness' is acknowledged through the increase in popularity of these places, where thousands or even millions visit places of death and disaster. For instance,

the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster site has attracted thousands of people (before the start of the war between Russia and Ukraine in March 2022), the September 11 Ground Zero memorial receives millions of visitors, and there are millions that visit the Auschwitz Holocaust memorial (Martini and Buda, 2020). Robbie (2008) states that a natural disaster like Hurricane Katrina in 2004 has turned the city of New Orleans into a tourist destination. Moreover, Cambodia's killing fields have been attracting visitors for decades (Koleth, 2014). In South Africa, the Pretoria Central Prison gallows has been reconditioned as a museum for visitors (Govender, 2011). Tarlow (2005) argues that even now, tragedies which took place on the actual sites continue to influence people in various ways – emotionally, socially, and politically.

A further feature of post-modern society connected to dark tourism is its contrast with leisure (Lennon and Foley, 2000; Rojek, 1993; Lash, 1990). Leisure has become accessible and possible for all activities and events. Isidori (2005) notes that post-modern relativism opens doors to people to experience leisure. All forms of leisure attractions and sites have become potential tourist destinations. This differentiation is reflected, for instance, in the cemeteries which once were sacred, yet now are promoted as outdoor museums (Rojek, 1993). Also, the rise of visits to museums and dark sites began to be connected with dark tourism. Conforti (1996) researched ghettos as tourist attractions. In the Auschwitz concentration camp, retail shops have been created (Rojek, 1993). Death remains largely absent in terms of how today's societies are constructed, as people are more involved in day-to-day issues, and the topic of death is not considered a main concern. Minic (2012) talks about a paradox here, where on the one side is the dearth of death, and the other side where death exists in popular culture. Hartmann et al. (2019) point out that dark sites can be regarded as the driving force between historic and contemporary change. This can be added to Lennon and Foley's (2000) reference to dark tourism being "An old concept in a new world" (Lennon and Foley, 2000, p.11).

Minic (2002) points out that dark tourism's role in contemporary society is an important issue; this is because it brings out a diversity of scientific disciplines, and that makes it a unique concoction. There exist sites and attractions that are directly or implicitly connected with death –for instance, places of disaster, war museums, concentration camps, and battle fields. Stone (2005) points out that sites that have as a central theme death and suffering are dark tourism attractions. Sharpley

and Stone (2008, p.584) argue that "Dark tourism takes the role in the social neutralisation of death."

Moreover, Minic (2012) notes that this type of tourism is referred to as 'dark' because it must bear the mark of death and include elements of torture. Godis and Nilsson (2016) argue that most places of death and disaster are about pain, problematic events or places, and memory and heritage. All these events were normal in relation to the norms and way of life of societies in those eras. In contemporary society, death is considered a frightening, baleful, and intimidating issue, but one over which there is little control.

### 2.3.2 Dark Tourism Definitions

There are many different names used to explain the phenomenon of dark tourism. Yet, due to the complexity and diversity of dark tourism as a special kind of tourism, it is difficult to prefer just one name. Thus, it has been named, among others, dark tourism, thanatourism, grief tourism, and disaster tourism. A common theme is that they are all about death. There is not one common definition of dark tourism in the literature. Isaak and Çakmak (2014) stress that currently there is little clarity or conformity when it comes to terminology and definitions around dark tourism research. There are various definitions that exist, yet they are different both in terms of explicitness and type. Regardless of the academic and scholarly research on dark tourism, the academics do not refer to a single common consensus on dark tourism. It is imperative to identify the different definitions that exist in the literature over dark tourism in order to examine and evaluate the opinions and views of the local community of what dark tourism portrays; in what way it is perceived and in what way they classify the different sites.

The terms have changed over the years. The classification of dark tourism is based on the sites' or attractions' characteristics, or the experiences and motivations of the tourist. Generally, the definitions do not really mention the complexity and diversity of the activities and the different forms of meanings attached to dark tourism. However, Kim and Butler (2015) mention that many people might get hurt emotionally by dark tourism, especially if they were victims of disaster at a dark tourism site. Therefore, a negative aspect of dark tourism is that it can be seen as being

commercialised, or unethical, or even that it contains a lack of respect to the victims and their families (Coats and Ferguson, 2013). Yet, there are researchers that view dark tourism as an opportunity to remember, for comforting reasons, or even as an opportunity to gain financial returns (Coats and Ferguson, 2012;Yoon and Kim, 2012). In order to comprehend that dark tourism might offer the context for conceptualising tourism at places of death and tragedy, it is imperative to contemplate other variants. In other words, dark tourism should be shaped around its characteristics, by tourist experience and motivation, by demand and supply and an integrated approach, and by any geographical or cultural elements. **Appendix I** illustrates various **Definitions of dark tourism** and identifies the common features that these categories highlight, but also the complex nature of dark tourism. The definitions illustrate a contradictory nature of dark tourism, in that it appears to be a phenomenon that differs from other types of leisure activity. Within the academic definitions is a critical and crucial element of research. It could be that by comprehending the different elements of the definitions, existing knowledge can be built up. These definitions also indicate the different categorisations that exist within academia. Nonetheless, it could still be valuable to provide less definitions and perspectives to the concept, so that it can be seen to develop at specific times and in specific places. Broadening and progressing knowledge may necessitate that a concept like dark tourism has diverse and even competing structures.

There is also a part of the literature that does not see the concept 'dark tourism' as universally accepted (Light, 2017). There are still academics that are uncertain over the concept and do not support it. Without a doubt this is partly because the concept includes wording and language that for many carry negative connotations (death, suffering, tragedy) (Light, 2017, p. 276), and for it to be recognised under the classification of tourism is questionable for some. Isaac and Çakmak (2014, p. 176) maintain that "conceptualising dark tourism has to be based on site attributes, but also on reasons why tourist visit the site". Certainly, regardless of the hasty development of the term dark tourism by scholars, further inquiry can be useful. Consequently, even in the circumstances in which it continues to be contentious, within this thesis, the concept will be under investigation as well in terms of how local communities perceive and understand it.

### 2.3.3The different types of Dark Sites

The literature has acknowledged locations around the world that have become a focal point of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990), yet there has been a realisation since the 1990s that they require a wider classification. This can also facilitate in the understanding of the phenomenon. Dann (1998) categorises dark tourism in divisions and sub-divisions (see the list below) and provides, therefore, a scope for dark tourism; it is acknowledged that despite their negative association, the divisions share common characteristics, which include being tourist settings. In addition, the different types indicate that there is some kind of overlap among the different divisions that, according to Dann (1998), include: perilous places or dangerous destinations; houses of horror; fields of fatality-areas/land commemorating death; tours of torment; and themed Thanatos in collections/museums. Dark tourism has been investigated from a variety of perspectives and is a multi-disciplinary area. Price (2017) identifies, among others, various perspectives: anthropology, architecture, criminology, cultural studies, education, and psychology.

The dark tourism literature displays a wide range of contexts and locations that have attracted attention through the years. Most attention, though, in the dark tourism literature, has been attracted by war or conflict sites, holocaust places, prisons, genocide, and slavery (Light, 2017). It has been noted that dark tourism is highly heterogeneous by its nature, as it cuts across sites that offer to potential visitors distinct experiences that lie in the dark tourism continuum. This fact has been supported by the research of Stone (2006), in that some sites are darker than others, and thus a distinction between ‘dark’, ‘darker’ and ‘darkest’ is proposed. This can identify whether a dark tourism attraction or site can fit under a particular classification of darkness. The spectrum embraces contrast among different locations, the objectives of the sites, and the perceptions of authenticity of an attraction. Its ambiguity has received much criticism, with Dale and Robinson (2011) arguing that the classification/type depends on individual views. Moreover, Light (2017) pinpoints that even individual experiences on the sites are different. This is also noted by Walby and Piché (2011) and Christou and Hatzielia Dratarova (2021), who note that each place has a different meaning for different visitors.

There is another perspective attached to ‘dark tourism’, which is about the people involved in or affected by dark tourism. So, various synonyms or labels have also been used in academia. For instance, places of dark tourism have been labelled as ‘sites of darkness’ (Jamal and Lelo, 2011), ‘places with dark associations’ (Miles, 2014), and ‘sites associated with death and suffering’ (Biran et al., 2014; Isaac and Ćakmak, 2014). Seaton (1996) labelled dark tourism as ‘thanatourism’ (thanatos means death in Greek), ‘disaster tourism’ (Dann, 1998; Lennon and Foley, 2000), ‘tragedy tourism’ (Richer, 1999), morbid, black spots (Stone, 2005) or ‘grief tourism’ (O’Neill, 2002). Whichever name is attached to such sites, it is worth acknowledging that they all include sites associated with death or suffering. The list of the various key names or themes of dark tourism is enormous. It can include so many terms that can describe it. For instance, there are particular words that refer to dark tourism, such as fright, pagan, suicide, atomic, conflict heritage, and dystopian (Strange and Kempa, 2003).Best (2008) refers to ‘black metal’ – a musical and theatric art form that has been involved with atrocities like murders in church buildings. Podoshen (2013), however, claims that there is no violence at concerts related to what is referred to as ‘black metal’ festivals. More recently, Buda and Shim (2015) have provided a more theoretical insight that includes a search for novelty (the unusual and unfamiliar).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that all these synonyms and labels are widely used in the literature, Light (2017) argues that despite the abundance of all these names, dark tourism is still the only one firmly established. The following **Table 2.1** presents a list of dark tourism related types identified by various authors:

**Table 2.1: Dark Tourism Related Types**

| **Dark Tourism Related Themes:** | **Authors:** |
|---|---|
| A heritage of atrocity and a heritage associated with unwanted memory | Isaac and Budrtye-Ausiejiene (2015) |
| Assassination sites | Foley and Lennon (1996) |
| Atrocity tourism | Desmond (1999); Ashworth (2004); Issac (2014); Schafer (2016) |
| Battlefield tourism | Miles (2012, 2014) |
| Black spot tourism | Rojek (1993); Stone (2005) |
| Collective memory | Yankholmes and Mckercher (2015) |
| Conflict tourism | Cochrare (2015) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Difficult heritage | Logan and Reeves (2009); Knudsen (2011); Hartmann (2014) |
| Disaster tourism | Ruonos and Bickman (1991);Dann (1998);Faulkner (2001);Bly (2003); Ritchie (2009) |
| Dissonant tourism and dissonant heritage | Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996); Issac (2015) |
| Genocide memory | Kistner (2010) |
| Ghosts and tourism | Valdex (2010) ; Heidelberg (2015) |
| Grief tourism | Rojek (1993) ; O'Neil (2002) ; Ritchie (2008) ; Yirik et al. (2016) |
| Holocaust tourism | Hartmann (2005); Liyanage et al., (2015); Sion (2017) |
| Milking the macabre | Dann (1994); Miles (2014) |
| Morbid tourism | Blom (2000) |
| Negative tourism | MacCannell (1989); Smith and Croy (2005); Lemelin et al., (2010) |
| Phoenix tourism | Stone (2005); Causevic and Lynch (2011) |
| Post-disaster tourism | Tucker, Shelton, and Bae (2016) |
| Terrorism and Terror parks | Henderson (2008); Prats (2012);Korstanje (2017);Wright (2018) |
| Thanatourism | Seaton (1996);Forsdick (2014);Tas (2016); Light (2017); Speakman (2019) |
| Tragedy tourism | Richer (1999); Volo and Pardew (2013) |
| Tragic tourism | Lippard (1999); Volo and Pardew (2013); Tang (2014); Yankovska and Hannam (2014); Yong (2014) |
| Visits to places associated with a difficult past | Seaton (1996/1999); Lennon and Foley (2000); Best (2007);Hartmann (2009); Lee et al (2012);Hartmann (2013) |
| War-zone tourism | Stone (1996); Seaton (2005); Marhouse (2016); Philpott and Barrett (2016) |

Source: Dark tourism literature

### 2.3.4 Dark Tourism Destinations and Sites through Academic Literature

As explored in the previous section, dark tourism research has evolved, taking into consideration distinct themes related to its subject matter. Over time, this focus and priority has evolved into a diverse range of topics and ideas, then expanded over the development of modernity, technology, and communications. Moreover, the management and marketing of dark sites have gained interest, as well as advancement in research methods that have been used to understand dark tourism.

Given the increased variety of disciplines drawing on the concept, **Appendix II; Dark Tourism Research: The Chronicles** summarises the different dark tourism research. This research has become the focus of academic attention within the concept, as also has the scope and presentation of dark tourism. The table illustrates the variety, range, and extent of existing research in dark tourism in recent decades. In doing so, it categorises academic articles under an array of subheadings. The scope of this is not to present a full review of all dark tourism literature, but the objective in categorising dark tourism literature is to emphasise the voluminous academic and management standpoint from which research has been approached in recent decades, but also the growing issues in the context of dark tourism. Particularly, the table summarises the evolution of dark tourism research since the 1990s. As already stated, dark tourism clearly includes a diversity and mixture of disciplines delineating the concept. This outline sets out to focus on the expanding sphere and depth of the research. It focuses on the academic debate within the theme of dark tourism.

The review demonstrates the diversity of the dark tourism literature that exists today within the overarching theme of dark tourism. It illustrates the sites, attractions, contexts, and experiences that have become central to the voluminous academic sphere, but they have also changed through the years. Among the researchers that have developed in-depth reviews of dark tourism literature are Sharpley and Stone (2009), Biran and Hyde (2013), and Stone (2013).

Moreover, the presentation of the research articles over the years of academic research does not provide a critique of dark tourism chronicles in all its themes and research areas; nonetheless, there are innumerable essential correlations that exist between dark tourism themes. It is evident that

there is a relationship between the experience of tourists and the representation of the sites through death and tragedy. This relationship and correlation provide the logic behind the commodification of dark tourism.

***Tourism education*** has been both explored and investigated as being a discipline, a field or area of study. Many scholars have attempted to acquire research agendas within this popular academic setting. As such, dark tourism has been viewed as appealing to establish itself as a forceful research label within the academic environment. Dark tourism has been explored as an academic field and the reason, according to Stone (2013), is because of the maturing of tourism scholarship. Moreover, dark tourism is also regarded as a fascinating and controversial area (Stone, 2013, Sharpley and Light, 2017). Dark tourism can shine crucial academic radiance on compound social, cultural, political, and moral topics (Stone, 2013).

By examining the themes of the papers there is an obvious indication of a potential shift in the focus of dark tourism research. There has been a stretch of the margins of the ***definitions of dark tourism***. Buda and McIntosh (2013) do this through tourists' lived experiences in a danger zone; and Miller and Gonzalez's (2013) paper on 'death tourism' identify a wider definition of dark tourism. There are papers that concentrate on the ***types of sites*** and their categorisations within tourism, which is something that has long been discussed in the dark tourism literature. For instance, Cheal and Griffin (2018) studied the Battlefield of Gallipoli, while Raine (2013) investigated graveyards and cemeteries. Also, sites of conflict and genocide sites like Auschwitz (Brown, 2013; Lemelin et al., 2013) have been explored, while Farmaki (2013) researched the National Struggle museum in Cyprus as part of the commemoration. The debate over ***commemoration and recreation*** was researched by Berberich (2018). The interpretation of these sites can be a product of ideology or dominant belief systems. There are dilemmas as to whether commemoration of the acceptable and unacceptable really reflects the condition of the sites or the nature and content of these sites. For example, in the studies that portray the Auschwitz and Cambodia concentration site and genocide site respectively, commemoration is the key element (Berberich, 2018; Hughes, 2008). This can be important in comprehending the history of the past through visiting these sites.

This leads to the ***transformation of sites,*** where death, tragedy, or disaster that has morphed into 'commodities for sale' has been the focus of many researchers. Elkington (2015) argues that the meaning of a site or experience can be weakened as a result of commodification. Wash and Giulianotti (2007), on the other hand, note that commodification can lead to physical improvements of a site. Particularly, it is supported that improved access and facilities via commodification can have a positive influence (Wash and Giulianotti, 2007). For instance, Lennon and Foley (2000) note that Auschwitz must be renovated in order to preserve the site from deterioration, so it should be commodified by enacting modern refurbishment. On the other hand, commodification of a site can be enacted for material gain, and according to Stone (2006), this varies greatly from site to site for financial, political, and other reasons.

Further, papers like that of Biran and Hyde (2013) dispute whether ***dark tourism knowledge*** has been advanced or whether it has merely created greater confusion –for instance, Carr (2010), on war-tourism sites where the events of the past can be censored. Moreover, Chronis (2005), in the research on war landscapes, argues that through the death of others they can turn them into tourist places, and even get past the patriotism or national unity of the sites. This is an indication that dark tourism research has moved from its descriptive nature to an empirical and critical investigation.

From the perspective of ***tourism development***, dark tourism can play a role but it can also be scrutinised in doing that. For example, dark tourism assisted in the development of Hiroshima as an atomic bomb destination (Schafer, 2015). It opened up the market for tourism and brought economic benefits, being termed as "A site that the public from all over the world would visit" (Hiroshimashi, 1982, p.81). Even though its natural wasteland offered a potential goldmine for the tourism industry, the development of Hiroshima as a site for tourism did present a dilemma; it presented a negative image of the city's appeal (Schafer, 2015).

There are sites that perhaps fall into the same category yet offer different potential. For example, the authors Strange and Kempa (2003) contrast two prisons: one is the Alcatraz prison in the USA (from notorious criminals to tourist site), and the other one Robben island in South Africa (the Nelson Mandela penal complex). Both of the 'prisons' offer historical and political storylines. Nonetheless, Alcatraz has been commercialised for entertainment purposes, whereas Robben

Island, according to Shackley (2001), is looking to exploit its potential to become a theme park. In other words, these two prisons, even if they are both considered dark tourism sites, offer a different type of 'dark' experience.

This section, presented on the basis of a review of past research papers' important themes in dark tourism scholarship, has advanced the literature on the dark tourism context. Important topics have been advanced in the literature: for example, the types, categorisations and definitions of dark tourism, the difference between commemoration and recreation, and the transformation of sites, as well as advancement in dark tourism knowledge, education, development and usage of the dark sites.

### 2.3.5 Dark Tourism Demand, Supply and Integrated Approach

As the previous section illustrated, the academic scholarship on dark tourism has advanced remarkably. Included in this dark tourism literature is the identification directed by demand and supply and an integrated demand-supply approach. Virgil et al. (2018) discuss these approaches in the study of dark tourism: the supply, demand, and the combination of the two – the integrated approach. The demand and supply of dark tourism is linked to the development of the places, sites, or destinations that have experienced tragic events or disasters. By identifying the people's experiences (demand), but also the sites' attributes (supply), tourism planners can identify paths to economic and social renewal. The following section explores the components of these two approaches.

#### *2.3*.5.1 Consuming Dark Tourism: Demand-side Research Perspective

The dark leisure experiences are located within dark tourism, and are often perceived as unusual and abnormal or even morally suspicious. According to Stone and Sharpley (2013) the dark leisure experiences can be acceptable (or legitimate and healthy) when the broader cultural condition of secular society is taken into account. There has been a discussion within the dark tourism literature over how places associated with death are presented to visitors. Studies on tourist experience

revealed that visiting dark tourism sites allows one to reflect on their own morality and behaviour (Lisle, 2004; Stone, 2009). The majority of research on dark tourism demand examines the consumption of dark tourism, concentrating on visitor behaviours and motivation. There is research on site-specific motivations, and on dark tourism experiences that explore visitors' responses as emotional or affective. The notion of demand for dark tourism is multi-faceted. Dark tourists are commonly described by Stone (2018, p. 509) as "those who visit sites associated with pain or shame". Nonetheless, the notion of demand perspective is varied. The demand perspective focuses on dark tourism understanding in terms of the motivation to visit, yet not all motivations to visit dark tourism sites involve an interest in death. As Rice et al. (2011) note, motivations are complex. Therefore, demand side definitions or characteristics for dark sites can be problematic. This is further supported by Biran et al. (2011), Ria et al. (2011), and Lemelin et al. (2010),who argue that dark tourism motivations are built around being morbid and are therefore even unwanted (Yankholmes and Akyeampong, 2010). Seaton and Lennon (2004) talk about two motives in visiting dark sites, which include the pleasure to see others' death and thanatopsis. Previously, Dann (1988) talked about eight influences on death: among others, nostalgia, novelty, and crime. This indicates the varied sentiments in the tourist motivation for dark tourism. Yet, there are studies that have attempted to understand the motivations for travelling to dark sites. For example, based on Ria et al. (2011),a classification was presented that has separated tourists into those who are after education and others who are after entertainment –but also those who might have a more emotional experience (Bowman and Pezzullo, 2009;Tarlow, 2005). Ria et al. (2011) quote Dunkley's (2007) motivation on dark sites as based on the wish for self-discovery and so-called morbid curiosity.

Ashworth (2004) focuses on 'difficult heritage sites', which are for visitors who are after a 'quest for roots'; this includes identity-seeking behaviour. Poria et al. (2006) provide the example of a Polish visitor who might visit a Holocaust site to see where their ancestors have perished. Ashworth (2002) compiles a list of motives that include curiosity, identity, horror, and empathy. Empathy has also been mentioned by Tucker (2016), who states that empathy is encouraged predominantly in environments where past injustices and suffering have occurred. Moreover, Nawijn and Frickle (2013), in a research study of a concentration camp memorial, note that some

emotions in visiting ‘dark sites’ can be positive or negative, and include joy, relief, and pleasure. For Isaac and Cakmac (2014), special interest tourism motives include curiosity and fascination with the bizarre. This is what their research identified in the examination of the motivations of visitors.

According to Stone’s dark tourism spectrum (2006, p.151), ‘one tourist experience at a dark site can be darker than another’. This is further endorsed by Collins-Kreiner (2010), who refers to dark tourism as a dark experience that is subjective to the visitors’ perception. This specifies that dark sites are bound to have more than one interpretation. Another demand perspective is identified by Knudsen (2011), who acknowledges that the experiences in visiting dark tourism might indicate that they are after something different from common travelling. Powell and Kennel (2016) further add that its growth is also manifested on the sensitivity of the international community; for many people, dark tourism events are related to their national identity or their history. Another complexity of the dark tourism issues that surround it is that there is a variety of travelling experiences, and not everybody who chooses to go to dark tourism sites is looking for a ‘dark’ experience. For instance, there are tourists that visit places of battlefields and tourists that attach nationality and nationalistic feelings attached to the places they visit. Others visit places in which natural disasters took place for curiosity purposes.

For Biran et al. (2011) and Isaak and Cakmak (2013), key motives can refer to ‘must see’ sites that include holocaust and genocide places. Yet, for Horner and Swarbrooke (2016), any planed travel to sites might be a combination of motivations and not necessarily ‘site-specific’ motives; they could be accidental, opportunistic, or a fashionable endeavour. An important aspect in understanding the consumption or demand for dark tourism is through thanatouristic activity. Knudsen (2011) chooses to understand thanatourism as tourism in places of commemoration. This classifies tourism in the category of difficult heritage tourism, even if there are different reasons behind the motivations of individual thanatourism (Knudsen, 2011). This kind of tourism has been referred to by MacDonald (2006) as heritage that is not wanted by the population. This is also given a name by Knudsen (2011) of ‘difficult heritage’, and is linked to sites that include slavery, genocide, or terrorism. However, thanatourism is notable as a behavioural rather than an essentialist occurrence. In other words, a traveller’s motives influence death and disaster tourism.

Moreover, it depends on whether a tourist has a single motive or multiple motivations in visiting a thanatourism site, and is not about the specific features of the destination. Seaton (1996) identifies that distinctive motivations embody death and disaster tourism. Consequently, Seaton (1999) identified five groupings of endeavours linked to thanatourism, saying that it basically involves distinctive types of concurrences between the tourist and death. According to the five categories, the tourist's motivation shall be the fundamental reason for visiting such places, and not specifically the characteristics or attributes of the sites. It could also be a motive related to fascination about death, or the interest in death could be person-cantered. Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) refer to a range of European examples, in which the difficulty is on the management and interpretation of heritage. Light (2017) argues that these qualities do not refer to tourists' motivations in visiting such heritage sites. A negative aspect of thanatourism is the ability to damage the image of a tourist destination as a result of an event that took place there. This has been argued by Knusden (2011), where the local population might not want to remember the past, but many times they have unwanted visitors that flood the area, wondering and asking what has taken place during the tragedy. For example, in Tasmania, Australia, visitor interest grew after a mass shooting took place in Port Arthur. The locals do not want to remember the event, so the staff of the sites that have been transformed to attract tourists request that visitors don't mention the dark event (Knusden, 2011).

The importance of all these studies in regard to the consumption and motivation of visiting dark tourism sites has produced new research approaches that highlight the importance of research from other disciplines, even outside the tourism field. Research on dark tourism demand has been concentrated on site specific motivations and the experience of visitors at dark sites. It might be the case that the main motives in visiting dark sites are not necessarily related to death. A 'morbid' experience is not always considered desirable, yet there are those that have a fascination with morbid curiosity. Yet, motivation and experience in visiting dark sites is linked with emotions, seeking education or entertainment, nationalistic feelings, or history and national identity.

#### 2.3.5.2 Purveyor Dark Tourism: Supply Side Research Perspective

The supply approach has attracted less scholarly attention compared to the demand approach. It concentrates on the fact that the supply factors include the benefits of the attributes of dark sites (Vigil et al., 2018). Moreover, Austin (2002) argues that the tourist supply of dark tourism sites is not created by the expectations of the visitor, like in conventional leisure destinations. This has also been highlighted, more recently, by Virgil et al. (2018), who aver that the supply approach concentrates on the site's characteristics, which the suppliers manage and are not what the tourists expect. According to Miles (2014), only the supply approach can provide research into understanding the way that these sites can become attractions for tourism. Debatably, there is a surfeit of attractions and sites all over the world that can be classified under the supply or purvey of dark tourism. This has pointed the way to many different and varied types of places and experiences that can be considered as potential places for exploration and could be classified under dark tourism.

The supply perspective concentrates mainly on the death of people or groups, and is in general associated with occurrences of violent deaths. The supply side sometimes includes specific site attributes that the local population might not like, as they 'offer' past human suffering for tourist consumption. For instance, best (2007) points out that these site characteristics include suffering of the deceased, tragic events, or places where death occurred. In other words, 'death' is re-enacted for tourist consumption (Stone, 2005). Moreover, the supply perspective assumes an evocative consideration, highlighting the individuals' existence in spaces associated with death (Biran et al., 2011, p.821). Nonetheless, the supply angle overlooks each person's individual motives, which may be just a basic understanding of dark tourism (Kunwar and Karki, 2019).

Stone (2006) identified a typology of dark sites and looked at it from a supply-side perspective. The creation of the conceptual framework was established. This was based on the 'Seven Dark Suppliers', to pinpoint the supply of such varied but also complicated concoctions like dark tourism. Based on Miles' tourism paradigm, the range of distinctive suppliers differ, from the 'lightest' to the 'darkest' type. Although the spectrum categorises sites and attractions based on their level of 'darkness', it has to be underlined that there are sites with a mixture of characteristics,

and it might be difficult to put them in a frame (Stone, 2006). For example, a war museum might provide both an educational and a political point of view. The multi-faceted nature of dark tourism makes it even more complicated. Biran and Hyde (2014, p.196) suggest that people ought to "resist the enticement to confine it to a stern definition". Sharpley (2009, p.11) argues that this table "is by no means definite" but it can still provide a categorisation of sites that are classed under the term 'Dark Tourism'. Also, as the table indicates, these themes have rather poetic titles.

For instance, the Dark Fun Factories is the lightest form of the dark spectrum, and includes entertainment sites that portray real or fictional death, and macabre events like the Dracula Park in Romania. The darkest parts of the dark tourism spectrum are the Dark Camps of Genocide, which are about how people suffer: for example, Holocaust concentration camps that exist where the event took place, and tell the suffering of people. Below is a list of these paradigm types of dark tourism based on Stone (2006).

- **Dark Fun Factories**–the lightest form of dark spectrum, real or fictional death
- **Dark Exhibitions**- the display of corpses or war museums
- **Dark Dungeons**- former prisons related with death
- **Dark Resting Places**– cemeteries or graves of famous people
- **Dark Shrines** - close to the site of death, non-purposeful for tourism
- **Dark Conflict Sites**– history connected with war or battlefields
- **Dark Camps of Genocide**– displays of human suffering

Another supply theory has been provided by Stone (2006, 2010), who created the dark tourism spectrum with the purpose of categorising these kinds of sites. It is a conceptual extension of classifications of sites. This is another profound theory, which is based on Miles (2002) and Sharpley (2005). In recent years, many authors have also focused on the spectrum (Heuerman and Chhabra, 2014; Miles, 2014; and Raine, 2013). According to Stone (2006), the dark tourism sites include some sites that can be darker or lighter than others. This recognition of whether the dark site is 'lighter' or 'darker' can establish how the destination can manoeuvre its potential. A dark site should be considered between two extremes, which Grebenar (2018, p. 59) refers to as "complete privacy and complete publicist" areas. Notwithstanding this, according to Stone (2013),

this typology could not be applied to the entire dark tourism supply, yet it can provide an extensive conceptual framework for a better comprehension of the phenomenon of dark tourism in present-day society. Further, Light (2017) notes that these elements include various dual rivals: for example, education and entertainment points of reference that replicate enduring discussions in dark tourism. In fact, the spectrum has undergone a critique from various authors. For instance, Ashworth and Isaac (2015) dispute that 'darkness' is a social concept and is not based on specific features. Biran et al., (2011) refer to it as being descriptive, and Dale and Robinson (2011) as being subjective. Nonetheless, despite its varying critiques, the typology has been widely used in the literature from various perspectives, as it is considered a very influential typology (Virgili et al., 2018). It is worthwhile pointing out that there is a need to amend the model in order to encapsulate the complex and multi-faceted approach of the phenomenon of dark tourism.

The supply-side research in dark tourism is still lacking. The reasoning behind this limitation is the consideration that this term touches topics that include death and tragedy, which for many are not attractive. Yet, there are destinations that have used these sites for their economic benefit and have opened their doors to visitors for touristic purposes. What is important is to identify these gaps and provide the potential for development of the supply of dark sites.

#### 2.3.5.3 Dark Tourism Integrated Approach: The Supply and Demand Research Perspective

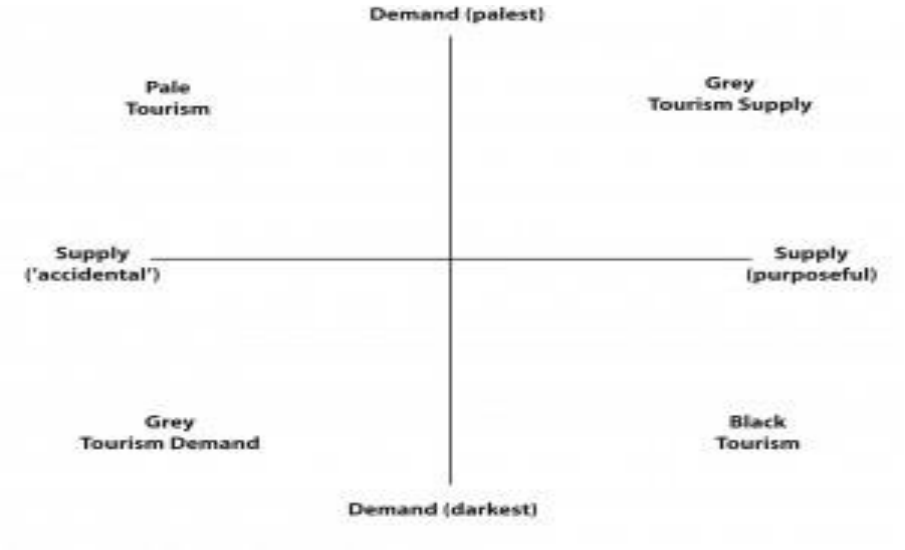
The discussion on the dark tourism demand, supply, and demand-supply integrated approach of dark tourism reveals certain contentious aspects in the current literature. The integrated perspective presents elements of the production and consumption of dark sites and their unique features. Conversely, Poria et al. (2004) argue that there are studies of dark sites that bring to light the fact that there are tourists or visitors to such sites who are not familiar with the sites' characteristics or attributes. The integrated approach of the demand and supply perspective is not presented as often as the demand-side or supply-side research perspective. This could be because of the lack of empirical research on the integrated approach, plus the fact that dark tourism has such varied and multi-sided interpretations, and a small number of empirical investigations.

Research that only comprehends dark tourism from the demand-side context omits a fundamental component of the equation, as motivation to engage in dark tourism is challenging to comprehend and is generally negatively characterised, due to the subject's macabre and melancholic nature. An examination of the concept from the supply-side is likewise controversial, as it contributes by featuring the clash of communities as the central segment to understanding it. An integration of demand and supply in dark tourism extends these distinct tourist activities that might take place at sites of tragedy and death.

Most typologies identified in the literature have focused on either supply or demand for dark tourism. However, Sharpley (2005) has attempted to amalgamate supply and demand in his research. This integration was conducted in order to get a more comprehensive view of dark tourism.

The site characteristics and the tourists' experience were linked, and the outcome proposed 'four shades' of dark tourism (Sharpley, 2009). The demand-supply perspective can bring together the site characteristics and the visitors' experience.

- **Pale tourism** – visitors do not have an interest in death as these sites are not purposely made for tourism. (example the churches with graves of famous people)
- **Grey tourism demand** – they are sites not intended for dark tourism yet the visitors have a fascination with death (example visiting Canterbury Cathedral for the exact spot of the murder of Bishop Thomas Becket)
- **Grey tourism supply** – visitors do not have an interest in death but they are sites developed to exploit death in order to attract visitors (example visiting the Colosseum in Rome).
- **Black tourism** – people that have a fascination with death and the supply of those sites is for the purpose of satisfying this fascination (examples: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Chernobyl, and Ground Zero).

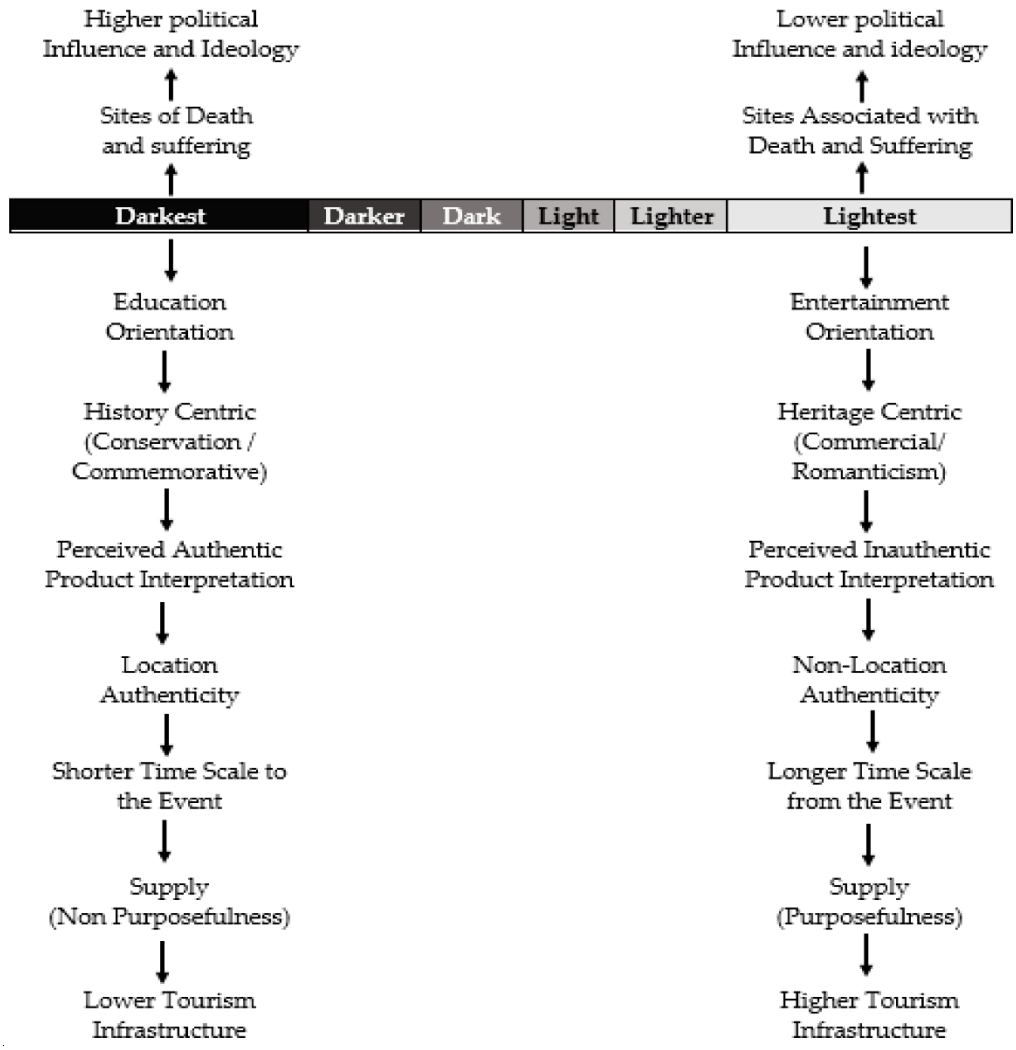



**The four shades of dark tourism**

**Source: Sharpley (2009)**

Furthermore, Sharpley (2005) identified a 'Matrix of Dark Tourism', which is referred to as a 'continuum of purpose', and includes the demand and supply of dark attractions, but also their experiences. The purpose of the matrix is to determine the elasticity of demand and supply, and if it is influenced by the interests of the tourists; this in turn is established through accidental motivation, but also by the dark place, as it might be consumed accidentally or on purpose. After the sites are placed on a sequence it is identified where each site 'belongs' – to the 'lightest' or the 'darkest' dark tourism site. The relation between demand and supply in dark tourism is based on exploratory research. While it is indicated that examples of these types are difficult to obtain, as it depends on the individual tourist, yet it could be argued that visits to cemeteries and churches with graves of famous people are considered pale tourism – as the motivation of the visit is the life of those deceased and not their death. Grey tourism demand could be a cathedral where someone famous is buried. Grey tourism could also be somewhere like the Colosseum in Rome or Christian catacombs. On the other hand, according to Stone and Sharpley (2008, p.579), black tourism could be considered the Pennsylvania crash site of the September 11 UA 93 (Flight 93 Tour) that is run

by a local farmer, who charges $65 per person for the tour, or a tour in Chernobyl, at the site of the nuclear accident disaster.




**The Dark Tourism Matrix**

**Source: Sharpley (2005)**

The fact that demand and supply are being explored together shows that there is a complexity of interactions that can occur during visits to such sites. Santos and Yan (2010) note that the most important element that dictates which heritage sites are dark are the tourists. Ryan and Kohli (2006) offered a conceptualisation of dark tourism and linked the site presentation with visitor expectations and perceptions. This means that the formation of the place and the approach of

interpretation are significant stimulants in the visitor experience. Farmaki (2013) studied two museums in Cyprus associated with colonial struggle, and identified that production and consumption of dark tourism is constant but also interconnected, and that demand develops through supply. Even given the narrow focus of the study, this is evidently an example of demand and supply integration to form the overall tourist experience.

### 2.3.6 Dark Tourism Potential: Opportunities and Constraints

The continued existence or further development of dark sites relies upon the continuance of a tourism culture: a tourism culture that will permit an approach of maximising opportunities and minimising constraints in dark tourism development. Yet, in many destinations this tourism culture is lacking. Ghimire (2001) points out that the creation of possible dark tourism initiatives is biased, and governments must have information on how the industry has grown.

Within the academic literature there are ample references to the potential opportunities for dark tourism development at destinations around the world. Muskat et al. (2015) note that dark tourism development can produce economic and local reconstructing at a destination. Once the benefits of dark tourism are identified and understood, this can have positive impacts to the destination and turn it into a new form of tourism. Kunwar and Karki (2019) note that dark tourism has a very good opportunity for development. Juranovic et al. (2021) point out that because the range of dark attractions is broad, it is essential to study each attraction individually and create such a product that will represent it adequately, and which will ensure appropriate development.

Even though the importance of dark tourism has been extensively recognised, the current role of dark tourism is still lacking and this is a constraint to its further growth. Jacobsen (2016) talks about the commercial aspect that surrounds death nowadays, and the scepticism over the ethical separation between commemoration and commercialism, particularly in dark tourism. Further, Stone (2019) argues that dark tourism uses death as commodities, and that even souvenirs of tragic memories are sold for touristic consumption. This produces controversy and discussion (Potts, 2012).

Clark (2014) discusses that it is ethically troubling to create alluring settings just for the purpose of making the dark site more attractive for consumption. Previously, Foley and Lennon (1996) have claimed that it is not ethical to repetitively rerun representation of the dead, either for the victim or their family.

Another major constraint in dark tourism development stems from the fact that dark tourism is mostly viewed as a secondary or alternative type of tourism. Ghimire (2001) talks about a trend that exists in many destinations that hinders the progress of a viable dark tourism industry, because governments don't consider it (dark tourism) as a priority. Poirier (2000) notes that a lack of resources and significant financial, cultural, and infrastructural obstacles can hinder the efforts to promote dark tourism; if these obstacles were removed, dark tourism could eventually become a self-sustaining industry.

#### 2.3.6.1 Dark Tourism Impacts

Tourism is a global industry that produces a multitude of impacts in destinations. It has been long suggested by academia that tourism is traditionally represented as a cause of change and development at destinations, as it changes the features of the destination, its economy, society, and environment (Deery et al, 2012; Park and Stokowski, 2009; Ahn, Lee, and Shafer, 2002; Saveriades, 2000; Butler,1991).These impacts can influence how host communities perceive the tourism industry and dictate their support for its further development (Smallman and Moore, 2010;Sinclair-Maragh and Gursoy, 2005). The impacts of tourism on a destination are multi-faceted. Yet, this thesis centres attention on what impacts the local community perceives dark tourism can bring on the destination, not in numbers, but rather on their opinions and views of the effects dark tourism development can cause. These impacts include the economic, social, cultural, and environmental effects (Brida et al., 2011; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010; Gursoy et al., 2002). The central focus of tourism development has been economic growth and its potential costs and benefits. Local communities, visitors, and interaction with the environment generate the effects and the components of tourism actions that are disturbed by this interface, positively or negatively. In other words, each of these areas are distinctly intertwined, in both positive and negative ways.

Academics have been examining tourism from many angles, as a result of the increasing uneasiness over the negative impacts that it can bring to destinations (Saarinen, 2006).

As various tourism destinations around the world mature, it is very likely that they also become aware of both the benefits and the costs of development. Therefore, the destination planners are attempting to improve the perks to the country and eliminate, if and when possible, the costs. According to Gursoy et al. (2010), this route should start from the local population, and identify their views and perceptions over which development they would support. The impacts have an effect on local stakeholders differently: Ashworth and Page (2011) point out that the benefits of tourism are concentrated in particular economic sectors, whereas the costs are more widespread.

The UNWTO (2018) indicates that positive impacts include a better international atmosphere, an increased number of events, an increase in a positive image, protection of historical areas and sites, and conservation and restoration of traditional architecture. This is also emphasised by Andereck et al. (2005), who note that the impact from development is reflected by an increase in the number of retail businesses. Tosun (2002) indicates that the economic effects that result from tourism development are perceived generally as being positive, as they can benefit the host community financially. Further, according to Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012), the local population tends to oppose tourism development if they consider the detriments outweighing the benefits.

Tourism is generally viewed positively, especially in its initial stages of development, as it is seen as being able to supply desired economic gains. At this stage, there is likely little knowledge over the consequences of tourism development (Mason and Cheyne, 2000). Dark tourism is at its initial stages of development in many destinations that have only previously concentrated on leisure tourism. Yet it is a wide branch of tourism that sometimes brings unexpected value into this varied industry.

## 2.4 Visits to Dark Sites

The following review is related to the tourist visitor experience at dark tourism sites. The vast amount of relevant theories and research examples of tourism experience are not the aim of this review, but rather the linkage of the tourism experience and the visits of the local community to dark sites, within the context of the thesis' aims and objectives. Buda and McIntosh (2013) highlight that it is more important that the individuals understand dark tourism based on their experience, and not on the sites. Heap (2016) stresses that at a war heritage site, the quality of the visit is connected to the people's experience, but this author also highlights their obligation.

In the study of tourism, experiences or visits to touristic places are now a central focus of the literature. Central to the notion of development is that tourism today can open up not only to delivering services to tourists, but also to provide experiences (Selstad, 2007; Pine and Gilmore, 1998).In current tourism research and management, the notion of tourism experience is central (Tung and Ritchie, 2011). The promotional efforts of tourism businesses often include 'experience' in their information. Yet, to understand tourism experiences, it needs to not only be seen from the business perspective, or from the perspective of how people consume tourism. Hall and Brown (2006) refer to ethical and prosperity issues when it comes to touristic activities. For Pearce et al. (2011) it is also about the quality of life and well-being of individuals. Researchers put effort into conceptualising tourism experiences and measuring those (Oh et al., 2007; Otto and Ritchie, 1996). Kim (2009) argues that there are conceptual models that investigate tourism experiences and have identified diverse concept facets that include, among others: hedonism, escapism, serenity, involvement, entertainment, and education.

Attention to the study and investigation of tourism experiences commenced in the 1960s (Uriely, 2005). Franklin (2009) notes that it originated from tourism being identified as a division of leisure, and it was attached to the complex issues of industrial societies. For instance, because of the intense working conditions of the 1950s and 1960s, leisure and tourism were seen as mediums that compensated for these conditions. There were multiple structures that were used to

scrutinise/consider the magnitude of the tourist experience. Morgan et al. (2010) refer to three: the phases of the experience, the influences of the experience, and the outcomes of the experience.

One important review is that of Uriely (2005). This author on the subject of tourism experience signifies four important theoretical developments: de-differentiating, pluralising, individual, and interpretive experiences. These four theoretical developments reveal the flow through which tourism experience is appraised. Hence, there is an even larger variety of approaches to tourism experience research. It is also important to acknowledge that the magnitude of all research and conceptualisation is a near impossible task, as there is a large overlap between the many different and distinct approaches. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this research there are certain central views that can fit with the overall thesis. For instance, Quan and Wang (2004) identify that research of the tourist experience can be viewed through the marketing and management perspective, but also through the social perspective. Anthropologists' and sociologists' work have been used to comprehend where tourism experiences came from.

Reviewing the definitions of tourism experiences highlights the complicated features of such experiences. As a result of the collective magnitude of what constitutes the tourism experience, the concept of tourism experience itself is said to be 'messy' (Ryan, 2000). Moreover, Larsen and Mossbery (2007) identify it as a 'confused concept'. The following definitions explain this: For Otto and Ritchie (1996), the tourism experience is based on a personal evaluation, and it is related to what tourism activities are being exercised before, during, and after a journey. Tung and Ritchie (2011, p. 3), define the tourism experience as a multifunctional leisure activity that could involve both learning and entertainment. In order to eliminate or at least minimise these confusing definitions, a number of authors have attempted to study these different conceptualisations. This, however, does not fall into the objectives of this study.

There have been many studies that have examined dark tourism sites from the perspectives of motives, perceptions, or for any desired benefits (Biran et al., 2011). In this current era, visitors to dark sites are looking for interactions and experiences, and according to Magee and Gilmore (2015), they are after more participation in such places. Visitors to dark sites articulate what they understand from the sites: the human sacrifice and loss and tragedy that has taken place. The basis

is on visitor learning and enhancement of knowledge and understanding through their experience: what Magee and Gilmore (2015) refer to as communication channels through which they can enhance their participation in a combination of learning, understanding, and meaning. A review of experience and dark tourism experience can be linked to the actual demand for dark tourism sites (which is not the aim of this study). Yet, what visits and experience have as a focal point for the local community and how their visitor experiences shape their perception for dark tourism development is what this investigation aims to uncover.

Most research so far on dark tourism experience has been based on specific cases or specific locations (Zhang, 2021). There are studies that have investigated dark tourism experiences in terms of structure and the level of 'darkness' of the site (Zhang, 2021), and these have emerged interesting generalisations. Between the various strands of dark tourism experience, three important contexts are also identified; these are visits or experiences linked with ***history (2.4.1), education (2.4.2), and commemoration (2.4.3)***. Packer and Ballantyne (2016) note that clarifying the components of the experience can lay the foundations to further investigate the outcomes of relevant experiences. Before examining the three strands linked with dark tourism visits, it is imperative to identify the notion within the tourism sector.

A challenge of dark tourism studies and research is to grasp and assimilate the reasons for the attraction of the site in the first place. According to Koskinen-Koivisto (2016), dark heritage is used as a canopy, under which it is connected to dark and difficult pasts that might even be features of its cultural heritage. Part of this challenging past can have an effect on contemporary destinations. For instance, many elements of a place's dark history might not be attractive for a destination to promote. Dark tourism can discern which parts of the past can be presented, and which distant events are not suitable for tourism. Moreover, Biran et al. (2011) present an integrated approach in considering experiences at dark tourism sites. Particularly, they combine the site's attributes with the tourists' perception and on-site interpretation in the visitor experience. Yet another example of a more recent study of an integrated approach is the study of Magee and Gilmore (2015), where they based their findings on a case study to explore four concentration camps in Europe. Their findings suggest a transformation of visitors as they become more familiar with the site and they focus on learning and reflection. The aforementioned studies used the

integrated approach in understanding the complexities of dark tourism from the development and management of the sites and places of death, while at the same time focusing on the visitor experiences through their perceptions and interpretation of the sites. Further empirical research focusing on demand and supply will ultimately assist in broadening the literature base and offering insights into the complicated and multifarious aspect of dark tourism.

Dark tourism is a complex phenomenon that can be experienced in distinct forms. Different experiences gained at the sites also vary accordingly. It can be said that a person faces the fear of death by visiting dark sites and in that way reflects on themselves. Authors, which include Kang et al. (2011), note that dark tourism functions as an emotional tourism experience, transmitting and implicating knowledge of past events. Through each person's interpretation the site is being communicated, and this is very important for dark tourism. Dark tourism sites are said to provide benefits and experiences to the people that visit them. Kang et al. (2012) and Biran et al. (2011) note that the sites can determine the potential for provision of legacies, but also provide emotional attainment through the visitors' experiences at the site. An example is given by Austin (2002), where in the West Coast of Africa, visitors to the slave forts and castles receive experiences of spiritual fulfilment. Moreover, the sites can act as a legacy to the visitors, increase understanding, and the visitors could engage in the experience in order to connect with their roots. Another example is offered by Biran et al. (2011), where they note that visitors to the Auschwitz concentration camp enrich their understanding of that heritage. This understanding can also increase the emotional connection, resulting in the visitors to the concentration camp increasing their empathy towards the victims. Based on that, they can increase their learning of the events that took place at the camp during World War II. On the same lines, Niemelä (2010) points out that visits to dark sites can increase learning and awareness of historical events and turn these visits into an educational experience. Daams (2007) had previously mentioned this – that visiting sites of such events is an educational experience.

Miles (2002) argues that dark sites have the potential to invoke profound expressions, which include anger, fear, sadness, empathy, and sympathy. Additionally, it has been maintained that dark tourism sites can have their roots in religion and/or ethnicity, or people could have been involved personally with the site (as in a case of war or accident). Cuka and Charancova (2013)

note that the interest in education and entertainment could be a reason for visiting a dark tourism site. A reason could be the fact that people want to understand the present (Lennon, 2014) and be more thoughtful about the future (Sampson, 2019).

Perceptions and interpretations of heritage in modern multicultural societies are ambiguous. There needs to be a distinction between a pleasant and unpleasant heritage. It should not be neglected that there exists a heritage that is unpleasant, yet is rooted to a country or nation. Similar to dark tourism, dark heritage also exists, with related sites having names that include the classifications of 'difficult', 'contested', 'dissonant', and 'negative' heritage (Thomas et al., 2019). Dissonant heritage was introduced in the 1990s and has been referred to as 'heritage that hurts' (Hartmann, 2013). It could also be defined as the 'unwanted past' (Balockaite 2015, p. 1). It is imperative to indicate that 'heritage that hurts' may refer to war or to negative narratives. For instance, the Nazi concentration camps during World War Two are regarded as memorial tourism for the victims and their families, but the perpetrators might see them as 'dissonant heritage'. There are people that might regard dark heritage as positive; for instance, a memorial could remind them of their country's victory at war, while others might view it as a loss of people, and this is where 'heritage that hurts' fits. This complexity is also noted by Garcia (2012), who described that dark tourism has a sensitive nature, and this can create difficulties in the acceptance of development of the sites.

There are various important sociological concepts that are potentially attached to the visitor experience: in this case, the dark tourism visiting experience. These include interpretation that coincides with commercialisation and/or commoditisation. These notions form an important part of this research, as the local community perception potentially depends on how they view the dark sites, but also on their sought visiting experiences at these sites.

There has been important research conducted on how people interpret sites associated with death and disaster in relation to tourism. Relph (1976, p. 46, in Frew and White, 2013), claims that experiences are straightforward and, in many cases, accidental. In 1957 the interpretation process was set out in a coordinated way, when the professionalization of the activity resulted in a book publication (Tilden, 1977). By the 1980s, there was an emergence of 'cultural heritage industry',

and this was due to the development of the leisure industry, but also an increase in demand for leisure (Hewison, 1989).

Interpretation frequently entails conceptions of communication, but also a kind of appreciation of a site, or an event that has taken place. In other words, it could give meaning to a site and potential visitors could thus comprehend its connotation. In recent decades, interpretation has been given various meanings. For instance, Schouten (1995) talks about it as turning history into genuine existence and experience. Steward et al. (1998) only refer to it as making places accessible to people. Moreover, Wight and Lennon (2007) define it as a way from which museums communicate with the public. Finally, for Moscardo and Ballantyne (2008, p. 237) in Sharpley and Stone (2009, p. 113), interpretation is a major feature of the experience of the visitor at a site or attraction.

This is imperative in understanding the way people interpret their experiences in dark tourism sites, hence they can shape their perception and attitudes towards their development. Particularly, they link interpretation to a person's life experience, who seeks meaning and not just to acquire information. Interpretation thus combines history and science, among other disciplines, and it should be holistic in disposition. For Tilden (1997), interpretation has been regarded as an educational interest, which points towards uncovering connotations and connections and direct experience, not just informing factual material. This is definitely powerful, as it contemplates the miscellaneous channels used in interpretation. Even though knowledge is essential to interpretation, it is not regarded as knowledge in the same way as receiving formal education, in view of the fact that most visitors to sites of cultural or heritage significance are also seeking leisure pursuits(Light, 1995). Consequently, interpretation supports visitors who go to dark sites in order to understand and appreciate their past. In dark tourism sites, the dead may be exposed for educational reasons. The basis for history teaching lies with educational visits, which include visits to the dead; this might be in schools, from educational material, or from visits to heritage sites by way of educational tourism. Occasionally, the dead are physically exhibited, like, for instance, mummies. Exhibitions, like museums and even heritage sites, can be compared to television documentaries, and this is referred to as edutainment. Walter (2009, p.48) argues that the dead – just like during public executions from previous centuries – still attract crowds nowadays, with the purpose of education but also entertainment. Based on Roberts (2018), the term 'edutainment 'has

thus been established; this concerns the fact that dark attractions have as a main objective to amuse and/or entertain (Robinson and Dale, 2009; in Dale and Robinson, 2011, p. 213).

For the purposes of this research, interpretation could be a planned activity and visitors can, as Moscardo (2007) notes, correspond about what is experienced by themselves as significant or otherwise. In this way, the manner in which people perceive a dark tourism site would potentially have an effect on whether they are positive or negative about its development.

The use of modern technology can have a potentially positive effect on a dark site, as well as enhancing the visitor experience. Furthermore, technology can be used as a marketing but also as a management instrument. Also, technological developments can actually benefit interpretation, as people can be able to comprehend the attached meaning of the visited sites more easily. Modern interpretation has given way to tours where the people are directed on their own, and they can listen to an audio device while on a tour. This modern technology development has overtaken the use of tour guides, of information leaflets, or other live presentation forms. In contrast, it could be stated that interpretation that misinforms, belittles or under-estimates, and commercialises the experiences, may function as an obstacle. Conversely, the current developments in interpretation have also been criticised. Some commentators deplore the tendency that it focuses more on entertainment as opposed to education. Those that criticise modern technology's use in sites believe that it has taken over education, which was the main focus of interpretation (Stevens, 1989; Lowenthal, 1985).

The section that follows explores dark tourism visits linked with history, education, and commemoration. Visits to dark sites can be understood from various viewpoints. People that visit a dark site can view these sites according to their beliefs, opinions, and perceptions. The visits can also influence their perceptions over the future development of the site. Dark tourism can be seen as a historic element but also educational, or the visit may be for the purposes of commemoration.

### 2.4.1 Visits Based on History

Dark sites frequently incorporate places that are contemplated and distinguished as heritage, cultural or dark heritage sites. Dann and Seaton (2001) have mentioned that cultural and historical significance is attached to dark sites. Consequently, a consideration of dark sites should be linked to already introduce theories of heritage tourism. For instance, Seaton and Lennon (2004) note that similar to sites associated with heritage or culture, dark sites could also entail ideological and political concerns.

Biran et al. (2011, p.823) maintain that "literature cantering on visits to heritage sites may permit more understanding of tourist experiences at dark sites". Specifically, such literature distinguishes between the functionality of the sites, but also what meaning the dead exemplify. For instance, research has demonstrated that dark sites are places for remembering events or people, for mourning, for a spiritual experience, to demonstrate national identity, or for educational experiences (Logan and Reeves, 2009; Slade, 2003; Austin, 2002). More recently, Hassapopopulou (2018) notes that dark tourism is fast growing and it includes 'attractions' connected to destruction, death, and controversy, and provides the examples of Auschwitz, Rwanda, Hiroshima, Ground Zero, and Chernobyl. It concerns sites where events have taken place and been documented in the historical time period of those places or destinations.

Curiosity about history, but also learning about history, can turn people to dark sites (Kokkranikal et al., 2015). The historical value and interest in the historical significance of regions, but also the quest to know about the historic importance of a specific place, can be a factor for interest in dark tourism (Çakar, 2020).

Although the pursuit of dark tourism has existed for a long time, it has been experienced more as a long journey and less as a type of tourism; some researchers argue that it is not widely researched (Timothy and Boyd, 2006; Seaton, 1996). In spite of this, research by Foley and Lennon (1996) has been debating the types of tourism that are largely ignored. They underline that the comprehension of dark tourism continues to be narrow, since there is inadequate research exploring dark tourism, or the literature concentrates only on specific places or spaces. Other

authors insist that there is scarce theory and practice around this phenomenon (Ashworth and Hartmann, 2005; McCain and Ray, 2003; Austin, 2002; Bruner, 1996; Foley and Lennon, 1996; Seaton, 1996). For example, there is a wealth of studies that look at it from a historical perspective, and this includes dark cultural heritage (i.e., conflicts in Europe), yet there is sparse research done on the transatlantic operation where Africans were sold as slaves, which is considered an atrocity (Williams, 1994; Patterson, 1982; Rodney, 1972).

According to Tarlow (2005), dark tourism has a commercial aspect that uses the horrors that have taken place in the past in order to make business in the present. Seaton (2009, p. 87) asserts that if commercialisation is introduced, there is a question on how it should be achieved in a way that does not adversely affect the site. Hence, there are situations where the decision to run a dark site is not based on the presentation of history, but on a commercial or semi-commercial basis. There is a need to debate if the local community supports the development and whether the proceeds are seen to help or benefit regional communities (Seaton, 2009). Cole (2007, p. 955) determines that "cultural commoditisation of locals can bring 'pride and self-conscious' awareness of their traditional culture, which has become a resource that they manipulate to economic and political ends". It could be stated that dark tourism visits could be a product, and the commoditisation process that dark heritage undergoes is a product that today's consumer society seeks.

### 2.4.2Visits Based on Education

Another conception of dark tourism is that it could be seen as widening education; in other words, learning about past facts that took place and cannot be changed, and learning from any errors of the past. It is important for people to get to know the history of their communities, understand it, and be able to comprehend why certain things have taken place. Therefore, dark tourism can be a valuable means with which to educate people. They can learn about history, and through this they perhaps might even feel pride after visiting a national monument or site. Nonetheless, research on educational dark tourism has not progressed dramatically. Biran et al. (2011) note that tourism research tends to neglect educational motivations to visit dark tourism sites as it is considered that people visit dark tourism sites because they are interested in death and the macabre. Moreover,

Israfilova and KhooLatimore (2018) have researched young people and their experiences after visiting dark heritage sites in their country. The conclusions drawn were that dark tourism can be used as a means to teach history, broaden learning, and to grasp what happened in the past. Controversially, according to Ames (1989), entertainment often prevails in education. Additionally, Binks (in Light, 1995) considers that educational objectives are in danger of being lost. Fleming (1986) goes further, to indicate that some sites are all about economic returns, and they may not even try to educate visitors. It is considered by some that there is an educational deficiency at some sites which is consequently associated with subordination of education in the direction of entertainment and visitor expectations (Fleming, 1986). Greenhalgh (1989) also appraises that education and entertainment are conflicting clashing. Urry's (1991) concept of 'edutainment' is a blend of education and popular entertainment that is a characteristic of modern cultural heritage; this can be recognised at dark sites as well. This is further supported by Martin and Mason (1993), who assert that entertainment is necessary, as it keeps the sites viable economically.

### 2.4.3Visits Based on Commemoration

Onsite tourism visits are considered potentially momentous. Hence, people can regularly reflect about their visit; this is because experiences stored in memory can bring about recollection and remembrance. Memorial tourism is closely related to heritage tourism. Kim (2009) argues that in developing conceptual models of tourism experience, memory should not be neglected. Moreover, Drvenkar et al. (2015) further add that memorial tourism emanates from dark tourism; particularly, it is stated that dark tourism presents the origin of memorial tourism. Furthermore, Yankholmes and Mckercher (2015) note that people tend to visit dark sites that are related to their heritage and identity. Dark tourism can help people not only to understand what has happened, but also to come to terms with the past, their history, and their heritage. This is also stated by Kang et al. (2011, p. 258) – that dark tourism is "significant as an education factor and a heritage". Hartman (2018, p. 473) goes one step further to add that "remembering is the basis for reconciliation". On the other hand, Stone (2012) argues that dark tourism can serve as mediation between death and collective memory, and that it might change over time. This indicates that collective memory can be changed or shaped according to when and how people perceive it, and at what stage in their lives.

