Exploring Dark Tourism in Bangladesh: Tourist Engagement and Perspectives in South Asia and Beyond

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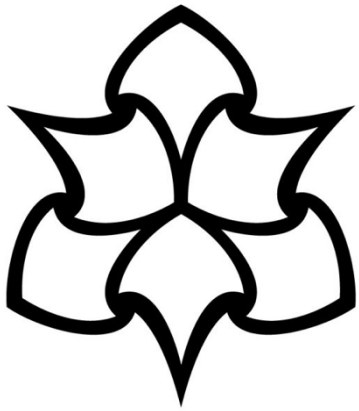

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Abstract

This thesis explores the history and evolution of the dark tourism research field, with a particular focus on South Asia and specifically Bangladesh. Using global examples from online interview and an in-person case study of Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi or the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial, a site central to the Bangladesh Liberation War, the motivations of visitors to seek out such sites and their on-site and post-visit behaviour are analysed, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The work reflects on the commodification of death from both domestic and global perspectives.

Appraising existing literature, this work expands the current theoretical framework to explore noteworthy aspects of dark tourism in Bangladesh. Centred around a constructivist research paradigm and employing methods derived from relativist, interpretivist, epistemological and ontological frameworks, innovative qualitative research ensures that data is interpreted and understood from a human perspective.

The data gathered highlights Bangladeshi and South Asian perspectives and draws on non-South Asian experiences, to investigate how attitudes and behaviours at global and domestic levels shape national identity and heritage. Bangladesh is a growing tourism prospect, subject to increased government investment, which inspires patriotism and a sense of national pride in domestic visitors. The role of family tourism and ancestry is considered, as is the role of online reviewing and sharing of experiences.

Visitors to dark tourism sites are reckoning with multiple motivations at once: paying their respects, mourning, and reinforcing beliefs. This culminates in the creation of a collective social memory. Bringing vital focus to the South Asian dark tourism industry, the research invites further critical attention.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Chapter Outline and Context

This introductory chapter first explains the research background to the present study and provides an impression of dark tourism in South Asia, particularly Bangladesh. It details the study's research objectives and overall significance within the field. The chapter concludes by detailing the structure of the study's subsequent chapters.

As tourism evolved and developed after the Second World War, rising living standards and technological progress saw the industry experience rapid growth and progression. In this post-war period, huge improvements were made to transport infrastructure, including the increased availability of commercial flights. In 1950, the number of international tourists was estimated at 25 million people. By 1970, this figure had inflated to 166 million, and 20 years later by 1990, it had reached 435 million (Blackall 2019).

Recent discourse on the tourism industry has, of course, been preoccupied by the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and has focused on analysing the recovery of the sector. Recent numbers from the World Travel and Tourism Council from 2021 show an ongoing recovery and highlights South Asia, where this study is primarily focused, as a region that has recovered dramatically in 2021 from 2020, with a sub-regional travel and tourism GDP change of 37.7% (World Travel and Tourism Council 2022).

While discrete motivations for the consumption of tourist activities that cohere around the 'sun, sea and sand' stereotype have been deliberated extensively in scholarship, more recent phenomena relating to tourists visiting sites associated with death and devastation remain significantly underexplored (Dale and Robinson 2011). Lennon and Foley (1996, p. 200) explain this as 'the occurrence which contains the presentation and feeding (by tourists) of actual and commodified death and tragedy sites. Following the global turmoil of the half-century following the World Wars, thousands of monuments were created across the world at sites with painful histories to focus on such memories (Inglis, 2005). Unsurprisingly, many have criticised the seemingly morbid practice of visiting such sites, or so-called 'morbid tourism', and the inevitable commercial repercussions (Schofield 1998). Stone and Sharpley

(2008) and, more recently, Stone (2011) observed that the topos of dark tourism remains underexplored, particularly with respect to tourists' motivations and on-site behaviour at such locations where no third party or commercial representation is present. Society often subconsciously applies an ethical perspective to its determination of what is suitable or unsuitable in terms of the subject matter that is consumed. It is thus crucial to investigate the aspects that influence travellers' decisions to visit such dark locations and to scrutinise their on-site and subsequent (post-visit) behaviours (Miles, 2014).

A growing body of literature has explored various aspects of dark tourism, including the sites themselves, the types of experiences that these sites offer, management-related aspects, visitors' motivations, and moral concerns surrounding site-management and tourist involvement (Sharpley and Stone, 2012). However, considerably less attention has focused on evaluating the products on offer at dark tourism sites, the meanings of specific places and events, and the feelings that these places and events are expected to elicit. For this reason, this work will address the dearth of critical responses to these factors in dark tourism studies, using theoretical and methodological perspectives, thus highlighting narrative approaches to this field, and the socio-political factors that underpin it.

It appears that today's appetite for the macabre cannot be sated by merely consuming horror films or books, whether fictional or historical. People increasingly seem to trust that, to have an 'authentic' experience (a phrase that will later be unpacked), they must visit the sites at which gruesome or disturbing events took place. Visits to cemeteries, battlefields, concentration camps and disaster zones or participation in walking ghost tours are all examples of what has come to be known as dark tourism. Referring to such activities as 'tourism' may seem strange to some, not only because of the macabre and perhaps even grotesque nature of the sites visited but also because such activities constitute a form of leisure. Nonetheless, the trend is increasing (Stone, 2010; 2013). Tourism of this nature has created business opportunities for several tourism industry professionals and is provided to by an increasing number of places and organisations worldwide. Yet, this phenomenon has given rise to a range of problems, including administrative, structural, and revelatory issues (Garcia, 2012).

1.2 Background to the Study

Where there is life, death too is inevitably present, and this truth affects us all universally. The history of humankind is often centred on death, as attested by the eclectic array of death-related rituals, rites and customs that have been implemented throughout history, along with artistic symbolism. These various forms of symbolism, depiction and substantial sign offer opportunities for the contemplation of death through the communication of ideas, shaping the use of time as well as space. Such observations might be complemented by performs that include visits to places and sites that are associated with death, viewing shrines to the dead or attending sites at which individual or mass deaths occurred (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). This new dimension of tourism has already been explored in the scholarly literature as 'dark tourism' but it remains a relatively new area that warrants further academic scrutiny. The term 'dark tourism' was first introduced by Lennon and Foley in 1996. The term soon entered academic discourse in relation to tourism that is broadly connected to death, disaster, and other forms of suffering (Stone and Sharpley, 2008).

The dark tourism phenomenon continues to attract scholarly attention; it has been met with considerable interest in the media and has become a generally pervasive topic of interest for most people. People's fascination with dark tourism sites is evident, prompting investigations into tourists' motivations for visiting dark tourism places, whose attractions are inherently accompanying with death and disaster (Coldwell, 2013).

Visitor numbers have been observed to increase at locations associated with dark tourism, such as Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi (or the Boddhovumi) in Bangladesh, the memorial built in memory of the martyred intellectuals of the Liberation War, which is the subject of the primary in-depth case study in this thesis, or Ground Zero in the USA. Concerns have already been raised regarding dark tourism's dubious ethical and moral aspects, with some expressing the opinion that the commodification of death is problematic (Dann, 1994). Here, too, further investigation and reflection is warranted.

Scholarly assessments of dark tourism have increased across numerous disciplines, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. However, various gaps remain in the literature, as noted in recent works (Johnston and Mandelartz, 2015). Some studies have explored discrete aspects of dark tourism, such as the management of museums (Miles, 2002), the administration of concentration camps (Magee and Gilmore, 2015) and the publicising and marketing of ghost

tours (Garcia, 2012). A small number of studies have investigated people's inspirations for visiting dark tourism sites. However, tourists' experiences at dark tourism places, particularly in Bangladesh, remain largely unexplored.

Tourists' experiences have always been at the apex of the entertainment business and are crucial in the services sector. The tourism sector consistently seeks to provide memorable and unique experiences, and several key determining factors contribute to shaping and stimulating these experiences, values, and future outcomes. Positive tourism experiences will generate word-of-mouth promotion, publicity, intentions to revisit and loyalty (Zhang, Wu, and Buhalis, 2017). The delivery of memorable experiences to tourists may offer tools for differentiation, attract greater footfall, and provide competitive advantages. It would also create engagement and loyalty between destinations and travellers.

While research on dark tourism has recently enjoyed considerable momentum, Podoshen et al. (2018) point to the absence of research on tourists' engagement with dark tourism sites and call for further study in this area on a international level that is cognisant of the various dimensions of experience that tourists articulate when they visit dark tourism sites, which include both emotional and cognitive experiences: aspects of the dark tourist experience under investigation in this thesis. Global experiences of tourism must also be investigated in diversified contexts, including tourists' experiences of phenomena as realised through contact with objects and material remains that encapsulate these phenomena. Stone (2006) has classified dark tourism into six types—darkest, darker, dark, light, lighter and lightest—with each type offering different tourism experiences. Tourists' individual subjectivity means that their experiences will vary and differ from site to site; for example, while some visitors may be disturbed by the cruelty and horror associated with Ghana's Cape Coast Castle, others may find the experience of visiting it enjoyable. It is thus necessary to explore tourists' perspectives on a global level, and the present study is informed by this necessity.

Significant gaps exist in the scholarship with respect to scrutiny of dark tourism's socio-cultural contexts, studies founded on empirical data and consequences as well as the implications of the phenomenon: indeed, as Peter Stone suggests, the field is replete with 'under-theorised conjectures or empirically fragile frameworks to prop up phenomenological studies' (Stone, 2011, p. 3). Early research on the subject lacked objectivity and spontaneity, mainly in the context of Bangladesh, despite the country's numerous dark tourism sites, which are frequented

not only by Bangladeshi tourists but also by international visitors. For this reason, the acceptance, prioritisation, and experiences of dark tourism in Bangladesh should be explored from multiple angles, which is yet another factor that informs the present study.

As noted above, Stone (2006) provided a dark tourism spectrum that categorises sites according to 'shades' of darkness, whereby the 'darkest' sites centred on demise or suffering have an explicitly educational and historical orientation, in addition to a focus on the maintenance of robust 'authenticity'. Authenticity is a contested concept in tourism theory: as this definition indicates:

> ''The notion of authenticity arises in tourism research in two ways: In theory, as a contentious, complicated, and disputed construct; empirically, as a recurrent theme in accounts of tourist experiences of place and culture and as a quality of tourists' experiences' (Moore et al., 2021).

Such dark tourist sites are found worldwide, and they vary in their notoriety and the scope of their draw for tourists. Bangladesh is a South Asian country that is home to numerous and diverse dark tourism sites that have so far gone largely unexplored in the literature and critical attention of the field. This thesis explores the arguments and experiences that pertain to the commodification of death at such sites, in addition to exploring visitors' experiences from both global and domestic perspectives and how factors of nationality and familiarity influence them.

1.3 Research Question, Aims and Objectives

The most pressing research questions posed in this thesis are: how do tourists interact with dark tourism sites in Bangladesh, and how can this knowledge enrich the field in South Asia and beyond? It is the primary ambition of this research to mobilise and draw greater attention to the research potential in examining dark tourism in South Asia, and this thesis proposes Bangladesh as a country with much to offer in this space, replete as it is with historical interest and an increasingly robust dark tourist industry. This research question speaks directly to this invitation.

The aim of this research is primarily to bring focus to how tourists interact with dark tourism sites in Bangladesh, and how this can inform and enrich the field in South Asia and across the world. A significant aim of this thesis is thus to address the gaps within the existing literature. This study provides up-to-date insights into aspects of dark tourism that have received a high

level of research attention, namely tourists' motivations, experiences and on-site behaviour, but applied to less well-known sites, specifically in Bangladesh, providing a fresh perspective on well-established research areas. Additionally, this research probes into underexamined factors including the products presented at such sites, the meanings produced by the sites, and the feelings experienced by visitors: providing new avenues for discussion and examination.

To support the research question and the aims stated above, this study pursues the following objectives:

I. To understand the motivations behind the travel experiences of people, both from within the country and abroad in visiting several dark tourism sites.

II. To explore the emotional experiences during visits to dark tourism sites, and how these relate to individuals' perceptions of the benefits derived from such visits and the overall quality of their experiences

III. To reveal dark tourist attitudes, behaviour and experiences in Bangladesh through contemporary research methods reflecting on the factors that most significantly shape these

IV. To understand tourists' experience of 'Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi' in Bangladesh and explore how their reflections on the poignant event this commemorates impacts on their lives and shapes their existing understanding

1.4 Research Justification

The justification for this research is primarily to address the dearth of empirical studies focused on dark tourism practices, in terms of tourists' on-site experiences and immediate reactions captured during visits to such sites. The hope is that this investigation will help both stakeholders and visitors alike by facilitating a fuller understanding of their visitors' activities, motivations and experiences. As a consequence, planners will be better equipped to provide for their practical needs. The role of the sense of academic accomplishment and possession of

understanding and deeper knowledge on the part tourists would show clearly how this can be achieved. Therefore, this investigation is conducted out of both academic necessity and with a view to produce tangible benefits for the industry, particularly for areas with little precedent for anticipating the demands and needs of a growing industry within tourism.

1.5 Original Contributions of this Study

The importance of the general and situational factors that influence behaviour at dark tourism sites has been addressed. However, individuals' subjective and motivations, interests and desires with respect to dark tourism also bear mentioning here.

Global tourists' motivations for visiting dark tourism sites have been explored. The term 'global' here refers to any citizen from any country identified through an online platform who has narrated and shared their experiences of dark tourism sites in various countries and within diverse categories. The synthesis of such information in a single study is exceptionally rare. As such, the present study constitutes a major contribution.

Regarding the study's specific geographical focus, Bangladesh is a developing country whose recent history has been largely shaped by the country's 1971 Liberation War against Pakistan. This conflict, in addition to the Second World War, contributed to the formation of many dark tourism sites throughout Bangladesh. The country thus provides a compelling case for greater engagement: it is a nation that not only is rapidly accumulating tourist interest but also has a rich history of conflict within living memory of many nationals, members of the diaspora and foreign travellers alike. However, the term 'dark tourism' was not typically applied to these sites as a way to promote them, despite the fact that both domestic and international visitors visited them. In this study, ethnographic methods are applied to investigate tourists' experiences, motivations and responses in relation to the Boddhovumi, the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Bangladesh. The present study will thus pioneer dark tourism research in the context of Bangladesh specifically, making it a unique contribution that will be of interest to tourism industry professionals and academics.

In terms of future research, this study's outcomes and findings will also offer new perspectives for further study, helping to extend critical arguments relating to dark tourism.

1.6 Structure of this Study

This thesis has seven chapters excluding conclusion. A brief outline of the structure of these seven chapters is shown in below.

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter will describe the research avenue pursued herein and identify the key aspects of the research topic that will be addressed. Matters connecting to the definition and development of dark tourism will be detailed and the subject matter under investigation will be placed in context. It states the study's central research question, aims and objectives, and provides a brief literature review in anticipation of the fuller literature review chapter, which will be provided to offer insights into the field's trends. The study's overall context and background will also be articulated.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review most significantly reveals the conceptual framework behind the study: how dark tourism impacts national identity, collective identity construction and identity formation in evolving national narratives. It opens by establishing definitions and key debates within dark tourism, and provides an analysis of contemporary approaches, which include looking at media, typologies and spectrums of the field, destinations and supply and demand in the industry. It then looks at socio-demographic factors, namely family and education, and tourism feedback, which includes motivations and experiences. Finally, the literature review examines dark tourism beyond the West.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods used to collect and analyse the primary data used in this study and provides an outline of the thesis' objectives and methodology and an analysis of the role that the platform played in guiding the research. This research is primarily guided by interpretivism and constructivism. On the basis that ontology is subjectivity-based, this research is guided by the idea that the nature of reality is socially constructed and flexible. The epistemology is subjective and social, and the phenomenology is situational. The pilot survey's contributions and implications for the thesis will also be appraised. The data collection via interviews and field research and data analysis methods applied will be explained in detail, and

ethical concerns regarding the data collection and analysis procedures will also be detailed in this chapter.

Chapter Four: Dark Tourist Information Sources and Motivations

This chapter will focus on the different sources of information on dark tourism sites and the motives that generally influence tourists to visit such sites, exploring what happens before site visits. The sources include family and friends, various media and published resources, as revealed by the empirical research. Motivations such as peer recommendation, challenge-seeking tendencies, respect and remembrance, the desire for self-education and curiosity about history are analysed through the data. This is drawn from interviews from international participants conducted using online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter Five: Dark Tourist Experience and Interpretation

This chapter explores tourists' different experiences and interpretations of dark tourism sites, which encompasses the duration and aftermath of site visits. The findings focus on diverse experience types, such as spiritual experiences, reinforcement of belief, grief and mourning, authenticity, feelings of involvement, diverse perceptions and educational experiences. As in Chapter Four, the data is taken from online interviews from international respondents.

Chapter Six: Case Study: Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi

This chapter focuses on data from Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi, situated in Bangladesh. It is an important site that commemorates the events of 'Martyred Intellectuals Day', which is now a national holiday in the country. The data for this was collected in person via in-depth interviews in Dhaka. Motivations, experiences and further perspectives on dark tourism and the site were discussed with tourists. Crucially, this is the only chapter for which the data was collected in person, which reinforces its validity and authenticity.

Chapter Seven: Significant Findings and Outcomes from the Investigation

This chapter presents the major findings of the research study, focusing on what has been gained from evaluating information sources on dark tourism, what conclusions can be drawn from analysing the tourist experience and interpretation of various sites and final findings from the case study on the Boddhovumi. It addresses how the major innovations of the research respond to and answer the research question, aims and objectives, in anticipation of the final conclusion.

Conclusion

The concluding chapter will highlight the originality of this research and reaffirm the project's proposed aims and outcomes. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this study and on the dark tourism site in Bangladesh is described, along with the process to overcome obstacles to the research. Key issues and findings are highlighted and restated along with the study's most pressing original contributions. Finally, the conclusion identifies what the future of dark tourism research in Bangladeshi and other non-Western tourist settings may look like.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Assessing the field: Dark Tourism within Tourism Studies

Tourism Studies is a complex and interdisciplinary research area, which can be approached through various lenses. Historically, researchers in this area therefore often approach it from within the specific boundaries of the main disciplines in which they have been trained (Echtner and Jamal, 1997). However, a thriving current research environment shows that the field is increasingly breaking down disciplinary boundaries (Koseoglu, Mehraliyev and Xiao, 2019) creating compelling disciplinary fields, such as dark tourism studies.

People's motivations to participate in the tourism industry depend on both extrinsic and intrinsic factors (Sharpley 2018). Extrinsic motivations for tourism are influenced by the pressures and conditions of life, whereas intrinsic motivations are influenced by deep-rooted psychological activities, such as self-esteem or the need for companionship. For example, the exposure to media would fit as an extrinsic motivation for visiting any site, and education and affect/emotion would be related to intrinsic motivations. Motivations furthermore result from diverse social, economic, demographic and psychological factors. Tourists consider multiple factors when deciding where to visit; at the same time, their previous experiences and other tourists' experiences affect their choice of destination. Despite the apparent importance of motivation, particularly for dark tourism, its conceptualisation in this context is still lacking (Fodness 1994).

Another important theory of tourism, which is particularly important to consider in dark tourism when assessing motivations, is push–pull theory, created by Tolman (1959) and developed by Dann (1977). This is probably the most widespread motivation theory used to explain tourist behaviour (Said and Maryono, 2018; Šimková and Holzner, 2014; Arowosafe et al., 2022). It suggests that tourists are pushed by internal factors, such as needs and wants, and subsequently pulled by external factors, such as their reasoning to travel specifically to a destination, including tangible things such as facilities, object-oriented attractions, and scenic beauty (Kim et al., 2003). This has a huge impact on decision-making processes (Uysal and Sirakaya-Turk, 2008). Research has revealed that that push and pull factors can effectively market a tourism destination (Oh et al., 1995). In addition, push and pull motivations are useful

to segment markets, market developments, package designing and promotional plans too (Rid, Ezeuduji and Pröbstl-Haider, 2014). The centrality of this theory will become apparent later in this chapter.

In the branch of tourism studies dealing with the exploration of dark tourism sites, motivations are still under-researched (Sharpley and Stone, 2009), and the South Asian perspective continues to be overlooked, especially in terms of Bangladesh. These two points represent the focus of this project, which aims to identify the motives, experiences, and supply and demand perspective of dark tourism sites in Bangladesh and explore how recent discussion in these areas impact our reading of them.

The wider field of tourism has expanded remarkably over the past 50 years, and, with it, research on the tourism industry and theories related to tourism has also expanded. Furthermore, the topic of dark tourism—where tourists travel to sites associated with suffering and death—has taken up more space in the discourse on what tourism means now. There is a significant and timely body of research speculating on the tourism of the future, which singles out dark tourism as a compelling area that is likely to grow in popular and academic interest (Collins-Kreiner, 2020; Lewis, Schrier and Xu, 2021; Wang et al. 2021; Proos and Hattingh, 2022).

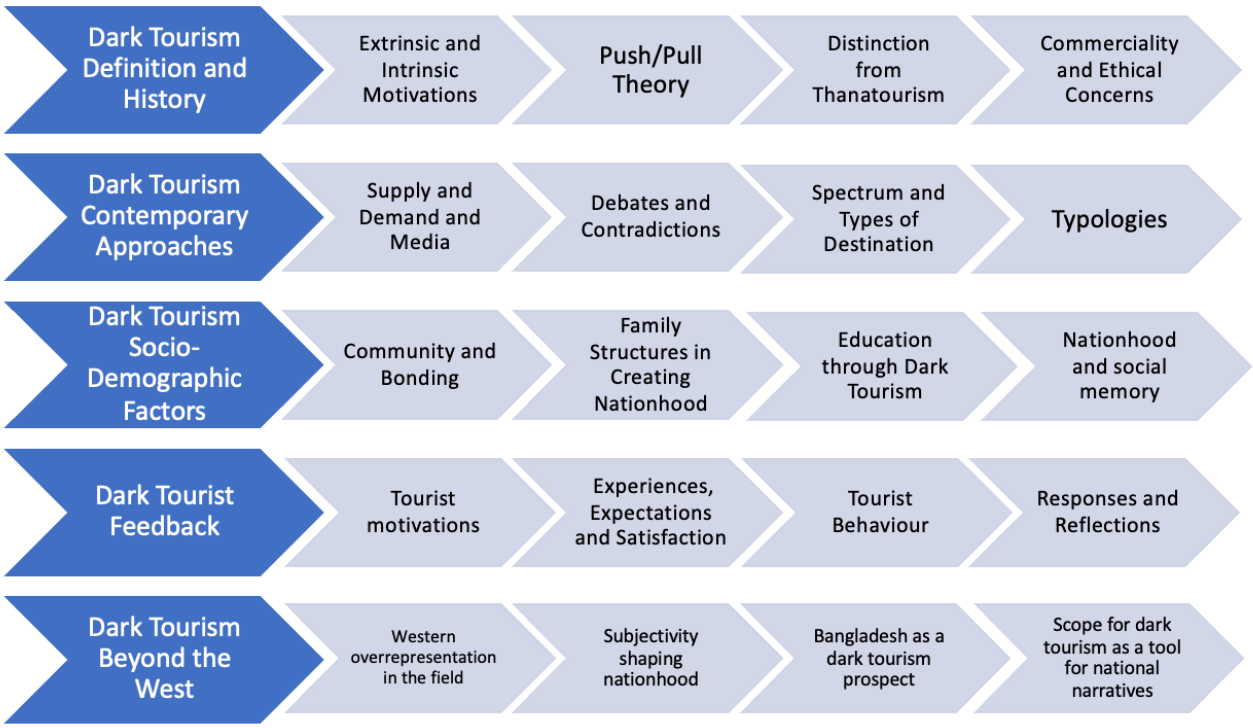
As established, the aims and objectives of this study are to elucidate further why people visit these sites, and how they react to them. Furthermore, the study will consider the European perspective on dark tourism and will focus in on South Asian perspectives and explore how they differ. To fulfil these aims and objectives, the dimensions of dark tourism need to be discussed, reviewed and revealed.

This review chapter focuses on the literature that provides foundational ideas and theories for considering dark tourism and the experiences and motivations of visitors who participate in it, beginning with an overview of the field, and its differences from thanatourism. It highlights the most pressing areas of current critical attention, and then turns to other spheres of influence on the tourists themselves, such as family and education. Sources are evaluated for what they bring to the wider discussion of dark tourism, but most importantly for how they can inform the research approach and what it can explain about approaches to dark tourism in Bangladesh, most particularly for the case study. Where the material on Bangladeshi sites is scant, this research engages with contemporary concerns and discussions, examining sites across the

world with an interesting body of research behind them to imagine what the discourse around comparative sites in Bangladesh would look like and to provide ways of examining the motivations and behaviour of tourists at the Boddhovumi. Thus, the thesis concludes on 'Dark Tourism Beyond the West'.

Overall, the conceptual framework, how the literature covers the most significant components of it, and how these components interact are summarised in Figure 1:

Figure 1: 'Conceptual Framework of the Thesis'



2.1.1 The Definition and History of Dark Tourism

Dark tourism, an act of travel to places associated with death, disaster, suffering, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and the macabre (Stone, 2006), appeared in the mid-1990s and began to provide attraction academic and media interest. Both international and national tourists have been fascinated by dark tourism sites around the world. Dark tourism is a universal aspect of the current visitor economy (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). According to Sharpley (2009), tourists purposefully travel to sites associated with death, suffering and violence. Before the concept of dark tourism arose, the study of travel related to death, disasters and atrocities was limited,

and it was featured as a precise system of tourism (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). This indicates that the phenomenon of dark tourism is not new; however, it is evident that dark tourism as a research area is comparatively young (Preece and Price, 2005). Indeed, as Philip Stone described it: 'despite a growing body of literature on the representation and tourist experience of deathscapes within the visitor economy, dark tourism as a field of study is still very much in its infancy' (2013). In the same article, Stone highlights how contested the concepts remains to be; and that its 'typological and theoretical foundations' are 'problematic' and 'raise complex issues regarding ''dark heritage'' and its representation and consumption' (2013, 308). This thesis understands the term 'heritage' to encompass the history, traditions, buildings and objects considered to be significant to a country of society.

The meaning or term of dark tourism was first used by Foley and Lennon (1996). Lennon and Foley (2000) later published a influential work entitled 'Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster': an article summarising the growing phenomenon, and outlining the ethical implications of the practice, and advising how to avoid exploitation and voyeurism by proceeding with respect and sensitivity. Five years later, Ryan (2005) published an article that focused on the growth of research interest into dark tourism and how it gradually continues to flourish. This result of this expansion has been seen in numerous national and international conferences related to dark tourism and research from various platforms or aspects has emerged. A website called 'The Dark Tourism Forum' was established, and this site has started providing support to scholars on this topic. Slowly, dark tourism has emerged as a phenomenon, attracting fruitful research, and creating a dynamic research community.

Although the concept of dark tourism has been developed in the tourism field only over the past two decades, it has attracted significant attention by academics. The core studies, with short summaries of their contributions are as follows:

Table 1*: *'Core Studies on Dark Tourism'

Rojek (1993): As 'black spot' tourism.
Foley and Lennon (1996): The consumption or commodification of death and disaster sites by tourists.
Foley and Lennon (1997): Visiting sites that are associated with death, disaster and tragedy at the time of twentieth century for commemoration, education and entertainment.
Lennon and Foley (1999): Tourism sites associated with death, adversity, and depravity. Tarlow (2005): Visitation to sites where disasters or any kind of historically remarkable death had happened and that have a continuous effect on people's lives.
Preece and Price (2005): Tourism visitation associated with death, disaster, acts related to violence, tragedy and scenes of death, and crimes against humanity.
Stone (2006): Travel associated with death, suffering and the macabre.
Ashworth (2008): Travel in which the tourists' experiences focus on agony, death, fear or grief, and the infliction of violence, which is not associated with any kind of entertainment experience.
Sharpley (2009): Tourists' total experiences are related with death and sorrow.
Robb (2009): Violence is the main attraction for tourists' visits.
Light (2017): The term 'dark tourism' is used as an umbrella that is somehow associated with death, atrocity, tragedy, crime and suffering.

Dark tourism is often referred to as 'heritage tourism' (Foley and Lennon, 1996; Lennon and Foley, 2000): a tendency developed by media. Media broadcasts frequently term anything along the lines of dark tourism as heritage tourism. A definition of this term from Timothy and Boyd (2003) explains that it is a 'form of cultural tourism that focuses on the cultural and

natural heritage of a destination as its principal attraction' (p. 16). 'Heritage tourism' understood this way differs from dark tourism, as the focus shifts from a network of complex reasons to one goal: experiencing a sense of 'heritage'. Light (2017) also identifies that there is an 'uneasy' relationship between the two terms. Therefore, in this thesis, the term is minimally used where authors use this term interchangeably with dark tourism, and to express in one instance a particular kind of tourist behaviour at the Boddhovumi, honouring Bangladeshi heritage and a sense of identity that fits into this category.

There are a few recent criticisms of dark tourism that posit negative aspects of this type of tourism; for example, it has been argued that dark tourism reflects questionable morality in global society and is in poor taste (Stone and Sharpley, 2013). This argument suggests that dark tourism may involve engaging in taboo activity that is rooted in unconscious guilt. However, the response to that criticism is that it stems from psychosocial life, which was previously mediated by religion and politics, whereas the new mediating platform is tourists' economic situation. Thus, religion, politics, and economics can be considered the psychosocial roots of dark tourism (Korstanje and Baker, 2018). Looking at the phenomenon in terms of how it occupies this psychosocial life, and how it has evolved from spiritual and political engagement is a productive one. Indeed, dark tourism can expose the 'taboo' behaviour of tourists, and how they go against the grain of accepted behaviour in seeking out such sites. On the other hand, a compelling argument can be made that tourists at dark tourism locations want to learn and might be interested in history, pursing self-education themselves, as opposed to being morbidly fascinated with death, or occupying these spaces for 'taboo' reasons (Biran, et al. 2011).

This ties into Chhabra's (2014) idea of how to create more 'authentic' dark tourist experiences: by making the most every opportunity to be educated and learn about context, and to reflect on the events of the site in a respectful and meaningful manner. Over time, the realm of dark tourism has come to be investigated from a more nuanced viewpoint. The importance of the ethical aspects of dark tourism depends on authenticity: that is, to what extent a dark tourism involvement is apparent as faithful (Chhabra, 2014). She notes that it is a challenge to preserve this with the pressure on sites to commercialise and commodify these encounters. Similarly, tourists themselves have ethical disagreements over whether dark tourism should be marketed in commercial ways. Clearly, it is unethical to profit from other people's suffering and thus a reconfiguration of the ethics around the dark tourism experience has been key (Stone and Sharpley, 2013). Along these lines, encouraging visitors to gain knowledge through research

and dark leisure experiences to some extent increased this need to promote dark tourism encounters in a responsible way. So, it was argued that the management of such sites needed to invest more time and attention to address and identify this issue (Hartmann, 2014).

Because motivation is the most significant factor for visitors or travellers that determines the outcome of their journeys, for example, their level of satisfaction (Iso-Ahola, 1982), determining these motivations of dark tourism visitors will assist researchers and marketers in anticipating tourists' behaviour at dark tourism sites. This research uses the push–pull theory of motivation to develop in-depth interview questions in the chapters that follow; the theory provides the research with a better framework for understanding what motivates tourists' visits to dark tourism sites.

2.1.2 Exploring the Differences Between Dark Tourism and Thanatourism

Thanatourism is distinct from dark tourism. The term 'thanatourism' was introduced by Seaton as tourism 'motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death' (1996, p. 3) and it reveals the behavioural orientations of dark tourism, emphasising the experiences and motives for site visits. In contrast, Foley and Lennon (1996) demarcate dark tourism as having more of a destination perspective. Simply put, the difference between the two is that thanatourism focuses on death, while dark tourism reflects a broader range of interests that may include death but does not necessarily require its presence in the experience. Since then, a few descriptions of dark tourism and thanatourism have been given by academics. The following works on thanatourism have been put forward (which include, as before, brief summaries of their main findings):

Table 2: 'Core Studies on Thanatourism'

Seaton (1996): Visits to a place are absolutely or moderately motivated by the desire to encounter death, not exclusively violent death.
Dann and Seaton (2001): Heritage tourism involves charms and places connected with death, violence, tragedy and criminalities against humanity.
Knudsen (2011): Thanatourism is tourism to sites related to what are recognised globally as places of commemoration.
Tanas (2014): Thanatourism is a specific type of cultural tourism involving sites that commemorate death.
Johnson (2015): In this type of tourism, tourists encounter sites associated with death, disaster and the macabre.
Johnson and Mandelartz (2016): Thanatourism is a type of sight-seeing where tourists visit places primarily related to death and adversity.
Seaton (2018): This kind of tourism is associated with remembrance of fatality and morality.

As noted, there is ongoing debate on the definition of dark tourism versus thanatourism, but dark tourism can be reflected as interactive; as Stone asserted, it is an 'act of travel'. Nevertheless, as established, dark tourism is broadly recognised as an umbrella term for places and charms that are related to death and suffering (Light, 2017). The term was first suggested by Rojek (1993), who presented it as 'black spot tourism'. Rojek (1993) aimed to focus on the commercial development of the sites associated with death and disaster as visitor attractions. Similarly, dark tourism sites relate to atrocity and the macabre, which can fascinate and attract tourists in a way that goes beyond morbid curiosity (Dann, 1994). Seaton's (1996) behavioural perspective on 'thanatourism' posits it as involving travel to a site that is wholly or partially motivated by a desire to experience death but not exclusively violent death. In a collaboration between the two latter thinkers, they submitted that thanatourism relates to heritage attractions

that are associated with death, acts of violence, scenes of disaster, and crimes against humanity (Dann and Seaton, 2001). Turnbridge and Ashworth (1995), furthered that it involves a heritage of atrocity related to human trauma. These researchers list several categories of heritage atrocity, including the following: unintentional tragedies by human action, killings committed by one group of people on another, killings arising within the context of any war, the legal process as atrocity, atrocities targeting a racial or ethnic group or any kind of social group, large-scale event of killings, and genocide.

Dark tourism and thanatourism are the most broadly used terms to reveal the production and consumption of sites and actions associated with death, massacre and grief. In the literature, alternative terms vary in usage and definition, including morbid tourism (Blom, 2000); fright tourism, where tourists may pursue a excitement from experiencing the site (Bristow and Newman, 2004); trauma tourism (Clarke, 2009); grief tourism (Lewis, 2008); dark side tourism (Skinner, 2012); death tourism (Sion, 2014); and thanatological tourism (Yan et al., 2016). All of this reveals a wide category of dark sites and therefore motivations for tourists to seek out experiences that engage with the more calamitous aspects of human life. Furthermore, a few interesting terms have also been proposed that find their definition based on the location or previous usage of the site, such as prison tourism (Strange and Kempa, 2003; Wilson et al., 2017), battlefield tourism (Slade, 2003; Ryan, 2007), Holocaust tourism (Cohen, 2011), genocide tourism (Beech, 2009), and ghost tourism (Holloway, 2010).

As we have seen, it is generally accepted that thanatourism is a type of tourism driven by desire to see death related disaster (Seaton, 1996). However, this interpretation has been contested in two ways. First, previous literature has revealed that the opportunity for tourists to encounter death is rarely a motive towards thanatourism (Biran and Hyde, 2013); second, as Seaton (2018) stated, dark tourism could be a medium for confronting actual death, representing an engagement that acts as a proxy for seeing actual death (Seaton, 2018). Finally, it could explain that the motives of visitors for visiting dark tourism sites are several and mixed, as illustrated by references. The ability of research in this area to contest the definition of thanatourism reveals something extremely important to bear in mind for this research: how powerful motivation is to determine what kind of encounter a tourist is having.

2.2 Contemporary Approaches to Dark Tourism

This section identifies five key considerations of current debates around dark tourism. First, the influence of media and popular culture in developing public opinion and knowledge of the field. Second, typologies developed by researcher to classify dark tourism activity. Third, exploring the spectrum of dark tourism developed to illustrate the categories developed by these typologies. Fourth, analysing the different types of destinations that exemplify dark tourist. Fifth and finally, explaining recent conceptualisations of supply and demand within this industry.

2.2.1 In the Media and Popular Culture

Dark tourism has attracted interest from the media as well as researchers, and it has been reflected on and inspired by media professionals everywhere the world (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Media has a reciprocal nature with dark tourism, by representing it and showing the behaviours typical of dark tourists. Dark tourism is portrayed in both conventional or traditional media as well as having a significant social media presence, and this portrayal and treatment has affected tourists' motivations and intentions. With increased press, media and social media attention, tourists are more educated and aware than ever of the possibilities offered by dark tourism sites.

Dark tourism has also been discussed in popular culture. Actor and comedian Dom Jolly (2010) published a book entitled '*The Dark Tourist: Sightseeing in the World's Most Unlikely Holiday Destinations'*. The concept of this book is to foster wider and greater interest, relevant to academics and non-academics alike, in visiting forbidding and dangerous locations: and as such, Jolly documents his travels to morbid places, including Asian sites such as North Korea and the Aokigahara forest in Japan. It clarifies how some forbidding or dangerous places have become famous or have gradually attained popularity. A 2012 psychological thriller movie *The Grief Tourist*, about an American vacationing to dark sites, was reproduced under the title *The Dark Tourist*. In 2018, a documentary series called *The Dark Tourist* was popular on the streaming site Netflix and followed a journalist to well-known dark tourism sites across the globe, including sites of nuclear disaster in Central and East Asia, and macabre sites in Japan, Indonesia and Cambodia. What is striking about these examples of mainstream treatments of

dark tourism is how comparatively *little* attention there is to South Asia, and even less to Bangladesh in this context.

2.2.2 Debates and Contradictions in Typologies of Dark Tourism

The development of dark tourism typologies and concepts is relatively recent, considering how the field has expanded, and how many tourism sites fall under the 'dark' category. It is significant to note, in the words of Stone, that 'there is no universal typology of dark tourism, or even a universally accepted definition' and that furthermore, there is a 'blurring of typological parameters … as such, full categorisations are extremely complex' (2013, p. 312). With this in mind, it is clear to see that there are overlaps in these attempts, but no consensus on dark tourism typologies, Academics have sought to find different kinds of dark tourism, whereas others have focused on creating an expressive typology. This section reviews and discusses the platforms, issues, and contradictions that have emerged thus far in this endeavour. This incorporates the literature of Tunbridge and Ashworth (1995), Ashworth and Hartmann (2005), Seaton (1996), Tarlow (2005) and finally, Sharpley (2009).

Tunbridge and Ashworth (1995) categorised the concept of atrocity, which includes the following: a) natural or accidental death by alleged human action; b) atrocities encountered in the context of war; c) atrocities that took place in former judicial systems; d) discrimination against racial, traditional, or any sort of social groups; e) widespread assassinations or massacres; and f) genocide. They also observed that a single event could involve multiple overlapping categories (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1995). Fundamental conditions have been identified as defining an atrocity (Ashworth and Hartmann, 2005): there should be human victims or human perpetrators, perpetrators must act intentionally, the victims must be innocent, and there is a degree of unusual seriousness to the event.

Seaton (1999) described five categories of dark tourism activities based on motivation and formulated a typology comprising them. First, he identified the activity of witnessing the sorrow and consequences of death. Then, to watch what happens after death. Furthermore, to visit interment sites or memorials, to travel to re-enactments, and finally, to synthesise the evidence of the dead that has been assembled. Rojek (1993) introduced another concept, that of 'black spots', to refer to the commercial developments of graveyards. He also coined another term, 'fatal attractions', which refers to cemetery-based dark tourism, such as the metropolitan

and national cemeteries in Washington, Westwood Memorial Park in Los Angeles, Memorial Park in Hollywood, Montparnasse Cemetery in Paris, and Highgate Cemetery in London. The concept of black spots (Rojek, 1993) is more philosophical than the concepts of Foley and Lennon discussed previously (1996). The commercial development of black spots motivates the tourists or fans to focus on dark tourism as it relates to celebrities, such as James Dean and Elvis Presley (Rojek, 1993). Hence, it is arguable that black spots are more a kind of positive leisure rather than strictly macabre sites (Stone, 2009); alternatively, they could attract visitors because of a fascination with death (Seaton, 1996) or with sites of shame and pain (Logan and Reeves, 2009). Tarlow (2005) outlined a similar meaning of dark tourism to that of Lennon and Foley (2000), emphasising the emotional and intellectual benefits of the practice. In this conception, dark tourism involves visitation to sites where noteworthy tragedies or deaths have occurred, and the events or incidents not only have emotional but also political and social significance. In evaluating the different typologies that have emerged to categorise dark tourist experiences, researchers consider a wide range of experiences touching on suffering to fall under dark tourism: and all in some way foreground the importance of remembrance, reflection, and education. It is notable that these typologies have been generated from research based predominantly from samples from Western sites.

Sharpley (2009) developed a typology particularly for the consumption and supply pattern of dark tourism: an area that will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter. Here, consumption indicates the demand aspect of dark tourism. In this typology, dark tourism is divided into four quadrants, ranging from pale to dark (Sharpley, 2009). This perspective was first developed by Sharpley in 2005, and it was detailed further to elucidate dark tourism based on the consumption patterns of tourists or visitors. Earlier research was performed by Lennon and Foley in 1999, and their research's reflection is there. The researchers found motivations to be a fundamental aspect of any activity related to tourism.

2.2.3 The Spectrum of Dark Tourism Destinations

In this section, I draw attention to previous researchers' attempts to visualise and make concrete the spectrum of 'darkness' in dark tourism. The image of the 'spectrum' is an attractive one for researchers: it has visual appeal for presentation data and flows well from the fundamental idea of 'darkness', and the language linking shades to ideas of the macabre: someone could be

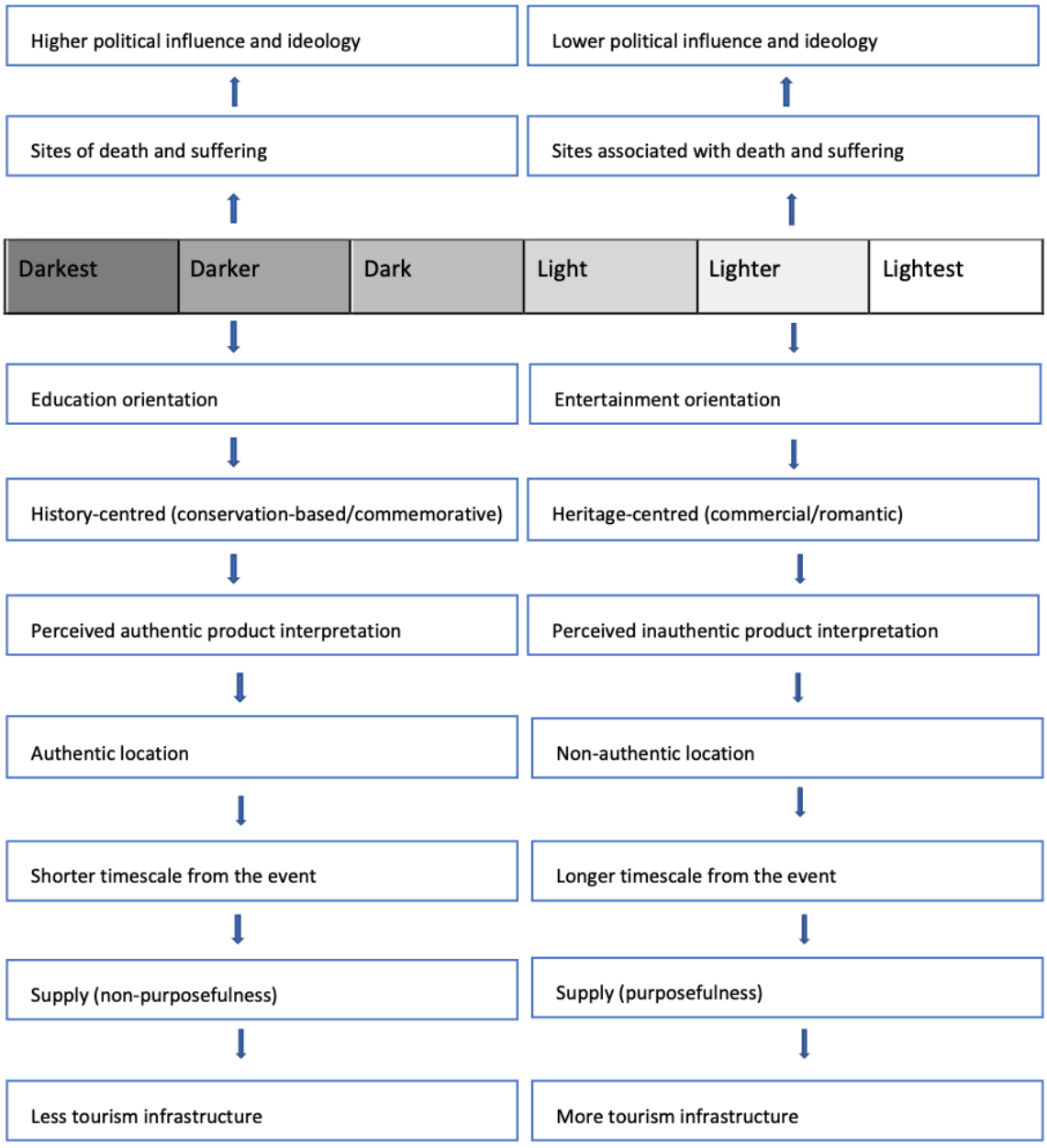
described as having ‘dark tastes’ if they are interested in subjects that others might find disturbing, for example.

According to Stone’s (2006) paper titled ‘A Dark Tourism Spectrum’, the supply of dark tourism can be analysed in a significant way only if tourists’ behaviour and the demand for dark tourism are both recognised. There should be a process of supplying dark tourism attractions that creates a way of identifying and researching tourists’ motivations and experiences. The figure (2) from this study, replicated over the page, shows several typologies of dark tourism supply grounded on several categories, such as the degree of validity, location, and orientation (education vs entertainment). These categories show an organised framework that can be used to categorise different dark tourism sites.

