

# **An emotional response at a memorial site**

## **The case of the tourism attraction: Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance**



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**AUTHORS: Alina-Mihaela Fluturas**

**Raluca-Anca Jandonschi**

**SUPERVISOR: Anders Sørensen**

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## **Abstract**

Even though the concept of dark tourism has been extensively debated for more than 20 years, the field continues to remain insufficiently explored in order to be fully understood. As a consequence, this master thesis aims to explore a different approach towards dark tourism context and provide meaningful knowledge for further researches. The study's main objective is to investigate tourists' emotional responses within memorial tourism as a subset of dark tourism sector and how can those emotions can lead to meaningful tourist experiences.

The case study selected for further research within this project is represented by the Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance from Romania. as a representative attraction for the dark tourism field.

This master thesis is based on a qualitative research with data collected at the memorial through interviews and direct participant observation.

The theoretical foundation, as secondary data for this project represents a useful tool for understanding the main topic and consequently make its contribution to provide an answer for the main research question. The literature section consists of three sub-sections representing the three sub-questions of this thesis that are meant to provide insight into the way the attraction is perceived by the tourists, the main factors that motivate tourists to visit dark locations followed by visitors' emotional responses at the memorial.

The findings of this research are revealed based on a similar layout to the theoretical foundation and they have the purpose of providing knowledge within the dark tourism context.

This research is valuable for the researched memorial in Romania by highlighting both the weakness and the strengths of the attraction with the main objective of future improvements in order to comprehend future tourists' needs.

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# 1. Introduction

What are the first things that come into your mind when thinking about travelling? Probably some would say sunny beaches, relaxation or good entertainment. This is what tourism most of the time is associated with. However, among the different categories of tourism, there is one particular category that according to Selmi et al (2012, p. 311) was seen as both “mysterious and controversial”. Certain tourists’ fascination with death and sites associated with atrocity and disaster might seem completely unusual to others. Several scholars argued that there has been a “significant growth in tourism associated with death and disaster“ (Isaac & Ashworth, 2012, p. 150), and the dark tourism sector became the main subject for academics including Lennon and Foley (1996) who introduced for the first time the concept of “dark tourism”. In addition, some academics expressed the same interest in dark tourism phenomenon and the concept became known under many other labels such as “thanatourism” (Seaton, 1996), “morbid tourism” (Blom, 2000), “grief tourism”, “disaster tourism” or “black spot tourism” (Rojek, 1993).

The increased interest in “dark” tourism became the source for the study of another tourism niche embraced by many academics (Lennon and Foley, 2000) in the concept of memorial tourism, as a particular segment related to tourist’s identity and heritage (Cohen, 2011). According to Cohen, (2011, p. 196) memorials for certain nations that faced tragic events during their history, can become a “site of memory” related to the original site where the events took place and which have the purpose of bringing awareness among population.

## 1.1 Problem Background

Even though the concept of “dark tourism” has been debated for the past 20 years, after a first examination of the academics’ input into this “deviant leisure” (Stone, 2013 a), the researchers identified a certain lack of innovation in different scholars’ writings as most of the studies tend to follow the same pattern in describing the demand oriented side of dark tourism, in order to understand tourism behaviour. This made us realize that further research into the field is needed. Many of the scholars (Biran et al, 2011; Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Stone, 2005b; Seaton & Lennon, 2004) acknowledged in their studies the idea that literature was mainly focusing on the supply side, as the dark destinations itself, by ignoring the demand perspective, in terms of experiences conveyed by those destinations. Taking into considerations the above mentioned, the

researchers would rather doubt about the quality of the above statement as our thorough literature shows the opposite, that the scholars tend to describe the demand aspect of dark tourism. In addition, the fact that the literature adopts the same framework and only the case study is different, made the researchers question about their quality within the dark tourism sector considering that they are limited and are lacking innovation in certain areas and the aspect will be further on debated in this thesis. As a consequence, based on the above considerations, our research is aiming to explore a different approach to dark tourism that will be further debated in this thesis.

## **1.2 Problem Formulation**

This study's aim is to follow a different approach towards the demand side of the dark phenomenon. As previously mentioned, based on researchers' findings within the literature review (Biran et al, 2011; Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Stone, 2005b; Seaton & Lennon, 2004) there is a lack of innovation within the demand side of the dark tourism sector. The authors identified that the demand side is revealed mainly in terms of tourists' motivation for travelling to dark attractions neglecting the emotional responses that visitors might experience there.

According to Miles "a visit to a dark tourism site requires emotion on the part of the visitor" (2002, pp. 1175), and since emotions can vary widely from one person to another, tourists tend to be more critical with their experiences at the dark destination than at the so-called "hedonic sites" (Miles, 2002). Consequently, this criticism can cause difficulties in conceptualizing and classifying the emotions felt at dark sites (Ashworth & Isaac, 2015). For this reason, the academic studies on emotions that tourists encounter at the dark tourism destinations scarcely exist (Stone and Sharpley, 2008).

Therefore, the main objective of this study is to reveal and analyse how a dark site can create and amplify meaningful emotions for tourists and what kind of experiences those tourists might encounter. The study will focus upon the category of memorial tourism. For this research a particular memorial site was selected to be analysed, as a case study for this thesis. The authors chose to base their research on a memorial from Romania in Sighetu-Marmatiei called the Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance, which will be referred to, during this thesis as Sighet memorial due to its lengthy name. The researchers' motivations for focusing on the memorial tourism as a dark tourism niche will be further on debated in this thesis.



This thesis will focus upon memorial tourism as a subset of dark tourism phenomenon and on what kind of implications memorial tourism can have upon tourists' experiences. In order to reach this thesis objective, different data will be gathered for the purpose of highlighting the importance of the memorial tourism concept in the tourism industry.

Therefore the main research question that this thesis addresses to its readers is: **“How can memorial tourism, as a subset of dark tourism, create and develop meaningful emotions in order to enhance tourists' experiences in the case of Sighet memorial?”**

Even though there has been a lot of interest in defining the consumption perspective of dark tourism, the phenomenon “remains limited” (Stone & Sharpley, 2008, p.574) in its understanding. Therefore, the answer to the above research question can be quite intricate and can vary from one person to another. Consequently, in order to clarify how tourists' experiences can be enhanced, several sub-questions will add their contribution to the understanding of the main topic.

Firstly, exploring the different ways through which the memorial can be perceived by its tourists will help researchers to gain useful knowledge into the dark tourism phenomenon. In addition, the link between image perception and knowledge will be also explained in this section. Therefore, the first sub-question aims to investigate: **How is the image of Sighet memorial perceived by the tourists?**

Secondly, the study will reveal the tourists' motivations to travel to a dark attraction and the implications that the motivations might have upon memorial. Moreover, this section will highlight how the memorial chooses to transmit its message towards the visitors and how the message is perceived by the tourists. The second sub-question is meant to reveal: **What motivates tourists to visit Sighet memorial and how does the attraction communicates its message towards visitors?**

Thirdly, the last section will explore the role of emotions in enhancing the tourist's experiences and also how can the memorial bring its contribution into this process. The last sub-question aim is to reveal: **How can emotions felt at Sighet memorial lead to meaningful experiences?**

To sum up, our thesis' general research question integrates all the 3 sub-questions mentioned above which include data about how the memorial is perceived by tourists followed by their motivation to visit a dark attraction and the memorial's contribution to enrich tourists experiences through the emotions felt at the researched case study. The main objective of the 3

sub-questions, is to collect necessary information that can contribute to the understanding of the main topic of the research.

### **1.3 Thesis' justification**

This section's aim is to reveal what motivated the researchers to choose, for further analysis, this specific topic as their main research study. The main reasons for the case study choice, for both location and dark site selection will be presented. The researchers aim to provide additional specification regarding thesis orientation towards memorial tourism, as previously mentioned, and what are the main reasons for selecting memorial tourism, as a representative category for the dark tourism phenomenon, with the main purpose to identify and analyze different emotions that can strengthen tourists' experiences at a dark site.

As the study of emotions is gaining more and more acknowledgement into the tourism field (Li et al., 2015), the importance of the study of emotions at dark sites becomes imperative (Cohen, 2011). However, several scholars (Nawijn et al, 2015; Wight, 2006; Walter, 2009; Preece & Price, 2005) claim that there seems to be a lack of academic studies on tourists' emotions at dark attractions. In addition, the literature review revealed that there's a lack of academic studies on the topic of memorial tourism and most of the time the memorial tourism is only mentioned between several others subcategories of dark tourism, fact that was also acknowledged by Stone and Sharpley (2008). As a consequence, this thesis aims to cover the gap in the literature on both memorial tourism and emotions felt at a memorial in order to provide further knowledge into the academic studies and the linkage between memorial tourism and emotions will be further on clarified.

According to Miles (2002, p. 1176), a memorial site should not only reveal "historical knowledge in order to be successful", but also to involve a "certain emotion between the traveller and the past victim". Nawijn et al (2015, p. 221) acknowledges Miles' (2002) assertion by claiming that "sites associated with death and sufferings are considered emotionally laden".

Miles (2002) claims that there should be a clear distinction between sites of dark tourism (such as Auschwitz) and sites associated with dark tourism (such as the Holocaust Museum in Washington) by asserting that the former site is darker as it incorporates the authenticity element.

Therefore, the selection of Sighet memorial for this thesis, is a former prison of death, a

relevant case study based on its characteristic of maintaining the authenticity factor for its visitors. According to Miles “darker tourism enjoys a locational the authenticity factor for its visitors...Just being there imparts to the darker tourists a uniquely empowering commemorative potential” (2002, pp. 1176), and, as a consequence, the authenticity of a dark site has the potential to create and intensify emotions throughout site name and location (Swieboka, 1993).

The main data collection was gathered from the Sighet memorial in Romania and will represent the foundation of the research, as the aim of this thesis is to gain more knowledge into the field. However, this main data will be only considered a useful tool in answering the research question.

In order to get more familiar with the thesis’ case study, we will further on briefly discuss the reason for choosing this particular location and why is it representative for the dark tourism phenomenon. However, in order to better familiarize the reader with the selected case study, the case of memorial will be further on presented in a separate chapter.

The fact that the research was conducted in Romania, is very much related to researchers’ familiarity with the country (as both researchers are originally from Romania), aspect that would make the entire research process smoother due to language and culture affiliations. In relation to the case study selection, this was done after a careful research about attraction’s characteristics and also based on memorial’s potential to provide meaningful data for the chosen topic.

Therefore, the memorial, as the only Romanian museum and the first one in Europe, in terms of chronology that was dedicated to the communism era (Paulesc, 2014, p. 316), it is a symbol for the way it remembers the past communist era in Romania, but also from the entire Eastern European region. Courtois et al (1999, p. 15) in the controversial “The Black Book of Communism” claims that approximately 100 million people became victims of the communist system, in contrast to approximately 25 million victims of the Nazi regime. However according to Malia (1999, p. xi) the statement seems controversial and he claims that “Courtois, rather than let the figures speak for themselves, he spelled out the comparison, thereby making the volume a firebrand”. Nevertheless, the researchers’ motivation for choosing this particular case study was also with the purpose to cast more awareness upon the communism regime.

According to Bourdieu & Haacke (1995, p. 98), memorials play a major role in the “construction of consciousness” as they are associated with public service and “educational” centres (Ames, 1992, p. 26). Additionally, the importance of the memorials in the production of collective memory and the creation of national identity has also been acknowledged by several

scholarships (Bennett, 1995; Nora, 1989).

The researched memorial became a typical example of one of the most important institutions that handle the gap between communism and post-communist era. According to the memorial's website (<http://www.memorialsighet.ro/>) the memorial became “one of the most sinister prisons of the totalitarian system”, focused on helping the communist party to achieve its target of “political purification”. More than that, the memorial's personal motto, situated in one of the main exhibition rooms: “When the court of law cannot serve memory, only memory can serve as a court of law” sets a clear light of the purpose and role of the museum and stands as an evidence for the atrocities of the communist regime. As a consequence of all the above considerations, the researchers chose this destination as a meaningful case study able to provide useful information for the main topic.

#### **1.4 Thesis' contribution**

The contribution of this study is diverse and it ranges from a theoretical point of view to a economical, practical and even a cultural one. As previously shown, the concept of death became without doubt an important part of human experience, and therefore conserving sites associated with dark tourism became a form of heritage preservation.

To start with, the gathered knowledge about tourists' experiences and the emotions evoked from those experiences can be a great input for future innovation into dark tourism destinations. From an economical point of view, an increased number of visitors will consequently bring their contribution to the preservation of the historical location and enable future cultural sustainability. On the other hand, the lack of tourism and suitable destination management, can lead to the regression of travellers' interest in visiting.

Furthermore, the power of gaining knowledge and proper understanding into the dark sites' administration will give the opportunity to a dark attraction's managers to always be a step ahead and keep up with the innovative requests from the more demanding customer segment. In other words, understanding consumer behaviour will empower the destination's management to design proper products for tourists in order to achieve sustainability.

To sum up, all of the above thesis' considerations, followed by a diligent research into the topic, can be beneficial for both the chosen case study and other different dark tourism

destinations.

## **1.5 Thesis' structure**

This thesis will be using social constructivist approach as the main paradigm, in order to explain how both its thesis and its research are run. The reason why this paradigm was chosen as the main view adopted by the researchers is fundamental, because it clarifies both the whole perspective of the entire thesis and also why this specific topic and case study were selected. Furthermore, this research will be organised under a common structure.

After the first chapter of introduction, chapter II has the aim to explain the selected methodological approaches with the main objective of answering the research question and its sub-questions. Additionally, in order to provide understanding for the readers, this section will reveal how the research was conducted.

Chapter III will come up with explanations about the theoretical background for this paper. The entire theoretical framework will serve as an understanding of the topic and also as a starting point for data collection. Consequently, the selected theories will also be used for analyzing the collected data.

The fourth chapter's main objective will be to familiarize the reader with the chosen case study for this research.

The fifth chapter stands as a brief introduction for the analysis chapter.

The sixth, seventh and eighth chapters of the thesis are designated for the analysis section which will discuss and compare the entire data from both theoretical perspective and the primary data collected at the researched location. The analysis chapters will follow the same structure as the literature review.

The last chapter will have as main objective to provide an answer to the research question and draw a conclusion upon how the collected data managed to interact with the theoretical framework.

## **2. Methodology**

This following chapter aims at helping the reader understand the methodological approaches required for answering the main research question of this thesis about how memorial tourism, in the context of dark tourism can develop and create emotions which can provide meaningful experience for the tourists. This whole section will also explain how the data collection process was made and the qualitative methods that were used.

Furthermore, this chapter will present information regarding social constructivism, the paradigm which was used for this research. Afterwards, the authors will describe the qualitative methods adopted in this thesis, the qualitative interviews and the participant observation, representing the primary data collected at the memorial. In the end, the last section will provide some understanding in the limitations that were found along the way and how detecting them is not perceived as a negative factor.

### **2.1 Philosophy of science**

As mentioned before in the introduction and previously in this chapter, for this project, the social constructivist paradigm is behind this methodology section. So, to understand it better, it is important to first introduce the concept that is characterized by Creswell (1998) as being the science that can explain the structure and the approaches used for acquiring knowledge.

The concept “philosophy of science” is dealing with the nature of reality and is the foundation for the thesis because it gives the researchers the possibility to choose the paradigm with which they will consider appropriate to work with (Creswell, 1998).

Therefore, as we have more participants in our research, a need for multiple approaches is required which underlines the fact that the methodology chapter was chosen to start with the philosophy of science, the selection of a paradigm and the questions it answers.

By definition, a paradigm is described as “a set of basic beliefs” (Guba,1990, p. 348), which determines the “viewing position of the researcher” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 247). In other words, the paradigm can be viewed as the position of the researcher to watch the world and be

able to analyze it, thus creating a “worldview” that outlines the nature of the “world” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). It must also be highlighted that this paradigm represents the power that researchers have in their way of influencing this thesis and the research and analysis methods which will be used to maintain the transparency along the project (Boeije, 2009).

Considering that the thesis will be based on the social constructivist paradigm, it must rely on “persuasiveness and utility” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) and, therefore, the constructivist approach best fits the analysis and clarification of the answer coming from our main research question .

In the constructivist paradigm, there are acknowledged “multiple, apprehendable, and sometimes conflicting social realities” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111) which interact and affect one another, so as to give each reality a characteristic meaning that the researchers can interpret and understand, but not assess (Cresswell, 1998). In this paradigm, there is no single truth, as all the “possibilities are opened for alternative means” (Gergen, 1985, p. 267). In other words, constructivism can give the researchers the possibility to interpret the problem in the research question related to emotions from multiple angles, representing various realities of each respondent. This research offers every participant his own role, through which he can affect the research course, in this way gaining the ability to co-create the reality of the thesis (Cresswell, 1998; Bryman, 2012; Kvale, 1996). In the end, the entire reality of the project constitutes of the concept of the research and the respondents, while highlighting that the researchers continuously influence the research’ development. This aspect is seen from the perspective of academics (Gergen 1985; Fink, 2000) as a positive one, due to the co-creation of reality. For instance, the authors chose the main topic of the research and the methods through which the subject was approached and further on analyzed, so that the main research question can be answered. For this reason, the researchers recognize the subjective involvement in the context of the project and the data displayed in it. As a consequence of this subjective influence, the authors chose to use qualitative methods, such as semi-structured and in-depth interviews which are specific for the constructivist paradigm (Jennings, 2005; Fink, 2000). These particular methods will provide understanding and they will have the purpose of supplying explanation and an educative result, as outlined by Jennings (2005).

Despite the type of the paradigm used in the research, there are three interconnected perspectives through which the researchers must take into consideration. These three main elements of the paradigm are ontology, which represents the “reality”, epistemology which

highlights the relationship between reality and the researchers and the final one, methodology which presents the methods used by the researchers to determine the reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researchers will take each perspective and explain it so that the reader could get a proper understanding of these concepts.

### **2.1.1 Ontology**

Ontology raises the question of “What is the form and nature of reality and what is there that can be known about?” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). From a social constructivist view, there are more realities than one and thus the researchers realize that they have to maintain an open-minded view over the research and accept the fact that the result of the project can be changeable and it will not be the ultimate truth, as “many constructions are possible” (Guba, 1990, p. 25). In accordance with Guba (1990), Jennings (2005, p. 104) describes ontology as being “worldview”, by explaining the “nature of reality”. As a consequence of the two academics’ views, the researchers decided to use the relativist ontology (Jennings, 2005) by studying the understanding of each participant and interpreting their realities. In other words, the most efficient way of collecting data for a social constructivist, is by interviewing and observing the chosen people who can identify themselves with, the Sighet memorial, our case study, and thus providing helpful opinions for answering the main research question (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

### **2.1.2 Epistemology**

The second question we identified is related to the connection between the reality and the researchers. This can not be outlined by objectivity because the thesis is based on the social constructivist paradigm. Therefore, to answer the question “What is the nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known?” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108), the relation between the researchers and the knowledge required must be highly subjective. In other words, in this project, at the researched attraction, the authors’ interaction with the participants in order to obtain data collection, created the knowledge. As mentioned above, this paradigm entails the process of co-creation of knowledge and realities (Creswell, 1998). This aspect is also highlighted by Burr (1995, cited in King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 22) who mentions also the



concept of “reflexivity”, specifically used in the epistemology by social constructivists who underline the point of considering the researchers’ “contribution to the construction of meaning”. Through all these aspects, the authors understand that the constructivism paradigm is the fundamental belief about reality and not only the way to address the thesis.