Nonetheless, engaging in dark tourism can assist communities to come to terms with their pasts and move forward. King (1998), in Walter (2009, p. 47) notes that remembrance is not memory. Remembrance brings about commemoration for those people who maybe have not personally witnessed the death or suffering associated with such a site, yet it is not history for them either. Walter (2009, p.47) argues that "when memory is not first hand, it turns into remembrance or history, genealogy, or ancestry …and doubtless other possibilities too". A memorial is not just a place of memory; it can be a way to care for those that are not alive anymore – and what is left is to remember them. Light (2017) researched the relationship between identities and visits to places of dark tourism. It is noted that such visits can be a means with which to affirm and reproduce particular identities (at individual, family, national and transnational levels) (Light 2017, p. 288). For Light (2017, p. 288), "visiting dark places can also be a means of defining or affirming collective identities".

The above-mentioned concepts indicate the ways that visits to – and experience at – dark sites influence the perceptions of people over the development of dark tourism. Dark tourism visits or experience can be linked with education and learning, history and culture, and commemoration and remembrance, and ultimately shape people's perceptions.

## 2.5 Local Community Perceptions of Dark Tourism

As discussed in the introductory chapter, the overall purpose of the thesis is to investigate the perceptions of local communities over dark tourism development. Such knowledge and understanding are crucial in order to investigate whether dark sites have the potential for further development and management in a manner which would be beneficial to the local community. This section reviews the literature of what local communities understand as dark tourism, the significance of their participation and involvement on the process of development, as well as a background to its development, the context of studies, and the gaps in the literature.

The literature maintains that local residents should be involved in the process of development – in particular, those who are directly affected, while others may be uncertain of the value of residents' involvement. In addition, it was realised that in the case where local residents get involved in the process of development, their perceptions will ultimately be more confident about tourism development. The dark tourism development route should include roles for local citizen participation; for it is the "residents [who] must put up with congestion at [destinations], put on the 'smile,' and live with the physical development" (Murphy, 1985, p.163). There are those who believe that a destination can keep its long-term popularity and success if the locals are friendly and hospitable (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010). Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010) also argue that detailed planning and tourism development strategies need to be highly focused at the local level, since this is where tourism takes place.

Residents are also in a better position to identify the resources that make their place special and unique (Chittenden, 2006; Rosenow and Pulsipher, 1979). This resource identification process should be guided as much as possible by those whose culture and heritage are affected (Chittenden,

2006). This is because planners and outsiders tend to homogenise places and rob them of their uniqueness through standardisation (Scarpaci, 2005; Teo and Yeoh, 1997). Researchers suggest some strategies to foster and encourage residents' support for tourism and its development. For instance, the first step, as Hall (2000) embraces, is that for tourism planning to be successful, the involvement and the participation of residents in the area is fundamental.

Timothy (1999) recommends that urban inhabitants should be encouraged to participate in decisions relating to tourism development through government motivations and incentives. On the contrary, McKercher et al. (2004) doubt the philosophy of wide-scale citizen involvement, given that local residents at times can be unmindful of visitors' needs during the selection of resources for attraction development. In particular, the resources that they select may not necessarily be what the visitors that they economically depend on would prefer. Furthermore, Li (2005, p.133), in research in China, asserts that in community participation, a Western paradigm "was only one of many ways to ensure that local people received benefits from tourism, and not a final goal itself." It was identified that "despite weak participation in decision-making processes, the local community can benefit sufficiently from tourism" (Li, 2005, p.132).

Zamani-Farahani and Musa (2008) claim residents' attitudes to tourism development are dependent on different circumstances. It has been suggested that when local residents feel that they have some control over planning and development, then their perceptions towards tourism are supported.

In opposition, Uriely et al. (2002) have not acknowledged any significant relationships as a result of residents' level of involvement; however, it was underlined that the involvement of local residents in the management of heritage sites could foster respect and understanding of the need for protection of the environment and the integration of tourism into the local community (Kennel and Powell, 2021). According to Koens et al. (2018), residents are more concerned about the rapid and unexpected growth of tourism, especially in areas with low levels of tourism development, rather than tourist numbers.

### *Local Community*

Within the academic literature, the involvement of the local community is considered to be imperative in the development of tourism. The term 'community' is inclined to be ambiguous (Salazar, 2012). According to Wenger (1998), a community is a social group that includes people with similar interests, regardless of their environments. Mayaka (2018) agrees with this, and adds that a community is made up of people who live in a particular location and share a common culture. Loukissas (1983) indicates that the literature on participation advocates that community input stimulates development of more advance plans which respond to local needs, and are therefore more acceptable in the community. Community is a widely used term that has been projected broadly. What is required to become a community is, according to Han et al., (2014), non-specific social warmth. Eom and Han (2019) refer to the community as an entity including different individuals who take part in an activity in different ways and with different commitment.

### *Perceptions of the Local Community*

Tourism academics consider that local perception is an imperative field of reference of the tourism industry. According to Simão and Môsso (2013), perception is a representation of reality. In particular, these authors term perception as the meaning allocated to an entity that is an outcome of a person's choice, and the way it decodes and interprets the information. They further acknowledge that this information agrees on the support or rejection that the local community may demonstrate in the process of tourism development. Tourism is seen as a reasonable option to interchange or supplement the conventional industries, which include mining, fishing, and logging; such industries have diminished in popularity in their communities (Petrzelka, Krannich, Brehm, and Trentelman, 2005; Bachleltner and Zins, 1999; Ap and Crompton, 1998; Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams, 1997; Madrigal, 1995; McCool and Martin, 1994;' Snepenger and Akis, 1994; Lankford and Howard, 1994; Long, Perdue, and Allen, 1990; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Liu and Var, 1986).

Since the 1970s there has been an increased number of research studies on local perceptions of tourism development. Andereck and Voght (2000) argue that there is a body of literature that concentrates on residents' perceptions of tourism. Given the significance of residents in the

development process of tourist destinations, a growing amount of studies on the subject have appeared. Likewise, Sharpley (2014) emphasises the significant increase in theoretical and applied research of residents' attitudes that has been achieved since the 1970s. Moreover, Giacomo and Angelo (2013) and Ribeiro et al. (2013) further argue that attaining local community support on topics around what tourism offers is fundamental to any development approach or plan. This is also supported by Morupisi and Mokgalo (2017), who state that tourism develops in the vicinity of communities, and the support of the local community is a requirement if it is to succeed.

The literature reveals that there is an imperative need to identify the perceptions, attitudes, and opinions of all stakeholders in the process of planning and development for tourism, in order to lessen any problems and reduce conflicts between them. Researchers determine a number of reasons that influence, predict, and explain why people have particular views towards tourism development, of which, as it can be revealed, there are conflicting views. For example, there are reasons linked with demographic, personal, social, economic, spatial, and tourism related factors (Jackson and Inbakaran, 2006; Harrill, 2004). Moreover, gender and ethnicity can explain inconsistencies in their attitudes, a view put forward by Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010), who highlight that both gender and age are elements of people changing their attitudes. Additionally, Var et al. (1985) indicate that there is a relationship between ethnicity and residents' attitudes. An additional feature comes from Peristianis and Warner (1996) and Lankford (1994), who indicate that the 'level of attachment' in a place encompasses birthplace, length of residency, home ownership, and employment, which are reasons that make them more favourable towards tourism. In contrast, Madrigal (1995), Davis et al. (1988), and Pizam (1978) mentioned no connection between socio-demographic variables and attitudes concerning tourism. Also, Nepal (2008) underlined that gender and age are not associated with attitudes towards tourism.

Previous studies have mentioned that dependence on the economic effects of tourism frequently indicates a support, even at the cost of other aspects (Wall, 1982, and Pizam, 1978). Additionally, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010) identify that dependence on tourism can determine attitudes. This is particularly so in Third World countries, where tourism can assist in economic uplifting. For instance, King et al. (1993) give the example of Fiji, where there is support for tourism for economic reasons, even if the social and environmental impacts of tourism are also conferred. This

is a significant correlation within the contexts of tourism development and residents' views, as even if the locals understand and become aware that tourism can bring negative impacts to society and the environment, they would still support tourism development (Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2015). Thus, the economic impact and dependence on economic rewards favours their support for development. It is therefore clear that they can distinguish between the social and economic benefits and costs, so if a destination is dependent on tourism, the communities' attitudes would incline in favour of tourism. This view is indicated by King et al. (1993), that the awareness of the negative effects of tourism does not necessarily lead to opposition to tourism development. Other researchers – for instance, Nepal (2008) – indicated no association between tourism employment and tourism attitudes to development.

### *Tourism Development*

Some of the first researchers to study tourism development were Doxey (1975), Pizam (1978), Murphy (1981), and Mathieson and Wall (1982). More recent works have concentrated on the importance of understanding and appraising tourism development at the level of local communities. These works include: Liu and Var (1986), Johnson et al. (1994), Upchurch and Teivane (2000), Tosun (2001), Williams and Lawson (2001), Burns and Sancho (2003), and Diedrich and Garcia-Buades (2009). There have been studies that have attempted to delve into the relationship between local perceptions of tourism development, and these have utilised theoretical models. These models include: Doxey's Irridex model (Doxey, 1976), Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (1980), Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), and Social Exchange Theory (Ap, 1992).

Other studies illustrate that residents often have favourable views towards tourism development (Adongo et al., 2017). These include the work of Andereck et al. (2005), Dyer et al. (2007), and Chaderi and Henderson (2012). The reason for this, concerns that which is affirmed by Jackson (2008), who indicates that tourism is frequently used for regional or national development. It is noted that more than ever, local communities receive benefits but also costs as a result of developing tourism in their communities. This is also stated by Long (2012), who affirms that tourism development can impact positively or negatively on a local community. An array of

researchers pinpoint that these tourism impacts comprise economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects (Long and Kayat, 2011; Long, 2011; Chena and Chen, 2010; Nepal, 2008; Jackson, 2008). Sharpley (2014) points out that the tourism literature pinpoints the perceptions of the residents toward these impacts. Also, Cavus and Tanrisevdi (2003, p. 260) claim that the outlook of 'observing residents' concerning tourism development is significant in the planning of tourism. The importance of local community perceptions is also affirmed by Kaltenborn et al. (2008, p. 665), who remark that tourism "is a wide field of research with studies conducted across the globe". Apart from the tourism impacts, which can result in positive or negative perception of development by local people, there are numerous other factors that can influence a local community's perceptions (Almeida-Garcia et al., 2016; Rojulai et al., 2018).

There has been much research conducted about local perceptions and stakeholders' perceptions of tourism development. The following includes some important research outcomes; Thomason et al. (1979) measured residents' and interest groups' perceptions of tourism. The results indicated that interest groups (both private entrepreneurs and the public sector) perceived tourism significantly more favourably than did the other respondents. This shows that tourism development is favoured for its likely economic benefit from tourism.

Allen and Gibson's (1987) research compared the perceptions of community leaders and the general public on community life (health/safety/education/environmental/economic). Both groups considered that community life is very important, yet residents were less satisfied than leaders on every dimension of community life. Byrd et al. (2009) investigated the differences in the perception of tourism's impacts on a rural community between four stakeholder groups: government officials, entrepreneurs, residents, and tourists. The results illustrate significant differences between all groups. For example, residents indicated that crime rates seemed higher than government officials specified. Moreover, even previous research on tourism development has shown that when a destination is dependent on tourism, the locals that are thus reliant on it have more positive attitudes towards its development (Madrigal, 1993). Haley et al. (2005) argue that even people who are on low incomes can still have positive attitudes towards the tourism industry, as they view that tourism could potentially bring economic benefits to the destination, and their involvement in decision making in the industry is also possible.

It is imperative that a local community is empowered in order to have control over tourism development in their community. Niekerk (2014) adds that for local people to benefit from tourism, they must participate in the decision-making process. In fact, decision making in tourism should involve the local community, as this can assure its benefits (Li, 2005; Tosun, 2000). Zhao and Ritchie (2008) go further, to opine that one way to make sure that the local communities do participate and get involved in the process of tourism development, or even get the opportunities to participate can take place, is by legislating for community participation. In addition, academic researchers have created models in order to conceptualise the different types of community participation. For example, Tosun (1999) developed a model that represents community participation within the tourism industry. The model suggests three different forms of community participation: spontaneous community participation, induced community participation, and coercive community participation.

### 2.5.1 Context of Studies on Local Community Perceptions of Dark Tourism

Although dark tourism is part of the tourism industry, it is different from other types of tourism development. Coats and Ferguson (2013) compare dark tourism with other types and conclude that the commercialisation of misery may produce complex local feelings. Kim and Butler (2015) found that there are different perspectives and attitudes towards dark tourism in local communities. For dark tourism planners and managers, it is imperative to appraise that local residents' attitudes are inclined towards its support (Wang et al., 2017). Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) point out that there is a need for studies to focus on the significance of tourism product offerings, since they are crucial to tourism stakeholders. Moreover, Sharma and Dyer (2009, p. 188) note that residents' perceptions must be determined regularly, so as to ensure that proper plans and strategies are implemented for the right people at the right time.

Yuill (2003) notes that dark tourism depends on a destination's dark past, and often directly affects the destination's residents. There are residents who would like to avoid the past (Kim and Butler, 2015), and others that may themselves have been victims, or members of families of victims in disasters (Lu and Guo, 2016). In this respect, dark tourism is often opposed by local people (Wang

and Luo, 2018). An important question would be why people are fascinated by disasters and the suffering of other people. According to Korstanje and Ivanov (2012), this fact represents one of the most important aspects of dark tourism. Disaster tourism is usually combined with 'dark tourism' and its connection with disaster recovery. Disasters are often mediated and commoditised by corporations that take advantage of the situation to introduce new products (Korstanje and Ivanov, 2012). For instance, thousands of tourists visit dark tourism sites because of curiosity or morbid fascination, and they will be willing to pay for organised tours in order to be there. As stated by Korstanje and Ivanov (2012), tourism is not necessarily affected by disasters, but rather tourism can result from disasters.

Another important factor that can influence the perception of the local community is the environment (which can be social or cultural) that might impact the supply of dark tourism. This cultural environment has been described by Rojek and Urry (1997) as one that includes representational characteristics of the sites that can change the meanings (moral or ethical) of the places of death, disaster, or tragedy.

Geographically speaking, in the evaluation of Western and non-Western world perception, it is identified that non-Western societies are not generally in favour of dark tourism. This is evident from research in Sabah, Malaysia, where dark tourism in this country is viewed as exploiting death and disrespecting the dead. Zhang et al. (2016) also identify that dark tourism visits among the Chinese is constrained by the perceived taboo of death; this influences them in not visiting dark tourism sites. This indicates that in many local communities, a troubled past or atrocity, or the macabre, can be less acceptable as tourism experiences. Heidelberg (2014) also evaluates the blemish of death and tragedy that may be repulsive to the locals who want an easy way of life, and do not have any aspiration to receive additional recognition. Nonetheless, as Muskat et al. (2015) point out, dark tourism plays a critical task in giving power and inspiration to community.

Dark tourism perception has also been documented in the heritage and death context. Both groups of international visitors and tourists and local community/domestic visitors are important when it comes to its development. Thus, before any kind of development is decided in an area, the authorities need to consider local community perceptions. This investigation will enable local

community groups to assess the level of acceptance (Masanti, 2016), and also the local participation in the development of dark tourism in a particular area (Wang and Luo, 2017).

### 2.5.2 Gaps in Local Community Perceptions of Dark Tourism

Even if a large section of research has been conducted in the examination and analysing locals or residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism development, there exist evident gaps in the literature. Astonishingly, although there is acknowledgement and favourable perceptions of dark sites over the past two decades, research at dark sites is yet lacking (see Chapter 1). Also, not much research has considered the communities where the pull factors are the historic-cultural and dark resources, such as buildings and monuments (Fan, Wall, and Mitchell, 2008; Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2008; Harrill and Potts, 2003; Uriely, Israeli, and Reichel, 2002; Bachleltner and Zins, 1999; Snaith and Haley, 1999). On the same lines there is not much research done of small island countries.

Wang et al. (2019) argue that research on dark tourism has been directed on the supply of dark tourism, which has analysed particular growth areas of dark tourism –for instance, war museums and genocide commemoration sites (e.g., Wight and Lennon, 2004; Williams, 2004), disaster tourism management and planning (e.g.,Campiranon, 2014; Ritchie and Ritchie, 2008), and the demand for 'dark' touristic experiences and tourist motivations, such as why tourists are drawn towards sites or experiences associated with death and suffering (e.g., Biran, Liu, Li, and Eichhorn, 2014; Rittichainuwat, 2008; Stone and Sharpley, 2008). However, only a small number of studies have been done about local people's views over dark tourism. Coats and Ferguson (2013) have explored residents' perceptions towards economic recovery from an earthquake through the lens of dark tourism, but little research has been conducted to understand resident attitudes towards dark tourism development. According to Kim and Butler (2015), the importance of the inclusion, participation, and support of local residents has always been emphasised in tourism planning for the ongoing development of any tourism. Residents' satisfaction in tourist destinations lies at the heart of the movement towards more socially sustainable development (Williams and Lawson,

2001). Nevertheless, dark tourism plays a crucial role in empowering and stimulating the community (Muskat et al., 2015), yet this remains to be further explored.

It is evident that although there is a large volume of research that examines and analyses the perceptions and attitudes of residents to tourism development, there are evident gaps in the literature. Even though there is increased recognition that dark tourism has been widely accepted in destinations around the world, in recent decades, studies of dark/cultural and heritage sites have been deficient. Moreover, not many studies have considered communities where the supply includes historic and cultural resources, like buildings and monuments (Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2008; Israeli and Reichel, 2002).

In spite of the ever-increasing academic attention paid to dark tourism, the perceptions of the local community over the development of dark tourism in a conventional leisure destination have been overlooked. In other words, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of how local people who live in tourism destinations and close to dark sites perceive the concept of dark tourism in general, but there is also a lack of information on their role as a community in further supporting its development. Such knowledge and understanding is, however, crucial in order to develop and manage dark tourism in a manner that not only meets the needs and expectations of the tourist, but is eventually also beneficial to the local community and other stakeholders. Indeed, it is arguably even more crucial in the context of a 'dark', 'darker' or 'lightest' site at a destination of leisure tourists, where the local residents live close to the site or event. This is where the development of dark tourism may enhance their understanding of the scale and impact the site has, but also may perhaps contribute to the redevelopment of the area or community.

Even though academic research has examined in-depth local community perceptions on tourism development, there are apparent gaps in the literature. In particular, research on dark tourism development considering local communities' perceptions are lacking – even if in the last 20 years there has been an increased recognition of such type of tourism. Therefore, there is a lack of extensive research on dark sites, and even considering the gradual recognition and acceptance of such sites, there are still noticeable gaps. There is a lack of studies on residents' attitudes at dark sites Although there is an abundance of research analysing the authenticity, interpretation, and

commoditisation of dark sites there is lack of research on the attitudes and perceptions of the residents of such sites.

Correspondingly, not enough studies have been done on communities of conventional leisure destinations. Walton (2009, p.115) challenges that the modern tourism development landscape, "cannot be understood without reference to what has gone before; nor can we attempt to predict or pre-empt the future without achieving some understanding of where we, and others, have come from, or of how relevant interested parties understand and appreciate their versions of the past." There is a need to recognise distinct dimensions around the development of dark tourism in flexible research contexts. All these related elements can influence the present and future characteristics and connections in tourism development, and can assist in understanding how dark tourism can develop within localities. Even studies that have aimed to understand dark tourism demand and visitation are site specific (Mangware et al., 2019), and they do not aim to achieve an understanding of the views of the local community in relation to their perceptions of the site's further development.

Moreover, according to Jordan and Prayag (2021), researchers have identified that residents hold very different views of dark tourism sites and have their own perceptions about how these sites should represent the history and lived experiences of communities. Nonetheless, little is understood about residents' own experiences when visiting local dark tourism sites (Wu et al., 2014) and whether they perceive disaster sites as dark tourism sites (Prayag et al., 2021). Local communities are people living in a common location that usually share same interests and actions. It can include people from different backgrounds that share the same place. For the purpose of this research the local community was studied by including local residents, public sector officials, and private sector managers/owners of tourism businesses. Thereafter, the purpose of this study is to investigate their views on whether dark tourism has the potential to develop, and to suggest effective tourism strategies and policies to reinforce positive outcomes of this potential. In short, when planning and managing a 'dark' site, the views of the local community must be taken into account. Therefore, it is essential to enhance not only theoretical but also practical understanding and knowledge of the local community's perceptions of and attitudes towards what constitutes 'dark' site. The sites can provide the opportunity to explore, through empirical research, the issues

surrounding the supply of dark tourism, local visits to dark sites, and in particular, the complexity of the local perceptions in such a destination. Thus, it is important to address briefly the literature on host perceptions of tourism.

A clear understanding of the perception, attitudes, and interests of the local community is a necessary antecedent to the development, planning, and management of dark sites. Consequently, given the scant attention to the perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and interests of local communities in dark tourism development, and the identified significant gaps in the literature, this thesis explores these specific concepts of perceptions at a sample dark tourism site, together with attractions associated with dark tourism.

### 2.5.3 Conceptual Framework: The Social Exchange Theory

A conceptual framework is a fundamental component of research design, as it is, according to Maxwell (2012) a structure of statements, ideas, notions, expectations, and theories that aids and enlightens the research. It assists in shaping the research design through helping to identify, define, and operationalise the key concepts that are going to be studied and the relationships between them (Pearce, 2012). Research on host attitudes/local communities towards tourism is one of the most systematic areas in the field of tourism (McGehee and Andererck, 2004). Several theories have been used to assess perceptions of host populations toward tourism. These theories include the attribution theory (Pearce, 1989), the dependency theory (Preister, 1989), the social representation theory (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003), the tourism area life cycle (TALC, Butler, 1980), the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), and the social exchange theory (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Sirakaya et al., 2002).

In order to undertake this research on local community perceptions of dark tourism development, the theoretical bases of stakeholder theory and social exchange theory are considered as potentially useful theoretical tools. These theories have dominated the literature on host perceptions of tourism development. Each paradigm is critically explored and evaluated on its applicability in various empirical circumstances. The social exchange theory was chosen as the most appropriate model as

it fits better with the aim and research objectives of the study. As dark tourism is aimed to be introduced as a potential tourism type, the social exchange theory has been adopted to explain the local communities' perceived impacts of such development in various dark sites.

Stakeholder theory has its roots in organisational management. It was first initiated by Freeman (1984), who suggested that an organisation is characterised by its relationships with different individuals and groups. Cook and Rice (2006) and Firth (1967) presume that this theory is rooted in sociology and anthropology, and has been applied widely in a business context. Timur (2010) argues that stakeholder theory is a useful tool for identifying different obstacles that may hinder effective collaboration and communication among different stakeholders. This indicates that different types of stakeholders could hold distinct and individual perceptions over the costs and benefits of tourism development. Goeldner and Ritchie (2003) pinpoint that there are four main viewpoints of tourism stakeholders which include the tourists, residents, entrepreneurs, and local government officials.

Stakeholders in tourism development and their perceptions and attitudes have been researched by a number of authors, who have concentrated on different perspectives. For instance, a number of authors have focused on the perceptions and attitudes of individual stakeholder groups to tourists (Gottrell et al., 2004; Poria et al., 2006; and Weaver and Lawton, 2004). Others have focused on tourists – Andereck et al. (2005), Tosun (2002), Gursoy et al. (2002), and Basculides et al. (2002) – others on entrepreneurs (Clarkson et al., 2001), and others, finally, on local governments (McGehee and Tepanon, 2006). These findings from the various authors demonstrate that there is ample research on individual stakeholder groups. Yet, limited research has been done to compare perceptions of different stakeholder groups (Byrd et al., 2009).

The concept of stakeholder theory can be related to tourism destinations because a destination can be deemed to be an organisation that is distinguished by its relationship with the various groups that are responsible for the development of tourism (Saftic et al., 2011, p.2). Destination stakeholders often have different ambitions, purposes, and interests, which can lead to conflict (Atzori, 2020). Therefore, the inclusion of all stakeholders and an understanding of their needs is considered fundamental in managing tourism. Moreover, Sautter and Leisen (1999) further argue

that consideration should be given to stakeholder groups regardless of whether they are powerful or not. Hence, it is imperative that each stakeholder group must participate in the process of development.

The social exchange theory (SET) is a social theory that emerged and prevailed in the 1960s (Zhang et al., 2017). SET has since been established in tourism research (Wang and Pfister, 2008). From the seminar works of a group of pioneers (Homans, Blau, and Emerson), social exchange theory first emerged between the 1950s and the 1970s. It originated from the disciplines of sociology and social psychology (Boley et al., 2014). As a sociological theory, it was first developed to analyse individual social behaviour in terms of the exchange of resources. Ap (1992) defines it as a sociological theory that includes a comprehension of the exchange and interaction circumstance between individuals. The social exchange theory is concerned with "understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation", where 'actors' supply one another with valued resources (Ap, 1992, p.668).

Social exchange theory is now recognised as the dominant theory used to study residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, based upon their awareness, attitudes, and intentions (Boley et al., 2014; Ap, 1992). Furthermore, Coulson et al. (2014) note that social exchange theory is established in tourism research. In essence, social exchange theory describes a procedure of exchange between residents and tourists. If residents perceive the benefits of tourism to outweigh its costs, they are motivated to engage in a process of exchange and interaction with tourists (Jurowski et al., 1997; Ap, 1992). Therefore, if destination residents view the benefits of tourism development as exceeding the costs of development, they are more inclined to support the development of tourism (Jurowski et al., 1997). It has been used as a theoretical basis for facilitating comprehension of residents' perceptions of tourism development (Latkova and Vogh, 2012; Wang and Pfister, 2008; Andereck et al., 2005). From a tourism development standpoint, social exchange theory presumes that stakeholders' attitudes and support for tourism in their community will be influenced by how they evaluate the actual and perceived effects of tourism (Andereck et al., 2005).

Despite the voluminous body of research on resident/community perceptions supporting the basic views of social exchange theory, there are researchers that have questioned the usefulness of this

theory, which is used to identify the factors that influence residents' perceptions –for instance, Sharpley (2014), Woosnam, Norman, and Ying (2009), and Andereck et al., (2005). In particular, Sharpley (2014) argues that the basis of the theory is that both parties engage voluntarily in the process. However, many residents may engage unintentionally and involuntarily, while in many cases, no exchange may occur. Moreover, Woosnan et al. (2009) claim that social exchange theory treats the relationship between residents and tourists as solely economic (and no other factors are included that affect the relationship). McGehee and Andereck (2004, p.139) criticise the theory as being basic, with two faulty notions: the first one being that people most of the time base their decisions on positive outcomes, and secondly, the local community usually assume that they have taken the best decision, but then they might change their mind once they see that some decisions might not be favourable. Moreover, they also criticise the theory for not answering the 'how' and 'why' questions relevant to community perceptions towards tourism. They suggest "the need for added qualitative work to gain more in-depth and rich information" (McGehee and Andereck, 2004, p.139).

Nunkoo and Ramkisson (2009), citing Fredline and Faulkner (2000) and Pearce et al. (1996), also criticise that the theory assumes that local communities are rational actors, while in reality they are 'cognitive misers': that is, people who make quick judgments. They recommend the development of means-end chain theory that can be developed and used to elicit the personal values that drive attitudes, thus leading to a better understanding of residents' perceptions of tourism (Nunkoo and Ramkisson, 2009, p.339). Andereck et al. (2005) and Woosnan (2012) stress that the effects of community attachment on the positive and negative perceptions of residents towards tourism development are ambiguous, with contradictory findings. As a result of the theory's limitations, a number of authors have attempted to apply other theories to the investigation of the influencing factors and reasons behind residents' perceptions (Boley et al., 2014; Sharpley, 2014; Andereck et al., 2005). Notwithstanding this, Fredline and Faulkner (2000) argue that researchers consider social exchange theory to have made the most important theoretical contribution to the field of residents' perceptions of tourism. Moreover, Choi and Sirakaya (2006) note that residents are crucial stakeholders in tourism development, and that their inclusion in tourism planning is fundamental. Ozel and Kozak (2017) note that based on SET, individuals act in a rational way in their social relations, and compute the benefits and costs that they encounter.

Initial work on social exchange theory was conducted by Emerson (1976), and analysed human behaviour. It was summarised as "a two-sided, mutually contingent and mutually rewarding process involving 'transactions' or simply 'exchange' (Emerson, 1976, p. 336). In other words, the theory offers an outline that may illustrate how individuals are reliant upon rewarding actions from others. Emerson further investigated why and how resources flow at both the inter-individual and intergroup levels, by examining power dependence (Emerson, 1962). He based his argument on the fact that a source continues to stream if there is a significant gain based on a fair relationship. The theory's main idea creates an essential base within social exchange theory. As it deals with people's expectations, which are contrasting, the theory can be looked at as being a sliding scale, yet one that can ultimately apply on an individual basis. If a person's relationship examples are set out, this could be used as a base for future relationships.

Different perspectives came out from the theory. Blau (1964), through his theory from the economic analysis standpoint, distinguished between economic and social exchange relationships. This theory was further developed by Homans (1985, p. 606), who had as a research focus the psychology of instrumental behaviour. This author presumed that "Social behaviour is an exchange of goods: material goods but also non-material ones, such as the symbols of approval or prestige". In other words, social ties could be established based on the exchange of valued resources, tangible or intangible. Skidmore (1975) considers that social exchange theory indicates that people would immerse in an exchange if the results are considered valuable, rewarding, and the anticipated costs would not surpass the benefits or gains. In addition, social exchange theory suggests that people evaluate an exchange based on the costs and benefits incurred as a result of that exchange. In other words, if individuals benefit from an exchange they are likely to evaluate it positively; however, if they perceive costs, they are likely to evaluate it negatively. This is suggested by Gursoy and Kendall (2006), who propose that an individual or group of people will willingly become involved in an exchange with another party if they think that there will be a benefit from the exchange.

According to SET, social exchange involves the consequences of economic and/or social objectives (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Whitener et al. (1998) note that exchanges may involve benefits with economic or no specific objective utility, and further argue that the latter

may have a significant impact on the social dimension of the relationship. Nunkoo (2016) has used SET to analyse the social exchange process, using trust as a central focus between various sectors (public sector vs. local community) involved in the exchange process. In this way, an investigation of residents' perceptions of tourism and their support for development is highlighted. The study suggested that the trust concept could have a significant potential in explaining community acceptance of tourism. A number of studies highlight the role of public trust in regulatory institutions in determining the benefits and costs of an activity, as well as its acceptability (e.g., Bronfman, Vazquez, and Dorantes, 2009). Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011) argue that low trust in tourism institutions may hinder residents' acceptability of tourism development in a region.

In the field of tourism, social exchange theory has been applied to clarify the perceptions of the local community towards tourism development (Haobin Ye et al., 2014; Sharpley, 2014; Nunkoo et al., 2013; Nunkoo et al., 2012). Wang and Pfister (2008) and Ap (1992) note that social exchange theory is recognised as a popular theory that explores the support of residents for tourism. Nunkoo and so (2016) highlight that there is a relationship linking local communities and the tourism industry. This takes place when destinations seek to comprehend how residents would react to tourism development. This is further investigated by Latkova and Vogt (2012), who dispute that the appropriateness of the social exchange theory in deriving information about the perceptions of the locals on tourism development depends on its capacity to propose that people are going to support the exchange if they perceive that the benefits would ultimately exceed the costs. Faulkner and Tideswell (1997) propose two scopes of the tourism development/community boundary: the extrinsic and intrinsic dimension, the first one being the characteristics of the location with respect to its function as a tourist destination, and the second referring to the attributes of the local community, which can differently shape the impacts of tourism in the community. Perdueet al. (1987) paralleled how social exchange and tourism can be used to understand the reason behind the support or opposition for tourism development at a destination (Boley et al., 2014). In addition, Ap (1992, p.685) found social exchange theory to be beneficial in regard to tourism because of its logical nature and its ability to account for "both the positive and negative impacts of tourism as perceived by the host community". Nunkoo (2016), Soontayatron (2013), and Mazón et al. (2010) speculate that the social exchange theory is considered to be the best theoretical framework to explain residents' attitudes towards tourism development.

Effective support of local communities is vital for the success of tourism development. The supporting attitudes of the local population is something that requires analysis, especially for planners or managers in the field of tourism. Motivation theories indicate that human behaviour is often driven by extrinsic and intrinsic factors. In terms of residents' support for tourism, the extrinsic factors are the positive and negative impacts of tourism (Huh and Vogt, 2008; Andereck and Vogt, 2000). Social exchange theory is viewed by tourism researchers as an appropriate framework to explain the relationships between perceptions of tourism impacts and resident attitudes towards tourism (Andereck, et al., 2005), which involves an exchange of resources among parties seeking mutual benefits from the exchange relationship (Ap, 1992). It is anticipated that a local community's perceptions of these impacts are influenced by their employment relationship with tourism and the underlying concept of SET. These perceived impacts help to form an understanding of local communities' overall support for dark tourism development in a conventional leisure destination.

The support for dark tourism development through the impacts of dark tourism could also be acknowledged by the use of social exchange theory. According to Andereck et al. (2005), SET is viewed by tourism researchers as an appropriate framework to explain the relationships between perceptions of tourism impacts and resident attitudes toward tourism. The perceived impacts of dark tourism development are derived from the dark tourism impacts recorded in prior impact studies. These impacts encompass different economic, socio-cultural, and environmental features. Additionally, literature specifically focused on dark tourism has identified potential impacts associated directly with this type of tourism, and these have been incorporated into SET. It is expected that a local community's perceptions of these impacts are influenced by the fact that they reside in a tourism destination. Based on the fact that a local community plays an imperative part in decisions on dark tourism development, this research will apply social exchange theory to explain the different elements involved in dark tourism development, especially between local authorities/policy makers, local residents, and the private sector in a conventional leisure destination. Social exchange theory seems the most appropriate theory, as it will assist in clarifying each group's perception and offer additional perspectives from different knowledge areas and visitor experiences on the topic of dark tourism. The rationality rule of social exchange theory is

consistent with the aims and objectives of this study. Based on the rule of SET, it is suggested that residents that have positive perceptions towards tourism are supportive of development. Using social exchange theory, the perception of the local community can be properly identified as being valuable or not for dark tourism development. It puts forward the notion that people evaluate an exchange based on the costs and benefits incurred as a result of that exchange (Pham and Kayat, 2011). In other words, a person who obtains costs and benefits related to the tourism industry is more likely to have a positive perception of tourism development, and will consequently support this particular sector every time (Afthanorhan et al., 2017). However, this situation might not happen for other individuals, who may perceive disadvantages from tourism development, and thus will oppose the sector. Hence, the use of social exchange theory can offer a holistic view of the perceptions of the local community (positive or negative) and thereby identify the highest effect of the positive or negative support of residents towards dark tourism development.

The following **Diagram, 2.1,** identifies the relationship between the impacts of tourism and ultimate support for dark tourism development, using social exchange theory. The theory will specify the aspects that will have to be explored in the investigation. The perceived impacts could assist in forming an understanding of the local community's overall support for the development of dark tourism. Social exchange theory will clarify the most important issues of the research, and then will connect these with other aspects that influence the research, based on the aims and objectives of the study. This is because it elucidates the gains of tourism and thereby the acceptance of local community of the incursion of tourists to the destination (Nunkoo, 2016). As the theory can investigate the perceptions of the local community in tourism development, this denotes that the local community can influence tourism development in case the benefits of tourism are much more than the potential impediments.

The local community, should they be involved or not in the tourism industry, or in a tourism development course, could react with opposition, or may be less supportive, if the anticipated interchange results in a negative effect (Gursoy et al., 2017; McGehee, 2016; Ap, 1992). They could support dark tourism development if they identify that there are positive impacts from dark tourism development.

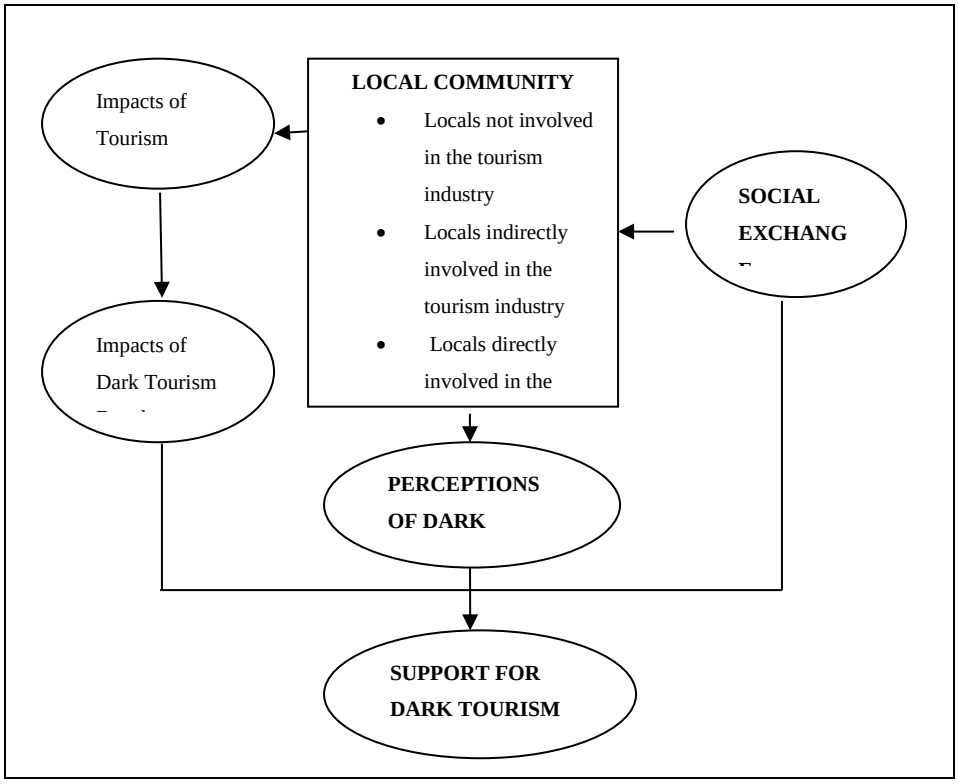



**Figure 2.1: Relation between Impacts and Support for Dark Tourism Development, Using SET.**

## 2.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided the background review of the literature that focuses on the topic under investigation. Around the development of this research is the concept of dark tourism, an area of academic study within the broader field of tourism studies that, as discussed, continues to exhibit a number of limitations and gaps. In particular, limited attention has been paid to the development of dark tourism (supply) from the perspective and the views of a local community; hence, the focus of this thesis is on the local community in Cyprus.

As already pointed out, despite the volume of research into dark tourism, the literature remains broad and sparse, but also, a number of themes and issues relevant to dark tourism have yet to

receive rigorous academic attention. One such issue is, of course, the role and perceptions of the local community over the development of dark tourism, hence the focus of this thesis. The literature review highlighted the growing interest in dark tourism and proceeded to analyse the historical aspects of dark tourism. It has placed emphasis on the demand and supply of dark tourism, but also how visits to the dark sites affect people's attention, views, and opinions, and the factors that influence their perceptions.

This chapter reveals that the connection between locals' perceptions and tourism development with regard to their support is multiplex and multifarious and the local community participation and involvement can benefit the destination as it moves to further development. Social exchange theory has been evaluated and is the theory that fits with the general purpose of the research. While it has been used in empirical research, it also comes with particular limitations, which were identified. Despite the fact that it provides a useful framework for identifying and explaining local communities' perceptions over dark tourism development, the literature acknowledges that there is a lack of consensus over its ability to adequately explain perceptions. Nonetheless, social exchange theory is the most appropriate framework for this research, as it can provide the basis for explaining and analysing the results of the findings.

As dark tourism becomes more and more attractive, appealing, and alluring for many people, it can be emphasised that this is a result of the opportunity to gain knowledge, for curiosity purposes, to determine heritage and culture, to find out the history connected to deadly events or the gaining of knowledge of catastrophic events, to identify paranormal activities, and for mystery. The destination management (local authorities, actual dark sites) have a responsibility: to develop, manage, and market dark tourism through tourism policy and strategies in order to attract tourists in this dark tourism direction niche, but also to provide an opportunity for education, learning, and getting to know the history and heritage of the destination. However, there is still limited understanding of local community perceptions over dark tourism development at a conventional leisure destination. This is an area that has been largely overlooked, and the current study thus aims to extend dark tourism knowledge by addressing these issues.

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter conducted an extensive appraisal of the literature on dark tourism. Through the review of the literature it was able to determine the contextual context of this investigation, as it provided a detailed synopsis of the relevant literature and knowledge on dark tourism. The objective of this chapter is to present the methodological approach to the study and place the complex issue of the local community perceptions on dark tourism development in a conventional leisure destination in a context, so that the part of the literature can be operationalised. In particular, this chapter consists of the determination of the aims and objectives for the study, the research approach to the study, but also the factors that affect the research design. A local community approach was also mentioned; this puts into context the methodology used and the research context, which is the island of Cyprus (Chapter 4). Further, the data collection methods that apply to this particular study were introduced so that they can ultimately explore the aims and objectives of the study. The chapter begins with the determination of the aims and objectives of the research.

## 3.2Determination of the Aims and Objectives of the Research

The introductory chapter and the literature review have addressed the gap in previous research related to the perceptions of local communities on dark tourism development, and especially the absence in relation to conventional leisure destinations. These limitations led the author to pinpoint attention on the island of Cyprus, and in particular the implementation of the subsequent research aim:

To investigate the local community's views and perceptions towards dark tourism development, in an attempt to establish overall directions for dark tourism development and suggest effective tourism strategies and polices for dark tourism development.

Subsequent to the identification of the research aim, the next stage was to frame the research objectives based on the extant of the literature:

1) To investigate critically how the local community (local residents, public and private sectors) perceives the concept of 'dark tourism';

2) Identify awareness in the local community of what constitutes a 'dark tourism' attraction or visitor experience;

3) To explore the perceptions of the local community in developing and promoting further dark tourism at a conventional leisure destination (such as Cyprus);

4) Evaluate how the local community might support/contribute to the development of dark tourism sites and experiences.

The underlying scope of any research is to produce a reaction or answers to a query or questions in order to endow evidence and ultimately to arrive at novel outcomes. Durbarry (2018, p.4) notes that "research is a systematic process through which data is gathered and analysed in order to 'provide explanations, establish relationships'…to generate new knowledge". It is important that the research follows a plan in order for the research process to apply the theory to the data collection and disclose particular outcomes. Gratton and Jones (2010, p.5) provide five strands that the research process contains:

- The stage before data collection: research, aims and objectives.
- The stage of designing a collection of data: establishing methods and methodology to be used.
- The stage of data collection: data collection by one or more methods.
- The stage of data analysis: the use of a technological framework adopted to achieve aims and objectives.
- The stage of reporting and communicating findings: presenting findings.

The abovementioned steps are followed in the succeeding sections of this chapter, with the final step presented in the next chapter.

## 3.3 Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach was applied in this research study, with the scope of exploring and examining local community's perceptions on the development of dark tourism at a conventional leisure destination. According to Silverman and Patterson (2015), in the field of tourism, an accepted, common, and extensively used research approach is the qualitative method. Dark tourism research from a local perspective has not been explored extensively, and for this reason, the exploratory qualitative approach was identified as the most appropriate method in data collection. According to Kim and Butler (2015), when not much is known, due to the lack of information about a subject matter, then researchers are recommended to use the qualitative exploratory approach. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) further note that in cases when the topic under investigation is multi-dimensional, qualitative research might be more valuable. For this reason, qualitative research can offer a setting through which the researcher could delve into more detail and get more in-depth information on the topic of the research.

This research is about exploring the perceptions of people, their views, their opinions, and an abundance of details required to be unearthed. Hence, the use of qualitative research is the most fitting, as it is also aligned with the ontological and epistemological stances. This is also confirmed by Kim and Butler (2015), who underline that qualitative research is characteristic of an illustrious method that can bring about both abundant and in-depth material. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.3) document that the qualitative approach is an informative practice "that makes the world visible". Particularly, this approach has been used by academics in an attempt to understand the means by which the world recognises what is happening around it (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Within tourism academia, qualitative research has been specially recognised (Veal, 2017; Riley and Love, 2000).

Qualitative research is a general term that uses a group of methods and approaches of collecting and analysing data that are manifestly distinct from quantitative methods, because of the dearth of quantification andany statistical examination. According to Morse and Richards (2002), qualitative methods are ideal in the following cases: to explore topics where little is known, to make sense of complicated situations, to obtain new insights about phenomena, and to create themes in order to

clarify occurrences. Furthermore, the characteristics of quantitative data have been identified as not aligning with the current study.

For instance, quantitative data does not provide any in-depth accounts of the perceptions, beliefs, and views of people (Choy, 2014). Also, according to Bryman (2016), quantitative research cannot answer any inquiries in the research. This means that quantitative research can uncover the matter but not the reason or the purpose of an action or matter. Hence, Walliman (2016) avers that quantitative methods are more appropriate when an issue is to be probed. When the subject matter requires more deep examination, then the most fitting method is the qualitative approach. Hence, the choice for this research is qualitative, as it seeks to identify the perceptions of people and uncover the beliefs of the individuals under study. Therefore, based on Walliman (2016), quantitative methods are used when no details are required, whereas for more refined results, qualitative methods are required.

In any research it is essential to choose an appropriate and fitting methodology. Gratton and Jones (2010) emphasise this and note that researchers have to take into consideration the type, kind, and disposition of the study, as well as what research questions have been set when selecting an appropriate research method. Therefore, in this study the rationale was to choose the qualitative research method. This would allow obtaining comprehensive views and opinions of the locals on the development of the dark sites. In this way, the research could obtain the inherent views of the residents of the local community and place prominence in revealing opinions and views of whether dark tourism could develop at a conventional leisure destination. As Viken (2014, p. 26) states: "Quantitative approaches are not suitable for detecting relationships or influencing relations."

The qualitative approach instead addresses the 'how' and 'why', so as to discover completely the research topic, with the use of unstructured methods (Veal, 2017). This is also supported by Silverman (2011) that qualitative research brings about deep awareness, whereas quantitative research does not include any social consequences. Moreover, a wealth of information is more likely to be discovered by using qualitative research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Marshall and Rosman 2006; Silverman, 2011). Through the years, the qualitative approach has also been criticised as being 'soft' and even 'non-scientific', and inferior to the quantitative approach

(Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). This has led to the qualitative method having strong but also weak points. Some authors have even criticised the fact that qualitative methods are based on the views of people, which can be underlined as biased because they might influence the end result of the research (Creswell, 2013).

For the initial choice between qualitative and quantitative methods, several considerations were noted. Firstly, the research was exploratory in nature; secondly, the research did not include a pre-deducted assumption, and thirdly, the research object was subjective in nature. With regard to these factors, the choice of approach was made. This fact enabled a deeper commitment of the participants, and also it achieved a thorough comprehension of their perceptions on the research topic. A qualitative approach was also preferred because it was based on the collection and analysis of data that are complex, dissimilar, and diverse, and these are characteristics that this particular examination includes over a subject like dark tourism, which is indeed complicated and multifarious. Thus, this study of a local community's perception towards dark tourism development adopted a qualitative methodology, incorporating methods that are explored in the following sections of the chapter.

## 3.4 Research Approach

Empirical research is gathered based on the methods that are used when the data is collected. In this thesis, the qualitative research approach collected data using eight (dark) tourism sites. The data collected took the form of informal interviews, in-depth formal interviews, and focus groups, as will be explored later. This study has used the interpretive paradigm that states that realism is part of the world (Robinson, 2015). In this way, explanations can clarify, explain, and illuminate the phenomenon of dark tourism, which is the basis of the research.

### 3.4.1 Interpretive Paradigm or Phenomenological Position

This research has used the inductive phenomenological research philosophy. This is also known as the interpretive perspective. The thesis, as indicated, aims to explain and assess the perceptions of the local community over the development of dark tourism. This is a reason that the researcher

has chosen to use phenomenology. This perspective concentrates on perceptions, beliefs, and opinions, and therefore is fitting with what the thesis attempts to investigate. Additionally, Bryman (2008, p. 15), makes a note that "individuals make sense of the world", and this, in essence, is an interpretative approach. Altinay and Paraskevas (2008) point out that this method can bring out perceptions that form the personal stances and perspectives of the informants.

According to Szarycz (2009), within the field of tourism phenomenology is an increasingly prevalent research philosophy. Consequently, it can be noted that it must be explored in a way in which it will reveal the perception of individual experience. This is also argued by Gray (2004), who avers that phenomenology seeks to discover the opinions and beliefs of the informants, which in fact are supported by people's perceptions and knowledge. Smith et al. (2009) note that phenomenology is not about solid 'positivist reality', but rather it attempts to understand the experience of people, based on their understandings.

Phenomenology predominantly fits this study because the aims and objectives of the study are to identify the perceptions of the local community, and not to experiment or test in a deductive way the reality of their views. Dark tourism is not perceived as a distinct phenomenon, but it is investigated whether the community regards it as constructive or off-putting, which clearly relies on their individual opinions. In that, it is clear that someone's familiarity – or not – with dark tourism can shape how the concept is perceived. For this reason, the data collected have to be examined and explored based on the individual determinants – hence a phenomenological stance is appropriate to this thesis.

This perspective supposes that actual realism, or the truth, is not outside in the world, but rather is what people think about. In other words, it is not objective but subjective. This is also explained by Sarantakos (1998), who related this perspective to the constructionist approach, where the informants can help by acquiring more knowledge based on their own beliefs. The interpretive paradigm has significant strengths; for instance, it can tackle complex issues (Black 2006), or it can assist the informants in expressing their opinions, beliefs, or even their concerns (Ford-Giboe, Campbell, and Bermann, 1995). This is also agreed by Guba and Lincoln (1994), where they talk about the 'social truths' that are developed by the researchers themselves. The interpretive research

paradigm within the tourism field demands that the researcher carries out the research in real settings, through their personal events or situations. That is, their personal experience should make them more subjective. This thereby explains its use in a qualitative research methodology.

In this study, the interpretive paradigm aims to present what the locals think of dark tourism and its potential development. The approach used by the interpretive paradigm in this study includes informal interviews, in-depth formal interviews, and focus groups, as explained below. It encourages local community residents' and the public/private sectors to inform the researcher about their perceptions of dark tourism and dark tourism development, and to evaluate how they could support further development in a conventional leisure destination. It will particularly assist in drawing responses to enquiries about the subject matter under investigation.

### 3.4.2 The Research Paradigm: The Ontological, Epistemological, and Methodological Positions

Within any research, the research paradigm mandates what methods would be used in order to collect the data and analyse the findings in sequence. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.107) provide a definition of a paradigm as "a basic belief system, based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions". Smith (2010) indicates that there are individual paradigms that can differentiate the distinct methods used. Every paradigm comes with diverse notions, beliefs, or ideas, and it depends on how individuals view it. In order to execute qualitative research in the thesis, it is imperative to first explain why a particular paradigm has been chosen, and also to justify the choice. In essence, the selected research paradigm is where the research investigation begins. The paradigm will then set the appropriate method that will be selected for the conducting of the data collection. Thus, it is significant to comprehend that there is a relationship between the elements of each paradigm; that is the relationship between the ontological, epistemological, and methodological essentials. These three principles are required to be analysed to permit the comprehension of the context that underpins the study.

In this investigation, both ontological and epistemological positions have shaped the study. Killam (2013, p.7) refers to ontology as 'beliefs about the nature of reality'. Moreover, it is maintained that an ontological position affects, but not determines, the epistemological position. Phiri (2013) points out that queries over ontology are linked with suppositions or beliefs. For Willig and Rogers (2008), responses to ontological queries are vital in academic research. Moreover, Carpenter (2018) points out that an ontology relates to the ways people express themselves, based on how they view reality to be. Moreover, while ontology can be explained as the means by which populations understand knowledge through 'meaning-making' (Crotty, 1998, p. 10), epistemology is the concept of 'how we know what we know'.

Epistemology is understood as a theory of knowledge (Pritchard, 2010) that reflects the beliefs that have to do with how people are enabled to find out about knowledge. Epistemology is also expressed by Birksand Mills (2015, p.178) as a "branch of philosophy concerned with the study of knowledge". On the same lines, Carpenter (2018) maintains that epistemology is the answer to how we know what is already known. Lastly, Bailey (2007) labels the methodological inquiry as the in which the researcher uncovers social reality. Furthermore, Krauss (2005) suggests that ontology and methodology are both part of epistemology. In particular, ontology talks about reality, whereas epistemology mirrors how people find out about reality, and finally, methodology explains how to put knowledge into practice. In consequence, the researcher selects a fitting paradigm that would reinforce the ontological, epistemological, and methodological presumptions of the research undertaken.

The thesis follows the epistemology which asserts that 'knowledge is a human creation, (Golinski, 2005, p. 6). It underlines that knowledge does not exist independently and it has to be interpreted by the human mind in order to become more evident. This research as explained throughout this chapter, is particularly concerned with the perceptions, views and opinions of the interviewees which are of course, developed through the past experience of the people and hence, do not exist in independent, objective isolation. In this way the research can portray a strong feature of findings by treating each interviewee as individual. Based on the ontological view it can serve to strengthen the insight that each interviewee viewpoint offers to a researcher, which is appropriate for this

research because it can offer keen insight into the reasons why the local community hold certain views based on cultural or social tradition (Hay 2011).

## 3.5 Factors Affecting the Research Design

### 3.5.1 Local Community Approach

An investigation of local community perceptions, attitudes, and opinions is seen as appropriate to identify any differences in each group. These differences are important in ascertaining any action that could involve the recognition that dark sites require development. Nonetheless, it is imperative to first identify all actors to be involved in the potential development. The literature has indicated that local community perceptions have long been included in academic debate, due to the importance of community support for successful development (Robinson et al., 2019). For this reason, it is considered proper that the community is involved in tourism development – perhaps with different kinds of power, participation, or involvement. Richards and Hall (2003) note that there is extensive literature on how communities participate in the tourism development, but also on what methods communities deal with development. In addition, Van der Duim et al. (2006) point out that the literature on tourism and community development underlines the complicated and difficult work that has to be done, taking into consideration the local and global structures, but also the structures of which these communities are made.

When integrating the outlook of various authors (Mason, 2003; Swarbrooke, 1999) that have researched the participation of the community in tourism development, it is viable to assert that the term local community includes those people that live in the specific tourism destination: they are the ones affected by tourism and the impacts, positive or negative, that are caused by tourism development. It is not the aim of this study to uncover a definition about community. Nonetheless, the community is seen as a significant part in the development of dark sites, and therefore an imperative part of the study is their perceptions on the topic of dark tourism.

Particularly, the research adopts a proposition that the community is the central focus of the investigation on the three study groups within the local community: local residents, the public sector, and private sector businesses. Based on this, it is appropriate to receive information from

all study groups in order to identify their perceptions over the development of dark sites. In the following **Figure, 3.1,** are the three local community groups that are used in the research.

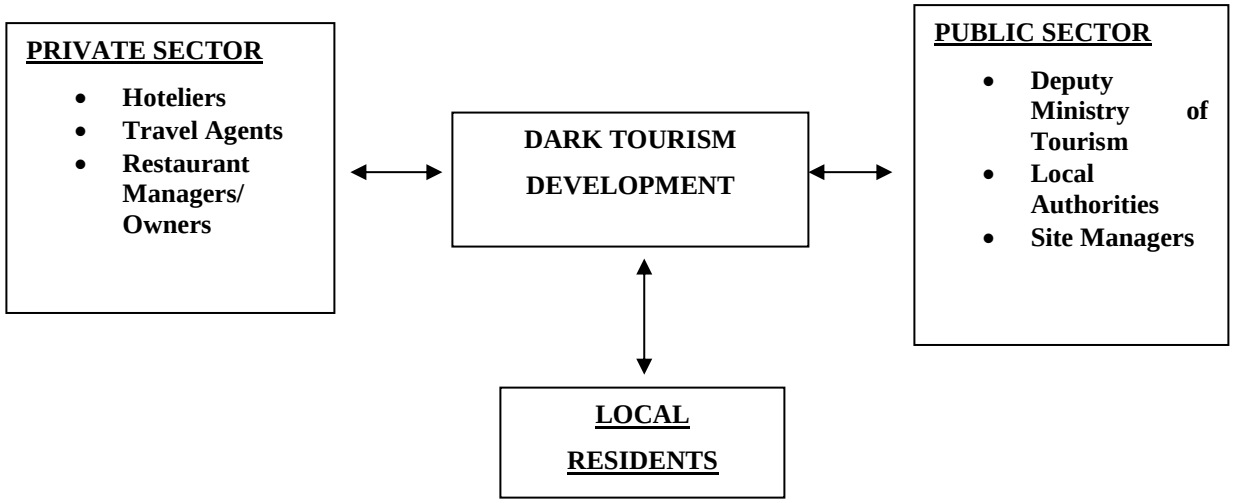



**Figure 3.1: Local Community Groups for the Development of Dark Tourism at a Conventional Leisure Destination**

**Local Residents:** Local residents are the community members that are directly or indirectly dependent on tourism, or are involved in employment in tourism. Yet, if they are directly involved or not in the tourism industry, they still have to function in a destination that is dedicated to tourism and its consequent development.

**Private Sector Businesses:** these businesses provide amenities, facilities, and services to the tourism industry. This particular group was preferred because it is directly dependent on tourism; it can provide employment and income, and it affects the welfare of the local community. This group under investigation includes hoteliers, travel agents, and restaurant owners/managers.

**Public Sector:** this group are organisations and authorities responsible for the planning and development of tourism. They include the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, local authorities, site managers, or other representatives of agencies that are in positions of power.

The perceptions in the thesis are vital in describing the attitudes and beliefs of the local community in Cyprus towards dark tourism development. The perceptions can be formed based on the knowledge and experience that people can have, in this case of the dark sites. They can be affirmative or disapproving, depending on what the locals know about the sites. By evaluating the perceptions of the locals on specific aspects, unique findings can be unearthed. Moreover, the perceptions can be used to understand what expectations the community has over the growth of these sites. In turn, this can assist in making important decisions for the success of dark tourism. According to Lynamet et al. (2007), perceptions can enlighten actual views over any plans. For this reason, the perceptions of the aforementioned groups are an imperative part of this investigation.

## 3.6 Selection of Data Collection Methods

This section will explore the methods that were used to collect the data. Specifically, three research methods were utilised, and their appropriateness is discussed below. The research methods are an important means through which to implement the data collection, and they shall also demonstrate the research philosophy of the study. Academic literature indicates that there is no general accord on the structure of research, and various types and designs are followed (Merriam and Grenier, 2019; Robson, 1999; Punch, 1998; Schutt, 1996; Ryan, 1995).

Data collection in qualitative research takes place at a particular location, and the most powerful and significant issue is the profundity of the data; it is important to not collect large samples. Morse and Richards (2002) emphasise this by mentioning that qualitative research embraces approaches that are interpretative and are centred on meaning. This was also taken into consideration with reference to the sample size of the study.

A qualitative research design is flexible and can actually amend its sample size in terms of the amount, quality, and nature of the data to be collected. The interview practice is highly suited for exploratory research, since it enables the interviewee to disclose their personal impression of the research object, and thereby allows the researcher to access data that has not previously been

known. As Trotter (2012) indicates, this is more difficult to access through targeted quantitative questions.

### 3.6.1 Data Collection

After examining the purpose of qualitative research in this study, the following part explores the methods of data collection that have been used. Particularly, it will explore the methods in detail, how they worked in practice, the purpose of each, and what they offered in this study. The underlying principle of conducting any research is to get hold of as much information and knowledge about the topic as possible (Kvale, 1996). This is also supported by Gill et al. (2008), who point out that the point of research investigation is to identify the views and opinions of the interviewees on particular issues. In the case of this study, interviews were considered most appropriate, as the aim was to investigate the perceptions, views, and beliefs of the local community. Moreover, as on this particular topic not much has been discovered up until now, detailed insights of the participants were required. Another aspect of the choice of interviews was that it explored a sensitive topic, where participants may not have wanted to talk about the dark tourism phenomenon in a group environment. Interviews grant a 'deeper' comprehension of social phenomena (Gill et al., 2008), and this is exactly what this research explored.

### 3.6.2 Interviews

As previously mentioned, the research method used to obtain primary data was the qualitative research method. It is imperative to explore and justify the data collection methods that have been used in the thesis. The choice of the methods used have been specifically chosen to fit with the study under investigation. When the most suitable methods are used, then more suitable and plentiful data are obtained. Merriam (2009) notes that qualitative investigation that has as a focal point the meaning in circumstances but also in perspective, needs to have the means to collect, gather, and interpret data that are sensitive.

The researcher decided to conduct informal semi-structured interviews, formal in-depth interviews, and focus groups as the instruments of data collection for the research. The aim was to

explore the perceptions of the interviewees on the development of dark tourism in Cyprus. The interview is defined as a "practice where the researcher and the interviewee connect through a conversation that has focal point questions that are related to the research under investigation" (DeMarrais, 2004, p.67). The interview procedure is considered a complex concept that includes a session where the researcher inquires about a topic of interest and attempts to extract the opinions of other individuals on the particular topic. A trustworthy and reliable purpose (in this case a research thesis) is usually the basis for conducting this type of interview. In essence, the interview is based on a process in which an individual requests information on a topic from an informant. Kvale (1996, p.1) provides a definition of interviews within qualitative research: "to comprehend the individuals' view, to open out to individuals' experiences, and to find out about these experiences before scientific clarifications." This is also agreed by other academics, who state that the qualitative interview is a focal point in data collection (Gill et al., 2008; Rosenthal 2016). A significant element of the data or material attained is that it has to be real, credible, and genuine. This is also based on obtaining informants that have a reliable association with the researcher. Interviews can provide valuable information when the researcher is able to obtain the informants' beliefs and stories through their experiences. Therefore, based on how the informants respond, interviews are conducted as the two parties work together; questions and queries are put forward, follow-up questions can also be posed, and according to MacNamara (1999), in-depth data can be pursued. The interviews are not difficult for the interviewees, as the interviewers are looking for their opinions, beliefs, and ideas, yet they can be time-consuming and resource intensive.