The spectrum depicted over the page varies from the lightest type (dark fun factories) to the darkest one. The Castle Dungeon at Warwick Castle in the United Kingdom is considered to involve a primitive experience related to death and grief, but it occurs in a harmless and amusing situation, whereas the Auschwitz concentration camp or such genocide sites as the assassination grounds in Cambodia (Williams, 2004) are considered to belong to the darkest category in dark tourism. It is the work of Sharpley that contributes the shades of darkness typology from the research contributions of previous researchers.

Unpacking the term ‘darkness’ is important when it comes to categorising dark tourism. According to Strange and Kempa (2003), in the context of dark tourism, there is a difference between lighter and darker tourism sites. Alcatraz and Robben Island are former prisons, both of which have been converted into tourism attractions. These two sites have different histories and certain dark tourism-oriented attributes. Alcatraz is a commercial and entertaining site, whereas Robben Island has a more serious atmosphere and lends itself to more political interpretations. Robben Island is promoted as an educational site and somewhere to honour and remember the prisoners who were held there, indicating that Robben Island is a bit darker than Alcatraz (Stone, 2005).

Figure 2*: ‘The Spectrum of Dark Tourism Typology’*



Source: Stone (2006)

Sharpley follows the research of Rojek (1997), looking at whether the intention of any given visit was accidental or the result of deeply personal interest. Sharpley then also develops Seaton's (1996) categorisation of the five bases of thanatourism. This leads Sharpley to develop the 'continuum of intensity', which relates to tourists' motives for visiting specific dark tourism sites and different categories of interest in death. This approach (Sharpley 2005) considers two primary bases of the shades of darkness typology—namely, the consumers (tourists) and the product (tourism sites). Considering consumer behaviours and desires, this researcher outlines several shades of darkness based on tourists' interest in death. Sharpley (2005) utilises Holt's (1995) typology of consumption practices, which involves an analysis tourism consumption related to supply and demand and develops a framework of consumption practice. Sharpley (2005) incorporates Holt's (1995) four metaphors of dark tourism—experience, play, integration, and classification—and Seaton's (1996) levels of darkness in relation to supply and demand. The most intense and therefore 'purest' form of dark tourism is fascination with death from the tourists' point of view; indeed, suppliers attempt to exploit this fascination to market a product (tourism location). Dark tourism locations can be defined as intentional or unintentional in terms of how they emerge. Unintentional sites include any sort of death- or disaster-related churches, battlefields, and burial locations; and intentional ones include Flight 93 tours or September 11 (Sharpley, 2005). These two types of dark tourism supply create a continuum related to the purpose of interest or fascination of death. Therefore, in comparing the supply and demand of dark tourism, Sharpley (2005) delineates four shades of dark tourism, as follows:

1. Black tourism: This is a kind of pure dark tourism. It involves a strong fascination with death and a determined supply of dark tourism involvements to please consumers' needs.

2. Grey tourism supply: This kind of dark tourism is developed intentionally to exploit death and death-related disaster. However, these aspects do not dominate of overwhelming the visitors; they are matched with tourists' interests.

3. Grey tourism demand: In this category, tourists have a fascination with death, but they visit the sites unintentionally.

4. Pale tourism: Tourists have limited or minimal interest in death and disaster types of tourism sites, and they might have no intentions to visit these kinds of dark tourism sites.

The thought of location is an interesting consideration in this discussion of darkness and lightness. Miles (2014) claims that there is a difference between on one hand attractions for dark tourism and on the other, sites where historical death and torment occurred. Hence, a significant difference could be observed between a Holocaust death camp, such as Auschwitz, and a memorial site such as the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. Clearly, Auschwitz would represent a much darker experience: it confronts the visitor with the historical setting of atrocities, rather than a location built to pay tribute to events with more physical distance from the site it commemorates. The darkest sites of tourism are those associated with heavy loss, unimaginable atrocities, and severe consequences to reconcile, and they therefore have much lower touristic utility. These sites have a strong educational focus, and they are perceived as more authentic and commemorative than commercial. Although they are comparatively less in demand than those at the lighter end, that have more commercial appeal and are less problematic to build on that commercial interest, the darkest sites still draw committed tourists. In contrast, the lighter tourist sites are those sites where the infrastructure is built for the entertainment of tourists and to maximise the draw of the sites; and as such may have less perceived authenticity.

To summarise the discussion around the 'spectrum' of dark tourism, some interesting conclusions can be drawn, as we can see, Stone highlights the importance being able to research visitor motivation, as well as analysing supply and demand, as well as considering a wide variety of factors providing a quite flexible typology, whereas a typology such as Sharpley's is more regimented in approach, and narrower in its central model. These typologies primarily differ in their emphasis on tourist behaviour and demand, the intentionality of supply, and the degrees of fascination exhibited by tourists to these sites.

2.2.4 Identifying Types of Dark Tourism Destination

As we are now aware, the nature, scope, and diversity of dark tourism is immense and dynamic. One way to make sense of this wide-ranging information is to look more closely at the types of dark tourism destinations. This section identifies seven types of destination that can be prefixed with 'dark': fun factories, exhibitions, dungeons, resting places, shrines, conflict sites and genocide camps.

'Dark fun factories' refer to tourism sites that focus on entertainment and a commercial ethic, presenting fictional death-related and macabre events through performance, participation and

creating affective space for visitors (Zhang et al., 2022). As such, these types of tourism sites hold a significant degree of tourism infrastructure, and they are purposeful and centred on having fun and being entertained (Niemelä, 2010). This type of dark tourism site is the nimblest type of dark tourism. Dark fun factories basically provide sanitised products and probably show a less authentic orientation. For instance, there is a prominent and classic dark fun factory across Europe that is authorised by Merlin Entertainments Ltd. and follows a dungeon concept. The most famous dungeon attraction is the London Dungeon, and the many visitors to its doors interact with 'ghouls' and displays of morbidity. The London Dungeon presents family-friendly visuals within a socially acceptable environment that explores death and suffering. Ashworth and Isaac (2014) made the case that sites of this nature have contributed to a shift in perspectives around tourism, proving a more mainstream appeal.

Additional instance of a dark fun factory is Dracula Park in Snagov, Bucharest, Romania (BBC News, 2003). It is builds on the mythology about the real-life figure of Vlad the Impaler, a fifteenth-century Transylvanian count who supposedly tortured prisoners in particularly grisly ways and left them dying. In 1897, Bram Stoker wrote the novel *Dracula* based on Vlad the Impaler. The continuous success of this novel since its publication has popularised the myth of a vampire aristocrat, which has had the consequence of fuelling a tourism industry around locations associated with it. Dracula Park which situated in Romania was formed as an entertainment-based product focusing on the macabre and fictional story. A popular example of dark fun factory, it has been noted as a superlative example of this type of site by multiple researchers (Minić, 2012; Stone, 2006; Christiana, 2013; Stoleriu, 2014; and Fonseca et al. 2015).

'Dark exhibitions' represent a dark tourism product that incorporates educational opportunities. Whereas dark fun factories provide commercial and entertainment products, dark exhibitions provide experiences that revolve around death and the macabre via an inherent commemorative, educational, and creative message. These types of products may be perceived as more authentic and serious. Although they have a conservational ethic, these products incorporate a tourism infrastructure and commercial focus. Dark exhibitions usually offer an eclectic range of products and are located far from the actual death-related and macabre sites at which the events took place. As this represents a wide 'type' of site, there is little focus on it as an isolated phenomenon, but it is discussed as a significant type of site (Stone 2006; Dale and Robinson 2011). Museums that consider death and suffering in an educational and

commemorative way would be considered dark exhibitions. A prominent example of a site of this type would be the Smithsonian Museum's permanent exhibition of images and artefacts from the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

'Dark dungeons' are attractions that highlight former prisons, showing historical penal and justice codes to the current customer. These kinds of products involve a combination of amusement and learning, with a relatively high degree of commercialisation. A site in Nottingham, UK, called the Galleries of Justice, is housed in a building that was used as a prison and court from the 1780s to the 1980s. It highlights the harsh penal codes of the past and exposes visitors to the site's heritage while simultaneously promoting educational and historical content; it has been cited widely as a compelling example of 'dark dungeon' (Stone, 2006; Ntunda, 2014; Niemelä, 2010). Biran (2018) has argued that experiences of dungeons allow visitors to reflect on the serious themes of justice, punishment and torture, which prompt them to examine their own morality and feelings around the society of the past and present, and its values.

Dark resting places refer to cemeteries, graveyards or sites with multiple tombs (Seaton, 2012). Tourism planners can use cemeteries to promote tourist visits to a geographical area while maintaining the structural integrity and sustainable ecology of local environments (Meyer and Peters, 2001). Through the extensive use of media and dedicated tour guides, cemeteries have become a place of the living dead; they plot the central part of the dark tourism spectrum. Dark resting sites are perceived as being centred on history and culture, and as having a commemorative ethic (Pecsek, 2015). Dark resting sites offer serenity. They also present an opportunity for visitors to commemorate the spot and show their respects to the deceased.

Dark shrines focus on the act of remembrance and respect for the dead. Dark shrine sites may be constructed formally or informally at the site of death and within a short time of the death occurring. They capture a darker component of the dark tourism spectrum. The events they commemorate dominate the media for a short time; they also show a high engagement of political awareness that continues as the site attracts media attention. Flowers may be left at dark shrine sites, where deaths have occurred, as gifts from people who do not have a direct relationship to the victims. The media reports on these events may stimulate tourists to visit the shrines (Walter, 1995). At the same time, dark shrines do not have much power as a tourism element because of their temporary nature and are therefore not subject to as much scrutiny as

more permanent attractions (Stone, 2006; Fonseca, 2015; Heuermann and Chhabra, 2014, Raine, 2013). An example is the informal floral shrine that was established at Kensington Palace for Diana, Princess of Wales, who was killed in a car accident in 1997, and that was visited by millions of people. Diana died in France, but the shrine was placed in England, where she had lived.

Sites that are associated with war represent the market with the widest attraction for dark tourists (Smith, 1998). This category is collectively known as 'dark conflict sites'. These sites represent a good source of commodification as significant tourism products. Dark conflict sites basically have a learning and memorial focus. The literature describes a memorial focus, remembrance, and the functions of dark conflict sites (Edwards, 2000); these sites are also described as representing a deep heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1995). Dark conflict sites are becoming commercialised, opening an opportunity for tourism infrastructure. Since a formalised Infrastructure has emerged, tour operators have begun to offer trips to battlefields, usually as part of a wider holiday itinerary. These offerings mostly focus on battlefield sites from the First World War. Indeed, most Western tour organisations offer battlefield tour sites to trivial groups with maps, war-related diaries, and in-depth observations from their points of view (Clarke and Eastgate, 2008; Iles, 2006 and 2008).

Dark genocide camps are sites that have genocide and atrocity as a significant product theme; they represent the darkest part of the dark tourism spectrum. Dark genocide camps represent the ultimate emotional experience (Keil, 2005). They express terrible stories of human suffering, and they may also have highly political subject matter. Thus, dark genocide camps include Holocaust sites, such as the Second World War concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Because of the atrocities that were committed there (Gilbert, 1986), this site still haunts the public's imagination.

As we can see from the range of sites categorised here, tourists are unintentionally following different typologies of dark tourism as well as its related spectrum. The dark sites on offer differ in terms of permanence, the accidental and deliberate nature of their construction and how physically 'contained' they are. This creates a wide scope for demand.

2.2.5 Understanding Dark Tourism through Supply and Demand

We turn now to the influence that the economic model of 'supply and demand' has on the dark tourism industry: which intersects effectively with other areas under consideration in this

literature review. This is a fundamental concept that dictates the market: put simply, supply is the amount of goods and or services that can be exchanged at a given time, and demand is what consumers or buyers are willing to invest to obtain those goods and services.

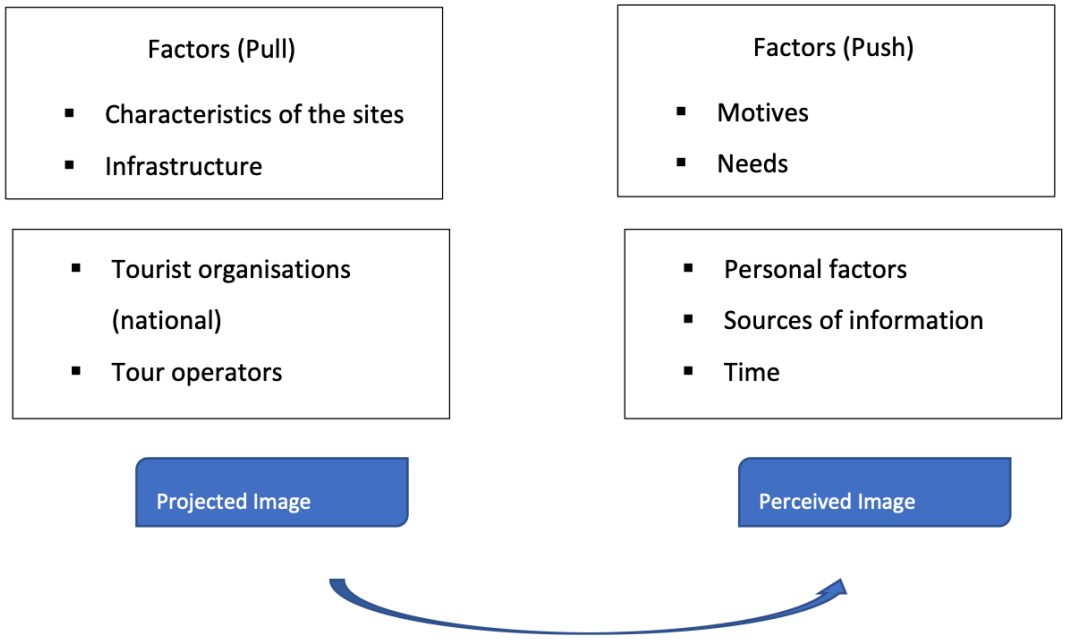
Three approaches contribute to the understanding of the supply–demand platforms in dark tourism. The most prevailing one is the supply perspective (Seaton and Lennon, 2004; Stone and Sharpley, 2008), which adopts a descriptive understanding (Biran et al., 2011). This approach emphasises individuals' presence at sites associated with death; it also explores death-related sites ranging from lightest to darkest. However, a disadvantage of the supply side sometimes neglects individual tourists' experiences, feelings, and motives, thereby portraying a simple understanding of dark tourism. The second approach is the demand perspective, which considers tourists' motivations for visiting specific sites. This approach illustrates the degree to which tourists reflect on their thanatouristic motives (Slade, 2003; Biran et al., 2011). Finally, the third approach is the integration of the supply and demand platforms, highlighting the need for both supply and demand in dark tourism. This links the attributes of sites and experiences along a continuum (Sharpley, 2005; 2009) in terms of the four shades of dark tourism outlined in the section exploring critical attempts to create a darkness spectrum in the field.

Supply is often easier to track than demand because it depends on a system of monitoring. Sales, inventory, and production figures can be easily produced. Demand, by contrast, depends on factors that are much harder to quantify or trace and are much more vulnerable to external circumstances. As a result of this, it is perhaps not surprising that there is less research into the demand side of economics than the supply side as a rule: and this applies very much to the research around the dark tourism economy. To date, the supply side of dark tourism has been researched intensively when compared with the demand side. Dark tourism should be equally weighted between demand and supply, but this unevenness in critical attention means that demand-driven tourist motivations related to dark tourism have not yet been explored in every dimension. Only a few studies on tourists' reasons and desires, such as those focusing on the experiences or drivers of dark tourism, have been conducted, as Sharpley has noted (2005).

Recent examples of research considering demand in dark tourism include Anna Farmaki's (2013) advancement of a conceptualisation of the industry by examining drivers of supply and

demand-side motivations of dark tourists in Cyprus (discussed in greater depth below); Millán, Rojas and García (2019) analysing demand through a case study based in Cordoba; and Khaydarova and Joanna (2022) exploring demand in dark tourism through the concept of 'new experiences. Clearly, the body of research is wide-ranging in approach and location, indicating that this could be a compelling new avenue for future research. To return to Farmaki's developments in supply and demand, her research presents a way to think about the factors involved in a push–pull strategy that plays a fascinating role in shaping both.

Figure 3: 'Factors of Push–Pull Strategy'.



(Source: Farmaki, 2013)

The figure (3) above indicates that supply stakeholders of dark tourism sites, such as national tourist organisations and tour operators, are significant in promoting dark tourism sites. The projected image from the source is then shown to new audiences by being picked up by the media, both traditional and new. As we may conclude from analysing the increased awareness in the phenomenon that has come from more media and press coverage, the demand for dark tourism is deeply affected by media and marketing. The degrees of darkness proposed by the typologies and spectrum summarised in this literature review significantly vary in relation to dark tourist sites as represented in the media, films, articles, and news stories (Stone, 2005).

Certain factors make the sites particularly attractive for tourists to visit, such as site characteristics, site infrastructure, existing facilities for tourists, and other points of accessibility for tourists, and these offerings are shared to tourists through the avenues that platform this projected image. This enhances the perceived image of the site among the tourists, as well as shaping their expectation for the 'real experiences' awaiting them during their visit. Perceived image is related to motives and needs and is a powerful consideration for visitors to dark tourism sites. Likewise, demand is influenced by this perceived image of what the tourist experience is likely to be. Information about dark tourism sites is circulated through channels

such as internet sites and tour operators. The image of the site is enhanced by more elusive factors such as the tourist's sense of time's passage since the relevant event occurred, their sense of solidarity and community, and even their level of knowledge.

In Farmaki's research, another compelling angle to this model was built up in the research that is of great relevance to this project: how examining supply and demand ties into the connections made by the tourists to the sites: and how their nationality or relationship with the country they are visiting affects this. It was found that one of the curators of a museum revealed during an interview that the museum was established to preserve the memories of people who sacrificed their lives and struggled so that younger generations of Cypriots would understand their sacrifices and remember who they were. Similarly, the Central Jail of Nicosia was developed into a museum. The island of Cyprus gained independence in 1960, becoming a centre of remembrance for those who were killed in the struggle. This museum does not depict the anti-colonial struggle between two communities in Cyprus; rather, it creates nostalgia to emphasise the oppressed situation of the Greek Cypriots. It can be interpreted as an attempt to reinforce the identity of the community by promoting the Greek Cypriots' belief. The development of this museum incorporated death into tourists' experience. This museum displays some personal belongings of the heroes who sacrificed their lives to show the symbolic orientations of visitors' experiences and respond to the consumption patterns of tourists. The graves of the heroes and the gallows that were used to hang them are shown to offer emotional perspectives to benefit the tourists' experiences. Consequently, this kind of museum has become a site of commemoration, respect, and learning (Yuill, 2004), and thus, it has been converted into a consumable dark tourism site.

In the same research, the curators of the museum revealed that a few foreign tourists like the museums, but their motives might be different or unique. The curators of the museum mentioned that tourists from Britain, Germany, France, and Italy visit the museum individually, and they gather information about the sites in Nicosia through booklets and maps, keeping the museum on their to-do lists. The curators also suggested that Greek tourists were slightly interested in the museum, possibly because of the solidarity between Greece and Cyprus. This is an interesting point, and it raises the possibility that the present research, which focuses on Bangladesh in South Asia, could explore whether international and domestic tourists have the same or different experiences in this region.

This kind of death- or disaster-oriented museum also exists in Bangladesh, and both international and domestic tourists visit the museum. However, research on these tourists that considers such factors as experiences, expectations, and services to uncover the supply and demand situation there has not yet been undertaken. Thus, there is clearly a gap related to dark tourism sites in South Asia, particularly in Bangladesh, in terms of tourists' experiences. Through empirical research, this gap could be addressed, making an important knowledge contribution for both academics and practitioners in the tourism field.

Death, disaster, and the macabre have become a noteworthy tourism sector in the UK. Dark tourism provides tourists or interested people with the opportunity to contemplate death in a safe way (Stone, 2005). Several researchers have described different shades of dark tourism (Lennon and Foley, 2000; Strange and Kempa, 2003; Stone, 2005), allowing dark tourism experiences to be plotted on a continuum ranging from relatively light sites in dark fun factories to dark sites, such as those focusing on the Holocaust and terrorism. Tourists visit different dark tourism sites in the UK because they want to gain different types of interesting experiences. However, dark tourism has not been researched from a South Asian perspective, especially in the context of Bangladesh, although Bangladesh does have assassination and genocide sites that attract both domestic and international tourists. This context could be an authentic and interesting platform for researching dark tourism experiences from the perspective of Bangladesh; dark tourism has been widely considered in the new world (Stone, 2005), but such research should be extended to every corner of the world. Research should focus on how these dark tourism sites are commercialised and how the tourism industry creates functional activities at dark tourism sites. The concept of dark tourism is dynamic, wide, and varied. At the same time, dark tourism sites associated with war or battlefields attract more visitors than any other types of dark tourism sites (Smith, 1998). Therefore, it seems that the interest in dark tourism is growing, and it has been undergoing a significant development when it comes the supply and demand of sites and attractions. According to Stone (2005), the structure and availability of dark tourism sites need to be understood before providing any kind of concrete assumptions. Marcel (2004) agreed with Stone's (2006) determination of dark tourism sites' dimensions and availabilities, pointing out that dark tourism may be considered an unrevealed sector of the tourism industry or for the country or local community; thus, it must be understood in terms of its fascinations and perspectives as well as demand. This aspect is also under-researched in the context of Bangladesh, and such research could help identify

what is expected to be a great contribution to the tourism platform not only in South Asia but also throughout the world.

This section has considered dark tourism from the perspectives of theories of tourism, typologies, and the spectrum of dark tourism, and supply and demand. However, several topics have been articulated that remain to be developed. These are: motivations and perceptions among tourists, travel behaviour—touching on family tourism and the desire for education at dark tourism sites—and tourism in Bangladesh. The focus of this study is correctively the demand side, such as tourists' (South Asian and non-South Asian) perceptions and motivations for visiting dark tourism site, which have historically proved more elusive to trace than supply factors. By orienting the present study to demand-related topics, the research provides a nuanced and unique perspective on what tourists are seeking from these encounters with dark sites.

2.3 The Role of a Dark Tourist's Socio-Demographic Profile

Thus far, this study has taken into consideration the discussion and contributions that have come together to create the field of dark tourism and attempted to establish ways to categorise sites and experiences to establish the parameters of what dark tourism is, to understand it. This section of the literature review turns to the dark tourists themselves: or the socio-demographic factors that seriously impact their motivations, planning and experiences, building on this knowledge. The areas under consideration here feed into the second research objective stated in this thesis: what perspectives can a tourist bring to a dark-site visit? What is fuelling their interests and reactions to a site of past atrocities? What aspects of their identity are determining how they think and feel before, during and after a site visit?

This section highlights significant factors and characteristics that shape individuals, which affect their experiences and motivations as dark tourists. These elements are of recurring importance to the people interviewed in the case study chapter, who cite these characteristics as being important to their decision-making process in selecting the Boddhovumi as a destination, and as affecting their experience while there. The discussion here begins with examining and explaining how research into the family is key to understanding the draw of dark tourism: and how it unlocks abstract concepts such as memory, and emotion. The discussion then moves to explore how education and the drive towards self-education affects

engagements with dark tourism sites. This approach establishes the intersectional nature of the study. The term ‘intersectionality’ was established by the theorist and civil rights scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw to establish an analytical framework around how identity creates states of discrimination and privilege. She explains:

> Intersectionality is a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood among conventional ways of thinking. (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 149)

This study ensures an intersectional approach by considering a variety of social identities and being mindful of how potentially oppressive systems affect their experiences within the dark tourism field. In the Methodology chapter, this approach is confirmed using a qualitative framework, which is frequently cited as being particularly conducive to intersectional investigations (Rodriguez, 2018; Christensen and Jensen, 2012; Atewologun and Mahalingam, 2018).

2.3.1 The Role of Family Structures in Dark Tourism

Family tourism unites family members to spend time together and create memories outside a domestic setting (Schänzel, 2012a). It is a category of tourist readily shaped by shifts in demographics and social structures, such as changes in working patterns, divorce rates, enrolment in tertiary education, and the growing elderly population (Yeoman, 2008). It is a challenge for the tourism section to fulfil the needs of the changing family. This is extremely important to consider when assessing future trends for tourists travelling in a family unit. In predicting what family tourism may look like in the future, researchers are eager to look at changing family structures, considering factors such as gender, multigenerational family units and blended families (Schänzel and Yeoman, 2015) which absolutely have a bearing on the approach to dark tourism. Understanding that the ’family’ is a rapidly evolving prospect, rather than a mundane and mass phenomenon requires dedication to product developments and quality assurances to maximise the potential of the market. Understanding this approach within dark tourism makes for an exciting prospect: pairing new ways of thinking about family tourism with an emerging form of tourism (Kidron, 2013).

Family tourism has captured 30 per cent of the leisure travel market in world tourism (Schänzel et al., 2012b): a substantial market size. It is also more resilient than other types of leisure travel because family members travel to reconnect and frequently have reasons to do so, such as reaching various milestones. This ensure that family travel is less vulnerable to economic downturns (Backer, 2012). Because of this consistent demand and relatively stable economic trend, it is evident that family tourism may create an opportunity to strengthen connections in society (Putnam, 2000). Rather than a frivolous form of consumption, family tourism considered to be authentic, and an activity that benefits society because it allows people to connect with each other at a very deep level (Hall, 2011). As we have discussed, dark tourism is an engaged and emotionally demanding form of tourism: thus, the role of family, a social structure that is complex and similarly involves high emotion deserves more attention in this area of research.

Family is key to creating national and ethnic identities. It could be described as playing the role of the nursery to a nation, or as the grammar learning institute of the nation (Stoler, 1996). Many researchers have explored the role of family in creating individual and collective identity in various communities: revealing how family reinforces or challenges a sense of solidarity and belonging, and thus shaping a sense of national identity (Nash, 2008). According to Benedict Anderson's ground-breaking research into nationalism and the emergence of the nation state, *Imagined Communities* (1983), the national history of any country is essentially a family history, where key players produce the imagined community of the nation through shared cultural practices. This is the symbolic value of family, and it carries cultural themes and imaginings of human relationships. Tinson and Saren (2022) make this connection between family and nationhood explicit:

> Participants consolidate their personal nationalism by connecting with and on behalf of others as well as through various ways of belonging, and by interpreting their experiences in relation to their families. (2022, p. 104612)

Likewise, family is key concept to cultural commemoration practices, as it is a rich source of remembrance. Families often encourage their members to participate in rituals to commemorate historical events. A popular dark family tourist venture is visiting World War sites and graves: and the global and widespread nature of these conflicts have created a vast number of potential tourists with family connections to them (Winter, 2010).

One study described the motivations and lived experiences of Israeli children of Holocaust-surviving parents who took family trips to sites associated with the atrocities of the Holocaust. In many cases, they were accompanied by their parents, who were themselves Holocaust survivors (Kidron, 2013). The research performed semi-structured interviews, which revealed that the trips fostered deep historical memories and family socialisation. The presence of both parents and children at these sites moved the visitors so much than they continued to reflect on their experiences after they returned home. This kind of trip to recover survivors' roots created or increased the sense of familial connections.

Stemming from the physical co-presence (Urry and Larsen 2011) and material traces relating to the parental past, children wish to evoke how it might feel to survive an atrocity, as an act of empathy. Children may experience emotional identification and attachment, reinforcing familial connections. The strategic motive of family members travelling to dark tourism sites reflects previously unspoken pain; this emotional intensity emerges from the encoding of personal memory-based experiences (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999). Thus, feelings at dark tourism sites are conceptualised as fragmentary presence in the everyday lives of survivor families. Family trips allow a confrontation of death-related feelings that never basically separated in daily life, so basically dark tourism allows families to cope with their family histories in ways that they cannot do at home (Stone and Sharpley, 2008; Stone, 2009; Walter, 2009).

The rise in popular genealogical studies and biotech-based investigations into family heritage and ancestry as a leisure activity (de Groot, 2020) is an important indicator of a growing trend: more than ever, people are taking and creating opportunities to find out who they are. In doing so, many are uncovering previously unrealised connections to problematic or traumatic events, such as the children of Holocaust survivors in the example above, and in the process, may make journeys to dark tourist sites to connect with a part of themselves they do not know, or have previously had little information on. This additionally produces powerful emotions and drives families to form closer kinship is experiencing or producing history together (Gollac and Oeser, 2011; Holbrook and Ziino, 2015; Clark and Altman, 2016). Family is a key access to heritage based on emotional connections between the present and past; it Is a symbolic element of memorial heritage of any community (Nora, 1996).

Notably, many of the examples of research exploring family are from the West. This study demands a further empirical study of dark family tourism especially in South Asian perspective. It has been observed that a growing number of offspring of survivors of massacre and mass violence are setting out on family trips along with their family members in Bangladesh or any other South Asian counties to experience sites that are so enmeshed within their family histories: especially events within living memory (Sultana and Parvez, 2019). Therefore, this topic needs to be researched further.

2.3.2 Education through Dark Tourism

The concepts of travel and education are intensely linked, and indeed complement each other. People frequently speak about their travel experiences in terms of having learned more about the world, and about themselves. The motivations and experiences of those who travel for education and learning is a broad area to be researched, but interestingly, neither academics nor industry have taken full account of this area (Ritchie, 2003). Types or forms of educational tourism exist in broader aspects, but this topic is still relatively under-researched in the lead tourism and educational sectors, despite efforts such as datamining narratives of educational travel (Hecht, Starosielski and Dara-Abrams, 2007).

Research into the practices of tour operators has shown a growing awareness that those participating in dark tourism expect more educationally, showing great engagement and making dark tourism high stakes in terms of gathering information (Minić, 2022). People who seek out these kinds of experiences clearly have enquiring minds, and they can be referred to as inquisitive travellers. Advertising material promotes in-depth engagement between dark tourism sites and tourists because advertisers provide information that reveals contextualised knowledge, as well as a fruitful appreciation of these sites. It could be argued that the potential for voyeurism or exploitation ensures a careful approach to advertising such sites: to avoid sensationalising or commercially distastefully a site that is meaningful, and perhaps painful to visitors (Ntunda, 2014). Promotional material can be used as an accessible kind of learning material if done well.

The Shoah (Holocaust) memorial museum Yad Vashem, located in Jerusalem was the subject of research into its educational impact in the context of dark tourism (Cohen, 2011). This revealed that European tourists regard Yad Vashem authentically educational, though it fails

to accurately reveal its significance as a remarkable site. According to Cohen (2011), tourists find Yad Vashem's seminars and location in Israel meaningful but emotionally difficult. The excellent staff and rich resources at the museum provide both a deeply emotional and educational experience: resulting in tourists perceiving themselves to have significant cognitive understanding (Cohen, 2011). Because of Yad Vashem's educational and locational benefits, it offers a dynamic view of ongoing implications of the Shoah, such as testimonies of survivors and exhibits on survivors in Israel. The staff and seminar programs of Yad Vashem spark interest in meeting Israelis and experiencing Israeli society. Over time, perhaps naturally, these sites move memorialising to offering increased opportunities for education. For example, in Winter's work studying tourism around First World War battlefields, it was found that motivations for visiting these sites and interpretations of them have broadened over time to encompass memorialising the dead and looking for education about the historical events (Winter, 2009).

A few studies have been conducted to compare visits to Shoah sites in Europe and Shoah sites or memorials in Israel (Cohen, 2008a; 2009; Vargen, 2008). Visiting these two types of sites and gaining experiences from different countries could create perceptions about Israel, Jewish identity, and the Shoah (Cohen, 2009). Here, future research is called for to investigate the experiences of tourists regarding meeting local populations whose tragedy could be memorialised. For example, photographs of victims of the Cambodian massacres were displayed in New York Museum Art in 1997 in what was considered a temporary dark tourism site. However, after visiting the exhibit, visitors stated that the exhibition would be more effective if the photographs could be contextualised by the involvement of Khmer and Cambodian Americans (Hughes, 2003). Visiting the Shoah in Israel reveals an inherent and unique significance of learning even for non-Jewish tourists (Cohen, 2011). Future studies might help to formulate a theoretical contribution on the concept of memorials in dark tourism sites. Such studies could reinforce the educational perceptions and learning experiences of tourists or visitors at dark tourism sites in other parts of the world than Europe. Specifically, the dark tourism industry in South Asia, and especially Bangladesh, would benefit from such a research focus.

2.4 Breaking Down Dark Tourist Feedback

This section explores the processes that lead to tourist feedback. When a dark tourist shares about their experiences at the sites, they provide and process information on their motivations and expectations prior to their visit, their experience, responses, or behaviour whist there, and following on from their visit, their level of satisfaction and reflections on that experience.

2.4.1 Dark Tourists' Motivations

Dark tourism sites play a significant role in understanding human history, according to Seaton and Lennon (2004. While there is a popular conception that strange tourists are attracted such sites (Ashworth and Hartmann, 2005). demand for dark tourism is increasing, with popular sites like the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Anne Frank House, and Alcatraz Prison attracting millions of annual visitors. However, there is a gap in the literature for dark tourism motivations.

By motivations, we understand the phrase as expressing the forces that activate and generate the behaviour of individuals. As we saw in establishing the critical discussion of the field, while academics have focused on the supply side of dark tourism and labelling and sub-categorising sites and shades of dark tourism (Seaton, 1996; Seaton and Lennon, 2004; Stone and Sharpley, 2006), few studies exist on the reasons for visiting dark tourism sites: in my speculation, because this demand-side is harder to quantify. There is a pressing need for empirical studies or research on motivations for and experiences of dark tourism (Sharpley and Stone, 2009).

Arguably the main issue with conceptualising dark tourism is that it has been defined too narrowly (Isaac and Çakmak, 2016), which could pose a problem for developing or exploring the motivations for visiting dark tourism sites. Isaac and Çakmak (2016) note the wide diversity of sites as a barrier to establishing common motivations for tourists: we can fairly assume a visitor to a dark fun factory has different motivations to a visitor to a genocide site. Consequently, little empirical research exists on motivations: and identified by academics seem to stem from theoretical platforms (Isaac and Çakmak, 2016).

Despite the empirical gaps in the literature, there have been many suggestions that focus on different motivations for dark tourism. A striking example is from Ashworth (2002), who picks out three categories of tourists' motivations: desire, identity, and darker feelings. Desires include curiosity, horror, empathy, and self-understanding; identity includes a quest for

knowledge and a sense of social responsibility; and darker motives include indulgence in violence and suffering. This paints a picture that tourists have more complex motivations to visit dark tourism sites than simply to see death and disaster, which is more socially responsible than stereotypes of dark tourism might show. Other collectives of tourist motivations have been proposed and conceptualised in various tourism studies (Rojek, 1997; Dann, 1998; Seaton, 1999; Tarlow, 2005; Wight and Lennon, 2007). This complex network of motivations adds up to a picture with multifaceted dimensions. I shall summarise the most pressing motivations below that are most frequently cited to the literature, which pertain to the research questions of this thesis.

Dark tourists can be motivated by morbid curiosity around death (Raine, 2013; and Brian et al. (2014) or a wish to challenge themselves by heightening their own sense of mortality (Dann, 1998; Pelton, 2003; Joly, 2011). The word 'morbidity' can often have negative connotations, and when applied to questioning a person's motivations to do something can be pejorative. However, the research into morbid curiosity around dark tourism paints a more complex picture than the negative stereotype of a ghoulish fascination with death. Research into the area of morbidity in dark tourism intersects with death studies and interrogations into fascinations around death in contemporary life. Young and Light (2016) for example pose the question of whether a reluctance to be open about death in daily life, leading to a kind of cultural exile of discussions about death and dead bodies, has conversely increased the interest around it. Their argument is that sites connected with death, or 'deathscapes' (p. 62) are becoming more mainstream and less alternative, although retaining some ambiguity, as a reaction against this. Stevenson (et al., 2016) makes the case that such openness is hopeful in nature. Stone argues that dark tourism is a mediator between life and death, providing physical spaces for the living to connect to the dead, so that individuals can make meanings of death for themselves: calling this a 'mortality mediation' (Stone, 2012, p. 1565).

These discussions around the increasing mainstream appeal tend to show dark tourist in a positive or certainly more nuanced light. Others examine reasons that run the spectrum of what we might feel when confronted with death: some being profoundly emotionally affected by this proximity to death, to those who feel enjoyment. Best (2007) describes this well: 'The inclusion of both positive and negative emotions adheres to the nature of (dark tourism) demand – experiencing sites of death and human suffering for the purpose of enjoyment, entertainment, education and satisfaction' (p. 38). Some researchers have reflected on morbidity in terms of

its pitfalls, such as succumbing to voyeurism, such as Blom (2001) who connects morbid fascination with higher levels of commercialism, and the 'postmodern' character of dark tourism that ties into popular culture and sensationalism.

Proving the increasing appeal of morbidity to researchers, Dann (1998) proposed branches of morbidity: for example, celebrating crime or deviance, indulging fears of phantoms, nostalgia, bloodlust, or even novelty. As insightful and illustrative as these may be, they are more descriptive of external factors than tourists' individual motives (Stone and Sharpley, 2008). The nuances around the concept of 'morbidity' make it a compelling motivating factor: and an important element to further consider in the 'Information Sources' section of this thesis.

A discussion has been had that explores the distinction between 'dark tourism' and 'heritage tourism' as terms that are sometimes (perhaps erroneously) used interchangeably: but heritage as a wider concept is vital to examining motivations around dark tourism: indeed, it is central to the argument around my case study findings. Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre were flagged in *The Rough Guide to Cambodia* (2017) as dark tourism sites with strong and indivisible component of heritage, as evidence of the Khmer Rouge's murderous rule. The work of Poria et al. (2006) on Anne Frank's house in Amsterdam indicates that visitor motivations increase if the sites are connected to their heritage. An assessment of visitor motivations at Auschwitz (Biran et al. 2011) found a greater interest in the heritage experience of the site than for dark tourism. Furthermore, any heritage interpretations have significant and direct effects on tourists' motivations to visit and engage with the sites from a heritage perspective (Bryce et al., 2015). In these instances, alternatives have been proposed to the term 'dark tourism'. Ashworth and Isaac (2014) use the term atrocity heritage tourism or dissonant heritage tourism. Logan and Reeves (2009) use the phrase difficult heritage tourism. However, Light (2017) expresses that dark tourism is basically a part of heritage tourism and argues that dark tourism can be redefined as a particular type of heritage tourism. The competing assessments on the appropriate use of language confirms that there is still debate in the field even on the terms used: that it is sensitive to, and contingent on motivation.

Tourists motivated by remembrance do so for myriad and interconnected reasons: to engage in mourning or spiritual experience not unlike a pilgrimage (which is further explored later in this section) to enhance the visibility of national identity, and for educational purposes to better serve that remembrance (Austin, 2002; Slade, 2003; Logan and Reeves, 2009). Kendle (2008)

noted the motivation to understand how people lived through a catastrophe and to show sympathy/empathy for the victims is a powerful one in dark tourism. Illustrating this motivation very effectively, Mowatt and Chancellor (2011) found motivations to visiting slave castles in Ghana showed a wish for visitors to connect to their heritage, rather than having an interest in seeing suffering. This strongly shows a dimension of empathy in these visits.

We have established push and pull theory as a guide for those marketing and strategising for dark tourism, but it is an important element to consider for motivation theory.

In terms of push factors, tourists might visit a sit for personal reasons to commemorate their loved ones, to have personal experiences of war or battle sites (Bigley et al., 2010), to uphold their cultural and religious identity (Collins-Kreiner, 2010), or to satisfy their curiosity (Cheal and Griffin, 2013). Other push factors include enhancing relationships or experiencing feelings of support, kinship, and belonging (Wilson, 2014; Cohen et al., 2015; Tie et al., 2015). Young tourists connect more with push factors because their motivations are associated with atrocity owing to their age and interests (Krakover, 2005).

At the same time, dark tourism sites have the power to pull tourists, encouraging them to engage with education, reminiscence, and remembrance. In terms of emotional and psychological communication that falls into this more evasive 'pull' category, recent literature has tried to capture the psychological roots of tourists' behaviour in travelling to dark tourism sites. It has shown that one motivation is the effects of emotional contagion, where the sharing of emotions occurs via the perception of other people's emotional state. Tourists have psychological motivations for visiting dark tourism sites, such as for 'blackpacking', a neologism that explains the movements of black metal fans travelling to places associated with the subgenre of music, which is considered an art form (Podoshen, 2013) that relates to paganism, satanism, blasphemy, and historical violence. According to Podoshen (2013), simulation linked to emotional contagion is the prime motivating dimension of dark tourism. Within this emotional motivation model, the pure pleasure derived from the aesthetics and stimulation of a dark tourism environment is critically unresearched in this field. Overall, in the body of work on motivations in dark tourism, this psychological aspect has be severely neglected.

As previously mentioned, dark tourism can be engaged with on a deep personal level as a kind of pilgrimage, which is defined as tourists visiting places they value highly and deeply and with which they identify significantly (Morinis, 1992). Such tourism could be motivated by

religious values, but it is not necessary for all the visitors to be religious; many non-religious visitors may visit the same locations for personal reasons (Hyde and Harman, 2011). For instance, visits to dark tourism sites of dramatic historical importance might be considered pilgrimage, as could visits to the gravesites of celebrities or sites of prominent political incidents (Margry, 2008). Given this potential diversity, it is important for the tourism industry to unpack the motives for visiting such locations. This research would develop knowledge that has the potential to contribute greatly to the tourism sector. It is assumed that the core motives for visiting these kinds of pilgrimage locations may be leisure tourism (Singh and Malville, 2005).

The final motivation for visiting dark tourism sites and touched on in previous discussion of supply and demand and contemporary discourse, is stimulation from media. Usually, tourists are driven by two factors in this regard: seeing landscapes (i.e., scenery) depicted by other tourists on social media, and seeing locations depicted in books, media, or films (Reijnders, 2011). It is enjoying much popularity in mainstream media as a field: however, there is a lack of empirical research based on South Asian media reflecting on these sites, and on South Asian sites enjoying this attention, and there is certainly no published work at the time of writing examining the motives for dark tourism in South Asia.

2.4.2 Dark Tourists' Experiences, Expectations and Satisfaction

The research into tourist experience, expectation and satisfaction has a long research history in the field. Tourists' expectations of and satisfaction with tourism sites have been investigated as an analysis of the gap between tourists' pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences (Pizam et al.,1978; Schofield, 1999). When tourism products, such as tourism sites, match tourists' expectations, tourists are usually satisfied and leave the tourism site with a happy memory. This is why tourism marketers or service providers try to ensure that tourists have positive experiences: to minimise this 'satisfaction gap'. The overall satisfaction with and intention to revisit tourism sites depend on the benefits tourists received during their first visit (Scott et al., 1995). Therefore, tourism sites, including dark tourism sites, need to have their facilities and benefits marketed effectively and comprehensively to existing and potential tourists.

Most tourism products comprise services, and different cultural values influence tourists differently; therefore, it is anticipated that tourists from different cultural backgrounds may perceive tourism services and their quality differently (Crotts and Erdmann, 2000; Bowen and Clarke, 2002; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001). Different tourists may have diverse priorities related to safety and security, hygiene, tools for entertainment, appearance of people who are directly related to tourism services (how they look, what they wear) and so on. One study was conducted on the levels of importance of various tourism services attributes for tourists from Australia, the USA, Canada, Japan, and China, and the researchers measured these tourists' level of satisfaction (Turner, Reisinger and McQuilken, 2002). The study revealed evidence of a causal relationship between service quality attributes and service quality satisfaction. The study identified that different cultures have different levels of satisfaction, because culture determines the expectations of tourists on the levels of service received. Another study looked at two famous tourist areas—Hawaii and the Gold Coast of Australia—from the perspective of Japanese tourists as study respondents (Reisinger and Turner, 2000). As major alternative tourism sites for Japanese people, the study had interesting finding: of the twenty-seven components related to tourist satisfaction the respondents were asked about, it was found that Japanese tourists were much more positive about Hawaii than the Gold Coast: and that the Gold Coast could not meet their expectations. Moreover, multiple elements of what the Gold Coast has to offer were overlooked by Japanese tourists. Thus, it is evident that tourists' culture and behaviour varies in a dynamic way according to their destination, and these factors will not be same in all geographical locations.

International tourists often visit a place with minimal information about the spatial and symbolic environment: which is why traditional routes for booking holidays, such as travel agents are careful in helping people choose locations, managing their expectations, and encouraging them to understand what types of experiences they may have on their trip. Print and eBook travel guides usually provide information about a region and basic precautions, such as notes on local customs, manners, crime levels and health considerations. Thus, it can be assumed that guidebooks provide significant information regarding tour locations, and tourists from different parts of the world obtain advice from these forms of information. However, in Asia, these kinds of guidebooks for popular destinations have been found to attract less attention and emphasis, primarily for the reason that they are less widely available, which

accounts for why Asian tourists are not as dependent on tourism guidebooks as tourists from other parts of the world.

Most South Asian tourists travel with wider family or friends; only a few South Asian tourists travel alone or with spouses only. Most tourists from South Asia make travel plans with the help of travel agents. South Asian tourists mostly visit architectural sites, museums, and historical sites. South Asian tourists are concerned about visas, expenditure, language barriers and poor knowledge about the sites. Moreover, South Asian tourists have travel motivations that include enriching intellectuality, enhancing knowledge, trying something new and discovering different cultures and lifestyles; first-time tourists from South Asia are attracted landscapes, architectural components, and cultural attractions while visiting Europe. Tourists from South Asian travelling for the first time usually have many questions about the trip, which is why advertising and promotion regarding European sites, or any tourism sites, is an important aspect to attract tourists to specific destinations. Word of mouth also affects South Asian tourists' travel decisions.