### **2.1.3 Methodology**

The methodological question’s answer will depend on the two previously mentioned perspectives and as a result, not any of the available methods are appropriate. This assumption is asking “How can the inquirers go about finding out whatever they believe can be known?” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) or in other words, how can the researchers process about finding out knowledge. For social constructivists, the answer to this question can be obtained only through the interaction between the researchers and the participants. Therefore, the purpose of methodology is to find the best way of gaining knowledge and that is by interacting and observing the others. So, various techniques are used in order to answer the main research question. In this thesis, the methods which allowed collecting qualitative data were utilized, namely the in-depth semi-structured interviews and the participant observation.

Further on, we will discuss the frame of the research process and the steps that authors took to choose the methods through which the main research was made.

## **2.2 Research design**

As mentioned above, this section will explain the frame of the research process, the research design and the phases through which the authors followed to come up with an answer for the main research question.

The first phase of the research design was the selection of the main topic to be researched. This phase is called by Fink (2000, p. 4), “thematizing” and is defined as “the formation of the main research question”. Regarding this subject, several academics highlight that a the keystone of a well done research is a well constructed research question (Boeije, 2010; Silverman, 2013).

The researchers chose this topic for the thesis for several reasons that will be further on mentioned. Firstly, the subject of tourists’ emotions at memorial site is an undeveloped topic by

the academics in the literature studies and thus the researchers want to point this gap out. Secondly, the researchers are familiar with Romania, as both authors are originally from there and so they are connected with the researched location. Last but not least, the thesis is also based on the authenticity of the attraction, the Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance from Sighetu Marmatiei. It must be mentioned that the researchers made changes throughout the entire research process, starting from the main research question itself. The cause of these adjustments was the new knowledge that the authors gained along the process that led them to the development of the initial problem formulation. These changes are characteristics of the hermeneutical cycle, which will be further debated in a following section. Furthermore, this development is also mentioned by the scholar Gadamer et al (2004, p. 270), who mentions that the initial problem formulation can be too vast and present a lack of the accuracy and complexity of the final research question. Therefore, the researchers narrowed the subject by deciding on a specific case study and a segment of tourists for the research.

The second phase followed by the selection of the problem formulation is the data collection process. This section will show what qualitative methods were used in order to gain more knowledge and answer the main research question related to the emotions felt by tourists at the memorial. Moreover, these approaches included the semi-structured interviews and the participant observation as primary data and the theories from the literature review as secondary data. Regarding the interviews, the researchers articulate that even though several scholars (Kvale, 1996; Fink, 2000) underline the importance of the transcriptions, the authors did not undertake this process for a number of reasons that will be discussed in the limitation section.

### **2.3 The hermeneutical cycle**

As mentioned in the previous section, changes were made along the research process in order to understand and implement the knowledge collected during the research, thus making this research follow the hermeneutical cycle. Furthermore, as several academic (Laverly, 2003; Kvale, 1999; Gadamer et al, 2004) point out, the new data acquired is helping the researchers to develop the research process and attain different perspectives of the problem formulation.

The base of the research is represented by the researchers' own knowledge about the case study and their specific understanding of it. Gadamer et al (2004) highlights that there are some

negative points in this approach, such as the limitations of the researchers and the possibility of eliminating new perspectives regarding the topic of the research. But, the same scholar, also underlines that hermeneutics, in accordance with the constructivist paradigm are built on the same idea, namely to broaden the researchers' knowledge and help them in looking to understand the whole research process.

Our entire process of research is created on the hermeneutical cycle and this aspect can be acknowledged by the authors through multiple phases that the initial research went through. To begin with, the researchers must remind the reader that the problem formulation went through several changes until it discovered its final form. In addition, the interviews conducted at the dark attraction also underwent several adjustments during the data collection process, as new information was gained from the case study. In the interview phase, the interview guide was modified as to integrate the new topics of the research. Regarding this matter, the selection of the respondents was also a dynamic procedure, as we had to choose the best interviewees who could relate the necessary knowledge. In conclusion, in the whole process of research, the authors had an important role which will be further on explained in the next section.

## **2.4 The researchers' role in the thesis**

In this section the researchers will explain their own role in developing the research process, taking into consideration that the thesis is written on the social constructivist paradigm. Therefore, the authors will be the ones to make the decisions about the methods applied in concordance with the used paradigm in this project. In addition, they will also select the participants for the data collection and analyze their answers. In other words, the researcher will give the project value and make this value be known, thus taking Creswell's (1998, p. 11) advice into consideration.

A positive part can be identified as the researchers' original background related to the case study. Therefore, as mentioned above, the researchers are both native Romanians which will provide them with a better understanding of the language, culture, history and meaning of the attraction. On the other hand, they will also play the part of tourists as they have never visited the location before, a fact that will bring an outside understanding of how the place is perceived.

## **2.5 Qualitative research**

This section will describe and provide an understanding for the qualitative methods used in this project.

After previously mentioning that the thesis is based on the social constructivist paradigm, the methodology must be qualitative, for a number of reasons, including the fact that this type of paradigm is usually associated with the qualitative research, as mentioned by Dwyer et al (2012). Firstly, the ontological perspective of the world is composed of multiple realities, which construction allows the participant to create their own knowledge and understanding. This aspect highlights the subjective epistemology, that can be observed through the subjective relationship between the researchers and the respondents (Jennings, 2001). In other words, by working with qualitative methods, the researchers can analyze the experiences, interaction and thoughts of the participants through their description and understanding of their own world (Kvale, 2008; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004).

Qualitative methods are making the analysis based on the concepts of tourists, not on the concepts of the researchers (Boas, 1943, p. 314). Researchers, thus have a role in co-creating this project (Guba, 1990). For this reason, the authors will be facing the challenge of staying objective, as an interaction with the participants will be observed in the analysis chapter. Moreover, the relationship between the two groups, the researchers and the respondents, is one of understanding and acceptance as there is no conflict, because they are not enemies to each other. Furthermore, each of them has their own point of view, and this fact is embraced by the qualitative researchers who “acknowledge this and even celebrate it” (Tracy, 2012, p. 3).

In order to do the research and answer the research question, data needed to be collected and the qualitative methods that were used for this purpose will be further on debated.

## **2.6 Data collection**

The gathering of the empirical data can be made through several methods. But before explaining the tools that the authors utilized, it must be highlighted that all data will have the purpose of being used as either “primary or supplementary sources of data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 45). The data collected is comprised from both primary and secondary data in this thesis. The

data will provide necessary information and become valuable sources in helping the researchers to make the conclusions and to answer the problem formulation, as articulated by Saunders et al (2009, p. 258).

Firstly, the researchers will discuss the topic of “primary data”, which is collected by them with the purpose of acknowledging the study case in tourism that is being researched (Jennings, 2010, p. 71). The materials are gathered as an addition to the existing knowledge that the authors had and the methods chosen depend on the paradigm used. In this case, the constructivist perspective required the qualitative methods, such as the semi-structured, in-depth interviews and the participant observation. The researchers need to mention that the second approach, the observational method came as a complementary one. The reason for that is determined by our presence in the memorial and our problem formulation related to emotions, facts that made it easy for the researchers to underline certain expressions on the respondent's body while talking about the researched case study. More details about these two practices will be further on discussed in separate sections.

The secondary data is seen by Kusters (1994, p. 159) as “desk research” and is characterized by Jennings (2010, p. 73) as being “non-reactive, unobtrusive and non-intrusive” as there is no interaction with any participant. In our case, for a qualitative analysis, the materials used for secondary data are pictured by textual units, written and visual in the form of articles, studies, reports and other appropriate literature research, which has the advantage to offer a “retrospectivity” and take the authors back in time (Jennings, 2010). This type of analysis can not be made directly with the help of primary data and it has the benefit of comparing the data and the materials used or even forecast future events, trends or patterns related to the researched case study (Jennings, 2010, p. 75). As an example, the fact that researchers read a lot about the field of tourism and discovered a gap within the academic studies determined the authors to challenge this specific subject. However, this aspect will be further on discussed in the literature review chapter. In other words, the secondary data worked as a motivation factor for writing this thesis and selecting this specific research question.

An important advantage that must be mentioned in this section, is that though the many articles and books read by the authors, some of them were in Romanian as the attraction is also in that country. In conclusion, as the researchers are also from Romania, they managed to understand more academics from the field, thus acknowledging multiple perspectives from both subjective and objective sides from the authors.

Furthermore, the two qualitative methods through which the data collection took place will be discussed and analyzed, in order for the reader to understand the reason why the researchers selected them and how were they used in the analysis chapter.

### **2.6.1 Interviews**

Interviews were defined in a simple way, in the beginning, by the academics, as examples of conversations between people, which conversations have an established purpose (Jennings, 2010, p. 171). Since this thesis has a qualitative basis and is structured on the social constructivist paradigm, doing interviews was the best solution that the authors had in order to “understand the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2013, p. 9).

Based on the level of formality and structure, Saunders et al (2009, p. 320) classifies interviews in three categories: structured, semi-structured and unstructured, each of these types of interviews having its own ontological, epistemological and methodological characteristics (Jennings, 2010, p. 172). Unlike the structured interviews which are also called according to Saunders et al (2009, p. 320), “quantitative research interviews”, are characterised through a “predetermined set of questions” and are used for gathering quantified data, the other two types of interviews are especially working with qualitative data. The last two categories mentioned are constructed so that the conversations can evolve freely and the “interviewer” and “interviewee” becoming “researcher (s)” and “participant (s) / co-researcher (s)” (Jennings, 2010, p. 171).

The semi-structured interviews are based on a particular list of topics and questions to be clarified, but in the same time they are also adaptable enough, so that the researchers can add new themes to be discussed during the interview process (Jennings, 2010). In addition, the order of the questions can vary so that the conversation can run smoothly and the data can be recorded or the authors can take notes (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 320).

The unstructured interviews or the in-depth ones as they are also called, can be characterized as being more of a conversation, as the researchers’ participation is minimal and the respondents “leading the interview with their thoughts and reflections of the topic” (Jennings, 2010, p. 173). This method, as it takes a medium to a long duration of time can approach more themes or issues that can be discussed and can be tied with another method such as participant observation. The combination of both of these qualitative data collection methods

have the advantage of adding to the “richness of the empirical materials collected” (Jennings, 2010, p. 173).

To conclude the above mentioned, the researchers decided to use both semi-structured and unstructured (in-depth), face-to-face interviews and via phone, as both types involved multiple realities through which the world was seen, an established subjective relationship between the researchers and the participants a fluid nature, following the thinking line of the respondent (Jennings, 2010). Therefore, the interviews conducted for this research with the tourists were semi-structured, while the interviews conducted with the memorial staff and one of the external guides are in-depth, thus them being longer 40 minutes (see appendix C).

According to Sturges & Hanrahan (2004, p. 108), the researchers that use qualitative methods like interviews, usually rely on the face-to-face interviews, as they are more suitable to be done. However, the telephone interviews are another choice when it comes to specific situations, like gaining valuable data from respondents who are very hard to reach and obtain access too. This situation happens when the researcher does not have access to the participants because of distance and the high costs and time involved in travelling to the respondents normal environment. For this thesis, the authors had to conduct telephone interviews in two cases, because of the above mentioned reasons related to costs, time and distance: one conversation was with the memorial founder who lives in Bucharest at approximately 600 km distance from the memorial location; and the other telephone interview was with one of the external guides who also lives in another city and agreed of being a participant after the researchers got in touch with her via e-mail. Both interviews provided rich audio data and the authors managed to obtain completed in-depth interviews that were further on analyzed.

Furthermore, it must be mentioned that the authors, in their role of researchers managed to influence the flow of the interviews by conversing with the participants and creating a certain relation with them (Kvale, 1996). In addition, this conversation was based on interacting with people and holding a similar understanding, as both the researchers and the respondents were interested in the same topics and spoke the same language.

As pointed out from the literature (Elwood & Martin, 2000), the face-to-face interviews need to take place in suitable places that are quiet, comfortable and suitable for both the researchers and the respondents. Additionally, if the location is chosen correctly, the conversation can also provide an opportunity to make observations which can produce new information that will give the researchers a better understanding of the topics discussed in the

interviews (Elwood & Martin, 2000, p. 653). As a consequence to the previous statements, the authors chose two locations within the memorial grounds for the interviews: in the gardens, because the weather was appropriate to stand outside, and also gave the participants the opportunity to smoke and relax during the interview and the second location was in the conference room, inside the memorial, that had the advantage of being a quiet area and convenient for the tourists in order to keep the privacy of the interview.

In order for an interview to be conducted, the researchers need to follow some ethical guidelines that can ensure the protection of the human rights (Jennings, 2010, p. 99). One of the most important aspects in this regard is related to the participation of the respondents in this research and their consent for the information provided by them to be recorded and used for the writing of this thesis. Therefore, the first questions that the authors asked the participants were if they are willing to engage in an interview, an explanation of what the interview consisted of and what will be its contribution to the research, the approximate duration of the conversation and their consent related to the recording of the interview and the use of the knowledge provided by them. As a consequence to these conditions, the authors mention that there is one interview, the 30<sup>th</sup> that is not recorded because the respondent did not give her consent in this regard, so the researchers were allowed to just take notes. Within the interviews conducted, the respondents requested to remain anonymous, thus giving the researchers the obligation to create a coding framework, in order for them to be distinguished between one or another. However the method which will be further explained later on in this chapter.

An important part of the interview is the contribution of the participants, in this case the tourists who visited the memorial. For the purpose of the interviews not all the visitors at the memorial had been targeted. The following section will further debate on how the selection of the subjects took place and what resulted from it.

### **2.6.2 Sampling of participants**

The concept of sampling is explained by Jennings (2010, p. 137) as methods by which “subjects or study units from the target population are included in the research project”. The reasons why researchers adopted the sampling method can be explained by the vast number of respondents within a limited time frame.



By using qualitative methods, the authors had to choose the most suitable method of sampling, and that is the purposive one. This approach is also known as “judgemental sampling” (Jennings, 2010, p. 139), as it determines the researchers to make a decision about the participants who will be implicated in the study research. Furthermore, this method enables the authors to choose the most appropriate respondents that have the necessary knowledge that is needed in regards to the study focus (Saunders et al, 2009).

The researchers used the purposive sampling within their selection for the qualitative semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Thus, a target group was selected as suitable to provide useful knowledge for the main research topic.

The sampling process for the interviews was done based on several important criteria. Firstly, the participants were selected based on their nationality: thus, all of the respondents selected for interview were domestic tourist. This aspect was revised after the researchers noticed that the number of international tourists was too low, due to the fact that at the time the research was conducted, was outside the peak season. Therefore, since the data collection revealed only 4 interviews with international respondents, the researchers decided not to take them into consideration and focus only on the domestic tourists giving also their direct connection to the memorial. Tourists direct involvement with the events presented by the memorial was another criteria, so the tourists selected for the interviews were individuals who lived in the communist period and could understand better the purpose of the memorial and in the same time provide useful knowledge related to the researched topic. Also related to this aspect, it must be mentioned that this is also the main reason why children and teenagers were not taken into consideration. This affirmation can also be acknowledged from one conversation that the researchers tried to have with two teenagers from a group of students that came to visit the memorial along with their teachers. The answers given to us by the students were not relevant to the research study, so that the interview was not included in this thesis.

The last point that needs to be highlighted in this section is that some of the interviews, consisted of two or more individuals that were engaged in answering the questions, fact that created a more relaxing atmosphere and led to a more interactive discussion (see appendix C). Therefore, the researchers decided, for ethical purposes, to engage all the members from the group and classify the interview as one. This aspect of keeping the group together and not separate it contained a strength, but also a weakness as the participants were able to complete each other and in the same time influence each other in their opinions shared with the authors.

In order for the interviews to be conducted, an interview guide was created so that the conversation could run fluidly.

### **2.6.3 Interview guide**

For the qualitative interviews, the questions were designed as to provide help in answering the main research' question. It must be mentioned that the interviews with the tourists and the Sighet memorial's staff together with the external guides were different as various subjects were discussed. The majority of the questions were open-ended as to encourage the respondents to provide a more elaborate answer from where their personal opinions were extracted (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 337).

First, the researchers will talk about the questions addressed to the tourists that were involved in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, that can be observed in appendix A.

Therefore, the conversation started with background questions related to their place of origin, their motivation to visit Sighet area and the memorial and their knowledge of the memorial prior to their visit. This allowed the researchers to determine the place of the memorial on their list of main points to visit and also their interest in going there. These type of questions have the role of making the participants feel comfortable and they also set the context for the interview (Jennings, 2010, p. 174).

The next topic explored in these conversations was related to the visitors' motivation on visiting Sighet memorial and their connection to the place. The type of questions can become more personal depending on their answer, but this is a great point where they can elaborate and start developing themselves on this specific theme.

The following set of questions were related to the memorial itself and their recent visit which included: the information given by the memorial in comparison with what they already knew, what impressed them the most in terms of rooms, their image of the memorial, objects or other things, emotions felt and identification with the past. This section constitutes the core of the interview and it helps in answering the main research question. Moreover, because the subjects were so broad and the questions were open-ended, the tourists could describe their feelings and explore additional subjects that they can reflect upon, immediately after finishing their visit.

The last part of the interviews was related to the similar previous experiences at dark attractions, their emotional response to that visit and a comparison with the memorial in this aspect. Finally, they were asked about their opinion on what is the purpose of the memorial and their intention of recommending it to other persons. The purpose of these questions at the end of the interviews was to engage the participants with the present reality and to drive them to share from their travelling experiences with us.

In addition to all the above mentioned, the researchers can state that before the data collection process took place, they already had a set of questions to be answered, but after arriving at the location and understanding the structure and the attitude of the tourists, several questions were replaced and the format of the interview changed. This is an example of the hermeneutical cycle reminded before in the thesis, as the initial interviews were not meant to be functional and suitable for the participants.

In order to have a possible conversation with the memorial staff and one of the external guides, the researchers had to initially conduct a certain desk research. This included gathering data about the memorial and getting in contact with memorial's management. Thus, the authors had to identify the corresponding e-mail address from the memorial and the suitable staff member to get in contact (see appendix D) with the purpose of obtaining a future appointment, once the researchers would have arrived at the location. The same research was also done when finding external guides that included the memorial in their tours and after that contacting them with the purpose of establishing a meeting. The result was determined by requests send to 3 tour guide where only one was positive with whom we had a telephone interview in the end in relation to the theme's thesis, while the other two recommended us to go and talk more with the memorial staff itself. The second external guide that we have had an interview with came with a group at the memorial and agreed to have a conversation with us.