Informal interviews (Local Residents – Study Group 1), in-depth interviews (Public Sector- Study Group 2), and focus groups (Private Sector- Study Group 3) were the three methods selected. The reason for this was that these methods can unlock important information from the interviewees and are flexible, based on the fact that interviewees can clarify the question before they answer it. It was decided that informal interviews would be more appropriate for local residents as they were people randomly selected and perhaps did not have any knowledge of dark tourism. In this way, additional information can be unearthed through additional questions or queries that can be put forward where required. Formal interviews were selected with experts of the sites so that more in-depth information would be revealed as they were the ones more associated with the sites under investigation. Focus groups were specifically aimed at the private sector because people that work

in the tourism industry but from different business positions would eventually had more to say and discuss and more information would be identified within a discussion setting like focus groups. According to the authors Pizam et al. (1994), Robson (1993), and Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991), interviews carry numerous advantages, which include providing an explanation of the purpose of the interview, correcting misapprehensions, the ability to gather more in-depth information, and more control over the order of the questions set.

In the case of the thesis, the local community interviews can allow the participation of each informant to express evenly and uniformly their views and opinions over a complex subject, which is the development of dark sites in their country. Other techniques would not have been able to derive this information. In accordance with the work of DeJoncheere and Vaughn (2019), the interviews can collect information based on the interviewees' opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions based on the subject matter. This is what exactly this research is about: to collect new, exploratory data on the perceptions, views, and opinions of the local community over the development of dark tourism at a conventional leisure destination. Nonetheless, a common setback in interviewing local communities is that their views are inclined by their distinct interests and awareness, which might not be collectively shared.

It is imperative that the questions asked in an interview are the ones that will generate as much information about the study under investigation as possible. Moreover, the interview has to be based on the aims and objectives of the research. This study has developed the questions in a way to do exactly that: receive insights on local community perceptions over dark tourism development in the context of Cyprus. Britten (1991) notes that in qualitative interviews, questions should be open-ended (not just yes/no), neutral, sensitive, and understandable; they should build up self-confidence and understanding, and create valuable data that could consequently extend the interview. Pontin (2000) points out that it is best to primarily pilot the interview programme with a number of informants before data collection. A pilot interview was carried out prior to conducting the participant interviews (Piloting, 3.2.4). It assisted in building confidence in the researcher and establishing a clear way of asking questions on a sensitive topic like dark tourism. The length of the interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes for the individual, informal semi-structured interviews, approximately 40 minutes for the formal, in-depth interviews, and about 1- 1.5 hours

for each focus group. Before the start of the interviews, the participants were given all the details about the research and it was explained to them that this research is based on anonymity and is confidential, since the overall aim is the conduct of academic study. Moreover, as Gill et al. (2008) noted, this provides integrity and is an essential feature of the informed consent procedure. The interviews were carried out in places free from distractions or interruptions. The locations were chosen based on where it was more suitable for the participants.

Gill et al. (2008) note that if there is a possibility to have a bond or some kind of relationship with the informant before the interview, this could have a positive effect on how the interview progresses. This is something that the researcher did with regard to building a bond or relationship with the respondents before the interviews. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), in order to make certain that the process is constructive in terms of information seeking, the researcher must acquire skills that enable complete and clarifying data to be gathered through the interview. Important skills that the researcher used in the interviews included the ability to listen carefully to what they had to say, so that participants were able to give a full account and describe their views and opinions, but also their experience of visits, without any interruptions. Furthermore, Britten (1999) points out that during the interview, researchers' should have body language that reflects their interest in the respondent's answers: they should nod, smile, and encourage the informant. The researcher adopted these body skills, and this is something that assisted in making the participants feel more relaxed.

Gill et al. (2008) talk about the deliberate use of being quiet – that if used appropriately it can also be very efficient in capturing interviewees' considered replies; they can thus develop a larger conversation and elaborate further while clarifying specific topics. During the interviews, the researcher reflected on remarks made by the participants: asking such questions as 'When you said…what did you mean?' this assisted in seeking clarification in cases where it was unclear what they meant. 'Leading' or 'loaded' questions were avoided, as they may have unjustifiably influenced respondents in answering differently from what they actually viewed or perceived in regard to the subject under investigation. After the interview was completed, gratitude was expressed to the interviewees for their time, and they were asked if there was anything else they would like to mention. Kvale (1996) stresses that this gives participants the prospect to share

concerns that perhaps they considered as significant, but had not been shared with the interviewer. This actually contributed to finding new, unexpected information. Once the interviews were finished, the respondents were also debriefed about the study.

It has been suggested by Harvey (2010) that scholars are not in total agreement as to whether interviews should or should not be recorded. The foremost benefit of recording the interviews is that the transcription can take place and the interview can be decoded word by word with accuracy, without missing any points put forward by the informants. This can help the researcher to be more engaged with the informants (Richards, 1996). Most important perhaps would be the fact that the interviewer can go back and listen to the interview again, and quotes can be further drawn from the recording (Saunders et al., 2012). For this research, the researcher acquired permission from the interviewees before the interview, but it was also disclosed just before the start of the interview that recording would take place. The interviewees were not opposed to the use of the recording device. Moreover, the interviews took place in areas where there was no distraction by other people interfering or listening to the interviewees. Before the start of the interview, full permission was obtained from the participants. The conversations of the interviews were audio recorded, and this established continuity. An introductory discussion was conducted at the beginning of each interview. This included an explanation of the nature and process of the interview, which also included an introduction to the topic, o that interviewees were prepared for answering the questions set. Decrop (2004) notes that interviews should be read back to the interviewees, so that they know for sure that the recording was precise. This was conducted by the researcher in only certain interviews. At the end, there was no need to pursue more interviewees. The interview course stopped after 53 interviews (65 interviewees) had been conducted. The researcher decided at that point that data saturation had been reached. (In qualitative research it is noted that interviewing should stop at the stage of ‘saturation’ (Babbie, 2004; Hedges, 2004; Newman, 2004; Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, 2006.)). At this point, repetition in the interviews from some of the participants started to occur, so it was considered that from that stage, no new information would be discovered to further the aims and objectives of the study.

It was no surprise that the interviews came with challenges and limitations, and this study had to overcome some complications. For instance, it was challenging in accessing appropriate

individuals due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions on the free movement and interaction of people (Sattler et al., 2022). Moreover, the interviews took place during the summer period, when people are often on vacation, and those employed in the tourism industry are working. Watkins (2012) argues that not all interviewees make great participants. The researcher experienced this, as some participants were hard to engage in conversation. However, this limitation was negated, as the researcher provided more detailed information over the topic in order for the participants to 'open up' more easily.

The section that follows explains and justifies the three research data collection methods used in the thesis.

#### *3.6.2.1 Informal Semi-structured Interviews: Study Group 1- Local Residents*

The first type of research tool used was the informal semi-structured interview. It was considered that this method would be most appropriate for this research because it included the views and perceptions of the local residents study group. The unstructured form of the interviews allowed the interview questions to be open, and not have rigid form, which brought out new ideas and a range of themes to be discussed, as it included specific topics to be explored (Gillham, 2005). Moreover, the topic of dark tourism, as previously underlined, is an area with potentially mixed opinions, and this can possibly be a difficult subject matter for some informants. Therefore, informal semi-structured interviews provided a suitable method in the data collection process. The researcher believed that in this way the participants were more willing to discuss the complex issue of dark tourism and the development of the particular sites under investigation. Also, the topic of dark tourism, being an emotive one, posed certain challenges. It should also be acknowledged that some informants were not very comfortable, mainly at the beginning of the interview, when they were informed that the topic was about dark tourism and the investigation was about a topic that they had never heard of before; therefore, their first reaction was negative. However, once participants were clearly informed about what the topic is about, and the purpose of the research, they happily participated and actually enjoyed it.

#### *3.6.2.2 Formal In-depth Interviews- Study Group 2- Public Sector*

Formal in-depth interviews were carried out with 10 people from the local authorities, dark tourism site managers, museum representatives, and a representative from the Deputy Ministry of tourism. (Five females and five males were interviewed). Formal interviews were pre-arranged with the informants, and with their permission were recorded for the transcription analysis.

The researcher was in charge of the entire process and ensured that the participants fully comprehended the issue under analysis. The time of the formal in-depth interview lasted between 40 minutes to one hour, as the researcher started with generalised questions and then involved the participants in a deep discussion about the topic under investigation. The formal interviews were very constructive and beneficial, and collected valuable data from the 10 informants. The fact that the interviews included open-ended questions gave the opportunity to the interviewees to provide more in-depth answers to the questions set. This also supports the literature, in which, according to Sharpley et al. (2004), the interview format should be open so that more details on beliefs and opinions can be obtained.

The venues of the interviews were the premises or sites where the interviewees worked. All 10 formal interviews took place at the actual sites or the offices of the individual interviewees, as it was left to them to choose the interview venue where they felt most comfortable. This assisted in making the interaction with the participant comfortable, and they were able to speak freely.

#### *3.6.2.3 Focus Groups- Study Group 3- Private Sector*

The third research method used in the thesis was focus groups. In particular, this study conducted focus group interviews in order to triangulate data from the other two sources. The focus groups came from the private sector businesses. The reason to choose focus groups was based on the need to enrich the data collection methods by investigating the perceptions of this particular group through the use of the semi-structured interview method. Focus groups are identified by Gundumogula (2020) as being an extension to the interview process, but they are a way to hold a

more definitive, comprehensive group interview with a debate session. Smith (2010) argues that a strong advantage of the focus group is that informants can discuss, confront each other, agree or disagree on different views and opinions, and that can actually enhance the outcome. This was another significant consideration of the focus group interview for this research, as the interviewees came from distinct private sector businesses, which all belonged to the tourism industry, so they could offer valuable information, thoughts, and opinions over the main aim of the research.

Focus group interviews are less structured compared to the other two categories of interviews. This is because it is difficult to bring structure into a group of five participants with distinct backgrounds and perceptions. Nonetheless, it was possible through the interaction within the group to touch and discuss sensitive issues that were perhaps missed or not revealed during the individual interviews. In other words, focus groups were used to supplement the methods of data collection, but also to pursue and enhance the data collection. This research used three groups of five people, and the reason for this is because it was acknowledged that it would be easier to assemble, but also, a larger group would have made the interview/discussion more complex.

The structure of a focus group requires immense effort in order to reach an exceptional discussion. According to Gill et al. (2008), the group composition cannot identify the definitive 'best' group; however, a group mix of ages, sexes, and professional backgrounds is important. This study considered the group mix and the way that interaction took place. The composition of the group included a mix of males and females, older and younger people, but they also came from various professional statuses (private sector employees, private sector business owners/managers, public sector employees, university students).

Interfacing is fundamental for a focus group to succeed (Nyumba, 2017). Even though the research used groups of strangers, the participants were able to address the issue easily, with no worries about any consequence. The group size was another concern in the focus group research. Gill et al. (2008) note that focus groups can be effective with a group between three and 14 participants. Also, Bloor et al. (2001) point out that small groups risk a narrower discussion taking place, whereas larger groups can be chaotic, and even difficult to manage from the moderator perspective. Participants could even get annoyed if they did not get any opportunity to get involved in the discussion. This research, after considering the above issues, completed three (3) focus groups

involving five (5) people in each group. The reason for this number was because it was logistically easier to get together five people from different private sector businesses in the middle of the summer period (July 2021) in a leisure destination like Cyprus. Moreover, most of the participants were recently re-opening their businesses after the lockdown period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this research, the researcher, as a moderator in the focus group interview, did not participate in the discussion, but rather guided the discussion. This avoided introducing bias, as participants did not get any clues as to what to say. Rather, they were confident and honest about their own views and perceptions on the topic. As mentioned before, focus groups came from the private sector, and this many time triggered the discussion, as they were critically against, and even obnoxious, about certain questions. Moreover, they felt relaxed and comfortable with the researcher as a moderator. As a moderator, the researcher facilitated the discussion and kept it focused, preventing it from sometimes being dominated by one participant, and allowing all participants to express their own opinions and views. All of them were given the chance to identify their own perceptions over the topic.

The venue of the focus groups was also an important issue. All three groups were invited to an accessible, comfortable, and quiet place so there were no distractions during the discussion. The first focus group met in the hotel lobby of one of the hotel owners that took place in the participant group (Park Beach Hotel). The second focus group took place in the travel agency conference room of another participant (Travel plus Travel Agency). The third and last focus group took place in a quiet loft of a restaurant at a non-busy time (Agora Café Limassol). All venues worked well, as the groups met at a non-busy time, during the afternoon. At the start of the interview, when all participants were gathered, it was acknowledged to them that the moderator would audio-record the interview, and they were assured of confidentiality. It gave them the opportunity to withdraw if they were not comfortable. Luckily, no withdrawals were recorded, and the participants were very positive.

The duration of the focus groups discussion was another important consideration. Participants are likely to endure tiredness if discussions take longer, and the rule that is most wise to follow, according to Nyumba et al., (2017) is one to two hours, on the basis of how complex the topic investigated is, but it also depends on how many questions are included and the number of

participants within the group. In this study, the duration of the focus group discussion lasted approximately one hour and 15 minutes in all three focus groups.

Nonetheless, focus groups also have limitations. For instance, they are limited when the issue under discussion is delicate or controversial. The interviewees in a group might be hesitant to reveal their individual views and beliefs in the company of other people (Carey and Asbury 2016; Krueger, 1998). Moreover, vigorous personalities may control the debate and might even attempt to impose their beliefs and opinions on the other participants. It is also important to select the focus groups participants carefully in order to prevent any possibility of biases (Gundumogula, 2020). During the focus group discussion, the researcher, apart from moderating the group, made sure that interviewees were comfortable with each other, so that they would not feel reluctant to answer any questions. Also, the sensitivity of certain questions on the topic of dark tourism, which is considered a delicate topic in itself, was explained, and interviewees were briefed before the discussion so that the full extent of their opinions and thoughts would be obtained.

### 3.6.3 Research Ethical Clearance

Considering the fact that dark tourism, the topic under investigation, includes subjects of a graphic nature, such as death, disaster, or suffering, it was imperative to consider any ethical issues that could be attributed to the research. Saunders et al. (2021) point out that research ethics are concerned with acceptable behaviour from the person conducting the research, the rights of the informants, but also those people who could be influenced by the research. The research literature underlines that any ‘rigorous research’ (Davies and Dodd, 2002, p. 281) should take ethics into consideration. Moreover, ethical topics should be contemplated all through the research project (Economic and Social Research Council, 2017). It is the responsibility of the researcher to identify how to generate, read, explain, and use knowledge (King and Horrocks, 2010). Certainly, ethics can also be determined by the topic of the investigation where the research takes place, but also by the moral and social values and codes that much research is based on (Hasan et al., 2021;Camfield, 2019).

Before initiating the primary data collection, it was necessary to request ethical approval from the agency responsible. For primary research to be conducted, valid ethical approval is a pre-requisite, otherwise the primary research could not be carried out. The ethical clearance for this study was approved by the National Bioethics Committee of Cyprus. In June 2021, the ethical committee approved the researcher's ethical application, and thereby the researcher was able to begin the data collection.

**Appendix III** shows the approval letter that was sent by the ethical committee. Ethical approval requires the researcher to indicate to potential participants the purpose of the study prior to the interviews. It was underlined that their participation was entirely voluntary and that at any time they could withdraw. Also, it was mentioned that the data collection would be conducted anonymously. All informants in the research gave their consent to the interviews being recorded by an audio device and later transcribed. According to Hasan et al. (2021), ethical considerations should be followed from the start to the finish of the research. This research followed the relevant ethical guidelines, and this anticipated the avoidance of any conflict or harm.

The topic of dark tourism, as mentioned previously, is a controversial subject that can trigger a mixture of thoughts and feelings for some people. The researcher conducted the research with a great amount of sensitivity and respect for all participants during the data collection stage. It had to be taken into consideration that the topic could be an emotional experience, and at the worst a disturbing experience, which could have caused distress to a potential participant.

### 3.6.4 Reliability and Validity

Although validity and reliability are two terms associated with quantitative and not qualitative research, it has been suggested that all research has to include validity and reliability in order to evaluate and appraise the quality of the research (Gunawan, 2015). In this way, the research could make the findings more accurate. This is especially necessary in tourism research, which involves the participation of people in relation to their behaviour, views, and attitudes. This is also supported by the earlier work of Brink (1993), who states that validity and reliability are crucial elements of

all research. In other words, any form of research underlines the need for reliability and validity. Within qualitative research validity and reliability can facilitate and ensure that the findings are credible and trustworthy. According to Rezapour Nasrabad (2018) the reliability and validity in qualitative research depends on the nature of research, its recognition but also the trustworthiness of the findings. It should also be noted that differences in the application of these two concepts exist when applied in qualitative research. This is because qualitative research uses other methods of conducting research from quantitative research. Hasan et al. (2021, p.2) equates validity with 'precision' and reliability with 'consistency'.

Veal (2017) notes that research findings are not generalizable, as they convey the concerned focus of when and where the research is carried out, which in the case of this study was not acknowledged; the participants gave their perception of the topic over time, and related their past and present experience with dark tourism sites.

Golafshani (2003) notes that validity and reliability can enhance the quality of the research or support good research, according to Hasan et al. (2021). Brannick and Coghlan (2007) point out that when carrying out research, both reliability and validity can help reduce any errors that could not otherwise be identified. More specifically, reliability reduces 'variable errors', whereas validity reduces 'systematic errors'.

Another aspect within this context and the qualitative perspective of the two concepts, is the level of trustworthiness linked with validity and reliability in the research. Four criteria have been developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), cited in McGinley et al. (2021), and it is important to underline that even today they are accepted by most academics within the subject of qualitative literature. These four criteria are "credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" (McGinley et al., 2021, p.2). These criteria can be identified in this study. Firstly, credible research establishes the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the data –in other words, if the data collected from the informants is credible, believable, or even convincing. Transferability refers to whether the findings can be used in other settings or contexts. Dependability is whether a study can actually establish the basis for future studies to be investigated. The last one – confirmability – concerns whether the researcher is free from bias, as the findings are solely the answers of the informants.

Within this research, these criteria have been taken into consideration to confirm the trustworthiness of the data collected. Specifically, a concise orientation took place, in which the informants were briefed about the nature of the research. This has worked out well, as it eliminated bias, as a researcher can subconsciously affect their interviewees. Moreover, in order to develop confidence and trust, sometime was allocated in order to get to know each other, so that the researcher could get more trustworthy information. Due to the sensitivity of the topic of dark tourism, a number of participants were somewhat daunted, but only before they were introduced to the topic and the researcher. The topic under investigation is multi-dimensional and complex, and future studies can apply this in other contexts or settings.

Guba and Lincoln (2000, 1985) reiterate that in order to ensure trustworthiness and legitimacy, it is imperative to engineer reliability and validity into the methodological process. The researcher has embedded reliability and validity into the study.

## 3.7 Sampling Strategy

The sampling technique used in this thesis and for the purpose of this investigation is non-random sampling (i.e., non-probabilistic sampling). It was considered the most appropriate technique, as it follows the interpretive paradigm, which uses a qualitative methodology (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). Non-random sampling is a sample that is selected by a non-random method (Nikolopoulou, 2022). In other words all members have equal chance of being selected. Within this research three types of non-random sampling were used; convenience sampling were selected because they were near the sites under investigation, self-selection (expert sampling) was also used were the sample relied on informants who agreed to be part of the research (public-Group 2- and private – Group 3- sector interviewees); Snowball sampling was also used where interviewees - local residents-Group 1- introduced the researcher to others and gained access to more informants.

According to Wiling (2008) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research involves a wealth of information that may offer more extensive understanding of the subject matter, and not interviewing a large number of interviewees. This is because qualitative studies aim to provide an understanding of complex issues for instance answering questions of ‘why’ and ‘how’.

Notwithstanding, the ultimate goal of the researcher is to answer the research aim and objectives, hence an appropriate sample size shall be determined by the necessity of the research. Moreover, the determination of the sample size could be dependent upon the specific paradigm which the investigation is based. For this study, purposive sampling and snowball sampling were chosen, so that the findings were abundant and more beneficial (Suri, 2011). The interviewees consisted of three groups: local residents, the public sector, and the private sector.

### 3.7.1 Sample Size of the Informants

The sample size of the research can also be regarded as a challenge within qualitative research. The sample size is about which number of informants is the most appropriate for collected data. This is another complex decision in the research process that would lead to the completion of the research study. This is connected with what Houghton et al. (2012) point out – that research shall be linked with the paradigms, methods, and aims of any investigation. When the research begins, it is not possible to identify the number of informants that will be required to reach the saturation stage. Bryman and Bell (2015) opine that the sample size for qualitative research can be obtained when the researcher recognises that no new material or data is produced. The interviewees of the research are normally selected to participate because they can supply plentiful descriptions of their visitor experiences, and consequently will be willing to verbalise what they have experienced, thus enriching the understanding of the researcher (Crabtree and Miller, 1992).

Within this study, the sample size that was used for interviews was 65 people (40 informal semi-structured interviews, 10 formal in-depth interviews, and three focus groups –five people in each group). The sample size of the Study Group 1 was not predetermined but when the researcher recognized that interviewees were giving similar answers it was apprehended that saturation was achieved. The interviewees were selected around the sites and the interviews were taken place in a predetermined location where the interviewees would feel more comfortable. The duration of the interviews was 30-40 minutes.

Within Study Group 2 that involved in-depth interviews the aim was to acquire a sample that would develop an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and as new themes stopped

emerging after about ten interviews it was considered an acceptable sample size. The place that the interviews took place was on the sites themselves, in the offices of the site managers, representatives and local authorities. The duration of the in-depth interviews was 50-60 minutes.

The third Study Group – focus groups were private sector tourism business people that were brought together to collect the different level of information produced by personal interaction. The sample size – 5 people in each group- was based on the researcher own local knowledge that would satisfy the requirements of the study. It was based on the convenience of the informants and the sample size (5) was decided in order to have more control of the group and acquired the maximum information from the informants. The place of the three focus group interviews took place in a hotel conference room, in a hotel lobby and the third in the meeting/conference room of a travel agency. The duration of the focus groups interviews was about 1 hour and 15 minutes.

### 3.7.2 Demographic Characteristics

A profile of the interviewees and focus group participants is presented in the following tables. The demographic details of interviewees used in this study included males and females, from a range of age groups (18-60+), with an education range between primary, secondary, and college/university. The use of age groups was used instead of specific age and each individual would fall into a certain age category as opposed to a specific numerical age value. This research did not include the calculation of statistics (like the mean and median) so it was not necessary to know the specific age of each individual interviewed. **Table 3.3** presents the **Study Group 1,** which included the local residents. Specifically, 40 local residents were interviewed, through informal semi-structured interviews. The sample comes from the age group of 18 to 65+ and was of mixed gender. Even though they are all residents of Cyprus, not all of them had Cypriot nationality. The level of education was high school to postgraduate.

**Table 3.3: Study Group 1- Local Residents**

| INFORMANT NO. | AGE GROUP | GENDER | NATIONALITY/RESIDENCE | LEVEL OF EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 35-44 | Male | Argentinian/Cyprus | High school |
| 2 | 65+ | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | High school |
| 3 | 35-44 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 4 | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | Postgraduate/above |
| 5 | 35-44 | Female | Lithuania/Cyprus | College/university |
| 6 | 25-34 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 7 | 35-44 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 8 | 35-44 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 9 | 55-64 | Male | UK/Cyprus | College/university |
| 10 | 25-34 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | Postgraduate/above |
| 11 | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 12 | 45-54 | Female | Poland/Cyprus | College/university |
| 13 | 45-54 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 14 | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | Postgraduate/above |
| 15 | 18-24 | Female | Lithuania/Cyprus | High school |
| 16 | 45-54 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 17 | 35-44 | Female | Slovenia/Cyprus | College/university |
| 18 | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 19 | 35-44 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 20 | 35-44 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 21 | 35-44 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 22 | 45-54 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 23 | 35-44 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 24 | 25-34 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 25 | 35-44 | Male | Bulgaria/Cyprus | College/university |
| 26 | 25-34 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 27 | 25-34 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 28 | 35-44 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 29 | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 30 | 35-44 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 31 | 35-44 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | Postgraduate/above |
| 32 | 55-64 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | Postgraduate/above |
| 33 | 45-54 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 34 | 45-54 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 35 | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 36 | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | Postgraduate/above |
| 37 | 45-54 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 38 | 18-24 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | High school |
| 39 | 18-24 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | High school |
| 40 | 35-44 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |

**Table 3.4**, below, provides the demographic characteristics of **Study Group 2**. These informants were people coming from the public sector, a total of 10 informants. These people were,

respectively, a representative of the Ministry of Tourism, four colonial site managers and museum managers, two local authority representatives, a military cemetery representative, a representative from the Cyprus tourist guides, and a museum and site representative of an ancient burial site. There were five males and five females, and all of them were residents of Cyprus. Their level of education was between high school and college/university.

**Table 3.4: Study Group 2- Public Sector**

| INFORMANT NO. | AGE GROUP | GENDER | NATIONALITY/RESIDENCE | LEVEL OF EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Omodos Mayor | 55-64 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 2 Representative of Deputy Ministry of Tourism | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 3 Site and Museum Manager, Grigoris Afxendiou | 65+ | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 4 Military Representative, Military Cemetery | 35-44 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 5 President of Colonial Sites | 55-64 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 6 Museum Representative and Guide, Fylakismena mnimata | 35-44 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 7 Site Manager, Achironas Liopetriou | 65+ | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | High school |
| 8 Guide and Museum Representative, | 65+ | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | High school |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tombs of the Kings | | | | |
| 9<br>Mayor office, Yermasoyia | 65+ | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 10<br>Tourist Guide, Cyprus Organisation of Tourist Guides | 45-54 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |

**Table 3.5**, below, is the third study group of the three focus groups. Three focus groups of five informants in each group were selected to carry out the discussion about the topic under investigation. These informants came from the private sector, and specifically from tourism businesses. There was a mixture of genders, but they were all residents of Cyprus and all possessed Cypriot nationality. Their level of education was high school to college/university.

**Table 3.5: Study Group 3: Focus Groups, Private Sector**

| **INFORMANT NO.** | **AGE GROUP** | **GENDER** | **NATIONALITY/RESIDENCE** | **LEVEL OF EDUCATION** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GROUP A** | | | | |
| 1<br>Hotel Owner (3-star hotel) | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 2<br>Travel Agent (a) | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 3<br>Agro tourism Apts Manager | 25-34 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 4<br>Restaurant and Hotel Owner | 25-34 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 5<br>Hotel Apts Owner/manager | 25-34 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| **GROUP B** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1<br>Food and Beverage Manager (5-star hotel) | 25-34 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 2<br>Travel Agent (b) | 45-54 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 3<br>Front Office Manager (5-star Hotel) | 25-34 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 4<br>Tourism Journalist and Blogger (RIK) | 35-44 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 5<br>Restaurant Manager | 35-44 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| **GROUP C** | | | | |
| 1<br>Manager of Hotel Group | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 2<br>Travel Agent(c) | 45-54 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 3<br>Travel Agent(d) | 35-44 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 4<br>Front Office Manager (4-star hotel) | 45-54 | Female | Cypriot/Cyprus | College/university |
| 5<br>Hotel Apt Manager | 35-44 | Male | Cypriot/Cyprus63+ | College/university |

***The location, date and time of interviews are indicated in Appendix IV.***
***Sample of the interviews are provided in Appendix V.***

### 3.7.3 Interview Procedure

The interview procedure included the preparation, as already indicated, of semi-structured interviews. Questions were prepared ahead of the interview to support the interviewees to explore the particular themes of the research, but at the same time were sufficiently flexible. The interviews included a particular blend of questions: for instance, introduction questions, inquiring questions, specific questions, direct-indirect questions, follow-up, and interpreting questions. This blend of questions was based on the adopted framework of Kvale (1996). The sections of the interviews were based on the topic areas that included the research aims and objectives, the dark tourism concept, dark tourism awareness based on visits, perception of dark tourism development, opinion about public sector/private sector involvement and dark tourism site development, and the local community's contribution and support of the development or otherwise of dark tourism. The interview questions were created under these broad sectors, and were used for direction and for exploration.

The interviews used the appropriate language and paid particular attention to the tone of the questions. For example, they attempted to avoid questions that would have caused the respondents stress or any other emotional reaction. Introductory questions were asked at the beginning of the interview, and then more complicated ones related to the multifarious and controversial concept of dark tourism. The questions were asked in a way to avoid the respondents becoming tired, or showing less attention. Moreover, where it was regarded as taking longer or shorter times to get an answer, the questions were re-ordered so as to avoid really lengthy or very short answers. The interviews were conducted mostly using the local language, Greek, and were converted into English during the transcription process. Some interviews were conducted in English.

Furthermore, the particular use of specific terms was given great consideration. For example, dark tourism was not a familiar concept or a well-understood term. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 661) underline the importance of both the researcher and the informant understanding and sharing the context of the research.

As already stated, dark tourism is complex and diverse in nature in terms of what it portrays, but there is also a wide controversy about the features and characteristics of what makes a dark site suitable to be included in this category of sites. Moreover, the public sector/private sector involvement in dark tourism development also lacks clarity in the literature. Additionally, perceptions of the local community are complicated, with major differences between academic literature and practitioners or industry understanding in comprehending their importance. Nonetheless, Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) argue that when there is uncertainty, more important data can ultimately be attained. In order to delve into the informants' opinions and perceptions over the development of dark tourism, no definitions were given before the interview, and this has also minimised bias in the research. During the pilot study (as discussed in Section 3.7.4), the respondents were familiar or not familiar with the term of dark tourism, yet they were content to discuss the concept. Nevertheless, the interview questions encompassing their perceptions of dark tourism development require clarification in terms of the infrastructure developments on the site, as well as the public sector/private sector involvement. It was identified that this clarification was imperative, as it gave direction in conceptualising concepts and minimising the possibility that the informants did not get tempted not to respond to any questions.

### 3.7.4 Piloting

The aim of the pilot study is to make sure that the method of data used in a study is the most appropriate before it is actually used in the research. Any likely issues correlated with the questions set or even the language used can be changed before they are used in the bigger investigation. Arain et al. (2010) state that a pilot study is a small feasibility study, with the main purpose being to check or trial the methods of the bigger investigation. A researcher, by conducting a pilot study, minimises failure of the proposed methods of the larger investigation (Lowe 2019). It might also help the researcher to become aware of potential time and cost (Polit and Beck, 2017) consuming errors in the questions set, or even if the right research methods have been chosen. Yin (2013) also supports that the questions can be processes in terms of quality. Within this research, a pilot study was carried out with six interviews. They lasted approximately between 10 to 15 minutes. After the six interviews it was perceived that appropriateness was achieved, and the researcher acquired

sufficient knowledge to continue with the interviews further. The pilot study did not follow a specific method. It was based on friendly conversations with the local residents. With their consent, the conversations were recorded and were used to structure the framework of the research interviews that followed. The pilot study stage took two weeks to be completed whilst the researcher was assessing the possibilities of the research questions.

## 3.8 Data Analysis

This part of the thesis provides a description of the manner by which the analysis of data was analysed, once the collection of data was completed. Within qualitative research, the objective of the data analysis is to manage, organise, and interpret words or language and the meaning that is associated with those words or language. According to Walker and Myrick (2006), the aim of data analysis is to categorise and condense the data collected into themes. Qualitative data analysis has also been characterised in that it follows some stages or steps that assist in its organisation, but also displays it and illustrates the conclusions (Grbich, 2013).

The transcripts of the interviewees were conducted and the first impressions on the data were identified. A verification of the transcripts was made; that included listening again to the audio and reading the transcripts. The literature points in this direction; as Chenail (2011) stresses, qualitative research is about a continuous check over the data collection and analysis.

The data collected from the interviews were then analysed so that the most constructive and useful facts derived from the findings were determined. The method of analysis of the data was a computer-assisted data analysis (CAQDAS), specifically, the package NVivo Pro version 12. The data were inserted into the software system, which assisted in capturing key themes over important topics, which were derived and coded. The software assisted in the organization and the coding of the large amount of data that was unstructured. The following section explains and justifies the use of the NVivo software.

### 3.8.1Analysis of Data Using the NVivo Software

Qualitative research does not commonly use a software package in the analysis of data. However, using a software package can bring lots of advantages tantalizing data. This is noted by Bryman (2008), where it is stated that in qualitative research a software package is not extensively used, as opposed to quantitative data, where the software packages for analysing data are anticipated and widely used. In this study, NVivo has been chosen, as it permitted the data to be analysed a lot quicker and more organised than if it was done by hand. The structures pursued in the data analysis using the NVivo toolkit (O'Neill, 2012) are adopted in the thesis and identified below. In Stage 1 (Descriptive) the project details and classifications are entered; in Stage 2 (Topic) clear topics emerge and nodes are created; in Stage 3 (Analysis) the nodes are merged into hierarchies; and in Stage 4 (Conclusion) the verification and developing of theories is formed.

Handling data with NVivo adds more accuracy into the process (Ozkan, 2004). According to Hutchison et al. (2010), NVivo deals with not only the analysis of the data but also the presentation of the findings. Bryman and Bell (2015) claim that NVivo can eliminate all of the clerical tasks associated with manual coding. It should be noted, however, that the software does not help in writing, coding, classifying, and interpreting the data. The researcher still has to conduct this task. Yet it did assist in the inductive stance to be used that fits with the research approach of the thesis. This is also identified by QSRInternational (2015) – that NVivo allows more time in the analysis of materials. Nonetheless, the data analysis still continues to be the task of the researcher. In addition, NVIVO aids in coding. Grbich (2013) points out that the data is grouped and labelled, and in this way, it becomes more manageable.

The research for the current study encompasses the three study groups of local community members. As already described in the previous section, the data were gathered through informal semi-structured questions, formal in-depth interviews, and focus groups. This was the empirical part of the research. Secondary data were also collected from an extensive list of academic journal articles and other publications (**List of References**). Overall, 65 cases were created – one for each

person interviewed. The data wereanalysed by identifying the different themes or nodes, based on the research questions.

#### *3.8.1.1NVivo coding*

The approach followed in the conducting of coding during the NVivo data analysis included the identification of codes. These codes were extracted from the research objectives of the study in relation to the findings from the transcripts that were submitted to the NVivo software. These codes were made through the themes that were first identified, and they emerged with the assistance of the organisation of the data in the software. From these themes, the nodes or codes were constructed. In NVivo, the coding was conveyed through the connection of the interview passages to a node.

'Nodes' or 'codes' were created from NVivo all through the coding process and with the use of the transcripts. Bryman and Bell (2016, p.610) defined nodes as "a collection of references concerning a specific theme, place, person, or other area of interest." The nodes of the study are shown in **Figure 3.3,** below, in the screenshot capture of the NVivo coding. As can be seen, the 'nodes' are words or phrases that sum up the main themes extracted from the transcripts of the interviews. When a new theme is found, a new 'node' is created; with every new 'node' a memo is created and added, thereby the findings are recorded to this particular 'node'. When nodes are allocated to categories of data, then a code definition is created that indicates the main aspects of the code. After examining the data and associating it with the inductive approach that was chosen for the thesis, empirical coding was conducted to develop analytical codes as these came forward from the data.

For example, for the concept of dark tourism, the 'nodes' created were *dark tourism concept*; *familiar, and non-familiar*. The transcripts transferred to the 'nodes' the information and organised it to indicate the familiarity or not of the local population with the aforementioned concept. This assisted in creating 'stories' with regard to the perceptions of the three study groups over the development of dark tourism. 'Hierarchical nodes', for example the 'parent' and 'child ''nodes', (QSRInternational, 2015), were put together in order to assign data with no logical connection.

Using the example above, the dark tourism concept was created as a parent node, while familiarity and non-familiarity had a series of child nodes. Two levels of hierarchical structures were created. In this way, the coding was structured in such a way as to avoid a narrow approach, and instead gave meaning to the data as more themes came up. This gave way to the prospect of unanticipated findings; for instance, the informants used an array of words that were coded according to their perceptions of dark tourism, such as ‘adrenaline’, ‘mystery’, ‘smell of death’, but also linked with emotions like ‘fear’, ‘anxiety’, and ‘tension’.

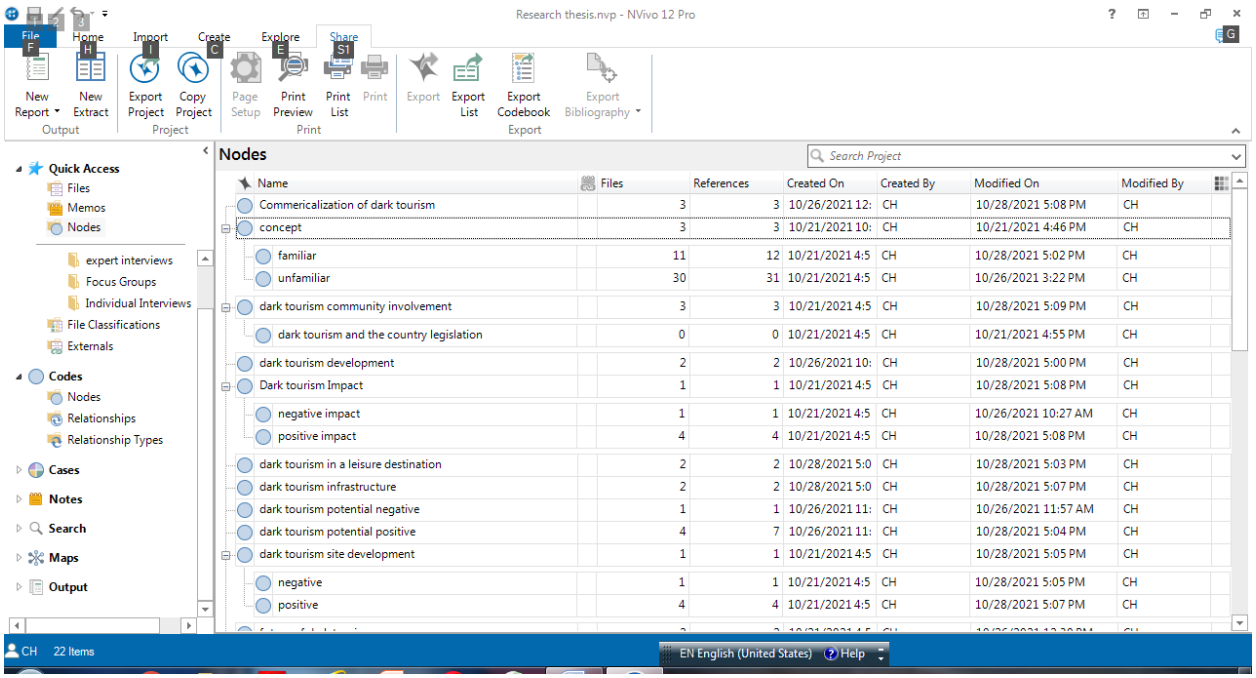



**Figure 3.3: Screen Capture of Codes Created in NVivo**

### 3.8.3 Data Analysis Process: Thematic Analysis

As indicated, specific consideration was given to the usage of the software package NVivo, which was extremely helpful and valuable in organizing and managing data into cases, and kept in files the data, including memos and notes. This section provides the process of the data analysis, using a widespread type within qualitative research of the thematic analysis. Within this research, thematic analysis is used to analyse the data based on the identified themes.

According to Braun and Clarke (2019), thematic analysis has the potential to be used across distinctive research topics, and it can work with specific methodologies (Creswell and Poth, 2017). This analysis categorised the themes under any common issues, relationships, and differences. From then on, the ‘stories’ could be created. This was the basis that directed procedure towards the use of thematic analysis in this study. After the data was organised in the NVivo software, particular themes were created out of the aims and objectives of the study. The thematic analysis

assisted in distinguishing any contradictions – for example, through the findings. For instance, a contradictory statement from informants related to the concept of dark tourism; most stated that they were not familiar with the concept, yet the majority have visited dark sites.

The literature identifies the benefits related to the utilisation of thematic analysis. These advantages had been identified in the research. In the first place, thematic analysis is an adaptable and accessible approach, and can be tailored based on what the study wants to achieve (Braun and Clarke, 2019; Nowell et al., 2017). A topic like dark tourism, which is controversial by itself, would benefit from the use of this approach, as its diverse topics would more easily be approached. Secondly, Nowell et al. (2017) emphasise that thematic analysis is able to explore the similarities and differences between the views of different groups. The research explored commonalities and differences between the different local community groups over the development of dark tourism. It underlined the commonalities in their views, but also emphasised the different opinions. Thirdly, Nowell et al. (2017) highlight that thematic analysis can create organised reports through the adoption of a structured method. Within this research, the different themes identified based on the objectives of the study assisted in the creation of the well-structured themes. This will assist in the discussion that will follow in the next chapter.

## 3.9 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided the justification and explanation of the research methodology for the research study. On the basis that little empirical evidence is available concerning the perceptions of the local community on dark tourism, qualitative research was considered the most appropriate research method to achieve the aims and objectives of the thesis. After the determination of the research objectives, it was imperative to identify the factors that affected the decision to apply the particular research design in this thesis. The thesis was based on the philosophy of phenomenology (interpretive paradigm), which contemplates the perceptions and beliefs of society, hence it fits appropriately in this research. The research design was based on a community approach, as the community is seen as a significant part of the development of dark sites. Therefore, the proposition that the community is the central focus of investigation led to the use of the three study groups

(local residents, public and private sectors). Their perceptions can support or otherwise the development of the dark sites.

The context of Cyprus has been presented in this chapter. Specifically, it has discussed the development of Cyprus as a tourist destination, its current state in terms of tourism, and it has identified a variety of dark sites that could potentially develop for touristic purposes. The sites belong to the colonial era, the aftermath of the Turkish invasion and occupation, as well as the accidental explosion of the naval base. Their characteristics and attributes denote them as potential 'dark sites'. A major part of this chapter was the exploration of the methods of data collection, based on the research philosophy of the study. Interviews formed a major part of the research techniques used. Specifically, three techniques were used as part of the research design – informal semi-structured interviews, formal in-depth interviews, and focus groups. The use of these research techniques has allowed the extraction of important insights on the views and perceptions of the three study groups. Ethical approval was given for the study. Moreover, the validity and reliability included in the discussion the fact that it assisted in appraising the quality of the study. The sampling strategy was discussed, which included the sample size of the informants (65 people). Their demographic characteristics were mentioned and the interview procedure was described in detail from before, during, and after the interviews and focus groups discussion. Piloting was also conducted, which verified the procedure for the execution of the larger investigation.

The last part of the chapter included the data analysis, which was based on the qualitative nature of the investigation. It used a qualitative software system, the NVivo Pro Version 12, where the transcripts of the informants were inserted and key themes were coded. That assisted in the organisation and management of the information collected. Thematic analysis was the method used in the analysis of data– by categorising the themes of the topic. Based on the themes identified, the next chapter identifies and presents the findings of the data collection.

# CHAPTER 4: THE STUDY AREA - THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

## 4.1 Introduction

A very important part of this study is to explain and explore the context on which the investigation is based. This chapter explains in detail the context of Cyprus, by first providing general information on the island and then presenting the sites under investigation, where the aims and objectives of the study were met. An outline of the historical development of the dark sites is undertaken and the eight sites are placed on the spectrum of 'darkness'. In this way, the sites are categorised based on their characteristics: from the 'lightest' to the 'darkest' site in Cyprus. This study recognises that dark tourism is a controversial topic in Cyprus and is subject to interpretation by the various stakeholders involved in their running. Policy implications can pinpoint whether dark tourism can ultimately be used for the further development of tourism on the island.

## 4.2 Major Developments in Cyprus' Tourism Industry

The Republic of Cyprus is an independent nation that is a member of the European Union. Since 1974 the island of Cyprus has been divided after the Turkish invasion and occupation of the northern part of the island. The southern part, which is the largest part, has a population of about 900,000 (Ministry of the Interior, Cyprus, 2021). The self-proclaimed 'Northern part' of the island, which is only recognised by Turkey, has a population of around 300,000 (out of which about half – 150,000 – are Turkish settlers). In the last 48 years the negotiations for a solution on the political issue have advanced under the UN (Farmaki et al., 2015). All groups concerned have been aiming at an agreement that would unite both parts under one government, but this has not yet been achieved.

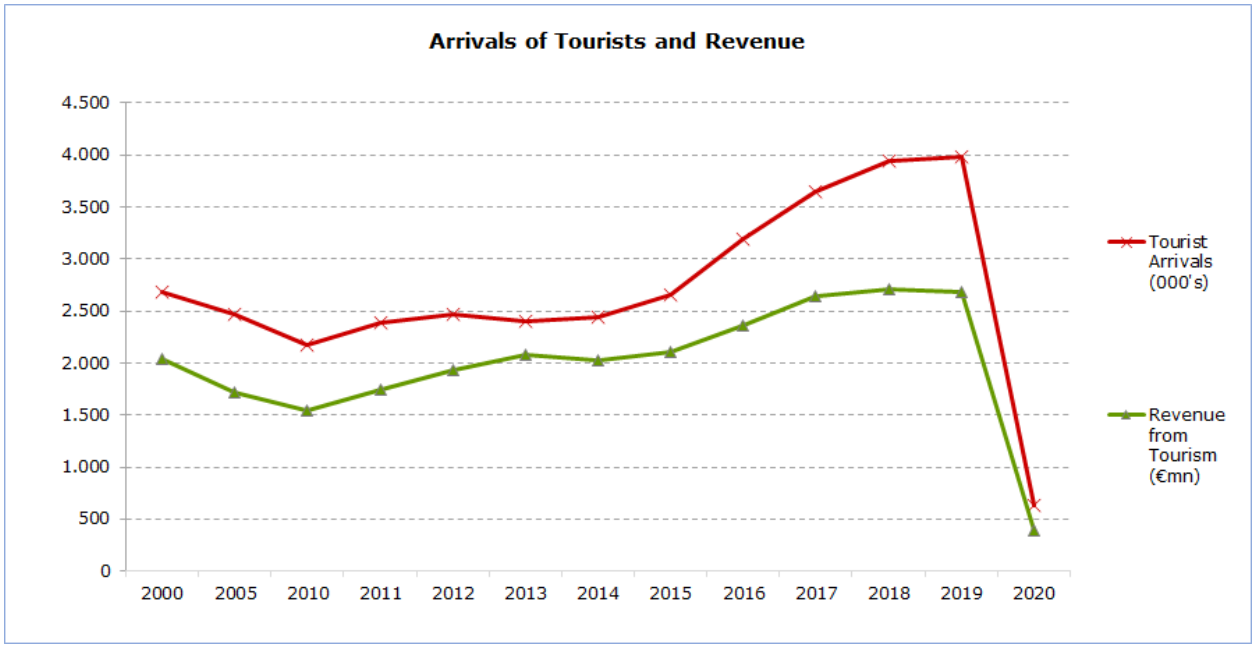
Cyprus went through a profound economic crisis over a period of three years (2008, 2009, and 2010). This has had a dramatic effect on the Cypriot tourism industry. The Cyprus economy is

strongly dependent on the services sector, and particularly on the tourism industry. Since the crisis, this has also caused the collapse of the Cypriot National carrier – Cyprus Airlines. It has been suggested that Cyprus has recovered from this crisis. For instance, the total contribution of travel and tourism to the country's GDP in 2014 was €3.405 billion, which is 21.3% of the total GDP (WTTC forecast report). The total contribution of travel and tourism is expected to grow by 4.2% p.a. to €5,419.8 billion by 2025, which is 25.5% of total GDP (WTTC forecast report). In 2015, the revenue from tourism reached €2.112 billion, an increase of 4.4% over 2014 (CySTAT).

Cyprus is a successful tourism destination for Europeans, primarily the UK, Russians, Greeks, and Middle East countries. The tourism infrastructure in Cyprus is well-developed; it is supported by two international airports, hotels, resorts, holiday homes, marinas, as well as a well-developed road infrastructure. Cyprus offers a large variety of accommodation for tourists (CTO, 2020). Many British, German, and Scandinavian holidaymakers are also actively looking for holiday alternatives, due to the increased terror threats for Western tourists in Turkey, Egypt, and Tunisia, and this provides Cyprus with further development prospects.

## 4.3 Recent Trends and Developments Impacting Cyprus' Tourism

The current state of tourism development in Cyprus still significantly impacts the economy. It provides employment and growth in the economy, involving a wide number of tourism businesses. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Cyprus had three successive best-ever years of tourist arrivals, reaching four million tourists per year. The Covid-19 pandemic restrictions in travelling effectively erased the 2020 and 2021 summer seasons. The government of Cyprus and the Deputy Ministry of Tourism (the former Cyprus Tourism Organisation) are two important stakeholders of the industry in Cyprus in terms of making competent policies, rules, and regulations for the protection of the touristic environment, in conjunction with the well-being of the local population. Employment of appropriate strategies from the public sector is imperative in attracting and retaining tourists, including keeping Cyprus on the tourist map (Boukas and Zikas 2013).




Source: Cyprus Statistical Research (2021)

**Figure 4.1: Cyprus Statistics**

Tourist arrivals in Cyprus reached 321,858 in August 2021, recording an increase of 208.7% compared to August 2020 (during which 104,261 arrivals were recorded), and a decrease of 41.9% compared to August 2019, which had 553,845 arrivals (Cyprus Statistical Research, 2021).Figures released by Cyprus Statistical Services (2021) show that for the period of January – August 2021, the arrivals of tourists totalled 960,150, compared to 424,850 in the corresponding period of 2020, recording an increase of 126.0%, and a decrease of 64.9% compared to the period of January – August 2019 (2,735,839 arrivals).The arrivals of tourists reached 339,242 in September 2021, recording an increase of 288.4% compared to September 2020 (during which 87,334 arrivals were recorded), and a decrease of 35.3% compared to September 2019 (with 524,707 arrivals) (Cyprus Statistical Research, 2021). For the period of January – September 2021, arrivals of tourists totalled 1,299,392 compared to 512,184 in the corresponding period of 2020, recording an increase of 153.7%, and a decrease of 60.1% compared to the period of January – September 2019 (3,260,546 arrivals) (Cyprus Statistical Research, 2021).

These figures indicate the impact of the pandemic on Cyprus. As the tourism industry around the world is facing a time of uncertainty due to COVID-19 pandemic (Garcez et al., 2021) so is Cyprus.

Yet the pandemic is not the only threat. Brexit was also considered a threat to the Cyprus tourism industry. The indications said that the British would travel less. Cyprus, as a Eurozone member, could be impacted. Predictions on how long the recession would last will ultimately be evidence for Cyprus tourism, as it is very dependent on the tourism from England (Cyprus Statistical Research, 2021).

## 4.4 The Spectrum of Dark Sites in Cyprus

The dark sites under investigation can provide the basis for understanding how the local community in Cyprus identifies them. Under colonial rule from 1867 to its independence, tourism in Cyprus has had different developmental phases. The history of Cyprus is that of a struggle, and it has been forced by external powers. Through the centuries, the island of Cyprus has been conquered and ruled by numerous powers, including Egyptians, Romans, Venetians, Ottomans and the British. In 1960, the island gained independence for the first time in its history, after a devastating struggle for independence that lasted from 1955 to 1959. After the invasion and occupation, and the destruction of the tourism industry, Cyprus has had rebuilding periods, and has also experienced prosperity (Harm and Kagermeier, 2013; Ioannides, 1992).

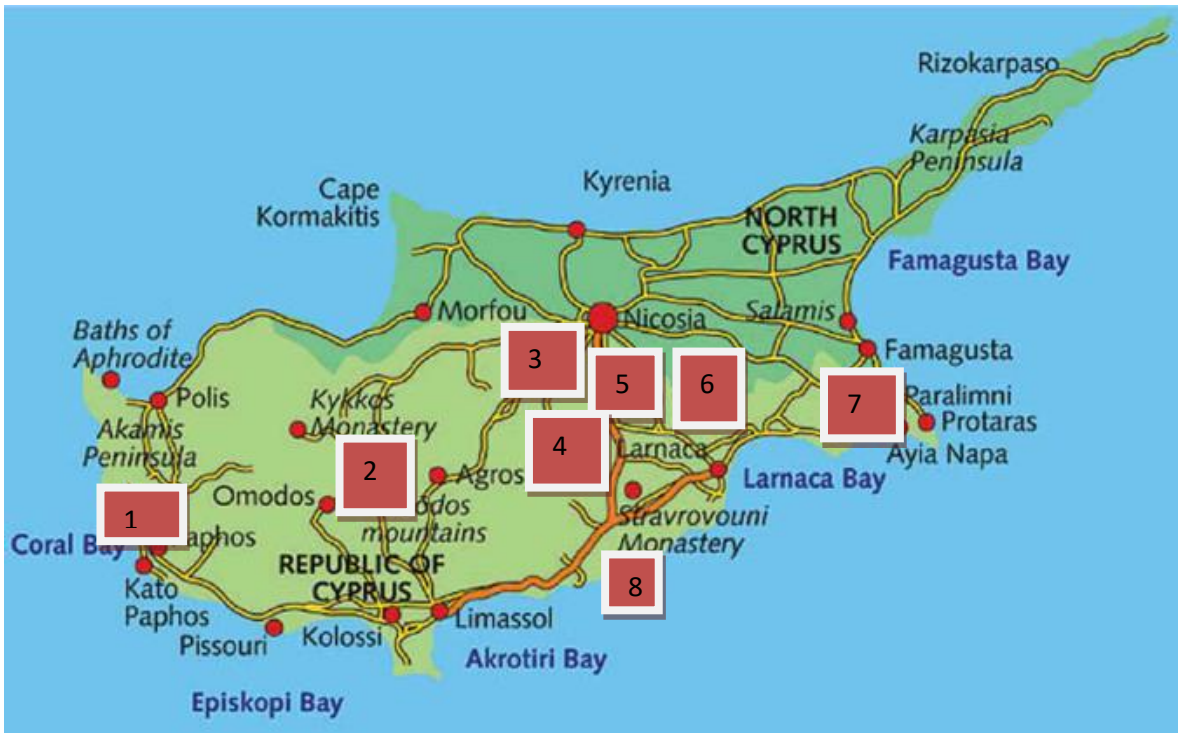
The historical path of Cyprus has left around the island a number of sites and places of death, tragedy, and atrocities. At present, the study on dark tourism in Cyprus remains at the early stage. Theoretical researchers of dark tourism lag behind the practical development of dark tourism. It is a special tourism resource and product, and its research will further promote tourism and social development. As special tourism, dark tourism has entered people's consciousness, and has become a new highlight of the tourism industry.

The selection of these particular sites in Cyprus has been based on the fact that they fit the dark tourism site framework, which includes sites of death and suffering at differing levels: i.e., the darkest sites to the lightest sites. In terms of why these sites would be interesting to be investigated is in itself a subject that requires further exploration. Whilst visitor experience to dark tourism sites have been going on for a very long time, the individual and various perceptions of the local

community over their development have been lacking academic scrutiny. This is one of the main purposes to research dark tourism in a context where leisure tourism is the norm. Particularly with the examination of the perceptions of the local community over how they conceptualise, understand, and experience these varied types of such sites, it can identify significant information for their future development.

**Table 4.1: Cyprus' sites under investigation**

1: Paphos - Tomb of the Kings- resting place of rich aristocrats
2:Limassol: Museum and hide-out place, Omodos
3: Nicosia- Military cemetery-site of tragedy, Tymvos Makedonistissas
4:Nicosia- Museum and hide-out site, tragedy site, Grigoris Auxentiou, Machairas
5: Nicosia- Buffer zone (Green line)
6: Nicosia- National Struggle museum and resting place of the 13 graves- site of tragedy, Cyprus central Jail
7: Ammochostos- Museum and hide-out place and site of tragedy, Achironas Liopetriou
8**:** Larnaca: Naval base accidental explosion and tragedy site, Mari




Source: http://blog.overseaspropertyonline.com

**Figure 4.2: Cyprus Map with Dark Tourism Sites under Investigation**

***Profile of Sites***

The profile of sites consists of a variety of features that reflect the range and creation of dark tourism site across the island of Cyprus. As illustrated in **Figure 4.2**, the sites are located over the whole island and include urban, rural, and coastal sites that are situated in major towns (Nicosia, Paphos), more rurally based attractions (Omodos, Machairas), and coastal sites (Paphos, Mari), The structure of the sample was museums (4), penal institutions (1), memorial sites (2), cemeteries (2), and battle sites (3). The bulk of sites do not charge any cost, with the exception of the archaeological cemetery, where the local authority charges a fee. For the rest of the sites there is no entrance fee and other charges were not made either, even to the museum exhibitions.

Other sites include a cemetery and an area that is a buffer zone and former battle site. Taking into consideration Miles' (2002) peculiarity of dark tourism sites and attractions, **Table 4.2**, below, shows the type of site where *actual* deaths have taken place, compared to sites associated with death (or disaster) within the sites chosen for investigation. Most sites used in the study are sites of actual death, rather than sites associated with death. The sites in this thesis include places of

actual death at a battle, death by execution (hanging), or death associated with accidental disaster. In terms of displays, the museums did not have the dead on display, but rather a collection of their personal belongings (clothes, shoes, firearms), and photographs of the deceased, as well as photographs of the actual death site. The museums were purpose-built and are still used for commemoration purposes, particularly the yearly memorials that take place at the sites. These features are predominantly useful for conceptualising and categorising dark tourism sites.

Table 4.1: Dark Tourism Site Spectrum in Cyprus

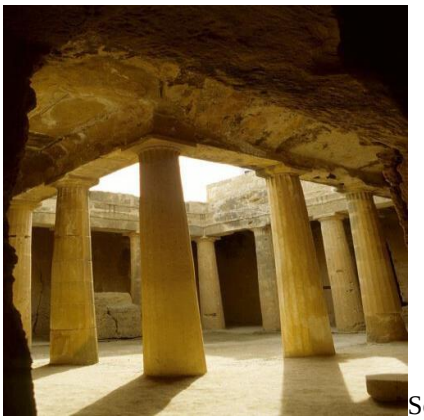
| **Dark Tourism Site** | **Darkest Site- tragic death related site** | **Dark Site** | **Light Site** | **Lightest Site** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Tomb of the Kings | | | | **X** |
| 2. Buffer zone | | **X** | | |
| 3.Military cemetery | **X** | | | |
| 4. National Struggle museum and memorial place of the 13 graves-Central Jail | **X** | | | |
| 5. Museum and hide-out place at Machairas, Grigoris Auxentiou | **X** | | | |
| 6. Museum and hide- out place Achironas Liopetriou | **X** | | | |
| 7. Mari naval base accidental explosion site | **X** | | | |
| 8. Museum and hide-out place Omodos | | | **X** | |

Waitt (2000) notes that in recent times, important features of tourism are visits to sites that render events connected with death and tragedy. Biran et al. (2011) challenge that going to heritage sites allows a deeper comprehension of the tourist experience at the dark sites. The sites of death exhibit particular symbolic meanings that people get attached to. Additionally, Kang et al. (2012) assert that there are sites that have become tourist attractions, places of remembrance or spirituality, yet they are related with natural or man-made disasters.

It has been suggested that a complete classification of dark sites is enormously complicated, since dark site attractions are varied in nature (Foley and Lennon, 1996). They can range from actual sites to entirely commodified sites that are even far from the site of events being presented (Wight 2006). These constitute a categorisation that is based on their differences, yet are linked with death and tragedy. Subsequently, academics have categorised several sites as 'primary sites' or 'secondary sites' (Wight and Lennon, 2007). Other academics have categorised dark sites by how much shades of darkness there are (Miles, 2002). For instance, sites of actual tragedy and death can be categorised as 'primary sites' or 'darker sites'. Alternatively, sites associated with commemoration of tragedy or death are ordered as 'secondary' or 'dark sites', and include museums, or the ones that are in a different location from the site of tragedy (Wight and Lennon, 2007; Miles, 2002).

Another categorisation of dark tourism sites has been the spectrum of dark sites adopted by Stone (2006), which was introduced in Chapter 2. The spectrum considers that there are sites that offer attractions from the darkest product to the lightest product. The darkest is basically linked with whether the site has education features, commercial features, or if it has a high level of political influences and ideology (Stone, 2006). These factors and features fit with the sites investigated in this study. The sites can be categorised depending on their characteristics, perceptions, and qualities. For the purposes of the thesis, eight sites have been selected in Cyprus, and as indicated above, they fit the spectrum of darkest to lightest site, as indicated in **Table 4.1.**

1: Paphos - Tomb of the Kings- resting place of rich aristocrats (associated with death); the site is a large necropolis in the town of Paphos. The classic underground tombs are made of solid rock. They date back to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Even though the site's name is Tomb of the Kings, rather than kings, it is actually high-ranking officials and aristocracy that were buried there, yet their magnificence gave rise to the name Tombs of the Kings. There are tombs that do an impression of the houses of the living, with the burial chambers opening onto an atrium. The site is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (CTO, 2018).


Source: CyprusHighlights.com

2: Limassol: Museum and hide-out place, Omodos (associated with suffering).The village participated in the struggle, with arrests, prisoners, and the blowing up of a hide-out place. The Museum of Struggle was developed in order to project the participation of the village in the struggle. There is material such as personal items, suits, and documents of the EOKA heroes that were located at the hide-out. No killings took place there, but the museum provides an illustration of the destruction that occurred.


Source: CyprusHighlights.com

3: Nicosia- Military cemetery-site of tragedy, Tymvos Makedonistissas (actual death). This cemetery and war memorial is located in Nicosia. A Greek plane with Greek fighters was shot down by mistake in1974 (by the Turkish invasion forces). The cemetery is the resting place of Greek Cypriot and Greek officers and soldiers who were killed during the Turkish invasion (CTO, 2018).