It is natural that repeat tourists may have fewer motives than first-time tourists to visit a particular site, but this repeat tourist group should not be ignored because they can provide interesting alternative motivations and can certainly advise on expectations and experience. They may, for instance, already be satisfied with particular locations, they may have an emotional attachment to the place, or they may want to explore the destination further (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984). Some recent research has discussed dark tourism and tourists' attitudes in east Asia (Bhati et al., 2021; Masanti, 2016; Ramlee, 2018) but they have not included South Asia. Expectations and attitudes in mainstream tourism in South Asia is more comprehensively researched but does not reflect the special interests of dark tourism.

2.4.3 Dark Tourists' Behavior

Owing to the solemn and sometimes traumatic nature of some dark tourism sites, it is perhaps unsurprising that tourist behaviour differs from that found in other types of tourist site. Moreover, comparative studies based on push–pull motivational factors and travel behaviour of tourists could help determine what produces the market segmentation (the identification and selection of groups of consumers to present products or product lines to them) that drives dark tourist consumption. Travel behaviour and tourist behaviour have different dimensional and

interdisciplinary meanings. Travel behaviour is considered as tourists' conduct before, during and after the visit and its consistency with their beliefs and attitudes (Van Vuuren and Slabbert, 2011). In contrast, tourist behaviour here does not only refer to behaviour at the site, but it also includes any product or element, or component tourists use and the responses they have to the process of using a product, element, or component. These points are clearly applicable to dark tourism (Wight and Lennon, 2007). The literature shows that tourist behaviour influences policies that affect tourism marketing, as well as the well-being of small entrepreneurship businesses (Pearce, 2005; Reisinger, 2009). Thus, a prerequisite for understanding tourist experiences is understanding the products tourists buy, how they buy them, where they buy them from, and why they buy them.

Early dark tourism studies explained that the abovementioned questions are diverse and can be answered in a more focused way by considering certain demographic groups. For instance, the level of involvement with dark tourism may correlate with such demographic information as tourists' location, gender, age, and travel budget (Kang et al., 2018). This is why the present study focuses on tourists of South Asia. Exploring the role that gender plays in tourism encounters is significant in understanding tourists' travel behaviours; for instance, female tourists might adopt less sustainable attitudes and behaviours than male tourists (Boarnet and Sarmiento, 1998). Another interesting point is that female travellers tend to travel less and travel shorter distances than male tourists (Moriarty and Honnery, 2005). However, according to Best and Lanzendorf (2005), there are no significant travel differences between male and female tourists. Therefore, this study considers whether gender has any impact on visiting dark tourism sites.

2.4.4 Dark Tourist Responses and Reflections

In previous research, responses on the willingness to visit dark tourism sites were neutral (Bhati et al., 2020), and participants who were asked about this point had no specific answer. This may have been due to limited awareness about dark tourism (Bhati et al., 2020). Moreover, in Asia, participants' willingness to travel to dark tourism sites can be broken down by gender, budget, level of patriotism, and so on. According to Hanson and Pratt (1995), there is a relationship between travel budgets and travel time among Asian tourists, where those with the lowest budget travel for the shortest duration. Tourists' trip durations are determined by dark tourism attractions in Asia (Bhati et al., 2020).

Both local and international tourists experience similar emotional reflections when they visit sites where war has taken place (Çakar, 2020), and further evidence of emotional experience characteristics has been put forward in the literature on dark tourism experiences (Kang et al., 2012). Tourists who travel to dark tourism sites frequently express sadness, and both domestic and international tourists tend to describe feelings of solemnity (Çakar, 2020). Tourists show their sadness when they walk around the dark tourism sites, and this has been reflected in the results of several studies. Empathy development is a significant experience that tourists reveal when visiting dark tourism sites (Çakar, 2020).

Previous studies have shown that tourists acquire greater empathy, directly or indirectly (Çakar, 2020). We may imagine that the opportunity of developing empathy could be considered one of the reasons for visiting dark tourism sites (Ryan, 2007), but in actuality, effects on levels of empathy could be considered an 'by-product' of tourist activity at the dark tourism sites. Moreover, it is shown in the literature that empathy is a recurring theme of tourists' experience. Developing empathy is a direct emotional expression by domestic visitors, whereas empathy is developed in international tourists' minds as an experiencing factor (Çakar, 2020). A domestic tourist in contrast is more likely to have a more personal experience because the probability that the events represented by the site relate to their ancestors or family is higher. They may also connect the site through a sense of patriotism: especially at a site connected to high-stakes events for their country, such as a battleground. In contrast, international tourists might consider it an experience of empathy, but they may or may not have the same insight or historical knowledge (Çakar, 2020). It is revealed that in the context of dark tourism, empathy through communication and commentary made during their visits to dark tourism areas (Miles, 2002). Thus, it can be said that the empathy developed towards dark tourism sites by tourists can be considered a result of the interaction-based activities and processes, and at the same time, they serve as a product of the psychological process (Sharpley and Stone, 2009; Stone, 2009).

Reviewing this body of research and the emotional statements made by visitors, a conclusion can be drawn that the nature of visiting dark tourism sites has the consequence of building memorable and multidimensional emotional experiences for tourists for a number of reasons. Tourist groups comprised of family members of victims find dark tourism sites memorable; those without connection to the sites may find the dark tourism sites touching. The reflections on these dark tourism site visits prompt myriad descriptions, such as magical, powerful,

inspiring, and humbling (Çakar, 2020). Tourists note that features of sites such as monuments, martyrs' cemeteries, inscriptions, and memorials evoke strong immediate feelings: that in turn become long-lasting memories.

In terms of socio-cultural experiences, the literature on dark tourism reveals that interest or curiosity in history is the most important reason for travelling to dark tourism sites (Preece and Price, 2005; Powell and Kokkranikal, 2015). Both domestic and international tourists can learn from and experience history when they visit dark tourism sites even if they do not know about the sites beforehand (Çakar, 2020). In the literature, tourists have revealed that while visiting the dark tourism sites, they may gain a new perspective about the site regarding history and the incidents that took place there and that such a perspective might not otherwise be available to them in films and documentaries (Çakar, 2020). Tourists gain historical knowledge during their visits. In addition, having tour guides present is considered another important aspect of visitors' learning and understanding history because they can provide substantial information, and respond to questions or discussions in the moment.

Both domestic and international tourists consider the acquisition of cultural identity and consciousness formed during visits to dark tourism sites as highlighting their symbolic value and the respective nations that had become nation states (Slade, 2003). In this regard, the significant components that make visiting dark tourism sites meaningful for tourists are the elements of national consciousness and cultural identity. These kinds of findings have been reported from the outcomes of previous literature (Basarin et al., 2010; Donoghue and Tranter, 2015; Prideaux, 2007).

Thousands of young tourists visit dark tourism sites each year, and there are a few studies on young tourists' visiting experiences. However, previous research has not substantially incorporated youth involvement or described young tourists' visits to dark tourism sites. The research of Mowatt and Chancellor (2011) includes young tourists, but the conclusion did not extend to young tourists of all ethnicities, and young South Asian tourists were not represented at all in the research. Another study by Selmi et al. (2012) found that a substantial proportion of tourists were from schools or university trips, but the researchers did not mention the tourists' age or ethnicity. Thus, young tourists from South Asia have not been considered in studies focusing on the experiences of dark tourism sites, despite the strong reactions and

lasting impressions that are likely to come from young people, especially those with family or heritage connections to the sites.

Research has looked into the emotional reactions of young tourists at dark tourism sites as an interesting phenomenon, building on work that speculates on the intensity of the emotions of children and teenagers. One young girl's retrospective account conveyed emotional expressions from when she visited a battlefield (Darlington, 2014). She showed grief for the recent death of her school friend and described her strong connection to that dark tourism site as a result of visiting a location connected with ideas of dying young, although the circumstances were radically different. It has been observed that young people or children have outward emotions at dark tourism sites that are characterised as grief and a connection to the location (Baldwin and Sharpley, 2009). According to Baldwin and Sharpley (2009), a young tourist started sobbing when she discovered the grave of her ancestor; she did not know that she was being observed for research purposes. Another case involved a group of young tourists who were first- or second-generation immigrants and found their family names on tombstones in the graveyard; they verbally expressed their sense of emotional connections to the battlefield and their ancestors who died or were shot (Baldwin and Sharpley, 2009).

According to Baldwin and Sharpley (2009), young tourists behave in specific ways when they visit dark tourism sites; young children typically assert ownership, creating instant memorials. In one study, Israeli high school students who were visiting the Birkenau concentration camp were 'noisy', carrying portable stereos and flags; in this way, they asserted their ownership. When young tourists visit battlefields or military parks, they often start playing war, recruiting their family members into their games (Baldwin and Sharpley, 2009). In a history of German bunkers in the British Channel Islands, Carr (2010) mentions that young tourists play war at this dark tourism site.

It has been reported that children and victims' family members made informal memorials in Chile under Pinochet's regime (Clark, 2011). Furthermore, many tributes from young schoolchildren were left at the World Trade Center memorial, but it is not certain whether those tributes were created previously or made on site (Knudsen, 2011). What is clear is that young children spontaneously draw and write tributes when they visit the Flight 93 National Memorial (Kerr et al., 2014). Every year, thousands of young tourists visit dark tourism sites. Surprisingly, however, this sector of dark tourism has not been the subject of much research,

especially from a South Asian perspective. Thus, such research could help to determine why young South Asian tourists have been omitted from dark tourism research.

There are some barriers to the inclusion of young tourists in dark tourism research, which can be considered to explain why young tourists have generally been overlooked in tourism research (Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Carr, 2011; Schänzel et al., 2012; Poria and Timothy, 2014), especially in South Asia. Researchers in dark tourism may ignore young people because of legal hurdles and the extra care that must be taken to uphold youth development knowledge in research methods. In contrast, research involving young people may require extra care and additional time and effort to secure the site and obtain consent from the participants. This would involve considering emotional issues affecting young people. However, performing such research may shed light on the topic, especially from a South Asian perspective. Such research should provide valuable information. There should be a balance between protection and participation in research and its related platforms.

Dark tourism is not dominated by adults, so young tourists can participate in it spontaneously and conveniently. Research with young tourists requires specialised knowledge (Duffy, 2007; Poria and Timothy, 2014), and this can be posited as another reason for undertaking research with young tourists. Here, the researcher may need to know how to conduct interviews with young tourists, especially in terms of emotional aspects or topics (Irwin and Johnson, 2005). Young tourists' writings, photographs, and other artwork would reveal their emotional or behavioural experiences in relation to dark tourism sites. Interviews may not always be possible, so observation and components such as images and language would help here (Aitken and Wingate, 1993). Scholars recognise that young tourists influence their societies, for example though image-making (Einarsdottir, 2005), and although engaging them requires special expertise, the experiences they relate can provide a new research dimension (Barker and Weller, 2003; Fraser, 2004). Thus, engaging young tourists from a South Asian perspective could provide intriguing new outcomes.

2.5 Dark Tourism Beyond the West

The discussion now turns to reflect on what we might learn about tourist motivation and behaviour through extending an analysis of dark tourism into non-Western contexts. Thus far, the literature review has shown substantial gaps relating to visitor experiences: specifically,

their perceptions of sites and motivations for visiting them. The literature becomes especially sparse evaluating these phenomena from a South Asian perspective. These crucial gaps are described below, detailing the sources of the literature, the focus of the existing literature, and remaining gaps and applications for this study. They will be used to focus the primary data collection, following an exploratory and explanatory design. The gaps detailed below have been used to guide and establish the research question, aims and objectives of this study outlined in the introduction.

Through investigations of experiences and motivations in dark tourist visits, Sharpley and Stone (2009) and Stone and Sharpley (2008) show that these sites have been designed to accommodate commercial types existing in Europe, the United States, and Australia. This clearly orientates the disciplinary field to the West, and therefore, predominantly Western visitors, which leads to huge omissions and oversights relating to whole continents including South America, Africa, and Asia. Furthermore, little research had been conducted on South Asia, which has less 'formally' recognised dark tourism sites, particularly in a contemporary setting. This is a compelling opportunity to enrich the field by widening its perspective into researching territories that do not have sufficient space in the discussion and to make some significant contributions to our collective understanding of how nationhood is built through dark tourist encounters. This research proposes to initiate and establish ways to address this research gap in South Asia, and in particular in Bangladesh.

Now, it is important to establish the meaning of nationhood in this context. It has been defined as the convergence of political, cultural and historical factors (Nairn, 1997), frequently after a protracted power struggle by ideologically conflicting political factions (Hechter, 2000). Thinson and Saren (2022) note that 'personal nationalism is characterised by inclusion, interaction and individualisation' (p. 104612). These are processes that are closely entwined with the ideas of family structures and nationhood arrived at previously in this research: of developing a sense of personhood and belonging through the realisation of being part of a family structure and accumulating social capital through inclusion. Currently, there is no literature that shows the link between perception of the national brand (how the nation forms) and citizens' experiences of national identity. However, several studies have been conducted on branding nations and forming or reaffirming national identity via tourism (Edensor, 1998, 2000; Macdonald, 2006; Chronis et al., 2012). In the English context, for example, Palmer's

(2005) research findings show how a national identity of 'Englishness' is formed through English tourists' experiences at battlefields and heritage sites.

Both Stone (2006) and Robb (2009) find that the consumption of dark tourism is multi-layered. In addition, they show that the dark tourism experience is subjective and varies from tourist to tourist, including in relation to tourists' attachment to the specific site. Subjectivity is deeply shaped by an individual's sense of their nationhood and identity as a member of a community (Riley et al., 2003; Maratovski, 2008; Gonzaga, 2009). Thus, there is a need to investigate this dimension of motivation for visiting dark sites from a South Asian perspective. Likewise, the behaviour exhibited by tourists, which is an indicator of stages a tourist undergoes before even booking a visit (Heitmann, 2011) which clearly intersects with tourist motivations.

There are many assassination and genocide sites in Bangladesh, and children (in the sense of the familial connection) of individuals affected by the events within living memory visit them along with their parents. This is a way to experience a shared history and narrative not unlike the kind of journeys undertaken by the generations visiting sites associated with the Holocaust discussed previously in this chapter. There is no current analysis of these journeys made by generations affected by Bangladesh's turbulent recent history. It would surely be a rich investigation to gain the perspective of the children of survivors in Bangladesh, and to assess the nature of their experience when contrasted with more intensively researched regions with dark sites. There is also an assassination-based memorial museum in Bangladesh (Bangabandhu Memorial Museum), but no significant research has been conducted on it so far, or research does not directly engage with it as a dark tourist destination but rather concentrates on its educational and heritage value (Chakraborty and Jahan, 2019). As this site is considered a major attraction in Bangladesh with a strong regional reputation for engagement with this period in history, and has so much to offer in terms of dark tourist education, the outcomes of such an analysis would contribute significantly to the dark tourism literature from a South Asian perspective.

Examining social media engagement is a relatively new but fast-growing phenomenon in tourism and dark tourism studies. For example. Çakar (2018) studies tourists' online reviews and comments on dark tourism site on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey. His findings examine perceptions expressed by tourists from different countries, and the researcher articulates tourists' emotional and nostalgic experiences according to different dimensions. There is a lot

of potential data to be found in online comments, forums and reviews of dark tourism sites in Bangladesh: indeed, at the time of writing, the Boddhovumi has 18 reviews submitted by previous visitors on TripAdvisor (TripAdvisor, n.d.). However, no research has been conducted based on those online reviews on TripAdvisor or other online platforms to interrogate visitor responses to Bangladeshi sites. Therefore, a significant gap remains in terms of researching how local and international tourists portray their experiences and feelings through online reviews; this would be a noteworthy contribution to the dark tourism literature, especially from a South Asian/Bangladeshi perspective. Here, researchers could gather and synthesise visitors' expressions of their subjective experiences and feedback.

Precedence for this kind of assessment is provided by Boateng, Okoe and Hinson (2018) and Aho (2001), who have studied online reviews by tourists visiting Cape Coast Castle in Ghana to establish three categories of experiences: slavery (tourists' emotional reactions to the slavery), emotional, and cognitive. They found that tourists commented on online platforms that they experienced informative, transformative, and practice-based experiences from their visits that had a deep impact on them. Researchers may obtain data on the experiences from online reviews by South Asian tourists (in Bangladesh) who are also from South Asia. This represents a noteworthy research gap. Analysing and researching online reviews to gather information about tourists' perceptions and experiences would not only bring an immense contribution to the dark tourism literature in Bangladesh, but also offer a managerial perspective on this topic that could lead to practical benefits to the sector there.

It is in considering the dearth of research on the South Asian dark tourist experience and reflecting on how the factors that could enrich an understanding of the field, most particularly in terms of motivation, are relatively unresearched that a conceptual framework emerges. The framework developed by this research centres nationhood and social memory by highlighting the relationships between heritage, authenticity, motivations, collective identity, social memory, and placemaking, and how these factors impact on the development of national identity. Pressingly, the framework explores how dark tourism, with its emotional and affective dimensions, influences the connections between Bangladeshi nationhood and social memory. The framework emphasises the importance of understanding the role of dark tourism in placemaking and the construction of collective identity. Ultimately, it offers a lens through which to analyse emerging issues of identity formation and placemaking in the context of evolving and developing national narratives.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Chapter Outline and Context

This chapter develops and explains the philosophical aspects of the research, with a particular focus on the research methods used in the collection and analysis of the data. The chapter begins by revisiting the research objectives, and then explains how the research methods and processes were employed during the study.

It will establish and justify the use of a constructivist research paradigm in this research by exploring and investigating the methods that were employed to conduct the research: including the qualitative research approach and the thematic template analysis method. The ethical aspects of the research will be outlined and addressed, alongside the role and motivations of the researcher. It will detail the process behind developing and conducting the pilot survey finalised before the main study began and will elaborate and justify the myriad reasons for setting the research specifically in Bangladesh: and what can be gained by doing so.

3.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study was to outline an empirical evolution of dark tourism, primarily leading to a greater understanding of the field in Bangladesh. Although the research's focus is the South Asian perspective, the motivations, experiences, and reactions to this type of tourism globally are also vital to its understanding and analysis. The principal aims and objectives of this research are restated below:

I. To understand the motivations behind the travel and experiences of people, both from within the country and abroad, visiting several dark tourism sites.

II. To explore the emotional experiences during visiting dark tourism sites, and how these experiences relate to individuals' perceptions of the benefits derived from such visits and the overall quality of their experiences

III. To reveal dark tourist attitudes, behaviour and experiences in Bangladesh through contemporary research methods reflecting on the factors that most significantly shape these

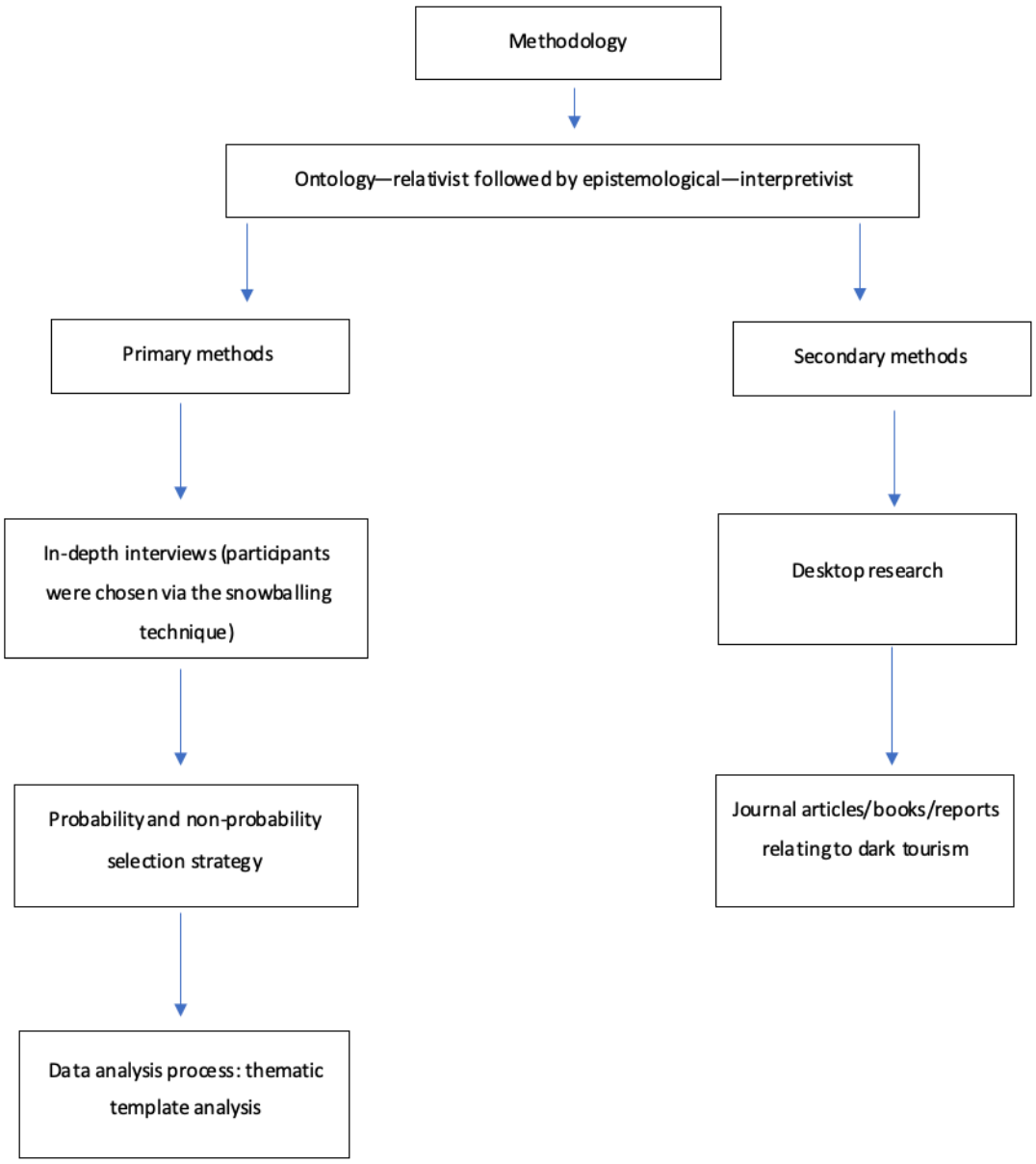
IV. To understand tourists' experience of ‘Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi’ in Bangladesh and explore how their reflections on this poignant event impact their lives and shape their existing understanding of it

These aims and objectives relate to the nature of tourists’ engagement with dark tourism sites in Bangladesh, and how this understanding can enhance the broader disciplinary field of dark tourism in South Asia and other regions.

To best illustrate the findings in service of these aims and objectives, it was decided to present the findings as follows. First, I provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature and research gaps. Second, an exploration and explanation of the methodology is outlined. Third comes a chapter presenting the data pertaining to information sources and motivation to address what happens before a site visit. Fourth, I present the data pertaining to experiences and interpretation of tourists addressing the duration and aftermath of site visits. The fifth chapter is a case study presenting findings on the Boddhovumi. And sixth, I offer a chapter presenting the major findings and contributions of the study.

The following sections of this chapter outline the overall philosophical and methodological approaches used in this research, the data collection methods, and the analysis of data. Figure 4 presents an overall view of the methodology used to conduct this study.

Figure 4: 'Overview of the Research Methodology'



3.3 The Philosophical Foundations of the Research

The compilation of empirical research is dependent on the methodology that is adopted in the process of data collection. Methodology is the process by which researchers collect data or information (Mertens, 2010), and it can be defined in one of two ways: (1) quantitative analysis, which expresses data through numbers (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012), or (2) qualitative analysis, which collects data in the form of words and interpretations thereof. The choice of quantitative or qualitative methodologies is made depending on the nature of the individual research; in some instances, a mixed-methods approach is best. However, a mixed-methods approach would not have been appropriate for this research, as the data used were mostly qualitative; a quantitative approach would not have reflected the nuances and opportunities for interpretation inherent in this type of data. An additional factor in this selection was to adhere to an intersectional approach: as pointed out by many researchers, this combination ensures a strong methodological framework to highlight inequalities and disadvantages that may impact the research: factors that are very important to dark tourism research (Rodriguez, 2018; Christensen and Jensen, 2012; Atewologun and Mahalingam, 2018).

In determining which methodology to adopt in any given study, the key consideration is the type of data that the researcher seeks to collect. An appropriate methodology must be selected to enable the collection of precise, accurate data from which to extract the findings. The next part of this study will consider the role of a research paradigm in influencing the chosen methodology.

3.3.1 An Assessment of the Fundamental Beliefs of Research Paradigms

Three key aspects of any research study must be balanced equally: the research paradigm, the ontological base of the research, and its epistemology. The research paradigm is a set of ideas that guide the research activity (Guba and Lincoln, 1994); examples include positivistic, interpretative, critical-theory-based, chaos, or post-modern paradigms (Jennings, 2009). The style of research is guided by the chosen research paradigm: qualitative data should follow the interpretative paradigm, while quantitative data should follow the positivistic paradigm, and researchers should weigh the potential advantages and disadvantages of both before deciding which to use (Collis and Hussey, 2013).

The research paradigm influences the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and methodological orientation. The use of a research paradigm is beneficial because it intertwines ontology, epistemology, and human nature (Saunders et al., 2009), and according to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) ontology, epistemology, and human nature are the core elements of the paradigmatic foundations of knowledge. These foundations form our social experiences and our worldviews; therefore, the application of these foundations provide the truth of reality, instigating an unending argument about whether an objective reality exists, or what can be considered as reality (Tronvoll et al., 2011).

Ontology in a research context refers to the set of concepts and the classification of objects or entities in a study that reveal the properties and relationships between them, and highlights that which a study sets out to examine. For instance, a study could consider the differences between external and internal human perception, where external perception implies the existence of independent human constructs, and internal perception implies the existence of reality as a result of human-constructed ideas (Chua, 1986). In this model, reality would be either physically or socially constructed (Chua, 1986). Ontology considers the nature of reality, what we can understand about reality, and how entities can exist and interact with each other to create and sustain our concepts of reality (Wiling, 2021; Carpentier, 2018).

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge that considers how we create, recognise, and use knowledge that is accepted as valid (Wahyuni, 2012). The study of epistemology considers 'what and how we come to know about' what exists (Grix, 2004), as well as the association between individuals and their knowledge, how this knowledge is accepted as true, and how knowledge is considered more broadly (Krauss, 2005). While ontology is socially constructed, epistemology depends on a subjective reality.

Social constructivist epistemology, in which the development of knowledge is facilitated through interactions with others, was chosen a suitable approach for this study, as the researcher considered and interpreted the experiences of the subjects in a constructed society (Denzin et al., 2006; Farquhar, 2012; Wahyuni, 2012). This approach also involves a critical analysis of assumptions that would not be prevalent in other approaches (Jacobs and Manzi, 2000). In ontology, constructivism considers that reality is processed diversely by different individuals (Krauss, 2005). The researcher and the participants were situated within a dialogue, and they began to understand each other through sharing their experiences and interpretations,

leading to a full understanding of the research topic. Eventually, the researcher and participants co-constructed findings from their collaborative discussions and explanations.

I evaluated the key philosophical aspects, qualities, and fundamental beliefs of various research approaches, in order to select an appropriate paradigm for this study. I considered researching through the lenses of Positivism, Realism/ Critical Realist, Interpretivism/ Constructivism and Pragmatism, adapted from the work of Saunders et al. (2009) and Wahyuni (2012) on assessing different research paradigms.

Positivism is an external, objective-oriented approach that is moderately independent from social actors. Observed dimensions are provided and causality and laws that govern reality are key, such as reducing dimensions to simple elements. Both the researcher and data are independent and consider the objectives of the research. This approach is robustly structured, the sample size is large, it is measurement-oriented, and primarily quantitative, although some aspects would be qualitative.

A Realism or Critical Realist approach maintains independence from human thoughts and beliefs about overall knowledge but is interpreted by social conditioning. Phenomena are observed and provide credible data, although inaccuracy might occur owing to insufficient data. Alternatively, phenomena produce sensations that would cause misinterpretation (critical realism) and focus explanations within a context. Research within this paradigm is based on value: the researcher observes the participants' worldviews and experiences of culture, and then research is valued accordingly. The chosen method depends on the subject matter.

A Pragmatist approach is external, and multiple dimensions chosen to provide an adequate answer to the research question. Research questions determine whether both observable phenomena and subjective meanings would provide acceptable knowledge, are focused on practical applied research, and create integration of different perspectives that could help to interpret the data. Values have a significant role in interpreting results; the researcher may adopt both subjective and objective points of view. In terms of methodology, it is mixed method; quantitative and qualitative.

I ultimately chose to undertake the research with an interpretivist/constructivist approach. This approach is subjectivity-based, socially constructed, and flexible. Its approach to knowledge is subjective and it treats social phenomena as situational. It promotes value-based research in which the researcher is part of the research, and therefore the research is considered subjective.

The methodology drawn from it is largely qualitative, the sample size is small, and investigations are in-depth: all factors that amplify the importance of the narratives and viewpoints expressed in the research.

3.3.2 Ontological and Epistemological Aspects of Dark Tourism

Ontology explores our beliefs about the nature of reality (Killam, 2013). In the disciplinary field of dark tourism, the researcher's ontological position is of great importance, owing to the varying interactions between dark tourists and the sites that they choose to visit. According to Carpentier (2018), with the correct use of suitable ontology and epistemology approaches in such a study, the researcher would be able to recognise the social construction of 'darkness' in these sites. This ontological aspect mediates between realism and relativism (Carpentier, 2018). Realism indicates the absolute truths of the world (Carpentier, 2018), whereas relativism argues that there is no absolute truth, but rather that there are multiple social and psychological truths (Carpentier, 2018). As relativism does not enable the researcher to explain or consider the absolute truth of existence, this approach is difficult to consider from an epistemological perspective.

Two epistemological approaches exist: positivism and interpretivism (Bahari, 2010). Positivism is like realism in that it recognises as fact only that which can be verified or proved through the application of science or mathematical proof; it focuses on cause and effect as a framework for existence (Walliman, 2016). Interpretivism, by contrast, suggests that reality is subjective, socially constructed, and made up of multiple perspectives that can include interpretation and differences in meaning (Walliman, 2016). Interpretive epistemology builds an understanding of multiple realities, because it rejects the assumption that human behaviour can be categorised into laws and underlying regularities (Walliman, 2016). Interpretive approaches to reality and the nature of being allow researchers to understand the beliefs or feelings attached to a particular object or site, both by individuals and by a given cultural. Considering the aims and objectives of this research, the constructivist paradigm, which follows a relativist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology, was considered suitable to investigate the motives of tourists visiting dark tourism sites and to compare the behaviours of different tourists. This is because this approach centres and takes seriously perception and interpretation as a way to create knowledge and understanding: and perception and

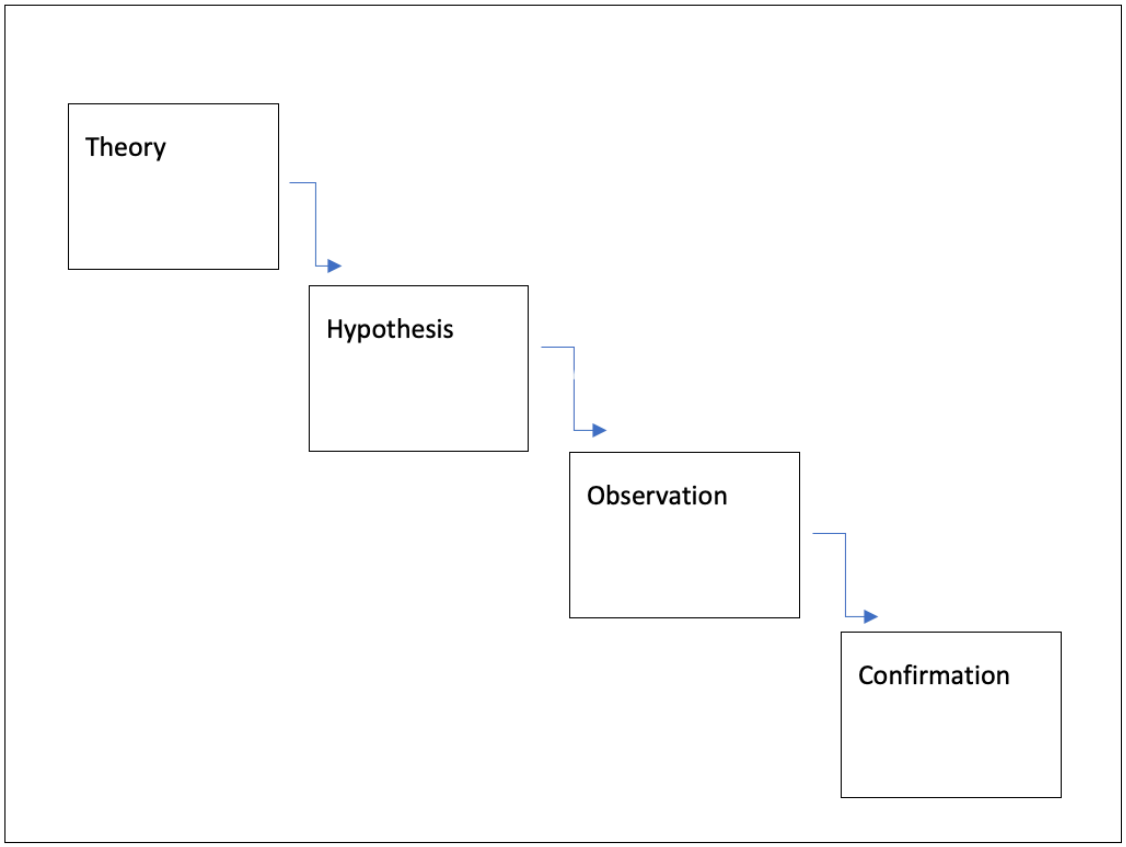
interpretation are two key criteria under investigation in the interview sections of this thesis. This interpretive approach allowed the researcher to best understand the different attitudes and feelings of tourists towards the dark tourism sites.

3.4 Deciding on Research Strategy

3.4.1 Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Two broad approaches need to be considered when choosing how to design a research study, namely whether to use deductive or inductive reasoning (Gratton and Jones, 2010). Deductive reasoning adopts a top-down approach (Figure 5), which starts with a general theory before narrowing the field to a particular topic, and then identifying a precise theory to be tested (Heit and Rotello, 2010). Thus, deductive reasoning begins to establish a theory by testing a hypothesis using precise data (Trochim, 2006). Deductive reasoning provides logical arguments, and the researcher reaches a precise conclusion by navigating through these steps (Walliman, 2016).

Figure 5: 'Deductive Reasoning'

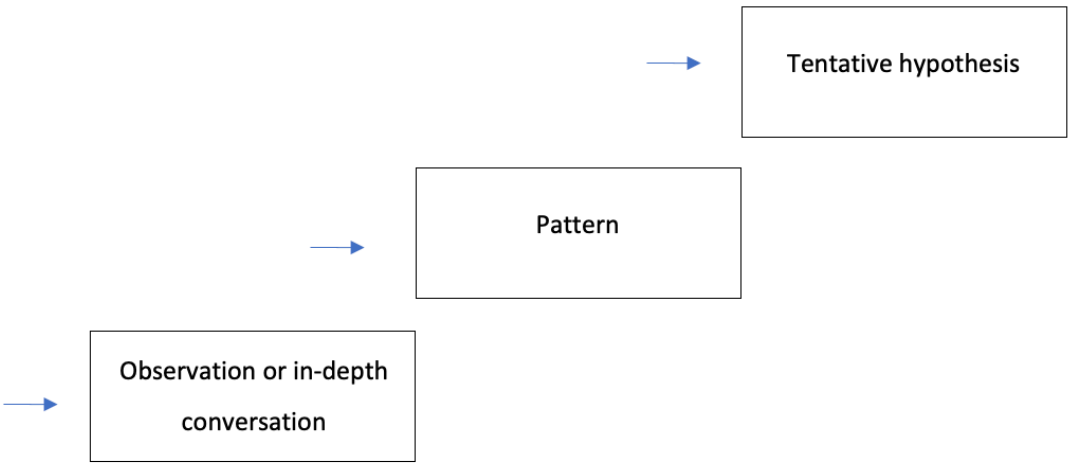


Source: (Trochim, 2006).

Conversely, inductive reasoning (Figure 6) indicates a bottom-up approach. This approach begins with precise observations, identifies patterns and uniformities, and then produces potential hypotheses that require investigation, which results in the development of overall conclusions and theories (Trochim, 2006). Inductive reasoning constructs theories from empirical data, identifying themes and searching for meaning in the evidence (Lewin and Somekh, 2007).

Deductive reasoning tends to offer a narrow path of logical steps that should be followed to reach a conclusion, whereas inductive reasoning is more open-ended and exploratory (Trochim, 2006).

Figure 6: 'Inductive Reasoning'



Source: (Trochim, 2006).

The decision was made to use inductive reasoning in this thesis, because it provided room for broader generalisations and ideas at the initial stages of research when analysing data, which could then be condensed into theories and relevant conclusions as the research progressed (Trochim, 2006). It was also considered that deductive reasoning may be too rigid and narrow and exclude importance nuances shared by the interviewees. In-depth conversations or interviews provided a platform from which to analyse the motivational drivers for visiting dark tourism sites, the perceptions of these locations, and the behaviour of individuals or groups at such sites. Conclusions were then drawn about potential motivations for dark tourism, and these motivations were compared among tourists from different parts of the world.

3.4.2 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are considered as authentic, viable tools by researchers (Walle, 1997). Given that the research followed a constructivist and interpretivist

approach, qualitative research methods were most appropriate to ensure that rich, in-depth data could be interpreted and understood from a human perspective; quantitative data might have overlooked such aspects (Abawi, 2008).

Qualitative research considers a subjective reality, whereas quantitative research uses different measurements and statistical tools of data analysis to observe behaviour based on reality and the notion of absolute truth (Gratton and Jones, 2010). If the research measures a particular objective phenomenon, then the most appropriate data collection method would be a quantitative approach. If the research relates to feelings/opinions/perceptions, then qualitative methods of data collection would be more applicable (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

There are several arguments against quantitative methods of data collection (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), such as its incapability to reveal deeper, underlying meanings (Amaratunga et al., 2002) or to provide an in-depth narrative of human perceptions and beliefs (Choy, 2014). Quantitative research may answer the question of 'what', but not 'why'. Walliman (2016) argues that to investigate the degree of a research problem, quantitative methods are appropriate, but to identify the nature of that particular problem, qualitative methods are more suitable.

Given that this study is not concerned with identifying the cause-and-effect relationships between tourists and dark tourism sites, but rather was concerned with capturing deeper perceptions and behaviours of tourists towards dark tourism sites, including their opinions, feelings, and experiences as regards them, a qualitative approach to data collection was deemed appropriate. The tourists were divided into two groups: South Asian tourists and non-South Asian tourists; because perceptions regarding dark tourism sites may differ between these groups, quantitative data collection methods would not have reflected the nuances and social differences between these two groups and would thus have been inappropriate (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

A qualitative approach facilitates flexible research designs (Marshall and Rossman, 2014) and has the potential to further one's understanding through participant observation; it uses in-depth interviews that yield descriptive data (Taylor and Blake, 2015). In addition, qualitative research uses quotations from participant interviews and field notes that offer a rich source of evidence to reinforce the findings of the given study (Merriam and Grenier, 2019).

3.4.4 Merits of research techniques:

Typically, in-depth interviews are conducted in person to establish a rapport with respondents (Stokes & Bergin, 2006). These interviews, along with focus group discussions, provide more comprehensive feedback, which enhances data collection (Matyas, M., 2020). Compared to focus group settings, there is a lower likelihood of moderator bias in in-depth interviews.

The in-depth interview is one of most useful ways to discover more about respondent's positions, viewpoints and standpoints. It can be applied as a separate research technique or in combination with others, depending on the objectives. One to one interview is ideal for projects that wish to explore complex or discordant themes, or where it would be logistically difficult to acquire sufficient numbers to simultaneously participate in a focus group (Johnson et al., 2004). Such interviews can reveal a range of differences across diverse respondents at a granular level more effectively that focus groups. Whether staged face to face or digitally, the most significant issue is that the researcher shapes a relationship with the respondent. The style of the interview itself will depend on the researcher, but the best will make the respondent feel sufficiently relaxed to contribute truthful and frank responses.

3.4.5 Case study approach as a suitable methodological framework

According to Yin (2009), a case study is an empirical inquiry that examines a phenomenon within its real-life context. It involves an in-depth study of a phenomenon and utilizes multiple methods of data collection. It is important to note that a case study is not a method of data collection but rather a research strategy or design used to study a social unit. Case studies are qualitative in nature and involve a thorough exploration of a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2014). In case study research, one can choose to study a single case or multiple cases. Single case studies are commonly used, and Yin (2014) states that they are justifiable under certain conditions. These conditions include studying a unique or atypical case that can provide revelatory insights, testing a hypothesis, or examining a case that represents the quintessential example of a particular phenomenon under investigation. On the other hand, multiple-case study designs have advantages over single case studies (Baskarada, S., 2014). They are generally considered more compelling and robust as they have a higher chance of identifying data collection errors and biases, resulting in more acceptable outcomes. However, conducting a multiple-case study is challenging as it requires extensive

resources and time, which are often beyond the means of an independent researcher (Yin, 2014).

An example of a famous multiple-case study is the "New Towns-In-Town" study conducted by Derthick (1972). This study aimed to examine the reach and impact of federal programs on local communities. Derthick selected seven sites throughout the country that were experiencing specific events, collected data from each site, and integrated the evidence from multiple cases to develop an overall explanation of the outcomes of the federal programs (Yin, 2004). In a multiple-case study, two or more cases experiencing similar events or phenomena are studied, and the data obtained from different cases are compared to derive generalizable conclusions.

In case study research, the focus is not on generalizing findings to a broader population, as case studies are not based on a sample. Instead, the emphasis is on examining external validity through replication, similar to experimental studies. Reliability refers to the consistency and repeatability of producing a case study's findings (Yin, 2014). Since case study research involves an in-depth study of a social unit over an extended period of time, it requires patience and meticulousness from the researcher. Researchers should be well-trained to set aside their value preferences and preconceptions before entering the field. As fieldwork often presents surprises, researchers must be perceptive and adaptive, adjusting their data collection techniques to suit specific occasions. Sensitivity, insight, discernment, and creativity are essential qualities of a skilled case study researcher.

Thus, in this research, a case study is designed and a single dark tourism site, Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi in Bangladesh, is selected. Through in-depth interviews, data is collected, interpreted and analyse with sensitivity, discernment and creativity, involving patience and meticulousness.

3.4.6 Distinction between different sampling strategies, review for this research technique and Justification:

Sampling supports researchers to study bigger target populations, thereby significantly expanding the possibilities for research (Guest et al., 2020). Sampling strategies differ greatly across study areas, as well as between research projects. Selecting an appropriate and effective sampling technique is vital in ensuring the accuracy and quality of qualitative research (Coyne, 1997). Researchers have a range of sampling techniques to consider, each with their own

advantages and drawbacks. Probability and non-probability sampling represent the two most typical approaches to data collection (Denscombe, 2021). Probability sampling is a popular approach that uses a random selection process to select participants for the research. The primary advantage of this is the high probability of the sample accurately representing the population. Techniques that fall into this category include simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, and cluster sampling (Ruel, et al. 2015). Non-probability sampling, in contrast, includes the purposeful selection of participants based on their relevant experiences or knowledge (Denscombe, 2021). This approach is often used where there is insufficient information about a population, or there is an issue of access. Examples of techniques in this category include convenience sampling, quota sampling, and purposive sampling (Ruel, et al. 2015).

In simple random sampling, each individual has an equivalent opportunity to be nominated as part of the sample (Senthamaraiselvi & Sundaram, 2023). This is a straightforward and cost-effective method and lessens the danger of unfairness associated with non-random sampling. However, it provides no control for the investigator and may result in the chance selection of unrepresentative groups. Convenience sampling is the utmost direct method, and it needs insignificant planning to be applied quickly. Stratified sampling increases the picture of all recognized subcategories within a population, reflecting more correct outcomes in diverse populations (Cornesse et al., 2020). Cluster sampling is beneficial in terms of cost and logistically easier when dealing with large and geographically discrete populations. However, while purposive sampling aims for more precisely defined groups and is more tailored to specific research questions, it can lead to a biased sample that restricts the broader relevance of a study. Snowball sampling is helpful for particular specific research objectives (Pace, 2021) but, once more, may lead to a somewhat selective bias.

In summary, different sampling methods are essential tools for researchers to effectively study larger populations and generate relevant findings. The choice of sampling strategy depends on factors such as research objectives, available resources, and the desired level of representativeness. Each method has its strengths and limitations, and researchers need to consider these factors when selecting the most appropriate sampling method for a particular study. By employing suitable sampling approaches, researchers can enhance the validity and generalizability of their findings, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in their respective fields.

After deliberating on the strengths and weaknesses of the sampling strategies outlined above, it was decided that both probability and non-probability sampling would be employed in this research. Data collection was initially planned using field work, which would involve visiting different dark tourism sites across South Asia, including in Bangladesh and India. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, field work and tourism were suspended. This unexpected global development prompted reflection and a rethink of what had initially been planned: it was concluded that interviews should be conducted through online platforms such as Zoom and Skype. Non-probability selection was used for different categories of participants in this research, namely tourists who visited dark tourism sites, tourists who visited dark tourism sites in South Asia, tourists who visited dark tourism sites in locations other than South Asia, tourists who reside in South Asia, and tourists who reside outside South Asia.

Social media sites such as Facebook have many dark tourism groups, such as 'Dark Tourism Photography', 'Dark Tourism World', and 'Miracles from Heaven'. The researcher posted in such groups asking for participants who would be willing to be interviewed for PhD research, to which many people responded. The snowballing technique was used after research had begun to gather additional participants (Denscombe, 2021), which was found to be much more helpful as the sampling was targeted with an incentive from new participants from their own networks, that of personal recommendation. Snowball sampling is also referred to as chain-referral sampling and involves existing participants recruiting others as required for the research through their own networks. It is important to note that non-probability and snowballing techniques introduces the possibility of biases, that the researcher made every effort to be mindful of. One corrective to this was to try and balance probability and non-probability sampling, the former being less vulnerable to bias.

