

Black Tourism and the Impact on Society with a Focus on Isla de las Muñecas

Turismo negro y el impacto en la sociedad con enfoque en la Isla de las Muñecas

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Abstract:

This article analyses the factors or motivations factors or motivations that influence tourists to visit certain destinations, which are nowadays destinations, which are currently catalogued as Black Tourism. In addition to the impact that this has generated in the society, taking as object of study Isla de las Muñecas in Xochimilco, Mexico City. The qualitative research paradigm qualitative research paradigm is used for the development of the study, with a non-experimental non-experimental, cross-sectional research design, using the qualitative methods of a case study. qualitative methods of a situational case study and phenomenology, applying open, flexible and unstructured interviews with 15 tourists who visit the place. The main results obtained show that the practice of this type of tourism can be considered cultural and educational because tourists are passionate about or interested in learning about the history of the place and the people who lived or were in those destinations.

Keywords:

Black Tourism, impact, destinations, society.

Resumen:

En el presente artículo se analizan los factores o motivaciones que influyen en los turistas para visitar ciertos destinos, los cuales, en la actualidad, son catalogados como Turismo Negro, de igual forma el impacto que éste ha generado en la sociedad, tomando como objeto de estudio la Isla de las Muñecas en Xochimilco, Ciudad de México. Se emplea el paradigma cualitativo de investigación para el desarrollo del trabajo, con un diseño de investigación no experimental de tipo transversal, por medio de los métodos cualitativos de un estudio de caso situacional y la fenomenología, aplicando entrevistas abiertas, flexibles y no estructuradas a 15 turistas que visitan el lugar. Los principales resultados obtenidos evidencian que la práctica de este tipo de turismo se puede considerar cultural y educativo porque a los turistas les apasiona o es de su interés conocer la historia del lugar y de las personas que vivieron o estuvieron en dichos destinos.

Palabras Clave:

Turismo Negro, impacto, destinos, Sociedad.

Introduction

The present research looks to notice the impact on society and tourists about Black Tourism. At the same time, knowing their principal motivation and the type of tourist people who search travel to those destinations. Therefore, diverse data is presented, such as background, definition, activities performed, characteristics, and some places where Black Tourism takes place and whose object of study of that analysis is Isla de las Muñecas.

One of the definitions given to Black Tourism or Dark Tourism is “one in which the visitor is attracted to sites linked to death, natural or human catastrophes” .1. Nowadays, it is relevant to say that there is a great variety of destinations in which Black Tourism can be practised. For instance, In San Jose, United States, we can find the Winchester mansion with guided tours to learn about the history of the place besides the details of the same and the legend that accompanies this enormous mansion.

Nonetheless, Mexico City does not lag since it also has an enormous variety of places in which Black Tourism can be

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Received: 17/08/2024, Accepted: 15/10/2024, Published: 05/01/2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29057/mbr.v6i12.13531>

practiced. For example, one of the most known places where visitors can have those experiences is in Isla de las Muñecas en Xochimilco, in Mexico City. This destination offers tourists a guided tour through the island and learn the histories and legends of that place. Due to the previously stated, the research purpose is to examine Black Tourism using a qualitative research paradigm to know about the current situation in la Isla Muñecas, Xochimilco, in Mexico City.

History and Characteristics

Throughout the years, diverse tourism types have been formulated, such as beach tourism, adventure, or health; however, the tourists' interests have changed due to distinct emerging tendencies. For this reason, presently, there is no other classification so particular as "Dark Tourism" or Black Tourism" which is defined as "...one in which the visitor is attracted by sites linked to death, natural or human catastrophes". According to Álvaro López López, a researcher at the Institute of Geography (IGg) of UNAM, another definition that considers this type of attraction is based on experiences related to death, risk and disaster or something gruesome. 2. Nevertheless, it is necessary to take into account that the term "Dark Tourism" is not the only that has been utilised throughout time because there is an immense quantity of definitions. Moreover, many terms are used in diverse ways because of their similarity among them.