Source: CyprusHighlights.com

4: Nicosia- Museum and hide-out site, Grigoris Auxentiou, Machairas (actual death and suffering); in the Nicosia area and in close proximity to the Machairas monastery, in a rocky and wild vegetation area in the forest, is where they chose to build the hide-out. Grigoris Afxendiou remained in the hide-out to fight his last battle. The natural environment, the monastery, and the hide-out symbolises the victory of spirit over the matter. Today it is a memorial site (CTO, 2018).


Source: BigCyprus.com.cy

5: Nicosia- Buffer zone, (Green line) (actual death); Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, is a divided capital. The town is split into two, part of it under the occupation of Turkey while another part is under the control of the United Nations. The area reminds people that the country is divided and that suffering and injustice have taken place. The historic part of the town has not been restored since the occupation (CTO, 2018).



Source: Cyprusmail.com

6: Nicosia- National Struggle museum and resting place of the 13 graves- Cyprus Central Jail (actual death); the site includes a museum that illustrates the Greek Cypriot uprising in opposition to the British colonial rule of the island. The museum also displays objects and personal items that the fighters used. There are also photographs and newspaper articles displayed. The memorial site in the Central Jail is only for demonstration purposes, and illustrates the place where the prisoners were hanged (CTO, 2018).



Source: CyprusHighlights.com

7: Ammochostos- Museum and hide-out place, Achironas Liopetriou (actual death); The barn, located in Liopetri village in Ammochostos, portrays the battle that took place on 1-2 September 1958 as part of the Cyprus struggle, where four Greek Cypriot men were shot. Now a national monument, the 'Achyronas Barn Museum' includes a bronze statue of the four EOKA men who died there. It today stands as a memorial site (CTO, 2018).



Source: hellinonfos.gr/i-machi-ston-achirona-tou-liopetriou-02-septemvriou-1958/

8**:** Larnaca: Naval base accidental explosion site, Mari (actual death)**:** In 2011, at Evangelos Florakis Naval Base, based near Mari, Larnaca a large amount of explosives detonated by accident. The result was the death of 13 people and 62 people were injured (Dewhurst, 2011). It was the worst accident that has taken place in Cyprus, and an official investigation verified that.



Source: Cyprusmail.com

## 4.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided the context in which the research will be conducted. It has presented Cyprus and its tourism development to date. Centred on the island of Cyprus, a conventional leisure destination, the study recognises that Cyprus, through its historical development, includes attractions that are in the category of dark tourism. Based on this, the study will empirically investigate the views of the local community over the development of dark tourism on the island. Cyprus' dark past and commemoration of certain sites provide an opportunity for the investigation of whether and how the local community might support or even contribute to the development of dark tourism sites.

As dark tourism becomes more and more attractive, appealing, and alluring for many people, it can be emphasised that this is a result of the opportunity to learn, assuage curiosity, or even determine heritage and culture. This history, over many years, is associated with death events, the gaining of knowledge of catastrophic events, paranormal activities, mystery, and bloody legends. The destination management (local authorities, actual dark sites) has a responsibility to develop, manage, and market dark tourism through tourism policy and strategies in order to attract tourists in this dark tourism direction niche, but also to provide the opportunity for education, learning, and getting to know the history and heritage of the destination.

# CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

## 5.1 Introduction

In order to explore the perceptions of the local community over dark tourism development, the opinions of the local community were investigated through a record of interviews and discussions. The results of the three study groups are presented in this chapter, which is divided into four subsections: the first sub-section presents the findings of the local residents' perceptions (Study Group1), the second of the public sector (Study Group 2), and the third of the private sector owners/managers of tourism businesses (Study Group 3). The fourth one combines the perceptions of the three study groups. As indicated in Chapter 3, NVivo software was used to analyse the information collected from the participants. It is divided into themes based on the research objectives; Theme One is about their comprehension of the concept of dark tourism, Theme Two about their visitor experience to dark tourism sites, while Theme Three is whether they see potential for dark tourism development, Theme Four if they perceive positive or negative impacts from dark tourism development, and Theme Five is the way they appraise the future of dark tourism development in the study context of Cyprus.

In **Table 5.1** the main themes of the study have been identified, based on local communities' responses. These themes were based on the aims and objectives of the study. They include:

- Understanding of the dark tourism concept: familiar and unfamiliar
- Visitor experiences at dark tourism sites: commemoration, education, history
- The potential for dark tourism development: opportunities and constraints
- The impacts of dark tourism development: positive and negative
- The future of dark tourism: public and private initiatives

This can aid in the exploration of the information collected. The sub-section presents the key findings on local community responses**.** The table below indicates the main themes created, which puts into perspective the subject matters discussed by the interviewees. The table shows the

themes, but also the files and references. Files are the collective material, in this case the interview transcripts recorded. References refer to the number of responses on the particular code/theme (name). This table will be used as a reference during the presentation of the findings.

**Table 5.1: NVivo Themes Identified Based on the Interview Responses**

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| Commercialisation of dark tourism | Is the development of dark sites considered commercializing the local culture and events of the past? | 15 | 16 |
| Concept | | 7 | 8 |
| Familiar | Are you familiar with the concept of dark tourism? | 20 | 24 |
| Negative concept | Do you consider it a negative concept as it is related to death and tragedy? | 5 | 5 |
| Unfamiliar | Have you ever heard of dark tourism before? | 40 | 47 |
| Dark tourism community involvement | Are you involved in any decisions over dark tourism development? | 9 | 11 |
| Dark tourism impact | Can dark tourism have an impact on the destination? | 1 | 1 |
| Negative impact | Do you consider a negative impact of dark tourism development on the destination? | 5 | 6 |
| Positive Impact | Do you consider a positive impact of dark tourism development on the destination? | 25 | 33 |
| Dark tourism in a leisure destination | Do you think dark tourism can develop in a leisure destination? | 10 | 14 |
| Dark tourism site development | Can dark tourism develop further the sites? | 6 | 7 |
| Positive | Is dark tourism development positive? | 4 | 5 |
| Negative | Is dark tourism development negative? | 10 | 11 |
| Dark tourism site visitation | Have you visited dark sites?<br>For what purpose? | 16 | 24 |
| Commemoration | For commemoration? | 22 | 28 |
| Education and learning | For education and learning? | 21 | 29 |
| History and culture | Fir historic and cultural reasons? | 42 | 55 |
| Future of dark tourism | Do you see a future in dark tourism development? | 20 | 31 |
| Positive potential | Is there a positive potential in dark tourism development? | 11 | 18 |
| Negative potential | Is there a negative potential in dark tourism development? | 26 | 46 |
| Private initiative | Should dark tourism development be a private sector initiative? | 10 | 26 |
| Public initiative | Should dark tourism development be a public sector initiative? | 11 | 26 |

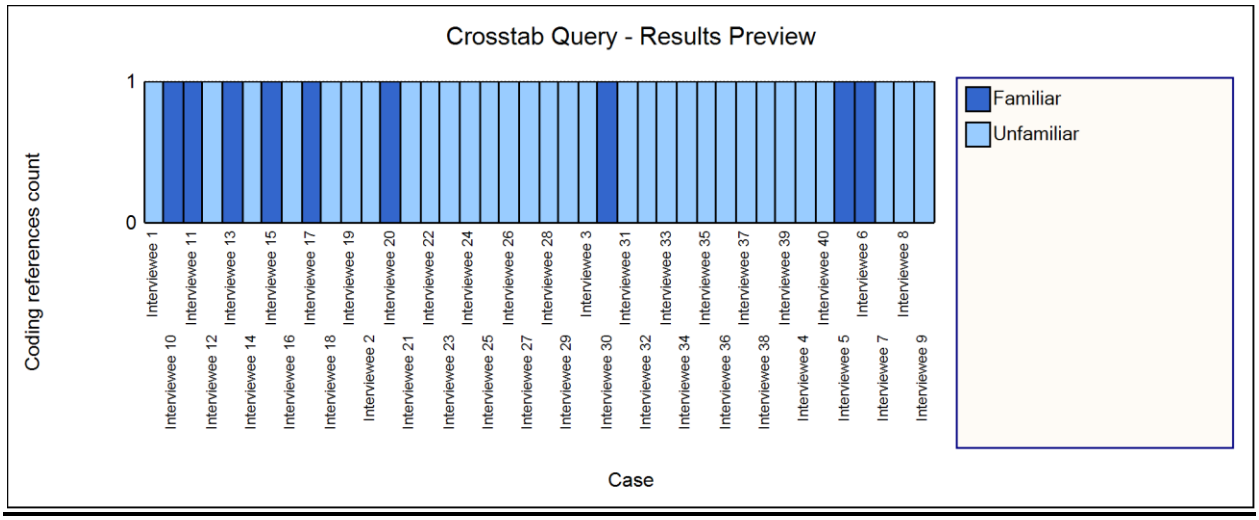
## 5.2 Study Group 1: Local Residents

Study Group 1, as discussed in Chapter 3, were local residents of the island of Cyprus. Through their responses, the local residents identify important factors that influence their perceptions over the development of dark tourism.

### 5.2.1 Understanding the Concept of Dark Tourism

In order to understand how the local residents perceive dark tourism, the interviewees were asked about their familiarity with the concept **(Table 5.2).**The 40 local residents' responses indicate that very few were familiar of what the concept is about. The majority of the interviewees had never heard about the concept before.

**Table 5.2: Understanding Dark Tourism: Familiar and Unfamiliar**




> "No, I have not heard about the concept of dark tourism before. I have never thought about it or heard the concept name as such, it's the first time today."
>
> (**Interviewee 14, F, 45-54)**

> "No, I have never heard about dark tourism before. Just today I heard for the first time about this type of tourism from you. I know and I understand that is a type of tourism that is about visiting sites of death or tragedy, but the concept I have never heard about."
>
> **(Interviewee 29, M, 45-54)**

> "No, I have never thought that there is such a concept. I have heard of people visiting places of interest where a disaster took place but I didn't know there was a name for it."
>
> **(Interviewee 9, M, 55-64)**

> "No, it is the first time that somebody spoke of dark tourism and it sounds interesting to see places with a kind of sightseeing, where people have died and what has taken place, to know the story behind the event."
>
> **(Interviewee 18, M, 55-64)**

As stated above, for the majority of the respondents the concept of dark tourism was unfamiliar. Yet, they have all visited dark tourism sites, and particularly all the sites that are under investigation in this study. What they have specified is that they never thought that these particular sites would fall under the category named dark tourism. Some of the responses revealed varying opinions:

> "Yes, I have visited those sites you mentioned but I never thought they are considered 'dark'. I didn't know about this categorisation of such sites. My experience is actually from years ago and during school trips, but I always thought they were historical sites and not dark tourism sites."
>
> **(Interviewee 16, F, 45-54)**

> "When I first heard the concept of dark tourism it sounded unknown, I never heard of this name before. However, I have visited many of the sites you mentioned. They are important sites for the country and its legacy."
>
> **(Interviewee 8, M, 35-44)**

> "From what I know, the tragic always attract people. From the old times to today when there is a death it fascinates people. Maybe it sounds negative by its name. But as a type of tourism it is an alternative type that is not negative. It is a type of tourism, it is a normal type of tourism, that in every country we see now that people are looking to leave from the traditional type of sun and sea. Also, there are countries that don't have the sun and the sea and they are looking to develop this type of tourism. Just like other types of tourism I regard this as one, one more."
>
> **(Interviewee 35, M, 45-54)**

***Positive and Negative Views of the Concept of Dark Tourism***

It is significant to note the views of those that have heard of the concept before –in other words, how they comprehended it and what they recognise when they hear about it. Their understanding was a blend of different meanings. When asked what they understand of the term dark tourism, their responses were varied; for instance, they linked it with 'mystery', 'adrenaline', 'a dark place', or 'something bad'. In particular:

> "The first time I heard about it was in the media about the first serial killer in Cyprus, and they showed the places where the women were killed and their bodies disposed of. Two dark tourists went to take pictures at that place and they found a corpse. It is scary and mysterious."
>
> **(Interviewee 3, M, 35-44)**

> "I have the sense that many times the negative or death attracts a person to exactly this type of tourism, even if it causes awe; but that awe attracts, it raises people's adrenaline, as people want to see 'dark places.'"
>
> **(Interviewee 14, M, 45-54)**

> "I perceive it as something negative actually; you receive the vibes in the atmosphere that something smells like death. I don't want to go to places where you have negative feelings or 'something bad' like death happened there."
>
> **(Interviewee 10, F, 25-34)**

> "I would not regard it like a negative type of tourism, but I would sit down and learn what this type is about and what it entails. Why have they named it dark tourism and not something else? Because 'dark' sounds negative, but anyway I would not be negative about it."
>
> **(Interviewee 27, F, 25-34)**

Even though the majority of the interviewees had never heard of the concept before, after explaining to them what it is, the majority did not see it negatively; on the contrary, they spoke very positively on dark tourism.

> "The first thing that may come to your mind is that it is something negative, or your mind goes to even something dangerous or hazardous… yet it can lead you somewhere else, maybe even to want to discover more about it and what it entails."
>
> **(Interviewee 7, F, 35-44)**

> "Even if it sounds negative as being 'dark', it actually sounds interesting to visit and see places of death or disaster. There is something that may attract people to find out more about it."
>
> **(Interviewee 18, M, 45-54)**

> "No, I wouldn't consider it negative. I don't think it creates negative feelings. It takes place in the past, it creates emotions and reminds us of events and facts that took place in the past."
>
> **(Interviewee 36, M, 45-54)**

The concept of 'death' seems that it was not incorporated in people's knowledge of the sites. This is because the sites convey other meanings to the residents (that are revealed in the following themes):

> "I have visited these sites but there is nothing morbid about them. They are part of the history of the country and I think that would be negative to take away from them the historical impact from the event in order to make them attractive or death related."
>
> **(Interviewee 9, M, 55-64)**

> "The sites exist to remind us of the heroes and those that gave their life for the freedom of Cyprus. They are part of the history and the historical events that have been taking place on this island for hundreds of years."
>
> **(Interviewee 14, M, 45-54)**

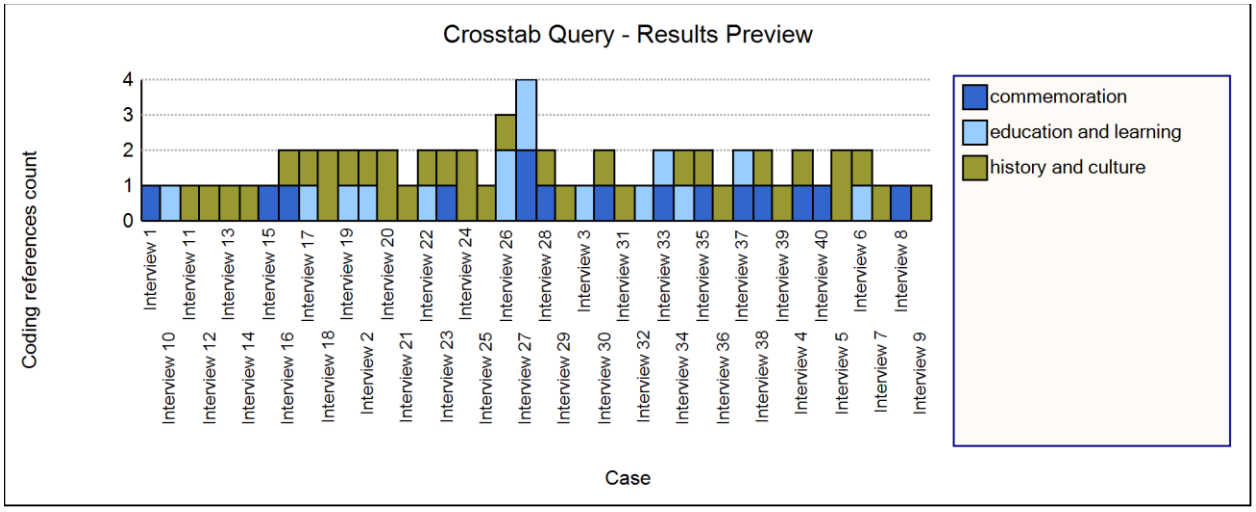
The above findings indicate that local residents were unfamiliar with what the concept of dark tourism is about, yet the majority of the interviewees view it favourably, as they have visited the majority of sites under investigation.

### 5.2.2 Dark Tourism Visitor Experience

The dark tourism visitor experience evokes multi-shades of views and opinions about how people perceive dark sites. Based on the NVivo analysis, the local resident's interviewees' responses were around three sub-themes, as shown in **Table 5.3,** below: visits for commemoration and remembrance, education and learning, but also for the history and culture of the sites. As previously mentioned, the majority of local residents were not familiar with the concept of dark tourism, yet they had visited the sites around the island. Hence, they had a view about what the

dark sites portray. The three sub-themes shown are what local residents perceive in connection with their visits to dark tourism sites. For the majority of the respondents, history, but also commemoration and learning, were fundamental reasons for visiting those sites. The three sub-themes were mentioned by the local residents as the main purpose for the further development of dark sites in Cyprus. History and culture were the main reasons the local residents attach to what constitutes dark tourism. This is also visible in the table.

**Table 5.3: Dark Tourism Visitor Experience**




Some respondents have expressed that their visits to such sites were connected with commemoration of the past. The issue of death and/or a turbulent past is found to be acceptable as long as it is developed in a way that respects those that have died and their families. Particularly for the site of Mari, the accidental naval base disaster, residents perceive it as a site of respect, commemoration, and remembrance for those that died. It is also a tribute for the families of the victims, as it is a recent disaster.

> "This site is to commemorate the lives lost, to have their lives remembered, but also for respect for their families. The families come here and find closure. A memorial is done every year and it honours the people who were lost."
>
> **(Interviewee 36, M, 45-54)**

> "My experience comes from how I perceive dark tourism to be; a piece of history that attracts you is a visitor site, but not all sites of death could be regarded touristic.

> For instance, the Mari naval base explosion that killed 11 people, I regard it a site for commemoration, and a place to show respect, but not tourism."
>
> **(Interviewee 14, M, 45-54)**

> "As locals we all had this experience from visiting school trips, but when I went back as an adult, a mature person, of course I see this different and it affects you differently. The sites are about remembering what has taken place, and of course the death of people."
>
> **(Interviewee 36, M, 45-54)**

As indicated above, the local residents' perception of dark tourism is a positive aspect of their visitor experience. The local residents, even though they had never heard about the concept of dark tourism before, had still visited all the sites under investigation. Moreover, they were aware of the events that created the sites in the first place. For this reason, the sites offer for them an opportunity for learning and education. They also refer to the fact that they have visited these places since they were young, and they link them with the history of the country. They see dark tourism as a way of educating, and somewhere through which awareness and encouragement can be revealed to younger generations.

> "I know some places are characterised as dark tourism places, and I am not a big fan of visiting such places because of all these feelings of sadness. But I believe in the education and learning that these sites can offer. So, it is important to visit and know these places, especially the new generations, and our children."
>
> **(Interviewee 10, F, 25-34)**

> "I think the word dark is indeed a bit negative; maybe if there was a different word it wouldn't be regarded as something negative. It obviously emits negativity, just the name. However, there are always people that have an interest to learn what happened, to find out about the history of these places, so I don't regard visiting these places as something bad or negative."
>
> **(Interviewee 32, M, 45-54)**

Their visits, as indicated, had been linked with learning about the sites and what events had taken place in the area. A lot of dark sites are developed in the interests of history and education. There are also those locals that have visited the sites with no learning intention, yet they were able to enhance their knowledge concerning what has taken place in the area.

> "In these sites we can remember the heroes that died in the fight for freedom for their country. It shows value to them and their families, and our children can learn about what has taken place and the events that created the site."
>
> **(Interviewee 19, M, 35-44)**

> "It is an opportunity for the young people to get to know the history and the historical events of their country. They can also commemorate the dead and show respect to their families."
>
> **(Interviewee 28, M, 35-44)**

> "It's a unique experience, a historical event that helps to learn about history, the devastation that occurred, but also to get to learn about the story behind the sites."
>
> **(Interviewee 37, F, 45-54)**

> "In these sites the experience is really touching, and you get a mixture of emotions, especially when you see those young men that have been hanged at such a young age. Those boys were spiritually so much evolved, and they have left their mark on the history of the island. The learning experience is huge, especially for the young generation that live in completely different times."
>
> **(Interviewee 32, M, 45-54)**

The commercialisation of dark tourism sites was another aspect of their view on whether dark tourism could or should be sold as a commodity for economic benefit. The local residents did not regard dark tourism as a type where the sites are exposed for the scope of making profit. The purpose of the site was seen as somewhere to highlight the historical struggle of the people that died, and not a place developed to make profit.

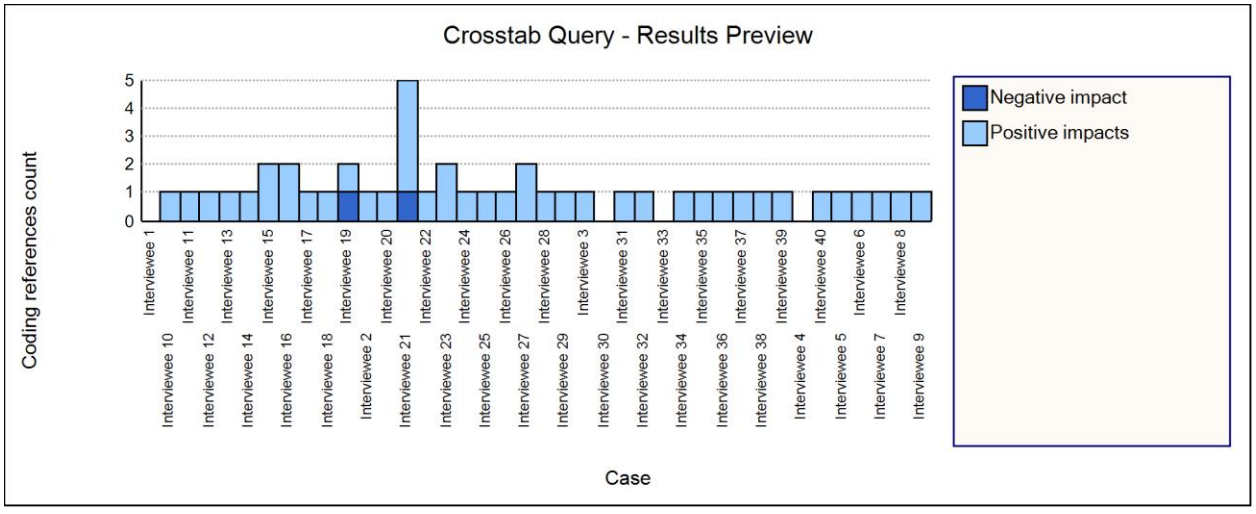
From the information collected it is apparent that the concept of 'death' seems not to be incorporated in people's knowledge of the sites. This is because the sites convey other meanings to the residents. For instance, they did not regard these sites as 'dark' but rather historical, and their visitor experience was more linked with learning, commemoration, and history. The residents expressed the opinion that these sites are not there to be visited out of general interest, but that it is imperative for their visit to be a learning one – of the historical events that have taken place.

### 5.2.3 Dark Tourism Impacts

Local residents' initial thoughts were that they first viewed dark tourism as a negative concept, and that it would bring nothing good to the community. However, once they identified their actual visitor experiences as dark tourism, immediately they thought that dark tourism could only bring positive impacts to the destination. Local residents have since been positive about the potential of dark tourism development. They expressed that dark tourism has the potential to generate more tourists, extend the tourism season, and have a general positive economic impact on the country. They conveyed that dark tourism can be beneficial in helping the economy regionally, but also nationally, and thus boost the economy. Since the majority of the locals viewed the dark tourism impacts more positively than negatively, the general view is that they would not oppose its further development.

**Table 5.4,** below, shows the 40 local residents' perceptions on dark tourism impacts. As indicated on the diagram, more residents believe that dark tourism would have positive impacts on the destination, rather than negative.

**Table 5.4: Perceptions of Impacts of Dark Tourism: Positive and Negative**



> "I am in favour of dark tourism development, as it can help in preserving the cultural identity and legacy of those that died. Cultural exchange can be encouraged, as it will be more known."
>
> **(Interviewee 5, F, 35-44)**

With respect to the impacts, the greater part of informants considered that dark tourism development could improve the infrastructure and superstructure of the region around the sites. In general, the local residents articulated a very positive attitude towards dark tourism development. They revealed that they mostly see benefits and not costs in dark tourism, and they underline that it is a type of tourism that should be encouraged in Cyprus.

> "Maybe it is not as popular as other types of tourism, but I am in favour of the development of dark tourism ….it will allow improvement of facilities that will attract more tourists to these sites."
>
> **(Interviewee 37, F, 35-44)**

> "Dark tourism can provide job opportunities for residents, as more businesses will open. This can improve the locals' standard of living."
>
> **(Interviewee 7, F, 35-44)**

> "By developing this type of tourism there will be improvements in the standard of living in the economy, but also, the culture will be promoted of a place that is only for leisure tourists."
>
> **(Interviewee 12, F, 45-54)**

The informants indicated that they see positive effects concerning local dark tourism development, despite the fact that these sites refer to a tragedy or death. This is very important but also challenging, especially for those people that reject dark tourism because of its negative connotations as something that not a lot of people would accept. Yet for them, the learning and the acquisition of knowledge could just be another positive impact.

> "With dark tourism people can be more interested in the region or area, or even more involved; they would appreciate more the history and culture and it will be like a recollection of the past. So, it could be a useful development tool."
>
> **(Interviewee 37, F, 45-54)**

> "When people go on holidays they don't want to encounter anything sad, so maybe this is negative for dark tourism, but its development can be used even for the attainment of information and awareness; and perhaps the visitors can appreciate it

and the destination can receive more positive impacts, like cultural and historic promotion."

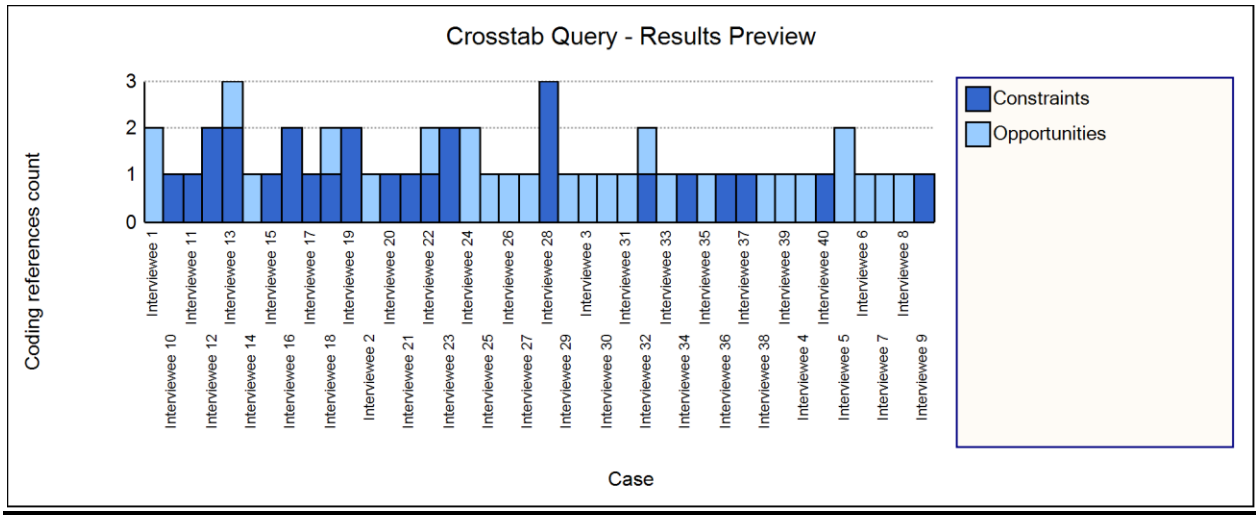
**(Interviewee 37, F, 45-54)**

For some people, remembering times of war in the past could be painful, but they can serve as great histories to new generations. This has been one of the reasons the local residents' perceptions of the impacts have been positive. Thus, the impacts of dark tourism have been received as positive, as the local residents saw that there could be an utilisation of the tragic past to promote their culture, to educate the local and international community, but also to boost the economy of the country.

### 5.2.4 Dark Tourism Potential for Development; Opportunities and Constraints

The majority of the interviewees expressed positive perceptions over the development of dark tourism in Cyprus. It was interesting to see that the local people believe that the potential for dark tourism development in Cyprus is there. However, even if the opportunities are there, they still saw major constraints: for instance, the public and private sectors are seen as not actively working towards its development. **Table 5.5**, below, as shown by the NVivo analysis, demonstrates that locals believe there is potential for dark tourism development, yet they see more constraints concerning opportunities for development.

**Table 5.5: Dark Tourism Potential: Opportunities and Constraints**




In terms of the potential, local residents were mostly positive, affirming that the sites that exist in Cyprus and are under investigation have the potential and the opportunity to become attractions for both local and international visitors:

> "I think the dark sites have a good potential for development in Cyprus. So, there is potential for development but it requires lots of initiatives from all sides: the public sector/private sector should be the first to plan and develop."
>
> **(Interviewee 3, F, 35-44)**

> "This type of tourism for sure has a great potential in a country like Cyprus, but it needs, apart from the upgrade of their facilities, upgrading of the area around them, accessibility to the sites and infrastructure, but also facilities and amenities that are now absent."
>
> **(Interviewee 6, F, 25-34)**

There were residents that expressed that Cyprus has ample opportunities for the development of dark tourism. These opportunities include the fact that there are many dark sites around the island. The sites were perceived as needing upgrades with technology, facilities, and infrastructure, but also modern representation of the stories behind the sites. Yet, there were those who argued that even though there are opportunities, there are lots of constraints that can hinder the island from developing this type of tourism. For instance, no promotion or marketing efforts have been made,

no specific authority for the planning and development of the dark sites exists, and according to some locals, the dark sites are not popular. In particular:

> "Cyprus doesn't have these worldwide known places for dark tourism, and apart from that there is no promotion done, and the sites do not have any potential for development as no authority is doing anything about it."
>
> **(Interviewee 9, M, 55-64)**

> "I don't think there is potential because there is lack of information about the sites, no promotional efforts are being made. And people are preferring more popular sites. Cyprus is popular for sun and sea holidays only."
>
> **(Interviewee 12, F, 45-54)**

> "I believe that itis very difficult to attract visitors for such types of tourism, as Cyprus is very small. There are very few options here. Maybe as part of their leisure they could combine their trip to visit such sites, but it is difficult to attract large numbers."
>
> **(Interviewee 23, F, 35-44)**

Another constraint in dark tourism development was emphasised by some interviewees, in that they believe that dark tourism is not a type of tourism that children should be exposed to. Particularly, they expressed that parents – but also the community in general – should be very careful how they inform and educate children about 'dark' events.

> "In a visit to the Military Cemetery in Nicosia with my kids, I was very nervous how to explain to them the events, and when I did I got this negative feeling from them. From the one hand it is important that they know the history, but we have to be very careful how to explain to them the events that took place without scaring them."
>
> **(Interviewee 10, F, 25-34)**

> "Dark tourism cannot be for everybody, and definitely not for children. Families with children, maybe they will be willing to go and see the places which perhaps were connected with dark tourism. But for sure, the children should be excluded from this type of tourism."
>
> **(Interviewee 12, F, 45-54)**

A number of interviewees believed that the potential is dependent upon the decisions of the authorities. The local residents' opinions and perceptions indicated that Cyprus has a great

potential for such a type of tourism, but more direct initiatives have to be taken. The reluctance of the public sector in the further development of these sites, the minimal infrastructure, and the unawareness of the private sector over this type of tourism were also mentioned by local residents as major constraints.

> **"**It all depends how the authorities will manage to do it. Technological advancement or upgrade of existing monuments could attract more visitors to the actual sites. It can guide the visitors in learning about the history and what took place there and make it more interesting, rather than a signage of what happened there only. It could be more educative and informative."
>
> **(Interviewee 27, F, 25-34)**

> "Only if there are initiatives coming from the public or private sectors, then maybe the sites would have more opportunities for development and the locals will be more involved for developing further dark tourism sites."
>
> **(Interviewee 1, M, 35-44)**

> "The sites in Cyprus are not taken care of. There is no attention to them, no funds to them, there is no advertising and nobody knows about them. It is very disappointing what we have here."
>
> **(Interviewee 21, F, 35-44)**

> "There are absolutely no promotional efforts to indicate that these sites even exist. The government agencies should be the first to start working on this. There are no facilities or services for the tourists. The actual sites are just plain sites, and there are no tourist services or facilities. Technology is always absent."
>
> **(Interviewee 22, F, 45-54)**

The following **Diagram**, **5.1**, demonstrates the specific constraints expressed by local residents over the growth of dark tourism in Cyprus. It is important to remark that central to the dark tourism constraints are the public and private sectors' initiatives, lack of promotion, lack of infrastructure, but also, the local community in general doesn't take any responsibility for initiatives for dark tourism. A restraining factor concerning the prospects for the development of dark tourism involves the challenges that these places have. The local residents referred to insufficient facilities and services, the absence of marketing and publicity of dark tourism sites, and a negative perception of their future development, which might be hindered because of these aspects. The local residents indicate that there is a future, but that it is dependent, however, on the support of the local community.

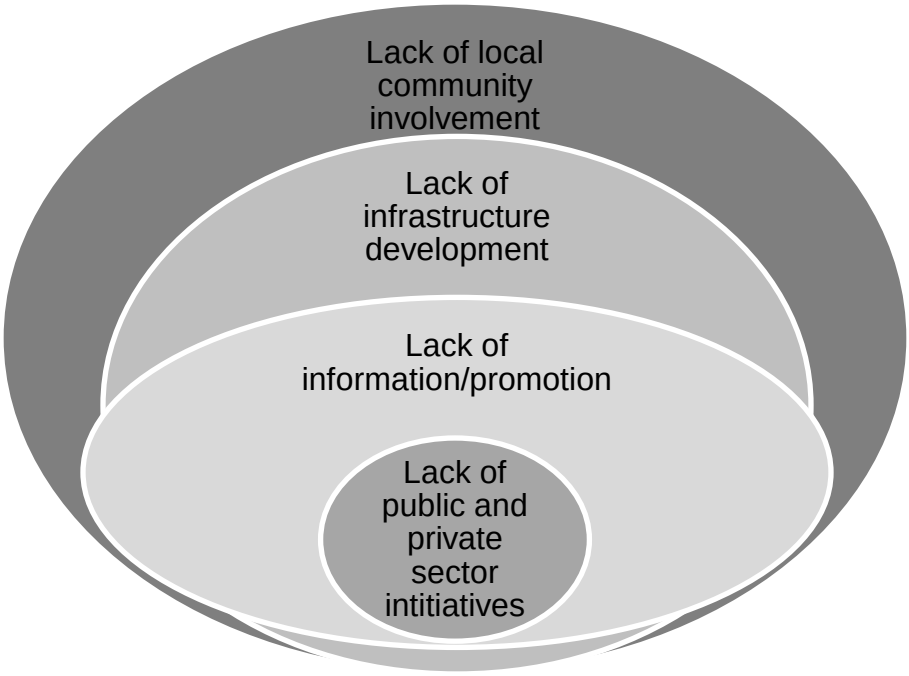



**Figure 5.1: Constraints Identified by Local Residents over Dark Tourism Development**

More local residents expressed potential for dark tourism in Cyprus if the opportunities would be used and the constraints limited. In fact, the locals were very clear over the ample opportunities that existed for dark tourism development. For instance, they referred to the historical significance of dark sites on the island, but they underlined obstacles in achieving this: lack of local, public and private sector initiatives, lack of promotion, and lack of upgrade of facilities and infrastructure.

### 5.2.5 Dark Tourism Development Future at a Conventional Leisure Destination

The majority of the local residents viewed that Cyprus has the potential to develop the dark sites and include these sites in the country's overall tourism and leisure product. Cyprus is a destination that has rationally/conventionally opted for attracting leisure tourism. The local community is aware of the positive economic impacts (leisure) tourism brings in to the country and for this reason it was imperative to identify their views and opinions over dark tourism development. For the majority of the locals perceive positive potential of dark tourism development yet with certain

challenges. This view was based on the fact that they regard these sites as historical, based on the culture of the country, and they commemorate the heroes who lost their lives on the sites. Their support was based on the overall benefits of what tourism can bring (economic and cultural benefits). Their positive perceptions also emphasised the important role that the two sectors have (public and private). The initiatives of the public and private sectors towards dark tourism development potential in Cyprus were mentioned by a large number of interviewees; they declared that Cyprus dark sites have the potential for development, which can be marketed equally to locals and international visitors. However, although the sites are recognised by the locals as being part of the culture/history, they view that they have yet to be established in the minds of people as a potential for touristic purposes. Initiatives, coming from both sectors, as well as recognition of their importance, plans, and infrastructure, were features valued by local residents in the drive towards dark tourism development.

> "The future of dark tourism depends on various factors. It could add to the sites' popularity if there was any kind of development of infrastructure, more information, more technology incorporated in the sites, and these are obstacles to its development. I am not very optimistic that it will happen, but it could for sure."
>
> **(Interviewee 34, F, 45-54)**

> "The sites are there and they have to take into consideration the great potential that they have. People are not informed about what these sites and monuments are about, and this can be an impediment for the future."
>
> **(Interviewee 36, M, 45-54)**

> "Its future has to do with the communities. If a community had a disaster in their area, or if they have a site that is considered dark, then they have to take initiatives and support it. Maybe the benefits will be small, but in the long run it can help the whole country."
>
> **(Interviewee 11, M, 45-54)**

The findings indicate that the local residents have favourable views and perceptions towards dark tourism with regard to its positive (economic and cultural) impacts. These positive perceptions indicate that ultimately, the local residents will support dark tourism development, due to the general positive view towards tourism in Cyprus. For the residents, dark tourism can bring lots of benefits to the respective areas, but also to the country in general. Interviewees 'views in support of the positions with regard to dark tourism development opportunities are varied. Most views are

related to the actual sites and to the fact that they are part of the history and culture of the country. They strongly support the notion that Cyprus contains dark sites associated with a turbulent past, and these should be included in the learning and commemoration and remembrance of those people who lost their lives in various tragic events. Yet, they also mention that even though there are ample opportunities for dark tourism development, there are also constraints that limit the development of dark tourism. One of the major constraints is the reluctance of the public and private sectors to start any initiatives or planning efforts for development. They also evaluate negatively the lack of initiative by the local community and the insufficient provision and support from the public and private sectors for dark tourism. They emphasised that more promotion/marketing should be done, but also that infrastructure should be developed on the sites.

## 5.3Study Group 2: Public Sector

The second study group interviewed, as discussed in Chapter 3, were individuals from the public sector, which included local authorities, dark tourism site managers, and a representative from the Deputy Minister of tourism.

### 5.3.1 Public Sector Perceptions of Dark Tourism

From the ten public sector interviews, it was indicated that half of them had heard about the concept before, but they had distinct views about what it entailed; the other half had never heard about the concept before, but it was just the name of the concept that was unfamiliar, not the stories behind the concept. It was interesting to note that even though these sites are regarded as ‘dark’, the concept is relatively unfamiliar. Even among those that manage the sites. Interviewees from the public sector had different opinions and perceptions over the concept of dark tourism and what it portrays.

> "To be honest I have never heard of this concept before today. But I understand that there are lots of sites that are under this concept. Here in the village we have a hide-out place which is of historical significance, so it could be regarded as a dark tourism site, even if no killings took place here. It was still a tragedy, as houses were exploded and people went to prison."
>
> **(Mayor, Omodos village)**

> "Even though I don't really like the concept name dark tourism, as it doesn't really reflect a nice marketing approach, yes I have heard it before; a characteristic example is that of Auschwitz in Germany."
>
> **(Representative of the Deputy Ministry of Tourism)**

> "I know it is linked with historical sites, we have lots of sites that can be regarded as this type. There is nothing bad or negative with this site, it is only unknown."
>
> (**Museum Representative and Guide, Fylakismena mnimata)**

There was a different perspective from the lightest of the dark tourism sites, and this was reflected in the opinion of the representative interviewed. For a 'lightest' dark site that does not include morbid or tragic death, the site representative almost rejects the 'dark' reference:

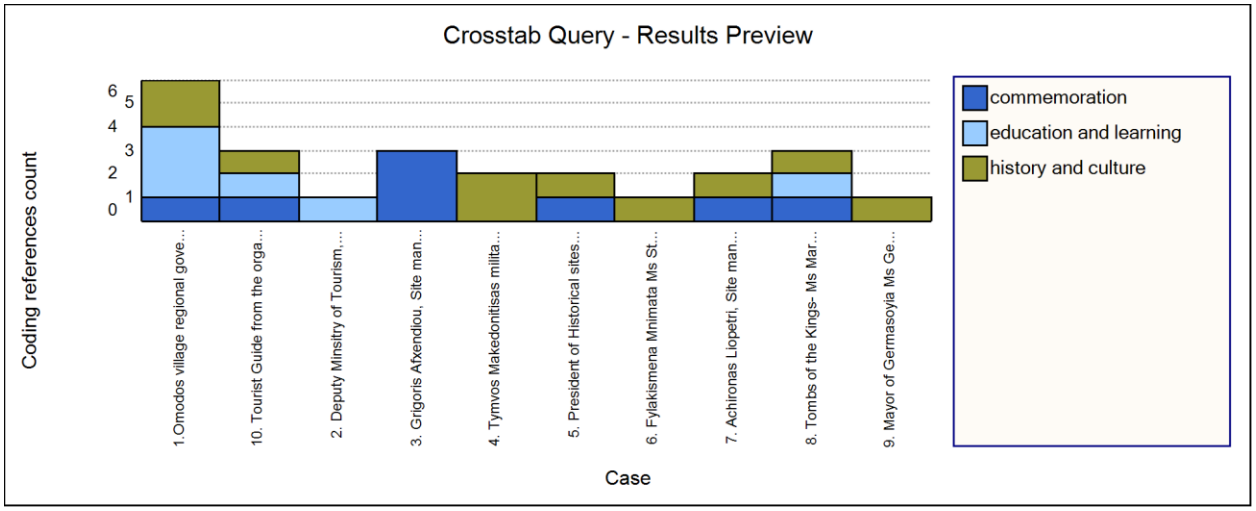
> "This site is well known for archaeological rather than dark interest. People that come here don't really relate it with something dark, or with death. It is rather so old that it has become archaeological even, if it is about tombs of people. Yes, they are interested to find out how people were buried in those times, but there is nothing morbid about it."
>
> **(Guide and Museum Representative, Tombs of the Kings)**

It is interesting to note that even those that work and represent the sites under investigation had still not heard of the concept of dark tourism. This represents the fact that the concept is still new in the industry, and specifically, for a conventional leisure destination, still mostly unknown.

### 5.3.2 Dark Tourism Visitor Experiences

One of the issues mostly addressed by the public sector has been the reasons why some sites could have more potential to be visited than others. The colonial sites managers have been really positive towards the sites' development, as they link it with history, remembrance, and commemoration, but also the keeping of the memory for those who have died during the colonial struggle. However, a different perspective was indicated by other site managers and the representative of the Deputy Ministry of Tourism– that only through education is there a potential for visiting such sites. This was disputable, as the sector that is responsible for development is not perceiving it as a type with potential for touristic purposes (especially colonial sites). Colonial sites are divided into two political sides in Cyprus, and this is evident at the memorials, where only the 'one side' usually attends; this leads to the conclusion that memorials appear to be indirectly controlled by politics. This undoubtedly raises questions as to whether the sites are actually capable of representing all the locals, as politics still influences their choices, even for these sites. **Table 5.6,** below, shows that public sector officials regard these sites as mostly historical, and the majority emphasised this during the interviews. Moreover, they also mention the importance of commemoration and remembrance when it comes to dark sites. Some also saw it as a way of enhancing learning about the events that took place on the sites.

**Table 5.6: Dark Tourism Visits**




Those who were positive that dark tourism sites can exist for commemoration and remembrance were mostly dark tourism site managers. There were some public sector interviewees who were not so keen on their development, even if they exist for commemoration; their opinions were that the existence of those sites is for the few locals that are perhaps attached to the sites, but not for the rest to visit. For the military representative from the body responsible for the military cemetery, it was very clear that the site is there for commemoration, above all:

> "The way I see it is that dark tourism is a type that should be included in the information and promotion of the island as a destination for this type of tourism as well. It is a moral obligation to remember those that died at the site. During the memorial every year, many people and diplomats come here to visit the cemetery and pay their respects."
>
> **(Military Representative, Military Cemetery)**

This was also acknowledged by the president of the colonial sites and the Achyronas site, who emphasised the importance of keeping the memory and commemoration of those who lost their lives during that period. The majority of site managers refer to 'keeping the memory alive'. In other words, they want people to keep remembering those that died, but they also want new generations to see it as a 'moral obligation' to find out what happened and not to forget. Therefore, the following statements can underline even better the above assertion:

> "We are responsible for the continuation of the memory and commemoration of those that fought and died during the patriotic effort against the British rule. We need to preserve and conserve those sites, they are part of our history."
>
> **(President of Colonial Sites)**

> "For me it is all about the memory and the commemoration of those people that gave their life over this fight. There should be more concern about the memory of those heroes. It's a historical memory and people that visit the place can say they feel proud about what took place here."
>
> **(Site Manager, Achyronas Liopetriou)**

The commercialisation of dark tourism was a concept that **Study Group 2** rejected. They mentioned that dark tourism, even of commercialised sites (e.g., those that charge entrance fees), is for its maintenance, restoration, and preservation. The collective memory of the victims is not affected by this.

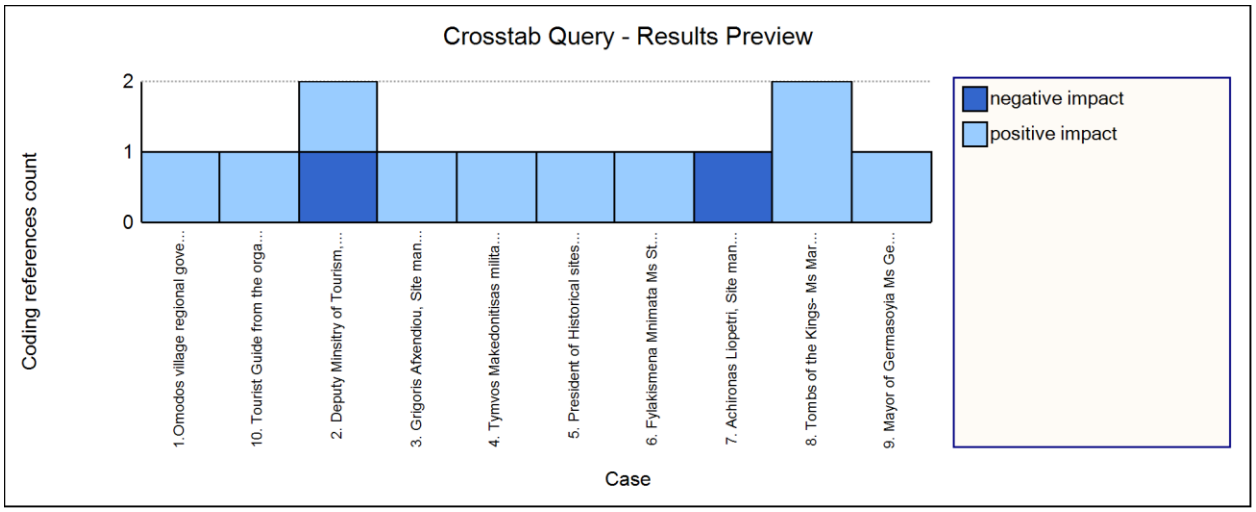
**Study Group 2**interviewees were divided over what the dark sites portray, and their opinions were different. History and culture were the main reasons mentioned for the further development of the sites. For the other half of the interviewees, education and learning are what the sites portray. Some of the site managers were people who were linked to the site in some way, or were even relatives of those who lost their lives in the events of the sites. For them the sites are sacred, and so is their future. Commemoration and remembrance are priorities as well.

### 5.3.3 Dark Tourism Impacts

Surprisingly, even though the majority of public sector respondents saw a lot of constraints in its future development, they still underlined that dark tourism could bring positive impacts if further developed. **Table 5.7**, below, indicates that the general perception of the majority of the respondents was that dark tourism would bring positive impacts to a destination. For instance, it was referred that showing an authentic disaster site, for example, can enable people to learn and

respect the history and legacy of a country. **Study Group 2**interviewees viewed that the positive impacts and effects of tourism development in general are far more beneficial than any anticipated cost. This is the reason that they mostly made positive references to beneficial effects of dark tourism development. Their views were around the potential improvement not only of the economy, but also the culture and care needed to preserve these sites. They held that it can even have positive effects in terms of the awareness of the cultural and historic values of the country. As the table indicates, two of the ten group respondents indicated negative impacts as well; they mostly concentrated on the complex political issues that could derive from such development.

**Table 5.7: Impacts of Dark Tourism: Positive and Negative**




> "There are lots of prospects in Cyprus for the development of dark tourism. For sure it will have a positive impact on society; the culture is all related with politics and culture."
>
> **(Tourist Guide, Cyprus Organisation of Tourist Guides)**

> "This kind of tourism can only bring positive impacts where it is developed. It can change the people's perceptions to an open-minded experience when visiting dark sites. People will be more willing to understand and value life."
>
> (**Military Representative, Military Cemetery)**

> "I believe that this type of tourism is all positive, economically and culturally. Since the potential is there, there could be positive economic and cultural impacts. The community can learn about confidence and courage when visiting these sites – even learn about peace and its importance. So, I only see positive impacts."
>
> **(Mayor's office, Yermasoyia)**

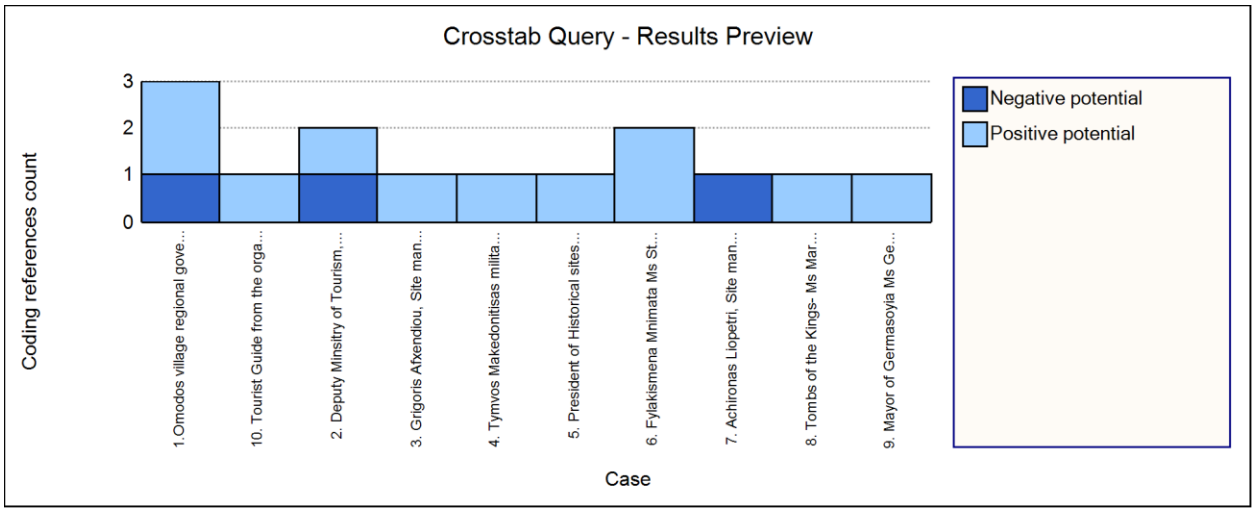
> "It is a very sensitive topic to develop as a form of tourism; it includes the historical events that perhaps only through educational institutions could be developed; otherwise it will create political problems."
>
> **(Representative of the Deputy Ministry of Tourism)**

The impacts of dark tourism development potential were viewed favourably by **Study Group 2**. The public tourism sector is as mature as the Cyprus leisure product. Economic benefits have always overshadowed any costs in the development of a tourist product. This is the main reason that this group of interviewees has seen positive impacts from dark tourism development.

### 5.3.4 Dark Tourism Potential for Development: Opportunities and Constraints

It was very interesting to note that half of the public sector interviewees saw positive potential for dark tourism development, whereas the other half saw a negative perspective. What is more important, though, is to note the reasons for these answers. For instance, the dark tourism site Fylakismena mnimata saw a negative potential, as there is physically no more space for development due to the fact that the site is situated within the Cyprus central prison. The representative of the Deputy Ministry saw no potential because there are other priorities for the ministry, like those projects that may have a more positive economic impact. It was expressed that only through educational institutions could dark tourism be perhaps further developed. **Table 5.8,** below, shows dark tourism potential as classified by the public sector respondents. The majority saw a positive potential (and thus opportunities), even if they referred to numerous negative aspects as constraints in the further development of dark sites.

**Table 5.8: Positive and Negative Perceptions for Dark Tourism Potential**




Concerning the potential for development of one of the sites that is located in the Cyprus central prison, it was noted that there is a restriction for further development due to its location:

> "I can say that this particular site has some issues, in that it is secluded. Bear in mind that the site is inside the central prison of Cyprus. From the one hand we have lots of security, but it is different in that anyone who passes outside can enter, but here is a secluded area…The site here cannot be further developed, it is exactly like it was in the year 1959, when the war ended; it has been restored and left like that."
>
> **(Museum Representative and Guide, Fylakismena mnimata)**

One of the colonial sites' managers emphasised that there are constraints to further development – that they do not receive any assistance from the local authorities or any other public sector department. Their organisation of historical sites (colonial sites) has total responsibility for the running of the site:

> "The local authorities are not really involved, as if the site is not of any importance. When it comes to development we are alone under our organisation (historical sites). We are a historical site and we take care of the preservation and restoration of the site."
>
> **(Site Manager, Achyronas Liopetriou)**

For one of the 'lightest' dark tourism sites, the Tombs of the Kings, at Paphos, the potential for development is not an issue, as the archaeological department of Cyprus is responsible for this site. This site is not really regarded as a dark tourism site, even though it is 'death-related', yet not atrocity- or morbid-related. The site does receive a large number of 'leisure' tourists that come to explore its archaeological significance.

> "There are graves that are very popular for their legacy and historical popularity. People don't really regard it as a dark site, as there is nothing morbid about it. Change and upgrade is constant here, and the potential for development is there, as the department responsible is very active in its promotion."
>
> **(Guide and Museum Representative, Tombs of the Kings)**

All public sector interviewees expressed that there are constraints hindering the development of dark tourism. Even those site managers that perceive dark tourism as hopeful, and that it could bring positive impacts, talked about opportunities, but also emphasised the constraints that exist. For instance:

> "There is a lot of potential for the development of dark tourism but the problem is always economical. It costs a lot to develop or redevelop and invest in such a site."
>
> **(Military Representative, Military Cemetery)**

> "There is a problem with the promotion of these particular sites; for example, the Organisation of Tourist Guides in Cyprus doesn't have any interest in including these sites in their tours. Even after we try to include them they are not interested at all. They only take the tourists to more archaeological related sites and other routes; these sites you have to go off track to find."
>
> **(President of Colonial Sites)**

> "Unfortunately, in Cyprus the culture is only revolving around leisure tourism, and usually it goes very slow and is a complicated process to develop anything else. So, I am not very optimistic about its future development, even if yes, we have the sites and the potential for development."
>
> **(Mayor's office, Yermasoyia)**

The views of **Group 2** interviewees over the positive and negative potential seem contradictory. They do see potential, as **Table 5.8** indicates, but then their opinions over the constraints restrict

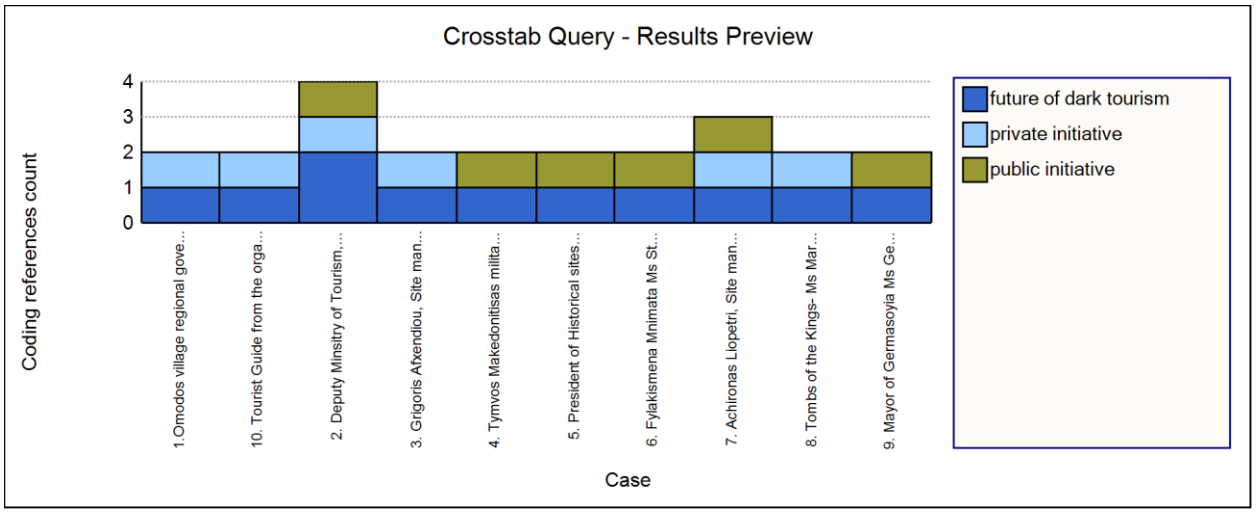
this potential for further development. The majority are not very optimistic about dark tourism development and underlined physical constraints, political constraints, but also the fact that Cyprus is only popular as a leisure destination.

### 5.3.5 Dark Tourism Development Future at a Conventional Leisure Destination

Even though dark tourism is identified as an important part of the whole tourism package and the public sector respondents see a real potential there for its future development, site managers, local authorities, and representatives of sites seem to have very different perceptions of dark tourism development. Since there is no one body responsible for these sites, the sites themselves are fragmented and isolated from the plans, organisation, and promotion within the tourism sector in Cyprus. As **Table 5.9** shows, the perceptions are split between those favouring public sector initiatives and others who think that there needs to be a private sector initiative for their future development. Even though, as the table indicates, there is a unanimous view that there are future prospects for dark tourism development, there is also evidently a split in views about which sector should take the initiative to plan and develop this type of tourism.

The public sector views are that the initiative should be started by both sectors with regard to planning and developing, but also by promoting dark tourism on the island.

**Table 5.9: The Future of Dark Tourism**




> "Yes, dark tourism has good prospects. But the private sector should also get more involved. Unfortunately, they are after profits and they overlook what is best for the country. These sites need more support from everybody. And for sure it will contribute further to the tourism product."
>
> **(Guide and Museum Representative, Tombs of the Kings)**

***Complicated Future as a Result of Politics***

For the reason of politics, one of the colonial sites' managers believes that there will be a future if the young generation changes their perceptions and embraces these sites as part of the history of the country**.** This site manager thought that the deputy minister should have responsibility for its promotion and development. For the same political reasons, the opinion from the Deputy Ministry of Tourism is that the further development of dark tourism sites does not have potential, unless it is for educational or academic purposes. The representative of the Tombs of the Kings also believes that the 'no interest' of public sector departments is a reason that the future of dark tourism does not seem bright.

"The historical sites should have been their (Deputy Ministry of Tourism) main interest but it is not. It should be in their strategies. Maybe because it has to do with the unfortunate result of the occupation, but for many people it has a negative perception."

**(Site Manager, Achyronas Liopetriou)**

"[…] through educational institutions, they could do this (dark tourism development). That's the idea of alternative tourism, not to become mass tourism in the first place. That's why I say only this target market of the political science students could develop dark tourism…or it can be connected with archaeological tourism if, with the assistance of archaeologists, again with special interest… but I guess there isn't too much interest."

**(Representative of the Deputy Ministry of Tourism)**

"[…] because for many and varied reasons it was a priority that other forms of tourism were developed and not dark tourism. Up until now the Ministry is not participating in these sites and personally I don't see this happening either."

**(Guide and Museum Representative, Tombs of the Kings)**

**Initiatives should be instigated from Both Sectors**

More initiatives are requested, even from site managers, in order for this type of tourism to become more popular:

"New and young people could be in a position to transfer this knowledge of events. We need people that will get involved in such a subject, so they can promote and project further these sites. It is a problem that nowadays a lot of people are somehow even afraid or reluctant to talk openly about historical events."

**(Site and Museum Manager, Grigoris Afxendiou)**

"People have a lack of information and education over this, they don't know what it is. And this is a problem. But there is lots of sufficiency and potential over dark tourism development."

**(Tourist guide, Cyprus Organisation of Tourist Guides)**

"Even though the site here is perhaps the most tragic site in Cyprus, it is about the history of Cyprus, so it needs to be further promoted, even if the Ministry doesn't bother with the promotion of these sites. This site is under the Ministry of Education

> and not Tourism, so I would expect them to get more involved. The schools come here for education and information, as do soldiers that serve in the military."
>
> (**Museum Representative and Guide, Fylakismena mnimata)**

The military cemetery is under the control of the military, but they seem more content with this, as they believe that if it was under the control of local authorities, no development could have taken place and thus there would be no tourism potential.

> "This site does not belong to the local authorities but is rather managed by the military. And I believe itis better that the military manages it, because it is taken care of much better, with much emphasis and promotion. The local authorities here are doing so many different things and projects, and it would have been a pain for them to manage this site as well. It's about soldiers that served the military and have died while fighting for Cyprus."
>
> **(Military Representative, Military Cemetery)**

The overall view of Group 2 interviewees was that even though they consider there to be a future for such types of tourism, in reality the constraints would eventually block its progress; they thought that there is no authority that is willing to take responsibility for the sites' overall plan or further development. It is politicised type of tourism, and physical space limitations were among the reasons for the difficulty in dark tourism development at a leisure destination like Cyprus.