The interviews that resulted with the memorial staff (curator, guide and founder) and the external guide are in-depth interviews. Even though the researchers had initially a set of questions established, new subjects appeared and others were lost because there were found not relevant for the final project. Therefore, the themes discussed were in connection with the typology of tourists (number of visitors per year, local or international, peak season), the image and the role of the memorial as seen from their perspective and from tourists' point of view, the emotions experienced by tourists and the memorial's contribution to them, the approaches used to send the information to the visitors and the unicity of the attraction (See appendix B).

All the interviews were conducted in Romanian because as explained before in this chapter, the researchers and the participants speak and understand the same native language. This aspect was also visible when the respondents expressed various emotions through their words, fact that helped answer the main research question.

Within this thesis the researchers decided not to transcribe the interviews conducted at the memorial. Even though, the authors are aware of the fact that by not transcribing the interviews some of the information might be omitted and this can become a limitation. However giving the fact that the researchers conducted in total 35 interviews, with 30 of them conducted with the tourists and the other 5 interviews with the memorial curator, one of the memorial guides and the memorial founder and 2 external guides, which in total counted for 739 minutes, approximately 13 hours (see appendix C). Therefore, if we would have transcribed the interviews, it would have been too much time-consuming, therefore the time period that could have been spent on transcribing the interview, was instead used on other sections from the project like the literature review and the analysis section.

Furthermore, in order for the researchers to respect the code of ethics mentioned before in this chapter, no names of the people interviewed are mentioned in this project. On the other hand, the authors had to distinguish in certain way between the respondents so that the reader would have a better understanding of the answers. Therefore, in the following section, the method named coding framework will be presented in further details.

#### **2.6.4 Coding framework**

After data has been gathered from the interviews, the researchers had analysed it by creating different categories. This process is called open coding and is defined by Corbin & Strauss (2008, p. 195) as a way of “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data”. Thus, a category can be defined as a group that shares something in common (Krippendorff, 1980) from where the researchers can look for repeating themes, words or concepts.

In the case of this thesis, the categories are represented by the participants that have been interviewed. Therefore, as it can be observed in the table from appendix C, in the first column, there are the respondents whom we have coded, by giving them short initials in order for them to be identified in the analysis chapter. For example, the tourists that were interviewed are called

I1, I2, I3 until I30, the memorial' curator is named MC, the founder, MF, the guide MG, while the two external guides are EG1 and EG2. Further on in the table, the second column represents the number of people that participated in the interview, while the third one reveals about the duration of the conversation. In the last column is written the type of interview, semi-structured or in-depth interview, depending on the time taken for the specific conversation.

The coding framework brought its contribution into the analysis chapter by simplifying the work of the authors in writing this process and by providing a better understanding for the reader of the participants involved in this research. Also, it must be mentioned that when quoting a participant's answer, the lines will be written in english in the analysis chapter, between quotation marks and in italic, while underneath it, in parenthesis will be the codename of the respondent, followed by the country of where the data collection took place and the year. For example if the answer will belong to the memorial curator, it will be MC, Romania, 2017. In addition, as mentioned before the interviews were taken in Romanian, but in the analysis chapter, the quotations from the interviews' answers will be translated in english and the original transcript of it in Romanian will appear at the end in appendix E along with the codename of the respective respondents and the page number of the thesis from where it was translated.

Along with the interviews, as mentioned before, the researchers also used participant observation which was not coded as the individuals that were observed were also randomly chosen. This second qualitative method will be debated more within the next section.

### **2.6.5 Participant observation**

Participant observation is a method used for collecting data that can contribute to the richness of the analyzed data. The method implies discovering the “meanings that people attach to their actions” (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 288). Similar to Saunders et al., (2009) opinion, Patton's (2002, p. 81) claims that the concept as involving “intensive fieldwork in which the investigator is immersed in the culture under study”. According to Given (2008), the participant observation as a significant method within the qualitative research studies will contribute to the comprehension of the main topic of this thesis.

The purpose of the researcher within the participant observation context has been debated by many academics within the literature studies, however the researchers chose to use the most recent one, from 2002 by Gill and Johnson which is the same as the one in 1960 by Junker who

categorises the role of the participant observer in four types: the complete participant, complete observer, observer as participant and participant as observer (Saunders et al, 2009; Jennings, 2010). In the data collection, the researchers chose the approach of being complete observers because this method gave us some advantageous perspectives. As a consequence, while the authors took the role of complete observers, they did not take part in any of the respondents activities and they revealed the purpose to their activity only when the interview would take place.

For this thesis, the researchers managed to observe the interaction between the participants themselves but also with the memorial staff and the attraction itself. The result of this was the various behavioral reactions and the emotions exposed as a final reaction.

The most important advantage of the participant observation is that the data gathered from this method can be also used in the analysis and thus providing great insight into answering the main research question, as it involves the part of emotions felt by tourists at the site.

There are also some disadvantages of this method, as the researchers at the time of the data collection do not know how much and which information will be relevant. So, the authors have to gain as much data as possible, thus studying the visitors' reactions everyday, for the time of the data gathering process. Another weakness of this approach would be the fact that researchers have no control over the subjectivity (Jennings, 2010, p. 181), as they can not test what they discovered and their interpretations can also become subjective.

Even though, with all its advantages and disadvantages, the participant observation is a very useful method and connected with our research question regarding emotions, as it permitted us to gain a better understanding in this subject.

## **2.7 Evaluation of the research**

Due to the fact that there are more perspectives of the data and that the thesis is constructed on the constructivist paradigm, the literature studies (Creswell 1998; Jennings, 2010) highlight the importance of evaluating the research. The criterion used by the Guba & Lincoln (1985) to assess this aspects are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, which are the most useful in the case of a qualitative research.

Firstly, the credibility is interpreted by Guba & Lincoln (1985, p. 296) as the data being credible because it has been approved by the participants of the research, namely the

respondents. In this thesis, this criteria is noticed from the selection of two qualitative methods in order to gain knowledge from different perspectives. This aspect allows the authors to provide a thorough analysis on the subject of emotions felt by the tourists at the memorial.

Second, there is the criteria related to the transferability of the research and whether the conclusion of it can be used in other cases. For instance, the sample of the people chosen to be interviewed for this research can be transferred to other thematic projects. Also, the case study itself can be viewed not only from the touristic point of view, but also from a historical one.

Another criteria is analysing the dependability of the result of the thesis, aspect that is accomplished by the recordings of the interviews and the notes taken during data collection. Even though this criterion was criticized by scholars, for example Bryman (2012) who insists on the fact that establishing dependability can be a matter of subjective perspective, but as the thesis is based on constructivism, the subjectivity part is unavoidable.

Last but not least, there is confirmability which deals with the possibility to validate the information in the thesis and data gathered (Patton, 2002). This criterion is noticed in the thesis through the authenticity of the answers from the interviews and the direct participation that took place at the memorial, but also with the help of the recordings that were taken directly at the researched location.

The data collection process after evaluating it, the researchers discovered that there are some limitations and strengths that are debated in the following section.

## **2.8 Strengths and limitations**

During the data collection, the researchers noticed that there are some strengths and limitations to the qualitative methods they used.

First of all, the qualitative methods chosen, namely the interviews and the participant observation are both easy-performing ways of collecting data in terms of time, money and quality. This fact came as a strength for the researchers, but also as a limitation because according to the academics such as Bryman (2008), the best way of analysing the qualitative interviews that are recorded is through the process of transcription. On the other hand, the authors tried to change this limitation into a strength, as there were too many interviews and the task of transcribing them would have been time-consuming. Also, as the researchers are two

persons, each one of them could come up with a different interpretation of the transcription (Kvale, 2008). In addition, the interviews were conducted in Romanians, the native language of the researchers, so the reader would not be able to understand anything.

Another limitation that the researchers managed to convert into a strength, was the time period of the data collection, which was in March, 2017 the off season from a tourism' point of view, and for a short period of seven days. This fact proved to be a strength after the researchers talked with the memorial's staff and found out that in the peak season, the whole building is too crowded and the heat too intense for people to be asked for an interview. Additionally, even though the time was short, the attraction proved to be popular among tourists in that period, especially during the weekend. The authors must mention that the interviews were taken until the necessary information was obtained. To conclude, the number of tourists that came to the memorial in the period when the data collection was organized, was relevant and sufficient to be part of the analysis process.

A limitation that remained can be seen in the telephone interviews, where because of a lack of time, money and distance, the authors did not meet with one of the external guides and the founder of the memorial. This fact is considered a weakness of these conversations, because the authors were not able to have a more in-depth interview with these persons. In addition, in this thesis, one of the bases that is built upon, is represented the emotions, so meeting face to face and organizing these interviews, would have been better ways to add to the participant observation and help in providing more knowledge for answering the main research question.



### **3. Literature review**

This chapter's aim is to identify and in the same time to come with a reason for the chosen theoretical background for this thesis, in order to better understand the main topic of the study.

The theoretical foundation from this section has the purpose of becoming a tool for the further analysis of the data collected for this research, by providing an answer to the problem formulation and the affiliated sub-questions. However, in order to answer the research question and get even deeper into the examined topic, the researchers will have to make use of several different academic studies that will be able to provide knowledge and understanding of the main topic. Therefore, after a careful examination of the literature review, the researchers main challenge will be to select and use exactly the theories considered useful and appropriate for the research question.

As a consequence, each of the theories revealed in the next sections will be able to explain and interfere with the main research question or subquestions in order to become a solid ground for the analyses.

#### **3.1 Defining dark tourism**

This section will begin by providing a certain understanding within the dark tourism concept by conceptualizing the term as it was presented in the literature review. The first definition of the concept came from Foley & Lennon, as a "phenomenon which encompasses the presentation and consumption of real and commodified death and disaster sites" (1996, pp. 198). Moreover, when the two academics were asked to clarify "what's so dark about dark tourism?" (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2009, p.188), they came with no clarification for the two association of the words and acknowledge that they "do not wish to enter into any philosophical debates" in this regards (Lennon and Foley, 2000, p. 11). However, according to Bowman & Pezzullo, (2009) the terms might have been associate to western culture, where "dark" might stand for a place without light and which came as an opposition to labels that one will usually associate with a holiday such as: Sun, Surf and Sex. In other word, the idea that tourism, in its understanding of a harmless and optimistic activity, through its very mysterious side, might have some dark connotations, which will be widely attracting tourists, became even more shocking for the contemporary society (Ashworth and Isaac, 2015).

Seaton introduces another label, the one of “thanatourism” as “travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death, which may, to a varying degree be activated by the person-specific features for those whose deaths are its focal objects” (Seaton, 1996 cited in Fonseca et al, 2015, p.1). Therefore, the concept introduced by Seaton is more focused upon tourist behaviour and their motivation and fascination for this sites, rather than emphasizing the various characteristics of one site or another.

The concept of dark tourism was also acknowledged by different other academics and as a consequence it became known under many other labels such as: “black spots” (Rojek, 1993) or “grief tourism” (Lennon, 2005; Trotta, 2006), there seems to be no particular agreement on how exactly the concept should be defined. However, despite Lennon and Foley perspective upon how the term should be called, this research study will be using the term of “dark tourism”, as travelling to sites associated to death and atrocities with emphasizes on tourists’ experiences.

Furthermore, after a brief conceptualization of the “dark tourism” notion, the following sections will reveal the various way that the memorial, as the researched case for this study might be perceived. In other words, the attraction image will be described throughout the use of several academic studies.

### **3.2 Why should we have “dark tourism”?**

As mentioned before, the concept of - dark tourism - has been debated for more than 20 years by many scholars and even today it remains one of the main trends within tourism sector. Therefore, this study’s purpose will be to reveal if dark tourism sector can still manifest an interest for further research that can lead to new approaches towards this concept. From the literature review it might seem that there is a division among academics in this regards and not all of them share the same values and beliefs. On one hand, several scholars claim that the concept was so much debated that it has become overrated and is more likely to lose its relevance. Any interest in further commitment into dark tourism idea might also disappear. For instance, Bowman and Pezzullo (2009, p. 199) suggest that it’s “time to even abandon the term - dark tourism - insofar as it may present an impediment to detailed and circumstantial analyses of tourist sites and performances in all their mundane or spectacular particularity and ambiguity”.

In agreement with the approach of Bowman and Pezzullo (2009) there are some other scholars (Biran and Poria, 2012) that identified several issues related to the “dark tourism” concept. First, they acknowledge that dark tourism is a socially constructed concept and secondly, they emphasize the idea of a paradoxical understanding between an increased interest towards “dark” segment of tourism, in the context of more than 20 years of careful investigation upon dark phenomenon that continues to be “poorly conceptualized” (Jamal and Leo, 2011) and loosely defined (Biran and Poria, 2012). The assessment comes as an acknowledgement for the researchers of this thesis’s observation, related to certain lack of innovation within dark tourism phenomenon in the context of 20 years of active involvement in field's research. However, this aspect will be further on debated in a different section. Ashworth and Isaac, (2015, pp. 323) come up with an even more pertinent assessment that “after almost 20 years...it is time to move on”. On the other hand, there are several scholars that claim that more precision within tourist motivation is need (Preece and Price, 2005), or admit that there is “a neglect of the demand side” (Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p. 579). In addition, Lennon and Foley suggested that “if further research is inevitable then it is visitor motivation that represents an important aspect of the understanding...” (2000, p. 169).

Is it well recognized that tourism became an important feature within individual’s life and as dark tourism represents an integrated section of tourism, it consequently occupies a significant role in life itself.

### **3.3 Image formation**

Within an industry that is more focused on selling experiences rather than tourism products (Iordanova, 2015), the study of destination’s image formation can be quite challenging (Pike & Page, 2014). There have been multiple attempts to conceptualize the notion of image, therefore, if initially, several scholars (Crompton, 1979; Kotler et al., 1993) would define the concept as a mixture of ideas, beliefs and impressions that tourists might have upon a destination, later on several others scholars would conceptualize the concept of image formation throughout two significant dimensions: affective and cognitive (Hosany et al., 2006; Qu et al., 2011). From the cognitive image perspective, scholars claimed that people's’ beliefs and knowledge constitute the main attributes (Baloglu, 1999; Richards & Wilson, 2004), while others tried to expand the

definition by attaching others attributes such as memories, evaluations interpretations and decisions (Neal et al., 1999).

From the affective image perspective, the emotional reactions (Walmsley & Young, 1998) and feelings (Russel, 1980) seems to play a significant role into the overall conceptualization of the notion. In addition, the compatibility between the cognitive and affective attribute of the image is further explained by Sahin and Baloglu (2011) who assert that tourists fascination with the cognitive image of the destination can trigger a greater affective evaluation. In other words, tourists previous knowledge and beliefs about the memorial can have a great influence upon their future emotional development at the attraction.

Within the many academic studies upon destination image formation, several models have been adopted in order to explain how the image formation takes place.

Several scholars such as Baloglu and McCleary (1999) come up with a destination image formation model prior to tourists' experience at the destination, in terms of a image based on factors such as different information sources and personal factors. Further on, since previous studies were mainly focusing on the image formation prior to tourists visit, further research (Beerli & Martin, 2004) proposed a model throughout several characteristics such as primary and secondary information sources, motivation, travellers familiarity with the destination and socio-demographic characteristics that had the objective to contribute to image formation of the destination post-visit. Moreover, a new model of image formation was proposed by Tasci and Gartner (2007) in relation to pre-, during- and post-visit consumer behaviour. However the model fails to explain how the three stages of the image formation can be affected by different factors within the cognitive and affective elements. Despite the fact that many academic studies meant to define the destination image formation, it seems that there's a lack of a unified concept that can contribute to a better understanding of the image formation. The above models of destination image express their main focus on image formation at both prior- and post visit phase and neglects the on-site tourists image formation. The on-site image formation was also acknowledged by Gunn (1972) who claims that image formation continues even after tourists start their experience at the site and goes through a "modification" phase that, as a consequence, can alter the post-visit image formation of a destination.

Having in mind the above considerations, the research conducted at the memorial can provide useful knowledge related to visitors on-site image formation that will be correlated to

their image prior to their visit at the attraction and also will reveal the possible changes occurred after their on-site visit.

The researchers find this section relevant for this thesis' main topic as the site's image formation can trigger emotional stimuli at the attraction through, its cognitive factor, in terms of tourists beliefs and previous knowledge.

Furthermore, this section will reveal the different perception that tourists might have of an attraction and how they can lead to meaningful emotions that can enhance tourist's experiences.

### **3.3.1 Dark Site and Heritage Site**

This thesis' researchers believe that "dark tourism concept cannot be completely explained in the absence of heritage tourism", as "sites associated with war and atrocities have long been considered within a broader heritage tourism context" (Stone and Sharpley, 2008, p. 576). The notion of heritage can be more precisely defined through its correlation with the past and it seems to be more connected to individual's fascination and attraction for those sites, more than to site's characteristics. For this reason, heritage tourism has been defined in strong relation with nostalgia, emotions and a certain sense of belonging in time and space. However, the concept of heritage, due to its wide meanings and associations, can be difficult to explain, as basically everything around us can be included into heritage sphere. In order to narrow down the definition, academics concluded that heritage is in strong relation with the past and the concept of inheritance, is something that can be passed from one generation to another (Nuryanti, 1996, p. 249). Moreover, a research conducted by Timothy & Boyd (2003) showed that culture and heritage were the main motivational factors to travel, which denotes that tourists fascination for travelling back in time had become an important aspect within tourism industry (Dicks, 2004, p. 57). Nevertheless, since there hasn't been an unified perception on how old something needs to be in order to be considered heritage, heritage managers started to concentrate their attention towards more recent periods such as the 1950's, 1960's and going even further to 1980's (Timothy and Boyd, 2003, p. 10). In this regards, the researched case study can integrates quite well into the above mentioned categories as visitors travelling to the Memorial from Sighet can encounter their not-so-distant past. Some of them might have lived it themselves or they might have had parents or grandparents that lived in those periods. However, no matter how close or distant it might be, heritage can only be seen as heritage, when it receives a certain value or utilitarian function by a society or culture (Chhabra et al., 2003, p. 703). In other words, the

objects encountered by the tourists at the attraction receives a certain value from the individual in order for those items not to be forgotten. Moreover, the site's dark connotation highlights even more that is a heritage that worth remembering, as part of a shared identity.

The study of heritage tourism at "dark" sites has also been researched by many academics as "dissonant heritage" (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996), "heritage that hurts" (Uzzell and Ballantyne, 1998), or "difficult heritage" (Logan and Reeves, 2009), and it is focused on the understanding tourist behaviour at sites associated with death.

However, not all scholars acknowledge the relation between dark tourism and heritage tourism, as Lennon and Foley, (1996) considers that there should be a clear distinction between "dark" and "heritage", while, on the contrary, Ashworth (2002, p.191) claims that they aren't "mutually exclusive categories". In other words, regardless of how pleased or not we might be with our ancestors' past, events associated with death and disaster will always be seen as one common heritage. As a consequence, the memorial as the researched case study for this thesis, became a place of remembrance and an inheritance that needs to be valued and commemorated by the future generations as part of one nation's identity.