In Table 1 the terms collected by Stone and Sharpley (2009) show in their work *The darker side of travel*. 3,4

Table 1. The dark side of travel
Source: Own authorship based on the work of Stone and Sharpley (2009). *The darker side of travel*. 3, 4

Terms	Author
Black Spot Tourism	Rojek (1993)
Grief Tourism	O'Neill (2002)
Milking the Macabre	Dann (1994)
Thanatourism	Seaton (1996)
Dark Tourism	Lennon & Foley (1996)
Morbid Tourism	Bloom (2000)
Atrocity Tourism	Ashworth (2002)
Difficult Heritage	Loan & Reeves (2009)

Even though this type of tourism seems like something new, it is essential to mention that it has existed since a long time ago. Some examples claimed are the Romans in the year 71 D.C, since they performed spectacles or events in the coliseum, considering the battles among gladiators, prisoners, or even animals until scenarios in which people could see dying slaves. Furthermore, we can state that public executions were performed in London during the XVII century since merchants took them as advantages for economic purposes and rented balconies or seats or sent food during those executions, which had a colossal number of spectators. In France, deaths were due to the guillotine, which was performed in public. In these events, a massive quantity of spectators came in to entertain, but

that tourism started to catch academic attention at the end of the nineties since it was Lennon & Foley, the first one to employ this type of tourism in 1996. 5,6.

It is noteworthy that within this tourism, there are two relevant classifications, which are considered the first ones of that tourism. The one developed by Graham G.M.S with T.Seaton and the one from Stone.

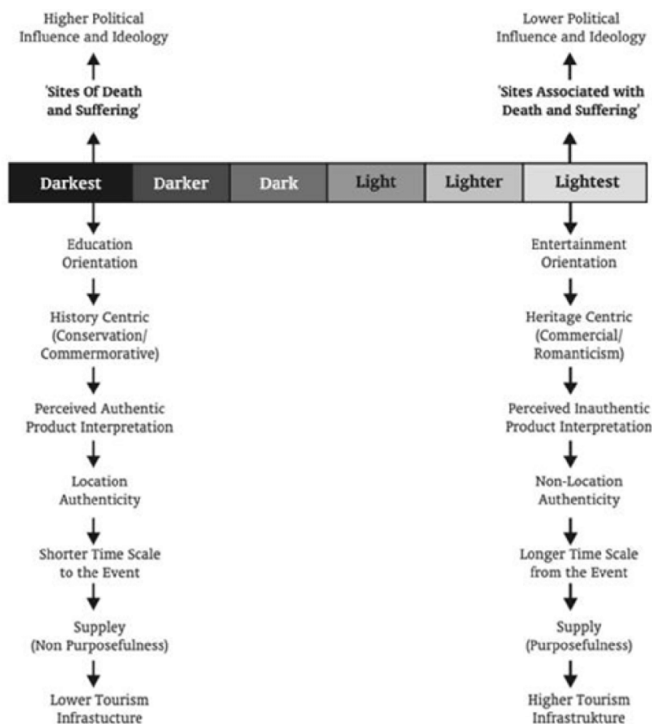
Table 2 shows the classification based on Stone compiled in the book "The Darker Side of Travel" (2006).

Table 2. Classification within Black Tourism
Source: Own authorship based on *The darker side of travel* (2006). 3,4

Seven Dark Suppliers	
Dark Fun Factories	The purpose of this one is fun; however, with a small explanation of what happened on the site, which is related to something ghoulish or simply to death.
Dark Exhibitions	It has an educational or commemorative purpose and is usually not located in the place where the events took place.
Dark Dungeons	It includes prisons or any place of justice where tours are offered or where they are functioning as museums.
Dark Shrines	These are places where deceased persons are commemorated, which commonly have tourist infrastructure but without obtaining any economic benefit.
Dark Conflict Sites	In this category, some places have to do with wars, and their purpose is only educational and commemorative.
Dark Camps of Genocide	As the name suggests, these are places where a large number of genocides have been committed.
Dark Resting Places	It refers to cemeteries that have an educational purpose and are considered part of the cultural heritage.