As the COVID-19 situation developed, the researcher was able to visit one dark tourism site in person to collect data through observation and in-depth interviews conducted there. Interviews conducted in-person at the Boddhovumi in Dhaka constitute the sources for the case study, whereas the data collected for the internationally based empirical chapters were collected through online interviews.

The Boddhovumi was selected as a case study representing dark tourism in Bangladesh for many reasons. The first and primary reason is on the strength of its reputation as a site of pivotal importance to Bangladeshi nationhood. It is so lauded that it is the centre of a national holiday

in December, call ‘Martyred Intellectuals Day’. This holiday reflects on a mass-killing of political dissidents collectively call ‘the intellectuals’ at a site in central Dhaka. The monument that stands on the site today commemorates this dark historical event but is also a widely embraced public space in the capital city. It was commissioned and continues to be maintained by the Bangladeshi government, making it a political site. It is free to enter, and has no physical barriers to entry, meaning that it is an accessible site to many people. This combination of factors mean that the Boddhovumi has much to offer in terms of research potential.

Usually, qualitative research reflects a few limitations such as small sample sizes, possible bias in answers, poor questions from researchers which do not have any match with research aims.

Qualitative researcher can follow a few data collection methods such as interviews, observations, focus groups discussions, visual analysis (Gill et al., 2008). The most popular data collection method of qualitative research is interview (Patton, 2015). Interview method helps to explore experiences, views, opinions, ideas, individual’s motivations, issues, and several phenomena. This is why, interview method is accurate and appropriate when researcher wants to know in detail such as how and why and furthermore, when the research topic is sensitive and respondents of the research desires to express their discussions or opinions in details. This research used only a single method of data collection method and that is in-depth interviews. This research has conducted in-depth interviews and avoided other method of data collection. Because interviews are beneficial when researchers want detailed information of how or why regarding tourists’ thoughts and behaviours. This helps to explore new issues and platforms in depth. In addition, depth interviews provide context to other data offering a more fundamental as well as significant picture of what happened and why it went through. Interviews help stakeholders to understand the whole scenario.

3.5 Interviews

3.5.1 Participants

In-depth interviews for the international portion of the empirical study (that is, outside the case study) were conducted between June and mid-November 2020 using online platforms such as Zoom and Skype, under ethics clearance and following guidelines from Manchester Metropolitan University Ethics Committee. Participants specified their preferred platform. The

interviews were both audio and video recorded and were subsequently transcribed; original expressions were preserved where possible to enhance the credibility of the research (Tracy, 2010). The decision was taken to anonymise the participants in the written research, giving each an identifying serial number, and referring to them by age and nationality. This was in order to protect their privacy, and according to recommendations made following research into data protection. The following tables offer a short description of the demographics of both the South Asian and non-South Asian participants for the online interviews.

Table 3: 'South Asian Participant Sampling'

Serial No	**Gender**	**Age (years)**	**Home country**	**Dark Tourism Site (Country)**
SA: 01	Female	37	Bangladesh	Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, Pilkhana, and Comilla War Cemetery (Bangladesh)
SA: 02	Female	49	India	Jallianwala Bagh (India)
SA: 03	Male	30	Bangladesh	Killing fields (Cambodia)
SA: 04	Female	28	Bangladesh	Mainamoti War Cemetery, Comilla, Mirpur Buddha Bhumi (Bangladesh)
SA: 05	Male	60	Bangladesh	Bangabandhu Memorial Museum (Bangladesh)
SA: 06	Male	30	Bangladesh	Auschwitz Concentration Camp (Poland), Dachau Concentration Camp (Germany)
SA: 07	Female	36	Bangladesh	Comilla War Cemetery, Bangabandhu Memorial Museum (Bangladesh)

SA: 08	Female	35	Bangladesh	Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi Monument (Bangladesh)

*SA = South Asian

Table 4: 'Non-South Asian Participant Sampling'

Serial No	**Gender**	**Age/ (years)**	**Home Country**	**Dark Tourism Site/Country**
NSA: 01	Male	36	UK	T-21 (Cambodia)
NSA: 02	Female	19	UK	Auschwitz Concentration Camp (Poland)
NSA: 03	Male	33	Kenya	Holocaust Memorial (Germany)
NSA: 04	Female	45	Northern Ireland	Chernobyl (Ukraine)
NSA: 05	Female	36	UK	Berlin (Germany)
NSA: 06	Male	45	UK	Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and Memorial (France)
NSA: 07	Female	40	UK	Auschwitz Concentration Camp (Poland)
NSA: 08	Male	57	UK	Ground Zero 9/11 (USA)
NSA: 09	Male	28	Italy	Cemetery of Paris, Père Lachaise (France)

*NSA = Non-South Asian

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher did not travel during this data collection and analysis period until travel restrictions had partially lifted. Prior to the easing of these restrictions, the interviews were conducted as follows: all participants were contacted prior to the interview, they were provided with a link or the ID for the online meeting space, and the date and time of the interview was finalised via email or through social media. The researcher obtained permission from each participant to use the recorder during the in-depth interview session via the use of a Participant Consent Form. There were eight in-depth interviews from non-South Asian participants and nine in-depth interviews from South Asian participants included in this study, making a total of 17 interviews.

3.5.2 Interviewing Methods

Many differing opinions about the correct sample size for qualitative research methods have been proposed (Bernard, 2011). Ideally, the research would run to redundancy, meaning that interviews would be carried out until all expected answers are repeated multiple times without any kind of major repetition (Bernard, 2011). A similar approach is to conduct interviews to saturation, meaning that all questions have been explored in detail and no new themes emerge in subsequent interviews (Schensul and LeCompte, 2010). An appropriate sample size for qualitative research, which aims to produce theoretical results, is achieved through a process. In this online element of the study, interviews were conducted until the researcher found multiple repetitions of answers, and so 17 interviews proved to be a suitable sample size. Across both the online and in-person parts of the study, the total sample size was 48.

Although the pandemic posed an immense challenge to this research, it was still possible to conduct interviews using online platforms such as Zoom, Skype, and multiple dark tourism social media groups. An important consideration here is to evaluation the strengths and disadvantages of using online communication platforms: in this research, Skype and Zoom. The most important factor in this study was that these video platforms provided a level of access to internationally based respondents that may have been impossible prior to the development of this technology; this was particularly important during a period of international and domestic lockdown. Other major advantage of using these platforms included an increased level of flexibility, as there were no travel considerations, and fewer time constraints in conducting the interviews. Another consideration was an increased level of anonymity, and the

potential that some interviewees may feel more comfortable than if the interviews were conducted in-person.

On the other hand, we must acknowledge the disadvantages and limitations of these platforms, to provide nuance to the findings from the data collected through the online interviews. First, there was the possibility of technical issues through using Zoom and Skype: such as problems with video or sound quality and poor internet connection, which risked not being able to fully capture what the respondent was trying to put across. Although every effort was made to maximise the comfort of respondents owing to the sensitive nature of the line of questioning, especially to those with more personal connections to the sites, online interviews may be less personal in nature that in-person interviews. Another consideration to note is that online interviews may be exclusionary in terms of accessibility, for example, if a potential respondent has limited access to Wi-Fi or internet connection or is for any reason unable to use the setup required for a Zoom or Skype call. Therefore, owing to time constraints, the sample of online respondents were people with internet access who were able to use these video platforms effectively enough to give their data.

The same sampling method was used during the in-person data collection at Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi in Dhaka, Bangladesh, where 31 in-depth interviews were conducted (Table:5)

Table 5: Face to face in-depth interview: Respondents' list (At Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi, Bangladesh)

Serial No	**Gender**	**Age/ (years)**	**Home Country**	**Dark Tourism Site/Country**
BP: 01	Male	22	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 02	Male	26	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 03	Female	22	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 04	Male	46	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi

BP: 05	Male	42	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 06	Male	46	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 07	Male	45	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 08	Male	34	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 09	Male	31	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 10	Male	40	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 11	Female	25	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 12	Male	32	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 13	Male	42	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 14	Male	42	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 15	Male	35	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 16	Male	40	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 17	Male	27	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 18	Male	45	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 19	Female	37	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 20	Female	33	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 21	Male	32	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 22	Male	27	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 23	Female	37	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 24	Female	19	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi

BP: 25	Female	30	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 26	Male	32	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 27	Male	24	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 28	Male	45	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 29	Male	32	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 30	Male	28	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi
BP: 31	Male	60	Bangladesh	Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi

*BP = Bangladeshi Participant

Again, there were both advantages and disadvantages to using data from in-person interviews: some intersecting with the kind of concerns involved in using online platforms, such as comfort level. A primary advantage was gaining access to a greater level of non-verbal cues and nuance through physical proximity to interview subjects. In this vein, a rapport was established between interviewer and subject, and it was easy to seek clarification during the interviews. Some disadvantages included the possibility of unconscious bias being introduced on the part of both parties. Another consideration was social desirability bias (Grimm, 2010) in the answers being given: if a respondent was giving an answer that they judged to be more acceptable than their initial reaction. Additionally, where the online interviews excluded those unable to access Zoom or Skype, in-person interviews in the case study dependent on a sample of people able to physically attend the sites: therefore, excluding some people with mobility issues or those housebound at the time of data collection.

3.5.3 Relative merits of using single method approach:

Mixed method data collection strategies refer to intentional approaches that combine elements of different research methods, such as structured survey interviews and unstructured interviews, observations, or focus groups, either in a sequential or simultaneous manner (Jarrett and Burton 1999). Mixed method data collection is a component of multi-method research, wherein insights obtained from one specific method are integrated into the application of

another method, in contrast to the deployment of a single research method or technique to conduct a study, whether this is qualitative or quantitative. While some researchers argue for the benefits of adopting multiple and mixed methods, many still prefer to stick to mono-methods, particularly qualitative techniques (Al-Ababneh, 2020). However, there is a growing recognition of the limitations of mono-method research, as it may not provide comprehensive solutions to social problems and can disconnect research from real-life policy issues. To address these limitations, scholars are encouraged to consider mixed method approaches that leverage the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms (Quyen, 2020). However, since research on tourists' experiences of dark tourism may be sensitive since tourists might disclose personal feelings and emotions, qualitative methods, specifically one to one interview, are often preferable.

A study conducted by Xingyang Lv (2022) uses photo elicitation as the sole method of data collection in dark tourism research. Traditionally, qualitative techniques such as observation and interviews (Podoshen et al., 2015) have been commonly utilized in dark tourism research. However, more recently, Ibaraki University empirical material has become more diverse with the inclusion of methods such as the Delphi method (Kennell & Powell, 2022), visual analysis (Goatcher & Brunsden, 2011), and interpretive phenomenological analysis (Farkic, 2020). While visual methodologies have been employed in tourism scholarship for some time, they have been extended in recent years (Michelini, King, & Tung, 2022; Winter and Adu Ampong, 2021). Goatcher and Brundsen (2011) conducted a study related to Chernobyl that analyses the photographs of tourists, addressing a cultural and sociological examination of the circumstances surrounding their emergence. The authors argue that attempting to capture the experience of horror solely through photographs might be futile since photographs may be limited in their ability to truly depict and represent such experiences. However, these photographs aim to convey more than just the visual aspects of a scene, as they carry the weight of the disaster and convey the uncapturable aspects that remain elusive. From a different perspective, Sun and Lv (2021) adopt an embodiment approach to examine the visual elements of the Zone's experience. They utilize a combination of tourist-posted photos and images captured by tourists on tour operators' websites.

One study focuses on examining the emotional experiences of visitors to dark tourism sites, their cognitive evaluations of these experiences and emotions, and the coping mechanisms they employed. The study involved in-depth interviews with 37 residents of Christchurch, New

Zealand, the site of the devastating Canterbury earthquakes. The findings highlighted that residents made cognitive assessments of their experiences at local dark tourism sites, considering important factors such as centrality and controllability. Furthermore, their visits to these sites evoked sensitive emotions and brought back memories of the disaster, resulting in predominantly negative emotions like sadness rather than positive emotions such as gratefulness (Jordan et al., 2022). This reveals that one to one interviews as a single method were more suitable than other methods since it was able to capture effectively what visitors wanted to disclose or reveal about their experiences elaborately and expressively. I follow this approach in this thesis to unveil a wide range of feelings, and emotions about tourists' visits to dark tourism sites.

3.5.4 Justifying Interviews as a Single Primary Method

The decision to draw on interviews, both online and in person, as the single primary method to explore the research questions was made following deep reflection on the benefits of this method of data collection. Interviews provide detailed information about the experiences, attitudes and beliefs of participants, all critical factors to analysing motivations. Interviews are additionally very flexible in approach: allowing the interviewer to adapt questions based on responses, to gather the most relevant data. The interviews allowed for the opportunity to directly engage with visitors to dark tourism sites, to gain a deeper understanding of their decision-making and behaviour. The interview format also allowed further clarification of responses, if needed. The interview format also gave varied and rich responses that would not have been possible to pick on from, for example, a survey or questionnaire.

The researcher considered using online focus groups as a means of data collection (Moore et al., 2015) but after evaluating this method, this was discarded in favour of the one-on-one interview method. The main reason for this was to be sensitive to respondents in the light of the sensitivity of asking questions about dark tourism. Encounters with dark tourist sites prompt visitors to engage with potentially upsetting topics, such as violence, death and conflict. The attentiveness of the researcher to the emotional state of the interview could be diluted in a group setting, with more people to pay attention to. There was also the possibility of interviewees influencing each other's testimonies, through social desirability bias (Grimm, 2010) or a lack of comfort in the group setting.

In summary, the choice to use interviews as a single primary method was to extract nuanced information in a way that was sensitive and attentive to the respondents, in order to minimise harm, and that was well-suited to the topic.

3.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data forms one of the most significant and complex aspects of qualitative research (Thorne, 2000). The researcher must thus follow a rigorous and systematic method of qualitative data analysis to produce effective, meaningful outcomes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). For this study, template analysis was considered the most suitable approach (King, 2012). It is a systematic, yet flexible approach, which results in data that is manageable and organised, making synthesis of the findings more straightforward.

Template analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data in which the data are coded into a template of themes set out by the researchers according to each theme's level of importance; the data are thus organised in a meaningful and convenient manner (King, 2012). Data analysis begins with the establishment of a priori codes that develop themes relevant to the analysis, but these may be changed if they do not prove meaningful or suitable to express or categorise the data received. Once a priori themes have been identified, the data can then be analysed, and any segments that appear to be relevant to the research objectives can be collected into the template. If new themes emerge through this analysis after coding a subset of data, then these can be added to the template. This template can then be applied to the whole dataset and modified in accordance with careful consideration of each transcript. When all the transcripts have been coded in this way, the template can be used to aid the researcher's interpretation of the dataset and to elucidate hypotheses and theories from within these findings.

3.6.1 The Choice and Appropriateness of Thematic Analysis in this Research

Thematic analysis identifies significant aspects of the data in relation to the research objectives, and represents these data in a meaningful, organised manner as they recur throughout the dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Javadi and Zarea, 2016). This research requires a flexible and accessible approach that can provide detailed data representations and a thematic analysis thereof (Braun and Clarke, 2006, Braun and Clarke 2019; Nowell et al., 2017). This thematic

analysis is effective in comparing the perspectives of different people involved in the study by recording their opinions, actions, and experiences, while leaving room for unanticipated insights (Nowell et al., 2017), thus making it an appropriate approach for comparing the different perceptions and behaviours of South Asian and non-South Asian tourists.

According to Holloway and Todres (2003), the flexibility involved in thematic analysis can bring about inconsistencies as the themes are developed, and they argue that thematic analysis is a process of qualitative data analysis, rather than a separate method. Conversely, various researchers, including Braun and Clarke (2006), King (2012), Nowell et al. (2017), and Thorne (2000) argue that thematic analysis could be a foundational method for qualitative research analysis, because it provides different forms of qualitative analysis. Despite these debates and the criticism surrounding thematic analysis, the template analysis model assists the researcher in creating rich, authentic, insightful, and trustworthy findings (Nowell et al., 2017).

3.6.2 The Process of Selecting Themes for Use in Template Analysis

Below are outlined the steps required in the selection of themes for use in template analysis in this thesis.

A) The researcher's familiarity with the data: to become familiar with the data, the researcher began by reading and re-reading the data collected in transcripts, listening to audio recordings, or watching the recorded video from the interviews (Braun and Clarke, 2019). For this piece of research, 17 interviews were recorded, a few of which were both audio and video recorded. Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed by the researcher. Through this process of familiarisation with the data, the researcher was able to notice topics and themes that might be relevant to the research objectives. This process was repeated numerous times throughout the study.

B) Generation of initial codes: in this stage, the researcher needed to identify and establish specific and systematic characteristics of the data to develop initial codes by which to sort them into categories or themes, using the template analysis method (Kind, 2012). Computer software such as NVivo was considered to aid the analysis of the data, but the researcher preferred the use of hard-copy methods, as these give more accurate and wide-ranging results when analysing transcripts, which fitted well with the objectives of the study. This process was repeated throughout the data analysis process until all the transcripts were fully coded.

C) Searching for themes: generating themes and subthemes by which to categorise the data is important to identify clusters, unifications, and coherent patterns in the responses of participants, from which theories and hypotheses can be drawn (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The relationship between themes is also important: some themes may be isolated and distinctive, others may be central to the connectivity of all data, or underpin other themes, while still others could be miscellaneous, posing no clear connection to other themes. Such miscellaneous themes may be discarded if found to be irrelevant, or they may be adopted as valid themes, which has the potential to reveal insights about the data in and of themselves (Braun and Clarke, 2019). This stage involved considering those themes that would be applicable to the data, keeping in mind the research objectives.

D) Reviewing possible themes: by this stage of the research, the themes should be a coherent and accurate reflection of key aspects of the whole dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006). If the initial codes were found to be inadequate to express or represent the data, then they were reconsidered and reworked, and new codes were included as a result. Once these coherent, distinctive themes were established and tested to ensure accuracy and adequacy, the data could be fully processed using this template.

E) Naming themes: in this stage, the researcher took an analytical approach to produce a granular analysis (Braun, 2019). A detailed analysis was conducted by following the narratives set out by the chosen themes, which had been woven through the collected data (Nowell et al., 2017). Themes must not overlap in this stage, but rather should be unique, should address the research objectives, and should express the data in a concise, comprehensive, and meaningful manner (King, 2012).

The main themes identified for this research were as follows: the motivations of South Asian tourists towards dark tourism; the motivations of non-South Asian tourists towards dark tourism; the presumptions of both South Asian and non-South Asian tourists about dark tourism; the perceptions of both South Asian and non-South Asian tourists about dark tourism while visiting dark tourism sites; the perspectives of both South Asian and non-South Asian tourists after visiting dark tourism sites; tourist guides' opinions about South Asian and non-South Asian dark tourists; what attracts tourists to or interests them in dark tourism; and the presumptions of both South Asian and non-South Asian dark tourists about the term 'dark

tourism'. The data collected into these different themes provided a vivid and convincing argument to support the research objectives, theories, and hypotheses.

F) Producing the report: the final phase of the thematic template analysis was to write up a concise, coherent, and logical analysis of the findings that emerged. The researcher analysed all relevant results to contribute new insights into the field of dark tourism. Direct quotations from the dataset were included in the report to reflect the valuable voices of the participants.

3.7 Pilot Survey

A pilot survey aims to pre-evaluate the research instruments used in a study to refine the research design, the proposed fieldwork procedures, the tools used for data collection, and/or the data analysis plans before the main research is undertaken. Qualitative research benefits greatly from the use of pilot surveys (Padgett, 2016). A pilot survey was conducted using the same procedures as for the final data collection, which helped the researcher to test their time management and the management of recording equipment, as well as to compare the duration of each interview. The pilot survey also involved drafting a sequence of questions to assess whether the participants were providing relevant information, which was important to determine before investing in the collection of the full dataset (Mason and Zuercher, 1995). The pilot survey was useful in sifting through potential participants to find a good selection and a varied sample size, and in helping to build the researcher's confidence, as carrying out preliminary surveys clarified and solidified strategies for conducting interviews, as well as the practical uses of online platforms. The pilot survey involved five participants, all of whom resided in the UK and who were selected and approached through Facebook groups such as 'Dark Tourism Photography' and 'The Mirror Caught the Sun'. All five participants received consent forms requesting permission for the researcher to conduct and record the online interviews. These interviews were then transcribed and read, and the transcripts were modified to create a model for data collection on which the final study could be based, which would follow the research design and objectives faithfully.

3.8 Research Ethics

3.8.1 Adhering to Current Guidelines

Research ethics are critical in ensuring that research is conducted in a sensitive and respectful manner that does not harm participants and interviewees. Qualitative research, which requires observation of people, and their behaviours can be extremely personal (Orb et al., 2001). Such research, therefore, can touch on sensitive issues during data collection, which has the potential to pose various ethics issues (Hennink et al., 2020). Therefore, before conducting any research of this nature, it is necessary to obtain clearance from an ethics board (Gratton and Jones, 2010). In the case of this study, clearance was graciously granted by the Manchester Metropolitan University Ethics Committee.

During the data collection phase, all participants were informed about the research objectives, the scope of the research, and how the research would be conducted. Each participant was given a personal information system form and a consent form. The participants were informed of their rights and provided them with the option to withdraw from the study at any time. The recorded data were stored in a password-protected computer database system, and participants and interviews were kept anonymous by using serial numbers and broader identifiers instead of names, and confidential, as mandated by current research standards (Walliman, 2016; King et al., 2019). Participants were also made aware that they could request a copy of the findings.

Adherence to current research standards is essential. As such, the researcher ensured that they were up to date with the latest guidance and guidelines on research practices by creating and following a reading list exclusively on research practices from the year 2020 onwards. This reading list included studies exploring changes to research practices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had an impact on the researcher's study (Bos, 2020; Solbakk, 2021). Additionally, the researcher appraised themselves of the body of work emerging to be as inclusive as possible in fields such as gender, neurodivergence, data protection, and online research ethics (Henrickson et al., 2020; Cascio, 2020; Weissand Racine, 2021; Vlahou, 2021; Tiidenberg 2020).

3.8.2 The Role of the Ethical Researcher

The contemporary consumerism associated with death (Jacobsen, 2016) has extended interest in the moral boundary between commercialism and remembrance, particularly in the realm of dark tourism, where tragic events are packaged and sold as commodities, and memories of tragedy are marketed as mementos (Stone, 2008). Dark tourism destinations are seen to happen in a moral realm (Beech, 2009) that sparks disagreement and debate. Firstly, regarding demise and tragedy, Foley and Lennon (1996) highlight the primary issue with dark tourism as the marketable manipulation of heart-rending procedures. Certain dark sites have experienced an influx of visitors and stimulated commercial exploitation, with the sale of mementos by private retailers presenting a dilemma for the authorities responsible for these attractions (Lennon & Foley, 2000). For instance, the existence of a visible culture of consumption around Ground Zero in New York has created contentious practices and led to accusations regarding the defilement of the memory of 9/11. Secondly, anxiety (Seaton & Lennon, 2004, Wight, 2006) in considering the moral and ethical codes of tourism surrounds the selling of confrontational and "sensitive" narratives to visitors. It was also found that the creation of immersive environments at dark sites designed to allow visitors to experience the feelings associated with dark events was ethically troubling. Thirdly, although investigators have addressed this precise issue, it has been claimed that repeatedly showcasing images of sufferers' deaths is unprincipled for its traumatic effects upon their families (Foley & Lennon, 1996), as for instance, with regard to the family of assassinated former US President John F. Kennedy (Foley & Lennon, 1996). In a broader sense, Stone (2011) recommends that commodification or commercialization across dark tourism represents an ethical aspect that deserves extensive consideration.

Although there is limited investigation on the ethical implications of tourist behaviour, some researchers have suggested that observing the past sufferings or tragedies of others is ill-mannered (Sharpley, 2009). However, Lisle (2007) claimed that constructing harmful judgments about tourists observing sites of adversity is overly simplistic. Dark tourism offers the prospect for tourists to reflect on their own existence and unavoidable mortality by witnessing the sites of others' deaths (Stone, 2011a, 2012). Lisle explores visitors' captivation with disasters and violent death at the former World Trade Center site in New York, and proposes that as tourists gaze upon the ruins, they may be reminded of "the rubble being created elsewhere in the world" (Lisle, 2004). Additionally, Muzaini et al. (2007) discovers that tourists visiting war sites were not merely observing relics; they were also seeking to learn more about

the local people. Moreover, Stone (2018) highlights that as dark tourism revolves around death and the deceased, it provides insights into existence and the living through its creation and consumption. On the other hand, tourists are not solely focused on previous dark incidents but also on how those incidents have impacted the lives of present-day individuals, including local communities (Muzaini et al., 2007) and the tourists themselves. Tourists do not merely observe ruins (Muzaini et al., 2007) but also pay attention to other aspects, such as surrounding spaces and local people. Generally, visitors do not visit to simply stare at disasters but rather to understand the effects of disasters on disordered societies, sufferers, and survivors (Wright & Sharpley, 2018). In this sense, visitors become involved with the communal scope of dark locations (Wright & Sharpley, 2018).

Mostly ethics in tourism is meant to how tourists behave on a trip or how the managements of tour site are providing their needs deliberating the moral perspective in relation to the background, context, association and effected parties. In aspect of dark tourism, there is always ethical issues and dilemmas in various minor instances. While researching dark tourism, there are several types of narratives come from respondents and those narratives are associated with death, sorrow, national identity. These are their own emotional attachments and sufferings. These are very much touchy and absolute. Now the question is whether it is appropriate to gain benefit from the places which are associated to suffering and straightforwardly affect peoples' emotional values. The issues of promoting such type of sites related to death is questionable and future researchers need a suitable advice for this too.

As an ethical researcher, it is crucial to be aware of the potential biases that can influence the research process. They must ensure that any investigation is carried out with care, and adherence to an ethical framework (Miller, 2021). The ethical researcher must be committed to treating people with respect and dignity in the course of the work, and ensuring that participants are protected, informed, and are acting with their full consent. Their data must be collected in manner protecting their data and privacy and maintaining confidentiality. The researcher may be influenced by factors such as their own values, beliefs, and social and/or cultural perspectives when choosing their research topic or research methodology (Manohar et al., 2017). However, it is the responsibility of the researcher not to overgeneralise or stereotype their findings that could present an inaccurate overview of the data, and let down individuals or communities (Miles et al., 2020).

Crucially, tourists invariably adopt different perspectives when engaging with dark tourism sites. Some develop a critical gaze and believe that disaster events should be preserved without commercialization, leading them to disapprove of such aspects. In contrast, a caring stare is observed among visitors who prioritize the well-being of local people and perceive the place as a site for the living. They view the commercialization of dark tourism as essential for the livelihoods of the community. Most visitors are able to recognize ethical dilemmas and improve a lenient or compassionate observation. A compassionate perspective emerges when visitors become aware of the ethical stresses and adverse consequences experienced by local residents due to dark tourism. In this context, future researchers could more critically address the ethical complexities that surround dark tourist sites.

Making normalizing and tolerable these sensitive issues and feelings would need a long effects and exploitations of these sites as a source of entertainment also need discussions since it might seem disrespectful paradigm. In addition, misrepresentation of incidents in front of tourists to attract entertainment, gain profit instead of presenting what exactly occurred. The participants would be relaxed and frank if they will be assured that the incidents or events would be represented as historical sorrow as it is, not as tourism product for gaining money or profit. At the same time participants would expect compassionate behaviour, attitude from researcher rather than leading questions and that is how they might express their own views. Making rapport and faith with participants along with strong and transparent communication is vital for advancing teamwork and adopting affairs about privacy and secrecy.

Regarding data collection, there are a few challenges to reliability and validity. For instance, most of the tourists will disregard to attend in data collection process since they would consider it as profit making activities. In this circumstance, future researcher needs to make calm along with proper explanation about true intension of research rather than being very much straight. Here the participants would feel encouragements for depth interviews if researchers show them unbiased gesture. Basically, the core objective would be to control of any bias attitudes. During the interviews, participants might require mental health support system and future researchers might arrange it if necessary. The future researchers might face language barriers a bit and this

is why they would arrange a translator which is available around the world. Thus, future researchers might get the opportunity to conduct research related to dark tourism; death, disaster and assassination.

The researcher in this study is a Bangladeshi national who is interested in Bangladeshi history, particularly in the struggle for freedom both in South Asia and more generally. This study provided the researcher with a significant opportunity to learn more about the culture, history, and perspectives of people/tourists around the world, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which somewhat limited the dataset. No conscious bias or malpractice occurred when choosing participants for the study (for more reflection on the capacity for bias within sampling, see the section discussing the range of sampling techniques available, and the process behind the selection used in this study.) It was essential that in order to minimise bias and not to compromise the integrity of this investigation, none of the participants had any personal connections with the researcher. Effective and open communication between the researcher and the participants was established to serve the research objectives and produce reliable, useful data from which to formulate innovative theories and hypotheses. The interviewer was careful, especially when prompting discussions into upsetting or difficult topics, to establish that the respondents felt comfortable, that they were aware that the interview could be paused at any time and that they could rescind their permission to have their data collected at any point. It was stressed throughout that they could take their time with their responses, and that they would be able to get in contact at any point following the interview to clarify any of the material, or to follow up on any of the points discussed.

3.9 Justifying the Sample Site in Bangladesh

3.9.1 Tourism in South Asia

The tourism business is an extensive business throughout the world, including South Asia. This business creates good possibilities and at the same time fosters foreign exchange, providing significant outcomes for development in any country. Tourism helps the economy to grow rapidly (Telfer, 2002). Thus, tourism should be planned in such a way that it has a low impact on society and the environment and boosts economic growth in society in the best way possible (Telfer, 2002). Every nation of the world utilises its natural resources or infrastructures as symbols of tourism to try to grow the economy. At present, South Asian countries are trying to

contribute to their tourism sectors, and it could be said that the tourism sector is also contributing to the economic development of developing countries. The South Asian countries are classified as developing countries, and governments should pay attention to their tourism sectors because the countries have natural resources such as beaches, mangrove forests, and mountains that could contribute to developing these sectors.

South Asia has a significant potential for tourism development, and this continues to grow. It has a rich and unique culture and biodiversity, a huge array of geographic features, beautiful oceans and beaches, mangrove forests, mountain ranges (e.g., the Himalayas), marvellous archaeological monuments and battlefield sites. Apart from all these attractions, it has hospitable people, and it is an attractive region for intra-regional and international travel. South Asia appeals to visitors with an interest in spiritual well-being. It has many archaeological sites in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, and it has major attractions for Buddhists from all over the world. As the specific focus of this study, Bangladesh is a developing country in South Asia. The Bangladesh Government's expected revenue for the year 2018 was $200 from the tourism sector; the government announced its intention to enrich the tourism sector in different tourism segments (Daily Star, 2015).

Bangladesh is situated between India and Burma on the Bay of Bengal in South Asia. It is a small country in terms of geographical size. It achieved its independence from Britain in 1947 and initially became East Pakistan. On 16 December 1971, after a liberation war against the Pakistani Army that lasted for nine months, Bangladesh became a sovereign nation. The official language of Bangladesh is Bangla; there are also a few small tribal language groups. Bangladesh is mainly an agricultural country.

The official organisation governing tourism in Bangladesh is the Bangladesh Paryatan Corporation (BPC). The BPC, established in 1972, is basically an autonomous organisation working under Civil Aviation and Tourism (government department). The main service that the BPC offers is extending tourism activities around the country and making sure the appropriate services are available to local and foreign tourists (Ahmed, 2019). Another tourism organisation, the Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB), has recently been putting different types of initiatives in place to develop the country's tourism sectors. For instance, they are trying to improve hotels, motels, amusement parks, resorts, and so on. The BTB was established in 2010

and is affiliated with the UNWTO. It was created to serve the strong demand for private sector and tourism professionals in Bangladesh.

From a global perspective, Bangladesh is a new and relatively unknown tourism destination. The country may develop its tourism sector enormously because it has natural beauty and a rich cultural heritage. The role of tourism in developing countries has been enhanced recently, including in Bangladesh (Cortés-Jimenez et al., 2009). Moreover, the relationship between the tourism sector and economic growth in Bangladesh is growing in a promising manner. Bangladesh is a country with a more active import than export economy, and has a deficit-oriented economy (Chowdhury and Shahriar, 2012), and therefore typically has an import-oriented structure compared with what it gains through export. Consequently, tourism is considered the best alternative platform to maximise exports.

Bangladesh has experienced multiple types of rulers, including sultans, nobobs (a provincial governor of the Mogul empire in India), kings, and the British. These rulers, who were from different regions, religions, and cultures, ruled Bangladesh for many years. In addition, they introduced diverse cultures to Bangladesh. Bangladesh has an ancient animist culture, with weaving, pottery and terracotta sculpture, and other artistic expressions.

Several research studies have been conducted regarding dimensions of tourism and Bangladesh's international tourism status, but no research has yet been carried out on dark tourism in Bangladesh or dark tourists' experiences in the country. However, Bangladesh has many dark tourism sites, and both local and foreign tourists visit them. Thus, there is a gap to be addressed by conducting research on tourists' dark tourism experiences in Bangladesh. This is a promising field of research because the wars, assassinations, genocides, and many other elements that are directly related to dark tourism very much characterise the history and culture of Bangladesh.

3.9.2 Tourism Products in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has several attractions that could make it a key destination for tourists. The tourism products and attractions of Bangladesh include eco-tourism products, archaeological tourism products, historical tourism products, religious tourism products and cultural tourism products (Hassan & Nekmahmud, 2022). In terms of eco-tourism products, Bangladesh is a country of natural wonders, such as hills, valleys, forests, beaches, lakes, and rivers. Sundarbans is the world's largest mangrove forest; UNESCO labelled Sundarbans a world heritage site because

it preserves and protects the biodiversity of rare eco-tourism through its conservation efforts. Bangladesh has 120 km of sandy, straight, and beautiful beach, as well as Cox's Bazar, a port city, which is well-regarded as the significant tourist capital of the country (Afrose & Alam, 2011). Bangladesh also has three hilly regions, known as Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban, where several tribes live. These tribes have their own distinctive cultures, rituals, and traditions. These are additionally very attractive hillside locations with beautiful views and surroundings. Sylhet is a tea granary eco-tourism attraction in Bangladesh. At the beautiful Kuakata beach, tourists can experience exceptional sunrises and sunsets. Bangladesh has different categories of flora and fauna, making it a biodiverse and attractive proposition for ecotourism (Ahmed & Arafat, 1986).

Bangladesh has a rich history that is brought to life by an abundance of archaeological sites, including Paharpur, the largest well-known monastery south of the Himalayas; Mahasthangor, comprising several isolated mounds; Mankalir Kunda; and Parasuramer Bedi. Mainamati is an isolated place, a low and dimpled hill dotted with 50 ancient Buddhist settlements (Hosain et al., 2005). Shat Gambuj mosque is the largest multi-domed mosque in Bangladesh and a prominent archaeological site. Both domestic and international tourists visit these sites year-round. Kantanagar temple is a late medieval temple in Bangladesh; built in 1752, it is also an archaeological site, and tourists often visit it.

In terms of historical tourism products, there are many historical monuments in Bangladesh representing periods marked by Hindu, Muslim, and British prevalence at difference points in time. The primary historical attractions are Lalbagh fort, the unfulfilled dream of a Mughal prince; Sonargaon, seat of the Deva Dynasty until the thirteenth century and capital of the Sultanate of Bengal; a Second World War cemetery situated at Chittagong, at which 700 soldiers from Commonwealth countries are buried; Gandhi's Ashram, a memorial for the historic visit of Gandhi from India to Noakhali in Bangladesh and devoted to his ideology; Mujibnagar memorial, a beautiful memorial dedicated to the revolutionary government of Bangladesh during the liberation war; a national memorial commemorating the millions of martyrs who died during the liberation war of 1971; central Shahid Minar (Ishtiaque, 2013), a symbol to commemorate the martyrs of the language movement on 21 February 1952; the martyred intellectual memorial commemorating the intellectuals who were killed by Pakistani forces in 1971, just two days before victory day; national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's grave, which

is adjacent to Dhaka University Central Mosque; and the old high court building, which was the residence of the British Governor and blends European and Mughal architecture.

In terms of religious tourism products, there are several attractions for tourists who are motivated by religion. These include Hazrat Shah Jalal Shrine at Sylhet, which brought the message of Islam to Bangladesh in the fourth century; Bayazid Bostami Majar, which has a large number of visitors' attractions and serves as a pilgrimage site; and Kantaji temple, a late medieval Hindu temple in Bangladesh embellished with exquisite terracotta depictions of flora and fauna, geometric motifs, and mythological scenes. There are also many mosques, such as the seven-domed mosque, Baitul Mukkaram mosque, the star mosque, Chawkbazar mosque, and Huseni Dalan mosque. In terms of cultural tourism products, there is Sonargaon, a folk-art craft museum that was the capital of Bangladesh; the tomb of Sultan Abdul Alla, a beautiful mosque; Dighapatiya Rajbari, a great moat that is well equipped with a garden and white marble statues; Shilaidaha Kuthibari, the mansion of Nobel laurate poet Rabi Tagore; Sagordari, the birthplace of poet Micheal Madhusudan Dutta, first poet of Bangla literature; Trishal, representing the boyhood memories of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam; Shahjadpur Kuthibari, which is connected to frequent visits from poet Rabi Tagore; Ahsan Manzil Museum, an epitome, home of the Nawab of Dhaka and a monument of immense historical beauty (Ishtiaque, 2013) .

3.9.3 Dark Tourism Sites in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a small country that gained independence in 1971. Thus, it recently celebrated 50 years of independence. Both before and after 1971, wars, battles, genocides, and assassinations occurred in Bangladesh; indeed, both domestic and international tourists frequently visit the battlefield, genocide, and assassination sites. For instance, the father of the nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and his family members were assassinated on 15 August 1975; later, his house was turned into a memorial museum called Bangabandhu Memorial Museum (Sultana & Parvez, 2019). Every year, this museum attracts many visitors to commemorate its history. This kind of memorial museum can be considered both a historical and a dark tourism site. Young generations of Bangladeshis can learn about the history of the country, and at the same time, cultivate patriotism towards Bangladesh. This museum serves as a witness to show the glorious history of Bangladesh to the world. As other examples,

Shaheed Minar, which is held in Dhaka University, Dhaka, and Rayerbazar Boddhovumi, Mirpur, Dhaka, are genocide sites that are open to visitors. In this study, the assassination site of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum and Rayerbazar Boddhovumi are considered the data collection fields.

Bangabandhu Memorial Museum is situated at Dhanmondi 32, Dhaka. It was the personal residence of Bangladeshi President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. The president was assassinated along with many family members at midnight on 15 August 1975. The house was handed over to the surviving family members of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Sheikh Hasina, who is the present prime minister of Bangladesh and Sheikh Rehana on 12 June 1981. Sheikh Hasina; the current prime minister, found a few diaries belonging to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which were later published in the form of memoirs. On 6 September 1994 the house was turned into a museum by the Bangabandhu Memorial Trust; it was inaugurated on 14 August 1994. The trust operates and manages the museum (Molla et al, 2022).

Rayer Bazar Boddho Bhumi is situated at Mohammadpur, Beribadh, Dhaka. It was established on 14 December 1993. This site was famous for pottery during the Mughal period because Lal Mati (red clay) was available there. The red clay was not available in other neighbourhoods, and this is why the potters of Rayer Bazar have a long tradition of making pottery with this red clay in the area (Zahir, S. 2000). However, on the night of 14 December 1971, many Bangladeshi intellectuals, including professors, journalists, doctors, artists, engineers, and writers, were rounded up, blindfolded, and taken to torture cells at different locations in Dhaka, such as Mirpur, Mohaamdpur, Nakhalpara, and Rajarbagh. They were later executed and thrown into the red clay or swamps at Rayer Bazar Boddho Bhumi at Dhaka (Khan, 2012). So, in this study one of the dark tourism sites among these two dark tourism sites would be considered for primary data collection (field work) and then the tourists' who would be given their depth interviews motivations, attitudes and experiences will be analysed. In addition, this would be the prominent and only research in Bangladesh where the further or future researchers would get the opportunity to read about dark tourism in the context of Bangladesh.

To summarise: Bangladesh is an ideal sample site for innovative research into dark tourism. First, it has untapped potential for dark tourism development, and as such is likely to grow in global stature as a destination for dark tourism. Second, its diversity, in culture, environment and history make it a compelling proposition for tourist activity of any nature: from eco-tourism

to pilgrimage. Third, it has a rich cultural heritage that weaves together the major concerns of dark tourism: remembrance, connection with death and disaster, and significantly to this study, the creation and shaping of a powerful sense of national pride and heritage.

Chapter Four: Dark Tourist Information Sources and Motivations

4.1 Chapter Outline and Context

Dark tourism involves visiting locations where some of the most distressing events in human history have unfolded. As outlined in the types of destination the disciplinary field covers, such events may include genocide, assassination, incarceration, ethnic cleansing, war, or disaster—either natural or accidental. We have developed a conceptual framework for critical analysis for this study by appraising recent research: and we now turn to examining dark tourist attitudes and trends in consumption, motivation, and experiences and putting this into practice. In this chapter, the sources used to access information on dark tourism sites, and the motivations for visiting such locations will be investigated, using the date from the online and in-person interviews.

The respondents who contributed to this empirical study were residents in diverse countries, including the UK, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, South Africa, and Italy. Data collection commenced in mid-2020 at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This presented significant challenges to in-person data collection, and pivoting the study so that it could be conducted over Zoom and Skype was necessary. It was a challenge to source respondents, but the use of multiple social media platforms allowed the enlisting of a diverse cohort of respondents who expressed a wide range of opinions and experiences which are interpreted and elaborated on below.

Information sources in tourism feed into tourist motivations to visit certain sites. The definition of sources in this context covers the information received by tourists prior, during and after either first time visits or repeat visits. Related information sources might provide motivations and entice tourists to visit the dark tourism sites. This chapter will first identify the variety of sources that visitors use to inform themselves about the dark tourism sites, analyse the motivations of tourists (that may intersect with these information sources). It will evaluate empirical evidence regarding these information sources and then motivations of visiting dark tourism sites.

4.2 Dark Tourist Sources of Knowledge and Information

After some years of global economic turbulence, tourism is a significant economic development tool and also a major sector in many countries' economic development. It has created an exceptional ability to generate income and employment opportunities too. Dark tourism is considered to be a growing tourism and therefore economic prospect. It has become a thriving platform within the industry and many hosts of dark tourism are trying to identify and create diversified sources so that tourists can receive up-to-date, interesting and relevant information regarding dark tourism sites. Many information sources about dark tourism sites become reliable source of information for tourists to develop their knowledge about historical events and to better appreciate their existence, origin and background (Yuill, 2004).

This section identifies the sources of information that were mentioned by the interviewees: and their responses are analysed in the light of the literature and research gaps identified in the previous chapter. They include testimonials and recommendations made by friends and family, media including film and TV, books and printed resources, and resources provided by tour operators and tourist boards.

4.2.1 Family and Friends Testimonials

The credibility of travel information sources is one of the most significant and debateable topics discussed among travellers. This addresses the trustworthiness of travel and tourism sources. People mostly take or receive information from their nearest and most relied-upon connections, such as family and friends: especially for dark tourism sites. Some researchers have speculated that modern tourists undertake their visits mostly by recommendations of friends and relatives, and to some extent from wider family members (Berhanu and Raj, 2020).

Family is the predominant social or peer group by that influences individuals' holiday and tourism itineraries and arrangements (Crompton, 1981). Historic research has treated family decisions, including those concerning holidays, as typically driven by a spouse individually or by both (Blood and Wolfe, 1978). The consumer decision-making phase involves various factors, such as desire or need, problem recognition, and information sourcing and the final decision regarding holiday travel will be made by the spouses (Davis and Rigaux, 1974), including itinerary and accommodation. Individual family members' distinct socio-

demographic profiles believed to contribute significantly to the choices they make with respect to tourism and site visits. Travel as a family unit is also known to yield social benefits, as tourism opportunities for bonding, communication and building relationships (Carr, 2011). Family members may find their social identities reflected in the sites they choose to visit which can help forge social relationships. This effectively amounts to the construction of social capital.

Family holidays provide valuable opportunities for shared experiences (Noy, 2008), and these experiences are often absorbed later as collective familial memories. Such memories often foster a sense of intimacy and belonging with respect to the sites visited (Obrador, 2012). Moreover, family holidays can help stabilises family relations, including family members to warmly share in the experiences of visiting sites together (Carr, 2011).

Dark tourism is far from a typical holiday experience and is typically bound up with painful past events. Such dissonant experiences and memories may impact family ties and cause individuals' spiritual and ideational perspectives to become known. Survivors of traumatic events may wish to share their experiences, emotions, and ideals with their families, and this may prompt them to engage in dark tourism.

> …my father always used to tell me about—when the Awami League government first won the national election, after a few months, my father told me about the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, since my father has some friends who fought in 1971 and knew all about the movement. So, they told my father, and I came to know about it from him. My father became so emotional while he encountered to me the incidents of that event; the assassination. So, my father told me that he would take me (to the museum) at the weekend.
>
> (SA: 08, female, age 35)

The participant quoted above had a patriotic father who had told her about the places of her childhood and the history of Bangladesh. The participant's visit to the museum was 'dark' in nature, as the site and the assassination that took place there continued to haunt her father. Tourists who are motivated by their family members to visit dark tourism sites perceive these sites first through their family members' eyes. Respondent SA: 08's father was an eyewitness to various incidents during Bangladesh's war of liberation, and this is why he used to tell his daughter about the history behind that particular dark tourism site. The participant generously shared her memories of the visit during the interview, recounting the emotional shock that it

triggered and detailing her father's consequent breakdown. Visitors may justifiably wonder how such frightening and emotionally triggering experiences can be reflected on as a highlight of their visits to the site. Respondent SA: 08's visit was somehow both influenced by her father and had an element of the spontaneous and unexpected. After her visit to the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, she began visiting similar dark tourism sites, and she mentioned during her interview that she had already visited several dark tourism sites in Australia. The information that her father shared, along with his visible emotion, aroused her empathy and clearly affected her on a deep emotional level, and motivated her to honour her father's personal history and experiences by seeking out her own first-hand knowledge.