## 5.4 Study Group 3: Private Sector Focus Groups

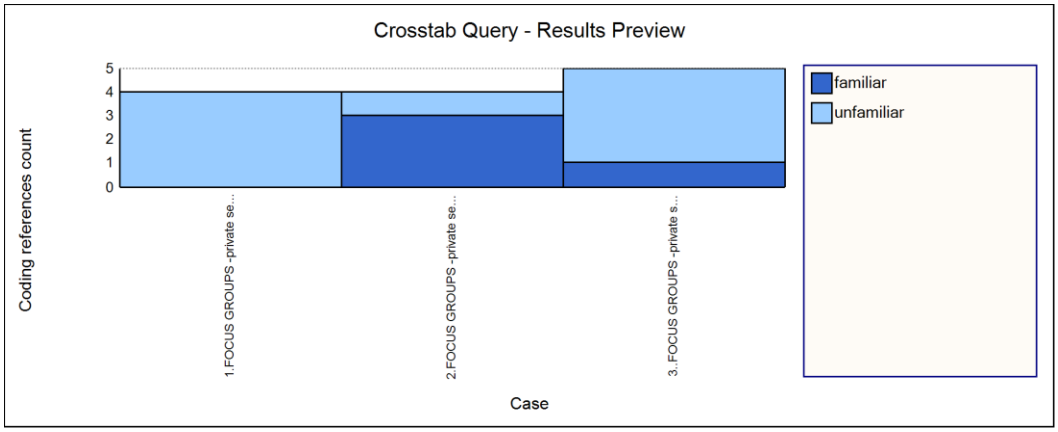
The third group of interviewees belonged to the private sector, comprising a variety of local tourism businesses. These businesses included accommodation, food and beverage services, and travel agencies. Focus groups participants identified the following factors as the primary issues that influence their perceptions, understanding, and experience of dark tourism:

### 5.4.1 Understanding the Concept of Dark Tourism

The first question was about whether they understand the meaning of the concept of dark tourism, and their answers were diverse. It has been recognised that although the name of the concept was

not familiar, it was albeit indicated that they view dark tourism as a special type of tourism. **Table 5.10,** below, shows that the majority of the focus group interviewees were unfamiliar with the concept of dark tourism. Nonetheless, even if some were familiar or aware of dark tourism, they frequently mentioned that they didn't understand what sites it included and what such sites portray.

**Table 5.10: Focus Group 1: Familiar and Unfamiliar**




In **Focus Group 1**, the discussion over the concept raised issues related to special interest groups and alternative tourism, but also their familiarity with it. With the exception of the travel agent, the other participants had never heard about the concept of dark tourism. One of the interviewees identified dark tourism from trips abroad, but they were not familiar with the name. They mentioned that even if itis an unknown concept for them, it would still seem interesting to visit such sites.

> "Yes, personally I understand what it is, but the name dark, I've never heard about it, but I know that it is about special interest groups of people that are after this type of alternative tourism. I have been abroad to dark tourism sites – for example, in a military cemetery in Russia – and it was a fascinating experience."
>
> **(FG1, Hotel Owner, M, 45-54)**

> **"**No, I have not heard about the concept before, but it sounds very interesting; it is a very specific type of tourism but I like it, only the name didn't sound familiar."
>
> **(FG1, Restaurant/Hotels Apts Owner, M, 25-34)**

> "I have heard about it from groups of people that want to experience such sites. I went to Auschwitz, and last year I visited the Cambodia killing fields. It is true that it is a special interest type of tourism, with lots of people visiting globally important sites and monuments."
>
> **(FG1, Travel Agent, M, 55-64)**

In the second group they were more familiar with the concept of dark tourism, but mentioned that there is a lack of information about what it portrays. In **Focus Group 2,** more participants declared that they had familiarity with the concept of dark tourism, but they did not have extensive knowledge about what it is actually about, and which sites are regarded as dark. Also, from their understanding, dark tourism is not a concept related to a conventional leisure destination like Cyprus.

> "I have heard about dark tourism before, but I don't have extensive knowledge on the topic. I know this type, as I have studied tourism and I have been informed. For Cyprus the potential is there, but perhaps not big."
>
> **(FG2-, Food and Beverage Manager, M, 35-44)**

> "I have heard about it as a travel agent but I have not looked at it in depth. Obviously, we have a lack of information, people don't know about these events. I have worked in the tourism industry for more than 25 years, and we have always tried to pass to the tourists a different philosophy when they come to Cyprus. Cyprus is about what the brochure says, 7-8 months sun, so they come specifically for the sun and relaxation."
>
> **(FG2, Travel Agent, M, 55-64)**

> "I have never heard about this type of tourism before. Now I don't know whether a tourist would come to Cyprus, especially to visit these sites. It is very difficult. Maybe for part of their leisure tour they could go to some excursions, but no more than that."
>
> **(FG2, Restaurant Manager, M, 35-44)**

The majority of participants in **Focus Group 3** had never heard of the concept, nor were they familiar with what it actually entails. For some it was reported that they generally find it interesting to know or learn about it. However, they did suggest that dark tourism sometimes falls under other concepts. Yet for some, their understanding led to more negative connotations than positive.

> "No, I have never heard about dark tourism before. I know, though, that it does exist as special interest tourism. From my experience it is a point of reference for every country, these sites or monuments. ...You can find it through historical, cultural, or church sites."

**(FG3, Hotel Group Manager, M, 35-44)**

> "I have never heard of dark tourism, and why use the name dark, it could be something else. Another name, perhaps more appealing. It wakes up the feeling of diabolical, black magic, and such things."
>
> **(FG3 (a), Travel agency, M, 55-54)**

> "I have never heard about the name but I understand it has to do with exploring places of interest, like Auschwitz, like Alcatraz."
>
> **(FG3 (b), Travel agency, F, 35-44)**

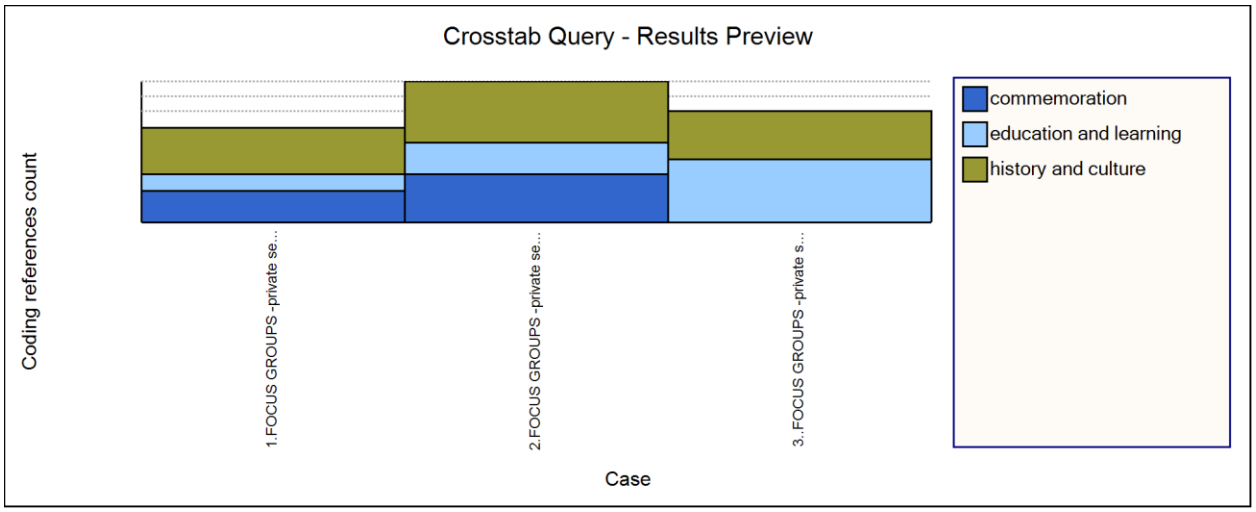
The three focus groups express similarly that the dark tourism concept is not a familiar type of tourism; nonetheless, the majority of interviewees find it an interesting one to learn and develop as well. Focus Group 2participants, although they found the concept interesting, do not regard it as a type of tourism that could develop further, especially in a conventional leisure destination like Cyprus. So, looking at it from a distance, it sounds interesting yet perhaps difficult, even impossible, to develop, with the lack of current information. Within Focus Group 3 the discussion was more directed on the negative connotation of the word dark, rather than a type looking to be developed.

### 5.4.2 Dark Tourism Visits

In all three focus groups, visiting experiences with dark tourism were mentioned, especially during international travel. Particularly, the majority of the interviewees had visited dark tourism sites in popular world tourism destinations. They agree that dark tourism in Cyprus does exist, and they are familiar with the sites under investigation, yet up until now they regarded them as being historic, or their existence is based on the commemoration of those that have died on the sites. This is because the concept of dark tourism is a recent phenomenon for most people. They strongly emphasised the fact that dark tourism has great potential for development in Cyprus, but there is a lot to be done for its further development. The participants implied that their visits contributed to their positive perceptions over dark tourism development.

**Table 5.11,** below, shows the focus groups' visitor experience with dark tourism as being associated with commemoration, history, and learning. For many, these types of visits were unique; others thought that dark tourism should exist only through history and learning, or just when people commemorate and remember those who have died. What is more striking is that in the discussions, majority of the three focus group participants said that dark sites are about the history and culture of the country, but also they referred to education and learning as part of these sites. Focus groups 1 and 2 also referred to these sites as being about commemoration. They held that people have to visit these sites and commemorate those people who have lost their lives in the events that are part of the history of the country.

**Table 5.11: Dark Tourism Visits**




In **Focus Group 1,** most informants had participated in a dark tourism visit to sites abroad, like killing fields and military cemeteries. They had also visited dark sites in Cyprus, but they linked them more with historical visits. From the travel agent perspective, tours are organised for tourists fascinated with dark sites.

> "As a hotel owner I personally take visitors to show them around to our sites in Cyprus. The reason is to show our visitors the history of our country. So I go to places like the Green Line, the hide-out place of Grigoris Afxendiou, mostly to show the culture and history of the country."
>
> **(FG1, Hotel Owner, M, 55-64)**

> "As a travel agent I take many groups of tourists to our sites all over Cyprus but mainly to the ghost town of Famagusta; we go on a small cruise ship and travel around to see the town where nobody lives, and it fascinates the tourists."
>
> **(FG1, Travel Agent, M, 45-54)**

In **Focus Group 2** the participants referred to their dark tourism visits as being associated with history, learning, commemorating, and remembering. Similarly, a few participants even linked them with sad emotions, negative and complex feelings. They therefore had extensive visits to dark sites in Cyprus, as they believe there are a lot of excursions to dark sites.

> "I have the experience of the Green Line, Fylakismena mnimata, Grigoris Afxendiou, Tombs of the Kings. The site itself can make you have a different experience; obviously it is a different feeling going to the place where heroes were hanged compared to the place where people were buried, like an archaeological cemetery. All these sites leave you with a feeling that some events/facts took place there some time ago, and some are sad events, yet they took place."
>
> **(FG2, Front Office Manager, M, 55-64)**

> "Of course, in Cyprus I have visited all major sites, and not only sites that fall under this concept. Some are there to learn about the events that took place, others are there for the memory of those that died."
>
> **(FG2, RIK Tourism Journalist, M, 35-44)**

> "My experience is about my visitation to the sites of Grigoris Afxendiou, the Green Line and Fylakismena mnimata.I believe that itis quite negative in the ears just to hear dark and tourism, but nevertheless it is linked with historical facts and events that visitors can learn something from."
>
> **(FG2, Restaurant Manager, M, 35-44)**

> "The Mari naval explosion should not be regarded as a touristic site, as it is about people that went to work and died because of political mistakes. People should not forget these people that died, but it is not about taking tourists there. It is just a sad place."
>
> **(FG2, Travel Agent, 45-54)**

In **Focus Group 3**, like the other two focus groups, the participants saw their visitor experience in such sites as linked with history, culture, and churches. Some stated that abroad, dark tourism is more popular, yet they have lots of experience from all the dark sites in Cyprus. In general, there was a perception that these sites have an emotional and unique acknowledgement and fascination for further exploration from tourists.

> "When I first heard the word 'dark', for sure something negative comes to your mind, that's why I say maybe the name should have been memorial tourism or tribute tourism. But now that I think about it, 'dark tourism' is indeed a unique name that gives you a fascination and an exploration tendency to find out more, so now I think itis not really negative. It's quite emotionally powerful actually, linked with history and learning."
>
> **(FG3, Hotel Group Manager, M, 35-44)**

> "I understand that these sites are linked with the culture and history of the place. In our travel agency we deal with alternative and special interest groups that have come to Cyprus for more than 25 years. It includes the study groups, and we take them all over Cyprus, and this type of tourism could have a good potential as well. But it is more popular abroad than in Cyprus."
>
> **(FG3 (a), Travel agency, M, 55-64)**

> "I believe it excites by the name, and abroad it is very popular. We need to promote this type of tourism, and make a lot of sites available for the walking groups we offer here in Cyprus. It is really strange that it is exciting yet unknown in Cyprus. Nonetheless we sell it and we have been dealing with it for so many years."
>
> **(FG3 (b), Travel agency, F, 35-44)**

When it comes to the commercialisation aspect of the dark sites, Study Group 3 noted that this might be a phenomenon, and they gave examples of dark sites that attract millions of visitors abroad, and spoke about the way they have become commercialised (e.g., Ground Zero NY – one of the most commercialised dark sites in the world). For this group it is imperative for their viability, not only as places of remembering and commemorating, but also a lot of them are business-oriented on purpose (e.g., the London Dungeons theme park).

For the majority of the three focus groups, visits to dark sites have taken place abroad, and this is where they have knowledge of dark tourism from. Dark sites in Cyprus were regarded as more historical, or they exist to commemorate and remember those that have died during the events that led to the sites. Especially, focus groups 1and 2 discussed the importance of commemoration that is linked with history, but also for the education and learning of the events. The only difference was that **Focus Group 2** underlined the complex sad feelings that take place when visiting dark sites. For **Focus Group 3,** dark tourism is about fascination but also about a desire to explore: something that the first and second focus groups did not identify.

### 5.4.3 Dark Tourism Impacts

All three focus groups perceived positive impacts from the development of dark tourism, yet they opined that it requires too much work to make this possible. Generally, the respondents cited that even though dark tourism is an unknown concept, they still perceive it as something positive that

could bring beneficial impacts where it develops. The three focus groups indicated support for dark tourism, which is influenced by their perceptions of the positive effects that it could potentially bring to the island. They seem to balance their knowledge over the positive economic and cultural effects. For example, they mentioned the economic benefits and the development of small businesses and investment opportunities, but also opportunities for the revival of local culture. However, the majority emphasised the lack of initiative coming from the public sector on dark tourism planning. The majority of focus group interviewees seem to believe that dark tourism could have a positive impact in a destination like Cyprus. For example, when the conversation turned to the impacts, they mostly expressed that economically and culturally, such a type of tourism could extend the season and open up new markets, and the returns would be greater than the costs of development. Yet for many, the impacts did not necessarily mean success, as all kinds of development could also have a negative effect on the destination (e.g., pollution and litter). Yet this was not regarded as an impediment to development.

**Focus Group 1** participants noted that the private sector is the only sector that could really develop dark tourism, but their emphasis is on making profit, so they would not be carried away by the emotions attached to these sites. Economically there were mixed thoughts on the impacts about the development of such types of special interest tourism, as it would not generate big returns, being a small market compared to the leisure market. Yet, other participants' outlooks were different, stating that it could extend the season and thereby generate substantial economic return. They also implied that the impact of technology and internet media today is very dynamic, and this should be taken into consideration. They mentioned that there are positive economic returns, but also cited that there are negative impacts as well.

> **"**The new trend in tourism today is experience. Not only to lie down on a sun bed. It requires branding and a story to tell to be included, so it can have some kind of echo to tourists. I believe there is a future {…} the economic returns will be small, as this type of tourism is small."
>
> **(FG1, AgrotourismApts Owner/manager, M, 25-34)**

> **"**Economically it is worth it. An organised tour – for sure it can be done, so they will stay in an area and the area will benefit and the country will benefit. There are

lots of things that could be done and lots of sectors can benefit. It requires more research and development in every area. There are lots of perspectives, but the impacts can be positive economically, and it could also bring lots of people, which could ruin the sites, so it could also turn negative."

**(FG1, Restaurant and Hotels Apts Owner, M, 35-44)**

"Maybe this type of tourism might be for the elderly more attractive. I work with people that are interested to lie in the sun and enjoy the sea, and you rarely see any young people asking or having any interest for any other type of tourism. However, it doesn't mean that there isn't any interest. All types of tourism have their positive and negative impacts and perspectives of how people see them. Considering that one of our main markets is the UK, I don't regard it as a type of monument that you should sell to them."

**(FG1, Hotel Apts Owner/manager, M, 35-44)**

**Focus Group 2** also saw positive impacts from the development of dark tourism, but only if there was cooperation between the two sectors. They do not regard it as a big market with sufficient impacts, but they believe the potential is there, and if used properly that it could be developed further, with the support of the local community as well. They thought that there should be an improvement of facilities, and in order for this to take place it requires advancement in research and planning. History is there to be used to attract tourists, but the potential alone is not enough if there are no real initiatives for development.

"As part of the private sector I believe that operators can work with offices abroad to be able to bring tourists that are interested in such alternative types of tourism. The tourists that come today for leisure holidays are also looking to have experience in visiting sites and monuments."

**(FG2, Food and Beverage Manager, M, 35-44)**

"As a travel agent in the private sector I would support it and I would be willing to offer it. I have the means and the way. But it doesn't depend on us completely. Let's don't forget that the last word is by the tour operators abroad, who we have to convince that it is worth it."

**(FG2, Travel Agent, M, 45-54)**

"It would be a positive impact to the country, the prospect of dark tourism, because the history is going to be learned, but it is required that they upgrade the facilities."

**(FG2, Restaurant Manager, M, 35-44)**

**Focus Group 3** participants were more intense in the belief that positive economic and cultural impacts could result from developing dark tourism sites. In agreement with the previous group, they stated that the worldwide market on dark tourism is huge, and there are millions of people who would appreciate and learn from the sites of dark tourism. Nevertheless, again the issue of the lack of support from the public sector was underlined, which is the biggest challenge to the development of dark tourism sites. The potential is there, but emphasis has to be given to the new generations to learn about the dynamic of this type of tourism, which includes part of the history and culture of the country. Once more, it was pointed out that the participation of both sectors is an important element in further developing dark tourism.

> "Dark tourism is part of the culture, so it is important to get it out there. Just imagine how many sites or monuments could be developed in so many villages, or in the countryside, which right now might even be unidentified or non-existent. Economically it would help the country a lot. And I don't think it requires lots of investment, as the sites are already there. […] There are people that want an active vacation to learn and be culturally enriched."

**(FG3, Hotel Group Manager, M, 35-44)**

> "The impacts can be positive for development. Yet, I noticed that the management of many dark tourism sites in Cyprus is outdated and there is absolutely no development of infrastructure. So, for it to develop and bring positive effects the public sector has to take it more seriously."

**(FG3, Hotel Manager, M, 35-44)**

For the majority of the interviewees of the three focus groups, the impacts of tourism and dark tourism respectively are considered as positive, overall. Their favourable attitudes are mostly because they consider that there could be positive economic but also cultural benefits. It was highlighted that the private sector businesses in Cyprus depend on the influx of tourism on the island. The positive impacts mentioned by the three groups were around the potential advantageous economic and cultural impacts. In particular, they believe that dark tourism could potentially develop small businesses, investment opportunities, and extend the season beyond the sea-sun product. Moreover, new markets could potentially be attracted, as this type of tourism has a large

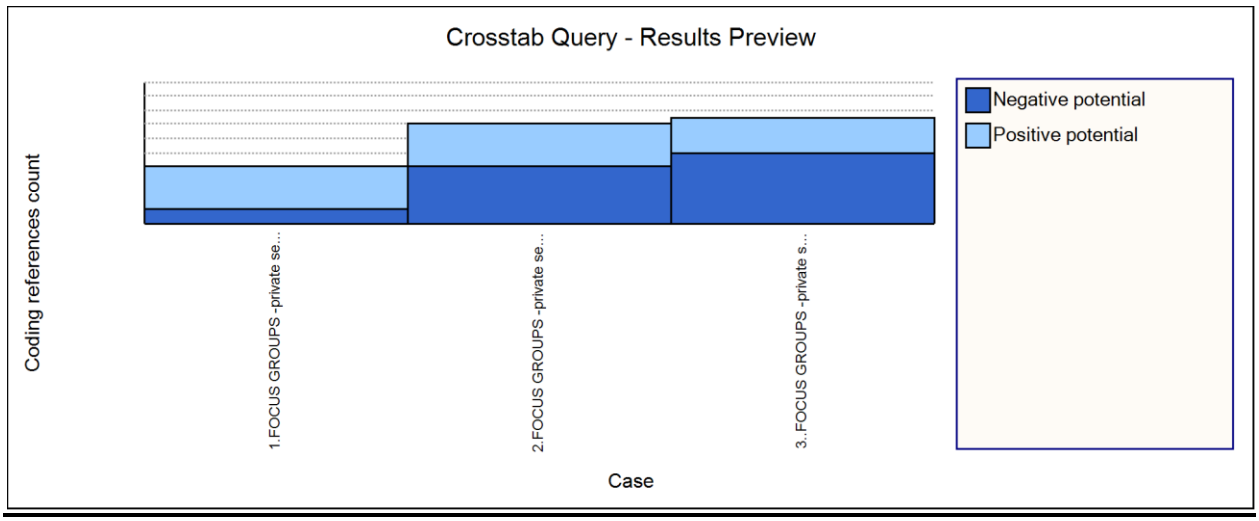
worldwide market. On the other hand, there were some noted differences between the three groups' views. For Group 1, the private sector is only looking for profits, and no emotions are taken into consideration. This type of tourism was considered to potentially bring only small returns, as it is considered a special type of tourism. Moreover, it would be uncomfortable to market it to people who constitute the main market on the island (UK and colonial sites). Members of this particular group also mentioned that the influx of tourists could ruin the sites. Even though Group 2 interviewees also talked about overcrowding and pollution, they believed that the overall economic impacts would overshadow any negative environmental impacts. This group also highlighted that this type of tourism might not provide direct economic benefits to the local community, and this may have an effect, according to their views on the effects of tourism. For Group 3, dark tourism is a big market, and economically it can help the villages and the countryside, in which tourism today is non-existent, as it could be developed with not a lot of investment.

### 5.4.4 Dark Tourism Potential: Opportunities and Constraints

The three **focus groups** have viewed a positive potential for dark tourism development. However, they mentioned that this potential depends on various factors, including a changing attitude from those that make decisions over tourism planning and development. There was some discussion over the fact that Cyprus is a leisure destination, and dark tourism is not a product that could change the overall tourism product. Yet, for commemoration and remembrance, dark tourism has a positive potential, since it is about history, and people should remember what has taken place. In the case of colonial sites, on the one hand they are historical sites, but on the other hand, the market for Cyprus is not made for developing such sites, as it is out of context with what the island has historically offered.

**Table 5.12**, below, indicates that most focus groups respondents regard the potential for dark tourism as positive. Nevertheless, they had very strong opinions over the fact that the positive potential is there if the public sector takes such development seriously and improves infrastructure, makes extensive promotion of such types of tourism, and includes it in its planning and organisation.

**Table 5.12: Dark Tourism Perceptions Over Positive or Negative Potential**




**Focus Group 1** participants emphasised the need to upgrade these sites further if they are to be successful. The public sector should take initiatives for its development, but they are not yet sufficiently involved, and there is not enough common ground between the two sectors, so this is a constraint to its potential development. The group in general stressed that there is a potential for development, but not at this stage, maybe in the future.

> "The private sector requires motivation, and if it is economic motivation, even better. But the public sector is not really close to the private one, so at this stage I don't see any common issues. So, this can be a constraint for the development of any type of tourism."
>
> **(FG1, AgrotourismApts Owner/manager, M, 25-34)**

> "It is a shame that our sites have so much potential, but nobody really cares, and they will be lost with time."
>
> **(FG1, Restaurant/Hotels Apts Owner, M, 25-34)**

> "I had a grandfather who was part of the historical struggle, so for me it is a personal obligation to commemorate these men who sacrificed their lives for freedom. Many of these sites are left with no interest, and it is important to get the new generations to create an interest in the legacy of the past, as from there something could start. There is a great potential but it has to be somehow recognised."
>
> **(FG1, Hotel Apts Owner/manager, M, 25-34**)

**Focus Group 2** participant's note that dark tourism could be developed further, but only if and when they minimise the constraints. These constraints do not allow this type of tourism to develop. The constraints include lack of information and technology, absence of planning, programming, while the facilities these sites offer have not been recently upgraded. Also, the image of the sites needs to be altered and perhaps emphasised more by promoting it as special interest tourism. In general, the group did not perceive the potential for development positively, as there are limited prospects, no recognition of their importance, and not enough sites.

> "The prospect of development in Cyprus is positive only if things change. There is a lack of information and technology, there is lack of marketing and promotion, so this is negative for the success of this alternative type of tourism."
>
> **(FG2, Front Office Manager, M, 45-54)**

> "I believe entirely that this can be developed and promoted as a special interest type of tourism with people that have an interest to experience this. I regard it as a thematic type of tourism."
>
> **(FG2, RIK Tourism Journalist, M, 35-44)**

> "The prospects of this type of tourism are very limited based on the sites that we have that are not recognised abroad, as somebody else just said. So, being a special interest type is not enough, plus the fact that we don't have any significant sites. Yet I would say that there are people always interested in learning the history and culture of our country. In such cases there are people who would show interest to go and visit these sites."
>
> **(FG2, Restaurant Manager, M, 35-44)**

**Focus Group 3's** discussion was over the fact that Cyprus is regarded as a 'three s' tourism (sun, sea, sand) destination: people come here to enjoy the weather and they do not want this to change and instead have dark tourism offered as an alternative type of tourism. Moreover, for such types

of tourism, nothing is done to promote it or even recognise it. Moreover, there is a lack of vision, and a lack of technology. Some participants note that there is a market for dark tourism and the potential is there, but things have to change. A participant from the hotel sector had a very strong opinion on the fact that Cyprus is a conventional leisure destination, and thought that promoting or developing anything else may backfire. Locals are not cultivated to believe in these sites' success and the potential is there only through commemoration and remembrance.

> "We are 4- 5 offices in Cyprus selling alternative tourism, and the market in Europe is huge. We all know that this type of special interest would work in the low months. It can extend the season to a summer sun destination like Cyprus, but I call tell you that the ministry doesn't help and doesn't really care. So even if there is a potential it is lost in the process."

**(FG3- (a), Travel agency, M, 55-64)**

> "I would say that personally it would attract me – even the name; it is something not known and people would be curious to experience something new. Imagine selling dark tourism in Cyprus and including its monument and sites; it could be so interesting and is something with a great potential."

**(FG3 (b), Travel agency, F, 35-44)**

> "Most monuments in Cyprus have to do with the Turkish invasion and the 1955-59 events, and we cannot really use them for promotion and attracting tourists. How do you promote these sites to our biggest market, the British, telling them these sites are the ones where we fought you? And 1974 is a boomerang as well, because the markets that visit us again – British, Germans, Russians – they have a neutral position towards the Turkish. Some may not even recognise the invasion. So our monuments and sites of this type don't really fit the type of tourists that come to Cyprus. It is very difficult for Cyprus to attract and enlarge this market on the island, being a conventional tourist destination."

**(FG3, Front Office Manager, M, 45-54)**

### *Lack of Trust as a Constraint*

Another significant constraint expressed by the three focus groups was the lack of trust in the public sector to make decisions, but also in taking actions and making decisions over dark tourism development. This lack of trust in the sector that makes decisions over any kind of development is obviously a constraint in its future success, as it can hinder cooperation between the two sectors, which was identified by several interviewees during the focus group discussion:

> "The public sector does not support us in the private sector. The Deputy Ministry of Tourism is sleeping, and no way do I trust that they can take any initiative for dark tourism development, they simply don't care."
>
> **(FG1, Hotel Owner, M, 55-64)**

> "The public sector is absent and not trustworthy. It will be a lost cause deal with them. If the Ministry of Tourism was private, it would have been much easier to develop such a new form of tourism, but they are all words and no actions."
>
> **(FG1, Travel Agent, M, 55-64)**

> "Unfortunately, there is no organisation from the public sector where they could manage its promotion from the Ministry of Tourism. But they don't really care to show even interest, they only show up in government meetings, so how can you trust them to put effort into a new type of tourism?"
>
> **(FG3, Travel Agent, M, 55-64)**

The three focus groups underlined, over the potential of dark tourism development, that dark tourism could provide opportunities for further development based around history and culture, which could potentially lead to attracting both domestic and international tourists through effective marketing and promotion. Dark sites could provide opportunities to develop areas off the beaten track/in the countryside, and into areas that are not popular with tourism. The groups mention that memorials serve as a reminder of the suffering and death of those who lost their lives during the struggle for freedom and the invasion on the island. The memorials provide commemoration and remembrance for those who died on the sites. A striking constraint that was emphasised by all three groups was about the lack of trust between the private and public sectors. This lack of trust translated into a lack of support, cooperation, and any initiative for actions on dark tourism, or

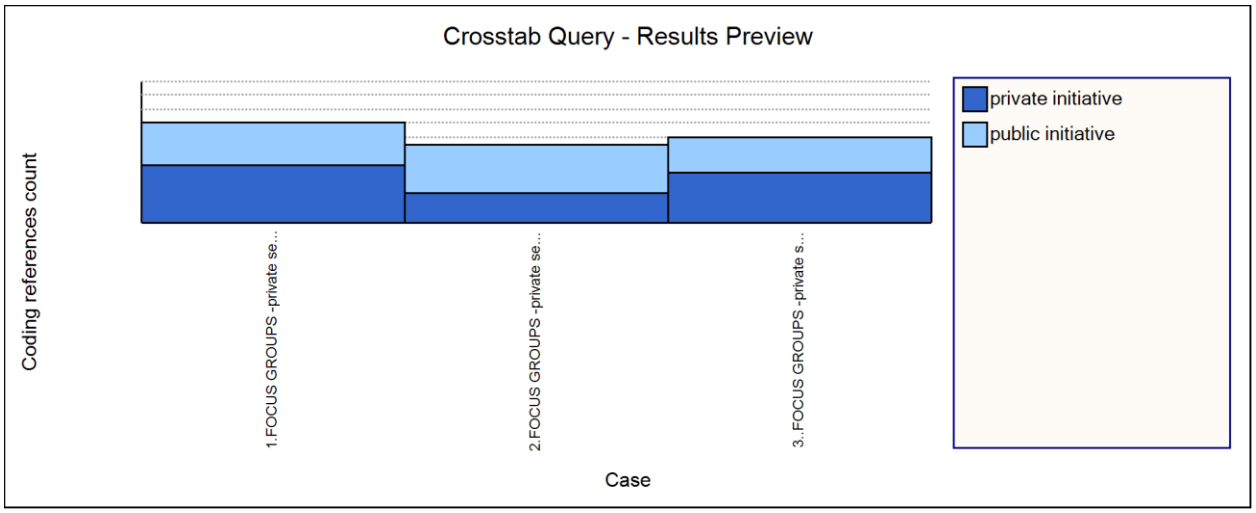
even tourism in general. For Group 1 the potential of the sites is there, but things have to change to make them popular for tourism. Group 2 emphasised mostly the constraints, which include lack of information, technology, planning and even a change of image. Group 3 opined that there is no real potential, and that the authorities should not even consider changing the direction of the tourism industry, as it is too risky. The potential is seen only in terms of the memorials to honour the dead.

### 5.4.5 Dark Tourism Development Future at a Conventional Leisure Destination

Focus group interviewees were very judgmental over the fact that the future of dark tourism mainly depends on the public sector, which they stressed is basically absent from any efforts towards developing this type of tourism. Their efforts in upgrading infrastructure, promoting the sites abroad, or even offering responsibility for the restoration or preservation of these sites, is not coming directly from the public sector, but from the organisations responsible for them. The private sector has been positive over the future of dark tourism in Cyprus, but only if there are significant changes in the way the public sector handles the planning and development of the sites. From their perspective, they are willing to put efforts to see dark tourism expand on the island.

**Table 5.13,** below, shows the perspective of the focus groups as far as responsibility is concerned over the development of dark tourism. The table shows that the focus groups' views are almost identical in their belief that initiatives should come from both sectors; these beliefs perhaps stem from different reasons, but their involvement, according to the private sector interviewees, is nonetheless equally significant and fundamental. All groups emphasised that the public sector should become more concerned with any development plans of the sites, and the private sector should assist these efforts by investing further in and around the sites.

**Table 5.13: Perceptions of Public and Private Sector Initiatives**




**Focus Group 1**members'opinions of dark tourism site development have been more or less disappointing in regard to the fact that there are conflicting perceptions of the public sector. They clarify that the private sector should have been the body responsible in the first place over these sites. Nonetheless, they believe that the private sector will not be involved if there are no financial incentives, and the best promotion should be the sites themselves and what they portray. As Cyprus is not known for such types of tourism, there should be an initiative to create a brand name so that it could be promoted further.

> "The private sector requires special officers that are experts on this type of tourism, so that they can promote it in Cyprus. There are several special interest groups/agencies that deal with alternative tourism, and they could take advantage of this type."
>
> **(FG1, Hotel Owner, M, 55-64)**

> **"**I think the best promotion is the product itself. Up to now, Cyprus doesn't have a strong name for such types of tourism. The key is to make a name, even though social media, and if it becomes popular it will become successful. But the public sector has to take it more seriously as well."
>
> **(FG1, Travel Agent, M, 45-54)**

**"**The private sector is not really involved at the moment. But once something interesting is initiated from the public sector, hopefully that would attract the tourists, and the private sector for sure will support further its development."

**(FG1, Agro Tourism Apts Owner/manager, M, 25-34)**

**Focus Group 2** interviewees remark that these sites 'belong' to the public sector. This is an opinion expressed by the previous group as well. The key is to improve relations with the private sector, so with investment opportunities, both sectors could be attracted to this type of tourism. Infrastructure is seen as being very basic, as leisure is the main focus of all those who take part in the tourism industry in Cyprus. The private sector is more active in development in general, but they have to create a strategic plan for its implementation. However, they regard the public sector as being absent from these initiatives.

**"**The problem of the private sector is that such sites are under the public sector and authorities, and it will not be so easy for the private sector to intervene. The private sector depends on making investments so that they get returns, but what should be done is to improve relations with the public sector to start with."

**(FG2, Food and Beverage Manager, M, 35-44)**

"The infrastructure is absent in those sites. So far, the private sector has had a minimum contribution directly to this type of tourism, apart from those operators that offer it. Perhaps this is because here our main focus is to sell the leisure product, so traditionally there was no effort to develop anything else."

**(FG2, Travel Agent, M, 45-54)**

"The private sector contribution, I believe, has a secondary role; first it has to come from the public sector, as they have to be politically correct, and then the private sector can intervene for the development."

**(FG2, Front Office Manager, M, 45-54)**

**Focus Group 3** informants expressed strong judgment over the fact that the private sector needs support on development plans of any kind. They believe the public sector is not there in supporting the private sector in any investment initiatives. So even though the market is big for dark tourism and there is a great potential for development, the lack of support, planning, research, or even identification of the prospects coming from the public sector make it very difficult for such a type

of special interest to flourish. The hotel sector should not be expected to create any initiatives, as this is not their responsibility, but they could support any decisions or initiatives coming from the public sector. There was strong disagreement between the participants over the fact that the British market would not appreciate the development of colonial sites (especially) in Cyprus, as Cyprus was a British colony up until 1960. One participant believed that we cannot expect the British to visit those sites, whereas a second participant believed that there is a British market for these sites, who are very interested to see what has taken place in former colonies. Moreover, it was believed that the local community should change their perceptions – first over the existence of these sites and then about their role in society.

> "It is unfortunate that in Cyprus there is slow movement in improving the infrastructure for anything else that is not sea-sun tourism. It is a shame. There is such potential but nothing is done."

**(FG3 (a), Travel agency, M, 55-64)**

> "It should start from schools, information and education; they do take them to school trips to all these sites all over Cyprus, but the problem is larger, it is a social problem. The sites are there, the potential for attracting tourists is great, and their development as well. But there is a lack of information about them and a lack of infrastructure development. Technology is also absent. The private sector is the only one moving towards this direction, but there is limited supply, maybe limited interest as well."

**(FG3 (b), Travel agency, F, 35-44)**

> "As a hotel manager, you are going to be positive if such (dark) tourists come. The hotels are there to offer their services to everyone, to whichever type of tourism; even clients that want exclusivity, we are there to offer for them what they demand. So yes, we are positive and welcome all kinds of tourism."

**(FG3, Front Office Manager, M, 55-64)**

### *The Future of Dark Tourism Development*

An interesting discussion that derived from focus groups was whether they view dark tourism as a viable type of tourism in Cyprus, which is a conventional leisure destination. It could thus be stated that the three focus groups had distinct views. The first group believed that there is a future for dark tourism in a leisure destination, the second group believes that in a conventional leisure destination like Cyprus, they don't foresee that this type of tourism can flourish, due to its constraints. Focus Group 3 views that dark tourism can flourish in a conventional leisure destination, but under certain circumstances that deal with the infrastructure and facilities. They held that even the sites themselves should be further developed and properly promoted. The following are views that were an assortment of different opinions from the three focus groups. For example:

> **"**I believe that there is a future in Cyprus to develop dark tourism. It is something new for Cyprus, but we have a rich history and culture. Of course, this is based on how it will be promoted from those that arrange tours from abroad, but it could develop. There are many tourists that visit dark tourism monuments."
>
> **(FG1, Hotel Manager, M, 55-64)**

> "The prospects of this type of tourism are very limited, based on the sites that we have, which are not recognised abroad, as somebody else just said. They are a special interest type, plus the fact that we don't have any significant sites."
>
> **(FG2, Restaurant Manager, M, 35-44)**

> "I believe that Cyprus is promoted for leisure tourism, and we have long concentrated on this type of tourism. So, change now has to come gradually, and by targeting specific markets. If, for example, I was a tourist interested in dark tourism or specifically to experience sites and monuments of this type, I wouldn't choose Cyprus, because it is not popular for this. The future is there if it's going to be promoted properly."
>
> **(FG3, Hotel Apt Manager, M, 25-34)**

With regard to the future of dark tourism at a leisure destination, the three focus groups have similar views. They see a future in the development of dark tourism, but first, initiatives have to be taken by the two sectors in order to initiate the first steps to development. The views of the three focus groups that were agreed by each one respectively were that they 'see' a future in dark tourism development in a conventional leisure destination. They mostly emphasised the constraints, the non-involvement of the public sector, and the lack of willingness of the private sector to develop any kind of tourism if the public sector does not get involved first. Yet they were positive about its future if the right steps were taken in this direction. These include upgrade of facilities of the sites, infrastructure, upgrade of technology, and image change, so the sites become more appealing. Another issue mentioned was that dark tourism could be promoted as special interest tourism, so that it can appeal to specific markets.

## 5.5 Combined Perceptions of Dark Tourism Development between the Three Study Groups

Combining the three group studies (local residents, public sector interviewees, and private sector interviewees), there is an indication of the views and perceptions through their responses. All three groups expressed that dark tourism development could have potential at a leisure destination. Although dark tourism implies death and disaster, in reality the perceptions of the local community appear to link it to the history and legacy of the places, so there is knowledge enhancement that the visitors could absorb, but also an opportunity to remember who has died at the sites. Thus, there are contradictory opinions over who should be involved in the development of dark tourism. The majority of interviewees first indicated that the two sectors have the ultimate say, and should be more engaged in the process of development. From the perspective of the two sectors, the findings show confusion over who shall be responsible for planning and development, but also if dark tourism should be included in the projects for development in the first place.

## Understanding the Concept of Dark Tourism

A general claim that appears from the interviews is that the concept of dark tourism is widely unknown in terms of what it is, its characteristics and its potential. Thus, even though they immediately pointed to its non-existence, the local community members changed their opinions once they understood what a dark site constitutes. It was identified that the local community members, within or outside the tourism sector, do actually have an understanding of the concept, as they have visited sites where death and tragedy has occurred. The majority of participants welcome the idea of developing dark tourism, yet there were some community members that refer to the concept of dark tourism as being negative, morbid, scary, and non-welcome.

Within the three local community groups, the majority of participants are unfamiliar with the concept of dark tourism. Some have never heard it before, others thought that it had nothing to do with tourism, while for others it was just an unknown word. Those who were familiar with it expressed that this was because of visiting dark sites, mostly abroad, and they have never connected it with dark tourism sites in Cyprus. The sites under investigation in this research were visited by almost all the participants, but they mostly regarded them as historic or cultural rather than dark.

## Dark Tourism Visits

As far as their visitor experience was concerned, a large number of participants stated that they have visited dark sites both in Cyprus and abroad. However, they link it with history, heritage, and culture, but also with education, commemoration, and remembering those who have died and are related to the sites.

The three local community groups had varied opinions and perceptions as to what their visitor experience in dark tourism sites constituted. The residents were firm about the fact that dark tourism and the specific sites under investigation are all part of the **history and culture** of the destination. The sites have to not only further develop, but also first overcome the politicisation complex of the events that led to the place becoming dark sites; additionally, those involved in

their planning and development have to reproduce the tragic events in a powerful way that can create an attractive atmosphere.

**Education and learning** are significant elements in the way the local community perceive the sites. Yet, according to the local community, the stories behind the events have to be structured for tourism purposes. The death and tragic events of the past have to be organised and represented in ways that attract tourism on the one hand but also respect the places of death on the other.

**Commemoration and remembrance** are also important factors in visiting the sites, and the groups specifically noted that it is imperative for the new generations to get to know these sites. Visitor sites that commemorate victims are very common in Cyprus, and for the locals they are important mementos of those who have died during the fights. This allows the locals to commemorate the conflicts of the past.

The following **Figure, 5.2,** shows the three themes with which the local community linked their visiting experiences with dark tourism. The diagram indicates the commonalities between the three groups' perceptions over dark tourism.

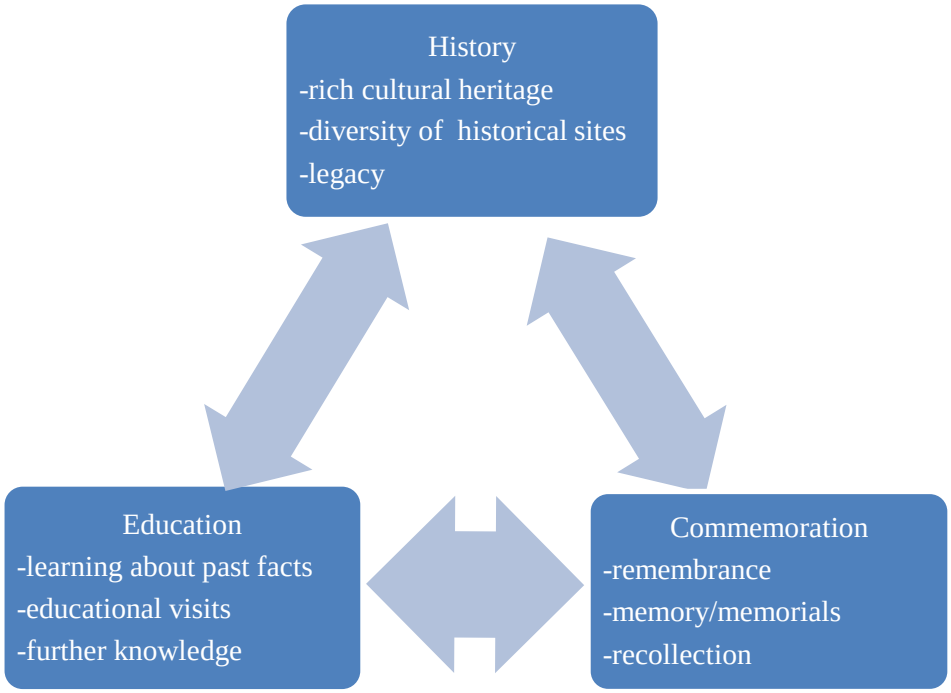



**Figure 5.2: Themes in Dark Tourism Visits**

***Commercialisation***

Another concept linked to the perceptions of dark tourism sites was that of commercialisation. In a discussion over whether they see dark tourism as commercialising the sites under investigation, most respondents from the three study groups were not in agreement. They do not view dark tourism as commercialising the history or culture of a place, a destination, or a particular site. On the contrary, they perceive that it can even be used to promote the sites, turn them into learning and educational spots, and inform the young generations about the events of the past. Moreover, those that did regard them as commercialised did so because they believe that commercialising them is a way of maintaining and preserving the sites. Even for those sites that charge entrance fees, they view it positively – that it can help in the preservation of the sites. Equally, for the ones who believe that dark tourism could be commercialised, they do not regard commercialisation as negative. They consider that it is only positive to keep the legacy of the events that have taken place. Even though most interviewees did not see it as a product that should be sold for financial gain, nonetheless they refer to commercialisation more as a way or a channel to portray both the

sites, but also the events that took place at these sites. In other words, they regard it as a positive means to reach people, especially the ones that are interested in the history and culture of the destination.

**Dark Tourism Impacts**

All three groups and all participants in the three studies have talked about the positive impacts that dark tourism could bring to the island. They regard it as an alternative type of tourism that could aid the destination by extending the tourist season, enhancing it with more economic benefits, but also with an opportunity for cultural development for both locals and visitors. They firmly believe that dark tourism can bring more positive than negative impacts. There were some participants who, although they expressed positive thoughts on dark tourism, also mentioned several negative impacts, like the increase in political frictions and misunderstanding between those who are not really in favour of developing certain sites. Moreover, there are sites that could only serve for commemoration and remembrance, and developing them further as tourist sites could cause negative feelings among the families of the victims, but also among local residents. For instance, the Mari naval base accident site is the most recent site that is under investigation, and the memories of the tragedy are still sharp.

**Dark Tourism Potential: Opportunities and Constraints**

The potential for dark tourism development is large, even at a conventional leisure destination like Cyprus. However, there were some locals who do not see any potential for exactly the same reason. At a conventional leisure destination, they considered that such types of tourism should not be a priority. Nonetheless, it could be promoted to those people that have a special interest in such types of tourism.

Within the local community groups, the participants stated that there are opportunities, but they also saw constraints in dark tourism development. The opportunities include infrastructure and technological advancement on the sites, more promotional efforts, but also enhancement of the

image of Cyprus, as being able to offer more than leisure tourism. The local resident group believed that both the public and private sector should set goals and seek more direction in the development of dark tourism, something that has not been done until now. They opined that the two sectors (public and private) should collaborate, communicate, and adapt to the fact that people worldwide are looking for new experiences while travelling. They also expressed disappointment over the public/private sector conflict that has existed through the years, and the fact that the two sectors are not collaborating or even accepting constructive feedback between them. These are considered the major constraints to dark tourism development in Cyprus.

For the public and private sectors (study groups 2 and 3), the opportunities for development are actually the sites themselves, yet these groups were not very keen (compared to the local residents – Study Group 1) on the potential of developing dark tourism in a leisure destination like Cyprus, which has always opted for a different form of tourism. They see opportunities on the one hand, but lots of constraints to future development on the other.

**Dark Tourism Development Future at a Conventional Leisure Destination**

The local community has generally revealed that they are in favour of dark tourism development, and that they would support any initiatives coming from the public or private sectors for developing dark tourism. The majority of the three study group interviewees perceive a future for dark tourism development. This future is based on proper decisions over planning and development, and minimising the constraints identified. There needs to be a tremendous improvement in infrastructure, image formation, branding, but also in upgrading the sites themselves. A negative perception of the actions of the public sector has been acknowledged within local community members, 'blaming' the lack of information and development and insufficient technological advancement and infrastructure at the actual sites on the public sector.

The residents had very strong opinions over the fact that dark tourism developments should start from public sector initiatives, while others believed it should start from the private sector. They underlined that the public sector has to agree to share responsibilities with the private sector, so as

to improve any practices for the development of dark tourism. Yet, according to the private sector, it should start from the public sector. It was underlined that the private sector should aim to catalyse their involvement in the wider development of tourism, and specifically dark tourism. The three local community group participants suggested that they should also choose to contact and cooperate with international organisations and businesses when it comes to the development of tourism. These organisations and businesses include tourism- related agencies or tour operation companies, for example, who have more experience and work more extensively with the market and types of dark tourism.

## 5.6 Chapter Conclusion

On the whole, the objective of this chapter was to present the findings of the three sets of study group interviewees who participated in the investigation.

Study Group 1 – Local residents indicated unfamiliarity with dark tourism, yet the majority had visited the sites under investigation. Their perceptions of the sites were linked with the historical events that have taken place on the island. Moreover, for the local residents, the dark sites in Cyprus are developed with education and historical orientation. Hence, they are positive about their further development, and indicated that dark tourism can bring positive impacts to the islands, both economic and cultural. Nonetheless, they identified a number of constraints that, unless they are eradicated, would mean that dark tourism could not develop further. For instance, they mentioned lack of public/private sector initiatives, lack of information and promotion, but also that the sites themselves are lacking facilities and infrastructure. Moreover, the local residents mentioned that the local community are not involved in decisions that affect them, like tourism development in general terms and dark tourism development more specifically. The future of dark tourism, based on the responses of the local residents, depends on the elimination of constraints, yet the local residents are supportive of any initiatives for its development.

Study Group 2 – Public sector perceptions reveal that half of them had heard of the concept of dark tourism before and the other half were unfamiliar. Even site and museum managers of dark

sites were unaware that such a concept exists. For them, the sites are historic and cultural, and are there to offer education and knowledge to the visitors. Moreover, they underline the importance of commemoration and remembrance of those who lost their lives in tragic events. The public sector has indicated positive impacts in dark tourism development – again just like Study Group 1 – mostly economic and cultural. The future of dark tourism in Cyprus was viewed with scepticism, as for some dark sites managers (especially at colonial sites), there was not much interest from the Deputy Ministry of Tourism or any other public organisation for tourism.

Study Group 3– Private sector focus group interviewees illustrated their perceptions, opinions, and visitor experiences over dark tourism and its potential future development. The results from the focus group considered the views of the private sector tourism businesses. Just like the previous study groups, they were also unfamiliar with the concept of dark tourism. This indicated that there exists a lack of information over what the concept is about, even for people directly involved in tourism. Those that were familiar with it have visited dark sites abroad. Again, this group, similar to the previous ones, regard the dark sites as historical, but also, they exist to commemorate those that died in tragic events. The majority of focus group interviewees underline that the sites under investigation have potential to offer positive impacts to the destination with the influx of tourists who are interested in this type of tourism. They talked about the positive potential of dark tourism, yet said that more initiatives should be carried out, especially by the public sector. One of the biggest constraints identified was the lack of initiatives by the public sector, which has been criticised by business people for having no intention to develop dark tourism. The lack of trust between the private and public sector was another constraint in any kind of cooperation between the two sectors. Between the three focus groups there were different views about dark tourism development in Cyprus. The first group believe that there is a future for dark tourism development, as there are ample sites that could be promoted. The second group discussed that there are many constraints hindering dark tourism's development, whereas the third group view that dark tourism can only be developed under certain circumstances, which include the development of the sites themselves.

The results of the findings show that even though dark tourism is an unknown concept, the local community sees great potential for its further development. Yet there should be a lot of work

between the two sectors (public and private) for this type of tourism to flourish. The next chapter discusses the findings of the research with reference to the literature review, all within the comprehensive aims and objectives of the thesis.

# CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

## 6.1 Introduction

This thesis was encouraged by the necessity for research that explores the perception of the local community over the development of dark tourism at a conventional leisure destination. Specifically, the research concentrated on dark tourism sites as a likely appeal on the island of Cyprus. Hence, the aim of this research is to investigate the perceptions of the local community over the development of dark tourism at a conventional leisure destination. This chapter deliberates the findings with respect to the research objectives (refer below), which have been created and used to direct the study in order to address the main research goal, and discussed in line with the theoretical framework of social exchange theory. Aligned with the perceptions, opinions, and attitudes of the interviewees, SET was used to understand the response of the local community to the development of dark tourism in Cyprus. Moreover, it could determine the overall perception of the local community regarding dark tourism development. These were the objectives that the study addressed:

1) To investigate critically how the local community (local residents, public and private sector) perceives the concept of 'dark tourism';

2) To identify awareness among the local community of what constitutes a 'dark tourism' attraction or visitor experience;

3) To explore the perceptions of the local community in further developing and promoting dark tourism at a conventional leisure destination, (such as Cyprus);

4) To evaluate how the local community might support/contribute to the development of dark tourism sites and visitor experiences.

To reiterate the aims and objectives of the study, the following part of the final chapter evaluates the four objectives set in Chapter 1. Each of the objectives have been examined and their main findings are presented. The aim was:

'To investigate the local community's views and perceptions towards dark tourism development, in an attempt to establish overall directions for dark tourism development and suggest effective tourism strategies and polices for dark tourism development**."**
The four objectives are presented and evaluated:

***Objective 1: To Investigate Critically How the Local Community (Local Residents, Public Sector and Private Sector) Perceives the Concept of 'Dark Tourism'.***

This objective delved into how the concept of dark tourism is understood by local residents. The examination focused on whether the locals are familiar or unfamiliar with the concept of dark tourism. There was no accord on what dark tourism means to the local population. Generally, and in the context of Cyprus, the local community expressed that they were not familiar with dark tourism. The majority expressed that they had not heard of the concept before and were not familiar with such a concept. When the researcher offered examples of dark sites there was an immediate reaction by the interviewees. They link it to the history and culture of the island and ultimately perceive it as a positive type of tourism for development. They mentioned that these sites in Cyprus are not considered sites of death, but rather sites associated with the death of heroes that have died for the freedom of their country. Many sites in Cyprus (especially colonial sites) are not granted much investment for further development, as there is a division in the perceptions of the locals about what they portray. This is because of the political influence – that it sometimes increases tension among the local population. Moreover, the interviewees label these sites as historical and cultural rather than dark. Their visits to the sites are based on their views that these sites should continue to provide an educational and commemorating base for the local population.

***Objective 2: Identify Awareness of the Local Community of What Constitutes a 'Dark Tourism' Attraction or Visit.***

In most cases, the interviewees pointed out that these dark tourism sites are significant, as through their visits there is evident linkage with the learning about the events that have taken place on the island, and the commemoration of those people that have died as a result of these events. Most of the sites under investigation were experienced by the local community through educational trips from a young age, but also from visiting these sites to pay respects to the heroes. Among the interviewees, the meaning or the significance of dark tourism experience differs. Local community perception of dark tourism affects the positive aspect of their visits. In general, the local community who have visited and are aware of the dark sites in Cyprus also spoke positively on dark tourism development.

Therefore, what dark tourism can propose is perhaps a stand for the local community to visit and use the dark sites for education, remembrance, and commemoration. Certainly, from the interviewees' responses it was revealed that they did not have any degree of morbid interest (as the literature acknowledges). Such sites are for the locals simply to remember the events of the past and link them with the island's history and culture. This position turns out to be a noteworthy finding.

***Objective 3: To Explore the Perceptions of the Local Community in Developing and Promoting Further Dark Tourism in a Conventional Leisure Destination (Such As Cyprus).***

The consensus is that the dark sites have both opportunities and constraints in their further development. There were interviewees (especially those directly involved in tourism) who viewed dark tourism in Cyprus as challenging, as the island is a leisure destination with very little facilities and infrastructure for dark tourism. For the local community, who see dark tourism as a possibility in Cyprus, they viewed that the island offers the opportunity to learn about the events of the past.

The opportunities comprise of learning and education linked to the dark sites on the island. The local community can get involved in the potential course of development on the island, as most of

them underlined. Concerning the constraints to dark tourism development, most interviewees identified several, of which the lack of public sector initiatives was seen as the most pressing. Nevertheless, if the public sector would offer opportunities through investment and incentives, these opportunities, jointly with public information and education, were seen as being a major approach to eliminate constraints. The private sector businesses could also benefit financially with the opening up of more opportunities for investment.

In the interests of comprehending the constraints that the locals attach to the dark sites, the literature notes that this involves various stakeholder groups that might not agree on their development (Laing and Frost, 2013). Consequently, from the local community interviewed, not all stakeholder groups associated with the dark sites agree that it is important or even appropriate to develop the dark sites further. For instance, there is no agreement between the stakeholders on the commemoration of certain sites. The findings of the research revealed that certain political parties lack the will or desire to commemorate certain dark sites. This was noted as a major constraint in the development of dark sites.

***Objective 4: Evaluate How the Local Community Might Support/Contribute to the Development of Dark Tourism Sites and Visitor Experiences***.

Even if the concept of dark tourism was not a familiar concept, by the end of the interviews the majority of the informants expressed positive views on the growth of dark sites. The interviewees underlined that if and when there are any kind of initiatives for the dark sites, they are willing to contribute to their development –for instance, through any promotional efforts, especially with the use of online platforms to distribute the information over the dark sites on the island. Their participation was regarded significant in the overall success of the growth of these sites, as they highlighted.

During the interviews it was suggested that there should be more recognition of the sites by the organisations and bodies responsible for tourism. To this end, it is fundamental that in the interests of facilitating the development of dark tourism, all local community groups, stakeholders, and sectors should be drawn in the course of planning and development of the sites. Moreover, there was overwhelming support from the interviews for dark tourism development in Cyprus. Yet, to achieve this there will need to be a more liberating perception, especially among those that plan

and develop policies. The future of dark tourism is dependent not only on the planning but also on the management philosophy that the sector would choose to follow. The political climate on the island is not in favour of developing the dark sites under investigation, and this can hinder its potential success.

## 6. 2 Local Community Perceptions towards Dark Tourism

### 6.2.1 Perception of the Concept of Dark Tourism

The majority of interviewees from the three study groups were unfamiliar with the concept of 'dark tourism'. Their perception of the sites was mainly historical or cultural, so they did not knowingly go to visit them because they are considered 'dark'. Based on the findings that were gleaned from the interviews, locals visit dark sites in order to gain further knowledge of what has taken place on the actual sites, or the events based on the sites. Most interviewees emphasised that they based their visits on the educational but also the informative features. Their responses agree with research conducted by Dunkley (2005), who mentioned that people visit dark sites because of the learning aspect. Moreover, the assertion of the importance of recognising the events that took place, the affirmation, and their recognition of these should be added. This seemingly can raise the idea that locals put emphasis on the educational component of their visitor experience to dark sites.

The greater part of the interviewees was affirmative about dark tourism, and were likewise in disagreement with any notions of negative connotations over dark tourism being immoral, disrespectful, or insolent to those who died. The local residents strongly agreed that dark tourism should be supported in Cyprus more dynamically. Then again, they were not in agreement with the idea that if more tourism came as a result of dark tourism it would bring negative effects to the island. In other words, they do not believe that any potential adverse tourism effects would result and have any significant negative impact on the island.

Another stated reason for how dark sites are perceived is remembrance and commemoration, which take the form of memorials, and in most cases take place yearly.

The memorials that are organised by specific organisations are made to honour the individuals who have died during the traumatic events on the sites or on the island in general, and are buried on the site. For many locals, taking part in the memorial is not only a matter or respect but is also a recognition of the significance of the history of the country. The memorials that usually attract visitors are from the colonial era, the Turkish invasion, but also the accidental naval base explosion, which resulted in a tragic aftermath. These events resulted in the sites acquiring dark characteristics. As displayed in the findings (Chapter 4), a number of interviewees state that it is mandatory for the locals to visit a memorial. Through this comment, the connection with the argument that memorials link the locals with the past is verified. Specifically, Study Group 1 (local residents) Interviewee 10, F, 25-34 stated that she went to the memorial otherwise she would have felt guilty or ignorant, or just feeling that she did not care about those people who have died during the struggle for freedom. This is affirmed by various authors (Forsdick, 2014; Pendleton, 2014; Allar 2013), who have mentioned that many sites of dark tourism engage in a significant function in the political scene, but also in terms of individual and communal memory and remembrance.

Moreover, Cai et al. (2022) note that dark tourism is consistently associated with sites of war, ethnic, and national tensions, and conflicts. The above-mentioned sites fall under this category, and in addition, local community interviewees mentioned that these sites are connected to collective remembrance and patriotism. The desire to learn history for educational purposes is found to be the main motivations of the locals' visits. From Study Group 1 of the local residents, Interviewee 38, F, 18-24 claimed that these dark sites on the island are about history, and the locals would want to gain more knowledge about it. This interviewee noted that history was a compelling factor in visiting dark sites. For some others, however, it was not only the learning aspect that inspired their visits to the site. They also considered that the local community needs to keep the memory and remember the events, so that the omissions of the past are not repeated. According to Bigley et al. (2010), people have a need to learn more about history, and based on Isaak and Cakmak (2014), the wish to expand the learning aspect of visiting dark sites is also worthy of any promotional efforts. This study identified that for the locals, their visiting experience was based on the desire to honour, just like Brown (2015), who noted the urge of many to visit graveyards. The findings of this study back up Stone's (2015) view that heritage sites that deal with death have

this common reasoning behind their existence, which include keeping a memory or educating. For example, from Study Group 1, of local residents, Interviewee 16, F, 45-54 noted that it was about learning history, and that it is important to remember exactly what happened during that time. This could unravel the position that some locals were interested in the learning aspect, as they were inclined to judge the people who were responsible for the tragedy (for example, the Mari Naval base accidental explosion). Their visiting experience, depending on which sites they were visiting, was based on their need and desire to find out about the history of the places, while for others it was just to confirm what actually happened there in comparison to what they knew before visiting (for the colonial and Turkish invasion sites). For the Mari naval base accident, they wanted to see what the political mistake had caused, as many interviewees stated.