Furthermore, the strong relation between dark tourism and heritage tourism was also acknowledged by Manic (2012, p. 83-84) who claims that "dark tourism is a manifestation of cultural tourism if we take into consideration the resources of cultural heritage" and if "cultural tourism is a broader term, "dark" tourism is only its subtype and a special form of expression, that in order to be considered "dark" it has to bear the mark of death".

Since tourists are more interested in buying feelings, rather than products by personalizing their experiences (Opaschowski, 2001), a new form of tourism emerged into the late modern society that was soon coined under the name of "special interest tourism"(SIT), as a form different from mass-tourism. Therefore, since SIT's tourists were motivated by a special interest or they tend to develop a brand new interest either in a completely new location or a familiar one, the dark tourism sector became integrated part of the SIT, and Novelli's niche tourism components figure (Fig 1) can better underline dark tourism position in relation to SIT.

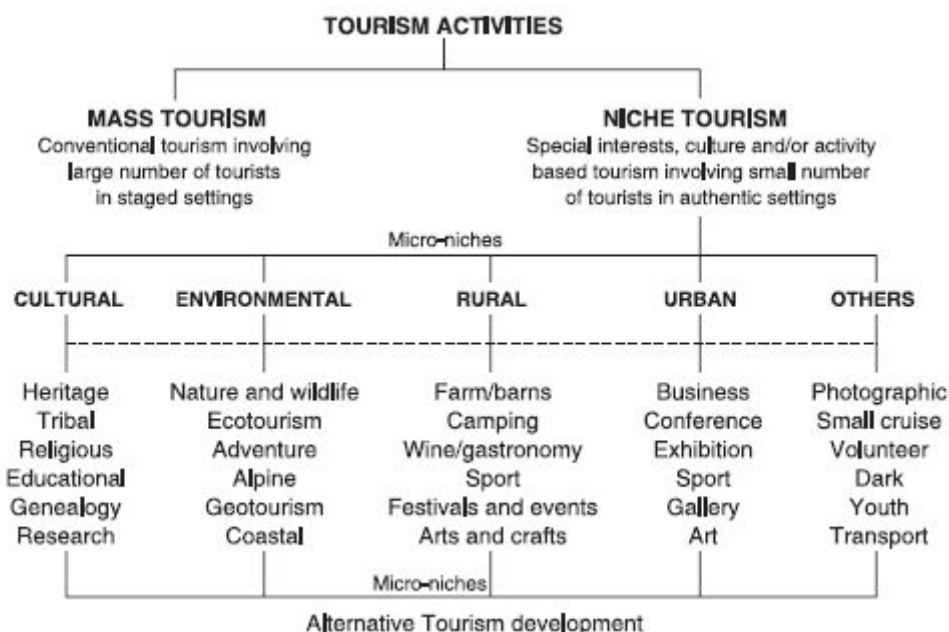


Fig. 1 Niche tourism components

Source: Novelli, M. (Ed.). (2005), p.9.

Nevertheless, Novelli’s figure regarding niche tourism components contradicts Manic’s (2012, p. 83) above theory which claims that “dark tourism is a specific manifestation of cultural tourism”.

### 3.3.2 Memorial Site

Since the purpose of this research is to better understand the meaning of memorial tourism, as a dark tourism niche, this section will firstly elucidate the concept of memorial tourism in order to better understand its emotional implications that it might have towards tourists. Secondly, the dark site attraction as a museum will be also discussed in relation to the way tourists perceive the attraction.

To begin with, the researchers want to emphasize that from the study of the literature review, there seems to be a lack of knowledge in regards to memorial tourism. The researchers identified a certain division in this regard, as several scholars (Drvenkar et al., 2015, p. 65) claim that the study of memorial tourism has received a considerable academic interest (Seaton, 1999; Lennon and Foley, 1999; Miles, 2002; Slade, 2003, Dunkley, 2007), while, on the contrary, Stone (2008) considers that the field remains quite fragile and further research is needed into the

field. Taking into consideration the above assertion, the researchers can support Stone's (2008) assertion, as in most of the academics studies memorial tourism is slightly mentioned, and dedicated studies in the memorial tourism seem to be lacking.

Nevertheless, the memorials, as dark attractions associated to death and past atrocities, have been simply defined as "sites of memories" (Nora, 1998; Resnik, 2003; Winter, 1998 in Cohen, 2003). However Miles (2002) comes up with a distinction between the memorials build on the same place that the tragedy consumed and those memorials that involve a certain distance from the actual place of the tragedy. The same scholar also comes up with the concept of "locational authenticity" for the former and integrates it into the darker tourism, in contradiction with memorials that do not imply an authentic location.

Based on Miles' (2002) theory, the Sighet memorial can be integrated into darker tourism category as it preserves its authentic location as a former prison of extermination, that was afterwards transformed into a commemorative site for the victims of the communism.

In addition, several academics proposed the concept of "in situ" or primary sites for the actual sites of disaster and secondary or created sites for memorials and museum set up in another location (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Wight, 2006; Wight & Lennon, 2007 in Cohen, 2010, p.193).

### **3.3.3 Museum Site**

The researchers need to briefly discuss upon attraction perception as a museum as well, due to numerous cultural artifacts and authentic objects that tourists can encounter during their visit. The researchers find the concept of museum relevant for the overall topic of this thesis in relation to site's ability to communicate the knowledge towards its visitors, concept that will be further described under the interpretation section. The museum's interpretation, as a significant tool for the attraction's management can create authentic environments (Timothy and Boyd, 2003, p. 284) which eventually can lead to meaningful tourists' experiences.

According to the International Council of Museums "a museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment" (<http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/>).



Taking into consideration the above statement, the Sight memorial, as a museum dedicated to its people, has to communicate the meaning and the values of the place as clear as possible in order for its visitors to be able to comprehend the message.

As a consequence, even from 1980's a new concept emerged within museums industry, known as "new museology", concept that was represented by a shift towards considering that "the context of a cultural artefact was more important than the item itself" (Styliani et al., 2009, p.520). In relation to the researched case study, the "new museology" concept will be able to make the content and context of the memorial more attractive and accessible to its audience, which can lead to enhancing tourists' experiences. However, the implications that the "new museology" concept might have upon visitors' level of comprehension and the kind of benefits it might have, will be further on debated in a different section.

### **3.3.4 Former Prison**

This section's aim is to illustrate a different image that tourists might have upon the memorial, that of a former prison. This image that can influence their overall tourist experience, as a tourist's own perception upon the attraction might be in contradiction with the discovered reality, which can lead to visitors' disappointment.

Academic studies have shown that former prisons, as sites of pain and sufferings, became touristic objective for many tourists, and their motivation is strongly related to "dark tourism" concept (Strange and Kempa, 2003).

Tourists motivation to visit such sites is highlighted by Dobbs (1999, p. 36) who claims that "once we can imagine this deprivation, we learn to cherish freedom". Even though many of the former prisons have been transformed into memorial and heritage sites, many rangers seem to find it difficult to change tourists initial perception upon the site into a more educated and informed one (Strange and Kempa, 2003).

The similar situation might account for Sighet memorial, as tourists' perception upon the attraction as a former prison might be difficult to change, as the educational purpose of the site might simply come in opposition with their own expectation.

Therefore, each cell of the former prison is represented by certain theme from the communist period and the wall of the cells are meant to illustrate a written description of the

theme as well as the importance and significance of various artefacts exhibit in the cell. As a consequence, the purpose of the memorial is to inform , therefore, to educate its visitors, rather than to simply maintain the walls of the prison close to their initial stage.

The idea of transforming the site into a commemorative one, in order to highlight its achievement side, is also supported by several scholars (Glassberg, 1996; Lowenthal, 1985).

However, despite different perspective that tourists might have upon the attraction, the site succeeds to have an emotional impact, especially respect and admiration for those imprisoned here, who suffered cruel treatments until their extermination.

### **3.4 Travel Motivation**

The concept of “dark tourism” has been extensively debated for more than 20 years within the academic studies and the findings of the long term research reveal tourists motivation and fascination for the sites associated to death and disaster (Sharpley, 2009; Foley and Lennon, 1996; Stone and Sharpley, 2008)

In the beginning, the studies were more focused upon dark attraction, but soon after there was a shift and the central of attention moved towards the experiences that a site might transmit and that can lead to the site dark connotation (Ashworth and Isaac, 2015).

Sharpley (2005), goes even further by arguing that the “dark tourism” concept can not exist in the absence of travelers’ motivation. However, since tourists’ behaviour can be a complex matter, it seems there is no unified agreement into conceptualizing the notion (Bowen and Clarke, 2009).

The travel motivation concept can be defined as an internal drive that interacts with tourists’ behaviour by giving a sense of direction. In other words, the concept of motivation focuses on illustrating how and why tourists’ behavior is triggered and conducted (Romando, 2007).

According to McLeod, the motivation can be intrinsic and extrinsic, and if the former is determined by tourist curiosity or inner fulfilment, the latter is linked to exterior sources and in this case the tourist can get a certain reward or reinforcement (McLeod,2015).

On the other hand, an intrinsic motivation is explained by tourists desire to get to a certain accomplishment that can have a certain effect upon their behavior.

To sum up, we can affirm that both McLeod's and Romando's points of view can be connected, based on their unified perception upon a certain linkage between motivation and a tourist's personal satisfaction. In relation to the researched case study, tourists can be attracted to the dark site from an intrinsic need to remember one of their ancestors, for instance, and an extrinsic need in terms of the site commemoration factor.

Several factors that can motivate tourists to visit dark sites were found within the literature studies. Tarlow (2005) claims that are basic emotions that motivates tourists to visit dark sites such as a sense of insecurity, feelings of humiliation or superiority or gratitude, Rojek & Urry (1997) explains tourists motivation from a social and cultural identity need.

However, Beech (2000, p. 40) considers "that the motivation of tourists visiting sites where "heritage hurts" is difficult to classify and makes an unrealistic assumption that all who visit are tourists indulging in a leisure activity". Beech identified two types of visitor at sites associated with sufferings and death: those who feel a certain connection with the site such as survivors or survivors' relative and common visitor at the dark site with no particular connection with the site who are mainly interested in the education outcome.

Memory and remembrance are motives that are specially linked to the first type of visitors identified by Beech (2000), based on their close relation to the attraction's past victims.

The concept of memory has been extensively debated within the literature studies dedicated to "going back to your roots tourism" (Fourcade, 2010), to "battlefield tourism" (Sharpley and Stone, 2009) and any other study related to the concept of memory in relation to tourist experience. The concept was very much related to historical events and especially those associated with death and disaster, in term of "duty of remembrance" (Lalieu, 2001).

According to Lennon and Foley (1999) the memory becomes the central motive within dark tourism sector. In accordance with Lennon and Foley (1999), Seaton (1999) claimed that tourist's fascination for dark sites might come from a sacralization perspective, fact that might lead to a ritual of pilgrimage.

In addition, tourists' pilgrimage at dark sites is considered to be more as a "social obligation", a moral duty that needs to be in accordance to society expectations (Poria et al., 2006). Moreover, several others scholars attribute this "moral obligation" particularly to future generations as they should become familiar with the events and pay tribute to the victims (Kang et al. 2012; Thurnell-Read, 2009).

However, if Slade (2003) acknowledges the above assertion by claiming that future generations motivation for the dark attraction might come from a “nationhood” felling, Beeck (2000) opposes the idea by claiming that the number of tourists directly linked to the dark attraction will constantly be reduced, if we take into consideration the mortality factor, and as a consequence the number of visitors will decrease as well.

Taking the above assertions into consideration, the researchers can acknowledge both of the theories. However, based on the research conducted at the memorial, Beech theory seems more appropriate. In order to be more specific, the researcher's direct involvement into the research at the original location, gave them the advantage to be able to analyse the visitors behaviour more closely, to observe their reaction, their gestures, their voice fluctuation, as an indication of their strong connection to the site, especially throughout their direct involvement with the period. The above mentioned feature will be missing from tourists' behaviour with no direct implication into the events, and as a result, the intensity of the emotions felt will tend to decrease from one generation to another.

Another motivation for visiting dark sites might come from a feeling of curiosity, as according to Ashworth “the unique and unusual evokes and satisfied human curiosity” (2004, p. 97). In addition, Knox, (2006) believes that a tourist's curiosity for dark sites comes as a consequence to the impact that media has upon individuals, as people are being lead in their decisions by things that they have heard or read about. People's perception of the site becomes more important than the experience itself. The theory was also confirmed by Lisle who confirms that people's visit to dark attraction in order to “confirm the reality of this event” (2004, p. 5).

According to Preece and Price (2005) there are three important travel motivations such as: educational purpose, the tourist's interest for the historical events and the tourist's fascination with the unusual. A similar approach can be seen in the study of Biran et al. (2011), who identified four important factors: the first factor is represented by the concept “see it to believe it”, which might come from tourists interest to see the reality of the site in order to actually believe that such cruel events took place; secondly, the tourist's interest in gaining more understanding about the events; third, the tourist's attraction to popular sites associated with a certain feeling of empathy for the victims, and forth, it is related to the tourists desire to connect with the heritage by having an emotional experience. Therefore, the interest in the concept of death doesn't seems to be relevant within the tourist's motivation as much as the willingness to acquire more knowledge and have an emotional experience.

However, several scholars believe that travel motivation can be mainly psychological such as individual's desire to discover themselves (Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998) or tourists visit at dark sites might come as an opportunity to better understand their own death (Stone and Sharpley, 2008).

To sum up, understanding travel motivation can become a crucial factor within the dark tourism context. Later on, this thesis will discuss the implication that authenticity, as an important factor within the travel motivation context, might have for the main topic. The researchers choose to highlight the importance of authenticity factor, as it can provide meaningful emotions which can lead to enriching tourists' experiences.

### **3.5 Authenticity**

For a better understanding of the concept of authenticity, a brief introduction is needed together with illustrating the implications that authenticity has within the tourism research.

To start with, the term "authenticity" originates from a latin word and meant "principal" or "genuine" (Oxford Dictionary). Nowadays, according to Oxford Dictionary (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/authentic>) the term is defined as something "based on facts", "accurate" that "faithfully resembles an original".

Within the tourism context, authenticity is what attracts people to travel to different places and it is a crucial factor especially within heritage tourism (Apostolakis, 2003; Yeoman et al., 2007). Beside its incontestable importance for the tourism sector, Wong (1999) argued that the concept of authenticity needs a lot of research, is still a concept that needs further research (Wang, 1999). It seems that its conceptualization led to different approaches and points of view and sometimes contradictory positions. The concept of authenticity is sometimes perceived in various ways "as a value (Olsen, 2002), a motivational factor (Cohen, 1988; Grayson and Martinec, 2004), as a claim (Peterson, 2005), as a perception (Cohen, 1988), as the choice people make (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006)" (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010, p. 652) or even as having different meaning such as the attributes of an object, an existing experience or "true self" (Wang, 1999; Steiner and Reisinger, 2006). Due to a lack of a common view upon the authenticity concept, many scholars even suggested to abandon the concept, a fact that came in contradiction to Belhassen and Caton (2006) perspective, who remind about the relevance that the concept has

for tourists and assert that it comes as a duty for many of the scholars to continue studying the concept.

Later on, this thesis will discuss the concept of authenticity from two approaches in order to answer the main question: the authentic experiences that tourists might encounter at the dark location and the object's' authenticity, approaches that were also recognized by Wang (1999). Wang came up with a classification of authenticity in three main categories: "objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity" (1999, p. 351).

Within the objective authenticity, the originality of the objects is what really matters and what can lead to an authentic experience (Chhabra et al., 2003). MacCannell (1976), introduced the concept of "staged authenticity", as tourists might still perceive an object as being authentic, despite the fact that it might be an inauthentic object or experience. In accordance with MacCannell (1976), Boorstin (1992) came up with a similar concept called "pseudo-events", in relation to the authenticity of originals. In other words, tourists might still perceive both the artefacts and the experience as authentic even though there might not be anything original or authentic in it, for instance, a new digitization approach towards toured objects (Guttentag, 2010, p. 645).

Within the constructivist approach the tourist might perceive an experience or an object as authentic not as a consequence of the objects' or experience's inherent attributes, but rather as an induced perception from the tourism managers' own beliefs, stereotyped images, and consciousness onto the toured objects (Wang, 1999, p. 355). For this reason, the constructive authenticity is relative, negotiable and is dependant on one individual subjective perception and interpretation upon authenticity (Dicks, 2004, p. 58). Therefore, tourists might experience the authenticity each in different way, which can lead to different perception for the same artefact. In this regards, the memorial managers authentic perception on the exhibit artefacts, might not be in accordance to the tourist own perception. For instance, the tourists perception and expectation upon memorial as a former prison, might not be in accordance with heritage managers own approach.

Since the above two approaches towards authenticity were focused on how or if the objects were seen as genuine, the existential authenticity focuses more on individual's emotions that can lead to a more authentic tourist experience (Wang, 1999). In other words, is not really relevant in this case, whether the experience is authentic or not, as the individual is the one who decides that. Within this final approach towards authenticity, individuals are more focused on finding

their own Self and the exhibited objects and artefact can only help them to create memorable experiences (Wang, 1999). Starting from the above assertion , the memorial becomes also a place of each individual to encounter with his own “Self” with the help of the objects and different artefacts. Moreover, the individual’s encounter with own Self might lead to feelings of nostalgia and Wang further on explains the individual nostalgia as follows: “It is nostalgic because it idealizes the ways of life in which people are supposed as freer, more innocent, more spontaneous, purer and truer to themselves than usual” (1999, p. 360).

Therefore, the memorial gives its visitors the opportunity to reconnect with the past and experience it in the present. According to Costa and Melotti (2012), the tourist nowadays is seeking the authenticity of the attraction within the experience and the sensation, rather than the authenticity of the object. In other words, regardless how accurate the memorial can be in revealing information, the tourist will still look for the enriching of the emotions, which can lead to meaningful tourist experiences. This thesis will discuss in the following section the heritage interpretation, as an important tool in communicating the message towards visitors.

### **3.6 Heritage Interpretation**

This section aims to discuss the relevance of heritage interpretation at a memorial and what implications it might have for the tourists. In order to familiarize the readers with the concept of interpretation the conceptualization of the term is needed.