Research has demonstrated that visits to historically significant sites can evoke sensory and emotional memories in those who have survived trauma (Bell, 2003). Visits to such sites may arouse people's emotional empathy, and the events of the past may be materialised through the virtual presence of objective reminders of past events, such as monuments, artefacts and memorials leading to secondary experiences of these events. Tourism destinations can evoke emotions associated with everyday family life. Respondent SA: 08 also described her father's emotional response in terms of the impression and lasting impact it made on her as a family member. The memorial to the Liberation War reflected or seemed to reveal truthful moments for those who had directly experienced the event, and for this reason, her father shared his experiences with his daughter. Such exchanges can create an implicit emotional legacy among family members, in addition to impacting family relationships by reflection and further discussion, where different perceptions and interpretations may be share, in agreement and in disagreement.

Another aspect to the family dynamic is the sense that sharing information and testimonials offers relief. One of the interviewees in this study reported on the process of her own enlightenment about the pain her family had endured during the Liberation War. She talked extensively about her father, and the range of emotions he felt about his memories:

> The truth of the incident I came to know from my father, it was so intense…emotional…my father used to express his pain as a survivor…although my father shared with me his fragmented memories of the genocide during my childhood. He told me how he had arrived at his home after he had been hit by the Pakistani military. He shared how

> he was rescued. The site certainly made me remember my father's survival tales, and I want to visit the site again and again.
>
> (SA: 01, female, age 37)

She linked the feeling of empathy for the father as a survivor of this period with her own impulse and motivation to repeat her visit to a particular site associated with that time. The same respondent shared a transitional historical testimony of a survivor's emotional experiences. She appeared to be on the verge of tears as she recounted her father's memories. She also shared,

> I am glad I had my father with me after his survival…I may not express my happiness. Our family used to celebrate National Independence Day joyfully.
>
> (SA: 01, female, age 37)

Her experience opened a window onto obscure moments from her childhood, in a similar way that her father's testimonials to her were clearly a way to make sense of his own 'fragmented memories'. The dark tourism site was already familiar to her through her father, because he had made it so vivid for her in their discussions. Her father's emotions were so intense that it clearly induced her to experience the pain herself. Her visit to the dark tourism site did not shock her, since she had virtually already been there through her father's experiences, having listened to his painful memories. Her own visit simply allowed her to experience it more intensely and made the events of the past more materially and emotionally immediate for her. The site materialised her family's private life in public context, and she was visibly animated during her interview: suggesting that also this was a painful chapter of their family history, she had reframed it with some positivity, that it had brough her closer to them.

In summary, owing to how contentious the credibility of information sources from tourism or travel bodies may be, many people do in fact rely on word-of-mouth from their friends and family when making travel decisions; and family is a primary social group influencing dark tourism decisions. The experience of travelling with family to dark tourism sites is, as the data shows, complicated. As much as it can offer a chance of further bonding, it is still ultimately seeking out experiences based on painful real-life events, that may even have a personal connection with the family. This has the potential to affect familial relationships and elucidate differences of opinion, spirituality, or values in a lasting way.

One respondent from South Africa confirmed that his friend was his source of information about the dark tourism site he visited. His friend had provided information about the sites, described the place and told him exactly where he wanted to visit. It is interesting that no other respondent in this study mentioned friends as their primary source of information about dark tourism sites except one who visited Chernobyl influenced by her friend.

In summary, this section draws on previous research and patterns in dark tourism behaviour to establish how important a traveller's closest peer group can be to shape their choices, when it comes to planning site visits. The recommendations and comments of friends and family significantly influences decisions make on itineraries and arrangements. The socio-demographic profiles of individuals, as discussed in the peer-review is a powerful determiner of tourist attitudes and behaviours and contributes much to their decision-making processes. Engaging with dark tourism is a relatively unusual choice for a holiday experiences, and at face value may be even more so in a family holiday context. However, owing to the often-traumatic nature of experiencing sites of historical pain and suffering, sharing in such an experience has the potential to strengthen these familial bonds. Individuals outside and within family structures may identify with what they see: giving them a clearer idea of their own identities through what they receive through their senses, and the emotional memories created. This can be especially powerful for those visiting with family members, who have a common history and narrative to their backgrounds and can offer some reconciliation or relief.

4.2.2 Published Information Sources: Media

Through in-depth online interviews, this study revealed that individuals have deeply personal motivations and desires that drive their interest in seeking out dark tourist experiences. The interviews revealed strong relationships between tourists' recollections of their experiences and the practicalities of their visit to the sites in terms of decision-making and their experiences as tourists: that actively participating in the visit deepened how they retained the memories of them.

The interviewees also discussed how much the media influences on their tourism choices without being prompted or explicitly asked: indicating a robust relationship between media and tourism. Anecdotally we might think of tourists bringing books on holiday with them for entertainment, even making time to finish their reading lists, but this study's respondents

reported having read particular books before they visited the sites to research their destination: even material cited to support the arguments of this research. Some mentioned selecting holiday locations influenced by their beloved novels, television shows, documentaries, or movies. When asked during interviews whether they wished to visit specific sites based on films, books or television programmes, most respondents answered positively. Books, television programmes and films are powerful agents of image formation. Some respondents regard visiting sites that have featured in beloved films or television programmes as a means of engaging with the main issues explored in the movies and sharing in the characters' experiences. One respondent identified a representation of the Chernobyl disaster on TV as being the primary motivation for a visit to the infamous site of the meltdown:

> I watched an HBO programme about Chernobyl, and me and my friend and I were talking. OK, where you want to go now? I said, why don't we go to Chernobyl? It is a three- or four-hours flight'. Honestly, it was on HBO that I watched the series…It was called Chernobyl, and it had several series like Netflix, four or five series. It was interesting to me, what happened and the role of human error, how the people were affected, when it was evacuated, massive like abandoned. It just interested me and my friend. His background is in science and engineering, so he wanted to see the site, because they are going to do something to protect against radiation, so maybe in one or two years it won't be possible to visit the site again for a long time. So, we found a tour group and conducted a lot of research on the sites they visited. That was quite informative, and we found ourselves back in that time when the events or disaster happened.
>
> (NSA: 04, female, age 45)

Another respondent articulated her desire to visit dark tourism sites in Germany, after reading a popular history book about the Second World War:

> I read a book about events in Nazi Germany, and then I decided that I would visit Germany for at least a couple of days…I wanted to see the site in person…after visiting there I could really to it…it is much more intense…it aroused in me the feelings that I had experienced after reading the book…now I could say I was a part of it.
>
> (NSA:07, female, age 40)

Respondent NSA: 04 and the anonymous interviewee both described having experienced the desire to visit their chosen sites based on an urge prompted by their media consumption, and that they then visited the world renowned and popular sites to see them with their own eyes, so that they could have a fully sensory experience. This sensory experience clearly functioned as

an extension of their viewing and reading and allowed them to project themselves into the scenarios that they had learned about. In these cases, the reader's and viewer's visits amounted to more than simply being on the sites: they wanted to be part of the incidents after viewing the television programmes and reading the books, which can be intense and interesting experiences in their own right.

Popular movies frequently drive tourism by sharing information about films' key location and inspirations; examples include the *Harry Potter* franchise, *The Beach, Braveheart, Mission Impossible 2, Troy,* and *Gladiator*. Such movies enhanced tourism sectors in the respective countries that hosted the filmmakers, having the effect in many cases of revitalising local economies. One of the study's respondents reported having visited the Killing Fields at Phnom Penh in Cambodia based on having watched a film that was shot at the site. The respondent said:

> First, I should say that I watched a movie directed by Angelina Jolie; the Hollywood actress that depicted the genocide in Cambodia and that is how I came to know about this site.
>
> (SA: 03, male, age 30)

The respondent was thus motivated to visit Cambodia based on his experience of watching a film depicting the country's history. This suggests that films is a strong draw to South Asia, and for South Asian tourists too who are inspired by films. The same respondent self-identifies as a 'film buff' who, upon watching any movie, tries wholeheartedly to visit the depicted locations:

> Recently, I watched a movie *Hotel Rwanda* which also depicts a civil war. I find movies based on real-life events particularly interesting. I wished to visit Vietnam specifically to see the bunkers that were used in the war between Vietnam and the USA. I watched so many movies about those events, and I learned that the USA lost owning to the strength of Vietnam's bunkers. So, I was so curious to see those. Unfortunately, I have not been able to.
>
> (SA: 03, male, age 30)

Thus, many tourists are heavily influenced by films that stimulate them emotionally and intellectually. This study's interviews revealed another pattern and relating to the underlying values of the stories portrayed. One of the respondents mentioned during the interview that she

was inspired by watching a documentary about Bangabandhu. The former Prime Minister in Dhaka therefore offered her a special experience:

> It is good to see things in person…I have an open mind…I have been watching documentaries, programmes about assassination of Bangabandhu…I felt virtually connected to this incident…that is why I was interested in visiting this site. Because I wished to visit at any cost. My experience there was more than the documentaries evoked…for me, Bangabandhu Memorial is a place where certain values are enriched…. A certain way of thinking may be perpetuated or even described.
>
> (SA: 01, female, age 37)

Again, this word 'virtually' is important: it suggests that tourists are motivated by a want to have an affinitive experience: to place themselves within something they have imagined, shaped by discussion or through representations. The widespread availability of television and the internet now provides tourists with convenient access to a range of information. Television can offer tourists virtual tours, and most people have access to television or news channels that provide information about attractions. Moreover, television inspires people to travel when people see interesting and attractive sites: they can 'see themselves' there, and are compelled to begin formulating their travel plans. The site at which the World Trade Center's (WTC) Twin Towers were destroyed by the terrorist attack on 9/11 in New York has become known as 'Ground Zero' and is one of the darkest sites that can be visited in the USA. Nearly 3000 people died in the attack, and since then, the location has been considered a dark tourism site. One of the UK respondents had visited 'Ground Zero', television news having been his main source of information about the incident. He said:

> Yes, I knew lots about it. Very sadly, I saw the disaster unfold live on television. So, I know a lot about it. I visited there, once before the disaster and once after.
>
> (NSA: 08, male, age 57)

The above statement clearly attests to the role that television news reports and programmes play in providing the information that forms the basis for the selection of dark tourism sites as destinations. Another respondent from Bangladesh, who is a university faculty member, affirmed:

> …maybe at that time, the political party was strong, and the television and newspaper also published this news regularly. In any case, I came to know about it.
>
> (SA:08, female, age 35)

The above statement indicates that this respondent also received information about a dark tourism site located in Bangladesh from television and newspaper reportage. Another respondent from South Asia stated,

> Most from the internet, searching on Google about tourist attractions in different countries. Nowadays, I feel every country is trying to promote their nation in a positive light and attracting people to visit them.
>
> (Anonymous, male, age 42)

This statement indicates that the internet (in this instance, specifically Google) plays a central role in tourists' identification of sites that they wish to visit and attests to the internet's status as one of the most popular and useful information resources for tourism purposes. Another South Asian tourist from India collected information about dark tourism sites that she visited in India from newspaper reports and websites.

> …I kept newspaper cuttings on that site, and I read those. I did a lot of online research, at least I did.
>
> (SA: 02, female, age 49)

Newspaper reports and websites are thus key sources of information for tourists in the present day. Respondent SA: 03 also extensively researched his sites of interest in Cambodia before travelling there. Another respondent from Bangladesh recalled having learned about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at school, which inspired her to visit the Bangabandhu Memorial on several occasions as an adult. He had been something of a childhood hero for her.

> A historical figure that I remember learning about is Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He is something of a hero in our family and my father was a particular fan of his. He was an excellent leader, and he was portrayed on numerous occasions in TV, dramas that I used to watch when I grew up, I had desire to visit his memorial site…and I did. I visited it several times.
>
> (SA:, female, age 35)

A motivating factor of this was also how the historical figure had been portrayed in various media: in both documentary accounts and also fictionalised and performed interpretations of his life. Childhood memories of media, whether fictional or non-fictional exert a strong influence on the adult psyche: memories made during childhood are considered the most long lasting and continue affect how individuals engage with environment around them, perhaps imbuing it with a sense of enchantment and excitement. In the interviews, respondents mentioned several environments that were meaningful to them, even though they did not explicitly relate to the environment of their youth.

> When I planned to visit the USA several years ago for the first time, I thought about the documentaries about Ground Zero. And when you experience that…. Something suddenly just comes up…. That just pops into your head, the people can relate…this actually happened …You can feel kind of close to the incident. That is why I like going to Ground Zero in New York, USA. To access that perfect image.
>
> (Anonymous, male, age 68)

Documentaries are clearly a useful source of information on dark tourism. Interestingly, one respondent from South Africa, one from South Asia and another from the UK mentioned documentaries in relation to dark tourism as a source of education.

Such ideas and thoughts identified by the respondent above echo a widespread discourse within society. Media coverage surrounding dark tourism destinations can drive tourists to visit these sites. People may decide to visit these sites based on films, novels, and television programmes that they engaged with during childhood, and which informed their plans for future travel. Memories and motivations surrounding these events and narratives may be provoked thoroughly external and internal stimuli and such memories are valuable and tantalising. Fictionalised plots and characters based on actual historical events promote individuals' ability to recall, extend, and experience these memories and their desire to visit the relevant locations, confirming the robust relationship between tourism and the media. Tourists may feel an affinity for dark tourism sites based on their engagement with characters or events through the media. They may feel deep respect appreciation for those who build and maintained the relevant sites. The respondents' testimonies revealed a consistent influence on the part the media in relation to their decisions to visit dark tourism sites. This study was not limited to any specific media: audio-visual stories and text-based news or narratives concerning historical, fictional, and non-fictional events or incidents were all included. Media that engages with dark tourism bridges

gaps of imagination that are often too overwhelming for the individual to synthesise themselves.

4.2.3 Published Information Sources: Books and Printed Resources

Books are a key source of information- both textbooks and books written for a general readership and literature exerts a considerable influence on tourism. There is a huge industry, particularly in the West for tourist guidebooks, and there are imprints and series that cover every imaginable destination. Books are key in informing tourists' engagement, experiences and activities at the various sites. Schoolbooks play a key role in contextualising historical sites and events that people will go on to visit later in life. In some respects, narratives can contribute to the sites' charm. Tourists may be inspired to visit particular sites upon reading books in which those sites are described. The inspiration may be random, but nonetheless, they will try to visit these sites in person at least once during their lifetime. One of the respondents stated as such:

> Yes, in Kenya, in high school we studied the Soviet Union and the World Wars in our books. So, I had a certain understanding. And the memory, of course, stayed with me and prompted me to visit the places I had read about. In my class, we encountered numerous issues pertaining to humanitarian laws relating to the World Wars- in particular, World War Two and the role of Germany and the genocide that occurred. So, these all become symbols of what you previously studied. That makes sense.
>
> (NSA: 03, male, age 33)

As this respondent's testimony highlights, law is also a significant source of information about the historical events associated with, dark tourism sites. As a law student, he learned about the First and Second World Wars from a legal perspective, both of which are prominent sources of dark tourism locations. As such, he was inspired to visit these sites based on; having encountered them in several academic sources at school and at university. Academic books often provide ideas about dark tourism for those interested in such sites, which are not typical tourist destinations, and are therefore not framed that way in conventional guidebooks, such as Lonely Planet or Rough Guides. One of the respondents had formerly worked as government public service officer but had recently completed a higher education degree and learned about dark tourism as part of his studies. When asked about the term 'dark tourism', he stated:

> From the book from Lennon and Foley, how I got to know about it. My BA was in photography, and I wanted to do something on documentaries, barriers, borders, and the geopolitical landscape. One of my lecturers said it sounded as though it might touch on dark tourism, and I spent a lot of time researching, academic materials on dark tourism. So, I may not to be your average subject in this research project, because last year I read a quite a lot about dark tourism.
>
> (NSA: 08, male, age 57)

The statement above refers to *Dark Tourism* (Lennon and Foley, 2000) written by the pioneers in the study of dark tourism, which provided him with information on the topic. Another respondent from South Asia (India) also reported having learned about dark tourism from academic books. She avers:

> It was part of my history book in school. We read of it as part of our history.
>
> (SA: 02, female, age 49)

Information sources play a key role in motivating and stimulating tourists' travel decisions and may be categorised as internal or external sources. Internal sources include one's own memory from previous visits or experiences, while external sources denote one's conscious effort to seek information from books, newspapers, etc. In the above example, the respondent was guided by an external source; academic books that she had acquired at school. Another South Asian tourist sought information about dark tourism sites from external sources, such as academic books and lectures:

> Actually I studies for my Master's degree in Archaeology at a university in Germany, so over there I learned about and encountered many conversation management sites relating to the Second World War from that time onward, I became interested in understanding why people in Germany are obsessed with World War sites…So, while studying there, I decided and planned to visit the camps with the gas chambers used during the Second World War in Germany. I wanted to see them, touch them, and feel them. Yes, I read about them in books, but reading books and seeing things in person are totally different experiences and, feelings.
>
> (SA:06, male, age 42)

Academic resources thus provide insightful education about dark tourism and highlight the connections that visitors feel to these sites. These books drive stakeholders' interests including those in the tourism industry, community parties and government bodies. Academic research

and presentations also address the key themes, critical issues, and significant consequences of dark tourism. Such academic sources may have been the key factor in prompting the above respondents to visit dark tourism sites in person.

4.2.4 Published Information Sources: Tour Operators and Tour Guides

Interest in dark tourism locations varies from tourist to tourist and each site will have its individual appeal. Therefore, it's important for tourists to be able to recognise locations that will fulfil their interest. For example, a tourist with an interest in the environment and conservation may be drawn to sites of ecological disasters and eco-collapse might be drawn to Chernobyl or Fukushima, or for those interested in military or Cold War history, Cuban missile sites might be a good choice. Tour operators engage in this research to categorise different experiences on the tourists' behalf, and it is important for them to visit sites in person to do so. One respondent had worked in operations, and outlined the importance of this kind of area research and gaining knowledge to accommodate tourists:

> Basically, I travel around different countries and advise them on projects and how to run their operations, so I was back in Belfast, and they asked me to open a site related to *Game of Thrones*. They have an area in which they wanted to run a business, and I went and told them 'You can do this, you can do that'. I tell them how to run the business and then I set up, I write the manuals, I set the business up, I hand it over and let them go. Or I can come and advise them—this is a good aspect. Maybe you can do other activities; maybe you can do something a little bit darker. This attracts local people rather than tourists. So that's what I do. I would say immediately that it's personal interest, but in my head, I am thinking about business. This is what I have done for 23 years.
>
> (NSA: 04, female, age 45, UK)

Tour operators typically visit dark tourism locations to confirm security, safety, budget planning, transportation, and infrastructure facilities in order to comfortably recommend them to people likely to spend money in the area and raise the area's profile through the tourism economy: so, this field research is very important.

Free catalogues, brochures or guidebooks typically help tourists find sites to visit, providing much greater detail and useful information. Sites that are less popular require such advertising measures to convey information to tourists. Interestingly, only one tourist, in addition to the respondent from the UK, sought assistance from a well-known tourist's guidebook. According

to the respondent, the guidebook was informative and provided him with knowledge about the site. None of the South Asian respondents in the present study reported having sought information in guidebooks, catalogues, or brochures.

4.3 Motivations for Visiting Dark Tourism Sites

After gathering information regarding dark tourism sites, and reaching out to their available networks to hear experiences from diversified sources, tourists start thinking about the logistics of visiting the sites. The intensity of the motivations to visit them and the nature of these motivations are a central concept in dark tourism related research (Isaac et al., 2019). Early studies that attempted to conceptualise dark tourism were not supported by empirical research, which is necessary to elucidate the phenomenon's underlying motivations and to bridge gaps in the literature. Tourists' motivations to visit dark tourism sites have been identified as having extremely diverse aspects (Isaac and Çakmak , 2014).

Different people will have diverse reasons for visiting dark tourism sites. These reasons may be educational, including the desire to learn about the site, and to understand the site's history. Social and personal motivations may also be at play (Kang et al. 2012) including 'self-understanding', 'curiosity' 'conscience' or the perception of sites as, must-see destinations (Isaac and Çakmak, 2014). Other reasons may include memory creation or attachment to past memories, 'gaining knowledge and awareness' and 'exclusivity' (Isaac et al., 2019). Some Western tourists cited motivations as wide-ranging as mortality-related reasons: a sense of obligation and, national identity, social reasons, remembrance, and commemoration (Biran et al., 2011). It is also evident that some tourists have a clearly defined interest in death (Seaton, 2018).

A study of dark tourism motivations notes that some tourists are motivated to visit disaster sites for leisure pursuits and a sense of 'prestige' (Biran at al.,2014). This evidence is hardly surprising in this age of visitors taking smiley selfies at sites of historical trauma. In this regard, Podoshen (2018) observes that the practice of taking selfies at disaster sites may not be associated with empathy, sympathy, or a benevolent attitude towards victims; rather, their priority is how others will perceive the activities: so, they are motivated by their own social capital and its pursuit. Those who take pictures of themselves are also participating in an

information exchange of their own and creating a testimony of a kind for others to receive, and perhaps be motivated to visit in turn.

Many tourists visit dark tourism based on their interest in history and heritage, such as battlefield heritage (Kokkranikal et al., 2016), and a desire to understand the culture in question (Yankholmes and McKercher, 2015). Learning about and understanding history is the most frequently cited motive (Light, 2017). This finding is supported by Yan et al. (2016), who posited that motivations to visit historic sites are largely associated with tourists' desire to understand past events. Biran at al. (2011) also observed that the Holocaust provides empirical evidence through which tourists can learn and understand history.

4.3.1 Thrill and Challenge Seeking

A recurring theme in the interviews conducted for this study was that one of the most significant motivations for visiting dark tourism sites is the sense of challenge. Many tourists wish to be challenged or experience thrills during their visits. Some tourists are not interested solely in beaches, and scenic landscape; sometimes, they desire experiences that stimulating and require some courage, and that will provide them good conversation fodder. One of the respondents described what made her decide to seek out these kinds of places, including Chernobyl in Ukraine:

> I was already keenly interested in such things. And I like to be challenged, I do not like the beach, and boats, not also shopping. I like history, culture, music food and heritage and these types of activities. Well, I travel a lot, I travel extensively, I never resist, so, it's interesting to go and visit all these places. In the last five years, since I was first introduced to the option of dark tourism, I have purposely visited places like Chernobyl and Japan just to visit particular sites. Yeah, I like to be challenged. I have a keen interest, it's my main purpose to go. Because I am sick of people saying, 'Oh, I went to Spain for two weeks, I had breakfast, different dishes, and I returned home with sunburn. I prefer to say I have been to Korea; I have been to ground Zero, Chernobyl. It is just more interesting for me, and when I tell people about the places I visit, it sparks a conversation, that is more interesting than generic conversation. So, I like to be a little bit different.
>
> (NSA: 04, female, age 45, UK)

This respondent specifically refers to the impact such trips have on her conversations with others: she wants to avoid anything 'generic'. As options to cater to tourists with different tastes increase, and more tourists are exposed to the possibilities of niche experiences, the range of motivations for visiting locations will expand to accommodate this . Such tourists may be in the minority, but nonetheless, some tourists do seek out dark tourism sites, even if they are not familiar with the term 'dark tourism'. The same respondent specified:

> I think people visit these sites, but they do not know that they are referred to as 'dark'. Before I knew of the term 'dark tourism', I had been in Edinburgh and we were walking down and it was raining and we saw a flyer for tours without knowing it, we visited a dark tourism site. This was unintentional, and you will find that lots of people really do not know what they are doing. When I was 18 or 19, I visited Gambia and found a place related to dark tourism. But in the last five years, I have purposely visited several places relating to dark tourism. So, a person may flip from one to the other.
>
> (NSA: 04, female, age 45, UK)

While the notion of what is thrilling or challenging with respect to tourism will vary across individuals, for example, one tourist may find a beach holiday thrilling, while a tourist like the individual above may find it dull. In this context, we may describe 'thill' or 'challenge' elements as tourist activities that engages tourists in physical, natural or cultural activities that take them outside their comfort zone. The above statement from the interviewee clearly reveals her desire to be challenged as the key factor driving her towards dark tourism. A desire to experience thrills or challenges may thus be presumed in those who visit dark tourism sites. One of the South Asian respondents had visited a dark tourism site in Bangladesh and described her excitement at learning about the past. She is usually excited by history and museums, and she essentially wishes to pursue the truth, the real story behind the events.

> I always think that where I am living, that is my present. But it is how you are living in the present that determines your future. I want to see my past, our past. Yes, some is recorded in writing, but would you really get everything in writing? Is it possible? No, it is not possible. I know how history in written and how it goes! There is a saying that if Raban (a religious figure in Hinduism) won, Raban would be the king! Similarly, those who win writes the history. This is why we need to dig down and find out the truth! What was the truth? Real fact finding! My interest was to dig down.
>
> (SA: 08, female, age 35, Bangladesh)

This statement conveys emphatically the respondent's interest and excitement: and the high stakes she places on such challenges in her travels in terms of her relationship with 'truth' and 'history'. This South Asian tourist visited the sites in search of excitement. Such excitement is key in dark tourism, as sites of this category are typically created through either crime or disaster, both of which carry an element of the thrilling.

4.3.2 Remembrance and Respect

Dark tourism typically centres on sites that are historically associated with death or tragedy. However, some concern world leaders who sacrificed their lives or were assassinated, and who continue to be remembered and respected. Therefore, the desire to demonstrate such respect and remembrance may also be a key motive for visiting dark tourism sites. Another respondent from South Asia stated as:

> It was also out of respect and admiration for Sheikh Mujib's legacy. I was there when I was a kid, but it was closed after the incident took place. But later, in 1977, I was able to visit again. It was needed an overwhelming moment for me.
>
> (SA:05, male, age 60, Bangladesh)

Few respondents in this study articulated their motivations for visiting dark tourism sites as precisely as this interviewee, who attached his motivation to a specific individual commemorated by the site he sought out. This respondent expressed his admiration for Bangladesh's great leader, which influenced his intention to visit the assassination site. Thus, we may assume that his motivation derived from his respect and love for this individual and what they represented to him, and desire for commemoration. When asked further about his deep feelings regarding that particular leader, he said,

> My father was a freedom was a freedom fighter and a close ally of Bangabandhu. We grew up watching him lead the nation. We have also been part of many campaigns and protests before our independence. So, there is a lot of history, emotions and memories associated with that place.
>
> (SA: 05, male, age 60, Bangladesh)

In this statement, we can see that this person is an activist who has participated in many movements and protests in the interest of his country's independence. This may be why he was

so committed to expressing his respect for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. His experience is also deeply shaped by the information available to him about the history that created the site from childhood: he, like other respondents to the interviews directly attaches his feelings about the site with his own family history: in this case, the knowledge he received from his father.

4.3.3 Education and Knowledge

We have identified the impulse on the part of dark tourists to educate themselves widely in the literature review, and the respondents to these interviews stressed the importance of this motivation in their responses both implicitly and explicitly. Many specifically cited their interest in both World Wars, and also the Cold War, all conflict that had huge power in shaping the world of the twentieth century and enduringly since. As such, as the 'hub' of all three conflicts, Germany is dense in dark tourist sites: some connected to Nazi crimes during World War two including the Holocaust, others to the Cold War and the 'Iron Curtain', the Berlin Wall being the most highly symbolic manifestation. This accounts for why Germany possibly offers the widest range of dark tourism sites worldwide, and was so heavily cited by the respondents. Germany also encompasses almost all categories of dark tourism to a greater extent than anywhere else. Tourists thus typically intend to visit Germany's dark tourism sites in person for the purpose for the purpose of gaining knowledge about these crimes, and recurringly in the responses to the interviews about the prominent figure of Adolf Hitler.

> I wanted to see how many people had died, and I wanted to know the background knowledge what happened during that time, and to find out what happened with people in Germany at that time and ultimately what happened with Hitler.
>
> (NSA: 05, female, age 36, UK)

Like the respondent in the section above who sought out a site on the strength of his interest in a historical figure (Bangabandhu), this individual identified another figure of interest, but, it must be stressed, for entirely different reasons. Another respondent from South Asia (Bangladesh) shared the following:

> My observation may be different from others' because I did not visit those places emotionally, but rather from a materialistic perspective. My main

> area of study is archaeological science and museum management (interpretation and presentation), so when I was standing in front of the gas chamber at the Auschwitz concentration camp, I did not have any feelings to be honest. It sounds so rude and harsh, but it is true …So, when I was studying, I planned to visit the camps, the gas chambers from the Second World War in Germany. I wanted to see them, touch them, and feel them, yes, I read about them in books, but reading books and seeing things in person are totally different experiences and provoke different feelings. It is impossible to understand the reality without seeing the site in person. Personally, as a researcher, I believe that anyone who does not visit the places that they are researching won't experience the site in full. All these desires prompted me to visit those sites.
>
> (SA: 06, male, age 30, Bangladesh)

Alongside giving wise advice to researchers, this statement is significant, as it represents an outlier in the data. This response is unusual, as it represents an individual who did not have an emotional response: and particularly did not emotionally respond to an element of the site that we will see does generate strong affect and emotion: artefacts and material remnants. However, as the respondent makes clear, there is a contextual reason for this: that he approaches them in materialist mindset, as it is his job to do so. Researchers accumulate knowledge and seek to enhance understanding in the area they are studying. As such, it is not unexpected that researchers concentrate on the materialistic aspects of emotionally provocative sites, as they are investigating issues around the objects for scientific or research reasons, although that is not to say that researchers cannot be emotionally affected by what they find. Respondent SA: 06 visited the location as it aligned with his academic research interests, and as such was approaching it with a very specific educational goal and motivation in mind.

4.3.4 Random and Unplanned Experience

Tourists occasionally wish to visit locations that lie off the beaten track and that are unique. Such locations may sometimes be visited randomly and may ultimately prove to be the most interesting. Sometimes, the excitement lies in getting there and observing and experiencing a site that the tourists would not otherwise have experienced. Such a random visit occurred for a Bangladeshi tourist working at a private university in Bangladesh,

> The same happened to me, we were outside, and we felt like visiting there as we just happened to be nearby. We were passing through the cemetery

> and the place seemed nice. We stopped the car and visited it once. It was not very enjoyable, since the day was very hot, but the place was calm and quiet. We just visited. But we felt so sad that so many people had been buried there during the Second World War.
>
> (SA: 01, female, age 37, Bangladesh)

The statement above recounts a spontaneous visit to the War Cemetery, Bangladesh, in response to a random urge that she experienced while passing the war cemetery and noticing that it appeared to be beautiful and calm site. It was also a sunny day, and this may also explain why this respondent wished to stop and rest. As she turned into the war cemetery, she learned about its history and the people who were buried there, and she experienced a sense of grief and empathy for them. Another participant also specifically mentioned her spontaneous decision to visit a dark tourism site in dark tourism site in Bangladesh.

> Before going there, I did not feel interested. But after visiting there, I felt very interested. I went only for entertainment purposes, but after that, I felt interested.
>
> (SA: 04, female, age 28, Bangladesh)

Debates surrounding dark tourism have emerged in recent years, particularly with respect to its educational, commercial, or cultural value. Dark tourism facilitators seek to develop and built on these dimensions in various ways. The impact of the media is a key factor in tourists' engagement in dark tourism for entertainment, but this is still dependent on tourists' perceptions or perspectives. It would be interesting to carry out further research into the element of chance in seeking out sites of this nature, and on the 'incidental' or 'accidental' dark tourist, which will also be considered in the case study on the Boddhovumi for very particular reasons about the situation and operation of the site. It would be interesting to gain more of their perspective too: if they feel more or less emotionally affected by a site without prior information, and with a motivation that is perhaps the least intense of those subject to this study.

4.3.5 Historical Curiosity and Revisiting History

Historical identity has been argued to be dark tourism's most significant pull factor (Azevedo, 2018; Božić et al., 2019). Here, both historical artefacts and location are key determinants.

History typically reveals the links between peoples' present-day lives and those of their ancestors, allowing people to gradually understand their own histories. When tourists visit battlefields and war-related disaster sites, they are mining social memories from a historical perspective (Kang et al., 2018) and might learn valuable lessons and undergo fundamental experiences at dark tourism sites based on visual evidence (Lennon, 2018). Most respondents in this study expressed their curiosity about world history as well as that of their home countries, and this curiosity prompted them to visit dark tourism sites.

> Yeah, I studied history for my A levels, and I think it is important to understand history, it has brought us to where we are today, because everything is simply a continuation of what has gone before. So, we don't know; we don't understand where the world is today and where we are going!
>
> (NSA: 01, male, age 36, UK)

The above statement indicates that history can reveal the dangers associated with hatred, prejudice, and discrimination as well as the tragedies of war: and as this respondent identifies, this knowledge can shape the actions of or perspectives of the present. Rather than being a guilt trip for future generations, history offers the opportunity to explore the catastrophic decisions that people made in the past as a result of propaganda spreading lies and hatred. Dark tourism constitutes a multi-layered phenomenon centred on history and history-related heritage and tragedies and centres the idea of experiencing history for yourself. As such, visiting dark tourism sites may provoke not only strong emotions but also a broader contemplation on the darker side of history and humanity. Tourists may be drawn to such sites, as one respondent described:

> I love history and very old buildings attract me a lot. So automatically, the Holocaust and related places motivate me or attract me to visit them. Because they already have historical connotations.
>
> (NSA: 03, male, age 33, South Africa)

For this interviewee, it was not only his interest in history but also old buildings that attracted him to dark tourism sites. Another respondent of the study had visited a war cemetery in the USA and responded as follows:

> … I visited cemeteries, but purposely! I visited this one because it was a piece of history and I love visiting such sites.

(NSA: 06, male, age 45, UK)

As established, the presence of historical objects at dark tourism sites can enhance tourists' attraction to or interest in the site. Several of the South Asian respondents also had an interest in history.

> As a tourist, I find places that introduce me to historical aspects and events more interesting… I like visiting historical places and museums. I have been to many other historical places, forts, and museums. When I was in the Navy, I visited many countries and their historical sites, such as the pyramids in Egypt, various ports in India and war museums in Vietnam around 1996. So, whenever a place or museum gives me an overall idea of a certain country, event, or era, it intrigues me very much. Even more so if they present those events or historical factors in a dramatic way. Oh, I would also like to mention another place in Malaysia, though I have not visited it yet: it is called Kellie's Castle. There is a myth or story about that place that once a British woman took her own life in that castle. I believe that is also a major tourist spot.
>
> (SA:06, male, age 44)

He clearly indicates that his interest in dark tourism is attributable to his broad interest in global history. He also stated the following:

> Sometimes we do not pay attention to a lot of information regarding history. But when we visit museums, they always present that information creatively, with write-ups, sculptures, images, visuals, etc. This makes it easier to understand and more interesting to see.
>
> (SA:06, male, age 44)

He prioritises history and wanting to get an 'overall idea' of another nation's sense of self: an interesting finding that intersects specifically with a major finding pertaining to the Bangladeshi approach to dark tourism in the case study to come. Similarly, in another South Asian tourist's testimony, he reflected on whether historical interest was shaped by his own sense of nationhood:

> Yes, it is a knowledgeable site and interesting for people like me. For people who are not interested in the past or true history-based stuff, such sites may not be interesting.
>
> (SA: 03, male, age 30, Bangladesh)

This tourist's statement clearly demonstrates his interest in his country's history and its role in his decision to visit a dark tourism site. He also mentions people who have no desire to visit historical sites and, as such, may have no interest in visiting dark tourism sites since they typically focus on tragic histories. Another South Asian tourist, now a research fellow in Scotland, UK, stated as follows:

> I went to Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Bangladesh when I was an adult. The Bangabandhu Memorial Museum allowed me to revisit history. Yes, because, for me, tourism is a happy thing. So, the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum was revisiting history for me.
>
> (SA: 07, female, age 36, Bangladesh)

Experiences that allow people to revisit history leave an imprint on people's minds. Still, some historical memories remain, and certain qualities linger in people's memories. Those with an interest in history collate information from different sources, and visits to different historical sites are one such source. Respondent SA: 07's visit to the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Bangladesh allowed her to feel as though she was 'revisiting' history, and interestingly, this encounter produced a 'happy' emotion in her for this reason.

4.3. Mourning Rituals

Most dark tourist sites are either locations where deaths have taken place, or are commemorating death. Death is an inevitability for us all, and we are likely to live lives marked with loss: but the kind of violent death, catastrophe or loss-heavy tragedies commemorated at dark tourist sites are comparatively rare. However, many people's lives are touched by such disasters, and it is particularly difficult for people to cope with losing members of their peer group owing to events such as war or earthquakes or any other unnatural causes of death. Many tourists visit dark tourism sites for the purpose of paying their respects to those who have died as a result of wars, and in the process, pay their respects to their ancestors or family members. One respondent reported that he usually visits such dark tourism sites along with his family members, owing to the great loss of his grandfather.

> I would say I am not someone who would purposely visit such sites. I am interested, but I haven't planned to go specifically. I have got family, my grandfather; he was lost like that. So, I have quite a lot of interest and I know the particular area where he was. I would like to visit at some stage

> to see those areas, and I am sure that there are a lot of memorials as well. If we visit those areas, we normally visit those locations as well.
>
> (NSA: 06, male, age 45, UK)

The statement above clearly demonstrates this interviewee owes his interest in dark tourism to the loss of his family member. He enjoys visiting such sites, since they help him recall his memories, in particular, those of his grandfather. These sites will likely be even more meaningful to anyone who has lost members of their peer group. Another respondent from the UK became very emotional as she spoke about her motivation for visiting dark tourism sites:

> I am kind of biased because I had a Polish upbringing. And I had a Polish Jewish grandmother, but I recommend that others also visit. You know there are clear educational aspects to it; you know you are learning about the Holocaust, and there are so many people who still do not know about it. Even I have no idea what to say.
>
> (NSA: 07, female, age 40, UK)

Respondent NSA: 07 became upset when talking about the concentration camp at Auschwitz. We may assume that she is particularly sensitive and moved by the site because as a person of Polish-Jewish heritage, she has been raised with the atrocities of the Holocaust as a lived reality for her beloved family. Another respondent from South Asia mentioned that she visited dark tourism sites because of her country's freedom fighters' campaign; otherwise, she would not usually visit such sites.

> No. I went there because it was related to my country's freedom struggle, and it was an important place to visit. I can give you an example: I toured Europe, but I did not visit Germany because of the concentration camps. So, for me, dark tourism does not mean anything. I would rather not visit places that have no positive feelings. I really do not feel like I want to go there. But this site, yes, I went…I would rather not have gone. It did not evoke any happy feelings. In fact, even in our country, I would like to avoid such sites. They do not carry happy feelings. Holocaust-related things hold no interest for me. I mean, I would rather consciously avoid them.
>
> (SA: 02, female, age 49, India)

Based on the statements from the interviewees above and elsewhere in this chapter reflecting on these sites who have personal associations with the sites, and most particularly, reasons to perform rituals of mourning around them, this may be one of the most affective motivations

for visiting dark tourism sites. It was these interviewees who understandably were the most moved by feelings of sadness. The last interviewee from South Asia made the interesting point that if she did not have that connection, she would not choose to seek out sites of that nation. She represents what could be speculated as being relevant to a significant portion of dark tourists: they are motivated by the wish to mourn and commemorate their ancestors or families, but they would generally avoid visiting other dark tourism sites.

A key finding of this chapter is the startling fact that many South Asian tourists said they visited dark tourism venues spontaneously or unplannedly with family or friends. Before visiting the dark tourism locations, they admitted that they were aware of some of their historical significance, and those who did so expressed a passionate desire to go there. According to several responders, this interest in history went beyond simple cultural curiosity because some people were going back in time. In addition to the historical curiosity incentive, this drive or preconceived notion offered a psychological, memory-driven method of perceiving a location. It's interesting that these group of people with close ties seemed to have a pretty clear idea of what to expect before visiting the dark tourist destinations. It is obvious that visitors from South Asia and other countries who visited dark tourism sites based on historical causes had the most distinct prior perceptions and expectations of the areas. This study showed that visitors to dark tourism destinations have a variety of distinct perceptions, some of which may change from their pre-visit perceptions. It was intriguing to think about how different people's prior perceptions or expectations were and how these were met, defied, or exceeded as a result of visits from various cultures. As a result, visitors may imagine how they might feel or think before visiting the gloomy tourism locations, but they may discover that when they get there, they react more strongly to the places. The visits confirmed their opinions, according to two respondents—one from the UK and the other from South Asia. Both claimed that their actions were limited to visiting the spot, but when they drove or walked there, they noticed that they were engaging with it on a different, self-reinforcing level. South Asian respondents expressed interest in looking into tangible objects, such as the equipment used to construct and adorn dark tourism sites. On the basis of their observations of other tourists, they said that although tourists frequently cry or feel helpless, their priorities were different. However, only visitors from South Asia brought up these peculiar behaviours. It's interesting to note that in this study, South Asian tourists seemed to be the only ones that used this exploratory approach to material goods. Both South Asian and British visitors experienced melancholy after leaving the gloomy tourist

destinations. They began to consider the families of the victims and to consider the offending attitudes of individuals who had committed the murders or had somehow contributed to the events. As we saw in the literature review, previous researchers have claimed that dark tourism sites are 'attractive' places to visit and have used the language of 'attractions' to discuss them. However, the majority of study participants, both from South Asia and elsewhere, vehemently disagreed with the use of the word 'attraction' in relation to dark tourism. Instead, they favoured the word "interesting" to describe the touristic function of dark tourism sites. Dark tourism destinations are thus most accurately described as fascinating places to visit, at least in this study. Overall, respondents shared their varied perspectives of what they felt after visiting dark tourism destinations. In their post-visit reflections, many respondents shared a range of perspectives on what they had learned, developed, felt emotionally, and enjoyed as a visitor. The study found that while the phrase "dark tourism" is well-known in academia due to the growing amount of academic interest in the field, few visitors are familiar with it. Because their universities are located in well-known dark tourism nations, such as Cambodia (South Asia), Germany (Europe), and the UK, one respondent from South Asia who had earned his master's degree in Cambodia, another from South Asia who received a degree from Germany, and a third from the UK who had earned his master's in geopolitical and dark tourism photography already knew the term "dark tourism." During the interviews for this study, South Asian tourists in particular expressed interest when they heard the word, showing that there is room to raise the field's profile in South Asia. The results of these interviews imply that the management or authorities of dark tourism destinations in Europe coordinate the aesthetics of the destinations with the phenomenon of dark tourism and its associated ideologies. A wide variety of published sources, including media like TV and cinema, literature, and tour operator materials, were used by South Asian and non-South Asian tourists as information sources on dark tourism. It was remarked that compared to the West, Asia had less guidebooks available. With approval from site management teams or authorities, tour guides employ innovative techniques to transmit intense information about dark tourism locations. They can quickly take visitors through the entire facility. Finally, the analysis of the tourist information sources that influence their perceptions before, during, and after site visits yielded two important findings. The first was recognising the enormous variety of motives that respondents described and how these interacted with the information sources they had previously explored. This was further influenced by the interviewees' cultural backgrounds, in particular. Two themes were identified

specifically for South Asian visitors: the importance of their political or social history motivations for visiting the sites, and their preference for online resources over site-based tour guides, which results in a more self-directed experience. The second was observing the discrepancies between initial perceptions, events during the trips, and subsequent perceptions. Due to prior knowledge gained from a personal connection with the locations, South Asian tourists had a very low gap between the expected experience and their reflections, but non-South Asian tourists had a wider gap and were more likely to be shocked by their reactions.

Chapter Five: Dark Tourist Experience and Interpretation

5.1 Chapter Outline and Context

This chapter explores the basis of theoretical knowledge behind the consumption, motivation, and experience of dark tourism, through the lens of the interviews. It proposes to examine how dark tourism is experienced and then interpreted from the perspective of the tourists themselves. The previous chapter was about how tourists around the world including South Asia and Bangladesh get information about dark tourism, and also about their motivations to visit the dark tourism sites, to paint a picture of what may occur before a site visit.

This chapter focuses on what happens during and after a site visit: to illustrate the kind of experiences tourists have during a visit to a dark tourism site, and then how these experiences are interpreted following the visit. Dark tourism sites may not be considered universally 'dark' by every visitor, because the experience of each unique individual may differ, and this idea is central to this study's analysis. Inevitably, more nuanced and varied types of experiences will be felt over time by different tourists.

While previous research on dark tourism has concentrated solely on the motivation of tourists, more recent studies have shifted the focus onto the experiences of tourists, as evidenced in the literature review. However, more work is required in this direction. This chapter contributes to that endeavour by exploring the experiences of tourists from a vast array of countries at several different dark tourism sites. This chapter will reveal and analyse the tourists' experiences regarding dark tourism sites, their reactions and their understandings. As the sample of individuals is international, and the sites under discussion are scattered around the world, this chapter will show a wide variety of perceptions of dark tourism sites.

In this chapter, respondents were interviewed about their experiences of dark tourism, and how they interpreted these experiences. As in the previous chapter, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted over Zoom, and in many instances, data from this chapter is taken from the same interviews as those reported in the previous chapter. The responses of the study participants, as before, were used to inform the analysis presented in this chapter.