Another aspect of their visits was obviously not touristic, as they underlined, but to show respect to the dead and their families, who are also considered victims of the tragedy. This was indicated by another local resident of Study Group 1, who stated that "we should pay our respects and honour to the heroes of the past and to the heroes of more recent events" (Interviewee 11, M, 45-54). The local communities' positive perception of dark sites affects their visits, but also their knowledge over what has taken place at the event, which has led to the creation of the dark sites. Those locals who were aware of Cyprus' past history had a positive experience from the sites. Actually, most local community interviewees from the three study groups mentioned this, and emphasised positive views from the sites visited. Perhaps the only exception was the Mari Naval Base explosion, where most locals interviewed had not been there after the tragic accidents, yet they expressed that the dark site development might be able to prevent any other dark event taking place by providing a reminder of the tragedy that took place and left a disaster behind.

### *Dark Tourism Linked with History and Culture*

The findings in this study have indicated that the local community interviewees, even if they were not familiar with the concept of dark tourism, have declared that they had all visited dark sites. In fact, the dark sites had a special significance for the interviewees, yet the meanings they attached to these sites were historical and cultural.

Moreover, they did not perceive their visitation experience as anything related to 'dark'. Instead, tourism to the sites under investigation was based on their wish to learn and become familiar with what events had taken place on the sites and what particular stories the sites have to tell. Another interviewee expressed the desire to honour those that have died and a longing to remark on the strength and courage, especially of those young heroes that gave their life for the struggle for freedom. There is also a theory which posits that dark tourism is also dark leisure (Yan et al., 2016 and Light, 2017, p. 281), but that also entails that dark tourism is not necessarily linked with death. For instance, if there was death as a result of war it does not mean that there is a morbid narrative behind the events that led to the war, and the war itself was not concentrated around death. The informants linked the invasion and occupation, but also the colonial struggle, more to history, and to those people that have died for their country. Their death was more acknowledged to foster pride within the population, and the interviewees referred to it as a struggle for freedom. Heap (2016, p.94) argues that dark tourism endeavours to present death through what is referred to as the 'glory way' and that there is nothing 'right and wrong'. For this reason, for the local community, dark tourism is confirmed as a 'light 'phenomenon, and their visits to dark sites are seen more as something even beneficial.

### *Dark Tourism Linked with Education and Learning*

Despite the perceived limitations by the interviewees, all of the research sites and museums appeared to have a bearing on people that live in the areas around the sites. This shows that the sites under investigation exist to educate the public. They wish to get further knowledge about the sites and their relation to the history of the country. Certain locals felt an obligation to make visits to the sites. Educational tours to these sites are part of the school curriculum, and during the school months there are extensive visits to the sites. These visits are linked because they are taken there

on school excursions. This was rejected by the Grigorys Afxendiou site and museum manager, who added that the young locals come because they want to connect with the struggle for freedom and see from close by the death site of the heroes they have heard about in class. This appreciation of the heroes is consistent with Brown (2015), which indicates that the people who visit dark sites feel closer to the heroes. The three study groups of the local community considered it necessary to visit some dark tourism sites, as it enabled them to draw a parallel to their history. This also agrees with Clarke and McAuley (2016) and Tinson et al., (2016), who highlight that dark tourism creates opportunities to affirm the peoples' senses of nationhood.

Local community perceptions of dark tourism affect aspects of knowledge. The interviewees of the three study groups indicated through their responses that they have the desire to understand and learn about the past history of conflicts. Moreover, for them it is also about getting a sense of thankfulness. In other words, they feel grateful for the sacrifices from those that died. For the locals, dark tourism can be a means to educate, especially the younger generations, in order to avoid such events of the past.

The dark sites were perceived as places of remembering and learning, but also as places where people experienced agonising times. One of the interviewees (Interviewee 16, F, 25-24) mentioned during their interview that these places take you back to those turbulent times of death, and this underlines how people perceive these sites– as places to remember those that suffered and died. The research sites and museums have a mission to pass their history to younger generations, and this is a reason why there are a lot of school educational trips to the sites. The literature suggests that museums have adapted to include contemporary developments, with an eagerness to integrate the experiential learning in displays (Gibson, 2016; Sodaro, 2013).

There is a limitation concerning which sites are used only for entertainment purposes or only for the purpose of education, or perhaps they exist amid a different intensity of darkness. The findings from this investigation underline a distinctive point that is linked with the visits. It is attributed to the supply side and it includes 'learning purposes' and 'educational purposes', but is lacking the 'entertainment purpose' in all the sites under investigation. Research outcomes illustrate that the

visits to dark sites are not really related to ‘entertainment ‘according to Foley and Lennon (1997, p. 155).

The current research findings show that for some local community members, a dark site has a learning aspect, but also a remembrance feature for the heroes, to show respect for their death through the memorials that usually take place every year. For other locals, dark tourism covers a different historical message that might challenge what they had known or understood so far from the sites. According to Sharpley (2009, p. 14) the ‘entertainment’ seems to be surpassed and substituted by what is referred to as humanistic and historical values that the dark site conveys to the people. This was especially the case for the colonial sites and the Turkish invasion sites, where the local community emphasised the educational and learning aspects of the existence of the sites, but also what they display. The literature argues that it is a controversial aspect of dark tourism supply to distinguish between sites that display, for example, human remains and/or their personal belongings, and those who don’t. Within this study, several sites did display photos of the dead (such as a burned body of a hero), but also their semi-burned personal belongings that were collected from the hide-out place and are displayed in the museum in their memory. Dalton (2015) argues that the ethical or moral issues linked with dark tourism may act as a negative catalyst for development. From this research, this was not something that was identified, as for the local community interviewees, the display of the heroes’ belongings was referred to as being of ‘monumental significance’, and even expressed a sense of ‘proudness’ for the hero. However, the other side was also expressed. For instance, within the focus groups discussion there were hotel managers who stated that ‘death is offensive’ (Dalton, 2015), and that Cyprus is a leisure destination and should not be considered as a place for dark tourism. Yet again, they did support its development, since they regard it as ‘special interest’ tourism.

### *Interest in Death and Remembering – Commemorating*

The findings of this research oppose parts of the literature which say that people visit such sites because they are interested to witness the ‘death ‘of others (Sharpley, 2009, p.14). The colonial struggle for independence (1955-59) and the Turkish invasion (1974) are still recent major historical events. For these two types of sites, the local community still has vivid and sorrowful memories, as there are people who got involved in these two events and are there to tell their

stories. For them it is still a profound, disturbing, and doleful experience to visit the sites. However, they do not connect them with a 'death' experience; rather they attach different meanings, which include the struggle for freedom and national pride. The locals have respect about what happened in the past, which ultimately guide them to the present and the future.

The three study groups under investigation emphasised that keeping the memory of the events and those that lost their lives at the dark sites were the reasons for visiting these sites in the first place. According to one interviewee, "the memory of the tragedy should be maintained for both for the locals but also for international visitors." The locals indicated that the sites are part of the modern history of the country and should not be left out of its memories. Timothy (2014) considers that memory is an 'immaterial element' that should be protected. Having visitors to the sites gives locals the opportunity to protect the memory of these sites. Moreover, particularly for the site 'Green Line', the locals expressed that by talking to the visitors about what has taken place at the site, they protect the memory but also continue the story of the war and occupation. This was also stressed by the military cemetery representative of Study Group 2 (public sector), who argued that the site is there and should not be forgotten, as it represents an ongoing political problem.

Notwithstanding that, it cannot be denied that dark tourism can lead the way to uncover what has taken place in the past during wars, losses, or even death. It can be regarded as a bridge to connect all the aspects of history and heritage in one amalgamation of experience. These experiences are distinct from other types of tourism that offer people a meaning for their culture, history, and heritage in which there is a connection to the site that can ultimately add to the visitor experience in a unique way.

The interviewees understood the sites under investigation in terms of carrying both positive and negative connotations. Ashworth and Isaac (2015) identified numerous emotions linked with dark tourism (e.g., sadness, fear, or anger). The interviewees in this research link the sites as educational and historic, and the emotions that have been mentioned were anger and sadness as a result of the aftermath of the clashes. Moreover, the locals used more illustrative words to express the feel of the sites: places of freedom, sites of heroes, or places of inspiration. Some locals also mentioned positive effects that emerged from their visitation. They referred that their visits could provide

inspiration, and that these were special places where young people can learn a lot about the history of the country. Also, they distinguished them as places of hope, reverence, and admiration. This is where some interviewees disagree with what dark tourism brings to the modern world, in that events could also be shaped in a different way.

In terms of any negative perceptions of the research sites, the interviewees also mentioned that these places can be depressing and disturbing places. For instance, the site Fylakismena mnimata, which was inside the Cyprus central prison, included the hanging area for convicted prisoners and their resting place. For the locals, this site is considered one of the darkest in the history of the country; they regard it as unfair, disgusting, and a place of complete sadness. Also, the Mari Naval Base site was viewed as a place of man-made political mistakes that led to a big tragedy. Yet, most interviewees were not in agreement about the site being developed as a tourist place. They only make visits to the site to pay respects to the men that died there.

Pertaining to the present study, the interviewees did not attach any negative perceptions to their visits. According to Braithwaite and Lee (2006), visits to dark sites could be made because people want to deal with 'grief'. The findings of the current study did not show grief as a reason why locals visited the research sites, with the exception of the Naval Base accidental disaster, where it was mentioned by several local residents that grief was something they felt when they got there and saw the memorial dedicated to the 13 men that died there. There are also studies that ascertained that tourists, when visiting such sites, might feel shock, grief, and sadness (Isaak and Çakmak, 2016; Leyanage et al., 2015). Dark tourism sites can be used as an opportunity to think critically about current world events (Isaak and Çakmak, 2016; Brown, 2015; Leyanage et al., 2015). This study showed that the local community is influenced today by the events of the past.

There are different classifications, attributes and diverse characteristics of dark sites. Kang et al. (2012) confirm that there is an assortment of distinct sites that are linked with dark tourism. It has been identified from the findings that dark tourism in Cyprus does not include major dark sites that attract large numbers of visitors. Nor have any sites or attractions been purposefully developed to attract dark tourists; places of memorialisation around the country have become popular with the locals because they can uncover meaning, and how the historical events that are represented have

shaped the community. According to Sharpley (2005, pp. 224-225), these have “become tourist attractions by accident".

For instance, war sites are presented as encompassing politics. The sites under investigation do indeed fall under different categories, with diverse attributes and characteristics, and can be even classified from ‘lightest’ to ‘darkest’. Moreover, more recent events are also regarded as ‘darker’ than those that have taken place a long time ago (e.g., in past centuries). In particular, the accidental naval explosion at Mari that killed 13 people is considered by the local community as one of the ‘darkest’ sites on the island, and it is argued that this site should not be selected for touristic consumption. A reason for this is because more recent tragic events are considered ‘darker’ than older ones.

This was mentioned by local community interviewees, who gave very ‘emotional’ responses with regard to this site. For instance, in the focus group discussion it was stated that this site should not be touristic; it was a political mistake and the site where 13 people lost their lives is, according to the interviewees, an emotional and sad place. It should not be considered a touristic site but one for the memory and commemoration of the people that died and their families.

***Commercialisation of Dark Sites***

Another aspect of the locals’ perceptions of dark tourism was linked with the commercialisation of the sites. The locals did not perceive that dark tourism sites were commoditised in any way for the purposes of income generation. Since the concept of dark tourism developed academically, so did the questions on whether it is acceptable to benefit or gain from sites which are connected to people that have suffered and that in some way affect some part of a society. Concerning the business side of the sites under investigation, the study identified that the sites were not intended in any way for financial gain, even the ones that did charge entrance fees (e.g., Tombs of the Kings, Paphos). No fees were levied for the rest of the research sites. Regarding commercialisation at the sites, it was identified that the local community did not view them as being commercialised.

According to dark tourism scholars, the aspect of commodification can also include misrepresentation of historical events to provide entertainment, gaining profits, and not to represent what has taken place. Based on Chen et al. (2017), commercialization is not the only aspect of dark tourism. Consequently, the perceptions and views of dark tourist sites by the local community could bring about benefits and costs to society (Chen et al., 2017, p. 351). The local community in Cyprus expressed that the public sector has to be able to comprehend the demands of the local community in a way that historical events are commoditized make economic benefits, but still share what exactly has taken place. In fact, the local community in Cyprus stressed this in a similar way. They specifically noted that they do not see dark site development as turning it into commercial places. Rather, they view that dark sites should be developed and further promoted, as they contain historical and cultural events of the country that more people should be aware of. Hence, this development and promotion should be undertaken in such a way that they do not disrespect those that have died or their families.

Two interviewees mentioned that they don't see the sites as being commercialised,because it is about history and history is always written by death [….]: "So you go inside history and you check it out maybe out of curiosity or maybe because it interests you. Or maybe you go back to your roots. When we visit such sites it is to learn what happened. It is for sure an educational and learning experience." (Interviewee 14, M, 45-54). Another interviewee emphasised that: "There is no commercialisation here, but I would not put a personal tragedy in front, so the right messages need to be indicated and not to promote the suffering of the relatives, for example." (Interviewee 28, M, 35-44). One central precept of the commodification process is that visits can include a business aspect. Thus, commercialization is one of the scopes of commodification. The question that is raised is if profit should be made as a result of exposing dark sites, and at what level it could be acceptable byte public. Today, as a result of technical devices and technology, it is possible that dark sites can reach a broader audience. Seaton (2009, pp. 87-88) notes that there are sites that have the intention of attracting a large number of people. These sites are regarded as the 'lightest' version of dark, due to their disposition. This research has identified that. Specifically, the site Tombs of the Kings (the resting place of rich aristocrats from the Roman period) is considered mostly an archaeological site rather than anything morbid. Hence, it belongs to the 'light dark attractions'. Moreover, the local community interviewed have asserted this as well. The site

representative who is responsible at the site noted that this site is well known for the archaeological aspect rather than dark interest. People that go there do not really relate it with something dark, or about death (Study Group 2, public sector, Tombs of the Kings, site representative and guide). Moreover, a local resident interviewee also talked about this along similar line, that: "The Tombs of the Kings are not considered morbid, it was more like going to an open-air museum, where you see the place people are buried, and things from the past." (Interviewee 9, M, 55-64).

People's recollection is sometimes substituted for a shared one, and as more and more people visit these places for respect and value, they can be used for profit making. This was mentioned by the local community interviewees, yet not in a negative way. They underlined that even if dark sites are commercialized, this is a way of making them popular, and making events known to people who had never heard about them. Moreover, they did not agree that the dark sites should become businesses, but that they should keep the memory of those that have died in those places. Thereafter, these places can be further developed and be used to pay respect to the victims, but also to their families. Thus, this agrees with the words of Seaton (2009, p. 77), that if a dark site is established as a business it can assist in its preservation and even benefit the community. The local community study groups highlight this by saying that just like other forms of tourism, dark tourism could also be used for financial returns, which could enhance the communities around the sites, but also, and more importantly, assist in the commemoration of those events and those who have died during the events.

### 6.2.2 Awareness of Dark Tourism Sites through Visits

In an attempt to provide a more integrated view of dark tourism, Sharpley (2009) attempts to incorporate supply and demand factors and Stone (2006) distinguishes between dark, darker, and darkest sites in a projected spectrum, which span from the lightest to the darkest sites. The following contains a review of the dark sites under investigation and the perceptions of the three study groups as to whether they perceive them as dark, darkest, or lightest, and whether the supply of the sites is on purpose or accidental.

The perceptions of the local community interviewed referred to the research sites that were considered really dark, and those that were regarded as being more 'light'. For instance, the Tomb

of the Kings in Paphos, which is a resting place of rich aristocrats, was rather seen as more of an archaeological site rather than anything containing death or a morbid experience. This was also confirmed by the representative and tourist guide of the site, who stated that the people that visit the place make no reference to death, but rather they are curious to see and experience the resting place of the ancient aristocrats and learn about the ceremonies and processes that were taking place during the time of their burial. This site could thus fall into the category of pale tourism under Sharpley's (2009) holistic view of dark tourism.

Further, the people that visit the military cemetery in Tymvos Makedonistissa, Nicosia, referred to the place as being a dark experience, as it is an actual place of death, together with the resting place of all the soldiers that died during the air strikes. Their experience is purely dark, yet they noted that they had a minimal interest in death itself; it was more a question of what the place represented to them through the death of the soldiers. For the locals, this place is a reminder of the ongoing problem of the Turkish invasion and occupation, and it is important that it is visited by both local and international visitors, so that they can learn about the political dimension. From the public perspective (Study Group 2) it was stated that the site is visited by diplomats and politicians that come from abroad, and it is a site that demonstrates the aftermath of a war. This also applies to the 'Green Line', where both locals and international visitors get to see the separation line between the north and south parts of the island. Even though it has been repeated that education is a major part of dark tourism academia, it can also become tricky how the history is translated into education. Within this study this was partly evident, as for a number of interviewees the dark side of occupation after the invasion in 1974 is disregarded by the tourism industry in the country itself, as they aim to concentrate on leisure tourism. The focus is on liberation of the occupied land, with emphasis on the remembrance and memorial days. For some locals, their perception of the dark site as being a learning and educational environment is absent, as they perceive it to be mentioning only part of the history.

The four colonial sites illustrate the different views and perceptions of the three study groups (Fylakismena mnimata, Grigoris Afxendiou hide-out, Achironas Liopetriou, Omodos hide-out place and museum). The colonial sites portray the struggle of the locals for freedom from the British colonial era and union with Greece. The result of this struggle was the death of (mostly)

young men (108 men died) in pursuit of this objective. The four sites under investigation include the death of a number of young men and they were tragic deaths. For the locals, these sites are very complex, as politics are involved. For a particular political party, the sites are not to be promoted, as they were against the 'idea' of the struggle. The other side firmly views the sites as being sites of heroes, and that people should remember and commemorate the fighters who lost their lives in the struggle for freedom. So again, it is indicated that death itself is not the purpose of the visits, nor is it the perception that the sites are morbid, yet it is the purpose of death that is important. The three study groups believe that the sites are important historical places that the locals should visit. Yet, the representative from the Deputy Ministry of Tourism in Study Group 2 indicated that these sites are not in their plans for future development, and that they could perhaps be promoted through educational tourism. Some interviewees from Study Group 3 (private sector focus groups) also firmly believe that these sites should not be promoted, as one of the main markets for tourism in Cyprus is the British market, and it may not be 'correct' to market these sites.

The site of the Mari Naval Base accidental explosion, where 13 people died, is not regarded as touristic by the three study groups. The locals are still very emotional about the reasons that led to the accident, and they believe that the only reasons the site could be developed further is to commemorate the people that died there, for them and their families. It is the most recent site under investigation and as it was regarded as a political mistake; the people connected with it are still upset when they refer to this site. Again, they don't regard it as morbid or connected with any kind of fascination for death (rather the opposite), but as a mistake that should not be repeated ever again. Yet, they are in favour of developing it as a site for commemoration, remembrance, and paying respects.

***Visits Linked to Curiosity***

From the findings of this study in regard to whether dark visits are positive or negative, the interviewees were mostly positive. Their dark sites visiting experiences were viewed positively by

all three study groups. Another aspect of the local community perceptions over dark tourism that was mentioned by several interviewees is the curiosity and personal interest that make dark tourism sites places of interest. Craig and Thomson (2012) discuss the issue of curiosity, and the attempt to incorporate curiosity with death, and so make such a place an attractive site for dark tourism. Particularly, this was mentioned by a travel agent, who stated that dark tourism should be part of the leisure experience of the tourists, as people today have an interest and curiosity to know what has taken place in Cyprus. The aspect of curiosity (Dunkley, 2005) was something mentioned by some interviewees, in that members of the local community make visits to such places to gratify curiosity, or for learning and education. The following two interviews mention this. Study Group 3 (Travel Agent, M, 45-54) discussed that "The tourists today come to Cyprus for the experience as well as for leisure. They go around asking about heritage and historical attractions, they are curious to know what happened. The market for these people is big." A second interviewee from Study Group 1(Interviewee 6, F, 35-44) referred to the fact that she wants to visit the dark sites because she is very curious to know what has happened. She adds that this part of tourism is very interesting.

According to a local resident (Interviewee 2, F, 64+), when she visits dark sites she recalls the places and events that she experienced as a young woman who fled the invasion in 1974. A young local resident (Interviewee 38, M, 18-24) views that he must mentally imagine the past events as a historical lesson that he follows in class. In general, the local community perceived that visiting the dark sites means showing respect and appreciation to the people who went through commendable struggle. Overall, the interviewees made positive comments in relations to their experiences at dark sites in Cyprus. The tourist guide from the Organisation of Tourist Guides in Cyprus expressed the view that Cyprus has ample sites that belong to this type of tourism, and that the settings fit with the overall dark tourism experience. This was an interesting remark, coming from a person who was professionally connected with dark tourism and tourists who want to experience dark sites and attractions. The dark tourism experience can be analysed through the meaning and experience that the locals attach to the sites. This in turn can shape their perceptions towards a meaningful visitor experience. This is supported by Mason (2005), in that people's knowledge and experience can alter the meaning they associate with the sites. The local community interviewees invert meanings of dark tourism sites through their visits to the sites.

Thus, this study cannot generalise the factors as components that form their experience. Hence, they can identify how they perceive the sites through their visitor experience, based on history, education, and commemoration.

## 6.3 Local Community Perceptions over Dark Tourism Development in a Conventional Leisure Destination

### 6.3.1 The Importance of Tourism Development in Relation to Dark Tourism

The importance of tourism development has been based on the crucial role that it plays in the economy of most destinations around the world, as it attracts businesses and direct and indirect employment opportunities. Benghadbane (2018) points out that decision-makers anticipate that tourism may engage in an even more prominent function in the future, as a result of attracting and encouraging investments in tourism, but also by utilising sites with distinct touristic features. At the same time, tourism development is expected to include a progressive infrastructure, but also generate a positive response from local people by pursuing sustainable tourism development (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2012). Within this research, the local community mentioned throughout the interviews and discussions that they regard tourism development as something that needs to be on the tourism planning and organisation agenda of the destination constantly, as tourism is among the most important economic, social, and cultural activities in the country.

This is another indication that that the local community identifies tourism development as a cause for optimism, and they regard that their lives are affected positively as a result of tourism, hence their positive perceptions of dark tourism development. Evidently, the local community were not all in accord with the notion that dark tourism can ultimately bring completely positive effects to the tourism industry. Hence, they showed a felicitous stance in the prospect of developing dark tourism at a leisure destination like Cyprus. They considered that the dark sites should represent an honest picture of the island's history and culture, and that the local community perceptions should indicate potential profits from tourism development. The political climate in Cyprus

impacts the views and opinions of the local community, and dark tourism – being extensive and diverse in itself – is not an easy topic to broach. However, the tourism industry, if correctly developed and managed, can include dark tourism that can also be shared collectively by locals and international visitors.

Moreover, wherever it is noted that tourism development is not a priority, it often leads to tourism turning its sights elsewhere (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015). There are academics that have openly expressed the opinion that with no support from the local community it is not possible for tourism development to flourish (Lee and Jan, 2019; Nunkoo et al., 2013). This means it is significant to recognise and understand the perceptions of the local community, so that they can be comprehended. According to the study of the three community groups' perceptions, it is indicated that dark tourism in Cyprus is perceived as being positive. Most interviewees underline the important role of tourism on the island, because it is widely known that the economy depends on the tourism industry. Moreover, there was agreement over the fact that dark tourism could develop and enhance the existing tourism product. For instance, the mayor of Omodos village, where a colonial site is located, emphasised how tourism developed in the village, and therefore the dark site was upgraded and a museum was added. Since then, more people and educational groups have visited the site. On the other hand, the Deputy Ministry of Tourism representative stressed that the ministry is working on the development of numerous special and alternative types of tourism, yet dark tourism is not in their plans for growth. The reason for this, he indicated, is the 'complex' political issues around these sites.

Tourism development can upgrade the facilities and services in a destination and open up the leisure space for the locals to take benefit from, but also take pleasure (Rivera, 2016).This can result in both beneficial but also adverse effects, not only on the physical environment, but also on the local community. By improving the financial aspect of the destination, the local community quality of life is also likely to improve. However, as it is stated in the literature, but also in practical examples, tourism development may generate a mixture of financial and social effects, and even effects on the environment. It is nonetheless anticipated that the multitude of impacts can reflect benefits to the local community, yet this is not always taking place.

Literature has also been directed on the significance of tourism development at destinations that purposely or not have chosen to develop this industry. The most obvious impact of development is on the people that actually live at the destination. Therefore, their perceptions should be taken seriously by those that are responsible for making decisions on tourism. Based on Ridderstaat et al. (2013) and Candela and Figini (2012), tourism development affects how people live and their quality of life in society. As tourism is further developed at a destination, so are the economic returns to its population, which can upgrade the standard of living of the community in a destination. This study, after examining the perceptions of the local people who live in Cyprus, as well as the opinions of the two sectors (public and private), has recognised that local life is in fact impacted by tourism. Since the local communities' everyday life is around tourism, its prospects, and its potential impacts, the identification of any adverse or beneficial effects of dark tourism on the everyday way of life of the local community is an important topic; it can also determine any challenges, constraints, but also opportunities that dark tourism development faces.

Essentially, the interviewees did not even show any concern over any costs of tourism development. Mainly they affirmed that tourism in general brings lots of advantages, which includes financial returns from jobs, employment, or even business opportunities. Even if the interviewees have shown optimism when it comes to the direction of dark tourism, their recognition of the perks of developing dark tourism mostly refer to the capability of dark tourism, as opposed to the real perks or advantages that it brings. The reason for this is perhaps based on the fact that the sites under investigation are not significantly developed at this stage. This is an interesting finding, as it indicates that the support of the local community for tourism is articulated in relation to their perceptions of the positive economic impacts of tourism that dark tourism can create. In other words, when they perceive positive economic impacts benefiting them as well, they will in turn support development. Andereck and Nyaupane (2011) have referred to this by saying that tourism has immense prospects to influence the way of life of local residents. The findings demonstrated that, in light of the local community knowledge about the positive impacts (economic and non-economic) of the tourism industry on the island.

### 6.3.2 Opportunities for Dark Tourism Development

Opportunities for dark tourism development can be seen from the consideration of any probable returns from dark tourism that the study groups refer to, and this informs that the financial returns are paramount in their views over development in general, and dark tourism more specifically. The study groups talked about tourism in general as being favourable for the economy, which can also be found in past research (Cornell et al., 2019; Stylidis et al., 2014). Similarly, there is potential for employment opportunities to be created (Figueroa and Rotarou, 2021), as well as economic returns for the local population (Cornell et al., 2019). Perhaps this is due to the fact that the local community lives in a destination with tourism as its main industry. The local community uplifted tourism for its positive impacts and the fact that it attracts investment opportunities, but also more expenditure. Hence, they have a positive perception about dark tourism development. Consequently, any plans or policies that are set to be developed should also emphasise the economic returns. The local community can in this way continue to raise the economic returns for the destination.

***Infrastructure Development***: The local community also commented that tourism can actually take part in developing the infrastructure of the sites, but also the maintenance and further development of dark sites. They emphasised their optimism when they referred to the positive effects on the preservation and conservation of the dark sites around the island. The preservation and conservation alone add to opportunities for employment, and the dark sites can definitely make use of locals that have such skills and expertise. This can also relate mainly to the structures that have been left destroyed from the era of the Turkish invasion, and from the colonial era. The findings back the belief that the local community would give their approval and support to any progress or growth that is initiated at dark sites – even the ones that are linked with death and tragedy. Cyprus includes, according to the three study groups, various suitable sites, and the uniqueness of these sites offers good prospects for dark tourism in the country. When the local community considers themselves part of the community they live in, this in turn can make them look at tourism development with more positive expectations. According to Sutawa (2012), when local people are part of an attractive destination it could be demanded from them to keep the distinctiveness of their areas through development. The local community viewed tourism projects

and events of dark tourism as something that could bring them together with other locals or even with tourists, and this social interaction would be positive; thus, the social aspect of dark tourism is significant, as social relationships can be formed, and this is considered a potential positive effect for the destination.

***Inclusion of the Local Community in Decisions***: The findings indicate that the social stability and cohesion within the community could result in more acceptance or even tolerance of tourism, and more specifically, dark tourism development. If there are local community members who are more susceptible to the negative effects of tourism, this can result in less support for dark tourism development. The findings are in accordance with the earlier research of Nunkoo and Ramkisson (2012), who identify that the apparent effects of tourism could be influenced by the political empowerment at the destination. This underlines the importance of opening up the prospect that the local community should share their views and opinions on dark tourism growth. It is significant that when the local population gets involved in the course of planning, it is likely that they would ultimately support the dark sites' development. However, the findings also suggest that the local community views themselves as being cut out of any decisions on tourism in general, and even less on dark tourism. When they were asked about whether they would be willing to contribute to dark tourism development, they mostly responded that they would be positive about being a part of any initiative, whether through marketing, promotion, or planning. Nonetheless, their perception of the authorities or local authorities in making them take part were negative and pessimistic. Even if they regard that there is an abundance of dark resources in the country, they do not see any willingness of the authorities to include them in any decisions or even opinions.

***Promotion through the Leisure Product***: The geographical location of Cyprus and the fact that it is an established leisure destination mean that the island is already popular and easily accessible to visitors. This was stated by the local community and is a reason for the locals' view that it will be even easier to establish dark tourism on an island that is already an established tourist destination; additionally, they perceive this as an opportunity. Yet again they highlighted the off-putting attitudes of the authorities and public sector in general to not include the local residents in any decisions or actions. Furthermore, from their point of view, dark tourism can actually form an opportunity to demonstrate to the outside world the political problems of the last 48 years. As one interviewee mentioned, they want to have both domestic and international visitors so that the

political problems can be heard internationally. The local community believes that someone can only truly comprehend about the dark event when they actually visit the place and experience the site for themselves. Pezzullo (2010) underlines that staying at home cannot enhance learning about a dark tourism destination. As pointed out by another interviewee, visiting the sites can give visitors familiarity in person, and offers them an exclusive opportunity to extend their learning about the events on the sites. By developing the sites further, the local community residents stressed that the visitors could better understand and learn about what has taken place. This also agrees with Pezzullo (2010) – that the degree of the effects cannot be comprehended if people do not experience the sites in person. The use of social exchange theory as the premise of this study on the local community, together with the findings, suggest that the locals have a very low level of trust in the public sector, in government departments, and most specifically in the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, which is the planning institution for tourism development.

For the local community of Cyprus, dark tourism eventually brings and is able to create many new opportunities, since it can be developed together with the leisure product, which is the main tourist product of the island. They mentioned that it could lead to new economic benefits, like higher income, especially for people who will be working in the service sector, as well as opportunities for enhancing other tourism facets (e.g., souvenir vendors, traditional food, and religious festivals). This could particularly benefit people living close to the sites. Support for development can also result when locals consider that the destination is going through an economically challenging period. Badarnech (2015) supports this by assessing that the social and economic contribution can be developed further when business from tourism is increasing as well.

### 6.3.3Constraints over Dark Tourism

Constraints were particularly mentioned by all three study groups. The constraints concentrated on a number of issues that resist the development of dark tourism on the island, creating obstacles around it.

Particularly, from the focus groups interviewees' discussion, what they talked about was certain major obstacles to dark tourism development in Cyprus. Exchange of benefits is not something imposed on a person but is rather an intended encounter. The exchange of benefits was something accounted for by the private sector focus groups – that tourism in general could benefit both sectors (public and private), yet they identified it as a constraint, since there is no real connection or correlation between the two sectors. According to Mascardo et al. (2017), trust is essential for the support of the local residents for tourism.

***Lack of Trust in the Public Sector:*** Trust is considered significant in relationships and between people (Leonidou et al., 2008), and it also implies a degree of willingness to cooperate (Adongo et al., (2017). It goes way back to the work, for example, of the researcher Blau (1964), who emphasised the magnitude of trust in any social exchange. Any business can be framed by law or legal structures, but trust is an essential measurement of a social exchange. Social exchange means that people ought to trust other people in order to fulfil any requirements (Adongo et al., 2017). Within this study and the fact that the three study groups come from different sectors, trust, obligations, and social exchange were identified more as lying on the restraining side.

Within this study, the public sector is the authority that has the power to plan and develop policies for tourism development. The issue of trust is underlined within this study as being between those that make decisions for tourism and the local community. In particular, the private sector viewed the biggest constraint in dark tourism development to be the stance of the public sector and their absolute lack of trust in their engagement in the development of tourism in general. Two interviewees were particularly bland on the topic: from Study Group 3 (FG1, Hotel Owner, M, and 55-64) it was noted that the public sector does not support the private sector and the Deputy Minister is not doing anything, so they do not trust that they could take any initiative for dark tourism development. Another focus group participant (FG 1, Travel Agent, M, 55-64) argued that the public sector is absent and not trustworthy, as they do not take any actions, especially for any new forms of tourism like dark tourism; they do not include them, not only in decisions but even in just listening to their opinions. Finally, a third participant from Group 3 (FG 3, Travel Agent, M, 55-64) also had similar views. Particularly, he mentioned the lack of trust, as he said that there is no organisation from the public sector; they apparently do not show any interest, they just do

meetings and their decisions are just reported to them. Throughout the focus group discussion, which as indicated before, involved people that work in the tourism private sector, the wider perception was that trust in the public sector was non-existent; they firmly view the public sector as distant from them (accommodation sector, travel agent businesses) and that they are not in favour of any social exchange between them.

According to some private sector business people, the public sector only cares about imposing restrictions, strict laws, and receiving taxes from the tourism businesses. This large gap of trust is a huge constraint in the development of dark tourism. It has been suggested by Choi and Murray (2010) that if governments are not successful in empowering residents, then tourism development might not be assured. The findings suggest the possibility that if the local community is left completely out of any tourism planning, it is probable that they would not agree with any decisions that might concern them. Within this study, the private sector focus groups suggested that they felt left out of the decisions of the public sector over decisions on tourism planning and development. This was a reason why the private sector group was very sceptical over dark tourism development and their involvement in the process. Study Group 1, local resident interviewees, viewed both sectors negatively (private and public). They actually blame the private sector for not investing in dark tourism sites or infrastructure. Although some local resident interviewees recognised the pre-eminent position of the public sector in tourism development and special interest tourism, when it came to dark tourism development they particularly blamed the Deputy Ministry of Tourism for bureaucracy, lack of organisation, and misguided policies. Most specifically, they perceived lack of vision. They also mentioned that there is insufficient provision of infrastructure at dark tourism sites as a result of this lack of interest from the public sector.

The interviewees underlined their disappointment in the role of the public sector. Kuvan and Akan (2005) point out that as there are stakeholders that take part in any endeavour, conflicts might also arise. Within the research, even though there was no notable conflict of interest between the different stakeholders (e.g., local residents, public and private sectors), nevertheless there was a noted tension between the three study groups as far as their perceptions over dark tourism development were concerned. Specifically, both local residents and focus group discussions (private sector) underlined the absence of interest from the public sector in dark tourism, and for

this determinant there is clear lack of supply and infrastructure at dark sites. Costa et al. (2020) point out that the main types of tourism development take into consideration the concerns of the stakeholders, whereas other types also look at the participation and involvement of the community. Within this study it is apparent that the local residents and private sector emphasise the importance of including the expectations and interests of the local community in regard to dark tourism development, which is something, however, that is not taking place on the island. The interviews showed that the public sector – and in particular the local authorities of the communities – do not take into consideration their views and opinions when it comes to tourism development. Yet this is something that they put across as a prerequisite before any type of development and planning is carried out. What was apparent within the stakeholders groups interviewed was that the locals stated that they were not consulted in decisions regarding dark site development. Indeed, they felt that their views, opinions, or needs are not taken into consideration. Specifically, for the research site of the naval base accidental explosion, which later was regarded as a political mistake, the local community was not taken into consideration about the development of the site. There were comments that had to do with the appearance of the site, and even for this, their views were not considered. This was stated in the comments made by the local residents (Study Group 1) during the interviews. Some interviewees suggested that the site could be developed by especially featuring the thirteen crosses of the victims, but this could create negative feelings and anger, and this may even create further political conflict. On the other hand, there were others who supported this development, because as they expressed, people should remember the mistakes of the past and commemorate those people who lost their lives in the accident.

***Lack of Coordination and Cooperation***: Coordination and cooperation among the different actors is a prerequisite in order to develop and apply policies for dark tourism development. Within this research, the local community perception indicated the lack of coordination and cooperation between the two sectors (public and private) over the organisation, planning, and general decisions that deal with dark sites and their further development. For this, many interviewees 'blame' the friction and different political views of the different sectors. Even though there is general agreement (within the interviewees) over tourism development in general, and over dark tourism sites, the friction, indecision, and indifference are mostly underlined. This was mentioned by most of the study groups' interviewees – even those that belong to the public sector. Study Group 1

(Interviewee 36, M, 45-54) revealed that there should be "more cooperation between the two sectors. Also, the private sector should be more willing to get involved. The public lacks ideas, initiative, resources, funding, whereas the private sector can move things easier. Instead of blaming each other they should move this type of tourism forward if there is such a potential." Another interviewee from Study Group 3 (FG1, M, 55-64) expressed disappointment with the public sector because of its absence in dark tourism development, and that they are not even close to the private sector. Lastly, from Study Group 2 – (Achironas Liopetriou site manager) – there was reference to the two sectors – that they should both get involved in order for the sites to continue to exist and transfer their legacy. The site manager concluded that it seemed like those two sectors are too far apart.

***Notion of Place***: There are factors that influence the people's experience and include, for instance, the physical aspects or the notion of place. The notion of place is quite controversial when it comes to dark sites in Cyprus. The local community interviewees perceived that Cyprus is not a popular destination for dark tourism, as it does not include worldwide acknowledged dark sites (for instance, extreme morbid venues like concentration camps or genocide fields). There were several local residents who stated that international visitors would not be interested to come to Cyprus for its dark attractions, as the island is not popular for this type of tourism.

***Financial Constraints***: The financial costs were not seen as an impediment to dark tourism development, yet this has been mentioned by several participants from all three study groups. Particularly, they emphasised that they do not regard dark tourism development as an investment that could not be realised, and underlined that there are financial assistant projects coming from the European Union that could be used to further develop and promote these sites. Therefore, the financial aspect was not seen as a constraint in dark tourism development. The focus groups (Study Group 3) discussion (private sector) specifically expressed their disappointment that the public sector could not provide financial assistance for any new dark tourism plans, something that was recommended by the private sector focus groups. They firmly believe that the public sector, through the European Union, could get financial aid and develop further the dark sites around the island. It is evident from the literature that the European Union provides financial assistance on projects concerning tourism development.

***Lack of Knowledge and Appreciation of Sites***: Other constraints mentioned by the three study groups that were cited include some aspects that are more connected with the sites themselves, and that need upgrading if they are to be further promoted for tourism. The first one is the need to control and organise the management of the sites so that there is accessibility for the wider population. The sites are under the control of distinct organisations that belong to the public sector, but which are not related to tourism. Therefore, the view of the local community is that these sites should come together under the umbrella of a specific organisation in order to succeed in their further development. Moreover, there were several other constraints mentioned, which include the absence of agreement on what and how to develop dark tourism sites. For many people, the dark sites are unknown for their role as tourism products, but most importantly, they do not understand themselves what they portray. Indeed, there exists some lack of appreciation over the dark sites on the island, and this was something mentioned by many interviewees. They also added that the sites have no real preservation or conservation plans, and that they lack modern assembly and composition, characteristics that modern tourists accept and appreciate today. The findings indicate that the public sector in Cyprus, which is seemingly the authority responsible for such development, is not involved at all, and has no wish or will to develop the sites. A reason offered is simply that they don't see the real potential for other types of tourism that could bring greater economic benefits. Fundamentally, the public sector should attempt to explore the potential of dark tourism development, and perhaps even advance any development plans. Maybe the first step would be an appreciation or recognition that these sites have potential in the first place. This is regarded as a constraint in dark tourism development – if people in the public sector themselves have no interest in acquiring further knowledge on how to develop these sites. Kovacs et al. (2008) note this, highlighting that many obstacles are evident when areas of cultural significance are to be developed. Within this research there was a number of interviewees who argued over several factors that were identified as constraints of dark tourism development; these included: the unclear and indistinctive regulations and policies that have so far been put forward by the public sector over dark tourism; insufficient financial resources; lack of agreement over the dark tourism site development; lack of tourism experts; and lack of information over the existence of the dark sites.

***Lack of Technology***: Another constraint mentioned by the local community interviewees was the lack of technology deployed in the further development of dark tourism. Most interviewees mentioned that in their experience of dark sites, they did not see any use of the latest technology, like virtual reality or even any guided audio-visual equipment. In their view, the potential future development of dark tourism with the use of technology would get the best results in informing the people about the site and ultimately acquiring higher visitor numbers. Particularly, they mentioned the lack of information on the sites, which could be a reason that people don't know the sites or what they stand for. Planned use of technology would add value, and pass on increased information and knowledge of the site. Information about the sites is imperative to inform the people what is there and why they should visit the site. Today, the use of technology through virtual reality or other devices could make the sites more interesting. Jung and Dieck (2017) emphasise that a negative aspect in tourism products or services is when there is a lack of technology available. One interviewee emphasised the importance of technology, in that it can actually assist in understanding what the sites portray. Therefore, he would like to see that any kind of innovative technology on the sites be made available, because of its potential growth in future service development. The point is not to substitute real experience with technology, but to enhance the on-site experience of the visitors. Most interviewees mentioned that the use of technology can enhance the cultural and heritage value of the dark experience. Larking (2011) argues that poor technological representations are considered negative aspects at any site. Apart from that, technology can enhance visitors' tour at a site by providing dramatic audio or visual representations of the events or stories that have taken place there.

According to Sung et al. (2021), the quality of technology positively influences consumer experiences. By using technology on a site, it would not change what the site stands for, but it could add to it a more pleasurable experience, and at the same time add to the learning and knowledge of the visitors. The incorporation of technology in businesses is today essential for their success or even existence. People today can even use it as a prerequisite to visit a location. For instance, an interviewee mentioned that the lack of technology at the dark sites visited was something that impacted the tour at the site negatively. In general, within this research the local community viewed technology as a constraint simply because of its absence at the sites under investigation. Particularly, one interviewee mentioned that in regard to the latest technology, "The

sites have nothing and that makes them less interesting, as there is no audio-visual technology and guide, or nothing that gives information in a lively manner about the sites with regard to the events that took place. Even new generations can be attracted with new technology." (Interviewee 16, F, 45-54).

Also, within this study, information and educational itemsaccessed through technology were mentioned by local community interviewees as being good to be used for navigating the sites. Based on Neuhofer et al. (2013) and Gretzel and Jamal (2009), integrating experiences with technology actually enhancesaplace, and it engages and involves people more deeply. The educational value is recognised by interviewees as a valuable way of obtaining information and knowledge. It can enhance the learning experience and provide added value to the sites. It can also increase the visitors' attention, and based onthat, they would definitely recommend it to others and even go back themselves, as this becomes a more personalised experience, according to Jung et al. (2015). In addition, the interviewees stressed that the future of technology would mean better outcomes for the sites in terms of visits, information, and knowledge. The views of the three study groups about the possible development of dark tourism sites in Cyprus are positive. Their views were based on seeking learning, increasing knowledge, and education.

***Politics as a Constraint**:* The private sector perceives dark tourism in Cyprus as neglected, and as continuing to be overlooked, especially by the public sector. It was generally articulated that the public sector has this tendency to overlook certain types of tourism, and dark tourism development is considered one of them, and the organisation to blame is the public sector itself. In other words, it was stressed that the development of dark tourism has not been encouraged by the public sector's communal approach, and therefore the community must take responsibility. Particularly in the case of colonial sites, the issue of politics and different political beliefs were a reminder of why this type of tourism has not been developed further. Local community perceptions, specifically on the colonial sites, were mixed. There was some recognition of certain public sector bodies in their support for local authorities, especially those that bring considerable economic advantages to the locations. On the other hand, some interviewees implicated external political factors that deal hinder interest in dark tourism. Conceivably, the local communities' opinions are also influenced

by the political party they belong to – unfortunately, this fact was indicated by a number of interviewees and discussed extensively in the focus groups.

There have been some suggestions from the local community to remove these constraints to dark tourism development. One of the main barriers identified was the lack of involvement of the local community in their decisions on planning and development. They can change this through local community groups and organisations, so that they can listen to the views and opinions of those people that live in the areas to be developed. The public sector stance was thus underlined, but the private sector was recommended to also look outside their business structures for the welfare of the communities. Besides that, collaborations between the two sectors, but also any other agencies that are involved in tourism, were exhorted to be added to the agenda. In this way, the local community would be more involved in the improvement and restoration of Cyprus as a dark tourism destination.

### 6.3.4 Perceptions over the Impacts of Dark Tourism Development

Tourism impacts have been on the agenda of tourist destinations for a long time. They have been a foremost aspect in the development of tourism, as their effects could be positive or negative in destinations. The local communities acknowledge these impacts, and the way they view them can also indicate their attitudes to tourism development. Within this context it could be argued that local communities can support or reject tourism development on the basis of what they see from tourism. This can include economic effects, social and environmental benefits, and costs.

Scholars have come to the conclusion that tourism-related perceived impacts could have an effect on the way the local community outlines and disseminates their affirmative attitudes or their disapproving stance when it comes to tourism development in their local area. Due to the long involvement of Cyprus as a tourism destination, the local community interviewed were mostly in favour of any kind of development if it was for touristic purposes, as they believe that the positive impacts and effects of tourism development in general are far more beneficial than any cost anticipated. They believe that tourism can potentially improve not only the economy but also the revival of their social or cultural ventures, which are part of their ethnic backgrounds. Also, when

it comes to the environment, there could be increasing concern over the preservation and conservation of historical events and sites on the island. In this way, they can preserve residents' identity and pride over the heritage and culture of the country.

The fact that Cyprus is a mature tourism destination, and tourism is well established and accepted within the local community, means that the interviewees have not focused on the costs of tourism development. Particularly, they have overlooked any negative socio-cultural impacts associated with tourism development (including crime or congestion), but also any changes in traditional values or social stability.

It was noted by Lundberg (2017) that the literature attempts, with various measurement scales, to comprehend if the impacts of tourism are understood by local communities and how they value them. The three study groups claim that their perceptions and potential involvement are important for the destination. The island of Cyprus is a mature leisure destination, and for this reason the local community recognises the significance of tourism, particularly for its perceived effects on the island. Based on the findings, the local community holds positive perception of dark tourism on the island and exploit its benefits.

The findings reveal, based upon previous research findings, that economic benefits can direct the way people view the effects of tourism. While a number of interviewees stated that they are not working in the tourism industry and therefore they do not receive any economic returns directly (except private sector interviewees), they still largely supported dark tourism development. This suggests that there must be other factors besides the financial benefits of dark tourism that affect the views of the people at the destination. It was highlighted that the development of dark tourism should be achieved in a way that locals would feel involved and proud, because if they are sceptical over dark tourism they would not be supportive either. In fact, both of these sides were identified in the findings. Several local residents indicated that they would be pleased to see the sites in their areas developed further, and they would even be willing to get involved in dark tourism development. However, people within the private sector were concerned that having a particular market (UK) as the main one in Cyprus might make it awkward to promote certain sites to them: for example, dark tourism sites from the colonial era. Specifically, this was mentioned by a front

office manager of a leisure hotel, who indicated that Cyprus could not promote the colonial sites to the British because it would be uncomfortable. These monuments, he indicated, do not match the type of tourists that come to Cyprus.

Concerning relations between residents and what they view as a financial deficit in the effects of tourism, Látková and Vogt (2012) argue that tourism could have detrimental effects on a destination, such as increases in prices of both products and services. The local community interviewees in this research have not referred to the negative economic impacts that dark tourism can potentially bring; however, they mentioned seasonality, but they made only positive references towards it. According to the interviewees, any new type of tourism like dark tourism can extend the season, keep the hotels full, and the use of services running. Eventually it can bring more income to a destination.

With regard to the environment and the potential effects of possible development within this research, no reference was made towards this feature. The tourism literature contains numerous discussions of the benefits and costs of tourism to the environment. According to Costa et al. (2020), tourism has the ability to protect or destroy resources. Even residents' views have been identified that, based on Liu et al. (2017), tourism can actually protect the natural environment. Nonetheless, within this research the impacts on the natural environment were not emphasised as significant. For instance, overcrowding, litter or pollution were not given any emphasis. They mostly concentrated on the contribution of dark tourism to keeping alive the dark and historical/archaeological sites.

## 6.4 Local Community Contribution and Support to the Development of Dark Tourism Sites

The final objective was to explore community participation and involvement, and evaluate how they might support dark tourism development. Also, the local community suggested methods that could assist the support of the local community in promoting a new type of tourism. This section

analyses and discusses the three study groups that were interviewed, and how they could support and contribute to the dark sites' development. This was identified through the opportunities, as well as the limitations or obstacles, and some suggestions were made to limit those constraints. The local community was certain in most responses that Cyprus does actually include significant opportunities for dark sites that could have a good potential to attract tourism further. Also, the study, through the local community responses, identified that if Cyprus aimed to develop the dark sites with an appropriate infrastructure and promotion, it could increase the overall tourism product in the country.

The results of the research indicated that the local community has an encouraging outlook on the growth of dark tourism on the island. The interviewees of the three study groups strongly supported dark tourism development, and failed to understand why for so long there have been no plans for its growth and expansion in Cyprus. In addition, an assessment was made of the three study groups from the interviews, and similarities were indicated in their responses. Their view was that in general, the perks of dark tourism prevail over any costs.

The character of the local community depends on the residents that live there. There might be locals who work directly in tourism businesses, yet there are others that are not involved in tourism businesses. However, there are many groups that belong to the tourism sector in the form of public and private organisations. Within this research, the local community is essential, as they live in a leisure and tourism destination, and any type of development affects them. For instance, as most destinations on the island are touristic, the locals would certainly use facilities and services that are there for both locals and tourists. Of the three study groups, the local residents from Study Group 1 were not involved in tourism business directly, yet they were indirectly, as they reside on a tourist island and they have a view of the importance and the effects of tourism. The second study group are people working in the public sector in tourism-related positions and the third study group are private sector tourism business workers who are employed in the tourism and hospitality industry. It is therefore important to assess the perceptions of these three groups of people who are directly or indirectly involved in tourism, but who all reside on the island.

Up to now the study has identified and agreed with scholars who underline that when the local community is positive about the tourism effects on the destinations, their support for development would be positive (Frieta and Jurdana, 2020; Eslami et al., 2019; Kang and Lee, 2018). Nonetheless, the opposite also exists. For instance, there are residents who might express their disinterest in this style of tourism, but they would still be in favour of tourism development (Kayat and Sharif, 2013). This has been identified by only one interviewee in this research. Specifically, the local resident (Interviewee 23, F, and 35-44) expressed that a visit to a dark site would not be her choice in her free time, as she cannot see any positive outcome from visiting this type of tourism, yet she stressed that she is not against its development.

### 6.4.1 Contribution of the Local Community to Dark Tourism Development

As has been mostly evident, any favourable outcome of dark tourism growth or expansion on the island relies on the foundations of the locals being in agreement. What is presented in this study demonstrates that even if interviewees were not familiar with the dark tourism concept as such, the majority had experienced dark tourism sites on the island or abroad. Moreover, most of the interviewees did not oppose to the development; actually they were in favour of the expansion and further development of dark tourism. This result, however, is to be expected, because Cyprus is a mature tourism destination and the general perception of the local community is that any kind of tourism, and specifically dark tourism, can advance local and regional development. Rasoolimanesh and Jaafar (2017) point out that residents who are optimistic about tourism development would also be more supportive. For any local people, taking part in decisions over tourism growth can be beneficial, depending on their views over tourism. Cecil et al. (2010) point out that it is necessary to consider how residents perceive tourism impacts, as tourism-related activities can impact their daily lives. Moreover, Demirović et al. (2020) note that perceived tourism benefits are important for evaluating tourism development. Incidentally, there was support for the local community to take part in any initiatives for tourism growth courses in Cyprus. In any proposal for development it is imperative to prepare and inform the local residents about dark tourism. This is because when people understand that dark tourism development has many

advantages for them, they would certainly pay more attention to it and would likely be more open to getting involved.

From the three study groups, the local community indicated support for the process of planning and growth of dark tourism. This support included the participation and involvement of the locals in any decisions over the further planning of the dark sites. Study Group 2 (public sector) showed support mostly in the conservation aspect of the sites. Their views were fragmented, like the actual sites they represented. For all of them, tourism development is important, but there are many factors that limit these particular sites from being more openly available. Study Group 3 (focus groups) asserted that they had a positive view over dark tourism, yet they thought that all stakeholders should be involved in the process. Tourism businesses are willing to get involved, but from the planning stage, so that they can have a say in any decisions on the composition of the dark tourism sites. As stated by Moscardo (2015), the dearth of local involvement and contribution in expanding tourism, as well as the non-inclusion of the locals in tourism planning, is a matter that should be considered. There were some interviewees who argued that unless their views are taken into consideration they would not be interested in the process of development. This is an indication that the contribution of the local residents is being taken seriously by them, as they are the ones to receive the effects of the development. Moreover, in turn they would themselves learn to appreciate the dark resources that the island has.

Specifically, they mentioned sites that should be preserved, as for instance the sites of the invasion or the colonial sites, even though they are considered as sites that could initiate clashes between political parties on the island. Also, the tragedy of the Mari naval accidental explosion should be used as a lesson. This is particularly agreed among the local community, as the accidental disaster should not be repeated, since its effects are evident even today. The local community contribution is also based on the fact that any development should be respectful, as there are still families of the dead alive today, who are present at the memorials every year (Interviewee 14, M, 45-54). The tragedy can be shown, but in an educational way, so that new generations can learn and extend their knowledge through visits to the sites. The sites should represent part of the heritage/history of the country and visits should take place in a specific context, such as in a museum. In some of the colonial sites, museums do that with replicas, yet the local community mentioned that they

should be more advanced and updated, as the ones in the museums are old fashioned and without any current technology.

A general agreement between local community interviewees was that the dark sites should be organised and developed altogether, so that they can convey a general meaning to potential visitors. Dark tourism in Cyprus undoubtedly exists, as many sites are associated with death and tragedy that has taken place. This is all part of the history of the country, and if developed appropriately it can flourish, even in a conventional leisure destination. Additionally, it was widely accepted that the educational element exists in these sites. The representative of the Deputy Minister of Tourism highlighted that in his opinion it is more likely that through educational institutions, dark tourism could be developed.

Most interviewees asserted that the local community would support dark tourism that is associated with dark sites around the island. However, the dark site development must be purposeful to the locals, as they attach it to the history of the country. They argued that people should leave their political disputes behind, so that the visitors learn what events have taken place on the actual sites without involving politics. A major weakness identified was the lack of cooperation between the public and private sector, based on politics. There is an obvious difference in beliefs and attitudes over what the sites stand for (for those making decisions) and a potential 'blame' from one political perspective to the other. Many dark sites lack necessary attention, as the participation of the different stakeholders involved is fragmented, and therefore decision making and policy making and planning are currently non-existent for dark tourism. Official tourism plans have not recognised this type of tourism as something to be developed. The majority of the stakeholders involved in decision making (local authorities, organisations, and departments responsible for the sites) are not expected to be involved in the process, and are even ignored by the Deputy Ministry of Tourism. Moreover, according to the focus groups, public sector consultation with the private sector and business owners appears to be completely disregarded. Even governmental organisations and different ministries (the Deputy Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Education) are not clear about their respective duties toward dark tourism development, and the essential collaboration and coordination they should have with each other.

A condition for the developmental role of tourism is that it is properly planned and managed (Harilal et al., 2019). Dark tourism development requires a strong team to work. This was emphasised especially by Study Group 3. They stated that the government has a duty to bring together and invite the stakeholders of the industry to participate in planning, and involve them in cooperating to implement the plans. This participation can provide useful information, which can assist in avoidance of unacceptable risks or unwanted effects for the local community. Nonetheless, in the case of Cyprus there is a prevailing friction between those that make decisions and the rest of the tourism sector. Ramchandar (2007) notes that there is conflict among stakeholders, especially when they have to investigate the role of each group's interests and involvement in tourism. It is fundamental that tourism planners should achieve compromise between the different stakeholders so that the most positive effects are put in place for the community.

Consequently, Ramchandar (2007) notes that in tourism development, all the community should be involved, and not just those that work in the industry. Basically, the intention of this consideration is to make certain that tourism should develop and concur with the community's broad economic and social aims, where both the community and the industry can gain jointly from a long-term relationship. A local community can be powerful if it is independent and displays pride.

In terms of the involvement of public and private sectors in dark tourism development, there have been controversial opinions, views, and perceptions. A range of public sector shortcomings were identified. The local communities' views were that all public sector departments that deal with tourism could be more involved and supportive of dark tourism development. Currently they believe that these departments are more interested in other types of tourism and/or projects.
The Study Group 3participants particularly criticised the Deputy Ministry of Tourism negligence and/or irresponsibility in dark tourism matters. This may be attributed to the fact that the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, as their representative, emphasised that they are currently working on "more than 600 tourism projects- but not dark tourism". The focus group was especially harsh towards the Deputy Ministry, and another criticism was that they focus on taxation on the hotel sector and insufficient funding, especially while financial support for the private sector businesses is rare and

only granted in special circumstances. Moreover, they reported that the Deputy Ministry has an unstable tourism policy and organisational difficulties, and even though they have become in recent years a Deputy Ministry (from a tourism organisation), they still lack proper tourism strategies, incentives, and legislation. An issue affecting the overall tourism policy and ultimately any dark tourism policy, which to this day is non-existent, is the fact that every time a new government gets elected they staff the ministry with their 'own' people. This leads to a lack of cooperation and organisation within the Deputy Ministry. The representative of the Deputy Ministry disregarded these claims and emphasised that the Deputy Ministry cannot be there for everybody and for everything that takes place in the tourism industry and solve all the problems and issues. He referred to the local authorities – that they can take initiatives as well, and implement tourism strategies. He accepts that dark tourism is not in the ministry's plans because it is difficult and controversial. The representative mentions as well that for many people these sites (especially the colonial sites) are holy places, and maybe the local residents would react adversely if they were turned into touristic places (Study Group 2- Deputy Ministry of Tourism, representative). On the other hand, a Study Group 3 interviewee (FG 2, M, and Hotel Owner) stated that unfortunately the public sector is very bureaucratic, and whenever there is a new government the tourism policies and strategies change.

Yet, there is a diversity of cultural and historical sites that could be promoted and marketed as dark sites. Physical aspects of dark sites in Cyprus can capture the historical events that have taken place. Two interviewees talked specifically about these sites: Study Group 1Interviewee 9, M, 55-64 said "For me it is a historical place of interest for the commemoration and remembrance of the hero", whereas the second one – Study Group 1Interviewee 11, M, 45-54 said that it is "an opportunity to find out more about the historic facts of my country".

The local community has also been asked over their perceptions on dark tourism development initiated by the local authorities. The formal interviewees were contacted by the mayors of the local authorities of the villages Omodos and Yermasoyia. Particularly, they were asked to what extent they contributed to and supported dark tourism development. The two interviewees had different opinions over dark tourism development and a positive perception of what constitutes dark tourism. They both contribute to the general tourism development in their localities, which

receive large numbers of tourists. However, only Omodos village is programming and planning activities for dark tourism, since they have a dark site in their village, which they have turned into a museum as well. The Yermasoyia mayor, on the other hand, is not keen on the development of dark tourism, as he mentioned that firstly, there are no dark sites in that locality, and secondly the fact that the area is dedicated to leisure tourism, with an extensive development of tourism businesses. Nevertheless, he believes that dark tourism development is able offer a positive effect in the area.

Local authorities have a vital function and responsibility in tourism development. According to Cevirgen and Kesgin (2007), the local authorities have a crucial role in tourism development, which includes the reduction of tourism's harmful effects and a boost from the constructive involvement of the business tourism sector. Moreover, Kachniewska (2015) points out that any exclusion from the initial stage of the planning and development of facilities and services for tourism could be a factor in any negative perception of its impacts by the local community; this will ultimately lead to negative consequences for any further development. From the study it is evident that there is limited concern from the local authorities on local dark tourism development. The majority of local authorities concentrate on leisure tourism, and attention is directed towards advertising and promotional activities to attract leisure tourists. In short, little emphasis is placed on dark tourism visits or any development efforts at almost all sites.

Two site managers indicated just that. From Study Group 2, the military cemetery site manager, Nicosia, revealed that this site does not belong to the local authorities but is rather managed by the military. The site manager believes that it is better that the military manages it because it is taken care of much better with much emphasis and promotion. The local authorities are doing so many different things and projects, and according to the site manager it would have been a pain for them to manage this site as well. This contradicts what the Deputy Ministry of Tourism representative said – that the local authorities should take initiative for tourism projects as well. This is clearly an indication of the distance between the two sides. From Study Group 2, the site manager of Achironas Liopetriou declared that the local authorities are not really involved in the sites, and the preservation and restoration of the site is the duty of the historical organisation responsible for it. The focus group interviewees were asked over their intentions on dark tourism development and

whether they support this development. Most of the interviewees were in favour of dark tourism, yet they did not have any plans for investments on areas around dark sites. The reason is because they expect the public sector to provide incentives. They mentioned the creation of off-season special interest tourism like dark tourism, which could add value to the overall tourism product of the island. Yet, they emphasised that dark tourism development should be added to the overall tourism growth, so as to increase the supply of sites and improvement of the existing ones. It is important that the support for dark tourism comes from public sector policies, while educating and informing the local residents over the significance of such types of tourism.