There is another classification also performed by Stone, but it differs since it does not name each type or category. Only it is qualified from dark to light. In other words, from higher to lower degrees.

Figure 1 represents the classification of dark(darker or extreme) to light(lighter), Clasificación Dark- Light de Stones (Stone, 2006). 4.



Source: (Stone, 2006). 4
Figure 1. Classification of Dark- Light by Stones

In the words of Graham G.M.S with T.Seaton, the classification consists of five categories:

- Risk places are the sites in which tourists' health might be affected.
- Spooky houses can include houses or sites that are related to death or are only recreated for the visitor's fun.
- Commemorative Sites are sites that might be cataloged as commemorations of events that happened in history due to a holocaust or war.
- Temporary visits are included in the places or sites associated with the murder and violence.
- Themed Thanatos or Thanatos-thematic, within this classification, are museums that are related to suffering, death, and pain.

In the same way, the researchers Lennon & Foley (2000, Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster)proposed the following classification: 5,6

- Battle tourism, as its name indicates, is where wars or any armed conflict have occurred.
- Cemetery tourism consists of tours to places where people are buried to learn about their history or architecture.

- Disaster or natural catastrophe tourism is visits to sites or places where natural phenomena have caused disasters.
- Ghost tourism refers to places or sites where you can experience apparitions or other paranormal phenomena.
- Holocaust tourism was created as a consequence of visiting places where deaths have occurred to destroy an ethnic group or race.
- Prison tourism visits to dungeons, cells, or spaces where human beings have been imprisoned.

Based on the aforementioned, and exposed by Dr. Elsa Soro, research professor of the Interdisciplinary Research Group GRIT-Ostelea in her report "Dark Tourism: profiles, niches, motivations", can be concluded that this type of tourism could be cataloged as educative and cultural since its motivational profile of the tourists, who are attracted to that are:

- The discoverer: travels to destinations such as France, Turkey, and Brazil, and is a particularly educated, middle-aged traveller.
- The vital: prevails in distant, mature markets, he is young and with a high level of education, in this profile stands out the presence of students.
- The vacationer-cultural: has a presence in mature European markets. He has a medium level of education and is predominantly a pensioner.
- As an experiential profile, it mentions the rural and nature tourists and the cultural tourists. 7

Indeed, this tourism has several characteristics that can be used as something cultural and educational because Black Tourism shows the history of different places and even how the place has changed over the years. 8, 9

Currently, there are enormous tourist sites where this type of activity can be practiced, such as The Winchester Mansion in San Jose, California, in the United States. This place offers you tours accompanied by the legend about the mansion, which mentions that said place is haunted and that to stop the curse, Sara Winchester had to build a house with certain specifications. Similarly, she should never finish it so that the spirits would not find an abode where to live. Additionally, Mexico has a massive number of destinations where you can practice this kind of tourism, such as:

EcoAlberto Park, Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo: In this place, you are offered a different experience that consists of a night walk in which you pretend to be an immigrant crossing the border.

Another place that can be mentioned and which will be the object of study of this research is Isla de las Muñecas in Xochimilco, CDMX. It is a very appealing destination for tourists because you can tour the place seeing the large number of dolls, which are in poor condition and are a bit gloomy, this while recounting the legend of the place, in which they mention that a merchant in the area called "Don Julian" was giving a tour in his chinampa and noticed that a girl was in the lake of Xochimilco, he tried to save her, but he was unsuccessful. Due to this event, Don Julian began to collect every doll he found to hang them on the island to scare away the energies, as he assured them that the girl's spirit was lurking in the area.