5.2 Understanding of the Term 'Dark Tourism'

It is important and commonplace to ask about the term or concept of the research while conducting an in-depth interview with the respondents, to adhere to ethical guidelines around consent and keeping interviewee informed, and also with consideration that without knowing definition of the concept, respondents might not be able to discuss their thoughts and experiences accurately, elaborately or effectively. With that in mind, the respondents were asked about the term 'dark tourism' during the interviews. Surprisingly, only a few of them knew this term or had ideas about what it might mean. In many ways, dark tourism is still very much a taboo among tourists, on account of the negative connotations of the term, which some respondents appeared to accept. One of the respondents from South Asia deliberated over the use of the term:

> No…I do not have any idea…in fact I did not hear about this…this site is historical site for me…this is a national place for me…I can see the sacrifices of my ancestors over here…but this term dark tourism seems like a bit commercialization of this site…this is not appropriate, because, peoples' lives' sacrificing would be shown as commercialization purpose…it would be a wrong concept…visitors should visit the site out of respect and emotion.
>
> (SA: 02, female, age 49, India)

However, a desire for new experiences that might appear to project an obsession with death has created a new area in recent tourism trends, and tourists who are already familiar with dark tourism are beginning to immerse themselves even further into the world of dark tourism. The respondents of this study were asked directly about their awareness or familiarity about the term 'dark tourism'. Most of them did not know about it. Some of them knew about it from different sources. One of the respondents affirmed:

> Yes. I came to know this term from my studies on tourism. It is almost 2/3 years now that I have known about this term 'dark tourism'. I have seen your post on that Facebook group, and I noticed that there are a few potential respondents who also did not know about dark tourism. It is a new concept to most people. When I first came to know this term, I haphazardly guessed it up. As I slowly began reading into dark tourism during my studies and general leisure, I came to understand what it is, and how it is manifested.
>
> (SA: 03, male, age 30, Bangladesh)

This anecdotal evidence clearly reveals that the respondent knew about dark tourism before he was approached for the interview. It is interesting to note that his education about the term involved 'guessing'. It is also both surprising and interesting that, being a Bangladeshi, he had been aware of the term for at least two or three year; other Bangladeshi respondents to this study were asked about the term dark tourism and all of them denied having any idea about the term. This is a response that could be expected, considering how little information about dark tourism in Bangladesh is available, especially to non-researchers, or those not in the tourism industry.

Even though SA: 03 was initially introduced to the term through academic textbooks since he visited some dark tourism sites, all of them were outside Bangladesh. However, such knowledge of dark tourism is not particularly widespread at present, even among tourists who might be visiting dark tourism sites, owing to factors outlined in the section on information sources used by dark tourists. Notwithstanding the experience of respondent SA: 03, another South Asian tourist, SA: 04, whom I interviewed and who had visited several dark tourism sites in Bangladesh and Japan, knew nothing about dark tourism. However, I did find another respondent from South Asia who had some prior knowledge of dark tourism. This respondent is a researcher of archaeology and in his capacity as an academic he has worked on ancient sites and monuments. This was his experience:

> Yes, in my study I found this term. I did interpretation and concept development work in Piramunda and there I found the term dark tourism. Piramunda is inextricably bound up with dark tourism.
>
> (SA: 06, male, age 30, Bangladesh)

This interviewee thus came across dark tourism somewhat fortuitously as part of his research on interpretation and concept development. By contrast, respondent SA: 08, a South Asian tourist and PhD student in Australia, was completely unaware of dark tourism. Another tourist from the UK had no inkling of what dark tourism might be, saying:

> I did not hear about it until recently. Is it some sort of money-making organisation?
>
> (NSA: 02, female, age 19, UK)

Respondent NSA: 03, an African tourist, was unaware of dark tourism even though he was interested in visiting historical sites and historical buildings or structures. Respondent NSA: 04,

who works in the UK as a tour operator and who must therefore be aware of trends in tourism for her job gained an awareness of dark tourism through reading Philip Stone's 2009 book, *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*. Stone is an academic who has written several works on dark tourism and is credited as a significant voice in the disciplinary field. Respondent NSA: 05, who visited a dark tourism site in Germany, was not aware of the concept of dark tourism. Respondent NSA: 06, who had visited the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery in France, knew of dark tourism before he was approached for interview: he recalled hearing the term used in a TV report. Another tourist who was interviewed for this research has been fascinated about dark tourism ever since it was brought to his attention by his university lecturer. When interviewed about his knowledge of dark tourism, he recalled a book written by Lennon and Foley (2000) *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*, which initially sparked his interest in dark tourism:

> I wanted to do something on documentary barriers, borders, geopolitical on my landscape, one of my lecturers said oh that sounds it could be touching on dark tourism, and I spent a lot of time researching, and read academic materials on dark tourism.
>
> (NSA: 08, male, age 57, UK)

This respondent thus had a very strong awareness and understanding of dark tourism prior to being interviewed for this research. However, another respondent, a tourist and student from Malaysia, had gained some knowledge of dark tourism through his academic background. The most interesting outcome of the examples explored in this section is that, while many of the tourists interviewed had frequently visited dark tourist sites in the past, most of them had no knowledge of dark tourism as a phenomenon. Although I hope to have shown that visiting dark tourism sites does not necessarily entail knowledge of dark tourism, more research still needs to be conducted to explore this underappreciated aspect of dark tourism further. This stuck the researcher as an important element to establish in tandem with examining experiences, to see if the respondents with knowledge of the disciplinary field had a different experience to those unaware of the term.

5.3 Spiritual Experiences

5.3.1 Paying Respect

The idea of paying respect proved to be a significant driver of the experience of visiting dark tourism sites. One of the respondents from the UK visited a genocide museum named 'Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum' in Cambodia to pay respect to people who were killed by the Khmer Rouge. From 1976 to 1979, an estimated 20,000 people were imprisoned at Tuol Sleng, and it was one of between 150 and 196 torture and execution centres recognised by the Khmer Rouge. On 26 July 2010, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia sentenced the prison's chief, Kang Kek Iew, for crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. He died on 2 September 2020 while serving a life sentence. The genocide, and certainly its aftermath, was within the lived memories of many of the interviewees: it is a significant event of recent history. The respondent also expressed a desire to take his children to the site so that he could share his experience of what he had learned about the atrocities associated with it, and so that they in turn may pay respect by knowing more about their past and history. When questioned further on his experience, he responded in the following way:

> Yes, very interesting. Like I said, we do not want these things to happen again, so we need to keep in mind the terrible thing one human can do to another human, it is not the individual, it is the action of the state. If we do not learn from our history, then we will just repeat it again. It is one big slippery slope, you know. It is a crime on humanity, and now I have 3 girls and my wife is pregnant. I would like to bring my children over there to show them. They are not old enough to understand it now. But when they get older, I would take them and explain it to them.
>
> (NSA: 01, male, age 36, UK)

His experience, and his wish to repeat that experience with his growing family arose from a desire to pay respect to people who fought or sacrificed their lives against the regime in Cambodia. He identified that the experience solidified a feeling that it is incumbent on future generations to familiarise themselves with their history, and to pay respect to victims of atrocities. In this way, dark tourism can form an important pedagogic function. The idea of showing respect through dark tourism is, therefore, more meaningful than simply finding out about dark tourism through popular books, movies, or documentaries. This is perhaps why this respondent is so keen on the idea of taking his daughters to the site he had originally visited in Cambodia, in the hope that they too might be inclined to pay their own respects after visiting

the site. The idea of paying respect through dark tourism is similarly recounted by other respondents. Respondent NSA: 03 from South Africa described his experience of visiting the Berlin Wall:

> I felt embarrassed to take pictures, I was embarrassed that people were playing around. On the one hand I am happy to have seen that, but on the other, I couldn't help blaming people, and I had a sort of mixed feeling. I had never been told that people were actually shot if they crossed the wall. At the beginning I became emotional reflecting on how terrible it was that people were shot when crossing that wall. Then I started to feel that it is soloistic of tourists to take pictures, as if people were taking pictures right where someone had been shot. So, I'm not sure whether you get my drift, but it was certainly a mixed feeling, yes.
>
> (NSA: 03, male, age 33, South Africa)

According to this experience, he thought that taking pictures of the site could be considered disrespectful to the people who were shot trying to cross the Berlin Wall. He was simply visiting Berlin, had no personal connection with the site, had come from a different continent, and was thrown into emotional turmoil as he gazed at the remnants of the wall. His experience of being this deeply moved and consumed by the idea of 'paying respect' is an attitude that is hard to imagine arising from a secondary source, such as reading a book about Berlin in the twentieth century. Clearly, the acuteness of this perception, or sensitivity to dark tourist sites is unique to an in-person experience. There is something about being situated in these locations where tourists are impelled to pay respect. This goes some way to explain this interviewee's mixed emotions on taking photographs as he walked around the Berlin Wall.

Visiting dark tourism sites as a means by which to pay respect is becoming more common. For this reason, tourists are less inclined to take selfies against the backdrop of the sites, which could be viewed as disrespectful, or not in line with the solemnity of the surroundings. Some of the respondents became emotional when asked about their experiences. For instance, respondent NSA: 06 described his experience of visiting the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery in France as follows:

> Yes, absolutely, the scale and the 15,000 headstones. It's an everyday memory for me, it is in front of you, forward, right, and left, there are headstones everywhere. I can say that the fallen are still so much respected by the people who look after the memorial. It's a completely maintained American cemetery and well-looked after establishment; it's peaceful, it's quiet, it has a lot of respect; it's a beautiful area, it's very

> well kept, all the grass is cut, and all the head stones are clean. It's been 100 years and still there are lot of people who come to pay their respects. I would say people have a lot of respect for these things over there.
>
> (NSA: 06, male, age 45, UK)

His respect for the people who lost their lives during the First World War accounted for the emotion he felt on visiting the site. Tourists might not have any preconceptions about their emotions or feelings before visiting dark tourism sites, but when they actually visit the sites, they often find themselves overcome with emotion. He reconfirmed his experience saying:

> No, it is not meant to be a touristic place. It is not somewhere to go to enjoy yourself or do things tourists usually do. It is a memorial for the dead. It is a place of respect.
>
> (NSA: 06, male, age 45, UK)

The experiences noted in this section thus indicate the power of being on-site in paying respects to people who died during times of conflict. The tourists who embraced this practice were deliberate and mindful of their behaviour on the sites, and had clear ideas of levels of appropriate behaviour and actions. The respondents also believed that by visiting these sites they could preserve the memory of the fallen.

5.3.2 Reinforcement of Belief and Grief

The reinforcement of belief usually occurs when an individual takes a certain action that offers support for a pre-existing set of beliefs or values. Respondent NSA: 01, who travelled to the Cambodian site, experienced self-reinforcement after his visit. When asked about the effect of visiting the site, he said:

> I think it is great for understanding your thought process and reinforces your original beliefs.
>
> (NSA: 01, male, age 36, UK)

This seems to suggest that the dark tourism experience can cause tourists to reflect on the site or the incidents that occurred there in a distinctive way. This is not an unusual experience, as is also indicated by another respondent on visiting Hiroshima Nagasaki in Japan, who said:

> People used to visit there just for a day out. When I started to go for that war cemetery, I also thought it would be a day out. But when I arrived there, I felt helpless, I could relate to the Second World War; above all it touched me. What touched me the most was that there were young boys like 15 or 16 years of age, their home countries were Germany, but they came here, and they died during the war—it touched me a lot, maybe their family members do not know where their gravestones are, and it will be there in Bangladesh year after year. This is how I was feeling. I was thinking In depth that so many people died, I reflected on their pains and sorrows. I could almost feel what happened to them. Yet I saw so many people taking selfies, and I could not be like that. I was so sad and emotional.
>
> (SA: 04, female, age 28, Bangladesh)

Her visit to Hiroshima Nagasaki in Japan clearly had a profound impact on her. Despite originally intending simply to visit the site, she revealed a diverse emotional attachment to the victims who lost their lives in the Second World War. She also experienced feelings of deprivation and helplessness on their behalf, thus demonstrating how the perception of dark tourism might change or differ when tourists experience dark tourist sites in person. Visiting dark tourism sites can evoke strong physical and emotional responses for tourists. The dark tourism experience essentially creates a kind of inner communication between the body and mind of the tourists as they visit different sites. Tourists feel or recreate in themselves through the affective power of the site a sense of deprivation and horror. This kind of reaction after visiting dark tourism site would create a significant stimulus towards tourists' physical and emotional activities. One of respondents of this study described his experience of visiting the Sachsenhausen memorial site and museum in Berlin:

> It was very peaceful at that war cemetery. There were a lot of teenagers, and I get quite sad as it was such a quiet place. And that peaceful garden was very pathetic, all the children were from orphanages and had been executed. I cried when I was there as I was really moved and had not realised that so many children were executed. Of course, I was aware of the Jewish community, and when I went to Hitler's suicide site [the Fuhrerbunker], I was quite happy. It was a car park and not a memorial site. I did not feel anything, it was just a historical moment.
>
> (NSA: 05, female, age 36, UK)

This interviewee, a British tourist, felt like crying when visiting a Holocaust in Germany. Before her visit, she had been aware of the atrocities of the Holocaust, but actually being at the site led to psychological and physical manifestations of grief. Tourists cannot predict their

reactions to visiting particular sites, but they are often different from what that tourist initially expected. Another tourist recalled having cried when she visited a famous dark tourist site in India named 'the Jallianwala Bagh massacre', also known as 'the Amritsar massacre', took place on 13 April 1919. A large peaceful crowd had gathered at the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, Punjab to protest the arrest of pro-Indian independence leaders, Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satya Pal.

> I did not expect to be so passionate. But I was. I found tears in my eyes. That was really a passionate moment for me. Passion regarding struggle, what our ancestors had gone through … Yes, the narrow exit way. It was so narrow and when you think that people were trying to come out from that site while being burned by the British … that really gave me goosebumps. It was not a very happy feeling.
>
> (SA: 02, female, age 49, India)

This person felt great 'passion' towards her ancestors who lost their lives during their struggle for freedom in India, which she explicitly stated she had not expected. She described finding herself feeling very emotional as she walked in the garden of that dark tourism site. In this, her feeling towards her ancestors arose instantly and unexpectedly. Indeed, it was precisely the unanticipated nature of the experience of grief that stimulated her feelings so deeply.

5.3.3 Authenticity

In this section, I explore the notion of authenticity that has been touched upon in the literature review and previous chapter with reference to the experiences one may have at a dark tourism site. As explored by the definition of the term in the introduction to this thesis, it is a contested term in the field (Moore et al., 2021). Throughout this research, 'authenticity' implicitly means a level of perception on the part of the tourist, in accordance with the generally accepted disciplinary view that authenticity is contestable. In the context of dark tourism, a perceived level of authenticity brings tourists to dark tourism attractions, and it brings meaningful experiences to the tourists.

The consumption of dark tourism through media and technology exposure, it is a significant note that authenticity considerations are important for the construction and interpretation of dark tourism sites to reveal and encourage tourists. Lennon and Foley (2000) showed these

repercussions of experiencing dark tourism sites such as the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC by the range of hype and controversy that it had generated in terms of a perceived lack of authenticity. The concept of 'authenticity' can protect some dark tourism sites against potential controversy and accusations that could be levelled at them. As a result, tourists might experience a sense of perceived value and satisfaction on having visited the site in question. One of the study respondents described this feeling as follows:

> After visiting the Auschwitz concentration camp in Germany, I could feel the authenticity of the site, and this is how I found myself so deeply engrossed in the site. When I was walking around the site, I could feel the victims' sorrow and pain. This has such real meaning to me. At the same time, I must say that I have visited various different dark tourist sites…but I have never felt such real or authentic feelings that I felt when I visited that Auschwitz concentration camp. I was so touched by the experience.
>
> (NSA:02, Female, age 31)

In this way, it is very important for the management of dark tourism sites to recognise the importance of authenticity for the success of the dark tourist experience. The desire for authenticity motivates tourists to take part in the dark tourist experience; and where feelings of authenticity match the expectations of tourists this contributes to their sense of a satisfactory experience. The availability of clear signposting and directions revealing the layout of a dark tourist site is likely to have a significant effect on tourists' perceptions of authenticity, being able to see for themselves what is being represented, and if done well, improves the experience. Authenticity in dark tourism is also strongly object-related: tourists like to see material objects that are related to the incidents and provide evidence of historical authenticity. One of the respondents of this study stated after visiting Bangabandhu memorial site in Bangladesh:

> I thought it would be a boring site to visit since I like to avoid historical sites. I do not have any fascination for history. But believe me I was shocked while I was there in the Bangabandhu memorial museum! I saw the objects and symbols which were directly related to the assassination of Bangabandhu along with his family member. The symbol of bleeding was not removed; the authorities of the museum kept it as it is. The messy room where he was dragged and shot…everything was as it is. The cloths, kitchen…everything…most interestingly every incident was written in a descriptive way over there.
>
> (SA:06, female, age 25, Bangladesh)

This quotation demonstrates that the feeling of fulfilment experienced on visiting dark tourism sites rests not on the genuine sense of authenticity but rather on the tourists' *perceived* accuracy (Chhabra et al., 2003). In the experience reported above, the respondent notes the authenticity of the site, in which the artefacts are original rather than replicas. She also praises the management of the site for not presenting a sanitised version of events. Considering the definitions and understandings of 'authenticity' from the data from tourists, we may suggest that tourists seek two distinctive types of authentic experience: first, through material forms that embody a demonstrable authenticity; and second, though the depth of feelings stimulated by a visit—an emotional authenticity, a more elusive quality. Dark tourism can shed light on both types of authenticity in the minds of tourists and are further shaped by how the management of dark tourism sites maintain the original conditions of the site. Perceived authenticity in dark tourism should therefore be seen as having a moderating impact on the relevant relationships between tourists' motivations to visit the sites and their experiences while there: creating an aspect of cultural development for the tourists.

5.3.4 Feelings of Involvement

The concept of involvement has been expanded into the area of consumer behaviour and is deemed by Josiam et al. (1999) to be a significant psychographic factor in tourism owing to its impact on individuals' opinions and decision making. Since tourists are consumers, visiting a tourist site is a concrete psychographic decision given the dependency of a tourist's decisions to visit a site because of factors including curiosity, excitement and exploration. A visit to a dark tourism site indicates the degree to which a tourist devotes themselves to associated activities and memorable experiences. A tourist's sense of involvement can also be expressed as a state of reason and desire as well as an orientation towards activities. Some tourists interviewed for this study felt a sense of involvement visiting the sites, which provided them with self-confidence and self-motivation in the duration of their visits.

Tourists who had personal connections with sites, such as losses of their ancestors said that they could feel a sense of deep involvement when they visited certain sites. One of the respondents from the UK (originally from Poland) narrated her experience while crying:

> I was totally lost when I visited the Auschwitz concentration camp…I could connect myself with my ancestors who were tortured and killed in

> that camp…it is intolerable…how brutal they were…how could my ancestors tolerate and pass their time in that way? I was thinking about what I would do if I were in their situation…I put myself and understood the priority-based preference there. I think the people of Poland need to visit the Auschwitz concentration camp again and again. Only through visiting the sites may they understand the sacrifices of our ancestors.
>
> (NSA: 07, female, age 40, UK)

Thus, during visiting period tourists could feel involvement with the dark tourism site if it much more enticing or if it would have previous related factors or issues with tourists. In this study, tourists expressed a sense of emotional involvement that emerged during the interview process. Feelings of involvement may also come from a particular sense of personal attraction towards a particular site (Hou et al., 2005), as was reflected in some interviews. Indeed, some of the respondents highlighted their attraction towards dark tourism sites, as evidenced in the example below:

> I am a historical person…when I take days off for holiday, I search TripAdvisor for historic sites. Most historic sites are based on toxic history and when I first read about them, I feel enticed towards visiting the sites. Usually, I plan to visit; sometimes alone, sometimes with friends. I feel that knowing about war sites related to different issues from the past can help us gain knowledge about authentic facts. Fact finding has always attracted me. I get immense pleasure when I learn about facts, and obviously dark tourism sites related to death fascinate me a lot.
>
> (NSA:03, female, age 28, UK)

Tourists visit dark tourism sites and are 'involved' because they can relate their past and present experiences with the dark tourism sites. The 'nearer' the loss, naturally, the feelings of involvement are more intense: for example, when tourists lose somebody from their peer groups, they become more emotional and sensitive. They organically involve themselves towards those dark tourism sites through these connections. Examining involvement with dark tourism sites as a facet of tourist experience is potentially rich in research potential: study respondents were drawn to the concept of 'involvement' and declared their interests and desires openly in embracing it as a mode of experiencing the sites.

5.3.5 Sights, Objects, and Visual Environment

Academic researchers are genuinely curious about the objects or platforms of their research. They also look down the road or around the corner according to different perspectives. They try to be much more connected and inquisitive. One of the respondents of this study is a researcher from South Asia who took a more inquisitive approach to dark tourism. He said:

> At that time, I was watching people, guided tourists, how visitors present themselves when visiting the sites. I saw that so many visitors started crying when the tour guides described to them the incidents and issues connected to the site. Basically, I did not look to my emotion. I was looking at other people's responses to the sites. It is horrible that within 4 years 1.1 million people were killed in that concentration chamber.
>
> (SA: 06, male, age 30, Bangladesh)

This respondent was attempting to observe all the different conditions present as he was walking around the site. His approach was very close to investigation, not that of a usual tourist: this respondent was noted as having a materialist approach to the site, being a researcher. His mode of visitation might be described as observational, rather than emotional, because it was for the purposes of his work. In focusing on a different observation that was concerned with the organisation and management of another dark tourism site, another South Asian tourist shared her experience of her visit:

> When I went for the first time to the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, I was so happy since the team who decorated and rearranged the site designed the interior decoration in a fantastic way. I was so happy to see it as if it were a home—like a President's home. The team re-arranged all the furniture and rooms as they were. The team should be appreciated. They transferred the home into a museum. This was a great thing. They made it lively, but at the same time they also preserved the history of the place. For example, they kept the symbol or spot of a gunshot with the help of glass. I feel this is a good representation of history, and for Boddhovumi I would appreciate the architects who made the monument as it was made so well. Sometimes some monuments do not represent history accurately, but this one did that very well.
>
> (SA: 08, female, age 35, Bangladesh)

As this quote demonstrates, this particular tourist paid a great deal of attention to the details of the site—the tools, the general design, and the furniture. She did not pay any attention to feelings of grief. In contrast to previous experiences surveyed in earlier sections, this provides

an additional and interesting response to perceptions of dark tourist sights. Rather than paying respect to the victims of the site or experiencing feelings of grief, this tourist chose only to observe the form of the site and the objects within it. This motivation was identified previously as having an educational slant. The experiences of those invested in the objects and sights provided them with vivid memories: these respondents gave more in-depth descriptions of what they saw, rather than how they felt. As they are objectively orientated, their interpretations are not related to emotions or involvement: they are seeking to mobilise an objective perspective.

5.3.6 Acquiring Knowledge

Following on from this object-based approach, we explore further the impact of educative motivations on dark tourist experiences. When a tourist is introduced to a site, especially in the cases of those with little to no knowledge of the events commemorated there, it presents an opportunity for education. A respondent who visited Auschwitz concentration camp affirmed this:

> The thing I remember is that they (the management or authority of the site) kept everything very well. I could remember everything as tourists had so many signposts which help people become educated. I would say that it was a great experience for me. I am extremely grateful for that. In this sense, I think dark tourism can be a positive thing which helps educate people and inform them about past events, so that such things never happen again.
>
> (NSA: 02, female, age 19, UK)

Her statement highlights the scope for education in visiting dark tourist sites. She tried to express repeatedly that tourists might get involved in the experience as they read the signposts situated around the sites. Thus, signposts appear to be a helpful tool for providing education to tourists at dark tourist sites. Another respondent from South Africa shared a similar experience:

> I did expect knowledge from the Berlin one, but I did not go there to gain any academic knowledge. I just wanted to see the site. And then I ended up with knowledge. More knowledge.
>
> (NSA: 03, male, age 33, South Africa)

The above statement clearly shows that there was an expectation of learning something new from the sites, and that this expectation was fulfilled. Another study respondent visited a dark

tourist site at the Sachsenhausen memorial site and museum in Berlin and confirmed that the site offered a source of education when she was approached for interview. She states:

> I think they (dark tourist sites) are educational because they teach things, and by teaching you get knowledge. That increase your knowledge bank and as people we become more educated. This makes it more interesting to interact with people and it gives you more knowledge.
>
> (NSA: 05, female, age 36, UK)

She identified another facet of education: that it further enables personal interactions: that taking these opportunities for learning deepens our ability to connect with other people. Another tourist explained his view of the potential for learning: and also noted it's positive value in forging connections with others:

> I think it is very easy to read a book, it is very easy to watch a movie or talk to someone who has experienced the real thing. But in anything we do in life, there is nothing quite like doing it yourself, actually going to the place. One thing that is important to me is scale; you cannot truly imagine how large or small a place is without actually going there. Let me give you an example not directly related to tourism. If you study art, you can read lots of books about paintings, let's say some flowers from Van Gogh. Or you can see a picture in a book, and you would see some flowers painted by Van Gogh. But you cannot truly appreciate the size, appreciate the details; you can't look around you and see people's reactions. So, I think if someone is going to truly learn about something visiting and experiencing the thing in person is essential to that learning process.
>
> (NSA: 08, male, age 57, UK)

The above response suggests that although academic books and educational institutions present important ways to expand knowledge, there is nothing more inspirational than travelling and seeing things in person, which arguably can provide more valuable life lessons and knowledge. He also significantly mentions the power of seeing other people experiencing the same thing too. Experiencing something is more valuable to the learning process than being told about it. Another respondent from South Asia had similar ideas about the intersection of knowledge and dark tourism:

> As I said, it had a lot of information which took us right back to the time of the original events. The way they presented it all was amazing. Sometimes we can learn about these things from books too, but I thought a visual display is much more impactful…Yes, absolutely. That was what

> I was trying to say. Specially for the younger generation, these museums could ignite a lot of interest and motivate them for further research.
>
> (SA:05, male, age 45)

His experience of dark tourism presented him with a new way of thinking. He suggested that future generations can also learn through visiting these kinds of sites. Like this respondent, tourists in general can come to appreciate that actually visiting dark tourist sites provides an important avenue for learning and gaining knowledge about the past. This plays strongly into the idea of the motivation of imagining oneself in a historical space: moving from virtuality to reality.

5.3.7 Engaging with a Sense of Humanity

Education refers not only to a more comprehensive understanding of facts and events, but in a more philosophical sense to how people learn and think profoundly about humanity: processing that historical and political knowledge to connect on a deeper level.

Many visitors to dark tourism sites experience strong emotions and use them to reflect on wider concerns. One study respondent from the UK expressed his personal feelings in the following way:

> For most of the places I have visited associated with dark tourism, I come away feeling how inhuman humans can be. Even though I am 57 and have seen lots of things in my lifetime, it is always a struggle. I always question what comes into people's minds, and how people could do certain things. I don't know why I am surprised each time because it has happened so often. I've seen people hurt their animals. Why would they abuse their pet? I cannot rationalise such inhumanity. I am surprised every time, no matter how many times I see the evidence. For instance, every time I see footage of 9/11, I just see mass slaughter, and think what a horrible thing it was.
>
> (NSA: 08, male, age 57, UK)

He became emotional as he talked about the incidents related to the places he had visited. He felt so terrible that he could not speak positively about the sites. He felt hopeless in the face of mankind's inhumanity and cruelty. However, he also described some fewer negative feelings in relation to the site management at Ground Zero, which he thought was being carried out with sensitivity and good judgement:

> I think it has exceeded my expectations in terms of how well it has been dealt with. As I mentioned before, America commercialises everything to some extent, and I felt that would happen there, but in reality, it's been preserved incredibly well. The fact that they did not build a huge building there, I think it's quite possibly one of the best memorials I've ever visited.
>
> (NSA: 08, male, age 57, UK)

This statement demonstrates the ability of tourists to critically analyse a dark tourism site. Such reactions provide compelling evidence that experiencing dark sites help tourists to make some sense of life. A respondent from South Asia spoke about her feelings visiting the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Bangladesh, which was formerly the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in which he and his family were assassinated:

> In terms of knowledge, maybe people might enhance their analytical abilities. Sometimes people make random comments, but when they visit, they know the reality and can relate the facts. I would say go and see their family orientation, their dining table, maybe their family did dine there many times…maybe people might become humbler after seeing the rooms where they used to live. It certainly made me humbler and gave me more focus and reassurance to continue living my life the way I am. Be happy with whatever you have right now.
>
> (SA: 01, female, age 37, Bangladesh)

The interviewee's comments express sympathy towards the victims of the murder. At the same time, she gained an appreciation of how to live a peaceful life, and gave names to what she took away from the experience: humility, focus, reassurance: all-encompassing and overarching states of being. In this way, dark tourism enables a comprehensive as well as an academic mode of learning. Using dark tourism as a means by which to gain life experience forms the topic of the next section.

> First of all, as a mother I would say that my kids should see that museum and should realise the reality, I mean they should not trust anyone whimsically. I remember my father also used to tell us that if you believe someone blindly, something wrong could come into your head. And at the same time, I want them to know our culture, heritage, and history, especially the young boy of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was killed so brutally. I want them to see that…kids may not expect or may not take that easily. None of them would take it easily, neither would my son.
>
> (SA: 01, female, age 37, Bangladesh)

This quotation demonstrates how one should form their own opinions good and bad. Rather than believing 'blindly' what one is told, personal analysis and observation might be a better marker for judging one's cultural heritage. Observation and experiences of dark tourism sites provide more practical and perceived knowledge of the kind that creates and shapes belief, helps people to analyse, form opinions, and think for themselves.

5.4 Tourist Perceptions of Experiences

Seaton (1996) describes dark tourism is a behavioural phenomenon that is characterised as an attraction towards dark tourist sites. However, some tourists might not define their desire to visit dark sites in such a way. They would perhaps be more likely to treat dark tourism as a sensitive or spiritual matter rather than one of 'attraction', which might be deemed inappropriate in this context. Indeed, one of the study respondents stated:

> In a way it is, but I do not like to describe it as tourist attraction. The families of people who lost their lives. I don't think they would consider it a tourist attraction. I don't know, it would be disrespectful if I said it is a place of attraction for tourists.
>
> (NSA: 02, female, age 19, UK)

Here, the respondent explained that dark tourism sites should be approached with respect. She expressed a respect and sensitivity towards dark tourism sites and disliked the concept of attraction being applied to the experience. She did, however express that the experience drew her further on to find out more about the site, describing it as worthwhile and interesting:

> I would not recommend it to somebody as an enjoyable experience. I would rather recommend as an experience, as a way to be educated. It made me more interested about the subject since I am so passionate about it, which is why I visited in the first place. After visiting, I felt more interested in the subject, and this was very much down to me going to Auschwitz.
>
> (NSA: 02, female, age 19, UK)

She frames the sites as vessels of history; not only as places of learning, but representing collective pasts. One respondent who visited Berlin expressed a similar feeling in the following way:

> I would not use the word attraction here, because I am sensitive towards the site. You know, it is not the site where people would go for attraction, since people were killed. Buckingham Palace is an attraction. It is interesting, yes, but I think visiting a cemetery is not attractive. I think it is interesting because it is all about human history. You can get to learn about political power and action. I think it is interesting because you may learn something you did not previously know. I gained new knowledge myself.
>
> (NSA: 05, female, age 36, UK)

Such sensitivity around the sites explains why many visitors do not consider them attractive places to visit, but worthwhile all the same. It is for this reason that the tourist quoted above considered her visit to Berlin interesting, rather than attractive: to shape the perception. One study respondent who was of Polish-Jewish heritage but living in the UK had visited Auschwitz, and had similar things to say about her experience:

> Attraction! I think this is the wrong word. Because of my heritage, I want to educate myself even more. I love history, and I consider it my duty. To consider it as attraction, enjoyment, or entertainment is pathetic. I think as a human being one must tick a certain number of boxes, and I think some of these places should be on everybody's to-do list. Otherwise, we might see history continue repeating itself, and younger generations may not be so interested in what happened in the past. So, learning is important to prevent history from repeating itself.
>
> (NSA: 07, female, age 40, UK)

Noy (2008) considers dark tourist sites to be places of attraction, which also she interestingly refers to as 'pathetic', or arousing pity, which is a feeling rooted in compassion. Although tourists may be attracted to death and disaster tragedies, this attraction largely stems from intrigue or pity rather than from any superficial form of attraction. Another dark tourist from the UK elaborated on the connection between attraction and dark tourism:

> Yes, attract is a very interesting word. I think because I have a very good knowledge of history, current and world affairs, and because I love travel, dark tourism attracts me. For example, I had been to the Berlin Wall before it was taken down in 1989. To go and visit and see what it looks like now was very interesting. All the other places I've read or studies I feel like visiting them in person enhances the learning experience.
>
> (NSA: 08, male, age 57, UK)

He tried to avoid using the word attraction in this superficial usage. What he is attracted by is contemporary affairs, history, and travel, and it is in this way that he finds dark tourism interesting. Regular tourists might consider general tourist sites attractive by concrete, practical criteria: if they have good shopping and accommodation options, hospitable locals, and so on. But in relation to dark tourism, the term 'tourist attractiveness' take on an alternative meaning. Most study respondents suggested that dark tourism is interesting rather than superficially attractive because they are at once sentimental, historical, and educational places to visit. This is expressed in the following response:

> Both, but I would say interesting. Attractive is more related to entertainment or amusement. From that perspective, I would say that dark tourist sites are interesting.
>
> (SA:06, male, age 40)

To this respondent, dark tourism sites are not attractive, because he interprets attraction as a matter of entertainment, which he deems is inappropriate in the context of dark tourism. A study respondent from India considered dark tourist sites to be interesting rather than attractive as her genuine desire to see the sites was related to India's freedom struggle. She visited the site of the 1919 Amritsar Massacre, which occurred when the British Indian Army was ordered to fire at unarmed Indian civilians who had gathered in a garden to protest at the arrest of pro-Indian independence leaders. When asked about the site, she said:

> Something interesting is anything that captures your interest, anything you desire to do. When I went there, I went with certain expectations. It was my interest to travel there, to see the place where Indian people struggled for their freedom during the time of British rule. I felt connected to the place and its history. So, for me it was absolutely an interesting site.
>
> (SA: 02, female, age 49)

She expressed a genuine desire to learn about the events relating to the struggle for Indian independence. Another South Asian tourist had a different perspective on the attractiveness of dark tourist sites:

> It depends on the place. For instance, I had no attraction towards the Piramunda concentration camp [a concentration camp in Germany], and I never will. Actually, I used to feel excitement rather than sorrow visiting these kinds of sites…I cannot say interesting, because if I say interesting people might think I am supporting the Nazi agenda, but that is not the

> case at all. But the word 'War' itself is a crime. So, if you fight in a war, there will be crimes. So, they did war, they did crimes. I would say I was not so emotional.
>
> (SA: 06, male, age 30)

This tourist was particularly interested in war and its machinations. Interestingly, he considered war to be a form of 'misconduct', which according to him generates further disaster and crime. Although he described his experience of visiting the concentration camp of Piramunda in Germany as 'exciting', he was reluctant to use terms such as 'attractive' or 'interesting' to describe his experience. Another South Asian tourist pursuing her PhD in Australia was not convinced that dark tourist sites were interesting. She said:

> I heard that the British people use the word 'interesting' when they do not like something or anything. I live in Australia and here in Australia when we do not want to say anything wrong, then we would say 'you did amazing', instead we say, 'you did interesting'. I do not want to say a dark tourist site is interesting, I would say it is important to go there, to see it in person. You cannot understand by only viewing photos and watching television, you need to see it in person. I have seen a lot of documentaries on the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, but I could not feel a true connection, that is a different thing. I mean the photographer or cinematographer is showing us his perspective. You are seeing things through another person's lens, and you might not get the full picture. In the same way that you cannot get a real view of nature wearing sunglasses, it is better to see things face to face.
>
> (SA: 08, female, age 35)

This respondent finds it is better for people to visit sites in person and make their own judgements about dark tourist sites, since photographs or documentaries cannot always give the full picture. Thus, whether a tourist finds a site interesting or not would depend on whether they visit the site in person. Respondent SA: 08 urges people to judge the sites for themselves, which explains her reluctance to use the term 'interesting'. As a tourist she might not wish to be affected by anyone else's bias. She refrained from endorsing anyone else's perspective, hence her refusal to use the term 'interesting'. Another study respondent visited a dark tourist site in Cambodia and considered the site interesting, stating:

> Yes, very interesting. People can often act like backstabbers, and history brings this in front of our eyes. Interestingly, dark tourist sites provide the source for us to be aware of such inhumanity. Yes, interesting.

(NSA: 01, male, age 36)

He thought that dark tourist sites were interesting, because he wanted to keep the incidents in mind, with the reasoning that a person who remembered such acts would never repeat them. According to him, dark tourism offers the opportunity to learn about world events, so that crimes against humanity might never be repeated. Another South Asian tourist narrated:

> Dark tourism sites are thought-provoking but not interesting. They are depressing, but not interesting.
>
> (SA: 01, female, age 37)

The interviewee did not consider dark tourism sites to be interesting, given her emotional reaction, 'depressing', to visiting one. Faced with the knowledge of such physical loss, she considered the place depressing rather than exciting or interesting.

5.5 Experiences and Encounters with Dark Tour Guides

At most tourist sites, tourist guides often assist visitors by providing information on environmental protection and historical context, and by translating signposts, for instance. In the context of dark tourism, the picture around tour guides was slightly different. One study respondent indicated that they did not need require help from tourist guide, as they had researched their visit in advance:

> No, I did online research…but maybe a foreigner would need the services of a tourist guide. I saw some other sites in Comilla [a war cemetery in Bangladesh] where foreigners were taking the services of tourist guides.
>
> (SA: 04, female, age 28)

This tourist from South Asia did not feel it necessary to acquire the help of a tourist guide, whereas she observed that other non-Asian tourists did enlist the services of tourist guides. Factors that might influence using a tourist guide can include undertaking advance research, having local knowledge, or having a limited budget.

Another tourist, respondent SA: 06, said that he found tour guides at Auschwitz but that he did not take up their services. Another tourist from South Asia (SA: 08) visited two sites in Bangladesh but did not find any guides there. Respondent NSA: 01, one of the UK-based study

respondents, also did not seek the help of a tourist guide. On being questions about tourist guides at facilities she had visited, another UK respondent said:

> Yes, tourist guides were there…but no, I did not take any…the family I was with knew a lot about the objects. It was not necessary to have a guide.
>
> (NSA: 02, female, age 19)

She could manage without the help of a tourist guide because she was with people who already had knowledge of the site. Perhaps if she were alone, she would have needed the help of a guide. One other tourist from South Africa who did not need a tourist guide on his travels said:

> One of my colleagues was there who helpfully showed me around. But I also saw some tourist guides giving information to other tourists.
>
> (NSA: 03, male, age 33)

He thus acquired information about the site from a colleague and did not need the help of a guide. Another British tourist had a different perception of tourist guides:

> I used to be a tourist guide myself. When I started my career, I was an activity tour guide in America in California, so I understand the importance of tourist guides. They have to be good, they have to be trained, and they have to be authentic, and they won't take you to their uncle's carpet shops to get money since every carpet shop is giving money to tourist guide if they bring tourists or visitors in their stores. I like to see countries training locals to provide that service, because it is giving back to the community and preserving it. In some places you might need a tourist guide, but in other places you can be more independent. It depends on whether the site allows for that or not.
>
> (NSA: 04, female, age 45)

She considered tourist guides to be helpful, but expressed a preference for authorities to train local communities, as this would provide a better service to tourists and give opportunities to local people. One argument she made was that using guides drawn from the local community would additionally make for a more authentic experience. This respondent also considered taking a more independent approach at tourist sites but suggested that it depended on whether the site had the right infrastructure to enable tourists to navigate sites themselves.

Respondent NSA: 05, who visited Berlin, used a tourist guide and was happy with her service. Another UK-based study respondent was optimistic about tourist guides at dark tourist sites, stating:

> Yes, there are a lot of tourist guides. Because you can't always walk around all on your own. You might need a guide as they can explain things to you in your language and would make you understand things better. People take guides as they are very knowledgeable.
>
> (NSA: 07, female, age 40)

This respondent's high opinion of tourist guides stemmed from her understanding that they could help tourists with things such as language interpretation and providing contextual information about the site. For this reason, it seems that that this interviewee would take up the help of a guide when visiting a dark tourist site.

One South Asian tourist, respondent SA: 01, did not find any tourist guides at the site she visited in Bangladesh. Another South Asian tourist did not take a tourist guide since he could not afford the cost. He provided a very interesting response:

> Yes, I saw tourist guides. But I did not take any guides as it is expensive, and it was my intention to visit over ten provinces. But it would be better if I could afford it. The main limitation of audio guides is the lack of two-way communication; audio guides cannot answer you, whereas human guides can. Humans can provide more on whatever I ask them. I have seen different language human guides over there such as English, Chinese, German and other guides. However, I could not afford the high cost of a human guide.
>
> (SA: 03, male, age 30)

This chapter supports the idea that these dark tourism destinations foster meaningful and long-lasting educational interactions, particularly when it comes to topics like the creation of national identity and/or patriotism, fascination with death and disaster, and interacting with friends and family members or relatives while visiting dark tourism destinations. In the participants' responses, the sense of empathy, especially that developed alongside their relatives or friends' (as stated by Lennon and Foley, 1999), was particularly apparent. Particularly when they interpreted their received experiences with empathy and sympathy for the victims, visitors who visited the sites with their families reported having a more positive

experience expressing their condolences for the victims. Visitors who stated that their primary reason was curiosity had extremely strong emotional and cognitive experiences. In this study, curious visitors actively sought for information while visiting the sites. Additionally, this study demonstrates that there are some dark tourism destinations where visitors not only seek an educational experience but also want to share the locations with their families because they believe it will be important for the next generation. Authorities and management of dark tourism sites are thus faced with a clear challenge to strike a balance between these high stakes elements: providing an appropriate environment to provide experiences to maximise opportunities for education, creating profound and lasting emotional responses, and serving as a setting for families, especially those of domestic tourists, to connect on a profound level. The inquiry into the dark tourist experience has made the important discovery that it is not a homogeneous system of collective meanings and experiences, but rather a praxis dependent on a wide variety of encounters that demand emotive and cognitive work as well as careful cultural analysis. While some visitors to a gloomy tourist destination may feel anxious, others may feel excited when given the same experiencing chances. In other words, how responsive the participants were to the affective power of the places greatly influenced how they interpreted their experiences. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, Zoom and Skype interviews had to be used to get information about dark visitors' perceptions and experiences. The fact that I was able to gather information from a variety of international travellers who had visited a variety of dark tourist destinations and who generously shared their amazing experiences and interpretations with me was a big benefit that I might not have otherwise been able to obtain due to physical limitations. Particularly helpful platforms for developing theoretical aspects of dark tourism in this work have been Zoom and Skype. However, there were a few drawbacks, as was previously discussed in weighing the benefits and drawbacks of different information-gathering methods and technologies. It's possible that the sharing of these narratives was compromised by the less intimate nature of online interviews as opposed to face-to-face interactions, despite the interviewees' incredibly generous willingness to share their experiences given the sensitive nature of visiting dark tourism sites. Dark tourists generally emphasised their respect for the places and the preservation of the histories they were engaged with when they reflected on their experiences and interpretations of site visits. The comments emphasise the necessity to approach them with reverence and care and the complexity of visitors' feelings and attitudes during their trips, which frequently had a strong relationship to their initial motive for going.

Chapter Six: Case Study: Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi

6.1 An Overview of Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi as a Dark Tourism Site

In Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, there is a well-known and historical thoroughfare called Rayer Bazaar. Rayer Bazaar originated during the colonial period, commonly thought to have emerged in the nineteenth century. Its history began when a community of potters began to reside near the Turag River in Bangladesh because a certain red clay used to make pots was available in this area. The potters at this site had a tradition of working with red clay during the Mughal and British Colonial periods. (Mamoon, 1993.) However, in contemporary times, Rayer Bazar remains in people's memory for a different reason: on the night of 14 December 1971, a massacre of Bangladeshi intellectuals, including professors, journalists, doctors, artists, engineers, and writers, occurred at this site.

West Pakistan had been in conflict with East Pakistan (presently Bangladesh), by intercepting its business, education and other basic rights. Pakistan was divided into two sides: East and West. The West side was the most powerful because they had been ruling the East side for a long time. The government and influential officials were located in West Pakistan: which enabled that side to ensure that rules and regulations of that time benefitted West Pakistan. As a result, West Pakistan had many advantages in terms of infrastructure and facilities and East Pakistan was relatively deprived. The authority of government, mainly comprising and representing the interest of West Pakistani people, had an agenda to deprive the people of East Pakistan of adequate education, as education was the key tool for national development. West Pakistan at that time prevented the development of East Pakistan and persisted in an agenda of subjugating East Pakistan. The people of East Pakistan worked hard, but as the government primarily represented West Pakistanis, it had this bias to favour this group while discriminating against East Pakistanis. Thus, politically engaged people of East Pakistan began protest against unequal and unethical actions carried out by West Pakistan; people such as writers, university teachers, doctors, journalists, singers, poets, artists, and university students engaged in these protests. Moreover, East Pakistani intellectuals protested by writing news items and songs to draw attention to these issues. However, the West Pakistan army tried to quash such protests. As of 1971, the population of East Pakistan had been oppressed by West Pakistan in many ways, including by means of restricted access to education (as mentioned), language, land, and

business, thereby preventing them from expressing their culture, for example, in consuming traditional foods; and other daily discriminatory treatments. East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) had a long history of the cultivation and production of foods and crops, but the authority of West Pakistan took maximum portions of the foods and crops to demonstrate their power and control, thus affecting the East Pakistani population's health. In response to the protests, the authorities of West Pakistan began a campaign of kidnapping dissenters from East Pakistan. They were taken to Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi and later executed there; their dead bodies were then thrown into the swamps (Ahmed, 2012). After the Liberation War, both the bodies of those who had been executed and their personal effects were found there. In memory of those who had been executed, a monument was built at Rayer Bazar. This monument is known as the Boddhovumi at Rayer Bazar, and the area has become famous as the Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi, or to locals, simply the Boddhovumi. This site holds a significant meaning for many people, and as such people have diversified reasons to visit the Boddhovumi. These reasons and experiences would be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The initiative to build a memorial at the site of the 1971 executions began in 1993, when the Government of Bangladesh's Ministry of Housing and Works Department and the Institute of Architects of Bangladesh mutually arranged a public architectural competition to design the memorial. Of 22 submissions, the design pitches of architects Farid Uddin Ahmed and Md Jami-al-Shafi were nominated by the jurors (Maniruzzaman, 2003). The Public Works Department was responsible for implementing the project, which took about three years to complete, between the years 1996 to 1999. A square grid with squares of 15.24 m by 15.24 m was used to demarcate the entire site of 3.51 acres. The central platform is raised 2.44 m above street level. The main element of the monument is a long, curved brick wall measuring 17.68 m high, 0.91 m deep, and 115.82 m wide. This represents the original brickfield site of Rayer Bazar at which the bodies of those executed were found. By design, the wall is shattered at both ends, representing the depth of misery and sorrow associated with the site. A 6.10 × 6.10-m square window at the south-west side of the wall permits visitors to see the sky beyond the wall; this also scales down the vast wall. In front of the curved wall is a still water body from which rises a black stone column, symbolising grief (Ahmed, 2012).