The local community expressed mostly positively over the growth of dark tourism. They also showed eagerness to contribute to promotional and other activities for dark tourism in their home region. Three local residents emphasised that; for instance, from Study Group1 Interviewee 7, F, 35-44 referred to her willingness to participate in any promotion of dark tourism, maybe through technology and the internet. The second one from the same group (Interviewee 17, F, 35-44) pointed out that she would like to participate in promotional efforts for dark tourism development. The third one from Study Group 1(Interviewee 28, M, 35-44) stated that he would be happy to assist if this type of tourism is developed. Specifically, this interviewee underlined that he would not promote personal tragedy, so the right messages need to be indicated, and that effort should be made to appreciate the suffering of the relatives, for example. As far as the promotion of Cyprus as a destination that includes dark sites is concerned, most local community interviewees held distinctive views. The locals were sceptical about any current initiatives to develop the sites under investigation. Even if the majority of the interviewees were supportive of any initiative for dark tourism development, many viewed that the right time to progress the development is an important issue. Specifically, some interviewees mentioned that the social environment might not be 'ready' to develop these sites, as there are conflicting perceptions over what these sites portray. Moreover, in the case of the accidental naval base disaster, it was argued that it will require more time to 'heal', as it is a very recent tragedy. This agrees with the research conducted by Dale and Robinson (2011), who mention the importance of in what period the site is to be developed, but also if the event that took place on the site was severe. It is evident that the locals support change and further development, but it has to come under the right circumstances and timing, which includes the right infrastructure, services, and proper promotion.

Local community interviewees mention that dark tourism development can provide more benefits to the destination, and attempts should be made to formulate policies through community opinions and views and incorporate them in the development process. Yet, this is debatable, as in Cyprus the local community is not normally incorporated in the development or planning process of tourism projects. The focus groups/private sector demanded that the public sector and government departments offer incentives to the private sector to stimulate dark tourism development in their areas. They firmly believe that the involvement of the private sector will offer a major advantage in that direction. Both sectors have an input on the growth of dark tourism. This could be done by offering assistance and cooperation to tourism organisations, but also to tourism businesses.

The contribution of the local residents in the growth of dark tourism is apparently an accepted practice if and when it is required by the body responsible for its development. The local community should be given the chance to express opinions over development on the sites that carry the history of the island. The willingness of the majority of all three study groups to contribute to dark tourism development is an indication that any proposed projects should incorporate their views and opinions. Nonetheless, the time of development should be considered, as many of the sites are recent, and this could bring about negative feelings, especially from the families of those people who died on the sites. This can also assist in the proper planning, development, and marketing of dark tourism.

### 6.4.2 Support for Dark Tourism Development

The findings showed that the locals mostly support dark tourism development on the island of Cyprus. The local residents and focus group (study groups 1 and 2) interviewees robustly supported dark tourism and argue that the destination has to find ways for its proper development and ultimately expansion on the island. Study Group 2 (public sector formal in-depth interviewees)

also showed a positive attitude towards its development, but did not mention any initiative for its development. The majority of interviewees from the three study groups strongly consider that there are more positive than harmful effects of dark tourism.

The local community emphasised their support for dark tourism once the constraints and limitations are removed. They mention that development can even benefit the communities, whether they are involved or not in the tourism industry. In addition, it was recommended that in order to expand outwards in terms of improving the sites, more attention should be given to the recognition of the sites 'importance and eventual promotion. This support for the recognition, interest, and further development must be embraced by the public and private sectors or any organisations that are involved in dark tourism. Policies and development plans for dark tourism that will incorporate and exploit the country's dark sites and attractions should therefore be taken into consideration.

As already stated, this research study aims to comprehend the perceptions and views of the community on dark tourism development. It applies social exchange theory (SET) to explain the different elements involved in dark tourism development, especially between local residents, the public sector (local leaders/policy makers), and the private sector (tourism industry) of Cyprus. The findings identify what locals think about dark tourism, both positive, and to a lesser extent negative, in various aspects. Scholars such as Wang et al. (2019), Wetzel et al. (2014), and Miles (2012) note that SET emphasises the economic but also social features that link the community and tourism. This is another aspect that could fit with the current research, as the local community base their positive support on the growth of dark tourism on the positive impacts that the dark sites can produce at the destination.

Since its initial utilisation, there was a predisposition to consider this concept as rigorously economic. Nonetheless, the theory entails the insertion of non-economic factors. Ozel and Kozak (2017) note that SET can consists of numerous aspects that deal with the financial, social, cultural, and environmental facets of the impacts that can enlighten the stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes. Based on Prayaget et al. (2013), the residents can ultimately recognise the gains and perks that development entails.

What residents think of tourism is a difficult topic to explore, yet their perceptions and views are significant in regard to their overall support for development. Apparent pressures that could be derived from tourism can be regarded as a factor resulting in limited support for tourism. If development takes place, it needs to be prepared in a manner that will result in an advantage for the country. A perceived threat that social exchange theory also includes is the dearth or absence of trust, and this is mentioned by local community members. Specifically, Zhao et al. (2017) note that SET also explains trust in that social interactions are considered.

As mentioned, the local communities' perceptions towards tourism in general were optimistic. As tourism is the main industry in Cyprus, the economic effects of tourism development are more apparent. Commonly, they refer that there are many advantages to be gained, given the case that dark tourism is developed as a new form. For the local community participants who were interviewed, the prospects for development include the upgrade in the façade of the sites, many sought-after employment opportunities for residents, preservation of the cultural identity of Cyprus, advancement in the local standards of living, and even support for any actions that could include cultural and social aspects of Cyprus. This information is noteworthy, as it proves that the local community think in a mature way over the effects of tourism, and they are expressing their support over this.

Towards dark tourism development the perceptions were also positive. In addition, they generally concur that dark tourism opportunities are real in Cyprus, because the island has a wealth of dark sites. This verification, resulting from expressions by the local community, is based mostly on the expectation that the whole country in general will gain financially, socially, culturally, and even physically because of dark tourism development. This finding concurs with the assertion articulated by Jun et al. (2016), which links the support from the residents to economic returns. In addition, Abdollahzadesh and Sharifzadeh (2014) observe that residents value above all the economic gains against the other effects (the social, environmental, and physical). Within this research the local community has mainly addressed the positive effects of development in general, and dark tourism development specifically, claiming that it could generate mostly benefits, and that the potential costs have been somehow overlooked. This shows that the local community of

Cyprus, a conventional leisure destination, does not face any fundamental dichotomy in supporting dark tourism development in their country. They perceive positive impacts of dark tourism development and are very encouraged to support dark tourism development in their areas and communities. The negative impacts are not perceived as hindering the destination in developing dark tourism. This comes in accordance with SET, which forecasts that the community would support development when the benefits exceed the costs (Stylidis and Terzidou, 2014).

It has been identified by the findings that dark tourism in Cyprus has not got a developed infrastructure, services, and conveniences that would properly support the development of dark tourism or even meet the market for dark tourism. There are no sites or attractions that have been purposefully developed to attract dark tourists, yet places of memorialisation around the country have become popular with the locals, because they regard them as historic and link them to the historical events that have shaped the community.

The public sector perspective on dark tourism development seemed to be complicated and extensive. It became evident that the further development of the 'dark' sites presents many challenges. Apparently, from the public sector perspective (Study Group 2), and specifically local authorities and the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, it was mentioned that the economic resources do not allow them to develop further this type of tourism. In the meantime, those funds that are available potentially go to other more popular types of tourism. The Deputy Ministry representative noted specifically that the Ministry has responsibility for hundreds of projects each year, yet this type of tourism is not in their plans. The focus groups rejected the 'no funds' or 'available resources' argument, as they believe it not only represents a lack of vision, but also concerns the avoidance of political friction rather than financial constraints. The public sector, they argue, should eventually accept this reality and put more emphasis on developing dark tourism.

Also, the local community were not concerned over any change in traditional culture, which because of dark sites' development may change negatively. There are occasions where the local residents may express negative views concerning the social effects of tourism. Particularly, tourism development has been charged with impacting negatively societies with misconduct, and increasing crime (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010). Yet in the case of the Cyprus local community

this was not something they regarded as occurring on the island. The three study groups have not made any reference to crime as a negative social impact on the island. Actually, they made little reference to any negative social impacts as a result of dark tourism development, or even tourism in general.

Moreover, there were some locals that viewed dark tourism positively, yet they did not express support as a result of the constraints indicated towards the dark sites development, and the fact that they see a public sector uninterested in any initiative towards dark tourism development. Some interviewees claimed to have negative perceptions of dark tourism, which is a result of the negative connotation they attach to the concept of dark tourism. They referred to it as morbid and death-related, and not as attractive as other forms of leisure tourism. Nevertheless, they expressed support for its development because of the economic and infrastructure development and other positive social impacts that dark tourism could bring, like the well-being of the community.

***Matrix:*** The findings assisted in the construction of a matrix that is useful for researchers and practitioners because it demonstrates that the perceptions of the local community on dark tourism development is based on their understanding and visits to dark tourism sites. The matrix demonstrates a conceptual continuum of local communities' perceptions and support over dark tourism development. The conceptual matrix can direct future studies. Specifically, the interviewees viewed various positive but also negative perceptions over development within the context of dark tourism. There is also indication of their positive or negative support for dark tourism development. The views of the local community study groups interviewed distinguished between their perception of what dark tourism portrays and visiting such sites. The interviewees made reference to the positive impacts of dark tourism development, which include economic and social characteristics, and which agree with social exchange theory, which indicates positive support as a result of their perceptions.

There are two extremes indicated by the matrix –those that perceive dark tourism positively and support its development (which were the majority of the interviewees), and a small number of interviewees who expressed negative views of dark tourism and were pessimistic over their support for further development. On the one hand the majority perceive that Cyprus has ample opportunities and potential for dark tourism and they support it because it could bring economic, social, and infrastructure development to the areas around the sites, but it could also add to the

overall tourism product of the island. On the other hand, however, there were interviewees that expressed negative thoughts over both the growth of dark tourism as a type of tourism, and that a leisure destination like Cyprus could not include such a form of tourism within its overall tourism product. The reason behind this negative attitude, according to the interviewees, was the lack of trust in the public sector planning and development, plus the fact that it is a politicised type of tourism. Moreover, the market for it is much smaller than leisure tourism.

The developed matrix is presented below:

Interviewees that had a **Positive Perception** also **supported** the development of dark tourism, specifically according to the informants dark tourism can bring positive economic and social impacts, ample opportunities and potential for dark tourism development (lots of sites and enhanced infrastructure). Full support and personal interest in the development given (as it can enhance the historical significance of the sites). Local community who expressed **negative perceptions** on dark tourism development due to lack of initiatives (from public and private sectors), lack of infrastructure and facilities of sites. They share pessimistic views for the future of dark tourism in Cyprus due to the fact that Cyprus is an established leisure destination. Yet if there is development they will support any initiatives to this direction. Local community expressed **positive perceptions** on dark tourism due to their positive visitor experience to the sites (e.g., learning and commemoration). But they were reserved on their support for dark tourism development due to the different constraints, which include no interest from the public sector, lack of updated facilities and infrastructure; therefore they indicated that since neither the public nor the private have initiatives for such development **no support** was highlighted. There were interviewees that had a **negative perception** of dark tourism development and thereafter **no support** of this type of tourism. Their support for dark tourism development is negative, as they consider that the constraints of such development cannot be overcome easily (e.g., lack of trust for public sector, politicised dark sites. Local community positive perception of dark tourism was positively related to personal impel over tourism development but negatively related to any initiatives due to political or business pressure over tourism. The private sector tourism businesses (Study Group 3) had powerful perception of dark tourism and expressed support of future development yet they did not realistically see this implemented due to the lack of initiative from the public sector and the minimal economic impact such type of development can bring to the sites. Trust an important prerequisite of social exchanges is absent between the two sectors and

this impacts the future development of dark tourism on the island. The two axis on the matrix provide the relation between positive and negative perceptions of dark tourism development and their ultimate support or not of such initiative.

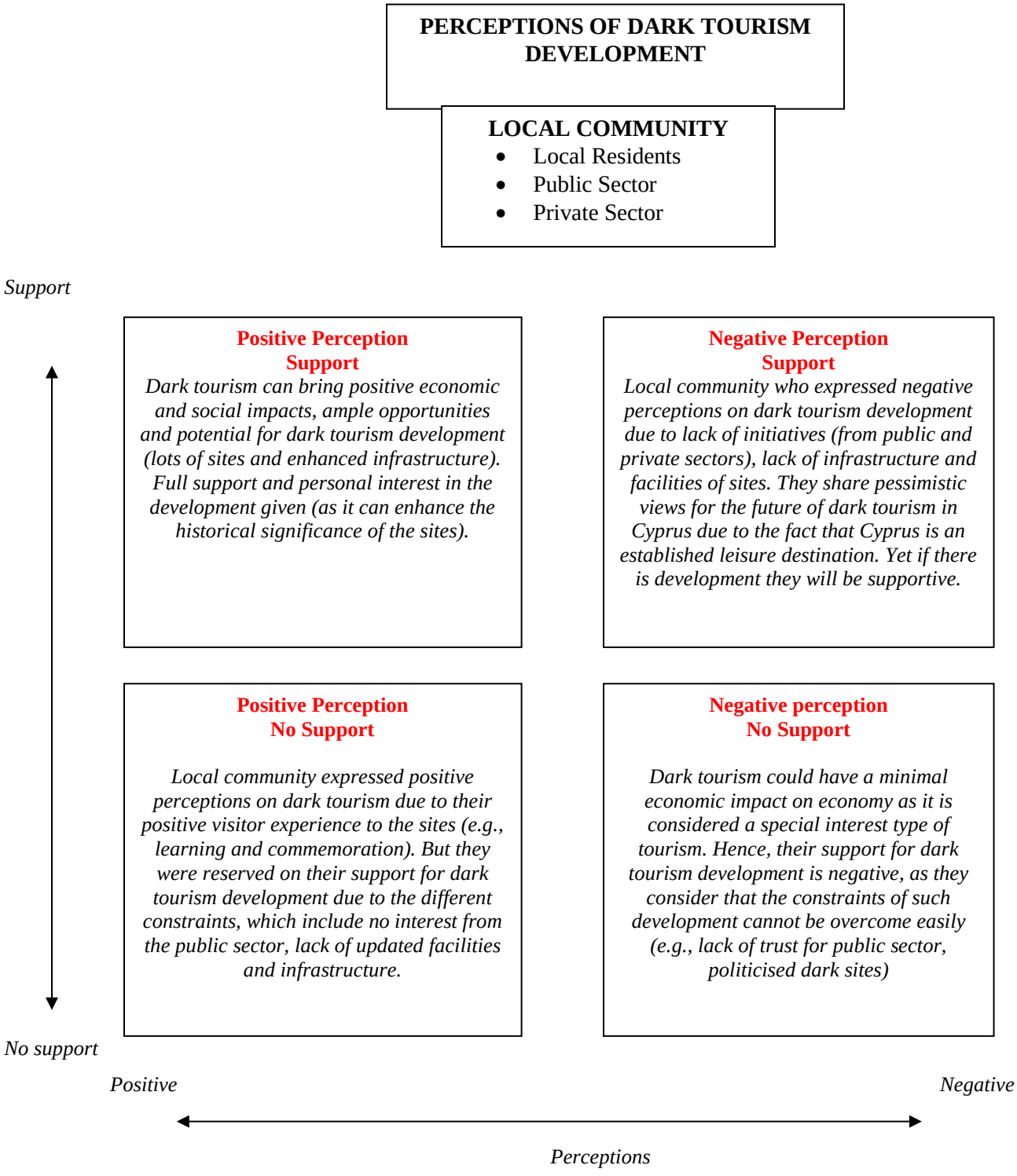


**Figure 6.1: Matrix: Perceptions of the Local Community over Dark Tourism Development**

As was already stated by the findings of the research, the development of dark tourism is generally supported by the three study groups. Yet, their support is based on the elimination of various obstacles or constraints, but also on the right timing for such an initiative. This is because many dark sites have emerged recently, and any decisions on their further growth is critical. They stated that development should be based on the events that have taken place, so that the historical unfolding can be transferred to the sites. In other words, the island, according to the local community, can develop the sites for touristic purposes, but again, they have to overcome many issues. Apart from these issues, the local community has also recommended strategies to upgrade and revitalise the sites in order to place them on the dark tourism map on the island. Particularly, Study Group 3 interviewees (focus groups) recommended approaches to handle the sensitive aspects of dark tourism. These are mentioned in the next part of the thesis (**6.4.3** Obstacles and Actions for Dark Tourism Development).

### 6.4.3 Obstacles and Actions for Dark Tourism Development

The majority of the local community were confident that a significant amount of opportunities for dark sites exist and it would be prudent to pursue such opportunities. Thus, in order for this to take place and such opportunities are to be taken, there are obstacles that should be overcome. These actions based on the perceptions of the local community confirm the notion that the residents would endorse the development of such sites and link them to the historical and cultural events of the past. Conversely, the findings also highlight a number of constraints that may hinder development and unevenly share the costs and benefits. In order for the supporting actions to become a reality for further dark tourism development, there are several obstacles that have to be overcome. The following obstacles and the actions to limit them are presented below:

- Lack of promotion – as the public sector does not formally support dark tourism, promotion is hampered, resulting in less popularity of dark tourism on the island. The setting up of a promotional web or promotion through the tourism platforms would eventually remove this obstacle.
- Lack of dark tourism facilities – if visitors go to the sites without knowledge (as many local community interviewees indicated), what they are visiting would be disappointing because

of the lack of facilities, technology, and infrastructure of the site. Private sector incentives could be given so that facilities are added on or around the sites.

- Improper conservation – dark tourism sites have no organised plan for their maintenance or conservation, and over the years they have become less and less attractive. This was mentioned by local interviewees – that they went back 20 or 30 years after their initial school visit, only to find the same on-site structures. Conservation and preservation of the sites is a prerequisite for their potential success.
- Image of Cyprus – the public sector has no plans to brand the image of the island as anything else except a leisure tourist destination. Cyprus is identified as a leisure destination and this is not changing. However, the potential to offer alternative types of tourism and dark tourism should be included in the plans of the general tourism development.
- Lack of local contribution – the local community involvement is non-existent in any kind of tourism development, and even less in dark tourism development. This is because of complex feelings for the sites and the political issues involved. Public sector policies should be directed to include the local community in any development decisions. It is identified that there is a lack of supportive government policies for the dark tourism destinations, and this could hinder the possibilities of dark tourism development. The first step could be the acceptance of what constitutes a dark site, as a type of tourism with a great potential.
- Dark tourism is politicised – among the locals there is a tendency to politicise dark sites. As a matter of fact, there are complex feelings or taboos about the dark sites on the island. Unless this tendency is limited, the further development of dark tourism remains uncertain.

Having removed the aforementioned obstacles, the potential for the dark sites is thereby open to the concrete actions of all parties that are involved in tourism. Systematic action for the planning and implementation of dark tourism is a pre-requisite for its success. Specifically, the three study groups gave their suggestions on certain strategies in which the local community could participate. In particular, they mentioned employment of tour guides for the areas, the opening up of more accommodation near the sites, and even involving the locals who live around the areas to take up

initiatives for the marketing and promotion of the sites. In this way the locals would feel more involved and their support would not be questioned.

The local community overwhelmingly supported the further development of dark sites. The following lists a number of actions that the local community groups have identified:

- Upgrade of the infrastructure around the sites.
- Public sector funding and incentives to local groups for promoting the dark sites.
- Educating the locals through school/university programmes in constructing awareness of the importance of the sites linking them to the history of the country.
- Provide incentives for the private sector to expand near the sites, but also incentives for including the sites in their promotions.

In order for the systematic action to succeed, the local community groups have identified specific organisations that could assist in this: The Deputy Ministry of Tourism, the Cyprus Archaeological Society, the National Planning Agency, local authorities that include dark sites, private sector accommodation and entertainment companies, and international travel and tour operator companies. Moreover, a number of cultural sites in Cyprus are under World Heritage protection from UNESCO, and these organisations could also take part by adding the Cyprus dark sites to their lists. It is not an easy task to provide precise and particular tasks to all these local and international organisations, and this is not the purpose of mentioning this. What is important, though, is to emphasise that organisations, associations, and businesses exist that could play an exclusive part in the growth of the dark sites on the island. Apart from that, the implications of organisations and associations provide further trustworthiness, as they have the know-how of planning, organising and implementing tourism policies, and this could be a factor in constructing an accord for dark tourism to develop in Cyprus.

## 6.5 Chapter Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to undertake a discussion about the research. The discussion blended the literature review and what the findings indicated, based on the research aims and objectives of the study. The discussion was separated into three main parts, which included the local community perceptions towards dark tourism, specifically for a leisure destination like Cyprus, and their potential contribution and support for the further development of dark tourism. Aspects that deal with dark tourism development and are linked to local community perceptions have also been addressed.

The thesis explored what locals perceived the research sites to be in terms of their supply. Most locals showed complete disappointment with what the sites offered as services, and they were really critical about this. Most remarked on the lack of infrastructure around the sites but also the lack of exhibitions, poor layout, and a lack of flow in the museums and sites. Even though the majority of the interviewees praised their visits to the sites, there were some that expressed disappointment about the organisation of the sites in general. Generally, the research sites induced positive perceptions, especially for their educational significance, yet at the same time they perceived the sites as outdated, with no modern technology and lacking basic facilities and services.

The local community were in general agreement that dark site development was not an impossible task. This was based on the fact that they anticipated more benefits than costs in the effects of such initiatives. Even if the majority of the three study groups were not familiar with the concept of dark tourism, they had all visited the sites under investigation. The sites were rather linked with history/culture, education/learning, and commemoration/remembrance. They also disregarded commercialisation as a negative aspect. Their visitation was linked with curiosity, and a number of opportunities have been identified from the findings of the three study groups. They include development of the sites for economic reasons, investment opportunities, and infrastructure development. Moreover, opportunities include the inclusion of the community and promotion through leisure. The constraints were also mentioned, and these include lack of trust between the

different sectors, lack of cooperation and coordination, lack of appreciation and knowledge over the potential for development, lack of finances and technology, and the fact that the majority of the sites under investigation are politicised.

With regard to the impacts, the local community perceived more positive impacts than negative, but they again underlined the obstacles and limitations to development. The contribution and support of the local community has allowed the construction of a conceptual model that indicates the relationship between the local community perceptions and their overall support for development. The conceptual framework was based on social exchange theory, where the local community are influenced by the positive and negative impacts and this influences in turn their overall support for dark tourism development. In particular, the locals that perceived more benefits from the impacts are likely to support dark tourism development, while the locals that perceive more negative effects are less prone to support development. The theory that fits with the study is that the local community interviewed perceived more positive than negative impacts of dark tourism development, and thereby seem more likely to support its development.

# CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the final conclusions to the research study. Particularly, it provides the conclusions, implications, and recommendations for this thesis. This chapter is separated into five sections. The chapter begins by restating the aims and objectives of the investigation. This includes the rationale and purpose of the research. A summary of the results is then detailed, creating a synopsis of each completed chapter. This chapter also refers to the theoretical contribution, and implications and recommendations are then cited. The limitations of the research are also presented and future research priorities are set. This final chapter has a profound purpose: to present the conclusions of the thesis on the basis of the aims and objectives presented in Chapter 1.

## 7.2 Summary of the Results

The background to the research included the evolving and redolent topic of dark tourism. It is a subject area that is connected with touristic visits to sites and attractions that include death or a tragedy that has taken place in a past event. Dark tourism research has been gaining more attention academically, which is evident through the increase of touristic visits to these places. However, although there are areas that have attracted noteworthy attention from academics, it is nonetheless identified that there is modest contemporary empirical evidence on such sites and none at all on dark tourism sites at a leisure destination. This provides a valuable opportunity and prospect for an empirical investigation and research.

This research has examined eight sites in Cyprus that have some association with a tragic event, but also death. The purpose was to address the objectives of the study and obtain insightful findings over the development of dark tourism on the island. Specifically, the research has concentrated on the concept of dark tourism and how the local community perceives it. Moreover, it attempts to identify whether dark tourism can flourish in a destination that is popular with leisure tourists, an

area where a significant gap in the literature exists. Even if the majority of the local community were not familiar with dark tourism as a defined concept, their visits to the sites under investigation underlined the importance of this type of tourism at the destination. Specifically, the local community mentioned that these sites are part of the history of the country, yet they had not connected it with the term 'dark'. The most suitable approach for the research was to undertake a qualitative investigation of the perceptions of the local community. Based on the fact that this is an exploratory study that investigates the perceptions, views, and opinions of the community group, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate. This gave the researcher the opportunity to study the interviewees' views and opinions in detail and in-depth, which resulted in a wealth of explanations of insights, difficulties, and complications that involve the future development of the dark sites under investigation.

The overall purpose and intention of the thesis was to investigate the perceptions of the local community over the development of dark tourism at a conventional leisure destination. It has used Cyprus as a fitting place context, since the island has been and is mostly popular with sun and beach holidays, and to a lesser extent is popular for other types of tourism. Addressing the research objectives offers the opportunity to examine an area that has been neglected in academia. These objectives included asking what the local community thinks of dark tourism, whether they are familiar or unfamiliar with the concept, and what meanings they attach to it. Moreover, it was aimed to discover whether they perceive that there is potential for development and whether they would be willing to contribute to and support its development. Through the examination of the findings it was recognised that the empirical investigation can contribute to both knowledge and also the practical aspect, which concerns the local community and dark tourism development.

In summary, the research thesis set out to investigate the perceptions of the local community over the development of dark tourism in the context of Cyprus. The central aims and objectives of the thesis were specified in Chapter 1. Specifically, Chapter 1 introduced the basis for this thesis through an extensive reviewing of present knowledge, but also of all-important milestones in the development of dark tourism literature. A comprehension of the concept of dark tourism and its implications was carried out through a theoretical lens, and through that the research gap was identified, as well as the rationale for the study. A thorough search of different dark tourism

research underlined the existing importance of the concept, both academically, but also in destinations that are likely to develop dark tourism. The chapter indicated the vast variety and mixture of disciplines around dark tourism.

Dark tourism was placed in the context of Cyprus – a destination developed around leisure holidays. A specific type of dark tourism was not identified in the context of Cyprus, but rather it was linked to distinct typologies based on the different sites that have been under investigation (e.g., lightest to darkest). For this reason, it was imperative to identify and regard the different types of dark tourism, definitions based on different concepts, but also differing categories of dark sites. This was achieved in Chapter 2.

Evaluating the literature on dark tourism broadly, but also what part it fulfils today in the world, was prioritised. The chapter discussed and distinguished the role of dark tourism from the demand and supply perspective, and considered how these identified concepts might best achieve their purpose when developed. It is imperative to understand why and in what way the local community might approve or disapprove of dark site development, and this is a crucial part of the academic investigations. The local community has been recognised as an important and leading stakeholder within destinations, as they constitute the people who are exposed to the benefits or costs of development.

After setting out the theoretical foundation of the study in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, in Chapter 3 the study introduced the research approach to be implemented to achieve the aims of the study. The research methods chosen were explored and the reasoning behind their choice explained. A qualitative approach was applied, as it examined the local community perceptions on the development of dark tourism on the island of Cyprus. This method was the most appropriate for data collection, as it was considered the most valuable in obtaining in-depth information on the topic of the research. This study, as was stated in Chapter 3, has used the interpretive paradigm, which clarified, explained, and illuminated the phenomenon of dark tourism, which is the basis of the research. The interpretive paradigm aimed to present what the local community thought of dark tourism, and their perceptions of its potential development. The approach used by the interpretive

paradigm in this study included three study groups, with informal interviews, in-depth formal interviews, and focus groups.

In Chapter 4, the context of Cyprus and the sites under investigation were discussed. It first introduced the island with general information, and it then presented the eight sites under investigation. The sites were chosen on the basis of a 'spectrum', which included the 'lightest' to the 'darkest' form of dark site. It was imperative to identify the participation of the local community and their support or even contribution to the development of dark sites.

Chapter 5 conferred the findings of the study, which were based on the empirical investigation of the three study groups (informal interviews, in-depth interviews and focus groups). The findings drawn from the three study groups about the local community revealed that dark tourism is not included in the priorities of the destination, and through their experience of visiting the dark sites, dark tourism was adjudged to be linked with the history, culture, but also commemoration of those that have died during past events. Although there are no formal plans for the growth of dark sites on the island, it was generally agreed that there was support of the local population for such growth; the majority of the local community interviewees concurred with this. The local residents viewed that there are ample opportunities to develop the dark tourism sites under investigation, yet there are constraints that need to be tackled and changed. Most sites, according to the local residents, are lacking infrastructure, services, and facilities. From the findings it was apparent that the dark sites in Cyprus could be added to the overall leisure product, yet such a development would require the effort of the different sectors within the tourism industry. Due to factors like an absence of cooperation between the public and private sector, and politicisation of what the sites portray, there are fundamental obstacles to dark tourism's further development. The theory also speculates that dark sites could be incorporated into broader tourism itineraries. Cyprus' overall tourism product could do just that.

Yet, the local community mainly supported dark tourism development, underlying the positive impacts and opportunities that exist in Cyprus. In particular, the research revealed in Chapter 5 that the different sites under investigation were viewed positively for development, with particular issues that need to be improved (e.g., the physical representation of sites, infrastructure, and

marketing). This would increase the potential for dark tourism to be connected successfully with its intended markets and establish it as another type of tourism at the leisure destinations. Furthermore, it was determined that for those directly affected by dark tourism development (Study Group 3, private sector) it was apparent that the dark sites still have to improve many aspects in order to be established in the Cyprus context. This illustrates the large gap that exists in attitudes and views between the private and public sector. Fundamentally, as it was ascertained, the public sector should take a more active function in the development of dark tourism, and above all, exclude dark tourism from being politicised, as the sites have been viewed through the lens of politics. Dark tourism development in Cyprus has been in many cases politicised, which can be determined as one of the main drivers of the discordance in developing dark tourism. In turn, the private sector could take initiatives for expanding dark tourism sites.

Centrally, as discussed in Chapter 6, it became apparent that the three study groups regarded that they 'see' positive tourism impacts from dark sites' development. Yet, the public sector needs to widen its interest in dark tourism and incorporate the local residents' views and perceptions in the direction of dark tourism development. In addition, the public sector can look for different ways and actions to progress the market for dark tourism, in a way that the sites are made popular for tourism without being controversial and provoking resentment amongst the locals, who might oppose such growth because they have lost family members in the respective tragedies. It is essential to promote the educational element and learning in the process of developing dark tourism, since the local residents themselves refer to these sites as including a historical and heritage aspect. Local people are well aware of the history attached to the dark sites in Cyprus, and they mostly link them with the invasion, the occupation, and the colonial fight for freedom. In fact, the majority of dark sites in the country are associated with that era. For the local people, the events of those years were a reminder of the political conflicts that were happening not only on the island but in many destinations around the world during and after the Second World War. They agree that the sites have the obligation to be preserved so that they continue to 'speak' about the events, especially to the younger generations that are not linked with the turbulent past. Moreover, the sites are connected with freedom and the 'innocent' beliefs of those heroes who died for the idea of freedom.

## 7.3 Theoretical Contribution, Implications, and Recommendations

The research study puts together various theoretical contributions to the academic examination of dark tourism; this theoretical contribution is underlined in this thesis. In the debate of dark tourism development context at a conventional leisure destination, the study develops from the concept of dark tourism in Cyprus within the complex facet of the tourism industry's supply and demand. The researcher has made an evaluation of the stance of the local community in dark tourism development, based on their perceptions of the concept, but also on the supply and demand of this type of tourism. Finally, the study proposes a new framework to evaluate the local community perceptions and their experience at dark sites in order to enrich the supply-driven approach to develop dark tourism products. The prevailing theory that has been elucidated by the local perceptions towards dark tourism development has been social exchange theory (SET). This theory affirms that residents evaluate dark tourism on the basis of the benefits and costs gained (Latkova and Vogt, 2012). The findings from the study maintain the appropriateness of this theory as a theoretical framework, as there are both economic and social aspects that could ultimately shape the local community's views and perceptions of dark tourism development.

### 7.3.1 Contribution to Knowledge

The projected input of this research was to fill major gaps in the literature by offering a further approach on the development of dark tourism from the views and opinions of the local community. Hence, the acknowledged limited research on dark tourism at a leisure destination like Cyprus provided an opportunity to consider the significance of dark tourism from a conventional leisure destination perspective. The findings in this thesis are constructive in expanding and enlightening the breadth of information and knowledge of dark tourism in academia. Moreover, the anticipated contribution of the thesis was to provide a deeper insight into the perceptions of the local community over the provision and further development of dark sites from a tourism supply-side perspective. These gaps have been addressed, directed by the research aims and objectives of the thesis through the finding and elucidation of the empirical findings (chapters five to seven) as

specific, original contribution to knowledge. The empirical findings offer in-depth insight into this complex phenomenon by the perceptions of the three local community groups, their opinions, views but also their experiences within the realism of dark tourism establishments, therefore, adding theoretical substance to the developing body of academic research in this field. In addition the findings provide vital information on the provision of dark sites and what the locals view over the issues surrounding the actual sites.

This thesis serves to add to the current understanding of the phenomenon as to the perceptions of the local community as to whether it can be developed in a destination that opted development around 'sea' and 'sun'. The thesis aid to reinforce the existing basis of academic literature in dark tourism research while it puts forward further stimulus for future research into the concept of dark tourism development. Furthermore, this study can be useful for dark tourism supply-side stakeholders. This is because it deals with the perceptions, opinions and views of the local community that could provide further insights on the effect of the process of the experience itself but also what the local community foresees of the 'dark sites'. As such, this research can be used to tailor any development accordingly in order to present the sites in specific ways and also aim to appeal to specific markets. By its nature the attempt to classify the sites based on the 'dark tourism spectrum' can assist tourism suppliers to invest much more in the creation of proper infrastructure that fits with the contemporary society on such sites that center on death or tragedy or other such phenomena as noted herein. In this way, modern tourism supply stakeholders can attempt to convey what the sites represent in a contemporary tourist setting and as this thesis indicates influence the experience of visiting such sites.

The findings reveal that the dark sites' development can be successful and useful for developing an alternative type of tourism in a destination that has previously focused only on leisure. It is imperative that all sectors involved in the process of dark tourism development are actual and have definite plans. Its significance is clear for all stakeholder groups, and thus contributes to the ability of any site that will be potentially developed further as a place for education, learning, and commemoration of the events of the past. The three study groups' findings reveal that the opportunity for further research was there, especially in a context that has not been investigated previously. These gaps in the literature have been addressed. They were based on the aims and

objectives of the research, which, together with the empirical investigation, has created an original contribution. Moreover, the results can make available critical and vital data that can be turned into further knowledge of the understanding and definition of dark tourism, explore the awareness of the local community as to what constitutes dark tourism, and incorporate issues surrounding the development of dark tourism. For instance, the potential for development underlines the opportunities and constraints, but also the effects of such development, according to the views of the local population. This can enhance the theoretical knowledge on the topic in the wider academic sphere. The research proposed a matrix of dark tourism in Cyprus. The matrix is an original contribution to the literature; it blends the perceptions of the local community and their ultimate support or otherwise of dark tourism development based on the perceived impacts.

### 7.3.2 Practical and Managerial Implications

The current study has investigated recent and ongoing research for further and in-depth examination of the local communities' views and perceptions regarding dark tourism development. This study also supplements previous studies by providing a view of local residents' perceptions regarding dark tourism at a leisure destination. The findings have assisted in the construction of a conceptual model that is useful for researchers and practitioners because it demonstrates the perceptions of the local community based on their support or otherwise for dark tourism development. Specifically, the interviewees expressed various positive and negative perceptions regarding dark tourism development within overall tourism development. This enabled the creation of the conceptual model, which attempts to address the link between the benefits and costs and the negative perceptions of dark tourism development in terms of how supportive local residents are of its development. Local residents' support for the development of the dark sites is an essential factor in determining the success or failure of the sites**.**

As indicated, the findings presented in this study show that although the interviewees were not familiar with the concept of dark tourism, the majority were in favour of its expansion, which adds to the credibility of studies undertaken by a variety of scholars (Wang and Luo, 2018; Kim and Butler, 2015). The results from the study illustrate significant connotations for tourism development and managerial processes on the dark tourism sites in Cyprus.

This thesis was undertaken to ascertain the perceptions of the three study groups concerning the development of dark tourism. These perceptions could be used as a point of reference for the future of dark tourism development on the island. Moreover, the thesis aimed to detect how any approaches or actions of the two main sectors (public and private) are viewed or perceived by the three study groups. The empirical investigation shows that the interviewees in this thesis were able to recognise different implications that the tourism industry on the island faces. Also, the interviewees proposed suggestions to issues and they even put forward solutions for the growth of any desired effect. The majority of interviewees criticised the limited initiatives for dark tourism that have been offered on the island thus far. They referred to the lack of knowledge of the concept in the first place. Moreover, through their experience they mentioned the insufficient offering of infrastructure, on-site facilities and services. In addition, they underlined the lack of marketing and promotion of dark tourism on the island. Other significant issues identified were the lack of public and private initiatives for dark tourism, and even the lack of local community contributions.

Local community members viewed dark tourism generally as positive and desirable. A reason for this positive perception, according to the local residents, is the fact that dark tourist sites are based and connected to the history and culture of the island. It is believed that policy formulation and local community views should be incorporated in the overall planning and development process. This constitutes another criticism of the local residents – which the inclusion of the local community in the development and planning process of tourism on the island is to date non-existent. Study groups 1 and 3 (the local residents and focus groups) requested that the public sector encourages, and through the provision of incentive packages stimulates, the growth of the dark sites. The local authorities can also do that in their areas and for the sites under investigation. The local authority of Omodos village is an example of this, where they used the increased tourism businesses in the village to expand the colonial site, which is now popular with many people who visit it. In the views of the local community, the development of dark sites could benefit the area and the country, and they would have liked to be part of a project to implement this and to be taken into consideration, yet up to now this has not been happening, with the exception of a few local initiatives.

Policy makers should utilise the findings of this study and take actions to develop the sites on the island. It is significant that policy makers take the recommendations of their communities seriously. This study offers an opportunity to the policy makers and practitioners to first take note of what their local populations have to say over the dark sites' further development. The inclusion or exclusion of the local community can be a determining factor in the success or failure of tourism plans.

### 7.3.3 Recommendations

On the issues identified by the three study groups, as well as suggestions and recommendations for the development of dark tourism on the island, the following suggestions were identified:

*1) Awareness and education of the concept of dark tourism:*

The local community has shown acceptance of tourism on the island. The findings indicate that there is high acceptability for tourism and even dark tourism. There were some limited exceptions in the views of the local community coming from the two sectors (private and public) over the acceptability of dark tourism development. Yet, it was evident (Study Group 1) that there was no involvement of the local population in any decisions or resolutions on tourism, or more specifically on dark tourism. Consequently, efforts should be made to ensure that the hopes of the locals for the dark sites within their communities and their future development should be integrated into the overall plans and policies. This acceptability should reflect the involvement of the local community, so that more returns are gained from this development. The public sector and/or other organisational responsibilities for dark tourism development should, according to the findings, find the means with which to endorse the positive perceptions of the local community in order to take advantage of the island's dark resources. According to Masanti (2016) the acceptance factors among the local community can influence the decisions and perspective in exploring dark tourism sites.

As views and perceptions change over time, this support for dark tourism development should continue, and according to the local community, education is a tool that could be used to emphasise the positive impacts of dark tourism, but also an understanding of its significance on the island.

The locals mentioned that educational programmes inside and outside schools could be conducted, as could workshops and promotional efforts, through popular mass media communication. A significant number of locals mentioned that the social media is today a powerful tool, as people are always searching for new types of experiences and alternative types of tourism. Moreover, local community organisations were also mentioned as another tool for educating people.

*2) Local community involvement and contribution to the development of dark tourism:*

From the findings of the study it was evident that there is widespread support in the local community for the prospect of development of dark tourism (with limited exceptions). Within this research, numerous inquiries of the interviewees were directed on the understanding of the local community and if they were interested in being part of dark tourism development plans in Cyprus. Most of them were very interested in any opportunity for development, as they recognise the importance of tourism in general. They mention that they are inclined to take part in dark tourism development, and evidently, they want to be considered and included in the dark sites' planning process. It was viewed that to date there has been no involvement or contribution of the local community in decisions over dark tourism development. Therefore, it is important that attempts should be made to make certain that the views, attitudes, and expectations of the local residents are taken into consideration when planning or developing policies, and the contribution of the local community would eventually make them gain more benefits. A regular and organised exploration of local community groups over their perceptions and views can fulfil a significant part in the development of planning and policy making over dark tourism development. An interchange of ideas and thoughts between the community groups and those making decisions over dark tourism development could lead to an accepted and chosen direction in strategy development, as a consensus on dark site development policies and/or programmes could become reality. Kunwar and Karki (2018) note that supply stakeholders such as national tourist organizations and tour operators are largely responsible for promoting dark sites. Local residents indicated that the development of dark tourism would add to the overall leisure product. The majority of the local community groups expressed their overwhelming support, and similarly the private sector expressed positive support, with, however, certain limitations, including the unwillingness of the public sector to develop dark tourism further. All community groups expressed their willingness

for collaboration and coordination of any future actions towards dark tourism. For this to succeed, the public sector is required to take charge of dark tourism development.

*3) Infrastructure and site development, marketing efforts and opening up to new markets:*

The findings have revealed that through the visits of the local community, there was identified an insufficient provision of dark resources and a very low quality of facilities and services at the dark sites. The local residents view that in order to achieve an expansion of dark sites, the public and private sectors should share greater desire to improve the facilities and services. Specifically, certain recommendations in the provision of facilities and services are identified:

(i) Include at the sites any audio and technical equipment and systems, which would support visitors with an outline of the dark site. This would be an added asset that would aim to enhance the attributes of the site but also the interpretation of the site, which can enhance the learning of the events that have taken place;

(ii) Restore and enhance synchronously the organisation and structure of signs, signboards, and maps at the dark site, as this will improve accessibility to the site;

(iii) Advance the dark sites in terms of an improved image, but also in terms of upgrading public areas and toilets, waste treatment, cleanliness - inside - but also the landscape outside the site;

(iv) Improve the transport infrastructure, especially on how to reach the dark sites so that potential visitors have access; and

(v) Consider any incentives for investment in any accommodation facilities, and direct any developments near the dark sites to promptly meet the needs of visitors, who might be domestic or international.

*4) Public and private sector initiatives and involvement of the local community:*

The two sectors (public and private) should take more initiatives to increase the different markets on the island and perhaps aim principally at the dark tourism market. This in turn will increase tourist spending and assure the well-being of the local community; this is something that the residents of the island are well aware of, as tourism is the main industry in Cyprus. Thus, it seems that both sectors, public and private, showed no endeavour to create or plan any dark tourism sites,

facilities, or services. In contrast, the three study groups recognised the potential expansion of the tourist season through dark tourism development. They regarded it as fundamental in expanding the tourism industry outside the coastal areas. Dark tourism could be an opportunity to promote the island as a year-round tourist location. Many interviewees expressed the view that dark tourism is offered at many destinations, and therefore any strategies for its development have to be competitive. The private sector, specifically travel agents, identified the function of international tour operators in attracting dark tourists in the same way that they attract leisure tourists. They underline that it is vital for international tour operators to attract dark tourists just like they appeal to leisure tourists. They underline that it is vital for international tour operators to find ways to convince tour operators to open up the dark tourism market. This is also something the public sector, and specifically the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, should do.

Efforts for the marketing and promotion of dark tourism from both sectors is imperative, as it can enhance the islands' historical and cultural aspects through dark tourism. This was mentioned by many interviewees – that more resolutions should be thoroughly explored by marketing and promotional actions that could involve dark tourism. Specifically, a targeted promotional operation could inspire the creation of awareness of dark tourism in Cyprus. Many informants referred to the lack of awareness of dark tourism in Cyprus, so by refocusing the promotional efforts on the history and culture of the dark sites as alternative or special types of tourism, interest in the island and visitor numbers could be increased.

Many private sector interviewees (Study Group 2 – focus groups) demanded more inclusion of the public sector in dark tourism development, and specifically the Deputy Ministry of Tourism; this in turn would present supplementary economic incentives or even encouragement to the private sector. Most private sector businesses lack any initiatives for dark tourism development, as they do not regard it as economically viable. It was acknowledged that the public sector neglects the private sector and concentrates on other projects without any cooperation between them. Therefore, they strongly demanded stronger attention, concern, and initiatives from the public sector, especially for small and non-coastal businesses. Thus, it was obvious to them that general

tourism policies neglect the contribution of the private sector and disregard any dark tourism incentives.

A crucial aspect in dark tourism development in Cyprus is to create a framework of sufficient infrastructure and facilities in order to enhance the currently limited capital investment in dark tourism sites. The island can then gain impetus for the regeneration but also for restoration of the sites. This will upgrade the sites and the local community could get even more involved, and therefore increase the opportunities for more visitors.

The improvement, development, or upgrading of service quality of the tourism sites and any related services entails the assistance of all stakeholders involved; first is the inclusion of the two principal sectors (public and private), but also stakeholders from the tourism industry, which includes tour operators and travel agencies. This is especially important, particularly if promotional efforts are made to attract international visitors, where a big market is anticipated. One crucial factor that contributes to the eminence and success of the tourism products and services is the human factor. It is essential to enhance the qualification and skills of the site managers, tour guides, and all staff at dark sites.

## 7.4 Limitations and Future Research

The thesis has supplemented the empirical component to the debate over the development of the dark tourism sites at a leisure destination. Nevertheless, further research should be undertaken to test and verify the research.

There are no perfect research studies, and it is acknowledged that any limitation of the research should be acknowledged and contemplated with prudence and carefulness. Within this study there have been recognised limitations, but also prospects to undertake future research studies. These two issues could merge, and that in turn could allow more productive evaluation of any weaknesses. Nonetheless, the limitations could provide a starting place for further investigation.

The first limitation could be connected to the fact that only the local community has been captured in the data collection. Intensifying the research and including international tourism, but also the perceptions of international businesses, would enhance the consideration of dark sites. Additionally, the thesis evaluates the data from the Cyprus context, and it concentrates primarily on the local population. It is recommended that considering both local and international visitors could provide more insights on the topic of perceptions on dark tourism development.

The second limitation identified was that the thesis delved into the perspective of supply and to a less important extent demand (visitor experience). These data have not executed thorough expressions or considerations from the visitors' standpoint on the dark sites. Hence, it is recommended that future investigation could apply a mixed method approach in collecting data, and not only a qualitative approach.

The third limitation is the fact that the qualitative data collection could not predict or estimate the future in terms of what is taking place in the tourism market, which could include any practical function that is connected to dark sites' development. It is suggested that a quantitative approach can measure the demand for dark tourism, and include local and international sections of the population.

Fourthly, there is a continuing problem of perceptions. Despite the fact that perceptions express the views/opinions or even attitudes of the interviewees, these might change over time. The potential of the interviewees' perceptions could be based on a degree of their experiences, which sometimes do change over time. Therefore, it is a challenge to determine the perceptions of the interviewees over time – whether it depends on their actual experience or on their expectations.

The fifth and final limitation linked with the thesis is the lack of addition of other attributes that have been shown to affect the local community's support for dark tourism development. For instance, other attributes can include the behaviour of the locals and any menace due to the complexities of the sites. It can be suggested that future research could include other attributes when attempting to comprehend the local community's perceptions of dark tourism development.

## 7.5 Future Research Priorities

Previous research into local community perceptions of dark tourism development is perceived as lacking. Research has mainly paid attention to particular facets of dark tourism (e.g., battlefields, war, genocide, disasters, prisons, cemeteries, terrorism, ghosts, and Dracula). It has also researched dark tourism from distinct perspectives, which include: visitor experience (Oshaldiston and Petray, 2011; Seaton, 2010), people's motivation on visiting dark sites (Topcu, 2020; Kamber et al., 2016; Isaac and Cakmak, 2014; Winter, 2011; Bigley et al., 2010; Gatewook and Cameron, 2004). Perceptions of tourism impacts on disasters have also been undertaken (Barbhuiya and Chatterjee, 2020; Rossello et al., 2020; Tsai et al., 2016). No effort has been made to study the local community perceptions of the overall dark tourism background. This thesis has made initial endeavours to investigate dark tourism development at specific dark sites. The sample of sites used for this thesis was a significant contribution to what the locals perceive as dark tourism. However, the thesis has not used dark sites throughout the island, since the study sites were chosen on the basis of investigating sites that are considered 'light', 'dark', and 'darkest'. Given the significance of the local community's perceptions of dark tourism development, there is a need for academic research to look into the local views on areas and sites all over the island and examine the magnitude, if any, and degree of acceptance of dark site development.

This thesis has served to create awareness of local community perceptions of dark site development at a leisure destination – a topic that has been narrowly researched. It has provided recommendations for further development of dark tourism on the island. Nonetheless, it is suggested that research is required to additionally corroborate the findings of the current thesis. Whatever research of local community perceptions of tourism development and dark tourism development may be conducted should acknowledge any diversity in views and perceptions of the local community. Even though there is much research on dark tourism development, most studies have concentrated on popular dark sites, and no attention has been placed on leisure destinations. For example, there has been extensive research on the Chernobyl energy plant nuclear accident, which Stone (2013) referred to as the world's worst nuclear accident (Morris, 2021). Other popular dark sites that have been extensively researched are the site Ground Zero in the United States and

the Auschwitz concentration camp (Lv et al., 2022). Consequently, it is imperative that the views of the locals over the development of dark sites at leisure destinations are further explored.

This thesis has seen, throughout the research investigation of local views and perceptions on dark tourism development, the demand and supply sides that can assist developers and planners to identify local community aspirations and suggestions. The intricacy here is that international tourists have not been incorporated into the study, and future research could add essential insights to dark tourism development policies and plans, thereby meeting any dark tourism aims and goals. There is a need to identify and extend dark tourism development dissemination and its effects for the island. Hence, all stakeholders, including international tourists, could be included in any further research activities. Dark tourism has been regarded as bringing a mix of views and emotions to the local community. The thesis argues that the local community under investigation has viewed dark tourism as positively contributing to the overall tourism product and connected it with the history, culture, and the opportunity for commemoration for those that have died through the turbulent events of the past. Yet, further research can shed light on the perceptions of the local community on the moral and ethical dimensions of dark tourism, especially in destinations that have not been traditionally popular as dark tourism locations.

Moreover, the thesis has identified that dark tourism development can incorporate, both directly and indirectly, the contribution and support of local community groups, even ones that are not related to tourism. One of the purposes of dark tourism development is to include the contribution or support of the local community. Therefore, research should be directed towards ways in which the local community could contribute and support dark tourism development at leisure destinations. The views and attitudes of these local community groups should be integrated into any future planning and development of dark tourism. Correspondingly, future research studies on tourism businesses can investigate further the views and attitudes of those people who work in the tourism industry over dark tourism development in relation to general tourism development. It could place emphasis on the business grounds, for instance if they would support dark tourism for profit generation or supplementary profit. Furthermore, the views and perceptions of the local community should be monitored regularly, as these perceptions might change over time, even within the same community. An examination of any changes in the local community's perceptions,

and its support for dark tourism development, should also be monitored, as those perceptions could also change over time.

## 7.6 Concluding Remarks

The local community in Cyprus have gauged the benefits of dark tourism development. This concludes that the locals of the island are experiencing a positive outcome from the tourism industry in general, and therefore consider that dark tourism development could also bring benefits to the destination. Economic benefits are regarded as the primary sustainment of this view, followed by education and learning through the historical and cultural effects of dark tourism development. As far as the economic benefits are concerned, the local community perceives that dark tourism development could contribute to the destination in terms of more spending on tourism goods and services.

Moreover, there is neutral agreement that any costs are not disadvantageous, as action programmes can be applied to boost dark tourism and reduce any negative impacts. The locals see dark tourism as an opportunity, which would have a huge impact on the locals. It is suggested that the public sector should reflect and consider programmes like seminars, trainings, and workshops about any positive impacts of dark tourism and possible outcomes. In this way it is anticipated that the private sector would be further interested to respectively invest and supply in this type of tourism. The three study groups proposed solutions to the constraints concerning dark tourism development. The prospect to propose any model that would further develop the dark sites in Cyprus is affirmed by the three groups, who even recognise it as part of the history and culture of the island. Finally, a contrast made with previous studies on dark tourism development brought to the surface some similarities, but added new insights into this phenomenon.

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# APPENDIX I

## Dark Tourism definitions

| Dark tourism definitions | Author |
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| "The commercialization or promotion of destinations or sites linked with dark tourism". | Dann (1994, p. 61) |
| "Travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly but not exclusively, violent death". | Seaton (1996, p. 240) |
| "Tourism to sites associated with death, disaster and tragedy in the 20th century for the purposes of remembrance, education or entertainment". | Lennon and Foley (1997, p. 155) |
| "Visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives". | Tarlow (2005, p.48) |
| "Visit to places 'associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre". | Stone (2006, p.146) |
| "Refers to individuals who are motivated primarily to experience the death and suffering of others for the purpose of enjoyment, pleasure and satisfaction". | Best (2007, p.38) |
| "Seek to integrate themselves with death, either through witnessing violent or untimely deaths or, in the extreme perhaps, travelling in the knowledge or expectation of death". | Sharpley (2009, p.18) |
| "Spirit-seekers visited hallowed places based on a desire to become closer to divinity, seek forgiveness for wrongdoing, worship ancestors and nature gods, or petition deity for blessings". | Nyaupane, Timothy and Poudel (2015, p.343) |
| "Visit heritage sites such as war cemeteries because we feel morally obliged to do so'. | Heap, (2016, p. 86) |

# APPENDIX II

Dark tourism research: the chronicles

| Battlefield and War (sites)Tourism | | |
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| Author/ Year | Article title/topic | Article focus |
| Seaton, A.V. (1999) | War and Thanatourism: Waterloo 1815-1914 | This paper examines the historical evolution of Waterloo as a tourism mega-attraction. |
| Iles (2006) | Recalling the Ghosts of War: Performing Tourism on the Battlefields of the Western Front. | This article explores the ways in which tourists embarking on commercial coach tours engage with the battlefield landscape by examining contemporary tourist performance. |
| Ryan (2007) | Battlefield Tourism: history, place and interpretation. | Through a series of case studies that involve past conflict in China, the United States, The South Pacific and Europe, the nature of battlefield sites as tourist locations are explored. |
| Iles (2008) | Encounters in the Fields – Tourism to the Battlefields of the Western Front. | This paper explores the ways in which tourists embarking on commercial coach tours engage with the battlefield landscape by examining contemporary tourist performance. It also considers the role of the tour guide in setting and directing the tourist encounter. |
| Winter (2009) | Tourism, Social Memory and The Great War. | This paper uses social memory theory to describe the process thought which tourism can engage in creating and perpetuating the memory of the Great War and suggests how research can help to better understand tourist experiences. |
| Bigley, Lee, Chon and Yoon (2010) | Motivations for war-related tourism: A case of DMZ visitors in Korea. | The purpose of this study was to analyse the motivations of visitors to the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and examine those findings relative to a review of conceptual research related to identifying the motivations for travel to war-related tourism destinations. |
| Braithwaite and Leiper (2010) | Contests on the River Kwai: How a wartime tragedy became a recreation, commercial and nationalistic plaything. | This paper examines the experiences of many tourists that can be summarised as recreation with a dash of lite infotainment, while the dark tragedy in the historic background is largely ignored. By learning about the history of the tragedy, people can learn what an ineffective and horrific way war is for resolving international problems and this can also help reconciliation |

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| | | between nations that were wartime opponents. |
| Carr (2010) | Shinning a light on dark tourism: German bunkers in the British Channel Islands. | This paper sheds light on some of the issues which periodically arise in the British Channel Islands over the most visible heritage of Occupation — the German fortifications, or 'bunkers'. It includes issues of disinheritance and the subsequent discord that this can cause. |
| Hall, Basarin and Lockstone-Binney (2010) | An empirical analysis of attendance at a commemorative event: Anzac Day at Gallipoli. | This research provides a positive contribution to the understanding of customer satisfaction in event settings, extending the limited research on attendee satisfaction to investigate its elements in relation to a large-scale commemorative event associated with battlefield tourism. |
| Seaton ( 2010) | Another weekend away looking for dead bodies: Battlefield tourism on the Somme and in Flanders. | This article reports a phenomenological investigation into the perspectives and experiences of battlefield tourists visiting the landscapes of the Western Front, the setting of trench warfare in the Great War of 1914–1918. |
| Zhang (2010) | Of Kaoliang, Bullets and Knives: Local Entrepreneurs and the Battlefield Tourism Enterprise in Kinmen (Quemoy), Taiwan. | This paper explores the role of local entrepreneurs in the branding of Kinmen (Quemoy) Island, Taiwan as a battlefield tourism destination. |
| Dunkley, Morgan and Westwood (2011) | Visiting the trenches: Exploring meanings and motivations in battlefield tourism. | This paper provides insights into the motivations and experiences of tourists who visit sites associates with war and conflict. Specifically 25 individuals who participated in a tour of the World War One battlefields of the Somme and Ypres. |
| Le and Pearce (2011) | Segmenting Visitors to Battlefield Sites: International Visitors to The Former Demilitarized Zone in Vietnam. | This paper profiles battlefields visitors based on their motivations. It analyses the patterns of demand of international visitors to the former Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in central Vietnam. |
| Osbaldiston and Petray (2011) | The Role of Horror and Dread in the Sacred Experience. | The aim of this paper is to explore and grasp on the experiences of people at dark sites such as Gallipoli. |
| Winter (2011) | Battlefield Visitor Motivations: explorations in the Great War town of Ieper, Belgium. | This study measured the motivations for education, holiday and remembrance for an international sample of visitors to the Great War town of Ieper in Belgium. |
| Chronis (2012) | Between place and story: Gettysburg as tourism imaginary. | This study seeks to advance knowledge on the socially constructed character of |

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| | | tourism imaginaries. Ethnographic fieldwork at Gettysburg provides insight for theorizing the anchoring of tourism imaginaries on four experiential domains: narrative, moral valuation, emplaced enactment, and emotional connection. |
| Cheal and Griffin (2013) | Pilgrims and Patriots: Australian tourist experiences at Gallipoli. | The purpose of this paper is to explore the Australian tourist experience at Gallipoli in order to better understand how tourists approach and engage with battlefield sites and how the experience may transform them. |
| Lemelin et al. (2013) | ‘‘Conflicts, battlefields, indigenous peoples and tourism: addressing dissonant heritage in warfare tourism in Australia and North America in the twenty-first century’’. | The purpose of this paper is to examine the omission of Indigenous narratives in battlefields and sites of conflicts while also highlighting how certain battlefields and sites of conflicts have attempted to address dissonant heritage by diversifying interpretation strategies and implementing elements of collaborative management approaches, thereby addressing Indigenous erasure. |
| Willard, Lade and Frost (2013) | Battlefield tourism and the visitor experience: the case of Culloden. | This paper considers Gulloden a battleground and a burial site. It aims to conceptualize the visitor experience. |
| Miles (2014) | Battlefield sites as dark tourism attractions: an analysis of experience. | This paper seeks to meet this challenge by providing more evidence of the actual experiences of tourists at those sites which are conceptually identified as ‘dark’ using the particular example of battlefields in the UK. |
| Volcic, Erjavec and Willson (2015) | Branding Post-War Sarajevo: Journalism, memories, and dark tourism. | This paper explores how Sarajevo journalists remember the city's recent violent conflict, and how war memory becomes commodified and branded for tourism. Also it analyses how prominent global media represents Sarajevo as a tourism destination after the war. |
| Murphy (2015) | Dark Tourism and the Michelin World War 1 Battlefield Guides. | In this article it is suggested that the Michelin WW1 Battlefield Guides were an early 20th Century example of a written aid to dark tourism. |
| Kamber, Karafotias and Tsitoyra (2016) | Dark heritage tourism and the Sarajevo siege. | This paper investigates tourists’ motives and expectations for visiting dark sites as well as to identify crucial issues in managing ‘dark tourism/heritage’ sites. |

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| Kokkranikal, Yang, Powell and Booth (2016) | Motivations in Battlefield Tourism: The Case of '1916 Easter Rising Rebellion', Dublin. | This paper reports findings of a study examining motivations of visitors to major battlefield destinations related to the '1916 Easter Rising Rebellion'. |
| Lemelin et al. (2016) | Videography and student engagement: The potentials of battlefield tourism. | The purpose of this article is to present the findings from a collaborative study conducted by a research team consisting of university students and a course instructor visiting battlefields and memorials located in Western Europe. |
| Naefand Ploner(2016) | Tourism, conflict and contested heritage in former Yugoslavia. | This paper considers the wars of the Yugoslav succession during the 1990s and its disastrous impact on the region's tourism sector. |
| Yink, Seyitoğu and Çakar (2016) | From the white darkness to dark tourism: the case of Sarikamish. | The purpose of this paper is to understand and examine whether the Sarikamish battlefield site can be considered as a dark tourist attraction by exploring the extent to which the site meets the five stages of MacCannell'ssacralisation process. |
| Yoshida, Bui and Lee (2016) | The Vietnam War- A Vietnamese perspective on dark tourism. | This paper aims at re-shaping the narrative of that war through the lenses of the Vietnamese community. Instead of focusing on foreign veteran experiences, this research highlights how the Vietnamese perceive, conserve and commemorate the heritage of the war. |
| Fallon and Robinson (2017) | 'Lest we forget': a veteran and son share a 'warfare tourism' experience. | This paper provides a fresh perspective on participation in 'warfare tourism' by investigating the behaviour and experiences of a living veteran and his son returning to two theatres of war in which the veteran had served in the Royal Navy during the Second World War. |
| Zheng, Zhang, Zhang and Qian (2017) | Exploring sub-dimensions of intrapersonal constraints to visiting "dark tourism" sites: a comparison of participants and non-participants. | This paper aims to explore the inner constraints on visiting the darkest edge of the dark tourism spectrum among both participants and non-participants. |
| Ekin, and Akbulut (2018) | Battlefield Tourism: An Examination of Events Held by European Institutions and Their Websites Related to Battlefields. | In this paper, the battlefields that existed throughout history but which have begun to be discussed recently in the academic world have been explored and European institutions and their websites related to battlefields examined. |
| Virgili et al. (2018) | 'From the Flames to the Light': 100 years of the commodification of | This paper reports the process of commodification of a dark site by |