The man began to lose contact with the outside world until he practically stayed living on the island because he thought that each doll was possessed by a different spirit. As a result, he became a solitary person, and people stayed away from the island since there was a rumor that he was the one who was possessed. Currently, it is not known how many years Don Julian lived alone on the island. Only news was obtained when they found the lifeless body in the same place where previously had been discovered the body of the girl that Don Julian tried to save. Also, it is mentioned that there is a miraculous doll named Agustina, which was the favorite of Don Julian.

Likewise, another theory mentions that these dolls were hung as an offering so that the harvests would be prosperous, but currently, no one knows exactly if the legend is true or not. The only indisputable thing is that thanks to this legend and the tragic end of the owner of the island, it became one of the most visited tourist attractions in the area of Xochimilco.

Justification

This research addresses the topic of Dark Tourism, as well as the relevance and impact it has had on society, mainly on tourists, since, at this moment, this topic has become very controversial due to the different opinions and ways of thinking of them. This research shows the main motivations and the various types of tourists who enjoy the experiences offered by black tourism. At the same time, it exposes a comprehensive look at what surrounds or involves such tourism to inform society on the subject and even service providers in tourism about the new experiences sought by some customers or, in this case, tourists and, especially, to publicize some of the points that make black tourism in cultural and educational tourism.

Hypothesis

In Isla de las Muñecas in Xochimilco, Mexico City, Black Tourism has had a great boom, which will cause tourists to seek different experiences, which can be used to encourage them to travel, have fun, and learn.

Type and Design of Study

In the present investigation, a qualitative research methodology is used because data are collected textually and spoken through interviews, presented graphically, to compare the opinions of various tourists. 10

The research design is non-experimental cross-sectional because the phenomenon under investigation is studied as it happens in reality, in its natural context, without manipulating the independent variables, and the application of the instruments is carried out at a single moment. 10

For this purpose, the qualitative methods of situational case study and phenomenology are used. The former refers to the study of an event from the perspective of those who have participated in it; on the other hand, phenomenology is the description of the lived, existential meanings. Phenomenology seeks to explain the meanings in which we are immersed in our daily lives and not statistical relationships based on a series of

variables, the predominance of such and such social opinions, or the frequency of certain behaviors. 11

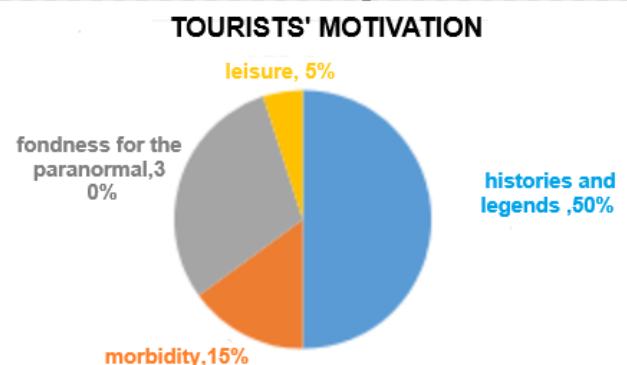
Theoretical sampling is carried out, which is a process of collecting data to generate a theory from which the analyst simultaneously collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what new data to collect and where to find them to develop an emerging theory. In reality, the data selection process is controlled by the development of the theory itself. When the first information is collected, the researcher is likely to have only some theoretical preconceptions to guide his work. Nevertheless, after gathering this data, he can formulate some explanations and pose the questions that will guide his further work. For this particular research work, 15 tourists who were in the place were selected to know their opinion regarding the object of study, Black Tourism. 11

The instrument used is an open, flexible, and unstructured interview that responds to the qualitative research approach. The interview includes the opinion about the visit to the place, if they knew about the subject, as well as their motivation for this type of tourism and if they would repeat the experience.