The main entrance to the memorial is located at the south-east corner of the location, where the visitor comes upon a banyan tree. This tree signifies the original banyan tree at the nearby Physical Education College, where the martyrs or freedom fighters were tortured before being

brought to the brickfield to be killed. Apart from the banyan tree, which is an evergreen, all the other trees used in the landscaping are deciduous. Their leaves fall in winter, and they remain bare during the month of December, adding to the sense of grief when Martyred Intellectuals Day (14 December) is observed every year. The present government has proposed adding a small museum and library to the site, but this is still in the proposal stage.

Tourism at the Boddhovumi is strongly experiential, and the site offers multidimensional and dynamic experiences. The number of annual tourists who visit the Boddhovumi is not currently known: there is no register of visitors from the authority that maintains the site, and owing to the open nature of the design, figures would be difficult to establish: notably, the site does not require ticketed entry, and is free for visitors. Both Bangladeshi visitors and international tourists come to the memorial. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, for obvious reasons, the site attracted minimal international visitors. On the other hand, during this time, Bangladeshi visitors visited frequently, and all-year-round. The nature of the site, and its mixed usage by visitors means that it draws a variety of emotions and experiences: from the weightier end, such as feelings of patriotism, authenticity, sadness, mournfulness, wistfulness, a sense of national identity, religious sentiment to enjoyment for those who use it for non-dark tourist purposes.

Many visitors spend a long time absorbing the atmosphere, trying to understand the symbolic meaning of the site, and creating their own interpretations of what is around them as they walk. Tourists who bring their children explain the history and signification of the site to them, and impart their own senses of history, or for Bangladeshi tourists with families, their sense of social memory and national heritage. Sometimes tourists are moved to approach and talk to the authorities of the memorial to learn about the history of the site, ask questions and prompt discussions. The authorities of the Boddhovumi refer to the caretakers of the site, who consist of a few government-appointed staff and who have their own office room and a few staff. The presence of these caretakers who are able to interact with visitors and provide a service in the form of insight and education could be said to provide authenticity to the site. They are also direct representatives of the Bangladeshi government, which gives them a level of political authority and endorsement.

6.2 The Pattern of Tourism at Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi

Although many theories on the spread of dark tourism have been advanced, as we have seen, the diversity of tourists' motivation and practices at dark tourism sites are extremely variable; they do not fit a single pattern. Reasons for visiting the Boddhovumi are similarly diverse.

This study found two types of respondents among the in-depth interviews at the Boddhovumi. The first type were local community tourists who were less likely to plan out their trip, while the second type were tourists who had travelled from some distance away with the express purpose of visiting the memorial, and therefore required a degree of planning. Visitors encompassed a variety of socio-demographic factors; they included both female and male tourists, people of different ages, people from extended families, some of whom visited the site along their family members; and several adolescent students visiting the site alone along with their classmates. Some visitors were nearby residents who had walked to the site for exercise; they were easily able to access it because it is open to the public and covers a large area. Visitors to the site could also be categorised as pilgrims or tourists. Pilgrims were those who visited the Boddhovumi to mourn and remember the victims, with a deeply personal connection to the event. In contrast, those who the visited the Boddhovumi because they were curious to witness the site of death, and thus motivated by morbid curiosity, self-identified as 'genuine' tourists: an interesting descriptor to associate with this particular motivation.

Like in the online interviews from the previous two chapters, this chapter probes into the motivations, experiences, and interpretations of visitors to the Boddhovumi site, to see what similarities and distinctions can be drawn, to learn more about international dark tourism and identify what is unique and special about Bangladesh. Analysing the reasons for respondents' visits to this specific site is pivotal in any attempt to clarify the nature of visits to this death-oriented location. The analysis elucidates a range of motivations to visit this dark tourism site in the context of the Bangladesh Liberation War and the historical events that took place at the Boddhovumi. The literature review and survey chapters have identified a huge array of motivations: desire to experience the power of the human spirit, novelty, nostalgia, a sense of morality, pleasure, excitement, the contemplation of death or morbid curiosity, empathic identification, pilgrimage, a sense of social responsibility, an interest in the phenomenon of human violence and suffering among them.

Strikingly, dark tourist motivation research exhibits a tendency to overlook diversified experiences and therefore only a few weak conceptualisations have been found as a result. Indeed, tourists have often been construed as homogeneous groups and passive recipients of the sites and cultures they encounter but tourists bring different levels of knowledge and diverse views to their experiences: and have differing levels of commitments to their motivations as a result. As we saw in the previous chapter, any combination of these factors may affect their interpretations of the site. The investigation of dark tourist motivations in Bangladesh is a distinctive contribution to this body of research: centring a South Asian perspective.

6.3 Respondents' Activities While Visiting Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi

This study conceptualises tourists' activities from both cognitive and emotional perspectives. A significant contributing factor to this is in the tourists' interactions with the artefacts that are available at the site that reinforce the connections to the historical events commemorated. The architecture of the site, built on the graveyard, is designed to encourage reflection with the design of the pool, and the jagged appearance of the wall represented the historical pain of the moment. This prompt strong emotions in the tourists who visit the monument and respond to these artefacts left by the architects and designers with not only anxiety and sorrow but also with thrill at the visual impact of the design and beauty of the site. As mentioned, all the respondents of this study were domestic tourists owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The responses were therefore extremely personal and showed a heritage connection: they described viewing the Boddhovumi as a symbol of their national identity; they adopt the Boddhovumi as part of their personal belonging and identification within Bangladeshi culture. Respondents to the on-site interviews stressed the mainstream appeal of the site: that it was so deeply connected to their wider heritage appreciation.

The visitors' surveyed therefore made connections between their activities while at the site with their appreciation of the area as a heritage tourism site. Field observations of the site noted the behaviour of the visitors for the duration of the study. Visitors to the memorial stood silently in front of the monument and in front of the graveyard. Many could be observed bringing flowers and placing them mindfully in front of the monument and graveyards to show their respect and appreciation., and some took occasional photos.

Of the respondents, a few were repeat visitors (visiting more than twice.) The majority had already been aware of the site from external media and press, such as books and newspapers, and most had received information or been made aware of the site's national importance from family discussions. In a recent discussion, Biran and Poria (2012) asserted that 'awareness is a precondition to perception'. When people aware about anything then eventually they might perceive anything and awareness helps to reveal the perceptions regarding any object (Ismail et al., 2018). In the case of the Rayer Bazar, the visitors in the present study knew what had happened there and had a previous awareness about the site; as a result, the Boddhovumi stimulated particularly emotional reactions in them during their visits that had a strong influence on their movements and activities.

Comments from participants in this study reflected an innate awareness of the events that happened during the Bangladeshi Liberation War at the location, as well as an intangible sense of the site. Respondents expressed feeling a sense of divine awe as they walked around the monument. Moreover, respondents reported that they gained deeper experiences because of the intrinsic characteristics of the site. For instance, one participant made the following statement:

> Walking around on my own… [with the] quietness of the site…gives me a different feeling. I could really imagine the events that happened during the Liberation War here…This site takes me away from this time to that time.
>
> (BP:15, male, age 35)

This response shows how moving the site can be: that it is transportive to a time that predates the visitor themselves and prompt a significant act of imagination in recreating events that are in an abstract way familiar but also distant. Walking is not just a prime tourism activity, but according to this respondent, a way to mediate emotions too. Given that they find the site quite emotionally or mentally overwhelming, tourists seek a physical engagement with it, which they can attain by walking through it. The Boddhovumi is not highly regulated, so tourists can easily walk around and have self-directed and therefore more personalised experiences there. However, as a mark of respect to the martyrs, tourists typically remove their footwear when they climb the upper stairs of the monument or walk through the graveyards. As such, tourists generally prefer to visit the monument and graveyards barefoot. Tour guides are available, but domestic tourists usually avoid hiring tour guides because doing so is expensive, and as they explained in their responses, would restrict their freedom around the site. Most tourists have

already consumed extensive information about the monument and graveyards via seeking out media about it and responding to the signage and information that is freely available and posted around the site. Moreover, as the respondents expressed, there is a view that it is better to experience the site first-hand as opposed to consuming information via others' perspectives. One stated:

> The best way to encounter the site is experiencing it. It would not be the same with a guided tour. All of this is actual substance that people can get when they visit the site independently.
>
> (BP:01, age 22, male)

Most tourists at the site already knew about the massacre from different sources before they visited, but they wanted to visit the site on their own, personal terms. They expressed a desire, like this respondent, for 'first-hand' experiences, representing a sort of reflexivity and unmediated connection with this site: and perhaps using this as a synonym for 'authenticity'. Bangladesh is a Muslim country, and as such, the majority of the domestic tourists are Muslims. Culturally, Muslim people take their time and spend a lot of time whilst at graveyards, where they will stand and pray. They may cry or sit silently near the graves, paying homage to the departed. Therefore, to feel that they have properly attended to these death-based rituals, visitors of faith require that flexibility to not be restricted by time and schedules. Local Muslims visit the graveyards every Friday after Jumma prayers and recite the religious book, since Muslims believes reciting religious holy book such as Qur'an might provide peace to the souls of the dead people. The Muslims of this study consider these visits a spiritual activity and a way to connect to their faith and their spiritual community, as well as attending to the souls of the dead.

In contrast, examining the less formal activities of the site visitors, it was noted that photography is an important aspect of the self-directed, or more independent dark tourist experience. With the rise of digital photography, it is becoming common for tourists to take photos at any place they visit. Capturing these images is an increasingly significant motivation for visitors: especially those active on social media who might be enticed to uploaded and share them to a wide network of friends and increasingly, strangers. Photography is also become more curated: a visitor on a day out might take fifty photos in a trip and keep the best twenty. People want to share their activities with peer groups, such as family, friends, and colleagues; at the same time, they want to gain appreciation for their posts on social media.

Assessing the photo evidence on-site, most interviewees typically took photos of the monument and lake. The respondents generally agreed that photos of the graveyards were not taken because this is proscribed from a religious perspective. Some respondents reported that they took photos of the memorial that to them were loaded with symbolic significance. Visitors clearly seek to capture not only the reality but also their ties with the events that have occurred there; they hope to retain the feeling they have experienced and preserve their visit. It is important to note that in terms of the field research conducted at this site, the researcher refrains from passing judgement on the activities of the visitors. There is no wrong or right platform: the study focuses on peoples' perceptions, which have changed over the past decade, and is less interested in imposing any moral framework on visitors.

The field study also observed more talkative tourists indulging in more 'mainstream' tourist activities: sitting and chatting on the grass, having picnics. At the memorial site, there is no prohibition against having food on the premises. Indeed, picnicking is a common and popular way for Bangladeshis to spend a day out. Adding to the site's reputation as a mixed-usage public space, the Boddhovumi is widely considered a meeting place for the local community.

At the time of the pandemic, young professionals between the ages of 25 and 30 years, many of whom were just embarking on their working career, sought out the site as a place to socialise, as an alternative to meeting in a coffee shop, for instance, owing to COVID-19 restrictions. Many respondents noted that they visited during the weekend or on their days off and strolled around, and participated in activities such as 'people-watching' and catching up with friends. During the field research, local boys were observed playing football or cricket at the site, although this is not officially allowed. It seemed that they were able to avoid being noticed by the site's authorities: or perhaps this was overlooked owing to the exceptional circumstances of that period. The monument could be described as being used as a large playground for the local community. Around 11:00 a.m., school students of all genders frequently visit the site along with their friends. Often, they board at the schools but want to spend the whole day with friends. They sit on the grass and eat. They wear school uniforms, thus signalling that they are school students. This shows that the use of the site varied significantly depending on the age of the respondents. We could conclude from the field research that mature young adults or young professionals used the site as a relaxed and sociable meeting point. The children using the site pushed the boundaries of how the site could be used, but significantly did not visibly encounter any resistance from the authorities.

In the evening, different types of visitors—including youths, adults, and elderly people, encompassing a wide age range—visit the Boddhovumi, and give the impression that they are local or regular visitors. They consider the site as a park or recreational open space where they can walk, talk with their peers, or just sit, especially evidenced by the field observation during the COVID-19 pandemic when wide, open-air spaces were vital for activities that involve physical distancing. During the site visit, visitors could be seen to bring their children with them to get fresh air. At the weekend, all kinds of visitors come to the site, and it is at this time in the week that visitors from further afield are most likely to be found at the Boddhovumi. As a site that is recommended by so many, especially those based in Dhaka, such as tour operators, family or friends, in the case of this site, it is a place that draws visitors who approach it with a sense of significance. One of the respondents summarised this very effectively, highlighting the site's reputation for being important to Bangladeshi heritage:

> I used to live far from here. Recently I moved this area since I bought my own house over here. One of my friends advised me to visit it. My friend told me that it is a historical site where I would feel our liberation war vibe and also it would be a good place for walking, passing quality times along friends and family, sometimes alone especially during this pandemic situation.
>
> (BP:06, male, age 46)

In conclusion to the observations of visitor behaviour and movements at the Boddhovumi, some important observations can be drawn. The tourist behaviour appears to have great range, in terms of formality and how they view the site can be used: from solemn commemoration site used in worship to local space for socialising and unwinding. However, what unites the actions of the visitors of the sites, both those observed and those approached for interview is an authentic sense of collective ownership on the part of the Bangladeshi people, and Dhaka natives. Those who visit the site (and making do so recurringly) approach it with a sense that it is a significant site that belongs to the people: and as such, approach it with respect. The fact that it is unrestricted by time and is an artefact freely given to the public and maintained by the Bangladeshi government adds to this sense.

6.4. Site-Specific Respondents' Reactions to Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi

The narratives from the study respondents illustrate how and in what modes they experienced their visits to the Boddhovumi; they revealed affirming, negative, and contrary descriptions of their encounters during their visits. Remarkably, several respondents revealed that their visits were not an inevitable result of their attraction to the historical monument; rather, the experience gave them a chance to enrich an individual self-identity that they had adopted. One respondent reported that he visited the Boddhovumi because it is:

> …full of history and I am personally interested in the history of my country; as a history lover, I read a lot of literature that talks about Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi. So, I wanted to go and see where the events had transpired.
>
> (BP:21, male, age 32)

Another respondent shared that he came to visit the site because his friends had already visited it and reported back to him about it, and he wanted to have the same experience. In addition, he asserted that dark tourism sites provide an educational experience that gives him information and knowledge:

> I came to Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi because my friends had already visited the site and said it was cool. I did not know about it before, but my friends said it was awesome. They said famous people's graves were there, as well as a national historical site. I thought it could give me some historical information, and that enticed me because history is our pride, our nationality. So, I thought I needed to visit the site.
>
> (BP:15, male, age 35)

Both of these testimonials from the site share a patriotic perspective, from two young people born after the events commemorated by the site. These interviewees were both specifically drawn to the site because of external influences, in the case of the former, the history books that endorse the Boddhovumi as centrally important to Bangladeshi history, and the latter, by reports from his friends, who also cited an interest in history and celebrity connections. They both also identify a hope that visiting the site would make them feel a connection to their social history and heritage, and in the latter, significantly, 'pride'.

The narratives from the study respondents also featured those with a more immediate, or living memory connection: some having to some extent been witness to tragic events in this period

of Bangladeshi history. In the case of these respondents, their visits to the Boddhovumi were motivated by remembering the people who lost their lives and partly with seeing the site where the mass killing took place. Understandably, their visits brought up strong feelings for them, and in many cases, quite traumatic ones connected to primary memories. The reflections prompted by their reactions to the site provided them an opportunity to reaffirm their values in the context of the struggles of this turbulent period. It was hoped on the part of the interviewees that sharing their reactions and experiences may pave the way for future behaviours of tourists since it would inspire others to visit.

6.4.1 Engaging with a Bangladeshi Sense of Belonging

As explored in the literature review, national identity or nationhood is a complex concept: but primarily comes from historical, political, and other cultural factors (Nairn, 1997). National identity is a form of groundwork in every nation, addressing who the people belonging to the nation are, where they are from, and why they are unique. As the literature review reflected on with the work of Anderson (1986), a nation can be considered as an 'imagined community' because even in the smallest nations, no person could ever know all their fellow members. While many findings have been written on nationalist political movements, the sense of nationality—the personal and cultural sense of belonging to the nation—has not received impartial attention. Nationalism does not refer to tribalism or regionalism; rather, it is the outcome of the deliberate efforts of a dominant political power to build a single homogeneous 'nation' (Hechter, 2000). This is particularly true in the case of the twentieth-century history of the creation of the present-day Bangladeshi nation-state. The connections between building nationhood, understood as above, and the idea of the family structure that were emphasised in the review proved particularly potent in guiding the field research at the Boddhovumi.

The Boddhovumi, as we may now realise, emblematises the core identities of Bangladeshis. In this study, the domestic tourists expressed the importance of their sense of nationhood using the language of or talking about their families. Some were visiting with a cluster of relations with a shared history, common values and beliefs, and a mutual sense of grief. It is in this way that the Boddhovumi facilitates a sense of belonging to a 'Bangladeshi' community: by centring real or 'imagined' families, the latter being a metonym for the nation: as in, a country being like a large family. Tourists' experiences act as a symbolic mechanism that

communicates a sense of national belonging. Interviewees expressed that this monument not only serves as a tangible manifestation of the past but also captures an intangible symbolic meaning of both national Bangladeshi and spiritual embodiments.

In addition to the sense of community, tourism can take on a political meaning, and it can re-establish combined memory and identity via selective memory and history (Zhang et al., 2018; Causevic and Neal, 2019). The respondents in this study reported reflecting on previous political issues and the history of Bangladesh as they walked around the Boddhovumi monument and read the wall placards hung around the site. Dark tourism is a vehicle for reckoning with painful history, but affectively through this pain, it can build a potent and concrete collective memory and national identity (Martini and Minca, 2018). Thus, not only is strengthening national identity a motivation for the interviewees to visit the Boddhovumi, but this strengthening is also a government practice. The site also emblematises to the visitors how the Government of Bangladesh aims to promote these kinds of locations so that large numbers of people can come to understand their country's history and their national identity.

Another key concept that visitors explicitly connected with Bangladeshi identity repeatedly in the interviews was 'respect'. Tourists gave the emotional response that they had at the site at contemplating Bangladeshi national identity the name of 'respect': implicitly linking respect and Bangladeshi nationhood. With respect viewed as an internal component of dark tourism, it may be suggested that an indomitable national spirit that places great importance on the process of deep admiration is the key element here. In this sense, it is important to mention that national identity and respect change in tandem. Respect functions as a self-transcendent emotion that can be used to further precise social goals (Stellar et al., 2017), prompting tourists to integrate into social groups. Under these conditions, the tourists included in this study were found to be more likely to engage in socially beneficial behaviour while visiting the Boddhovumi: suggesting a Bangladeshi national character that is very amenable and socially conscious.

Further proving this hypothesis, in describing their experiences at the Boddhovumi, the interviewees frequently began their comment with the phrase 'as a Bangladeshi…', illustrating that Bangladeshi citizens are preoccupied with being perceived as representatives of their communities. As a result, they are expected to uphold specific responsibilities and behaviours. One respondent described the notion of paying homage to those in the imagined community, who are part of Bangladeshi culture:

> Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi reflects such a significant role in history because it's an important historical site, and it is one of those sites that I feel all the citizens of this country—Bangladesh—need to see. I am not stating any political agenda. I just want to mention that if you're a Bangladeshi … you need to visit this site…It is a huge part of our culture.
>
> (BP:13, male, age 42, government worker)

This strong endorsement: 'all the citizens of this country… need to see' is a collective call to create a social memory that is all-encompassing and inclusive. It is also evidence of how visiting a dark tourism site can produce stirring and profound emotions around their own relationship to their fellow citizens in domestic tourists' minds, and consequently, it can engender notions of resilient citizenship. Considering these factors creates a compelling argument in favour of dark tourism being underpinned by notions of national pride, concerns associated with citizenship, and a sense of belonging to an imagined community.

As previously discussed, dark tourism is often exploited by national organisations, governments, and national and multinational organisations to generate feelings of belonging in individuals owing to diversified actions of politics and policies (Henderson, 2000). By highlighting traditional sites as symbols of the nation, government institutions attempt to motivate feelings of national cohesiveness and national belonging; in this way, they aim to bind society to the values and ideals ostensibly shared by the national group. The Government of Bangladesh created the monument at Rayer Bazar and now uses this site as a symbol of the nation and of national belonging. Thus, this sort of massacre site becomes a key aspect of shaping and maintaining national identities for Bangladeshi tourists, and a way for the government to interact with citizens and shape national conversations.

The concept of national identity provides a background of social bonds, individual associations, and expressions of nationhood. National identity has developed along with historical, political, and other circumstances (Nairn, 1997). Nationalism is not a sociologically issue like tribalism or regionalism; rather, it is the outcome of careful efforts of leading political influences to form a single homogeneous 'nation' from multicultural, heterogeneous populations (Mosse, 1975; Hechter, 2000). Issues of national identity have reached particular significance from the perspectives of globalisation, consumer culture, social media, and the division of social structures (Spillman, 1997; Mitchell, 2001). According to Smith (1996, p. 121), national identity is a 'myth of origins' based on historical descriptions that 'form the groundwork of every nationalist mythology … telling us who we are, whence we came from and why we are

unique'. The Boddhovumi is a tangible outcome of the exercise of political influence and domination in East Pakistan. It was designed as a space for healing and reconciliation after a period of brutality and turbulence, and to celebrate the resilience of the Bangladeshi citizens. Thus, the monument was created with a view to helping Bangladeshis connect with their origins, nationalities, and background. The Boddhovumi is therefore a powerful symbol of the 'branding' of Bangladesh: the reaffirmation of the self through nationhood and preserving historical and social memory, which is physically accessible and free to encounter in the heart of Dhaka.

Dark tourism acts therefore as a symbolic instrument through which national belonging can be re-created and to which it can be connected. An important finding of this study is that dark tourism, not only in the case of the Boddhovumi but certainly exemplified by it, is not just a tangible exhibition of the past represented by a historical monument. Rather, it also incorporates intangible features of symbolic meanings and spiritual expressions. Therefore, it is important to understand the Boddhovumi as both material and socio-psychological evidence of national identity in Bangladesh.

Reviewing the encounters of the field research, respondents' experiences at the Boddhovumi facilitate the creation of a national identity for them, crystallising what they consider to be representative of their self-identity. Some respondents sought opportunities to enhance the credibility of their personal stories via the experiences of the Boddhovumi that they recounted. This supports Podoshen's (2013) finding that dark tourists seek experiences for simulation and affect. Simulation occurs when an individual reveals the mental state and activity of others by reproducing them in the self. In this study, the simulators were the tourists visiting the site of the massacre, whose aims were either to pay their respects or to explore the memorial site to connect with the events that occurred there.

Based on the in-depth interviews carried out in this study, it can be observed that some passionate visitors may have intended to simulate other people's perspectives of the events. Some of the visitors emphasised emotion and affect during their visits; they not only stood in front of the graveyards for a long time but also exhibited empathy in the areas where the executions took place, and described the moments that they felt this sense of empathy in their own reportage. Tourists' emotions related not only to a consumption of violent experiences but also to a sense of commemoration connected with the death and murder that had occurred in

this area. Hence, violence and its related activities transcend the events. In the interviews, some respondents who had been visiting the Boddhovumi over periods of years or even decades reported feeling as emotional during their visits, no matter how many times they had been to the site. Indeed, most of the respondents described simulation experiences and a sense of affect in their visits to the Boddhovumi.

Respondents enthusiastically identified and praised the presence of the tangible symbols at the site illustrating Bangladeshi national identity, which included the design of the monument itself and the flag of Bangladesh. The intangible components of the Boddhovumi that they noted included the role of the site managers, who respondents reported effectively conveyed the meaning of the physical site and its spiritual significance to tourists, even if they themselves did not approach them. This provision of accurate historical knowledge of the Boddhovumi enhanced the respondents' appreciation for the martyrs' sacrifices. At the same time, respondents were also concerned that tourists might receive inaccurate details from 'random' sources, or from political rivals of the government that could reduce the impact or distort the perception of the Boddhovumi from the tourists' perspectives: particularly (at that point, in the future) on the part of international tourists without the background knowledge to bring nuance to this information.

The tangible aspects of dark tourism sites influence tourists' experiences immensely. From the responses from the site visit, it was clear that the reflection of authenticity of a site's background matters very much for tourists. Many respondents noted that if visitors do not feel an authentic connection to the events, they may be disappointed after visiting the site. As noted, dark tourists (and tourists in general) tend to seek experiences of perceived 'authentic' historical sites, avoiding overexaggerated and artificial contexts. Notably, the authenticity of a site or monument can trigger tourists' compassion (Kang et al., 2012), and empathy for the victims or martyrs who died at that site. The Boddhovumi carries the authenticity of incidents that occurred during the Bangladesh Liberation War in its tangible elements and artefacts, including graveyards, monuments, signage, posters, and brief narrations. On this point, one of the respondents stated:

> Probably the thing I love most about Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi is that I went through all the parts of the site, and I can see the site was not modified. I felt that the historical symbols were accurate and relevant. They did not change the graveyards' structure; they kept most of them as they were. They should not change it. Actually, they built the monument

> in the middle of the Boddhovumi, and they kept the rest of the things as they were, untouched.
>
> (BP:30, male, age 28)

What this respondent appreciated most about the site was that it was largely 'untouched' and 'not modified', which in his view, amounted to authenticity, and produced a strong affect and affinity for the site: he 'loves' that about the site. Respondents noted that they wanted to visit the sites that have been 'preserved', and like the interviewee above, they consider such sites to be authentic, original, and genuine rather than artificial. The respondents as a whole viewed the Boddhovumi as authentic because of its lack of modification and interference.

Clearly, the Bangladeshi visitors strongly identify with the Boddhovumi as a national symbol: seeing within the monument evidence of national resilience not only in the tangible environment and artefacts but on a symbolic level. They feel that it is an authentic sense of nationhood and pride because the site feels untampered with: they feel a direct connection to the events.

6.4.2 Exploring Historical Interest

As a historical site, the Boddhovumi provides tourists opportunities to learn about history, especially regarding the torture, brutality, and discrimination that Bangladeshi people have faced. It carries a historical memory for tourists, which is also part of its attraction. As one interviewee commented:

> Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi is a must see for many reasons such as it is a historical site, it represents the suffering that happened during the Liberation War to East Pakistani, it demonstrated how people would face discriminations and difficulties that time. East Pakistan was ruled by West Pakistan for so many years in all respects; West Pakistan used to take all the benefits that were created by East Pakistan.
>
> (BP:31, male, age 60)

Thus, the site emblematises Bangladeshi history, and visiting it is a way of revisiting history. It captures the sufferings of East Pakistanis, who are now Bangladeshis. By visiting this site, tourists can understand the history of the country and the historical importance of the site. Tourists learn not only from the structure itself but also from the movements of the other

tourists, which have been created to complement the site's historical content. Two activities witnessed in the field study included seeing visitors put national flags into the monument, and tourists explain each other about the history of this monument. In the interviews, some tourists explained that they consider this monument to be part of their ancestral origin; it brings up memories for them, and they can connect with it. One interviewee related the following:

> As a Bangladeshi, I think the Boddhovumi is an interesting place. While I will never know the roots of my ancestors, I have adopted Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi—its monument, its graveyards—and it gives me a sense of symbolic reconnection. I can revisit history here; it also helps me to better understand the context of the Liberation War.
>
> (BP:27, male, age 24)

The monument and graveyards help tourists to relate better to their origins. Indeed, the Boddhovumi serves as an emblem of Bangladeshi identity, and to some extent, the tourists adopt its structures (monument, graveyards) as part of their personal identity. Tourists can find their origins at the site since after this liberation war Bangladeshi achieved independence. It was the beginning of the nation state: they could trace their boundaries on the world map. In considering the experiences at the Rayer Bazar memorial, tourists hold a sense of nostalgia for the history of Bangladesh, as well as for that of their own nations. The key terms expressed in the respondents' narrations were 'sad', 'exciting', 'proud', 'touching', and 'memorable'. Thus, it seems that tourists' experiences are mostly reflected towards historical nostalgia rather than personal nostalgia. The respondents in this study expressed their experiences as revisiting the history of Bangladesh and the Liberation War. They held deep feelings in visiting this monument, memorial, and graveyards.

Many tourists visit dark tourism sites because they are interested in history and battlefield heritage (Kokkranikal et al., 2016). They also want to know about culture and history (Yankholmes and McKercher, 2015). Some tourists are interested in the Holocaust, which provides empirical evidence about dark tourism (Biran et al., 2011); for instance, visiting the Auschwitz concentration camp is considered the pinnacle of European dark tourism (Tarlow, 2005). Thus, battlefield and Holocaust sites are considered historical heritage sites for visitors, and those who are interested in these sites experience dark tourism. In relation to this, the respondents in the present study, who visited the Boddhovumi in Bangladesh, shared similar motivations for visiting this site. Specifically, they wanted to understand the historical context

and see this historical site in person. These two reasons were prominently mentioned by most respondents in this study. Visiting the Boddhovumi allowed them to revisit Bangladeshi history:

> When I visit this Boddhovumi, I can feel the brutal history of the country. I have read about the history behind this place. But visiting the site in person, I get a different feeling. I can see the genocide, the killings that took place during the Bangladesh Liberation War. The Pakistani military killed our intellectuals and buried them here. I am keen to know about history. I read historical books, and history is my interest. I am staying nearby, so I visit this historical site frequently.
>
> (BP:03, Age 22, Female)

This respondent gives a very visceral reaction to the site: for him, the site visit allows him to 'see' these atrocities, to recreate them imaginatively, drawing on what seems to be an extensive self-education on Bangladeshi history. Historic artefacts or memorials may provide a sense of objective authenticity to tourists (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006), and, thus, the respondents in this study presented with a sense of historical objective authenticity when they visited the Boddhovumi. However, visiting historical sites does not automatically provide an authentic experience for tourists whereby they can come to know about the events that occurred at the site. Rather, it takes time, and several visits may be required to understand the history and authenticity of historical sites. Apprehending the past takes time; this is why the respondents in this study often visited the Boddhovumi more than once. They found an authentic experience in revisiting this historical site of genocide in Bangladesh. As another respondent commented:

> Most people can develop a good idea about the historical issues of the Liberation War when they visit Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi. This site offers an important insight into what the freedom fighters went through before they were killed. This site holds a lot of history and education about Liberation War, history, and dignity, as well as the national identity of Bangladesh.
>
> (BP:24, female, age 19)

This idea of 'insight' also intersection with the notion of historical authenticity. This tourist also understands the scope of historical interest offers by the memorial. Tourists to the site not only learn about the history of brutality on the part of the Pakistani military but also about the wider history of the country within which the Liberation War occurred. This is how dark tourism opens Bangladesh to global attention and gives the country international visibility.

6.4.3 Upholding Social 'Norms'

Respondents shared their attitudes towards the Boddhovumi by stating that they were engaging with their society; in their view, visiting this sort of site represents a kind of social norm and carries social value. Participating in this kind of tourist is described as a type of social responsibility. Some respondents indicated that in sharing their plans to visit the Boddhovumi or comparable dark tourism sites they encountered social pressures from other people when discussing their travel choices. This led to practical outcomes for the visits that contributed to their behavioural intentions in a positive way. Here, social pressures refer to social norms. The respondents claimed to have considered social norms when they decided to visit the Boddhovumi. Some respondents reported that they accounted for the experiences other people, such as friends or relatives, described after visiting the Boddhovumi, and this inspired them to visit the site. This establishes the maintaining of social norms as a significant motivation to visit the Boddhovumi: a motivation that seems unique among those discussed elsewhere in this thesis. One respondent particularly felt this social pressure:

> My acquaintances have visited the Boddhovumi many times. I have noticed their photographs. Sometimes, they share their experiences. I had not been here, so I could not share anything about this mass killing. During the pandemic, I decided to visit this site with family members. I have observed the site now; I may participate now [smiling face]. Everyone should visit this site to feel its atmosphere.
>
> (BP:13, age 42, male)

This interviewees response indicates a motivation to 'join in' with family conversions and acquaintances: and implies another type of social pressure mentioned in the section reflecting on tourist behaviours: taking and sharing photographs. Clearly, this is a phenomenon that will grow in importance around discussions of social norms: that photography will be more widely embraced, and that the number of situations where taking photographs is not appropriate is likely to shrink.

6.5 Dark Tourism and the Creation of Social Memory

After the Liberation War in 1971, the post-war generation of Bangladesh were mindful to create and perpetuate social memories that honoured and memorialised the people who were killed. Public interest in death-related memorials rose gradually after the 1971 Liberation War in Bangladesh, and, at present, this is demonstrated by increased visitation to memorials and participation in remembrance ceremonies. The Bangladeshi government-endorsed creation of the Boddhovumi in the nineties was a culmination of this trend.

Social memory illustrates the relationship between tourism and the memorial at the Boddhovumi. By visiting the site, tourists engage in the creation of social memory, through remembering and commemorating the Liberation War. The Boddhovumi is visited by people from all walks of life: from the neighbourhood to the diaspora. In addition, government or non-government officials purposely (official visits) or non-purposely (random visit along with friends, family or any other reasons) visit it; their primary reasons are not associated with leisure travel, but in seeking to create social memories. The present study reveals that tourism has an important role in memory-making about the Liberation War in Bangladesh; thus, it can clarify how tourists remember the events that occurred and the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives more than fifty years ago.

Social memory can be conceptualised in two ways. First, social memory in dark tourism sites can be identified by tourists' experiences; second, social memory comes from tourists' personal perception, understanding, explanation, and narration of the sites they visit. The first point relates to the experiences themselves and the second to how tourists interpret these experiences. Both concepts are significant for this study, so they need to be considered to identify the right platform of social memory for the Boddhovumi. Tourists' experiences and interpretations can change according to their external circumstances because their emotions and cognitive processes will shift in different environments. Some respondents in this study narrated their experiences in a way that was inherently political. Such as:

> Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of this nation gave his speech on 7th March 1971 in front of mass people in East Pakistan. After his declaration, journalists, professors, musicians, general people got inspirations and ways to fight against West Pakistan. This 'Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi' is the result of that speech, our freedom, our liberty is also outcome of his contribution. Whenever I visit here, I cannot ignore the contributions of national father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

(BP:18, Male, age 45)

Thus, their interpretations and cognitive processes for the site were different from those of other tourists who did not have any political interests. Experiences and interpretations influenced the respondents' articulation of their views. Social memory is a revisiting of the past in the present situation. After the Bangladesh Liberation War, society needed to justify the war and address the reasons for the mass killing of the intellectuals; after liberation, people in Bangladesh wanted to remember these martyrs respectfully. Eventually, Bangladeshis started to accept the deaths of their loved ones and framed their Liberation War experiences within the context of national identities. Thus, social memories create unique identities among specific nations. One of the respondents described this point as follows:

> This is a memorial monument. Visitors should come here again and again. And those who have not visited it yet should come here immediately. Students should visit this site, and they should know about it too since we are students. This would help us a lot in the near future. People generally know that there is a site named 'Buddhijibi'. But they do not know the exact meaning behind this site because they were not born at that time. But this monument gives us the opportunity to know about the war—the Liberation War—and our freedom fighters' sacrifices. It is an opportunity for us to know about the past. So, people must come; they must learn. That is what it is all about.
>
> (BP:24, female, age 19)

The articulation of social memory in terms of dark tourism is not flexible or easy; it is sophisticated and complex. Visitors, especially those with living memories of the atrocities of the Liberation War know the hard truths from history. The original event is disembodied, and, therefore, tourists can only imagine and re-create what happened in their imaginations. This is not real, and its removal from reality is what makes the articulation of social memory complex and difficult.

Nevertheless, this difficulty can be overcome by describing the various cognitive, behavioural, and affective monuments, and ritual and ceremonial commemorations at the site. The Boddhovumi emblematises its history via monuments; each year on Bangladesh's Martyred Intellectuals Day, which occurs on 14 December, many people visit and bring flowers to show their respect. The victims of the mass-killing, doctors, professors, poets, activists, students, and protestors—collectively called the intellectuals—were killed on 14 December 1971 at the site of the Boddhovumi. Martyred Intellectuals Day is now a national holiday, and it is observed in

particular in educational institutions, such as schools, colleges, and universities. Day-long programmes, such as performances of patriotic music, are scheduled, event-oriented speeches are given by politicians and local people, and documentaries are screened. In this way, the post-Liberation War generation in Bangladesh is afforded an important opportunity to learn about the history of the nation.

The Boddhovumi memorial has been designed to maximise this opportunity. Visitors coming to the site on Martyred Intellectuals Day want to see the people, cultural programmes, and other events taking place on this day. As a result, huge crowds gather on 14 December each year at the Boddhovumi. The programmes and visitor traffic affect the experiences of tourists in different ways. Tourists have personal experiences, but they also see the reactions of other visitors. They can feel other people's pain and sorrow. In addition, on Martyred Intellectuals Day, tourists have the freedom to show their respect without fear of judgement because everyone else is doing the same thing. Thus, being part of the crowd may increase their comfort. It is important to note at this point, the on-site research was not conducted during the period of Martyred Intellectuals Day, so reactions specific to this were not captured.

The monument at represents a promise to remember the freedom fighters forever, and to accomplish this, the Government of Bangladesh has invested huge resources into its construction. The memorial articulates physically the social memory of the Liberation War. The names of intellectuals who were killed are written on headstones in the graveyards. The descriptions on the memorials are brief but have an intense emotional impact on tourists, as noted by respondents to the interviews.

The Boddhovumi is at once a memory bearer, a witness of death, a vessel for the expressions of respect that is so central to Bangladeshi nationhood, and Bangladesh's identity. After the Liberation War, the Boddhovumi or memorial site became a particular type of landscape, representing interest and attraction for tourists. Spiritual feelings were associated with this Boddhovumi during tourists' visits, and the graveyards and monument came to be regarded as holy sites. This can be described as a 'geopious' feeling (Tuan, 1976), and this feeling is still apparent in Bangladeshi tourists in relation to their attachment to place, love for their country and patriotism. One respondent explained:

> As you know, the spirits of the dead have power. Since the burial site is for heroes who were killed for our country, this is a kind of holy ground.

> Graveyards are sacred because they belong to God. The ground is also sacred because the bones of the heroes were buried there.
>
> (BP:28, male, age 45)

The above narration reflects the essence of reciprocity. Those who were killed sacrificed their bodies to protect Bangladesh. Following the Liberation War, the people of Bangladesh felt a sense of obligation to respect and remember these people; this is why they visit the burial site at the Boddhovumi. Fifty years after the Liberation War ended, numerous tributes are offered at the Boddhovumi monument, including garlands, small flags, music, and notes from tourists. As noted in the introduction to this case study, it was designed to specifically evoke feelings of grief and reflection in every deliberate part of its design. There are several monuments commemorating the Liberation War in Bangladesh, but the Boddhovumi is unique because it was designed to be broken, so that visitors would feel this sorrow: it is an outstanding representation of the atrocity and a remarkable feat of affective design.

6.5.1 Aspects of Forgetting Among the New Generations

The memories and meanings of the Boddhovumi that are articulated through its monuments and graveyards may not be well defined for today's generations. The problem is not that the memories have disappeared for younger generations; rather, their access to the historical meaning has diminished. One of the main challenges of the Boddhovumi is communicating the value and meaning of the memorials to people who have little knowledge of the Liberation War, and no lived experience of it. Communication about the Boddhovumi especially to young people is hindered by the lack of proper communication tools. One respondent commented:

> Maybe this generation does not know enough about Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi or the Liberation War of Bangladesh. This generation would know more if the wartime generation could share their historical experience; this might create a stronger perception for them. Generations and memories are mutually related—not because of some objective features of social and cultural structure but as the result of individual memories of historical events.
>
> (BP:25, female, age 30)

For Bangladeshi tourists, it is challenging to understand or imagine the meaning of the Boddhovumi in the absence of explicit information or visual and audio evidence such as documentaries, films or TV series that can help with these discussions, and in the absence of

compelling or useful information or dramatisation, young people may misapprehend the social and historical meaning of the site. When young people visit the site, as gathered from the interviews, they do engage in discussions about remembrance and commemoration, and do recognise the social value of knowing more about their national heritage. When compelling content and discussions are produced and are made easy to access and share, citizens of all ages, but particularly the young can be prevented from forgetting, and future tourists can continue to respond to the Boddhovumi. Therefore, this research calls for more media representation and visibility around the site.

6.5.2 Monument Works as Rehearsal of Memory

If the memory of the Liberation War or the experience at the Boddhovumi is not regularly rehearsed by citizens, it is likely to be forgotten. Remembrance of the Liberation War has become a symbolic and formalised ritual in Bangladesh, as in with the commemoration on the 14 December, creating a connection with the past. Social memories of the Boddhovumi or the Liberation War require continuous rehearsal via ceremonies or ritual practices, such as laying wreaths and recitations. Each year on Martyred Intellectuals Day, several thousand tourists attend the ceremony at the Boddhovumi.

Thus, the monument and graveyards of the Boddhovumi have served as a rehearsal site of memory since 1972. Visitors come to the site and come to understand the history behind it. Reading a book about history is one thing but experiencing the place where historical events occurred is a completely different experience: and physically experiencing a site is more likely to create a lasting sensory impression. When visitors have these experiences, they can relate to the situation and commemorate the victims and freedom fighters. Thus, the monument works as a continuous rehearsal of memory. It is arguable that without this type of abstract monument, people cannot perceive the significance of the event. By having a permanent memorial there, it is possible for people to engage with the solemnity of the site.

6.6 Tourists' Emotional and Educational Experience

We have examined many myriad emotional responses to the site through the on-site interviews from visitors. Most respondents feel not only sad about the events that happened during the

Liberation War but report experiencing deeper emotions, and even mixed feelings. As one respondent related:

> I came here with my friend; he is amazing. He told me everything about this site and had me feeling all kinds of emotions. It is a sad part of the history of Bangladesh. It is like revisiting this history. It is a must see if you live around here.
>
> (BP:23, female, age 37)

This illustrates that the presence of friends or a peer group can stimulate several types of emotions in tourists. This tourist was able to connect with the Boddhovumi on multiple emotional levels. In the on-site interviews, the most experienced tourists who had already visited the site, and sometimes on multiple occasions provided the most heart-wrenching narrations and reported influencing the emotional responses of other tourists. Another respondent described his sadness as follows:

> When I entered Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi, I could feel the cruelty and depravity of humans. I literally cried. This visit stimulated me spiritually but drained me emotionally.
>
> (BP:21, male, age 33)

Entering the place where the massacre and burial occurred can give rise to extreme feelings, of anger, of pain, of devastation. Although the setup of the Boddhovumi can put tourists in this melancholic frame of mind, some respondents in this study shared their experience at the Boddhovumi as exciting, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. One respondent recontextualised the site in this light: they were amazed by the open space, lake, and fresh air, in addition to recognising its historical importance, adding:

> Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi is a fantastic site to visit in Dhaka city. The visit is exciting and complete, providing an excellent understanding of the Liberation War and the lives Bangladeshi people lived in those times via the graveyard, memorial and monument.
>
> (BP:26, Male, Age 32)

According to another respondent:

> Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi is an excellent site to visit with anyone who wants to know more about history and the Liberation War of Bangladesh. This site does not require a ticket purchase or an entry fee. We can take

> excellent photos of the monument, and the posters that are hung at the site are highly informative.
>
> (BP:21, Male, Age 32)

From the respondents above we gain a sense of the positive emotions that can be awakened by the sight: tourists appreciate the beauty of the monument, and from the observation of the site, many are eager to capture photos of the beauty and aesthetic appeal of the memorial. Part of this ties into the location of the moment: it is situated within the type of open space that is rare in Dhaka, which—as the capital of Bangladesh—is a crowded and busy city.

The Boddhovumi is considered to offer a high degree of high emotional engagement in terms of reflection on the past. The tourists interviewed reported these extremes of emotion as well as a deep love for their countries and the victims. The desire of the Bangladeshi people to keep their history alive and convey the deep meanings of the place throughout the world is clear. The Liberation War happened over fifty years ago, but the memorial continues to uphold symbolic meanings of national identity. The authenticity and emotional engagement create a significant impact and respect for Bangladeshi history and the Bangladeshi people. This sense of respect centres on the heroes who fought for the human value of freedom. Most respondents in the study expressed their respect as they described their emotional experiences; indeed, every respondent expressed personal emotional reflections about the heroes who were buried or killed during the Liberation War in Bangladesh.