Therefore, according to Puczko,(2006, p. 228) the interpretation is defined “ as a form of communication, in which information flows between the parties involved”. In other words, the interpretation is related to the way the memorial chooses to communicate its message towards its visitors, so that the receivers (the tourists) can understand its purpose and values. In order for the interpretation process to happen the tourists becomes extremely valuable within this process, as if the message of the memorial is not properly understood than the memorial doesn't reach to its purpose. According to Puczko, (2006, p. 237) interpretation can be considered as a form of education, even though the two terms should not be considered as identical, as if education involves students and it occurs in a more organized and inflexible form, on the contrary, interpretation involves visitors and implies a more flexible and joyful approach towards transmitting the information. Nevertheless, according to Puczko (2006, p. 237) education and interpretation are not completely different as they both aim to transmit their message to the

individuals in order for them to remember it, and as a consequence he introduced the concept of “edutainment”, related to visitors’ predilection for the site that have the ability to inform but in the same time provide an entertainment, a new experience. In other words, the process of education can happen in many different ways, that can involve a more interactive approach towards visitors, and this is what makes the difference between interpretation and education.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned, Timothy (2007, p. xvii) argued that interpretation plays a significant role as the values of the attraction might be difficult to understand without the help of interpreters and interpretive media.

However, the importance of interpretation was acknowledged even from 1980’s together with the concept of “new museology” that was introduced within the museum industry and which highlighted the importance of the context as being more relevant than the exhibit item itself (Styliani et al, 2009). According to Timothy (2007) the most common method of the interpretive media was the traditional one, based on written text and displays, even though several other methods for transmitting the message towards visitors were also adopted, in terms of people-based media or even the non-living media. In relation to the memorial, the attraction is more focused on adopting a traditional interpretive media mainly through the use of the written text displayed on the walls and non-living media, in terms of brochures, guidebooks and several interpretation technologies. However, this aspect will be further on debated within the analyze section, for a better understanding.

As highlighted within the literature review (Puczko, 2006), the role of interpretation is to inform, therefore to educate its visitors by using the objects exhibited together with the multiple interpretive media in order to re-connect the tourist with the past. As a consequence tourists’ understanding and appreciation for the heritage site will increase through the various interpretative media used (Nuryanti, 1996, p. 253). Therefore, a proper understanding of the heritage site can attract emotion responses from tourists site that can lead to enriching tourists’ experiences.

Nevertheless, Timothy and Boyd (2003, p. 202) argued that heritage managers predilection for the education as the main focus within the interpretation of the site, made them perceive the entertainment approach as completely inappropriate in relation to education. As initially mentioned the concept of “edutainment” as it was coined by Puczko, (2006), was also supported



by Styliani et al., (2009), who claimed that interpretation and education are not quite exclusive terms and the idea of educating the visitors through entertainment is getting more and more recognition. In addition, Fog et al., (2005) proposed a more interactive approach that can link both the educational and interpretive aspects of a site, in terms of a more engaging storytelling.

In relation to the memorial, an interactive storytelling will have the power to better clarify the historical events presented. For some of the visitors the events might appear quite confusing as not all of the tourists possess the necessary knowledge within the historical context in order to receive a clear picture of the historical facts presented by the memorial. If the memorial message is properly understood then the emotional responses won't cease to appear, fact also confirmed by Pine and Gilmore (1999, p. 3), who claimed that an attraction should focus on selling experiences rather than products, and this should only be done through a more interactive and memorable way.

Therefore, the concept of interpretation plays a significant role for the overall understating of this thesis main topic, based on its strong connections with tourists, who need a proper understanding of the purpose and values of the attraction in order to make their visit memorable.

### **3.7 Emotions**

This section aims to reveal the role of emotions felt by the tourists at the memorial in order to create meaningful tourists' experiences. The section will look also into the different theories in relation to the concept of emotions, as the link between emotions and the memorial, represents in fact the main research topic of this thesis. By analyzing different theories that can look into the theory foundation from various perspectives is also beneficial for the understanding of the very broad and diverse topic of tourists' emotional responses at the memorial.

The field of emotions has been very much debated during the academic studies (Li, Scott, & Walter, 2015; Picard & Robinson, 2012), and even the most recent studies have as their main focus the hedonic forms of tourism, designated for destinations that provide pleasure for their visitors (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Prayag et al., 2013; Mitas et al., 2011). However, the academic studies do not pay too much attention to emotions felt at dark attractions (Nawijn & Fricke, 2015) and the lack of academic studies within emotions at dark attractions is also acknowledged

by Zeelenberg et al., (2008), who claim that emotions represent important features for decision-making.

Therefore, this thesis aim is to address this gap within the literature and focus on the emotions felt at a memorial, as a relevant aspect for enhancing tourists' experiences. Even though, academics have acknowledge the multiple challenges in conceptualizing, classifying and measuring the emotions (Stone & Sharpley, 2008), this thesis will come with several definition of emotions, in order to provide more understanding of the concept itself for the readers.

### **3.7.1 Definition and classification**

Even though a unified acceptance among academics is that there has been no common agreement upon defining emotions (Parrot, 2001), emotions have “arise as a result of an evaluation or assessment of specific stimuli relevant/irrelevant to individual or group's' goal” (Niedenthal & Brauer, 2010, cited in Li et al., 2014, p. 807). In addition, Scherer (2005, p. 697) defines emotion as “ an episode of interrelated synchronized changes in the states of all or most of the fives organismic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event as relevant to major concerns of the organism”. The short-lived character of emotions (Scherer, 2005), makes them even more difficult to measure, as individuals might experience different emotions during a day (Nawijn et al, 2013, p. 267).

In terms of the classification of emotions, the most common model is based on their valence: positive or negative, therefore according to Plutchik (2003) the term “valance” can be defined as emotion's characteristic of evolving positive or negative feelings.

Based on the emotions positive-negative characteristic, Fredrickson (2004) proposed her broad-and-build theory, by claiming that only positive emotions can have long-term consequences that can provide fulfilment and well-being to a visitor, while negative emotions come in total contrast with the theory and the author categorize them as simply instinctive human reactions to life-threats that mainly have survival purposes. In other words, the positive emotions are the only ones that can broaden and build by “moving people forward and lift them to the higher ground of optimal well-being” (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1375). However, Nawijn and Fricke's (2015) theory comes in contradiction to the broad-and-build theory, by claiming that the negative emotions can also have a positive outcome as well in terms of tourist intention for revisitation and positive word of mouth. In acknowledgement for Nawijn and Fricke's (2015)

theory, Ashworth and Issack (2015, p. 320) even comes with an example by asserting that, “anger, as a negative emotion and curiosity as a positive might have different consequences, therefore anger might involve actions with a positive outcome, while the other might encourage circumstances whose outcome is predominantly negative”. Taking the above assertions into consideration, the researchers can acknowledge all mentioned theories. However, based on their own research conducted at the memorial, they can better support Nawijn and Fricke’s (2015) and Ashworth and Issack (2015)’ theory that negative emotions can have positive consequences as well. Nevertheless, the positive outcomes that negative emotions might have at a dark attraction will be better explained within the analysis chapter.

Therefore, the study conducted at the memorial will involve both positive and negative emotions that can be felt simultaneously. The concept of multiple emotions (both positive and negative) felt simultaneously is best known as co-activation theory, and according to Larsen et al., (2003, p. 213) its consequence “may allow individuals to make sense of stressors, to gain mastery over future stressors, to transcend traumatic experiences and to transform adversity to advantage”. Therefore, in relation to the memorial, the amalgam of emotions felt at the memorial, gave the visitor the power for a better understating and also the ability to overcome the events throughout different emotions ranging from negative to even positive ones.

However, this thesis will focus on a limited number of specific, basic emotions, rather than the general aspect of emotions (Zelenski & Larsen, 2000).

The researchers need to come up with a clarification in relation to the use of the term -basic- when referring to emotions within this thesis. Therefore, several academics (Plutchik, 1980; Tomkins, 1984 cited in Zelenski & Larsen, 2000) came up with the concept of “basic emotion”, as fundamentals emotions, and “secondary emotions”, as blends of the basic emotions (Johnson- Laird & Oatley, 1992, cited in Zelenski & Larsen, 2000). Ekman, (1992, cited in Zelenski & Larsen, 2000, p. 178) highlights that basic emotions have been distinguished based on nine criteria such as: “universal facial expression, presence in other primates, distinct physiology, distinct antecedent events, a coherent response pattern, quick onset, brief duration, accompanying distinct appraisal pattern and an unbidden occurrence”.

In relation to the basic emotions several emotions have been included such as; happiness, sadness and anger (Chamberlain & Broderick, 2007), emotions that individuals possess from their birth, however, their number and their exact nature seems that is not exactly defined (Richins, 1997).

Nevertheless, it's relevant to mention that the above studies are only focused on the hedonic tourism, rather than dark tourism studies. Given the fact that the academic studies on emotions, within the dark tourism sector, scarcely exist (Stone and Sharpley, 2008), the researchers had to make use of different studies, sometimes even outside the tourism area and research, for instance, into the psychology field, in order to get to an understanding of the topic.

The researcher considers that the study of emotions at a memorial site is essential for the understanding of future traveler's decision-making and future tourist's intentions, an assertion also supported by several scholars as well (Cohen, 2011; Poria et al., 2006). The fact that the academic studies on emotions felt at a dark site scarcely exist is also supported by Nawijn and Fricke (2015) who claim that their study is the only one focused on revealing the emotional responses at a memorial site. As a consequence, the present study aims to provide more knowledge in this regard and help dark attractions, memorial site studies, in particular, acquire more understanding into the emotions field in order to further anticipate tourists' needs in relation to their decision making and future intention.

### **3.7.2 Emotions long-term consequences**

The following section is aiming to reveal the potential consequences that the emotional responses might have upon tourists' future travel intentions. As previously mentioned within the literature chapter, Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory claimed that only positive emotions can have the power to create positive long-term consequences. In addition Best's (2007) research extends Frederickson's theory by claiming that negative emotions can have a positive outcome as well and that negative emotions such as anger, fear and grief can also lead to meaningful experiences for the tourists. As a consequence, according to Best (2007) the negative emotions experienced by tourists at dark attraction can generate repeat visit and positive word-of-mouth. Muzaini et al., (2007) claims that is very important for dark attractions to generate tourists' intention to revisit the site together with a positive word of mouth, while Oppermann (2000) argues that positive word of mouth is a sign for tourists' loyalty. According to the literature review positive emotions can lead to positive word of mouth (Hanzaee & Khanzadeh, 2011) and tourists intention for revisitation (Han & Back, 2007) and as a consequence they can generate meaningful experiences. On the contrary, Soscia (2007) claims that negative emotions can have an opposite effect than the positive emotions, that can lead to tourists' dissatisfaction and

negative word of mouth. Nevertheless, Nawijn & Fricke (2015) research study comes in contradiction with the above mentioned studies and revealed that negative emotions are felt more strongly than the positive ones. Miles (2002, p. 1175) claimed that tourists tend to be more critical with a dark sites than with a “hedonic site”. In other words, even though tourist's expectations at a dark site are higher than at a hedonic site, the negative emotions felt at a dark attraction tend to be stronger than positive emotions felt at a hedonic place. The above assertion is also supported by Nawijn & Fricke (2015) study who concluded that despite the majority of the negative emotions felt at a dark attraction, tourists’ still expressed their desire to revisit similar attractions and spread positive word of mouth. Therefore, the current study aims also to investigate the outcome that negative emotions might have for the tourists and the findings of this research will be further on revealed in the analysis chapter. The researchers can argue that the findings of the study can have beneficial implications for the memorial’s management and for the future studies within the dark tourism context.

To sum up the theoretical framework through the theories identified within this section will represent a very useful tool in providing an answer to the main research question. Therefore the theories identified within the literature review will be used for analysing the main data collected for this thesis. The primary data collected at the researched location will be compared to the theories presented in the literature review chapter and consequently they will contribute to the final conclusion of the thesis by answering the main research question.

## **4. Case study**

### **4.1 Dark tourism in Romania**

Tourism in Romania has a great history, as the communist period left its mark on the progression of this industry. So, after the revolution in 1989, which led to the end of the communist era, the country started to experience an ascendance in the area of travelling, as more and more commercial projects started to appear on the market. (Rabontu & Vasile, 2014)

This first section of the presentation of the chosen study case aims to introduce the concept of “dark tourism” within the field of tourism in Romania. The country began making progress in this area with the story of Vlad Tepes, a Romanian sovereign from the Middle Ages, better known as Dracula. To better enhance the story The Dracula Society was founded in Bucharest in 1991 whose purpose is to promote this legend by creating related events, such as tours to Dracula’s Castle (the Bran Castle) or to other destinations connected to the story, different events and other experiences that the tourists can appreciate as being related to the “horror” in a safe environment. All of these activities and marketing promotions led to the myth of Dracula evolving to a main brand of the region Transylvania and Romania (Rabontu & Vasile, 2014).

But even though the Bran Castle in Transylvania “is certainly the most valuable brand in the world” (Rabontu & Vasile, 2014, p. 273) and a symbol that represents dark tourism in the country, it is not the only one that can instigate “dark” feelings for the visitors.

### **4.2 Maramures region**

This second section of the case study aims to understand better the importance of this region and how tourism plays a great role in its promotion for both Romanian nationals and foreigners. From the tourism point of view, Boar et. al., (2004, p. 128) claims that the region’s development began after the Second World War, a time when tourist complexes with large accommodation capacity were built, especially for mountain tourism, as the Crystalline-Mesozoic mountain area was emblematic with its height of 2303 meters. But the mountains are not the only thing that attracts tourists to Maramures, as there were also several mineral waters which were exploited in the region for therapeutic use, as well as the fauna and flora and the newly established natural reserves. Also, as an addition to all of these advantages

that the nature gave to this area, “the civilization of wood has given edifices of a remarkable aesthetical taste” (Boar et. al., 2004, p. 129). Maramures became well-known for its wooden gates and the wooden churches. “As a recognition for their unique value, cultural significance and beauty, eight out of the almost 100 old wooden churches of Maramures were granted the title of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and are part of UNESCO Patrimony” (discover-maramures.com).

Other unique and popular tourist destination in the region of Maramures is Mocanita, a narrow-gauge railway with a steam engine, trailing through Viseu Valley’s spectacular landscape. Other popular destinations in the region include: the Merry Cemetery, where the crosses bear amusing poems about the buried people, their personal traits and characteristic scenes from their lives, and the Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance in the town of Sighetu Marmatiei. These two destinations are representative sites of dark tourism in Maramures.

The latest dark destination, the Sighet memorial, also became the case study of this thesis and it will be further on debated in the next sections.

### **4.3 Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance**

To better understand how Sighet Memorial came to be, this section will briefly reveal the history of the building. The researchers can assert that the following section aim is to provide an understanding of the history and structure of the attraction. After reviewing the literature studies (Cristea, 2008; Dumbraveanu et al, 2016), the researchers discovered that the majority of the academic studies have as their foundation the knowledge provided by the memorial site itself. As a consequence this aspect made the entire reviewing process surprisingly hard for the authors. The authors identified a certain lack of innovation within the academic studies giving the fact that the identified literature review has based their findings on the information provided from the memorial own perspective. As a consequence the researchers need to inform the readers that the knowledge presented within this section is mainly based on the memorial’s point of view as it was described on their own website, due to a lack of studies meant to provide new knowledge.

According to the memorial’s website (<http://www.memorialsighet.ro>), the building that nowadays hosts the memorial, was initially a prison for criminal convicts that was constructed in

1897 by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. By 1945, there were brought to this place the repatriated Romanians who had been captives of war and expatriates from the Soviet Union.

After this episode, in August 1948, the prison became a place for a group of teenagers and farmers from the region of Maramures, some of whom still live in the city today and helped to bring out the recognition of the building as a memorial (Fürtös, 2007, p. 401).

According to Negrei Ion, a Romanian historian, after the communist regime was already installed in Romania, the next phase that the prison went through was in 1950, when on 5th and 6th of May, almost 90 important figures were taken to prison (<http://www.prohistoria.ro>). Moreover, according to the memorial's website (<http://www.memorialsighet.ro>), most of them were aged over 60 years old, from around the country and sentenced with hard punishments or in other cases never even sentenced at a trial (<http://www.prohistoria.ro>). The prisoners consisted of well-known intellectuals within "the political, military, intellectual, religious, economic and administrative" sectors who opposed the communist regime (Cristea, 2008, p. 63). As a result of the hard living conditions, many of the prisoners died, including the head of "the National Peasants' Party and former Prime Minister of Romania, Iuliu Maniu", whose cell remained intact and can be visited today at the memorial (<http://phantasma.lett.ubbcluj.ro>).

According to the memorial's website, the Sighet prison was meant to be acknowledged as a "special work unit" known as the "Danube colony", but it actually acted as a "place of extermination for the country's elite and at the same time a safe place, not possible to escape from, the frontier of the Soviet Union being less than two kilometres away" (<http://www.memorialsighet.ro>; Fürtös, 2007, p. 403). The conditions in which the people were kept were unsanitary, the prisoners were not well fed, the cells were not heated and they were forbidden to lock the windows, until shutters were placed there, or to lay down on the bed during the day (<http://www.neodacii.com>). This whole tragic chapter continued until 1955 when the Geneva Convention took place and the admission of Romania to the United Nations happened. As a consequence, some of the prisoners were released, while others were transferred to other similar places around the country and others were kept under house arrest and the place became again an ordinary residence for incarcerated criminals (Fürtös, 2007).

The last stage that the building went through started in 1977, when the prison was shut down and the building became home to a broom factory and salt warehouse. In the end, it turned into an abandoned ruin.

After that, in 1993, the ruin was taken over by The Civic Academy Foundation, an



organisation that was created at the suggestion of the European Council with the purpose of taking over the entire project of the Sighet Memorial. The main persons responsible for this change are Ana Blandiana, a famous Romanian poet and former dissident, and her husband, Romulus Rusan. They forwarded the project of the Memorial to the European Council. As a consequence, the Memorial was able to open its gates to public for the first time on 20 June 1997 (Haliliuc, 2013).

After having a better understanding of the history of the building and all the different stages it went through, the following section of this case study will present the Memorial in its current form and the way it is organised.

The attraction is called the “Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance” and is located in Sighetu Marmatiei, representing a former prison and the fight against communism and its repressive power. It constitutes of 60 exhibition rooms, as every cell became one representative chamber, following the main themes of the communist repression in chronological order, the destruction of the state of law and its replacement with the totalitarian regime. The exhibition area also includes two courtyards.

According to the memorial’s website (<http://www.memorialsighet.ro>), the doors of the Memorial are open daily from Monday to Sunday, from 9:30 until 18:30, in the summer time, from 15 April to 15 October and for the rest of the year, the visitors can come all week from 9:30 to 16:30, besides Monday when the Memorial is closed. The entry fee is 8 Romanian lei (approximately two euros) for an adult to visit the whole memorial, while for a student, pupil or retired person, the price is reduced to half, 4 Romanian lei (approximately one euro). There is also a fee of 5 and 15 Romanian lei (approximately one euro and 30 cents or 4 euro) for being allowed to take photos with a camera or film respectively. The entry is free for former prisoners and political deportees, for persons with disabilities and for journalists.

According to the curator of the Memorial, the number of the visitors from 2016 was around 112000, and 10 to 15% of them were international tourists. The international tourists come from all over the world, the top 3 countries being first France, than Hungary and finally Poland. In terms of age, a majority of the visitors is represented by the senior people along with the youngsters.