Analysis of Results

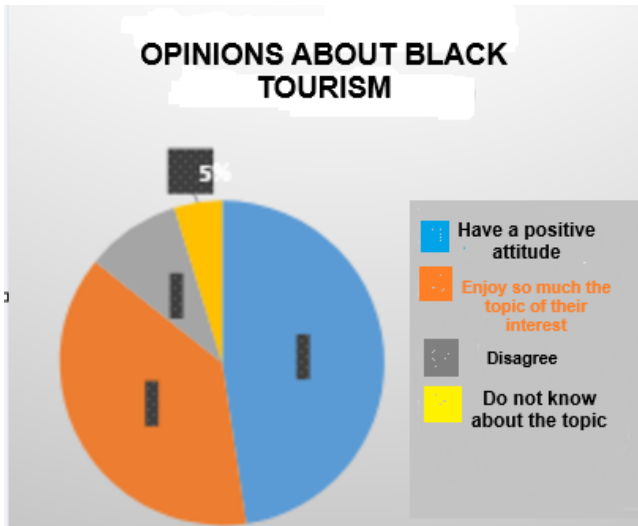
The following graphs show the results gathered from the interviews with various tourists at Isla de las Muñecas.

In this graph, we can observe that 5% of the tourists visited the place for leisure, 15% for morbid curiosity, 30% for a taste for the paranormal since they were looking for ghosts, and about 50% mentioned that they liked places with horror stories or legends, such as that place in which they tell you a legend, see Figure 2.



Source: Own Authorship.
Figure 2. Tourists' motivations

Figure 3 shows the opinions of tourists on the subject of Black Tourism. In this graph, it is observed that 48% of tourists have a positive attitude about the topic, for 38% the subject is of interest to them, and they mentioned that this type of tourism is something they enjoy very much since they see it as an educational, and cultural tourism, 9% are against it, that is, they do not like it because they see it as a lack of respect for the people who suffered in these events and, finally, about 5% did not know about this classification.



Source: Own Authorship.

Figure 3. Tourists' opinions on the subject of Black Tourism.

Conclusions

Black Tourism is not something new since, as mentioned above, it is a practice that has been carried out since the times of the Romans during their representations in the coliseum. Although, at that time, there was no classification of it or an exact definition, over time, this changed as various authors made various definitions for such tourism, as well as the classification of the type of places that fall into this category, taking into account the classification of activities or attractions they have.

Presently, there is still a division of opinions on whether this tourism is something positive or negative since the people who disagree mention that it is a lack of respect for those who went through such events and even see it as a mockery to the memory of those people. On the other hand, it can be noted that some people love this type of tourism and are very satisfied with it since they are looking for strong emotions and even experience paranormal situations. There is also another group that has a favorable attitude on the subject. They feel comfortable visiting these types of places, and they like these experiences, but they also enjoy practicing other types of tourism such as sun and beach or adventure. Lastly, a small group is identified that did not know this type of tourism because although they have practiced it, they were not informed about the existence of the classification of Black Tourism.

On the other hand, we also asked about the reasons why these tourists traveled to Isla de las Muñecas, the vast majority of whom mentioned that they travel to this destination for the legend because, in this type of place, they are attracted by the fact of knowing legends and horror stories of the same places they visit. In the same way, another group of people mentioned that they were looking to witness paranormal situations. Even in this place, it is claimed that the dolls talked during the night. Another type of tourist went simply out of morbid curiosity since the legend mentions the death of the girl and the gentleman. Finally, a small group of tourists came for leisure reasons since they were going to visit other places in

Xochimilco, and when they passed by the island with time to spare, they decided to stop by it.

Even though a small minority of tourists do not feel comfortable with Black Tourism, it has been increasing since most of them enjoy it, and little by little, it has been accepted by them to enjoy different, unique, and creepy experiences since the main motives. Some tourists even mentioned that they see it as cultural and educational tourism because they are passionate about or interested in learning about the history of the place and the people who lived or were in these destinations.

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