6.7 The COVID-19 Pandemic and Tourism at Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people around the world—including in Bangladesh—were required to stay at home for long periods of time. Governments, local authorities and community leaders restricted access to outside sites for people's safety. As a result, people could not go outside, visit restaurants, or schedule gatherings anywhere. In this situation, adults and children became mentally—and to some extent, physically—frustrated. They all wanted somewhere to go to be alone or to spend quality time with friends and family members. In the context of this situation, as previously mentioned, the Boddhovumi became an attractive site for people, especially locals, because of its proximity and its provision of an open space in which to gather, where people could maintain social distancing easily in the space. Thus, the site increased in popularity under COVID-19. As mentioned, the memorial is an attractive

location: usually calm and quiet, and an escape from traffic, construction, and urban noise. Visitors sit calmly and children play happily. As one respondent stated during his in-depth interview:

> I heard about this site from my neighborhood. During the COVID-19 pandemic, my business shut down because I could not open my shop. All day, I would spend time at home. My kids were also doing nothing at home—although sometimes they would play or attend online classes. My wife also became frustrated. Then, after learning about this site, we would come to visit…I read about this site in the newspaper, but I did not visit before the pandemic. This site is quiet, calm…open air…Social distancing is easy. The security of this site is quite standard since I feel safe when I visit there. I reach a kind of tranquility when I visit this site. Maybe the pandemic gave me an opportunity to visit, experience the calm and quiet…sit in a place and think about different things…I also bring my kids here…Before, I was so busy…I did not have that much time to come here, bring my family places or spend quality time with the family. This has been great for me.
>
> (BP:28, Male, Age 45)

Visits to open spaces increased dramatically in the two years following the pandemic, as people were forced to seek different activities that they could engage in safely. People from Dhaka used open public spaces in unprecedented numbers as places to exercise, get closer to nature, socialise, dine, or shop while socially distancing. The pandemic elevated the value of open spaces and underscored the benefits for Dhaka city of creating more open public spaces and supporting wider access to them. Thus, people may continue to consider the open space of the Boddhovumi as a concrete site where they could pass some time noiselessly during the pandemic period. People found it a peaceful destination in the chaos. As people are increasingly mindful of a post-pandemic world and what would happen if there were future pandemics, it would be interesting to see if the popularity of dark tourism sites such as the Boddhovumi was affected, on the strength of two motivations elsewhere identified in this research: the appeal of outside spaces, which constitute many such sites, and people's 'morbid curiosity', or seeking out life-affirming experiences in the case of catastrophe and human pain.

This chapter directly holds the research question on how looking at dark tourism in Bangladesh boosts understanding in the subject in South Asia and around the world, guided by the research drive and three main objectives. At the Boddhovumi, visitors are subtly urged to take part in the rehearsal of social memories of the Liberation War from a Bangladeshi perspective, as

stated in the chapter presenting the findings of the field visit observations and data from the in-person interviews. The memorial is heavily promoted by the Bangladeshi government, which also offers informative access to it. The Boddhovumi tourism facility takes care to promote social memory, enabling a wider spectrum of visitors to take part in the remembrance of the Bangladesh Liberation War. The monument's open operations and architecture allow visitors to take part in commemorative events without being limited to a certain day or hour; as a result, visitors have practically complete freedom to remember the site's history. In keeping with the findings from the larger surveys, the results of this particular case study show that visitors have varied experiences. Some of the participants in the study's on-site interviews had been to the Boddhovumi more than twice. In spite of the fact that they could be categorised as dark tourists in some ways, they were not drawn to the location for this reason. In order to address the lack of research in this field, this case study explores both the reasons why people travel and offers a more first-hand understanding of the interactions that people have while there. The case study results show compelling patterns of Boddhovumi-specific tourist motivations and conduct, indicating that South Asian visitors were thoroughly involved with the location. Recurring visitors painted a picture of developing a long-lasting emotional bond with the location, one that for many did not lessen in intensity over time. "New" visitors frequently praised the website's ability to transport them by reliving social memories and bringing history to life. The site's significance in religious funeral rites, particularly in Muslim traditions, was highlighted. This spiritual practise had an impact on visitors' actions, such as their removal of their shoes as a symbol of respect and their decision not to take pictures of the graves. However, there was a noticeable rise in the acceptance of photography in other areas of the website, indicating that photography's influence on South Asian tourists' experiences is likely to grow. The information made it evident that locals in Boddhovumi impact the experiences of visitors who travel from a distance by influencing these people with their local viewpoints. Locals from Dhaka provide tales that personalise and broaden the tourists' experiences. This bolsters the argument that dark tourism shouldn't be seen as a uniform system of shared meanings and experiences, but rather as a broad praxis that depends on the intrinsic diversity of its users. This was demonstrated by the discovery of the significance of recommendations and word-of-mouth testimonials in attracting visitors to the website. It was noted that the media coverage and publicity surrounding the site are incredibly lacking in comparison to the depth of this personal communication and endorsement, establishing a clear recommendation from this research for

those supporting the site to make sure that potential visitors have access to a wider variety of information sources to learn more about the site. Visitors are significantly motivated by the visuals they view in their free time, as evidenced by the debate of motivation and media. This case study's key result was how strongly the data focused on Bangladeshi nationalism. The respondents highlighted respect and social conscience as the pillars of Bangladeshi values and the country's ethos. More research is needed to properly examine the emotional intensity that visitors feel in different dark tourism situations, as this could uncover significant themes that weren't taken into account or covered in this study. We can gain a lot about the development of national identity and understanding of different cultures by carefully examining and researching how visitors to dark tourism sites remember, learn, and develop particular behaviour practises. Thus, dark tourism turns into a symbol of national pride, which is a persuasive argument for leaders and authorities to support it.

Chapter Seven: Significant findings and outcomes from the investigation

This chapter identifies and explores the major conclusions drawn from each of the empirical investigative chapters, evaluating the narratives presented in the datasets through the lens of the conceptual framework to find patterns, commonalities, and outlying information, and to prescribe areas for further study. The data sought to establish the nature of tourist interactions with dark tourist sites through global, South Asian, and Bangladeshi perspectives, ultimately in service of the central research question on what can be learned from the latter in application to South Asia and beyond.

7.1 Dark tourists (both domestic and international) travel information sources, travel motivations as well as experiences

The respondents of the empirical chapter investigating information sources were tourists from around the world from areas such as Europe, USA and South Africa, as well as those in South Asia. The worldwide nature of the range of respondents was made possible because data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic through online platforms. This resulted in a data set of respondents who had already visited numerous dark tourism sites around the world. This chapter sought to address part of the second research object to examine visitor motivations, and the third objective to compare attitudes based on the preparatory or anticipatory stage of visiting a dark tourism site, based on the gaps identified in the literature review.

7.1.1 Dark tourists' three stages motivations and experiences levels:

It became apparent through this analysis that tourists may endure three stages of perception regarding dark tourism: perceptions held prior to visiting the site; perceptions received during the visit; and perceptions processed after visiting the site. Tourists typically like to visit 'picturesque' or conventionally relaxing sites such as beaches, hills, holiday cottages, amusement parks, and so on, but some choose to chase challenges or thrills: and are enthusiastic about the prospect of visiting dark tourism sites for this reason. In the field research of this study, a South Asian tourist and a British tourist mentioned that they enjoyed challenges, thrills and excitement, and sought them out as holiday activities. Being motivated by a sense of adventure and novelty, rather than being satisfied with more sedate activities, they specified

that they were looking for the kind of destinations that could deliver off-kilter, exciting, and unique experiences, criteria often satisfied by dark tourist sites.

7.1.2 Dark tourists' diverse motivations and emotional experiences (both domestic and international perspective)

This study identifies that a strong motivation for visiting dark tourism sites is to show respect or remembrance to victims. One participant from South Asia felt that it was valuable to consider the visit in a spirit of respect to the victims commemorated before visiting the site: a perception held long before his visit. He had been politically involved with the victim memorialised at the site, who had been president, and for this reason the tourist was determined to show respect to this leader. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that political affiliation is a considerable factor driving South Asian tourists' decisions to visit dark tourism sites. Some tourists visit sites for the purpose of acquiring knowledge and educating themselves, as described by one South Asian tourist and one British tourist. Both anticipated obtaining knowledge about the Second World War before visiting renowned dark tourism sites in Germany, and were able to share their perception of how much they had learned following the visit.

A surprising finding from the study was that many South Asian tourists disclosed that they visited dark tourism sites as a random or unplanned experience with family members or friends. Two respondents from South Asia stated that before visiting dark tourism sites, their prior perception was that the sites would be calm and quiet and would thus offer a pleasant day out. They did not seem to have had any particular knowledge about these sites before visiting them, and therefore had a dispassionate experience of what their trip would be like. Most of the respondents in this study reported that they were curious about history, and thus highly motivated by the prospect of widening their historical learning before visiting dark tourism sites. They revealed their different experiences of developing an emotional or passionate response whilst experiencing these sites and appreciating the different dimensions of history embodied by them. Before visiting the dark tourism sites, they explained that they knew about several historical aspects of those places, and those with this partial knowledge of events described themselves as passionately eager to expand their understanding.

Some respondents outlined this interest in history as more than just cultural interest, feeling that they were revisiting history. This motivation or prior perception provided a psychological, memory-driven approach to experiencing a site. The loss of one's peer group or family was a considerable factor in the decision to visit dark tourism sites, both for tourists from South Asia and elsewhere. One respondent from the UK mentioned the loss of his grandfather. A respondent with a Polish background revealed her ancestors' struggles. Another South Asian respondent mentioned her country's fight for liberation. Respondents were graciously open to sharing their family histories and explaining what the sites meant to them in terms of their own personal or social histories.

Remarkably, this cluster with individual associations appeared to know beforehand what to expect before visiting the dark tourism sites and expressed their motivation to visit them out of compassion and affinity for their peers or ancestors. As mentioned in the findings about information sources, the Polish respondent became very emotional while relating the story, and her grief was palpable. One of the UK-based respondents mentioned that she visited the dark tourism sites for work purposes because she is a tour operator and her job involved identifying interesting and suitable sites for tourists. Clearly, both South Asian tourists and those from elsewhere who visited dark tourism locations based on historical factors had the clearest prior observations and prospects of the places.

This research uncovered that tourists have a range of numerous perceptions while visiting dark tourism sites, and that these perceptions may be altered from those prior to their visit. It was interesting to consider how varied the prior perceptions or expectations were, and how these fell short, were subverted, or were exceeded, according to visitors from different cultures. One respondent from the UK thought the site would just include a museum, but while he was walking around the museum in Cambodia, he found himself paying respect to the victims in a much more participatory way than he imagined he would. A South African respondent felt embarrassed by the other tourists taking photographs in the war cemetery, since he regarded it as disrespectful to the victims. Another UK-based respondent experienced the site on a spiritual level and reflected on the site as a memorial to death rather than a source of enjoyment. Thus,

tourists may have in mind how they might feel or think before visiting the dark tourism sites but find themselves more actively responding to the sites when they are actually there.

Two respondents, one from the UK and the other from South Asia, mentioned that their visits reinforced their beliefs. Both stated that their actions consisted simply of visiting the site, but that while they were visiting there or walking there, they found themselves engaging with the location on a different self-reinforcing level. They reported feeling fully engaged in the experience, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally. Thus, both South Asian and UK-based tourists may find that their beliefs and perceptions are reinforced by visits to dark tourism sites. Grief is commonly experienced during visits to dark tourism sites, and one respondent from the UK and another from South Asia experienced an overwhelming feeling of mourning while walking around the sites. Both were moved to tears as they stood in front of items relating to tragic events and atrocities, such as children's signposts. Although these two tourists may have meticulously planned their visits, they nonetheless found themselves overcome with emotion when they were there in person: defying their own expectations of the power of the site, or even of their own emotional reactions to stimulate relating to these events.

Participants from South Asia also stated that they were fascinated in exploring material items, such as the tools used to build and decorate dark tourism sites. They mentioned that tourists often cry or feel helpless but that their priorities were different, based on their observations of other tourists. One expressed worried that it may be rude, but he emphasised that he was also a researcher and intentionally visited dark tourism sites for the purpose of sharing knowledge and information. However, only South Asian tourists mentioned such unusual attitudes. Interestingly, this investigative approach to material objects seemed to be limited to South Asian tourists in this study.

Both South Asian and British visitors felt miserable after returning from the dark tourism sites. They found themselves thinking about victims and wondering about the violent attitudes of those who had perpetrated the killings or had otherwise had some hand in the occurrences. One South Asian respondent boldly mentioned that she would bring her children to the dark tourism site to teach them to 'never to blindly trust people'. She articulated that children should visit dark tourism sites as a means of cultivating life skills, since most dark tourism sites are intrinsically associated with political realities that sadly touch many of us in our lifetimes, such

as war, struggles for freedom and corruption. As such, children who visit these sites may be better able to understand how to protect themselves from struggle and hardship, and build resilience: a significant finding to consider, going forward, in research on the roles that children and young people could fulfil as dark tourists. However, it is important to note that only one South Asian tourist implied that visits to dark tourism sites offered future generations chances to groom their life skills.

Although previous investigators have specified that dark tourism sites are 'attractive' places to visit and used the language of 'attractions' to talk about them, as we saw in the literature review, most respondents in this study, both from South Asia and elsewhere, firmly rejected the term 'attraction' in relation to dark tourism. Rather, they preferred the term 'interesting' to describe dark tourism sites' touristic purpose. UK-based respondents consider dark tourism sites to facilitate historical experiences, convey sensitive stories of survival that are provocative and educational and provide information on the world's heritage rather than offering traditional entertaining, conventional pleasure. Most were stunned to hear the term 'attraction' used to describe such sites. Therefore, according to this study, dark tourism sites are best typified as interesting sites to visit.

In general, participants articulated their differentiated experiences of what they experienced after their visits to dark tourism sites. Many respondents post-visit expressed a variety of perceptions of what they had experienced straddling education, development, emotional response, and tourist satisfaction. Several respondents from the UK, South Africa and Malaysia (South Asia) affirmed that they had educated themselves and gained knowledge after their visits to dark tourism sites. They were not mentioning to academic knowledge or education; rather, they meant historical acquaintance and information and that their prospects as tourists had been completed.

While the term 'dark tourism' is familiar in academia, this study uncovered that tourists have little awareness of the term. One respondent from South Asia who had completed his master's degree in Cambodia, another from South Asia who was awarded a degree from Germany, and another from the UK who had completed his master's in geopolitical and dark tourism

photography already knew the term ‘dark tourism’, because their universities are situated in popular dark tourist destination countries, such as Cambodia (South Asia), Germany (Europe) and the UK. This suggests that presently, awareness of the disciplinary field is contained within academic circles. However, education does not necessarily mean that the individual will be familiar with the term ‘dark tourism’, since another three respondents, who were faculty members in universities in South Asia, were not familiar with the term. Some came to know the term for the first time during the interviews for this study.

Specifically, South Asian tourists were probing when they come across the term during the interviews for this study, indicating that there is scope to increase awareness of the field in South Asia and boost the profile of the disciplinary field. The findings from these interviews suggest that the management or authorities of dark tourism sites in Europe align the sites’ aesthetics with the dark tourism phenomenon and its attendant theories. By contrast, it appears that the management and authorities at South Asian dark tourism sites engage in very little deliberation regarding the aesthetics and theories of dark tourism.

In terms of bases of information regarding dark tourism, there was an extensive range of announced sources used by South Asian and non-South Asia tourists: notably media, such as TV and film, books and material produced by tour operators. It was noted that guidebooks were less widely available in Asia than in the West. Tour guides use creative approaches to convey intense information about dark tourism sites with permission from site management teams or authorities. They can show tourists the entire site in a short time. This may be why many tourists preferred to enlist tour guides, according to this study. While South Asian tourists were aware of the usefulness of human tour guides, most did not avail of these services owing to their high costs, which typically lie outside their budgets. Rather, they sought assistance from websites and audio recordings instead. As such, tools such as informative websites and audio recordings may play a key role that typically only human tour guides can play for tourists in the context of dark tourism. We have recognised that additional studies into the role of online commentary and information exchanges would be enormously beneficial to the field, particularly in South Asia, and accounting for the information used by South Asian tourist to see the most normally used resources used would make for a captivating study.

7.1.3 Online data collection and emotional experiences from dark tourists during visiting dark tourism sites

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the data on the occurrences and explanations on the part of dark tourists had to be collected via Zoom and Skype interviews. A major advantage of this was that I was able to collect data from a diverse array of international tourists who had visited various dark tourist sites and who shared their experiences and interpretations with me. I may not otherwise have had access to such accounts owing to physical restrictions. Zoom and Skype in particular have been very constructive platforms for generating theoretical aspects of dark tourism in this study. On the other hand, as previously outlined in evaluating the pros and cons of various tools and approaches for gathering information, there were a few disadvantages. Although the interviewees were extremely generous in their sharing of their experiences, the sensitive nature of experiencing dark tourism sites meant that it was possible that the sharing of these narratives was compromised by the less-personal nature of online discussions, as opposed to face-to-face communications.

At the end, the research of evidence resources used by the visitors that influence their observations before, during and after site visits revealed two significant outcomes. The first was recognising the sheer range of motivations that were identified by respondents, and how these intersected with the information sources they consulted beforehand. This in turn, was particularly determined by the cultural background of the respondents. Specifically, for South Asian tourists, two trends were noted: the strength of their political or historical motivations for engaging with the sites, and their choosing of online resources over site-based tour guides, leading to a more self-directed experience. The second was seeing the gaps between prior perceptions, experiences during visits, and then perceptions after visits. The South Asian tourists had a particularly narrow gap between the expected experience and their reflections, owing to prior knowledge derived from personal affinity with the sites, while non-South Asian tourists had a greater gap and were more likely to be surprised by their responses.

7.2 Dark tourists' attitudes, behaviours and experiences in Bangladesh and significant factors this influenced these responses

The examination concentrated on the narrated involvements evaluated narratives from visitors of diverse nationalities and backgrounds, who had visited dark tourism site in Bangladesh at various distances from their homes. As we found from the analysis, we could group their experiences according to the feelings that arose during the visits, affections held by visitors, understandings they had, activities they participated in, the values that were reinforced or challenged by the visits, and their own demographic considerations and how this influenced their experiences. Despite the recent increase in academic attention to experience and activity in dark tourism, there is still a huge potentiality for future research in the area. The outcomes of this research develop the concept that these dark tourism places yield solid and lasting educational encounters, particularly on issues surrounding the production of national identity and/or patriotism, interest in death and disaster and engaging with friends and family members or relatives at dark tourism sites. The experience of empathy, particularly that produced alongside their family or friends' (as described by Lennon and Foley, 1999) came across particularly strongly in the participants' responses. Tourists who attended the sites with their family members in particular reported higher experiences of expressing their sympathy for the victims: interpreting their received experiences with degrees of empathy and sympathy. Tourists who identified curiosity as a main motivation received particularly potent emotional and cognitive experiences. Intriguing visitors in this study were committed in their gaining of evidence whilst at the places.

This investigation also shows that there are some dark tourism places where visitors not only pursue an educational experience but also wish to show the sites to their families; furthermore, they consider this to be meaningful for the future generations. For example, one female respondent was motivated by a sense of imparting wisdom to her children on human nature and political realities. So, here authorities and management of the dark tourism sites face a clear challenge to balance these high stakes elements: providing an appropriate environment to provide experiences to maximise opportunities for education, creating deep and lasting emotional responses and being a setting for families, especially those of domestic tourists, to bond on a thoughtful phenomenon. Dark tourism is not merely a uniform system of shared meanings and experiences. Instead, it is a contextually dependent practice on a diverse range

of experiences requiring affective and cognitive work and deep consideration of culture. Where some tourists experience anxiety, others may experience excitement presented with the same experiential opportunities at the same dark tourism site. In other words, interpretation of their experiences was, as one might imagine, extremely determined on how receptive the individuals were to the emotional power of the places. In general, in displaying on their experiences and understandings of place visits, dark tourists emphasized their respect for the sites and the preservation of the histories they were engaging with. The responses highlight the complexity of visitors' emotions and attitudes during their visits that frequently had a strong connection with their initial motivation for visiting, with an emphasis on the need to consider them with devotion and acknowledge.

7.3 Case Study Findings: Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi in Bangladesh

The case study of the Boddhovumi contributed a solid spotlight to focus on the key question of the thesis: how do tourists interact with dark tourism sites in Bangladesh, and how can this knowledge enrich the field in South Asia and beyond? To address this question, the field research adopted an ethnographic approach to collect and interpret data on tourists' personal experiences at the Boddhovumi to better understand and conceptualise dark tourism. This case study addresses the direct proposition of the research question on how examining dark tourism in Bangladesh enriches South Asian and global knowledge in the field, guided directly by the research aim and three central objectives.

As specified in the chapter offering the results of the field visit observations and data from the in-person interviews, at the Boddhovumi, tourists are implicitly invited to participate in the rehearsal of social memories of the Liberation War through a national perspective. The Bangladeshi government is key in promoting the memorial and they also provide informational access to it (Ahmed, 2012). This gives the site a politicised edge, as the government are thereby directly and indirectly influencing tourists' motivations, expectations and experiences of the site. The tourism facility of the Boddhovumi is careful to foster social memory, allowing a broader range of tourists to participate in the memory of the Bangladesh Liberation War. The monument's open design and operations allow visitors to participate in remembrance activities without restriction to any particular date or time; thus, there is great flexibility for tourists to

commemorate the site's history. This openness makes the site accessible but also difficult to explore visitor motivations and understanding.

The results of this exceptional case study exhibit that visitors have versatile experiences, in line with the findings from the broader surveys. Some interviewees at the site who participated in this study had visited the Boddhovumi more than twice. Although they could be considered dark tourists in some respects, they were not drawn to the site for this reason: some of them visited more casually or because the open space was attractive during the COVID-19 pandemic: a view in line with much research on 'incidental' dark tourism where the associations with death do not factor into the tourists' motivations at all (for example, Slade, 2003). This case study pursues both enthusiasms for visitors to visit and delivers a more empirical perception of the visitors' encounters, addressing the dearth of research in this area (Podoshen et al., 2018).

The case study findings from the site identify compelling patterns of tourist motivations and behaviour specific to the Boddhovumi, suggesting that the South Asian visitors were comprehensively engaged with the site. There was a distinction made between local people casually spending time at the site as part of their normal day, and self-described 'genuine' tourists who had actively made plans to visit the site: suggesting that the sample of interviewees unconsciously or consciously associate tourism with planning. Repeat visitors outlined a narrative of building a sustained emotional relationship with the site, which for many did not wane in intensity over time. 'New' visitors often cited the transportive power of the site to recreate social memories and bring history to life. All respondents were deeply moved by the site. The role of the site in faith-based death rituals, predominantly Muslim traditions was noted: and the influence of this spiritual practice had an effect on the behaviour of tourists: for example, the removal of shoes as a sign of respect, and tourists refraining from photographing the graves. There was a notable increase in the tolerance of photography in other parts of the site, however, suggesting that the role of photography in shaping South Asian tourist experiences is likely to increase.

It became clear through the data that the people local to the Boddhovumi shape the experiences of tourists who come from further away, influencing these visitors with their local perspectives. Dhaka natives share stories that add personal value and perspective to the experiences of the tourists. This finding reinforces the perspective that dark tourism should not be perceived as a

standardized framework of shared meanings and experiences. Instead, it should be recognized as a diverse and multifaceted practice that is contingent upon the inherent diversity of visitors.

This was reflected in the finding of how important word-of-mouth testimonies and recommendations are to driving visitors to the site. It was noted that compared to the richness of this person-to-person communication and endorsement, the media and publicity around the site is extremely poor. This promotes a recommendation for officials to ensure that potential visitors have more diverse information sources available to learn more about the site. As seen in the discussion around motivation and media, visitors are strongly compelled by the images they consume in their leisure time.

A significant finding of this case study was just how much the data oriented around Bangladeshi nationhood. The site has a strong sense of being owned by the Bangladeshi people. The interviewees were passionate in highlighted what the site meant to them in terms of their own citizenship and sense of pride. They considered their nationhood in terms of their real and imagined families. As such, a strong sense of social responsibility and collective identity came across. The respondents foregrounded social conscientiousness and the notion of respect as cornerstones of Bangladeshi values and the national character.

To summarise the findings from the full range of respondents to this study—Bangladeshi, those from other parts of South Asia, and non-South Asian—the experiences of dark tourism site differs, and varies visitor to visitor, site to site and country to country. The range of experience might differ between domestic visitor to international visitor, but what comes across is the sheer affective and emotional power specifically of dark tourism sites. What strongly comes across throughout this study is how this affects an individual's perception of a nation: whether it is their own or one they have little knowledge of.

More studies are required to fully explore the emotional intensity that tourists experience in various contexts of dark tourism, which may reveal important themes that have not been considered in this study. By researching and exploring in great detail tourists' ways of remembering, learning, and developing specific behavioural practices at dark tourism sites, we learn a great deal about the creation of nationhood and awareness of other cultures. Dark tourism therefore becomes a symbolic instrument of national pride: and this is a compelling reason for leaders and authorities to embrace it.

7.4 Personal reflection on the research process:

During my PhD thesis writing, I have experienced a learning finding out the gap for research, preparing for data collection and obviously the thesis writing process which provided me to attempt for academic excellence. It is common that no two scholars are the same and no two research drives are identical, even though academic objectives could be similar among scholars.

My seniors and colleagues have been telling me their stories of thesis writing regarding how they achieved. Their narratives were encouraging, challenging and motivating. As my research topic is very much new in tourism area, I did not find adequate literature available. I was disappointed for a while, but gradually I came to understand the thing. I started collecting journal articles, books, research methodology class notes. Then I went to university to talk to my principal supervisor and discussed the context which I have been going through. The supervisor provided me suggestions to that but waited to see how things going through. My supervisor suggested me to go through the literature so that I might get some the idea to fix up and narrow down the context of research. That conversation with him helped and motivated me to go further reading of literature. Then I started visiting the Manchester Met library every day and collected some research works. All of my library works helped me to find out a context of theories and research gaps for thesis work.

It was the most challenging as well as struggling period for me to find out the specific aims and objectives for my study. Finally, I narrowed down the avenue as motivations, experiences of dark tourism from diversified tourists around several countries through online platform and also a case study approach from Bangladeshi perspective.

Now I needed to start writing the RD1 which was a proposal for the study that was just too much challenging for me. I did hard work and spent so many restless nights for writing my research proposal (RD1). I worked on for several drafts of research proposal for getting the research proposal to be approved. During this writing of my research proposal, I had received tremendous cooperation and help from my principal supervisor. It was challenging for me, but I made it. After approving RD1, I needed to prepare RD2. I had to go through broader aspects of literature review and so many times I took help from my supervisor. I shared my problems with him again and again and he clearly described me the tools, writing techniques and strategies. The meetings made me clear about my research gaps, research aims, data collection

instruments and many more. Then after six months I submitted RD2 and received a few feedbacks. This moment provided me to fix up my PhD since the viva voce team approved my RD2 and I came to confirm in next level which data collection for my research. Then I decided to collect and started preparing the depth interview questionnaire. First, I wanted to carry on a pilot survey. In between Covid-19 had been started and I was paused for a few weeks. But since Covid-19 did not overcome, I fixed an online meeting along with my supervisor and asked about it. Then both of us came to realise the practicality of the situation and decided to collect data through online platform along with snowball sampling techniques. This method was easy to some extent since the whole world was in lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic and my participants were reluctant to participate. I talked to the participants hours after hours and build rapport with them.

Then again, a new challenge occurred during my PhD term and that was the change of principal supervisor. Since my previous principal supervisor became busy for his additional administrative jobs, he arranged a new principal supervisor for me, and I agreed along with him. Then he introduced me with him through online. Now my new principal supervisor started helping me and he suggested me at least one dark tourism site I had to visit and collect data from there in person. Since covid-19 pandemic was going on, again I waited a few weeks and then booked flight to Bangladesh. I went back to Bangladesh and hold for my data collection for a few weeks for covid-19 pandemic. As soon as the covid-19 situation get a bit relax, I started collecting data from Rayer Bazar Boddhovumi in person from morning to evening every single day. That was quite time consuming, risky and challenging, but somehow, I made it. That was a full case study chapter in my thesis.

After collection of data, I tried to find out the best way to narrate and analyse the data that I collected, and I took help from my supervisor. He helped me suggesting data analysis procedure. I started learning the way, technique and strategy. Then started writing the analysis giving meaning to the data in terms of existing literature and give them a theoretical lens. Then after couple of months I prepared a rough draft of my entire thesis and sent it to my supervisor. My supervisor checked all of that and sent me many feedbacks. I tried to be incorporated all of them and submitted officially. After a few weeks I had a defence date and I attended or faced the PhD defence. It was a memorable day for me since it went good along with a major correction which I took this very much enthusiastically and again tried to work on it.

Approximately after six or seven months, I re-submitted my thesis and again received along with some minor corrections. I considered all of these and corrected it and submitted again.

The journey of writing my PhD thesis was very motivational context for me to do my further academic journey and I am truly grateful to the people whose contribution made my PhD journey of write my thesis the most meaningful and efficient. I extend my sincere appreciation to my supervisor for their sincere guidance, advices and care throughout the PhD journey. Thanks to Manchester Metropolitan University, through my PhD thesis, I have achieved in gaining a series of knowledge on research as well as dark tourism.

Though it has been challenging, it has been a productive and remarkable journey. I was not born intellectual; it was all about hard work, the encouragement from my supervisors that reached me where I am now. I am joyful to prefer this pathway. My PhD journey has prepared me stronger and more enthusiastic for the subjective purpose regarding tourism sector of my country.

7.5 Avenues of future research for young researchers

In this study, a wide range of motivations for visiting dark tourism sites have been identified and according to Light (2017), ‘motivations are now reasonably well understood’ (p. 295). However, there are still gaps in the literature, particularly in the context of South Asia. Future research should explore the spectrum of dark tourism motives proposed by Stone, paying particular attention to the "lighter end" where motivations may vary significantly in the South Asian context which is still covered and needs to be uncovered especially for south Asian country. Ivanova and Light (2018) aim to address this gap by investigating the motivations and experiences of visitors to a relatively less intense dark tourism attraction. Nevertheless, more research is needed to comprehensively understand this phenomenon in future. Understanding these motivations will be crucial for meeting the demands of tourists visiting countries like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and neighbouring regions. A recent study by Zheng et al. (2018) has made a significant contribution by shedding light on why tourists might choose to avoid visiting sites associated with death and in this study, it is not explored too. However, it is important to note that this study is based on a specific case study and may not be generalized to other contexts. So, a few more case study may be considered and researched by future researchers. Therefore, it is imperative to validate these dimensions through a follow-up study,

and ideally, a comparative study, as they may vary across different types of dark tourism sites within diverse social and cultural contexts, particularly in the South Asian region. Understanding the relationship between motivations and constraints can greatly contribute to our comprehension of the psychological aspects of dark tourism, specifically the intricate psychological and emotional processes experienced by dark tourists in South Asia. In this study, only qualitative study has been conducted and the findings could be different if quantitative would be conducted. Therefore, there is a need for comprehensive quantitative studies that delve into dark tourism motivations and experiences in South Asian contexts.

It should be emphasized that the existing body of dark tourism theory has primarily focused on understanding the motivations and experiences of adult tourists. As a result, there has been limited attention given to the experiences of children and young visitors, particularly with regards to their cognitive and emotional responses at different levels in this study. Consequently, explaining the motivations, experiences, and emotions of children and young individuals when faced with death and suffering at dark tourism sites, especially from a South Asian perspective, remains challenging. Kerr and Price (2018) have made a notable contribution by examining children's experiences within dark tourism. However, our understanding of children and young people's involvement in dark tourism, particularly their motivations and experiences when visiting such sites, is still sadly limited and in this study, it is totally unintentionally avoided. Exploring the motives and experiences of children within dark tourism is a sensitive issue, as younger tourists may potentially experience more distress. To address this gap, research must adopt a new, interdisciplinary approach and incorporate specialized knowledge related to children, as they represent a significant market segment in South Asia. The present thesis has demonstrated to include just visitors who were available in the dark tourism sites that were for only for this research. However, it could serve as a starting point for future research that promise to be more challenging and impactful.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Dark tourism is an emergent phenomenon, with its own ever evolving and expanding literature and field of study. It has a broadening community around it with both casual and seasoned tourists participating, and an increasingly high profile in the public imagination and media. As such, there is vast potential and richness to be found globally in seeking out the incentives of visitors to these sites. Dark tourism is also emotionally complex, as it is so heavily intertwined with national identity, trauma, and personal narrative, touching individuals communally and on the most intimate level. Visiting such a site can erase preconceptions about a country or reframe a sense of identity within a culture. These experiences can be challenging and confronting at the best of times but are particularly so during a time of international and national crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which spanned the period in which this research was undertaken.

Situating this research as an exploration of how individuals cultivate and appreciate a sense of national identity by reckoning with the aftermath of extreme events, it defines dark tourism as a mode of experience that is unique in tourism. This opens the field to further scrutiny and encourages future research to explore as-yet underrepresented parts of the world. This brings tangible benefits and opportunities to communities, and well as promoting a forward-looking approach, to ensure that these sites are part of the conversation in planning initiatives, countering future disaster, and reflecting on national character and culture. This research posits a way of investigating non-Western sites, and how the existing gaps in our collective knowledge can be filled.

This thesis established its ambition to widen academic perspectives of dark tourism from both Bangladeshi and non-Bangladeshi perspectives in its research question, aims and objectives. This thesis has deeply evaluated dark tourism as an overall concept, looking at experiences, perspectives, and activities related to the practice of dark tourism. The case study, unique in approach and providing innovative research focused on dark tourism in Bangladesh, and presented the experiences and stories that surround the Boddhovumi, including Dhaka's recovery after the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. This chapter set out the critical discussion this specific dark tourism site and its origin as a result of the war, and considered

how these two aspects coincide and interact to inform the wider theories and hypotheses that emerge in this investigation of dark tourism.

The current literature on dark tourism was comprehensively evaluated before the contributions of this piece of research were formed, and the theories of it built on this foundational knowledge to further academic research within this disciplinary field. The focus was on the dark tourism sites themselves, as well as post-war tourism and the role of stakeholders in post-war tourism development activities. The initial research plan was to collect data from all over South Asia, visiting many dark tourism sites to reveal the motivations and experiences of South-Asian tourists visiting these areas. Most research into dark tourism has focused on sites in Europe and the USA, but the researcher found very few studies that explored dark tourism in South Asia, and so this research was designed to fill this gap.

Owing to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, however, this research plan and the scope of the research had to be adapted to fit within the restrictions and limitations that were implemented both locally and globally. I was unable to travel to dark tourism sites in South Asia in order to collect the data needed for the study for some time, and I thus had to adapt the approach and move this data collection online. Through the use of online platforms such as Skype and Zoom, and by familiarising myself with online data collection methods and their outcomes, I was able to continue with my research and collect an appropriate sample size to inform my studies. Thus began a new phase of the research, and I settled on a snowball sampling method to collect the necessary data, which proved very successful. Tourists who had visited dark tourism sites around the world before the travel restrictions were imposed were happy to share their experiences with me, and I thus decided to widen the selection of participants to include anyone who was interested in contributing, rather than just seeking out South-Asian participants. I collected the data by conducting in-depth interviews through the chosen online platforms and approached participants through social media groups and the networks built up through these groups.

As the COVID-19 restrictions began to lift, I was advised to collect in-person data from at least one dark tourism site in Bangladesh. I had to carefully select the site that would be the most practical and convenient for this data collection, and settled on the Boddhovumi, an extraordinary site well known to the Dhaka and wider Bangladeshi community, which has so far not been subjected to the kind of in-depth analysis it merits, based on its reputation. The

memorial stands in an outdoor open space, which meant that the risk of COVID-19 transmission was minimised. Moreover, the government of Bangladesh and the local community had imposed no restrictions on the number of people allowed in a single space, or indeed any other restrictions that might disrupt the research. This site was thus a practical and convenient choice, which would allow me to explore at least one site in context, witnessing the perspectives, reactions, and experiences of tourists first-hand.

The research questions asked: how do tourists interact with dark tourism sites in Bangladesh, and how can this knowledge enrich the field in South Asia and beyond? I believe that this research has led to a compelling insight into the Bangladeshi appreciation of dark tourism as a tool to establish and strengthen their sense of nationhood, and particularly their sense of pride and respect for their collective social memory.

Many participants of the in-person study in Bangladesh noted the profound effect that this site had on them. Visiting the Boddhovumi made many participants visibly upset, and many explained their experiences and perspectives in great detail. Several participants were fascinated by the site and its historical/political resonance, whereas others felt a personal connection to the memorial. Owing to the link between this site and the origins of Bangladesh as a country, many visitors felt the need to visit it as a kind of historical landmark by which to remember the war and the sacrifices that were made as part of it. Continued coverage in the media has kept interest in this site alive, meaning that many people come to visit the memorial and the surrounding graveyards; I was thus able to find a good sample of participants for the study.

My research has demonstrated that participants' motivations for visiting the Boddhovumi included a strong sense of belonging, national identity and pride, and the desire to keep this pivotal part of Bangladeshi history and social memory alive. Despite the wealth of information on this site available online, in books, and in newspapers, participants still felt the need to experience and witness the site for themselves. Stone and Sharpley (2008) argue that tourists generally do not seek out information about death, and do not pursue experiences that will involve in-depth information or learning about death; visitors who are interested in dark tourism, however, are conversely motivated by this very desire to learn about and explore the concept of death, often driven by their own experiences. Visiting sites such as the Boddhovumi, for many dark tourists, is a way to reflect on death and their national identity and sense of

national pride, but also to understand the significance of their own lives when situated in the wider tapestry of historical, political, or social memorials or sites of interest. These realisations and the accounts that participants gave were spontaneous and realistic, and many were overwhelmed by their experience of the site.

These experiences were organic, diverse, and spontaneous, and were not driven by any general perceptions about monuments or cemeteries in general. Instead, they were specific to the site that the participants were experiencing. The participants were heavily influenced by their perceptions of the freedom fighters in whose memory the monument was erected. Many participants noted that their visit to the Boddhovumi nurtured a feeling of connection, which reflects Cheal and Griffin's (2013) research, in which tourists who visited Gallipoli felt personal connections to the site and pursued opportunities to learn more about it to deepen this connection.

A pattern emerged through the research at the Boddhovumi, which involved the reflections of participants about their own mortality in the face of this memorial to the lives of those taken during a war. These reflections were consistent with Stone and Sharpley's (2008) findings that visiting dark tourism sites brings ideas relating to death and mortality to the forefront of tourists' consciousnesses and helps them to prepare themselves to face their own mortality. The COVID-19 pandemic brought these reflections into sharp relief, as tourists could to some extent relate to this concept of life cut short by a drastic, dramatic event that irrevocably altered the community and the area in which it occurred. Although visitors made a conscious decision to visit the Boddhovumi, it was only when physically placed in that setting that these reflections of national identity, national pride, and the focus on mortality both generally and specifically began to surface.

Lennon and Foley (1996) found that dark tourism can be commodified, as visitors are willing to spend significant amounts of time and money to visit such sites as the Boddhovumi. Many of the participants in the study noted that their visit to the site was an opportunity to show respect and gratitude to those who had died during the war. Podoshen's research (2013) argues that dark tourism is often motivated by emotion, which was reflected in my research, as many visitors noted that they felt emotionally connected to the site after visiting it in person.

The reactions and perspectives of the local community to dark tourists and the dark tourism sites nearby were also key factors in this research. Many local inhabitants expressed their

dislike of tourists taking or posing for photographs in front of the monument rather than paying their respects to those for whom it was erected. Many locals were also uncomfortable about the idea of young people visiting the site together as a romantic holiday or shared experience, rather than a solemn, personal reflection on the war and its legacy in the present day. An interesting practical suggestion that arose from my interactions with the local community was that the behaviour of visitors at the Boddhovumi should be monitored by the authorities or the government, who already are the guardians of the site, in order to prevent any disrespect.

Bangladesh's history is kept alive through sites such as this, and through tourism more generally, which allows many different people to experience and learn about the country's history. This was evident from the narratives told by participants about their experiences of this site. Rather than external, artificial impressions of Bangladesh, such sites highlight the sense of national identity and pride in the nation as it stands today. The participants' emotions and the sentiments that they expressed towards the site and towards Bangladesh as a result of their visit reflected the important role of the Boddhovumi in shaping national consciousness. Despite the prevalence of ethnographic narratives that have demonstrated these concepts of national identity and a sense of belonging, fascinatingly few participants addressed the political issues between Bangladesh and Pakistan that were fundamental to the instigation of the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, which is the focus of the monument itself.

The Boddhovumi represents the whole spectrum of Bangladeshi national identity, as a monument to the nation's foundation. Participants of the study noted this aspect when they described feelings of belonging and a sense of a wider national consciousness when visiting the site. Previous research into the motivations of dark tourism have focused on tourists' desire to demonstrate respect towards victims through their act of remembrance, visiting memorial sites to honour the dead. While this motivation was common too among the participants of this study, individuals also mentioned a sense of duty or responsibility and recommendations by friends and particularly family in the case of this investigation as key motivations for visiting the site. Through conducting research at this specific site, I was able to explore those aspects of national identity that are linked to dark tourism, as visitors gained valuable experiences both from their recognition of the Boddhovumi as a place of national origin, and as a place that recognised the persecution of their people, which made this study unique.

As previous studies regarding dark tourism have largely passed over South Asia in general and Bangladesh in particular, it was important to fill this gap and introduce the concept of dark tourism to this broader audience. Visiting such sites as the Boddhovumi has often been considered under the umbrella terms of historical, heritage, battlefield, or even pilgrimage tourism, whereas this study sought to differentiate dark tourism from these alternative categorisations. The association of pilgrimage tourism with dark tourism is particularly erroneous, given that a pilgrimage has religious origins, stemming from religious beliefs, values, and practices. Although dark tourism may include sites with a particular religious theme, dark tourism itself is defined by its association with death, disaster, and war, among other motivating factors. It is this association that leads people to visit such places, rather than any specific religious motivation. This study aims to identify and clarify the differences between these different types of tourism, while also filling in the gaps in global dark tourism research.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges for this research, it also added an interesting aspect to the study. Several participants who visited the Boddhovumi in person reflected on the pandemic and the state of their mental health as a result of an extended period of isolation. They noted the relief that visiting the site brought as an open space with minimal risk of infection, in which children could relax and adults could explain the country's history and thus teach the next generation about their history.

This study has opened avenues for additional research regarding the development of tourism through exploring the contexts of and motivations for dark tourism, as well as highlighting the benefits and wider significance of this practice. As there is very little awareness of the concept of dark tourism in areas such as Bangladesh in particular and South Asia more broadly, these motivations and benefits remain largely overlooked, and the promotion of sites such as the Boddhovumi as dark tourism attractions is minimal. Additional research is required to encourage the development of this and other sites in and around Bangladesh and other lesser-visited areas, which could be of great benefit to visitors. Such developments in the field of dark tourism could also benefit the surrounding communities or those who have a personal stake in what these sites represent. The Boddhovumi, for instance, inspired very moving and reflective experiences, which could be used to teach visitors about the history and culture of the nation, so that they may further understand the context of the site.

This research has explored how peoples' surroundings can influence their thinking, and how these preconceptions create specific barriers in certain situations: especially around issues of different cultures, and nationhood. Further research is required to understand different attitudes towards other dark tourism sites in their different contexts, and how these contexts or perceptions can influence both those who visit the sites and those who live nearby. Such a study would present opportunities to benefit local communities in Bangladesh and other parts of South Asia, as this research may identify and seek to develop the socio-cultural activities surrounding dark tourism sites and the nearby cities or communities. The development and wider dissemination of knowledge about dark tourism could also benefit the development of other post-disaster locations and their local communities, which would seek to enrich the national image of such places, and also support the economy of fragile or struggling communities subjected to disaster.

The findings collated from the data set out in the previous chapter could be used in future research to further explore perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of dark tourism sites in relation to national identity and could thus build a greater understanding of how such sites and the history that they represent fit into the wider consideration of a national identity. Further study could also be used to develop dark tourism sites to steer existing narratives towards considerations of future disasters and monumental events, and in so doing could cause visitors to reflect on their own attitudes towards national identity and the part that they play in a wider national narrative.

Now that COVID-19-related travel restrictions have, for the most part, been lifted, future research could include other dark tourism sites, and could therefore offer a wider picture of dark tourism both nationally and internationally. To assess how best to tackle this research, it would be important to carry out focus-group interviews to gauge the type of data that could be collected, as well as how wide the scope of the research could be. The research presented in this thesis could be considered a preliminary part of this further study, as my in-depth investigation of one dark tourism site provides an instructive framework on which other such studies could be based.

The exploration of South Asian or non-European dark tourism sites would be an important focus for this future research, given the gaps in the research. This focus could contribute to a

wider understanding of national identity and the role of dark tourism in the creation and development thereof, which could then be compared with studies across the globe.

Future research could also compare the findings of this study with the motivations and behaviours of visitors who feel a sense of national identity through other tourism experiences. It would be compelling to see similar case studies emerge from other South Asian sites, to create a clearer picture of a part of the world so underserved by research, to be able to compare how nationhood is forged in different cultural and historical contexts in the light of dark tourism.

The Boddhovumi is a site commemorating a dark chapter in Bangladeshi history that continues to haunt nationals today, and it was purpose-built to amplify this darkness. It would be interesting to explore the differences between purpose-built and non-purpose-built dark tourism sites and how the motivations and experiences of tourists differ between them. Events that instigate the development of dark tourism sites, whether purpose-built or not, can often have a huge effect on a nation's identity, particularly from the perspective of outsiders. In addition, many dark tourism sites in Europe and the USA focus on war, victory in war, or freedom from some kind of oppression, as these narratives have historically dominated Western identity narratives. It would be interesting to see how perspectives, attitudes, and experiences differed between tourists from around the world, which in turn could inform a wider understanding of the creation and development of national identity.

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