The Memorial’s structure is based on the era of communism, observed from the victim’s perspective and it tries to present the information to the visitors through a process of interpretation of the large number of photos, documents and items that were donated by the

former prisoners or their family.

The Memorial aims not only at presenting the memory of Romanian Communism from a broader perspective, but also to provide a general outline of the situation in the communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe with the help of some of the thematic rooms like: Room 23 (The countries from the Eastern Europe (1945-1989)), Rooms 25-26 (A chronology of the Cold War), Room 83 (The revolution in Hungary (1956)), Room 41 (Ethnic repressions) and others.

In some of the rooms in the building, the information is received by tourists through various interactive facilities, for example Room 14 (the Security between 1948-1989) or Room 75 (Demolitions in the 80's). Other cells do not need any kind of explanations, as they are the tight, dark, airless spaces which represent the punishment cells, where the imprisoned people were sent when they didn't follow the rules of the administration: Rooms 37 and 68, called "The Black". Besides this type of cells, two other ones were left untouched, Rooms 9 and 73, the cells where former Prime Minister Iuliu Maniu (1873-1953) and politician and historian Gheorghe I. Bratianu died.

The rest of the rooms, as mentioned before, are organised by different themes and represent different points of repression, for example against the education system, the military system, the cultural system, the medical system. Other rooms are where many students, teachers, musicians, doctors, writers and so on were condemned for expressing their opinions against the totalitarian system. At these chambers, there can be added the most emotional ones starting with the hall that has the portraits of thousands of prisoners and political deportees on its walls and the rooms that represent women, children or even whole families in prison, poems and other type of art created in prison or the many photos and testimonials by repressors or victims of the tortures they went through. Some last interesting rooms that need to be mentioned here are the ones that represent the everyday life of the people under the communist regime, the room that identifies the kitsch factor of communism and the radio and television repression. These three rooms contain items, pictures and documents that the second and third generation of especially Romanian tourists seem to identify most with and be reminded of the life conditions back then.

In the two courtyards, tourists can go and firstly pray and light a candle in the "Space of meditation and prayer", which is an underground chapel in the first court. This space was created as an area for silence and meditation for visitors to come after they went through the terrifying events illustrated by the museum. On the walls outside and around the chapel and the wall from

the court, were engraved thousand of names of people who found their end in the prisons, camps and deportation sites from Romania. In the second court, there is a group of statues of eighteen human figures walking towards a wall that represent the closing of the horizon, which is what the communist period did to people. The human figures are guided by a headless other statue. This work of art made by the sculptor Aurel Vlad, called “The procession of martyrs” became the symbol image of the memorial. (Fig. 4.1)



Fig. 4.1 The procession of martyrs  
(Photo taken at Sighet Memorial)

The whole Memorial is presented in such a clear and organised way that the tourist can experience and explore it alone, without requesting the help of a guide, as in every room there are also sheets of paper with resumes of the cell. As a consequence, in 2016, the Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance was awarded for the third year in a row a Tripadvisor Excellence Certificate based on users' reviews.

Until two years ago, the Memorial also played a pedagogical role, as it was the host of the “Summer School”, an event which happened once a year, and constituted of a week when school pupils could come and learn about the communism era with the help of many guests such as historians, teachers and even former victims. Unfortunately, the event was discontinued, as there were no more funds.

All in all, the Memorial was listed by the Council of Europe as one of the “hotspots of the preservation of memory in Europe” (Dobre, 2013, p. 97) and continues to have its gate open for local and international tourists around the world

## **5. Analysis introduction**

This thesis main objective is to explore how dark tourism, in the context of memorial tourism, is able to create and amplify meaningful emotions for tourists in order to enhance tourists' experiences. As a consequence, this chapter aims to provide an answer to the above research question throughout a qualitative analysis of collected data at the researched location. The following section will analyse data from both interviews and participant observation which will also include insights gained from the literature review.

To start with, the analysis will be structured into three chapters that will follow a similar layout to the literature review presented in a previous chapter. The following structure illustrates in the same time the segmentation of the main question into the subquestions. However, the authors need to mention that the 3 chapters of the analysis aim to initially cover data about the researched location as both a heritage and memorial site within the dark tourism context and data about attraction image and how it is perceived by both curators and tourists. Additionally, this section will reveal tourists' classification within collected data, into two different groups, but more details will be revealed further on into this section. The second chapter is aiming to analyze tourist's motivation and to explore different patterns identified during the data collection. This section is also aiming to research both tourists and curators perception towards authenticity as part of travel motivation and also what type of interpretation, as a form of communication, is the attraction aiming for. Last but not least, the third chapter will analyze the type of emotions encountered at the researched location and how they contribute to enhance tourists' experiences.

As previously mentioned, the above mentioned chapters will be analyzed throughout data gathered from both interviews and participant observation at the researched location.

However, the authors explain that the information collected through participant observation will be presented as examples of situations that the researchers encountered during the entire process of data collection.

The authors need to reminded to the readers that the research is conducted under the social constructivist paradigm and the knowledge is gained throughout numerous interpretations

(Bryman, 2008). Therefore, the thesis is not aiming to highlight that one tourist's perception is more valuable than another's (Egholm, 2014).

## 6. Analysis part I: Image formation

As revealed within the literature review, there has been several attempts to define the concept of image formation and despite that, the concept is still lacking a unified perception on the term, that can contribute to a better understanding of the image formation (Iordanova, 2015; Tasci et al., 2007).

Therefore, this section will discuss what kind of image tourists construct over the selected case study and how does this image contributes to the overall understanding of emotions evolved within the destination image. Additionally, this research will analyse the destination image of the researched case study through several factors that can influence its image. Therefore, the authors will look for different patterns encountered among interviewees in relation to image formation factors.

Within the context of destination image, the researchers noticed that travel motivation for the interviewed participants was not the memorial itself as a main attraction, it rather came after several other tourist objectives. The above assertion is also supported through different statements of the interviewees. For instance, I10 acknowledges that the main reason for visiting this destination was that he had:

*“to attend a symposium...the memorial, I knew it from a long time, but I never had the chance (to visit) due to a certain distance...and between other destinations...the last one was the memorial”.*

*(I10, Romania, 2017)*

Another participant, I5 states that:

*“I came (in Sighet) for my colleague’s wedding...I have never been in Sighet, they (his friends) proposed me to get here...when I hear about memorial, I get goosebumps”*

*(I5, Romania, 2017)*

In addition, according to I11, the main reason for visiting the region was a wellness centre close to the researched location, followed by the Merry Cemetery and last, the memorial.

Therefore, even though a significant part of the participants manifest strong interest in visiting the memorial, they still don't place it as the main objective in their tourist plans. The above assertion is also confirmed by MC who claims that:

*“Romanians are coming to see the region of Maramures, not the memorial...Sighet has only a transit tourism. Tourists are coming from Merry Cemetery, Mocanita, Barsana and then the Memorial.”*

*(MC, Romania, 2017)*

However, through our research, we were able to identify a small segment of tourists that placed the memorial as their main destination, for instance I17 claims that:

*“I can assert for sure that I've been at the memorial at least 3 times...everytime we are in the region we visit Sighet and the memorial as well...the fact that we always come back is motivated by the different emotions felt at different stages of age.”*

*(I17, Romania, 2017)*

Therefore, the above assertion confirms that there is a segment of tourists interested in gaining more and more knowledge on one hand and on the other hand the memorial becomes a place of collectedness.

This section will be structured into five different subsections, each of them having the image formation of the destination, seen through the eyes of the researched participants as a main purpose.

## **6.1 Heritage site**

The researched case study can be easily integrated within the context of heritage site through its undeniable correlation with the past and individuals' motivation to reconnect with it. Therefore, tourists associate this location with their relatively recent past through different motivational factors that were identified by researchers as a pattern during the research.

A great number of participants claimed that *“those (individuals) who forget their past are doomed to repeat it”*. As a consequence, participants’ perception of the location as a historical site, plays a significant role for the destination image. According to memorial curator (MC), the attraction is designed to be perceived as a *“historical reconstruction”* of the past through *“authentic documentation”*. Likewise, one of the memorial guides (MG) acknowledges the fact that destination is a *“place of history”* and that *“history and personal confessions plays an important role”*.

On the other hand, I14 supports the idea of destination seen as a historical place and he associates it with a certain dark side of the history, claiming that *“we should recognise the dark side of our history”*. The above assertion stands as an acknowledgement for Ashworth’s theory that “dark” and “heritage” aren’t “mutually exclusive categories” (2002, p. 191). In other words, regardless of how dark our ancestors past is it will always be seen as one common heritage and it comes as a *“duty for a nation not to forget its history”* (I7).

Taking into consideration the above statements, we can see that history and heritage play a significant role for tourists based on the strong connection between past and inheritance, fact that was also acknowledged by Nuryanti (1996). Moreover, tourists’ fascination for travelling back in time in order to remember their recent past in order not to forget the events, regardless of how painful or not they could be, becomes an important travel motivation. In addition, the researchers can acknowledge that the events presented by the memorial represent tourists’ not so distant past and still they received significant value in order to become a nation’s heritage. The statement comes as an acknowledgement for Chhabra et al (2003, p. 703) theory which claims that regardless of how close or distant the historical events might be they can still be considered a heritage if it receives a certain value or utilitarian function by a society or culture.

## **6.2 Memorial/museum site**

This section’s aim is to highlight tourist perceptions towards the researched case study as a “site of memory” (Cohen, 2011). Even though the literature seems to be lacking in regards to memorial tourism (Stone, 2008), this thesis’ objective will be to provide knowledge in order to cover this gap.



In the interview with the founder of the memorial, the main objective of the destination is defined: *”the purpose is to restore the collective memory, memory related to the recent history...the memorial is not the road to past, rather to the future”*. (MF)

According to the literature review, a similar assertion is supported by several scholars who defined the notion of “remembrance” as a link between our past and the future that has also the ability to shape our present through the way we remember it (Young, 1993; Lennon & Foley, 1999).

Through our research, we can support the idea that a significant number of participants perceived the purpose of the destination as a site of memory. Therefore, most of the participants of the research believe that the past is one side of the history that shouldn’t be forgotten and that it is the Romanians’ duty to preserve its memory alive for the future generations. As a testimony for the above statement, the following assertions will be exemplified through the participants’ answers:

*“the main purpose is to bring memories back from the history” (I18, Romania, 2017);*

*“It is the Romanians’ duty not to forget their history...in order not to repeat it” (I7, Romania, 2017);*

*“The purpose of the memorial is not to forget” (I5, Romania, 2017);*

*“It’s part of our history...(their memory) it must be kept alive as an example” (I30, Romania, 2017).*

As a consequence, the previous statements reveal tourists’ perceptions of the destination as a place associated with remembrance and commemoration of those directly involved in the historical events.

The researchers highlight the fact that the memorial receives a second connotation, that of a museum due to its numerous exhibitions and artefacts, fact that underlines the authenticity of the place. The above statement is acknowledged as well by the founder of the memorial who claims that the museum:

*“Is precisely scientific and everything that exists inside is the result of our own research...the museum is designed based on our own research on one side, on the other side one of my own obsessions was not only to transmit knowledge but rather the intensification of the*

*sufferings, and this could only be accomplished through artistic means ...we intend to have certain artistic accents , those grass patches, some works of art, an area of silence...they emphasise through artistic means the same facts which we have presented in a scientific manner”*

*(MF, Romania, 2017)*

Furthermore, the assertion comes as an acknowledgement of the literature review which underlines that the role of the museum is to create a link between the past, in terms of “collection, verification and preservation” and the future, by becoming a generator of certain experiences such as “learning, engagement and enjoyment” (Chhabra, 2008 ,p. 441). The researchers will motivate their decision for debating the concept of “museum” as being relevant for the overall topic of this thesis based on its ability to transmit knowledge towards visitors. The authors can assert that the way the museum’s message is perceived, is crucial for visitors’ understanding as this might significantly contribute to the creation of memorable tourism experiences. On the other hand, if the museum’s message is not properly understood by its visitors, the lack of understanding can lead to less meaningful emotions and a poor tourist experience.

Therefore, through the above considerations, the attraction image is highlighted through both its memorial and museum characteristics and has the potential to create and amplify tourist emotions and eventually enhance the tourist experience.

### **6.3 Former prison**

This section aims to underline another perception that tourists constructed over the researched case study image. As the destination used to be a prison, several tourists end by being disappointed when they see a totally new appearance of the site. The appearance comes as a contrast to their initial perception as a prison. As the literature review has shown, former prisons, as sites of pain and sufferings, became popular tourist objective for many visitors (Strange & Kempa, 2003). The research at the memorial is not any different in this regard as several tourists express their interest in visiting Sighet memorial as a former prison. In addition, according to MC, tourists are divided between two groups and while most of the Romanian tourists would say

that they have come to see the former prison, only a small part of them came for the memorial. He claims that:

*“Some (tourists) come here and leave after only 20 minutes and say <You have built here a hotel, it’s very nice, painted in white with a lot of text (to read). I am not interested in it. I was expecting to see handcuffs>”*

*(MC, Romania, 2017)*

The above statement is also confirmed by our own research which underlines the existence of this particular segment of tourists that are disappointed by the new appearance of the location and the following examples are meant to highlight this aspect:

*“It is very modern...they should have kept it the way it was...too little was preserved from what it was”*

*(I27, Romania, 2017)*

*“I have heard about Sighet prison...I wanted to see the prison...I have never seen one, only in the movies...I see this place as a prison”*

*(I10, Romania, 2017)*

Similarly, MG supports the above statements by saying:

*“I believe that romanians are coming mainly to see the prison...I think that this is the perception”*

*(MG, Romania, 2017)*

On the other hand, there is another segment of tourists that, even though, they are aware of destination former background as a prison, they have pictured the site in a total different manner and are very much attracted to the new image.

*“Others come here and spend several hours in order to find out information that they didn’t know about or they knew little about it and then they have the patience to read and research...of course, the percentage of those coming specially for the museum, is reduced...they*

*even come back next day to continue because it's difficult to process all the information, not just to see it, because they don't just simply see it, they process it'*

*(MC, Romania, 2017)*

As a conclusion to all the above considerations, from the total number of 30 interviews conducted with tourists only 2 participants confirmed their interests in the destination as a former prison, 4 other participants came to see the memorial as their main objective, while for the rest of the participants the decision to visit the memorial came as an additional tourist destination after several other objectives. Therefore, based on the previous assertions, our research comes as a contradiction to MG's statement who claims that "Romanians are mainly interested to see the prison" while in our data collection there are only two respondents who confirmed MG's belief.

The memorial expressed purpose is to inform and educate its visitors and commemorate the victims, rather than presenting the building in its initial stage as a former prison, and the commemorative aspect of a site was also supported by several academics (Glassberg, 1996; Lowenthal, 1985). However, in order to satisfy those tourists particularly interested in seeing elements associated with the former prison, the memorial expressed its intention to open an underground area for this purpose. At the time of the research conducted at the memorial, the area was still under the implementation phase with the purpose of being opened for its visitors in the nearest future.

#### **6.4 Dark site**

As previously shown in the literature review, the concept of "dark site" has been associated to locations that have as a main focus events related to death and disaster (Lennon and Foley, 2000). However, not all attractions related to death and disaster can be integrated as being dark, therefore, Stone (2005), tries to create a distinction within dark tourism field by categorizing them into different types of product offered by the site, ranging from "lightest" to the "darkest", based on several characteristics of each site. For instance, an attraction designed to serve as a memorial would be integrated within the darker category, while a site that aims to be perceived as a cultural heritage would be seen as a lighter product.

Additionally Stone, (2005) claims that dark tourism sites can attract paying or non-paying visitors and can be associated to real or simulated death, pain and sufferings.

Taking into considerations the above assertions the researched case study integrates perfectly with the purpose of the memorial to attract visitors that are motivated by the sufferings and pain expressed by the attraction.

According to Ashworth (2004), in order for a atrocity site to become successful as a tourist destination it has to integrate 4 different characteristics:

- The historical events have to be man-made and they need to target human victims in order for the travellers to identify with the victims
- The person involved in the atrocity is part of a premeditated action and the victims must be completely innocents
- The event must have had a certain seriousness
- Must have the ability to remain alive into future generation's consciousness

Therefore, taking into consideration Ashworth's four characteristics, the Memorial from Sighet has all the attributes to be integrated as a "dark tourism" site.

However, even though according to the literature review, the research case study has all the attributes to be integrated into dark site category, the research conducted at the selected location revealed a different perspectives. In other words, the researchers discovered that the concept of "dark tourism" was not familiar to the participants involved in the research. In the same time the researchers want to come with an explanation in this perspective and remind the readers that the "dark tourism" concept is particularly associated with the tourism field and is more familiar among the academics and those directly involved into the tourism industry. Therefore, during the research conducted at the memorial, the interviewees seemed to have the perception upon the destination as being dark due to its associations with pain and death, but not aware of the "dark tourism" concept at all. As a consequence, this made the authors question themselves, that since the concept itself became unknown to those directly involved in it, does this mean that the site is no longer considered dark? Therefore, the researchers believe that further research into dark tourism field is still needed. The following examples are meant to clarify the above statements.

From the interview with the memorial curator, we find out that:

*"The memorial is designed as a historical site and not at all for dark tourism "*

(MC, Romania, 2017)

Moreover, MG asserts that:

*“I can not see (this place) as being negative or dark...because you can see that things can change...and this location became one of freedom”*

(MG, Romania, 2017)

The same beliefs are shared by I5 as following: the location *“was dark but now its purpose was changed...it can be a place for remembrance”*.

To sum it up, even though the literature review shows that memorials are considered dark tourism attractions through their attributes associated with pain and death, the collected data at the researched case study shows that the concept is unknown to its participants. Moreover, the concept of “dark tourism” seemed to suffer a change which means that people turned to perceive the initial dark attributes of the site into more positive and hopeful attributes.

## **6.5 The link between destination image and knowledge**

Based on the information presented in the previous sections, we can assert that tourists manifest different perceptions towards destination image formation and each of these perceptions is shaped by each individual knowledge and personal beliefs. Therefore, this section’s objective will be to analyse the relation between knowledge and how it affects destination image formation. Moreover, this section aims to investigate the concept of knowledge as an important factor that can have a significant influence upon image formation and it can also contribute to the classification of tourists into different categories.

For this purpose, the researchers identify two patterns in relation to the concept of “knowledge”:

**High level knowledge:** This group is mainly represented by tourists who possess a vast knowledge about the destination through their education, but also through numerous sources of information. Based on their level of knowledge, this group has the ability to enunciate statements that can contribute to both cognitive and emotional image formation of the

destination. A significant feature of this pattern is that participants are very much involved into deep understanding of the destination and not just simply consuming it. The next statement comes as an acknowledgement for the above mentioned:

*“I have read a lot and I am still reading...for me the book is holy...(I want) to find out more details because you can not comprise all these texts in a single book”*

*(I11, Romania, 2017)*

*“I already knew the information before, I have read them; now I have just filled up the gaps”*

*(I26, Romania, 2017)*

*“I have read many books...I even have an uncle who writes a lot about prisons...Here, I remembered about all I’ve read and heard”*

*(I29, Romania, 2017)*

We can conclude from the above assertions that tourists included in this category already have a baggage of knowledge gained from academic writing and the main objective for visiting the destination would be to enlarge their knowledge and develop a deeper understanding into the field. The statement also highlights the fact that different educational sources have a significant contribution to knowledge formation, a fact that was also confirmed by Baloglu & McCleary (1999) into the literature review.