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| | the dark tourist site around the Verdun battlefield. | adopting a supply approach and apply the dark tourism spectrum (Stone, 2006) to the battlefield of Verdun in France from 1916 to 2016. |
| Proos and Hattingh (2019) | Dark Tourism: Growth potential of niche tourism in the Free State Province, South Africa. | The main objective of the paper is to reveal the niche tourism potential of the Free State by focusing on the South African War (1899–1902). |
| Çakar (2020) | Investigation of the Motivations and Experiences of Tourists Visiting the Gallipoli Peninsula as a Dark Tourism Destination. | The present study strives to understand the travel motivations and experiences of both domestic and international travellers visiting the Gallipoli Peninsula. |
| Proos and Hatting (2020) | Dark Tourism: Growth potential of niche tourism in the Free State Province, South Africa. | The main objective of the paper is to reveal the niche tourism potential of the Free State by focusing on the South African War (1899–1902). |
| Topçu (2020) | Consuming history in a political context: Motivations of Turkish visitors of the Gallipoli Battlefields. | This paper aims to investigate the motivations of Turkish visitors to Gallipoli in terms of consumption experiences and to clarify empirically motivations of Turkish visitors to Gallipoli. |

| Holocaust/ Concentration camps Tourism | | |
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| Author/Date | Article/Topic | Article Focus |
| Lennon and Foley (1999) | "Interpretation of the Unimaginable: The U.S. Holocaust Memorial museum, Washington D.C. and 'Dark Tourism'". | This article analyses the U.S. Holocaust Memorial museum in the context of dark tourism, concluding that the museum's nature, content and purpose pose questions about visitor motivation dark attraction development, ethical management and the interpretation of history. |
| Buntman (2008) | "Tourism and Tragedy: The Memorial at Belzec, Poland". | This paper locates Belzec within its historical context and includes a related discussion about Polish-Jewish relationships up to the present. Belzec's new role in Polish Holocaust tourism is examined. |
| Thurnell-Read (2009) | "Engaging Auschwitz: an analysis of young travellers' experiences of Holocaust Tourism". | This article considers the experiences of young travellers visiting the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Poland. |
| Biran, Poria and Oren (2011) | "Sought Experiences at (Dark) Heritage Sites". | The paper focus on Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp (here after |

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| | | Auschwitz), the epitome of dark tourism. |
| Cohen (2011) | Educational dark tourism at an in populo site: The Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem. | This article is based on a study at YadVashem, the Shoah (Holocaust) memorial museum in Jerusalem. |
| Podoshen and Hunt (2011) | Equity restoration, the Holocaust and tourism of sacred sites. | This paper, utilising netnographic data, examines the reactions of some global Jewish citizens in relation to tourism activity surrounding historic Holocaust sites located in Eastern Europe. |
| Podeshen and Hunt (2011) | "Equity restoration, the Holocaust and tourism of sacred sites". | This paper, utilisingnetnographic data, examines the reactions of some global Jewish citizens in relation to tourism activity surrounding historic Holocaust sites located in Eastern Europe. |
| Raynolds (2011) | Tourism, the Holocaust and the Humanities. | This paper addresses that Holocaust tourism requires interdisciplinary study and through the exploration of Holocaust – related travel, it suggests that tourism need to be dismissed as simple consumerism. |
| Oren and Shani (2012) | The YadVashem Holocaust Museum: educational dark tourism in a futuristic form. | This paper utilizes the case of the YadVashem Holocaust Museum as an illustration for setting a themed environmental at a highly unconventional tourist site whose main goal is to serve as an educational memorial for the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people. |
| Kidron (2013) | Being there together: dark family tourism and the emotive experience of co-presence in the holocaust past. | This study examines the motivations and lived experiences of Israeli descendants of Holocaust survivors who set out on family roots trips to heritage sites and sites of atrocity accompanied by their survivor parents. |
| Brown (2013) | Dark tourism shops: selling 'dark' and 'different' products. | This paper aims to analyses the position of the museum shop within dark tourism sites. |
| Isaac and Çakmak (2014) | Understanding visitor's motivation at sites of death and disaster: the case of former transit camp Westerbork, the Netherlands. | This paper researches' people's motivations to visit sites of death and suffering and to contribute to a deeper understanding of dark tourism consumption within dark conflict sites. |
| Nawijn, Isaac, Gridnevskiy and Van Liempt (2015) | Holocaust concentration camp memorial sites: an exploratory study into expected emotional response. | This paper explored Dutch people's expected intensity of emotional responses of a potential visit to a concentration camp memorial site in the Netherlands. |

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| Busby and Devereux (2015) | Dark Tourism in context: The diary of Anne Frank. | This paper examines the influence of The Diary of Anne Frank on motivation to visit her house in Amsterdam. |
| Magee and Gilmore (2015) | Heritage site management: from dark tourism to transformative service experience? | This paper investigates the managerial perspectives of dark heritage sites and considers how visitors can benefit from and ideally be transformed by the overall experience. |
| Nawijin and Frickle (2015) | VisitorEmotionsandBehavioralIntentions:TheCaseofConcentrationCamp MemorialNeuengamme<br>Visitor emotions and behavioural Intentions: the case of concentration camp memorial Neuengamme. | |
| Podoshen , Hunt and Andrzejewski (2015) | Attribution Processes in Cross-Cultural Heritage Tourism. | This article examines psychological processes of some global Jewish tourists and local hosts surrounding historic Holocaust sites located in Europe. |
| Nawijn, Isaac, van Liempt and Gridnevskiy (2016) | Emotion clusters for concentration camp memorials. | This study examined the emotion clusters of a potential visit to a concentration camp memorial site. |
| Reynolds (2016) | "Consumers or witnesses? Holocaust tourists and the problem of authenticity". | This article considers how Holocaust tourists exercise agency, through the practice agency, through the practice of photography. Through such agency, tourists to Holocaust memorial sites become active producers of historical knowledge as they generate their own representations of historical trauma. |
| Podoshen (2017) | "Trajectories in Holocaust tourism". | This paper examines how tourists engaged in atrocity heritage tourism embark in processing meanings, community discourse and motivations when faced with increasing levels of hostility. |
| Reeves (2017) | "Mobilizing bodies, narrating security: tourist choreographies at Jerusalem's Holocaust History museum". | This paper considers memorials and museums commemorating war and atrocity mobilize visitors into narratives about security and sovereignty. |
| Berberich (2018) | "Introduction: the Holocaust in contemporary society". | This paper addresses the issues of Holocaust commemoration in contemporary society as is constantly moving, changing and evolving. |
| Podoshen et al. (2018) | "Dark tourism abjection and blood: A festival context". | This paper examines the psychological processes of some global Jewish |

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| | | citizens in relation to tourism activity and local hosts surrounding historic Holocaust sites located in Eastern and Central Europe. |

| Genocide Tourism | | |
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| Author/Date | Article title/Topic | Article Focus |
| Hitchcott (2009) | Travels in Inhumanity: VéroniqueTadjo's Tourism in Rwanda. | This article focuses on *L'Ombred'Imana: voyages jusqu'au bout du Rwanda* (2000), the travel narrative she published as a result of this trip. |
| Robb (2009) | Violence and Recreation: Vacationing in the Realm of Dark Tourism. | In this article the author takes a cross-regional approach to a diverse group of dark tourism sites, from Rwanda and Argentina to the United States and Brazil, considering their aesthetics and the experiences of visitors to contribute to the theoretical exploration of the relationship between tourism and violence. |
| Simic (2009) | Remembering, Visiting and Placing the Dead: Law, Authority and Genocide in Srebrenica. | The article address the recent development of „dark tourism" in Srebrenica and the blurring between voyeurism and educational enlightenment that such tourism provokes. The article examines the legal and ethical disputes surrounding the authority over the dead who rest in the Srebrenica Cemetery complex. |
| Kistner (2010) | Commemoration and Counter-Memory: „The Genocide Series". | At the end of his monumental work Lieux de mémoire, Pierre Nora finds himself baffled by the paradox that the critical work of counter-memory has been overtaken by the obsession with commemoration. This paper explores this paradox. |
| Short (2010) | Cultural genocide and indigenous peoples: a sociological approach. | This article argues that the dominant understanding of genocide as mass killing is sociologically inadequate. Also that indigenous peoples' use of the concept is often more accurate and precise than that espoused by many academics and call for more research into seemingly benign processes of indigenous 'cultural diffusion' but through the analytical lens of genocide. |

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| Tadjo (2010) | Genocide: the changing landscape of memory in Kigali. | This paper reflects on the memory of the genocide in Rwanda. |
| Davis and Bowring (2011) | Connecting with tragedy through landscapes of memory: memorial design, tourism and the post-genocide memory scopes of Cambodia, Rwanda and Germany. | This article explores the post-genocide memory capes of Germany, Cambodia and Rwanda, investigating their ability through memorial form, to 'connect' international visitors with foreign 'memory'. |
| Copeland (2011) | Madness and Mayhem: The Aesthetics of Dark Tourism | This paper focuses on two traumas capes: genocide sites in Cambodia and Rwanda and explores the intersection of consumer desire with the paradoxical roles of education and economics. |
| Schaller (2011) | From Lemkin to Clooney: The Development and State of Genocide Studies. | This article highlights some methodological and ideological problems inherent in genocide studies (e.g., Eurocentrism) and discusses their consequences for our understanding of mass violence. |
| Sion (2011) | Conflicting sites of Memory in Post-genocide Cambodia. | This paper examines the performance of memory in Cambodia through the lens of various memorials and commemorative practices. |
| Bolin (2012) | On the Side of Light: Performing Morality at Rwanda"s Genocide Memorials. | In Rwanda, numerous memorials have arisen to remember the 1994 genocide and its victims. This paper considers the effect of the national genocide memorials on Western tourist visitors, in the context of research on „dark tourism" and Western attitudes toward death and the dead. |
| Straus (2012) | "Destroy Them to Save Us": Theories of Genocide and the Logics of Political Violence. | This article investigates the causes, concept, and logic of genocide while suggesting a set of theoretical propositions and avenues for future research. |
| Tyner, Alvarez and Coluca (2012) | Memory and the everyday landscape of violence in post-genocide Cambodia | This paper addresses the politics of memory in post-genocide Cambodia. |
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| Friedrich and Johnston (2013) | Beauty versus tragedy: thanatourism and the memorialisation of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide | The paper reveals that the 1994 genocide is becoming increasingly incorporated into the national tourism product, a contested process that is both challenged and facilitated by the guardians of the memorial sites. |

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| Gigliotti (2014) | The memorialization of genocide. | This paper addresses the issues related to violence and the emotional and social claims and investments in mourning it, and forgetting it. Related, too, is the unsettlement that comes with labouring over personal memory and its transformations into concrete form, or its humble markings in landscapes, hills and buildings. |
| Sharpley and Gahigana (2014) | Tourist experiences of genocide sites: The case of Rwanda. | This paper locates genocide tourism within the context of dark tourism and reviews how the Rwandan genocide is presented/memorialized before considering research into how tourists experience genocide memorial sites in Rwanda. |
| Jinks (2014) | Thinking comparatively about genocide memorialization. | This article argues for a comparative approach to studying genocide memorialization. |
| Isaak and Cakmak (2016) | Understanding the motivations and emotions of visitors at TuolSleng Genocide Prison Museum (S-21) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia | The purpose of this paper is to examine the motives and emotions of Western tourists visiting TuolSleng Genocide Prison Museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and further contribute to a deeper understanding of the dark tourism consumption. |
| Wight (2016) | Lithuanian genocide heritage as discursive formation. | This paper presents a synthesis of Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* and the concept of discursive formation to critique museums and sites of memory as spaces in which competing discourses of cultural identity emerge. |
| Zhang et al. (2016) | Too dark to revisit? The role of past experiences and intrapersonal constraints. | By deploying a survey of tourists visiting the Memorial of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre, which lies on the darkest edges of the dark tourism spectrum, this study probes how well one's intrapersonal constraints and past experiences relate to one's revisit intention. |
| Lischer (2019) | Narrating atrocity: Genocide memorials, dark tourism and the politics of memory. | This paper highlights the role of international interactions with genocide memorials particularly how Western visitors, funders and consultants influence the government's narrative. |
| Kidron et al. (2020) | The "Perfect Failure" of Communal Genocide Commemoration in Cambodia Productive Friction or "Bone Business"? | This paper draws on at communal sites of genocide memory, villagers, monks, and nongovernmental |

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| | | organization stakeholders, traces (over a five-year period) the localization of Euro-Western genocide commemoration in the Cambodian landscape. Hybrid Khmer-Western communal memorials that display victim remains and promote genocide pedagogy signify elite capitulation to Western cosmopolitan memory and reap the rewards of atrocity tourism. |

| Natural Disasters Tourism | | |
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| Author/Year | Article title/topic | Article focus |
| Ryan and Kohili (2006) | The Buried Village, New Zealand- An example of dark tourism? | This paper attempts to elicit visitor responses to the Buried Village and to assess to what degree the visitor experience was within the dimensions of what constitutes a 'dark tourism' product. |
| Coats and Ferguson (2013) | Rubbernecking or Rejuvenation: post-earthquake perceptions and the implications for Business practice in a dark tourism context. | This research explores how residents of Christchurch, New Zealand negotiate the balance between being the subject of unwelcome tourist gazing and commencing the path towards economic and social recovery from the devastating earthquake. |
| Rucińska (2016) | Natural disaster tourism as a type of dark tourism. | This paper makes a distinction of natural disasters in thanatourism which is connected with dynamic geographical conditions. |
| Tsai, Wu and Liu Liu(2016) | Perceptions of tourism impacts and community resilience to natural disasters. | This research paper examined the perceptions of both tourism and disaster of residents that live in a hazardous environment who have experienced natural disasters. |
| Yan et al. (2016) | Investigating the motivation – experience relationship in a dark tourism space: A case study of the Beichuan earthquake relics, China. | This study identifies implications of dark tourism and describes how tourists and destinations define what constitutes 'dark' travel. |
| Miller, Gonzalez and Hutter (2017) | Phoenix tourism within Dark Tourism: Rebirth, rebuilding and rebranding of tourist destinations following disasters. | The purpose of this paper is to address the phenomenon of Phoenix tourism, which focuses on the transformation and rebirth of places following death and disasters. |
| Kunwar, Aryal and Karki (2019) | Dark Tourism: A preliminary study of Barpak and Langtang as seismic Memorial sites of Nepal. | This paper assesses theoretical understanding of the dark tourism, the society and culture of the seismic memorial sites, the motivation of the visitors, changing trends of visitors over pre-, during and post-Earthquake 2015 and prospects and challenges of dark tourism. |

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| Wang, Chen and Xu (2019) | Resident attitudes towards dark tourism a perspective of place-based identity motives. | This paper examined the relationships between the local residents' place – identity motives and their attitudes towards support for dark tourism development. |
| Barbhuiya and Chatterjee (2020) | Vulnerability and resilience of the tourism sector in India: Effects of natural disasters and internal conflict. | This paper builds random effect models to understand the impact of natural disasters and political conflict on domestic and foreign tourist arrivals. |
| Bauman, Yuan and Williams (2020) | Developing a measure for assessing tourists' empathy towards natural disasters in the context of wine tourism and the 2017 California wildfires. | This study explores the tourism implications of natural disasters contextualized in the case of the California wildfires by examining the perceptions of wine tourists who visited a California winery within the past two years. |
| Rossello, Becken and Santana-Gallego (2020) | The effects of natural disasters on international tourism: A global analysis. | This paper incorporates a data set on natural and man-made disaster events into a model of international tourism flows to evaluate the effect of different types of disasters on international arrivals at the national level. |

| Slavery Tourism | | |
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| Author/Year | Article title/topic | Article focus |
| Richards (2005) | What Is to Be Remembered? Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons. | This paper explores performances of identity enacted by black tourists and hosts in the "contact zone" of Ghana's castle-dungeons, now designated World Heritage sites because of the transatlantic slave trade that occurred there. |
| Buzinde and Santos (2008) | Interpreting slavery Tourism. | This inquiry explores the manner in which tourists endow a former slave plantation with meaning by promoting or demoting its cultural authority. |
| Litvin and Brewer (2008) | Charleston, South Carolina Tourism and the Presentation of Urban Slavery in an Historic Southern City. | The current study, focuses upon urban slavery versus plantation slavery and the handling of the issue by historic antebellum houses now opened as heritage tourist attractions in Charleston, SC. |
| Mowatt and Chancellor (2011) | Visiting death and life: Dark Tourism and Slave Castles. | This study is informed by combining data from interviews that were conducted with 14 individuals pre- and post-travel to Cape Coast Castle, Ghana, alongside elicited photographs from the site, and a narrative analysis on other visitations and reflections of coastal castles and bringing the discussion of these sites into an overall conceptual discussion of dark tourism. |

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| Robisnon (2013) | Darker still: Present-day slavery in hospitality and tourism services. | Its objective is to draw the academy's attention to the hospitality (and tourism) industries' relationship with present-day slavery and human trafficking. |
| Seraphin and Butler (2013) | Impacts of the slave trade on the service industry in Kenya and Haiti:<br>The case of the tourism and hospitality sectors. | This paper examines the impact of the slave trade on the tourism and hospitality sector in Kenya the starting point, and Haiti, the extension point. |
| Small (2013) | Still Back of the Big House: Slave Cabins and Slavery in Southern Heritage Tourism. | This article describes and evaluates evidence collected from site observations carried out between 1995 and 2011, on the nature, role and functioning of slave cabins incorporated into these sites. |
| Carter, Butler and Alderman (2014) | The House That Story Built: The Place of Slavery in Plantation Museum Narratives. | This article examines the characteristics and opinions of tourists visiting Laura Plantation Museum in southern Louisiana, paying close attention to their interest in slavery relative to other narrative themes presented at the site. |
| Poirot and Watson (2015) | Memories of Freedom and White Resilience: Place, Tourism, and Urban Slavery. | This paper enriches rhetorical studies' understanding of the relationship between place and public memory by offering a robust consideration of tourism as a constitutive component of memory environments. |
| Yankholmes and McKercher (2015) | Rethinking slavery heritage tourism. | This paper argues that the investigation of slavery heritage within a 'thana'- or 'dark' tourism framework invariably fails to appreciate the subtleties, power relationships and various contestations that are at play in both the presentation and consumption of former Transatlantic Slave Trade (TAST) sites. |
| Bright, Alderman and Butler (2018) | Tourist plantation owners and slavery: a complex relationship. | This paper examines owners of plantation heritage tourism sites as memorial entrepreneurs who control and negotiate the inclusion and specific treatment of the history of African enslavement. |
| Cheer (2018) | Geographies of marginalization: encountering modern slavery in tourism | This paper is about TUI the world's largest consolidated travel company that has taken the lead on formally acknowledging the reality that modern slavery exists in the tourism supply chain. |
| Cruz, Davidson and Taylor (2019) | Tourism and sexual violence and exploitation in Jamaica: contesting the 'trafficking and modern slavery' frame. | This paper presents findings from research on Jamaicans' experience of working in the sex trade and in the formal and informal tourism economy. |
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| Terrorism and Tourism | | |
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| Author/Date | Article Title/Topic | Article focus |
| Pratt (2002) | Terrorism and tourism: Bahamas and Jamaica fight back. | This study highlights the fragility of the tourism industry in developing countries. |
| Tynon and Chavez (2006) | Adapting a Tourism Crime Typology: Classifying Outdoor Recreation Crime. | This paper s tested a crime typology developed for tourism destinations in a U.S. National Forest recreation setting. Specific objectives were to classify the attributes of crime and violence, examine the effects of crime and violence on visitor demand. |
| Enders and Sander (2008) | Causality between transnational terrorism and tourism: The case of Spain | The purpose of this paper is to devise a methodology for estimating the impact of transnational terrorism on tourism. Using monthly data from 1970–1988, it estimates the relationship between terrorism and tourism for Spain. |
| Henderson (2008) | Managing the Consequences of the Bali Bombings. | The paper is concerned with the relationship between terrorism and tourism and examines the implications of the Bali bombings in 2002, the focus being on the period immediately following the terrorist attack. |
| Feridum (2010) | Impact of terrorism on tourism in Turkey: empirical evidence from Turkey. | This article aims at investigating the causal impact of terrorist attacks on the tourism industry in Turkey based on the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) bounds testing procedure for the period between 1986 and 2006. |
| Thomson (2011) | Terrorism and Tourism in Developed versus Developing Countries. | This paper compares the effect of terrorism on the tourism industry in developing and developed countries. Analysis of a cross-sectional data set of 60 countries supports the hypothesis that terrorism's effect on the tourism industry is larger in developing countries than in developed countries. |
| Araña and Léon (2008) | The impact of terrorism on tourism demand. | This paper focuses on the short-run impacts of the September 11 attacks in New York on tourist preferences for competing destinations in the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands. |
| Korstanje and Clayton (2012) | Tourism and terrorism: conflicts and commonalities. | The purpose of this paper is to explore why tourists continue to visit troubled and often violent nations, even when there is perceived risk. |
| Raza and Jawaid (2013) | Terrorism and tourism: A conjunction and ramification in Pakistan. | This study investigates the impact of terrorism activities on tourism in Pakistan by using the annual time series data from the period of 1980 to 2010. |

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| Saha and Yap (2013) | The Moderation Effects of Political Instability and Terrorism on Tourism Development: A Cross-Country Panel Analysis. | Looking at the current political turmoil across the globe, this study aims to analyze the effects of interaction between political instability and terrorism on tourism development using panel data from 139 countries for the period 1999–2009. |
| Karl, Winder and Bauer (2016) | Terrorism and tourism in Israel: Analysis of the temporal scale. | The aim of this article is to better understand the magnitude and temporal scale of the impact of terrorism on tourism. To this end, a research model differentiating between short-term and long-term effects of terrorism on tourism is developed and analysed for the destination Israel using data on tourists from Germany. |
| Neumayer and Plumper (2016) | Spatial spill-overs from terrorism on tourism: Western victims in Islamic destination countries. | This paper analyses spatial spill over effects in international tourism as a consequence of transnational terrorist attacks. Specifically, we hypothesize that attacks executed in Islamic countries on citizens from Western countries. |
| Ajogbeje (2017) | The effect of terrorism on tourism development in Nigeria: A note. | This article investigated the tourism–terrorism nexus in Nigeria using quarterly time series data within a vector auto regression analytical framework. |
| Bassil (2017) | Terrorism and tourism demand: a case study of Lebanon, Turkey and Israel. | This paper examines the impact of domestic and transnational terrorism on tourism demand (as measured by visitor arrivals) to Lebanon, Turkey and Israel. |
| Liu and Pratt (2017) | Tourism's vulnerability and resilience to terrorism. | Personal security is a major concern for tourists. Most tourists will seek safe and secure destinations and avoid those that have been plagued by terrorism. |
| Seraphin (2017) | Terrorism and Tourism in France: the limitations of dark tourism. | The purpose is to discuss whether dark tourism can be developed around the sites of recent terrorist attacks in France. |
| Teoman (2017) | Terrorism and Tourism and Tourism in Europe, New “Partners”? | This paper examines the effects of terrorist attacks on tourism in Europe. The paper will first discuss general implications of the effects of terrorism on tourism and show that tourist´s decision is largely based on the destinations country´s safety. |
| Coca-Stefaniak and Morisson (2018) | City tourism destinations and terrorism – a worrying trend for now, but could it get worse? | The advent of the tragic events of 9/11 in the USA and subsequent terrorism attacks in global tourism cities such as Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Istanbul, London and Barcelona, to mention but a few, have resulted in major challenges for the tourism sector, including the events industry in cities. |

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| Isaac and Velden (2018) | The German source market perceptions: how risky is Turkey to travel to? | The purpose of this paper is to get a better understanding of the influence of terrorism on risk perception and attitudes of the German travel behaviour toward Turkey as a destination in crisis, which has been considered one of the biggest losers for 2016. |
| Lutz and Lutz (2018) | Terrorism and tourism in the Caribbean: a regional analysis. | The Caribbean tourist area provides an excellent region for a more nuanced analysis of the effects of terrorist on tourist visits. Evidence from analyses of selected Caribbean countries that rely on tourism indicated that terrorism did not affect tourist visits before the twenty-first century. |
| Karameliki and Khan (2020) | Is terrorism a real threat to tourism development? Analysis of inbound and domestic tourist arrivals in Turkey. | This study estimates the long-run and short-run impact of terrorist incidents on inbound and domestic tourist arrivals in Turkey by using a non-linear autoregressive lag (NARDL) model for the period between 2007 and 2016. |
| Seabra, Reis and Abrantes (2020) | The influence of terrorism in tourism arrivals: A longitudinal approach in a Mediterranean country. | This longitudinal study examines the impact that terrorist attacks within a representative group of European countries can have on the tourism demand of a South European country with no record of terrorism attacks. |
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| Ground Zero | (Terrorism) | |
| Author/Date | Article title/topic | Article focus |
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| Lisle (2004) | Gazing at Ground Zero: tourism, voyeurism and spectacle. | This paper uses the temporary viewing platform at the site of the former World Trade Center to explore human fascination with violence, conflict and disaster. It illustrates how discourses of voyeurism and authenticity promote a desire for sites of horror, and examines how that desire both disrupts and reinforces our prevailing interpretations of global politics. |
| Hajer (2005) | Rebuilding Ground Zero. The Politics of Performance. | This paper analyses the planning process of rebuilding Ground Zero as a case in which politics was unhinged and new procedures were invented on the spot. It describes the rebuilding of Ground Zero as a case of an |

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| | | „unhappy performance“ in which, as the process continued, the wider publicly-shared determination to create a bold symbolic response to terrorism lost out to uninspired political-economic reasoning. |
| Marcoux and Legoux (2005) | Ground Zero: A Contested Market. | This article provides a theoretical reflection on the documentary Selling Tragedy, which relates to the commodification of Ground Zero. |
| Engle (2007) | Putting Mourning to Work: Making sense of 9/11. | This article investigates the work of mourning following the terrorist attacks in N.Y. and Washington on Sept 11, 2001. |
| Sturken (2007) | Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero. | This paper investigates the consumerism that followed from the September 11th attacks; the contentious, ongoing debates about memorials and celebrity-architect designed buildings at Ground Zero. |
| Sturken (2008) | The aesthetics of absence: Rebuilding Ground Zero. | This paper examines the narratives and meanings that have been projected onto the space of Ground Zero in New York City since September 11, 2001, how they have been deployed for various political agendas, and how they have informed the ways in which the site will be rebuilt and memorialized. |
| Potts (2012) | Dark tourism“ and the kitschification“ of 9/11. | The article interrogates the framing of New York's Ground Zero as a dark tourist destination, with particular reference to the entanglement of notions of kitsch in academic discussions of the events of 11 September 2001. |
| Winter (2016) | Tourism and Making the Places after war: The Somme and Ground Zero. | This paper is primarily based upon the landscapes of the Great War in Europe but it explores some of the similarities with the 'Ground Zero' terrorist attack. |

| Ghost Tourism | | |
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| Author/Date | Article Title/Topic | Article Focus |
| DeLyser (2010) | Authenticity on the Ground: Engaging the Past in a California Ghost Town. | Study explores how the concept of authenticity is constructed, experienced and employed by visitors and staff in the provocative landscape of the ghost town of Bodie, California |

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| Holloway (2010) | Legend-tripping in spooky spaces: ghost tourism and infrastructures of enchantment. | This paper investigates the increasingly popular practice of ghost tourism comprising urban ghost tours and organised paranormal investigations. Examples from participant observation on ten ghost tours across the UK, an overnight vigil in a Tudor mansion are used. |
| Valdez (2010) | Ghost legends from the historical district of Puebla, Mexico. A complementary tourist attraction? | This study supports the creation and promotion of three tourist routes containing the most famous historical buildings linked to legends of ghosts and supernatural phenomena in order to increase their interest for tourists in the historical district of the city of Puebla, Mexico. |
| Rittichainuwat (2011) | Ghosts: A travel barriers to tourism recovery. | This study aims to assess whether or not beliefs in ghosts really deter tourists from traveling to disaster-hit destinations. Study examines tourist barriers associated with tsunami-hit destinations. |
| Katz (2011) | Dangerous narratives: politics, lies and ghost | Narratives that resonate in the cultural imagination inform the ways in which we apprehend the world. This paper considers how certain images and stories that have been valorised over time bleed into reality and become socially and politically affective. |
| Garcia (2012) | Management issues in dark tourism attractions: the case of ghost tours in Edinburgh and Toledo. | This article explores the interpretative, managerial, and ethical issues present in dark tourism, namely ghost tours. |
| Thomson (2012) | Entertaining Ghosts: Gettysburg Ghost Tours and the Performance of Belief. | The author's aim is to define the ghost tour as a distinct genre and examine each of the elements that comprise a ghost tour performance in Gettysburg - the site of the largest battle and death toll during the entire American Civil War. |
| Mathe-Soulek (2016) | You Look Likou Look Like You've Seen a Ghost: A Pr e Seen a Ghost: A PreliminareliminaryExplor y Exploration in ation in Price and Customer Satisfaction Differences at Haunted Hotel Properties | This paper seeks to explore how price and customer satisfaction vary with the haunting of a property, while also considering the property type (inn vs. hotel) and ownership |

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| | | type (large chain vs. small chain/independent). |
| Krisjanous (2017) | Walking on the light side Investigating the world of ghost tour operators and entrepreneurial marketing | Ghost tours are an important part of tourism in many towns and cities around the world. Described as light dark tourism, they are a mix of the macabre and entertainment. Ghost tours are usually small business enterprises. In order for their venture to be sustainable, ghost tour operators must engage in effective entrepreneurial marketing (EM) practices. This study aims to evaluate the extent to which ghost tour operators use EM within their business. |
| Bucior (2019) | History's priests, history's magicians: exploring the contentious relationship between authorized heritage and ghost tourism in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. | This paper explores the contentious relationship between ghost tourism and authorized heritage in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania through the classical distinction between magic and religion. |
| Hanton (2019) | Spectral Beings and Being Spectral: Ghostly Enchantment within Edinburgh's Ghost Tours | This paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with a number of the Scottish capital's ghost tour companies. It goes some way to explaining the popularity of ghost tourism. |
| Hill et al. (2019) | "Meme-Spirited": II. Illustrating the VAPUS Model for Ghost Narratives. | This paper explores the role of the media, the use of technology to legitimatize amateur organizations, and the resulting conflict between popularized ghost-hunting groups, skeptic organizations, and parapsychology. Optimistically, we expect the VAPUS model can guide the development of new means or methods that aim to delineate and even bridge some of the competing social forces that shape or sustain these narratives in the popular culture and thereby constructively advance research in this domain. |
| Weston et al. (2019) | Spectral Cities: Death and Living Memories in the Dark Tourism of British Ghost Walks. | This article explores the role played by ghost walks in imparting and enlivening the histories of cities for tourists. Drawing upon research in York, London, Brighton and Edinburgh the article explores the manner in which the uncanny nature |

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| | | of the topic allows ghost walks to behave differently to other forms of dark tourism or thanatourism. |
| Dancausa (2020) | Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism: A Case Study in Spain. | This paper examines the motivations for participating in ghost tourism using the push-pull theory; and analyses how motivations and constraints may influence the intention to participate in ghost tourism in Spain. |
| Dracula tourism | | |
| Author/Date | Article Title/Topic | Article focus |
| Tanasescu (2006) | Tourism, Nationalism and Post-Communist Romania: The Life and Death of Dracula Park. | The following analysis examines how Romania is responding to Dracula as a tourist attraction and focuses on the debate surrounding the proposed development of Dracula Park. |
| Cosma, Comelia and Negrusa (2007) | Should Dracula Myth be a Brand to Promote as a Tourist Destination? | This paper tries to find an answer to the controversial question should the Dracula myth be used as a brand promoting Romania as a tourist destination? |
| Ioardana (2007) | Cashing in on Dracula: Eastern Europe's Hard Sells. | This article aims to show that attempts intended to capitalise directly on Dracula's trademark image. |
| Light (2007) | Dracula tourism in Romania Cultural identity and the state. | This paper examines the way the Romanian state has managed and negotiated such tourism, in both socialist and post-socialist contexts. |
| Jamal and Tanase (2009) | Impacts and Conflicts Surrounding Dracula Park, Romania: The Role of Sustainable Tourism Principles. | Sustainable tourism principles are applied to a historical case study of tourism-related impacts and conflicts over Dracula Park and its proposed location in Sighisoara (Romania). Analysis of this large theme park project reveals a highly political landscape, with complex interdependencies attributable to a diversity of stakeholders and issues ranging in scale and scope from the local to the global. |
| Hovi (2010) | Dracula tourism as pilgrimage? | His article is about Dracula tourism in Romania and how it may be seen as pilgrimage. The author approaches this connection especially through the place myth of Transylvania and through the status |

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| | | Transylvania has in Western popular culture. |
| Banyai (2011) | Dracula's image in tourism: western bloggers versus tour guides. | This study attempts to describe the different Western images related to Dracula tourism, and the role Bran Castle tour guides have in the image formation process. |
| Reijnders (2011) | Stalking the count: Dracula, Fandom and Tourism. | This article investigates why people feel the need to connect fictional stories, such as Dracula, with identifiable physical locations, and why they subsequently want to visit these locations. |
| Larson, Lundberg and Lexhage (2013) | Thirsting for vampire tourism: Developing pop culture destinations | The pop culture phenomenon the Twilight Saga (book and film series) is in this paper used as an example to explore how a pop culture phenomenon can affect destinations, and how destinations manage this type of tourism. Case studies in Forks, WA, in the USA, Volterra, and Montepulciano in Italy and British Columbia in Canada illustrate different tourism destination strategies. |
| Hovi (2014) | The Use of History in Dracula Tourism in Romania. | This article examines the history and tradition (as it is manipulated) that is not connected to Vlad or Dracula. It looks at the types and eras of history used and emphasised in Dracula tourism in Romania, and the reasons for the choices. |
| Stoleriu (2014) | Dracula Tourism and Dark Geographies of Romania. | The paper explores the concept of imaginative geographies built by the main Dracula tours promoted online. Based on text and pictures content, the main Dracula-linked destinations were identified and classified according to the type and weight of the local heritage they highlight. |
| Light (2017) | The Undead and Dark Tourism: Dracula Tourism in Romania. | This paper argues that Dracula tourism is a heterogeneous phenomenon which encompasses a wide range of interests and expectations among tourists. |

| Death of 'Famous' Individuals- Cemetery Tourism | | |
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| Author/Date | Article Title/Topic | Article focus |
| Foley and Lennon (1996) | JFK and dark tourism: A fascination with assassination. | This paper sets out to explore the phenomenon that the authors have entitled Dark Tourism and to analyse evidence of its existence in the context of sites associated with the life and death of the former US President, John F. Kennedy (JFK). |
| Merrin (1999) | Crash, bang, wallop! What a picture! The death of Diana and the media. | This paper draws upon contemporary media theory to argue that the death of Diana represents one of the most important recent examples of a media event in which event, broadcast and audience interpenetrate to render questions of truth and falsity, original and image undecidable. |
| Blom (2000) | Morbid tourism: a postmodern market niche with an example from Althorp. | The paper examines locations such as Elvis Presley's grave in Graceland, Jim Morrison's in Paris and Princess Diana's at Althorp in England (all of which attract large numbers of tourists). Additionally, battlefields, places where accidents have occurred and ghost walks in old castles are other examples of a kind of attraction which draws tourists and which can be included under the heading of morbid tourism. |
| Bartulović (2018) | Representing GavriloPrincip: Tourism, Politics and alternative engagements with the memory of the Sarajevo assassination in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina. | This paper follows the transformation of memories on Sarajevo assassination, reflected during the Assassination Centennial in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The author focuses mostly on touristic representations of GavriloPrincip. |
| McLean and Vibber (2020) | Remembering the king: Understanding strategic management of and participation in Elvis' Death Week. | This paper is about the annual commemoration of Elvis Presley's death at Graceland in Memphis TN, as a uniquely important part of tourism-based strategic public relations with a specific focus on the distinctive needs and considerations for dark tourism. |

| Cemetery Tourism Author/Date | Article Title/Topic | Article focus |
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| Du, Xing, and Li (2007) | The analyses on the resident' perception of tourism impact in ancient king cemetery——The case study of Maoling and Qianling,ShaanxiProvince,China | The aim is to exactitude understand the station and action of the residents on the tourism development. In order to constitute the reasonable strategy of the tourism development and to promote the continuance development of the tourism region for Han and Tang culture and to rely on the ancient king cemeteries. |
| VenBrux (2010) | Cemetery tourism: coming to terms with death? | This article focuses on the darker side of the tourist encounter — that is, the centrality of death in the performances, visited localities and artefacts that change hands - in the Tiwi Islands in North Australia. |
| Woodthorpe (2011) | Sustaining the contemporary cemetery: Implementing policy alongside conflicting perspectives and purpose | This paper considers the contemporary English cemetery as a simultaneous space of emotion, commerce and community. |
| Levitt (2012) | Solemnity and celebration: Dark Tourism experiences at Hollywood forever cemetery. | Tourists are encouraged to use the cemetery as social space, transforming relationships to the site. Many visitors respond warmly to these events, yet the cemetery faces disapproval from those who find these practices irreverent and lacking respect for the dead. |
| Toussaint and Decrop (2013) | The Pere-Lachaise Cemetery: Between Thanatourism and Heterotopic Consumption" | This edited volume takes the dark tourism discussion to another level by reinforcing the critical intersecting domains of dark tourism and place identity and, in particular, highlighting the importance of understanding this connection for visitors and destination managers. |
| Koskinen-Koivisto (2016) | Reminder of Lapland's Dark Heritage – Experiences of Finnish Cemetery Tourists of Visiting the Norvajärvi German Cemetery | This article I examine the experiences of Finnish people visiting the Norvajärvi German cemetery, located 18 kilometres north of Rovaniemi town centre. |
| Marques (2018) | Cemetery Tourism – the 'why' and the 'where'. | Cemeteries Tourism has been considered a branch of Black Tourism. But the motivations that bring visitors to those places point |

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| | | to another reality, as we will try to demonstrate. |
| Assunçᾶo (2019) | Cemetery tourism in Louresthe value of the transfiguration of a cemetery. | This article compiles the existing scientific information on tourism, specifically cemetery tourism, analyses the above-mentioned approaches; and uses as case study the Loures Municipal Cemetery, in order to draw reliable conclusions and contribute to scientific research in this specific field. |
| Dancausa, Millan and Naranjo (2019) | Cemetery tourism in southern Spain: an analysis of demand. | This paper is the identification of the socioeconomic characteristics of cemetery tourism in Southern Spain. |
| Mionel (2020) | (Not so) Dark tourism: The Merry Cemetery in Săpânţa (Romania) – An expression of folk culture. | Starting from the latest studies, which support the idea that the Merry Cemetery in Săpânța is a dark tourist attraction, this article examines whether this idea is fully justified. |

| Thanatourism | | |
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| Author/Date | Article Title/Topic | Article focus |
| Seaton (1996) | Guided by the dark: from thanatopsis to thanatourism. | The paper looks at the historical development of Thanatoptic elements in travel and shows how the Dark Tourism can be located within a historical tradition which sheds light on how it should be defined, typified and viewed in contemporary society. Thanatopis, death are captured in the concept of tourism bring forth the modern origins of dark tourism. |
| Folley and Lennon (1997) | Dark Tourism – An Ethical Dilemma. | The authors place emphasis and critical attention to the ethical dilemmas engulfed within the act of travel associated with death and disaster. |
| Seaton (2002) | Thanatourism's final frontiers? Visits to cemeteries, churchyards and funerary sites as sacred and secular pilgrimage. | The paper examines the historical and contemporary status of cemeteries, churchyards and other funerary sites, and their textual characteristics, as pilgrimage goals. |
| Slade (2003) | Gallipoli thanatourism: The Meaning of ANZAC | This paper argues for a tightening of the thanatourism definition by |

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| | | excluding people motivated to visit death sites for other reasons. |
| Stone (2005) | Consuming Dark Tourism - a call for research. | The article calls for the development of consumer behaviour models, which incorporate contemporary socio-cultural aspects of death and dying. |
| Stone (2006) | A dark tourism spectrum: Towards a typology of death and macabre related sites, attractions and exhibitions. | In this article the author argues that certain suppliers (of dark tourism) may indeed, conceptually at least, share particular product features, perceptions and characteristics, which can then be loosely translated into various 'shades of darkness'. |
| Wight (2006) | Philosophical and methodological praxes in dark tourism: Controversy, | The article comments on a cross section of publications written on this subject in the context of philosophical issues, research methodologies, emerging paradigms in the topic, contemporary debate and controversies. |
| Dunkley, Westwood and Morgan (2007) | A shot in the dark? Developing a new conceptual framework for thanatourism | This paper synthesises the extant literature and discusses the differing definitions of thanatourism, particularly highlighting the key differences between the terms dark tourism and thanatourism. |
| Stone (2007) | Dark Tourism: the ethics of exploiting tragedy. | Stone suggests sound management and governance is fundamental to ensuring dark tourism sites are not reduced to simply a voyeuristic tourist gaze, where people come to gawp upon others‟ grief and misfortune. |
| Phelan (2008) | Confronting mortality moments: death, dying and the consumption of dark tourism. | This paper examines the relationship between dark tourism consumption and mortality within contemporary society. |
| Stone and Sharpley (2008) | Consuming dark tourism: A thanatological perspective. | This theoretical paper seeks to address a gap in the literature; Despite increasing academic attention paid to dark tourism, understanding of the concept remains limited, particularly from a consumption perspective. That is, the literature focuses primarily on the supply of dark tourism; less attention, however, has been paid to |

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| | | the demand for “dark“ touristic experiences. |
| Bowman and Pezzulo (2009) | What's so 'Dark' about 'Dark Tourism'? Death, Tours, and Performance. | The essay identifies and interrogates the scholarly and political assumptions behind labelling tourist destinations at sites of death as „dark“. |
| Walter (2009) | Dark tourism: Mediating Between the Dead and the Living. | First the author identifies a range of mediators, and then enquires what kind of relationships dark tourists and others have with the dead. This is followed by an enquiry into what kinds of encounters with death are involved, and, finally, the author questions the current trend to analyse dark tourism in terms of motives and demand. |
| Stone (2010) | Death, Dying and Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis. | Drawing upon thanatological discourse – that is, the analysis of society’s perceptions of and reactions to death and dying – the research objective is to explore the potential of dark tourism as a means of contemplating mortality in (Western) societies. |
| Biran, Poria and Oren (2011) | Sought experiences at (dark) heritage sites. | Focusing on Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp (here after Auschwitz), the epitome of dark tourism, the present study sheds light on the nature of this tourism experience by clarifying the relations between the symbolic meanings assigned to the site and core elements of the tourist experience |
| Stone (2011) | Dark tourism: towards a new post-disciplinary research agenda. | This essay is a preliminary conversation and invitation to (dark) scholars to take up future dark tourism research without the restrictive dogma and parochialism of disciplinarily. |
| Stone (2012) | Dark Tourism. Heterotopias and Post-Apocalyptic Places: The Case of Chernobyl. | The purpose of this chapter is to critically explore the touristification of Chernobyl and, in particular, examine how a place of industrial death and disaster convey broader political narratives and identity. |
| Podoshein (2013) | Dark tourism motivations: Simulation, emotional contagion and topographic comparison. | This paper examines dark tourism consumption motivations. This study traces the dark tourism motivations related to |

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| | | "blackpackers" and fans of the musical performance art known as black metal. |
| Raine (2013) | A dark tourist spectrum. | The purpose of this paper is to develop a typology of dark tourists through an investigation of people's motivations to visit burial grounds. This research extends Stone's Dark Tourism Spectrum and Seven Dark Suppliers framework by identifying nine types of dark tourists. |
| Stone (2013) | Dark tourism scholarship: a critical review. | This review paper scrutinises dark tourism scholarship and, subsequently, offers original insights into the potential role dark tourism may play in the public representation of death, as well as highlighting broader interrelationships dark tourism has with research into the social reality of death and the significant Other dead. |
| Hartmann (2014) | Dark tourism, thanatourism, and dissonance in heritage tourism management: new directions in contemporary tourism research. | This research note focuses on tourism to heritage sites with a controversial history and sites associated with death, disaster, and the macabre. |
| Buda and Shim (2015) | Desiring the dark: 'a taste for the unusual' in North Korean tourism? | This paper examines the desire in tourism to visit 'unusual' places of darkness and danger. |
| Podoshen et al. (2015) | Dystopian dark tourism: An exploratory examination. | This paper discusses the rapidly emerging fascination with dystopian dark tourism. |
| Mionel (2019) | Dark tourism and thanatourism: Distinct tourism typologies or simple analytical tools? | this study aims to research whether dark tourism and thanatourism are a distinct type of tourism or they only represent analytical tools |
| Martini and Buda (2020) | Dark tourism and affect: framing places of death and disaster. | This conceptual article brings to the attention of tourism scholars new possibilities to theorize dark tourism as an affective socio-spatial encounter. |
| Light, Richards and Ivanova (2021) | Exploring "gothic tourism": a new form of urban tourism? | This study examines the recently proposed (but little-researched) concept of Gothic tourism and considers its relationships with other forms of special interest tourism |

| Dark Tourism Demand and Supply | | |
|---|---|---|
| Author/Date | Article Title/Topic | Article focus |
| Kim and Wong (2006) | Effects of News Shock on Inbound Tourist Demand Volatility in Korea | This study introduces the concepts and theories relating to conditional heteroscedastic volatility models and the news impact curve, and applies them in the analysis of the tourist market in Korea. |
| Poria, Reichel and Biran (2006) | Heritage site management: Motivations and Expectations. | This study attempts to explore the significance of tourists' perceptions of a heritage site, as it relates to their own heritage, and as an important factor for understanding their behaviour and the management of historic settings. |
| Miller and Gonzalez (2007) | When death is the destination: the business of death tourism – despite legal and social implications. | This paper views the growing popularity of death tourism which directs the confrontation with grief and mortality with the expressed purpose of orchestrating travel that culminates in assistance to end one's life. |
| Goatcher and Brunsden (2011) | Chernobyl and the Sublime Tourist. | This paper looks at a number of photographs from the Pripyat.com website that appear to share a visual grammar with "tourist snap-shots". |
| Kang, Scott, Lee and Ballantyne (2012) | Benefits of visiting a "dark tourism" site: The case of the Jeju April 3rd Peace Park, Korea. | This research examines visitor experiences at a contemporary dark tourism site: the April 3rd Peace Park on Jeju Island, South Korea, a site commemorating and memorialising one of the most destructive episodes in modern Korean history. |
| Biran and Hyde (2013) | New perspectives on dark tourism. | The purpose of this paper is to introduce the papers in this Special Issue of IJCTHR on dark tourism. These papers take either a demand-side, supply-side, or integrated demand-and-supply side perspective to understanding dark tourism. Collectively, the papers explore tourist experiences at dark sites, the management of dark sites, ethical issues in profit making, and the involvement of indigenous peoples in site management. |
| Brown (2013) | Dark tourism shops: selling "dark" and "difficult" products. | The purpose of this paper is to analyse the position of the museum shop within dark tourism sites. |

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| Buda and McIntosh (2013) | Dark tourism and voyeurism: tourists arrested for “spying” in Iran. | The purpose of this paper is to propose voyeurism as one possible lens to analyse the experiential nature of dark tourism in places of socio-political danger, thus expanding psychoanalytic understandings of those who travel to a “dark” place. |
| Farmaki (2013) | Dark tourism revisited: a supply/demand conceptualisation. | The purpose of this paper is to advance the conceptualisation of dark tourism by evaluating both the supply-side drivers for dark tourism development and the demand-side motivations for visiting two dark heritage sites in Cyprus. |
| Raine (2013) | A dark tourist spectrum. | The purpose of this paper is to develop a typology of dark tourists through an investigation of people's motivations to visit burial grounds. |
| Johnston (2013) | Mark Twain and The Innocents Abroad: illuminating the tourist gaze on death. | This article offers a rereading of Twain's encounters, proposing examination of Twain's encounters as timely and useful in addressing what Seaton identifies as a gap in data on thanatourism consumption. |
| Fonseca, Seabra and Silva (2015) | Dark Tourism: Concepts, Typologies and Sites | The main goal of this paper is to present a literature review about this new tourism product where the thrill seeking is the main motivation. |
| Powel and Iankova (2016) | Dark London: dimensions and characteristics of dark tourism supply in the UK capital. | This paper will investigate the characteristics of the supply of dark tourism in London, UK through an examination of the identified main dark sites in London, UK. |
| Gajete, Rojas and Millán (2017) | Dark tourism: study of supply and potential in Cordoba and province. | The aim of this work is based on analyzing the offer on Dark Tourism within the limits of Córdoba and its province in order to analyze the potentiality of this type of tourism |
| Millán, Rojas and Garcia (2019) | Analysis of the Demand of Dark Tourism: A Case Study in Córdoba (Spain). | This work analyses the profile of dark tourism tourists, particularly in two sub-segments - that of ghosts and of cemeteries - as well as the existing offer. |

| Dark Tourism and Heritage | | |
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| Author/Date | Article Title/Topic | Article focus |
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| Hanks (2011) | Re-imagining the National Past: Negotiating the Role of Science, Religion, and History in Contemporary British Ghost Tourism. | Examines significant contestation of British heritage in terms of attitudes toward science and religion, complicated by the tumultuous times or events that produce these ghosts constituting a feature of British cultural heritage. |
| Lemelin et al (2013) | Conflicts, battlefields indigenous peoples and tourism: addressing dissonant heritage in warfare tourism in Australia and North America in the twenty-first century. | This paper examines the omission of indigenous narratives in battlefields and sites of conflicts while also highlighting how certain battlefields and sites of conflicts have attempted to address dissonant heritage by diversifying interpretation strategies and implementing elements of collaborative management approaches, thereby addressing indigenous erasure. |
| Gonzalez-Tennant (2013) | New Heritage and Dark Tourism: A Mixed Methods Approach to Social Justice in Rosewood, Florida. | This article specifically examines the potential 'new heritage' has for social justice at dark tourism sites. |
| Ashworth and Isaac (2015) | Have we illuminated the dark? Shifting perspectives on 'dark' tourism. | This paper will examine the promise of the idea as it evolved through the work of numerous scholars who developed and refined the concept and discovered new applications for it and will explain how the focus, which initially was to identify and catalogue dark sites, has shifted towards the motivation, subsequent experience and consequent behaviour of the tourist in relation to the sites. |
| Magee and Gilmore (2015) | Heritage site management: from dark tourism to transformative service experience? | This paper investigates the managerial perspectives of dark heritage sites and considers how visitors can benefit from and ideally be transformed by the overall experience. |
| Podoshen, VenKatesh and Wallin (2015) | Dystopian dark tourism: An exploratory examination. | This paper discusses the rapidly emerging fascination with dystopian dark tourism. |
| Collins-Kreiner (2016) | Dark tourism as/is pilgrimage. | This research note posits that the time has come to re-examine our contemporary usage of terms in order to allow for broader interpretations of different phenomena in the field of tourism. |

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| Kamber, Karafotias and Tsitoura (2016) | Dark heritage tourism and the Sarajevo siege. | The paper provides an analysis that could be a powerful tool for the different stakeholders to design activities and promote and manage effectively the war-related sites in Sarajevo, depending on the needs and opinion of their public. |
| Dimitrovski, Senic and Maric (2017) | Commemorative events at destination memorials – a dark (heritage) tourism context | The aim of the study is to explore the influence of the main motivators on revisit intention and willingness to recommend for those who attended the commemorative event 'The Great School Hour' in Kragujevac, Serbia, with a particular focus on younger people. |
| Lennon and Tiberghien (2020) | Commemorative events at destination memorials – a dark (heritage) tourism context. | The aim of the study is to explore the influence of the main motivators on revisit intention and willingness to recommend for those who attended the commemorative event 'The Great School Hour' in Kragujevac, Serbia, with a particular focus on younger people. |
| Sun and Lv (2021) | Feeling dark, seeing dark: Mind–body in dark tourism. | Taking the Chernobyl zone as a case, we first prove the mind-to-body pathway in which the dark experience exerts a measurable effect on the participants' sensory expression in photographs and sketches. |

# APPENDIX III

## Ethical Clearance

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

ΕΘΝΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ ΒΙΟΗΘΙΚΗΣ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ

**Αρ. Φακ.:** ΕΕΒΚ ΕΠ 2021.01.143
**Αρ. Τηλ.:** 22809038/039, 22819101
**Αρ. Φαξ:** 22353878

03 Ιουνίου, 2021

Κυρία Χρύσω Παναγίδου
Ιωάννη και Αγγελικής Κορδάρη 7
4102 Λεμεσός

Αγαπητή κυρία Παναγίδου,

**Αίτηση γνωμοδότησης για την πρόταση με τίτλο:**
**«Local Community's Perceptions of Dark Tourism Development»**

Αναφερόμαι στην αίτηση σας ημερομηνίας 25 Μαΐου 2021 για το πιο πάνω θέμα, και επιθυμώ να σας πληροφορήσω ότι από τη μελέτη του περιεχομένου των εγγράφων που έχετε καταθέσει, που αφορούν την πιο πάνω έρευνα, η Εθνική Επιτροπή Βιοηθικής Κύπρου (ΕΕΒΚ) **γνωμοδοτεί θετικά υπέρ της διεξαγωγής της εν λόγω έρευνας.**

2. Η Επιτροπή επιθυμεί να τονίσει ότι παραμένει ευθύνη δική σας η διεξαγωγή της έρευνας με τρόπο που να τηρούνται οι πρόνοιες του νέου Ευρωπαϊκού Γενικού Κανονισμού Προστασίας Προσωπικών Δεδομένων (2016/679) και του περί της Προστασίας των Φυσικών Προσώπων Έναντι της Επεξεργασίας των Δεδομένων Προσωπικού Χαρακτήρα και της Ελεύθερης Κυκλοφορίας των Δεδομένων αυτών Νόμος του 2018 (Ν. 125(Ι) /2018), ως αυτός εκάστοτε τροποποιείται.

3. Σας ενημερώνουμε ότι, για σκοπούς καλύτερου συντονισμού και αποφυγής επανάληψης ερευνών με το ίδιο θέμα ήταν υπό εξέταση πληθυσμό μέσα σε σύντομο σχετικά χρονικό διάστημα, η ΕΕΒΚ δημοσιεύει στην ιστοσελίδα της το θέμα της έρευνας, τον φορέα και τον υπό εξέταση πληθυσμό.

4. Κατά τη διάρκεια εκτόνησης της έρευνας, ο συντονιστής / επιστημονικός υπεύθυνος θα ενημερώνει την ΕΕΒΚ για κάθε τροποποίηση των αρχικά κατατεθειμένων εγγράφων (πρωτόκολλο ή άλλα ερευνητικά έγγραφα) και θα υποβάλλει τις απαιτούμενες έντυπες τροποποιήσεις στην Επιτροπή.

5. Σε περίπτωση διακοπής της έρευνας, ο συντονιστής/ επιστημονικός υπεύθυνος θα ενημερώσει γραπτώς την Επιτροπή κάνοντας αναφορά και στους λόγους διακοπής της έρευνας.

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Λαέρτου 22, 2365 Άγιος Λεμέτιος, Λευκωσία
*Ηλεκτρονικά Ταχυδρομεία:* enbc@bioethics.gov.cy, *ιστοσελίδα:* www.bioethics.gov.cy

# APPENDIX IV

**Location, Date, and Time Interviews Completed**

| PARTICIPANT NO. | LOCATION, DATE AND TIME INTERVIEW COMMENCEMENT |
|---|---|
| **STUDY GROUP 1:** | **LOCAL RESIDENTS, INFORMAL INTERVIEWS** |
| 1. | Limassol, 28/5/21, 10:00 am |
| 2. | Limassol, 29/5/21, 11:00 am |
| 3. | Limassol, 2/6/21, 4:00 pm |
| 4. | Limassol, 4/6/21, 5:00 pm |
| 5. | Larnaca, 5/6/21, 4:00 pm |
| 6. | Larnaca, 8/6/21, 9:00 am |
| 7. | Limassol, 11/6/21, 10:30 am |
| 8. | Limassol, 11/6/21, 3:30 pm |
| 9. | Nicosia, 14/6/21, 10:00 am |
| 10. | Nicosia,16/6/21, 11: 00 am |
| 11. | Limassol, 19/6/21, 5:00 pm |
| 12. | Limassol,20/6/21, 6:00 pm |
| 13. | Larnaca, 22/6/21, 10:00 am |
| 14. | Larnaca, 23/6/21, 10:00 am |
| 15. | Paphos, 24/6/21, 12:00 pm |
| 16. | Limassol, 27/6/21, 9:00 am |
| 17. | Limassol, 28/6/21, 9:00 am |
| 18. | Limassol, 28/6/21, 11:00 am |
| 19. | Nicosia, 29/6/21, 9:30 am |
| 20. | Nicosia,30/6/21, 10:00 am |
| 21. | Paphos, 2/7/21, 10:00 am |
| 22. | Paphos, 2/7/21, 11:00 am |
| 23. | Larnaca, 3/7/21, 5:00 pm |
| 24. | Larnaca, 5/7/21, 7:00 pm |
| 25. | Famagusta, 6/7/21, 11:00 am |
| 26. | Famagusta, 8/7/21, 11:00 am |
| 27. | Famagusta, 8/7/21, 12:00 am |
| 28. | Larnaca, 9/7/21, 4:00 pm |
| 29. | Limassol, 11/7/21, 10:00 am |
| 30. | Limassol, 14/7/21, 9:00 am |
| 31. | Limassol, 15/7/21, 5:00 pm |
| 32. | Nicosia, 16/7/21, 12:00 pm |
| 33. | Nicosia, 17/7/21, 10:30 am |
| 34. | Limassol, 18/7/21, 9:00 am |
| 35. | Limassol, 19/7/21, 10:00 am |

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|---|---|
| 36. | Nicosia, 22/7/21, 12:00 pm |
| 37. | Nicosia, 22/7/21, 1:00 pm |
| 38. | Limassol, 23/7/21, 7:00 pm |
| 39. | Limassol,23/7/21, 8:00 pm |
| 40. | Limassol, 24/7/21, 6:00 pm |
| **STUDY GROUP 2** | **PUBLIC SECTOR, FORMAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS** |
| 1. Fylakismena Mnimata, Central Prison, museum and site manager | Nicosia, 12/7/21, 9:30 am |
| 2.Tymvos Makedonitissas, Military cemetery, site representative | Nicosia, 13/7/21, 10:00 am |
| 3.Tombs of the Kings, site representative and guide | Paphos, 14/7/21, 3:00 am |
| 4. President of Historical Fight Association | Nicosia, 16/7/21, 10:00 am |
| 5. Deputy Minister of Tourism Representative | Nicosia, 20/7/21, 11:00 am |
| 6. Achyronas Liopetriou site manager | Limassol, 26/7/21, 9:00 am |
| 7.Cyprus Tourist Guide representative | Famagusta,27/7/21, 11:00 am |
| 8. Mayor of Omodos Village | Famagusta, 28/7/21, 11:00 am |
| 9. Yermasoyia mayor Office | Limassol, 30/7/21, 9:00 am |
| 10. RIK Journalist and tourism blogger | Larnaca, 31/7/21, 4:00 pm |
| **STUDY GROUP 3** | **PRIVATE SECTOR, FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSION** |
| 1.<br>a) P1- Zenonas, Hotel Owner Limassol | Park Beach Hotel, Limassol, 10/7/21, 5:00 pm |

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| b) P2-Apostolos, Travel Agent Limassol Tourist area<br>c) P3-Antonis, Agrotourism Apts owner/manager, Larnaca area<br>d) P4- Antonia, Restaurant and Hotels Apts owner, Paphos<br>e) P5-Giorgia, Hotel Apts owner/manager, Paphos | |
| 2.<br>a) P1 Vasos- Hotel Group Manager, Limassol<br>b) P2 George- Travel agency, Limassol<br>c) P3 Maria- Travel agency, Limassol<br>d) P4- Kostantina- Front Office Manager, 4 star hotel Cyprus<br>e) P5 Marios- Hotel Apt manager, Limassol | Agora central Limassol, 29/7/21, 6:00 pm |
| 3.<br>a) P1- Marios Food and Beverage Manager, Ayia Napa 5 star hotel<br>b) P2-Kyriaki, Travel Agent, Limassol<br>c) P3-Ioanna Front office Manager 4 star hotel<br>d) P4- Stavriana RIK Journalist for Tourism and blogger of Cyprus Highlights tourism page<br>e) P5- Polys, Restaurant manager | Ayia Napa Hotel, Famagusta, 30/7/21, 5:00 pm |

# APPENDIX V

**Interview Sample**

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | |
| Name of Site: | |
| Role: | |
| Date of Interview: | |

**Introduction**

My name is Chryso Panayidou from the Technological University of Cyprus and I would like to ask you a few questions about dark tourism development in Cyprus. The purpose of this study is to gather information on the perceptions but also on the support of the local community over dark tourism development.
(Researcher to refer to consent form and information sheet and check permission to record interview).
The interview will last approximately 30-40 minutes to 1 hour - are you happy to proceed with the interview?

***NB. These questions are intended as a loose guide only – researcher to adapt and follow interesting avenues as they emerge. Question order for guidance – no strict accordance. Also, the three different interview groups required adjusted questions.***

**Dark tourism concept**

- Have you heard about the concept before
- Do you consider it negative concept

**Dark tourism visitation experience**

- Knowledge of dark sites
- Visitation at dark tourism sites

**Dark tourism demand and supply**

- Does it have the ability to advance in touristic supply?
- Do you foresee that people from abroad would visit these sites?

- Does it require upgrade of infrastructure, marketing, promotion, more information-education and technological advancement

**Dark tourism development impacts**

- Do you see positive or negative impacts (economic, socio-cultural) of dark tourism development
- Are you in favour or against of dark tourism development

**Dark tourism development opportunities and constraints**

- Positive contribution to the community
- Opportunities for further development
- Potential constraints on development

**Local community support and contribution on dark tourism development**

- Evaluate how the locals might support the dark tourism development

**Close and thank**

Source: Author