The following statement will highlight the importance of different informational sources:

*“There are not so many books that focus on small details...(I want) to find out more details...because here you can find official documents”*

*(I11, Romania, 2017)*

In other words, the participant acknowledges the importance gained from different academic sources, but in the same time he articulates that in order to gain a deep understanding into the area of interest, he has to be directly involved into the investigation. Additionally, the

attraction's association to official records turns the overall tourist experience into an authentic one.

To sum it up, the pattern identified through the participants with high level of knowledge, is more present in achieving a certain tourist experience rather than cognitive knowledge and the following statement can better clarify this aspect:

*“In terms of information, I already had them...I only revised them with both negative and positive aspects ”*

*(I15, Romania, 2017)*

I5 claims that the tourist experience at the location is unique and it can not be compared with any other experiences:

*“What you can experience here is reality...you only understand everything once you see it”*

*(I5, Romania, 2017)*

Taking into consideration the above assertions, the authors can conclude the high knowledge pattern by claiming that each individual's personal knowledge developed considerably once they have had the interaction with the reality at the destination. However, the correlation with authenticity will be further on explored in a different section.

**Medium knowledge group:** It consists of participants that manifested a moderate interest in visiting the destination and their motivation to see the destination was influenced by external factors such as media or close relatives. In contrast to the previous group, the medium knowledge group was lacking the vast academic knowledge prior to their visit, fact that can be confirmed through researchers' direct participant observation. Moreover, the researchers' above statement was confirmed by the fact that the medium knowledge group didn't seem very spontaneous in their criticism during the interviews as much as the high level knowledge group who were able to express themselves in a more academic way.

The following examples are meant to testify to the above statements:

*“We pass daily by it (memorial)...soon I'll be 50 and today is the first time visiting it...and now I came at my daughter's invitation...I regret waiting so long before coming here”*



(I2, Romania, 2017)

*“We didn’t come specially for the memorial. We came to see the region of Maramures...My father visited it and he liked it alot and he told us that it is worth seeing it...additionally, the advertisements (in the city)...this is what attracted us....also reading from the internet”*

(I3, Romania, 2017)

*“We came specially for the Merry Cemetery...We wanted to visit all the tourist objectives (from the area)...We searched on the internet for all the tourist attractions in Maramures”*

(I1, Romania, 2017)

As a conclusion, the medium knowledge group did not come with too much knowledge prior to their visit. They mainly came at the recommendation of one of their close relatives or the media and their visit at the memorial came as a part of many other tourist objectives. Therefore, as a contrast to the previous group, this one did not show personal interest into enriching their knowledge about memorial.

The researchers claim that there is no tourists classification of a low knowledge group, as this group would be represented by individuals with more nostalgic affiliation for the communist period and the memorial is either completely unknown to them or has no meaning in their own perception. Within the low knowledge group, the researchers included also children and teenagers who did not show too much interest into the memorial’s purpose. In order to exemplify the previous statement, the researchers would further on come up with situations from the observational point of view that can explain their motivation for including them into this category. Therefore, during the entire period of the research, the memorial received a significant number of organised visits from different schools which gave the researchers the opportunity to observe their behaviour at the attraction. The majority of the teenagers showed no interest for the memorial by refusing to complete their whole visit by simply sitting on the bench and waiting for the rest of the group or by being so noisy that the memorial staff would have to interfere. One of the teenagers, even from the entrance in the memorial, exclaimed: *“I’m already bored!”*. Taking these into consideration, the researchers decided not to consider the group relevant to provide knowledge for the main topic of this thesis. To conclude, the teenagers’ behaviour and lack of interest can be explained through the fact that they don’t have a personal connection with the past events presented by the memorial. This aspect can once again lead to

Beech (2000) theory, that the number of persons directly connected with the historical events will decrease over the time due to the mortality factor and future generations will not manifest the same emotions and the same tourist experiences as those personally connected to the events.

To summarise how the destination image is formed, the researchers point out to the readers that the main purpose of this section was to explore how individual perception is formed based on the “relationship between image and behaviour” (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999, p. 869). In other words, the way individuals perceive the destination based on their former knowledge, feelings and beliefs has the ability to enhance the overall tourist experience.

## **7. Analysis part II: Travel motivation**

Even though the concept of “dark tourism” has been debated for more than 20 years and the interest within the concept keeps growing, there is still need for further research into motivations and experiences that tourists encounter (Dunkley et al., 2010). The literature review initiated several theories related to what exactly makes tourists decide to visit sites associated with death and disaster. While several scholars such as Seaton (1996) claims that tourists motivation comes from a predilection for death, others like Slade (2003, p. 792) opposes the idea by asserting that it “obscures and denies other meanings by attributing thanatouristic intent to all visitors”. Additionally, Beech (2000, p. 40) believes that a classification of tourist motivation to visit dark sites can be extremely challenging and that can lead to inaccurate beliefs that “all who visit are tourists indulging a leisure activity”.

Based on the above considerations, the authors can affirm that tourists at the researched case study have been divided in two separate groups: those that share a certain connection with the site, such as survivors’ relatives and people who feel connected through a common heritage; and the visitors that have no connection at all with the site, but they still present a great interest in acquiring more knowledge, aspect that was also revealed within the literature review through Beech (2000) assessment. In addition, examples from both groups can be observed in the following sub-chapters.

In order to explain tourists’ travel motivation to the researched case study, this section will reveal the patterns encountered at the destination. The purpose of different patterns’ interpretation into this section will contribute to answering the research’ main question and reveal their input into enhancing tourists experiences through the variety of emotions felt at the attraction.

### **7.1 Memory**

During the interviews, tourists were asked to express their travel motivations to the memorial site and in the same time to reveal what experiences could they they sought at the end of their visit. The initial pattern identified in the travel motivation area was memory and remembrance as the main purpose of their visit. Therefore, for the majority of the respondents a

pattern was identified through the following assertion: “*those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it*” (I5, I6, I15, I11, I12). The memory as a main reason for visiting for our respondents is also acknowledged in the literature review as a central motive to dark tourism (Lennon & Foley, 1999). Additionally, the main purpose of the researched case study is also stated by memorial curator who claims that: “*the purpose of the memorial is to be aware, to keep the memory alive*”.

Another pattern identified at the memorial comes also as an acknowledgement to theory of Poria et al (2006) related to pilgrimage. Poria et al (2006) claims that several tourists perceive their visit as a “social obligation” specifically for future generations and as a moral duty for the victims. Therefore, the following statements can underline even better the above assertion.

One of the respondents who is also a history teacher, who brought his students to the memorial claims that:

*“We are not allowed to forget, but (I am) kind of sceptic with the teenagers....the teenagers have the duty to come, otherwise (the memorial) will not reach its purpose”*

*(I6, Romania, 2017)*

Another teacher supports as well the above assertion, by claiming that:

*“It is a duty for romanians not to forget their history”*

*(I7, Romania, 2017)*

Several other respondents claim that “*we are not allowed to erase (the memory)*” (I17), “*we have the duty to acknowledge it...it’s very important to know*” (I25).

During the interviews with tourists, the researchers noticed that most of the respondents relate the “social obligation” aspect to future generations and acknowledge that memorial main purpose relies on its preservation for future generations. In addition, the “moral obligation” for the future generations to acquire more knowledge about the historical events as part of their heritage together with the commemorations of the victims, was also supported by several other scholars (Kang et al, 2012; Thurnell-Read, 2009).

## 7.2 Identity seeking

Another feature identified during the participant observation shows that a majority of the participants either had strong connections with, or they've been directly involved in the historical events illustrated by the memorial. Therefore, for this particular category of participants, the memorial represents a personal connection, fact that can lead to the development of certain emotions based on their own experiences.

The literature review showed that there are two different theories in this regards. Therefore, if Beech (2000) claims that the number of visitors with personal connection will decrease during the time, based on the mortality factor, Slade (2003) would very much like to link the concept to a "nationhood" feeling related to visitors' desire to discover their roots. Based on the previous assertions, the researchers believe that each of the above statements can offer important insight into the problem. The authors agree with Beech' theory related to a certain decrease of the visitors with personal connections, while acknowledging to a certain level Slade's theory as well. Additionally, the researchers, based on their own research, sustain that future generation's desire to find their own roots could be a significant motive to visit the memorial. However, the decrease of the visitors with personal connections, as supported by Beech (2000), will still affect the overall number of tourists, as emotional responses and experiences won't have the same intensity as would have for a person with direct connection to the site.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned into the literature review, visitor's identity seeking became another motive for travelling to the memorial and the following statements can better clarify the assertion:

*"I feel a certain connection over time with my grandfather...with whom I resemble a lot...from pictures you can figure it out...it may be the structure, it may be spiritually, I feel extremely connected even though I have never met him...for me it is (the memorial) a place of remembrance, maybe more than anything else"*

*(I17, Romania, 2017)*

*"Based on the initial presentation that we have heard at the memorial entrance, that one of 8 Romanians was a victim of the communist regime, (it means that) every family has roots in*

*this memorial...I found my root here...we are (a generations of) doctors and I've discovered a doctor with the the same name, from the same region that my family comes from, whom I didn't know, that died here...I am almost sure that he is from our family”*

*(I25, Romania, 2017)*

The above statements illustrate that another reason for visiting the memorial is related to identity seeking and tourists' desire to connect with certain relatives that they may have never met just like I17 confesses or, to discover new roots that they were not even aware of, like I25.

### **7.3 Education**

Another pattern identified during the data collection was the desire of a particular segment of tourists to acquire more knowledge in the field. Moreover, the authors associate the educational pattern with the high level knowledge segment of visitors due to their increased eagerness to go even deeper into the knowledge of the field. Therefore, as previously showed in one of the above sections, several respondents such as I11, I5, I15, I29 or I26 associated with the high level knowledge segment, claimed that education became the push factor for their travel motivation. In other words, visiting dark attractions can be an educational experience that might have a meaningful impact on tourists' lives (Daams, 2007). However, there are different ways to be taken into consideration, in order to understand why certain events happened, during the communism period.

From data collection, visitors express their travel motivation in terms of knowledge, understanding and educational opportunities, concepts that were also shared by the researched dark attraction.

The educational purpose of the memorial is also highlighted during the interview with the memorial's founder: *“(The memorial) is in the same time, a school, a museum and a research institute”*. As previously stated, the educational purpose, especially for the younger generation was expressed through a project called “Summer School” that operated between 1998-2014 with the main purpose of teaching the teenagers about the concept of “memory”, a notion that neither school or parents were able to pass on effectively (<http://www.memorialsighet.ro>). Additionally, the founder of the memorial states that:

*“At the “Summer school”... there were 100 students, with the ages between 15 and 18 years old who were selected through a written exam...and lecturers were historians, sociologists, scholars within communism history from all over the world...not only from the eastern countries but also from America, France...moreover, the rector of Summer School (from 2001) was Stephane Courtois, the author of “The black book of communism”, a remarkable french historian.”*

*(MF, Romania, 2017)*

As a conclusion, the memorial aims to maintain the memory alive through initiating several educational programs especially for the future generations, in order for them to understand and learn from the past.

The importance of the concept of “education” for future generations was also confirmed by the literature review who asserts that “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (Santayana, 1962, p. 122).

Therefore, education becomes a way of understanding tragedy and in the end it comes to provide a certain relief to visitors interested in keeping the memories of the victims alive.

## **7.4 Curiosity**

As we can see from the literature review, the concept of “curiosity” evolved from the eagerness to know and learn more. Curiosity became a push factor that determines individuals to aspire to a deeper knowledge and understanding into the field. Additionally, Tarlow (2005, p. 48) claims that tourists’ visits to memorials may come as a result of “curiosity or because it is the thing to do”. As an acknowledgement for Tarlow’s assertion, Biran et al (2011, p. 830) identifies the travelling motivation factor in the concept of “see it to believe it”, associated to tourists’ interest for the attraction in order to prove to themselves that those kind of events really happened. Accordingly to the above considerations, the memorial became an attraction for a number of visitors out of simply curiosity or as a “must see” attraction, and the following examples are meant to clarify the above assertions.

From the interview with EG1, we could find out that the memorial represents “*that type of history that can't be learned in school...is the story behind the attraction*”, fact that was also confirmed by one of the respondents who claims that:

*“There's one thing when you read a story from the history book and there's another thing when you actually see it.”*

*(I13, Romania, 2017)*

The following statement has the potential to combine both curiosity and the “see it to believe it” concept by claiming that:

*“(We came) to see what it's all about in here, how a real cell looks like as we have never seen one...from curiosity. There's one thing to read and another thing is to actually see it.”*

*(I4, Romania, 2017)*

The previous statements can stand as a testimony that curiosity plays a significant role in tourist motivations which summarises a concept developed by Sartori (1998, cited by Tarlow, 2005, p. 57) with the main purpose of defining the notion of consuming dark tourism: “We come, we see, we leave”.

The researchers can affirm that travellers' curiosity for visiting the attraction was also influenced by different media sources or as a consequence of their friends or relatives recommendation. This assertion was also supported within the literature review by Knox (2006), who claims that tourists base their decisions on things that they hear or read and their visit at the attraction comes more as a “confirmation of the reality of the events” (Lisle, 2004, p. 5).

## **7.5 Authenticity**

This section is meant to cover the concept of “authenticity” as part of tourist's travel motivation. The authenticity concept was chosen for further debate in order to highlight its strong ability to influence the creation and intensity of emotions that can eventually lead to meaningful tourist experiences. Additionally, the section will make its contribution in answering the main research question.



The literature review revealed that the concept of “authenticity” can have a complex meaning which can lead to contradictory or confusing interpretations (Taylor, 2001; Wang, 1999). For this reason, the authors need to explain how the concept of “authenticity” will be perceived in this thesis. Therefore, this paper will analyze the notion of “authenticity” in terms of both tourist experiences and physical objects within the researched case study. In other words, as we could identify into the literature review, authenticity can not only refer to physical objects, but also to notions related to culture or tradition (Taylor, 2001). This section will illustrate that individuals perceive things as being authentic by associating them with their own understanding of a certain time and place.

According to MC, the purpose of the memorial is to bring awareness and remembrance into tourists perception through “historical restoration and authentic documents”.

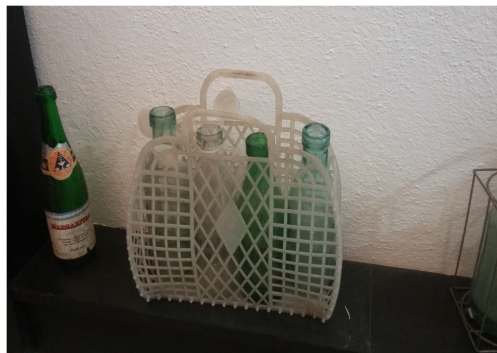


Fig 7.1: Photos taken at memorial Sighet

Having as a starting point the above statement, this section aims to analyze how authenticity is perceived by both the memorial and tourists and the next testimony can better exemplify that:

*“For the generations that lived in the communist period...there is on the 2nd floor one room dedicated to the daily life from the 50’s, another one from the 60’s, 70’s and even 80’s...and getting here (the tourists) immediately identify themselves with all kind of objects...a thermometer on the wall...the gasoline canister...we were standing in line...we had a certain ratio...the milk bottles...there are people who step in the museum and find their own youth, their teenage period”*

*(MC, Romania, 2017)*

The memorial’s curator’s statement is highlighting the fact that tourists identify themselves with certain objects that for those not familiar with the period might not have any relevance at

all. Instead, for those who lived in that time, the objects receive a different connotation by bringing back memories from the past. As an example, such kind of objects can be observed in the above pictures (Fig. 7.1). The following statement taken with one of the tourists underlines as well individual identification with personal objects that were part of their recent past and after seeing them again, they were able to bring back certain memories:

*“Very well represented that cell...just to see again the things that represented the daily life (in communism)...the milk bottles, old soda bottles...the dolls which I have played with...how simple and limited was life back then...but we knew how to value the small pleasures...and this has nothing to do with being nostalgic, but it is part of our life...it’s important because we grew up in the communist era”*

*(I25, Romania, 2017)*

Therefore, the concept of “authenticity” is associated with cultural identification through certain objects that tourists perceive as being authentic based on their local origin. The statement comes as an acknowledgement of the literature review which claims that physical objects can become a signifier for the culture (Hall, 1997). In other words, they produce meanings for locals based on their own knowledge. For those people who share the same background, the concept of “authenticity” would receive a similar understanding which eventually can lead to feelings such as nostalgia (Vlastos, 1998).

During the data collection, the researchers identified a significant number of tourists who perceived authenticity in different objects from the memorial as part of their lives or even the building itself. As we previously mentioned, the memorial was reconstructed on the ruins of the former prison that had the ability to maintain the originality factor. This was also confirmed by the tourists through the following statements:

*“When I was climbing those stairs, I was noticing how used they can be and I was thinking how many great politicians and intellectuals from Romania have walked on those stairs and I am also walking on them (now)...I simply wanted to cry.”*

*(I11, Romania, 2017)*

*“Here, everything is real...Once you get inside, you get the feeling of understanding everything...When you get in and see the authenticity of those walls...The building itself says everything...Is something very clear, very transparent...there’s nothing hidden...here, everything is real, here we turn back in time, but unfortunately, this turning back in time represents the suffering of those imprisoned here...the appearances say everything...no one can understand, only those visiting it”*

*(I2, Romania, 2017)*

From the above statements it is obvious that the authenticity of the place has a significant impact upon tourists which can lead to powerful emotions. The statement is also confirmed by the literature review which asserts that darker attractions are associated with a “locational authenticity” (Miles, 2002, p. 1176), fact that has the ability to amplify emotions through the attraction’s name and location (Swieboka, 1993). However, the implications of emotions will be debated further in another chapter.

As previously shown, the memorial is structured in thematic rooms which gives the individuals the opportunity to identify themselves with any of the illustrated themes and this statement is also acknowledged by MC:

*“There are women who spend more time in the room dedicated to women in prison...we have to also see the visitor’s profile...the go in the women’s cell and say <<We never knew that a woman can give birth in a prison>>...Or others who are more sensible...they visit the room dedicated to poems written in prison...Some pass by indifferently...others identify themselves (with the room) and others, the more sadistic type visit the room dedicated to Security Police (oppressors) <<Ah, here is the place for us!>>...and the individual type of those visiting the museum can be noticed in the rooms they spend the longest time.”*

*(MC, Romania, 2017)*

Therefore, we can conclude that the memorial has the potential to cover a variety of human typologies through the complexity of its thematic representations, a fact that makes the attraction unique and authentic. The next statement highlights several key points that make the location unique both in Romania and worldwide:

*“(The memorial) is the first one, chronologically speaking...the first museum within east-european space...And Ana Blandiana (MF) usually says that it is the first museum of communism victims in the world, because she visited many countries and she couldn't find another museum of this type to function before Sighet memorial...in terms of being unique, Ana Blandiana always highlights that this museum is in the same time a historical museum, a space for education and a cultural place as well.”*

*(MC, Romania, 2017)*

This statement is also supported by EG1 who articulates that the attraction:

*“Is the first memorial of this kind in the world...the location in which is established...and all the stories behind it. There are many documents, journals...all kinds of studies done by researchers or by the survivors or those persecuted here...An extraordinary material...and the most important thing in my view is that this is the type of history you will never learn in school...Is the uncontested truth.”*

*(EG1, Romania, 2017)*

Taking all the above statements into consideration, this thesis can illustrate a “phenomenological” consideration towards memorial tourism, the idea that was also supported by Rapson (2012, p. 165). In other words, the concept is meant to reveal the multiple ways in which tourists perceive the physical objects, pictures and official records that have the ability to create different narratives about the communist period and eventually build a notion of self-identification in association with the past experiences.

Even though, as one of our respondents declared that the individual identification with certain objects *“has nothing to do with being nostalgic, but it is part of our life”* (I25) and this statement can also be acknowledged by the researchers during the data collection, there is still a category of people who are indeed nostalgic about the communist period, and the idea is also confirmed by the interviews with both the memorial's curator and one of the external guides:

*“There are certain individuals who are nostalgic (about the communist period)...and what really surprised me, I understand those people who were not able to adapt very well during the transition period and post-transition...because before, they used to have a certain stability, both financial and professional.”*

(MC, Romania, 2017)

*“Some of the romanians unfortunately still have regrets...(after) the daily comfort, the comfort of having a house, a job...this something that can be noticed at the mediocre category...at intellectuals, you will never see this regret...because they understand...however I have read in a research study and I believe is true...these people regret not necessary the communist period with all the so-called facilities...but the fact that they were young back then and stronger and happier...this is very interesting.”*

(EG1, Romania, 2017)

The researchers need to mention, that none of the respondents showed any hints of nostalgic feelings over the communist period which can lead to the assumption that the number of this category is reduced and can be included into the low knowledge group that has no particular interest in visiting the memorial. This fact, was also confirmed above by EG1 when she calls this group “mediocre” based on their level of knowledge. The existence of this particular group is also acknowledged by one of the respondents who encourages them to visit the memorial:

*“We would wish those who still miss the communist period to come and visit it (the memorial) and think for a second about what happened back then...lately, we often heard them (being nostalgic)...and we would like to send all of them here...in order to remember what it meant...how many social categories, politicians, academics...have been affected by communism in the most horrible way.”*

(I20, Romania, 2017)

In summary, authenticity becomes a significant pull factor in travel motivation and has also the ability to create and amplify tourist emotions which can lead to meaningful tourist experiences. In addition, the researchers’ motivation for analyzing the concept of “authenticity” within the memorial was also determined by the concept ability to answer the main research question.

## 7.6 Site interpretation

The following section is aiming to analyze how the site interpretation works in relation to the concept of “authenticity”, as a significant tool for communicating the knowledge towards visitors (Puczko, 2006). The lack of proper interpretation within the memorial might lead to misunderstanding of the purpose and values of the attraction. For this reason, the concept of site interpretation plays a significant role for the memorial’s management who has the task to provide authentic experiences (Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

Furthermore, the data collected over the site interpretation was mainly gained through participant observation during the multiple visits to the site.

To start with, the researchers underline that the memorial follows mainly a traditional approach towards interpretive media based on heavy written texts displayed in each thematic room as it can be observed from fig. 7.2.



Fig.7.2 Picture taken at the memorial

This figure has the purpose of revealing historical information related to a certain period and event. From an observational point of view, the researchers can confirm that the displayed text on walls can easily reach the size of an entire book, due to its large extent. This observation was also confirmed by one of our respondents who articulates that “*you can not comprise all these texts in a single book*” (III).

In addition, the memorial displays, despite the traditional way of text interpretations on the cells’ walls, only few interactive technological tools with the purpose of engaging tourists into a more interactive approach towards experiencing the past. The statement is also acknowledged by the literature review that highlights the memorial’s intention to give tourists a feeling of getting more familiarized and closer to their recent past (Timothy & Boyd, 2003), a fact that can provide

tourists meaningful experiences as the main reason for interpretation (Timothy, 2007, p. xvii). Even though the memorial intends to use a variety of interpretive media, it can still be conceived as being rather traditional than a technologically oriented museum.

Once tourists get into the museum, they are welcomed by the voice of the memorial's founder who invites them on a short historical journey through the communism era that ends by encouraging tourists not to miss none of the most significant exhibitions from the museum. Afterwards, the tourists will have to pass through a gallery of pictures of the communism victims followed by a variety of cells with different historical thematics.

Further on, the researchers would also like to highlight how the memorial's interpretive media approach interacts with tourists' perception in this regard in order to create meaningful tourism experiences. In relation to the memorial, tourists are involved in a self-guided tour in order to extend their knowledge or to get them acquainted with the historical events. Therefore, for those most eager to find out more information, the tour can last even a couple of days, while for the rest, it is only little information gathered in a relative short time, due to lack of time or interest. As stated above and as well in the literature review, the memorial follows both a people based media and non-living media approaches. However, from an observational point of view, the researchers can confirm that the memorial encourages more a non-living media approach in terms of brochures, guidebooks, displays in terms of writings on cells' walls and last but not least several new interpretation technologies, as previously mentioned. In relation to people based media, the data collection showed that several respondents consider that their level of understanding and perception of the tour would significantly increase with the help of the memorial's guides and the following statements might come as an acknowledgement for the above:

*"I believe that a guide could be more suitable to explain maybe room by room what does it mean and give you some indications or maybe an audio guide to lead you...something like Schonbrunn where each room is explained because there's a lot of information...those familiarized might gain something (knowledge), but who is not familiarized with the history, he gets out the same way he came."*

*(I8, Romania, 2017)*

The next affirmation is made by a history teacher who brought his students to the memorial in order to familiarize with the historical events:

*“I was not satisfied with the way that us, as a group “were explained” around the memorial...People came here to understand, because many of them do not understand what it’s all about in here. If I were a guide, I wouldn’t have gone through all the cells but at least the most important ones...otherwise, (the memorial) doesn’t reach its purpose...as a history teacher, I can understand better because this is what I do, but them (the students)...few of them understand something...I was expecting more (from the guide)...No wonder I lost them (the students)...the guide didn’t do his job.”*

*(I6, Romania, 2017)*

With the above statement taken into consideration, we can conclude that the broad knowledge offered by the memorial can be challenging for the unfamiliarized tourists. However, the researchers highlight that the memorial guiding staff is made up of 3 members, who are incontestably outnumbered in comparison with the incoming number of daily tourists. Therefore, a personal or an audio interaction with a guide might solve the issues identified by both I6 and I8. Such interaction will be able to communicate the heavy written information from the memorial in a more simplified way.

In addition, from an observational perspective, the researchers witnessed a situation when I6, as a history teacher, made a brief introduction to his students that attracted some other visitors’ attention as well. The researchers noticed how tourists, captivated by the teacher’s enthusiastic speech, gathered closely in order to hear better. As a consequence, we can conclude that an interactive way of communicating the message might have positive consequences upon tourists’ interest in understanding the memorial’s purpose.

The below insights are meant to highlight respondents point of view in relation to type of interpretation adopted by the museum:

*“Talking about tourism, what has recently been done, is to set up a play, to have some characters; probably one day these kind of museum will also engage volunteered actors who will play very well the role of the prisoners and of the persecutors...probably one day, here too, for bigger groups there will be actors able not to express amusement, but simply to captivate*



*more and explain more...beyond those walls, those pictures and bars; they (teenagers) should leave this place with the lesson already learned...there's a lot to read...an enthusiastic guide or a more enthusiastic actor can deliver the lesson in a better way."*

*(I7, Romania, 2017)*

*"I try to mingle this painful part with a less painful one, funnier...sometimes I show them a picture of me as a pionier (a symbol associated with communism)...a modern museum has to create sensations, emotions...I was thinking that it would be a good idea to propose them(the memorial) to do guided tours...an audio guide similar to the one from Schonbrunn...the memorial was opened 20 years ago and it has to keep up with technology."*

*(EG1, Romania, 2017)*

This might come as an acknowledgement for the literature review that "visitors do not want to "learn something", but rather to engage in an "experience of learning" or "learning for fun" (Styliani et al., 2009, p. 525).

From the above statements we can conclude that the memorial's message towards its tourists can implement various ways to communicate its message in order to captivate the visitors' attention. While there are several opinions that support the idea that the "experience of learning" can be performed in a more interactive way, the memorial embraces a different approach. The following statements might contradict the above considerations. Therefore, when asked about how the memorial perceives the idea of implementing more new interpretation technologies specially for future generations, this is what we found out from the founder of the memorial:

*"I am a writer and the same problem can be associated to writers too...the reader has to rise himself to the level of the academic study, not the other way around...the same thing goes for the memorial...it has to be and express in its most intelligent ways...it has to target both the heart and mind so that the teenager can understand what he is leaving."*

*(MF, Romania, 2017)*

*"I can never visit a museum and use headphones...I need to have written material...I hope this method will still work so they (museum) can still offer me something written...So I won't have to use headphones...I am a fan of reading...and the tourists should be as well...and this is a*

*form of education...you have to read...I put pressure on them, especially on children and teenagers.”*

*(MG, Romania, 2017)*

Taking into account the above considerations, we can conclude that the memorial is very much oriented towards a traditional set of interpretive media in terms of written material as this is perceived as being a “*form of education*” according to MG’s previous statement. The interpretation as a “*form of education*” is also acknowledged in the literature review with the purpose of providing understanding and recognition for the attraction (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). However, the educational process through a traditional set of interpretation might not be perceived as being engaging for the future generations and the following statement might come as an acknowledgement for the above. Therefore, MC’s statement a slightly different perception, claiming that:

*“I tend to be somehow not on the same page with MG...there is a different world...I would rather go for a combination with new technology because is very difficult to get teenagers’ attention”*

*(MC, Romania, 2017)*

In conclusion the memorial’s hesitation towards more interactive educational approach might come from the perception that education and learning through entertainment are seen as two mutual exclusive associations. Therefore, an interactive storytelling that can engage visitors into the plot, as was suggested by one of the respondents (I7), might not be perceived as completely appropriate by the memorial’s management whose focus is forwarded towards an educational purpose mainly through material reading. The memorial’s approach comes in contradiction to Pine & Gilmore’s (1999, p.3) theory that the memorial’s main objective should be enriching experiences rather than focusing on products and those experiences need to be interactive “in a personal, memorable way”. In agreement with the previous statement, Danks et al. (2007, p. 104) supports the idea that tourists’ travel motivation factor is represented by learning process through an entertaining experience. However, the idea of education through an entertaining experience comes in opposition to several other scholars who claim that

implementation of such a strategy might affect tourists' perception upon an authentic experience (Costa & Melotti, 2012).

As revealed in the literature review as well, the memorial seems to focus more on an objective and constructive authenticity that emphasizes the way toured objects are perceived as being authentic rather than embracing an existential authenticity in terms of individuals' emotions generated through tourists' experiences. In other words, the memorial management relies more on the fact that the toured objects themselves have enough power and influence to transmit the authenticity of the attraction, which can lead to meaningful emotions for the visitors. Therefore, no further actions are needed in order to amplify tourists' emotions as the exhibited toured objects can speak for themselves.

This might come as a contradiction to the findings from the literature review that modern tourists are not particularly looking for the objective authenticity, rather they look for memorable experiences and meaningful emotions as were defined by Wang's existential authenticity (Costa & Melotti, 2012). The scholars consider that this type of authenticity can make the past more fluid and in certain ways more creative (Costa & Melotti, 2012, p. 55), which can lead to a higher level of tourist satisfaction. Therefore, even though the memorial seemed not very open to digital interpretation media, the research shows that tourists are more open towards innovative ideas that can combine the entertainment and educational aspect. Furthermore, taking into consideration that the memorial is a heritage that will be preserved for future generations, the researchers can acknowledge Costa & Melotti' point of view. In addition, from an observational point of view, we can affirm that during the research, visitors from the younger generations showed more interest into the technological media than the traditional one by using the audio headsets and spending more time in the area designated to watch documentaries on a screen. Therefore, for them, the digital media becomes a way of better understanding the message of the heritage, fact that comes in accordance with Costa & Melotti' statement: "in the absence of digital media, museums and archeological areas are "undecipherable"" (2012, p. 54) .

The following chapter has the purpose to highlight the importance of creating and amplifying emotions for the tourists in order to provide meaningful tourist experiences.

## **8. Analysis part III: Emotions**

This chapter aims to explore how emotions can be developed and amplified at the memorial in order to create meaningful tourist experiences. The literature review confirmed that there have been a significant interest mainly in revealing tourists' emotions on mass tourism rather than tourism associated with death and atrocities (Mitas et al., 2011). Moreover, it confirms that academic studies on emotions, at dark sites scarcely exist (Nawijn, 2015). Therefore, this research is aiming to address this gap within literature and bring forward knowledge related to emotions felt at a memorial site, that can contribute to future research studies. In addition, the study will be focused on specific emotions rather than general emotions as according to Lerner & Keltner (2000), specific emotions tend to be more informative in regards to tourism decision making.

To begin with, the researchers underline that the complexity of the emotions identified at the memorial would be further on analyzed into this chapter.

However, the study of emotions can be very challenging in providing enlightenment upon the concept itself and its classification. The assessment is also acknowledged by several scholars who claim that the lack of research studies upon emotions can be explained by the above mentioned challenges (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). In addition, the fact that emotions are difficult to be measured can be explained through their short-lived and complex character that individuals might experience within one day (Nawijn et al., 2013, p.267). According to Best, (2007) emotions felt at sites associated to death are likely to influence visitors future travel decisions throughout their intention to revisit the attraction and through positive word of mouth and this aspect will be further on analysed in this chapter.

During the data collection, the researchers identify a set of emotions from the interviewed tourists through both semi-structured interviews and direct participant observation. As a consequence, the emotions identified in data collection would be exemplified through tourists' statements from the interviews and situations that researchers witnessed during their research at the memorial.

## 8.1 Visitors emotions at the memorial

As previously shown in the literature review (Nawijn, 2015), tourism is constructed on emotions, fact that comes as an acknowledgement for the data collected at the attraction by one of the external guides:

*“Generally speaking, tourism is constructed on emotions...Any experience is built on an emotion and this is what tourists remember.”*

*(EGI, Romania, 2017)*

During the data collection, all respondents were required to identify what kind of emotions they experienced at the memorial as the main purpose of the research is to reveal the tourists' emotions as a consequence of their visit at the memorial. The researchers noticed that the amalgam of emotions felt at the dark location was diverse, fact that comes in accordance with the co-activation theory identified into the literature review, in terms of multiple emotions felt simultaneously by tourists (Larsen et al, 2003).

In addition, from an observational point of view, the researchers also noticed that tourists' emotions were diverse and they could range from positive emotions to the most negative ones. As shown in the literature review, if Miles (2002) asserts that visitors tend to be more critical at dark sites rather than "hedonic sites", Nawijn (2015, p. 221 ) extends the previous statement by claiming that "tourists experience negative emotions more intensely compared with positive emotions". In addition, the researchers can acknowledge both theories, however Nawijn theory related to tourists experiencing negative emotions more intensely than the positive ones, seems more suitable for the data collected at Sighet memorial. In other words, even though visitors experienced both positive and negative emotion at the memorial, the negative emotions came forward more frequently.

However, the classification and measurement of the emotions can be extremely challenging and is very much related to each individual personality (Stone & Sharpley, 2008), so the authors believe that future research into emotions measurement according to each individual personality is also needed. Therefore, this section aims to explore the concept of the emotions felt at a memorial in order to reveal their role in enhancing tourism's experiences. However, the authors can argue that most of the academic studies are not specifically focused on the emotions

felt at memorial site and there is only one research in this regard, fact also acknowledged by its authors as well (Nawijn et al, 2015, p. 11), which confirms once again the lack of researches within emotional responses at memorial sites.

Therefore, (Nawijn et al, 2015) study conducted at a memorial site, reveals emotions such as shock, sadness, compassion, disgust, interest, awe, anger, gratitude and fascination, as a combination of both positive and negative emotions. In addition, several other studies at dark locations revealed emotions such as sadness and hope (Thurnell-Read, 2009 cited in Nawijn et al, 2015), sadness and fear (Krakover, 2005) or shock, surprise, joy and sadness (Kidron, 2013), however, within those studies emotions were only a “by-product of the findings and not the main focus of the research” (Nawijn et al, 2015, p. 3).

As a consequence, this thesis’ researchers will correlate their own findings with the above mentioned studies, in order to reveal the most common emotions identified at the researched case study. Moreover, the emotions will allow the researchers to reveal certain patterns identified during the data collection. Therefore, the current study findings revealed emotions such as **anger, disgust, shock, sadness, compassion, gratitude, negative surprise and hope**. From the above emotions, the researchers could identify only three of them as being positive, as the respondents manifested feelings of compassion and gratitude for the victims and hope that future generations will learn the lessons, so that such events will never happen again. The rest of the emotions can be integrated into the negative emotions category. Further on, these emotions will be discussed and exemplified through tourists’ own statements.

The most common pattern identified among tourists at the memorial was anger that was expressed in various ways, including the prisoners’ living conditions and the brutal punishment methods applied to them. In addition, most of the respondents revealed also emotions of disgust for the prison management and the guards that were responsible for prisoners’ living conditions. The fact that tourists manifested different emotions at the same time confirms Larsen et al (2003) co-activation theory that multiple emotions can be felt simultaneously.

*“This is horrifying you, rather than impressing you...the persecution through which those people went through...It’s horrifying, I am completely moved...those people were oppressed and suffered for a cause that they believed in it.”*

*(I23, Romania, 2017)*

*“It shocked me emotionally speaking...I was not expecting (the memorial) to have such an emotional impact...between these walls, someone suffered...I get goosebumps...I never imagined that those walls from outside can hide something like that on the inside.”*

*(I2, Romania, 2017)*

*“I find it shocking that people can persecute one of their own kind...it seems extremely shocking.”*

*(I29, Romania, 2017)*

From the above statements, we can conclude that emotions such as extreme shock and disgust at the same time for the persecutors are the most frequent ones, emotions that were also confirmed by Sharpley’s (2012) study in relation to tourists’ experiences at camp sites. Moreover, the feeling of being shocked is in a strong relation to each individual’s own expectation about the attraction and it can also be related to each individual’s level of knowledge.



Fig 8.1. Picture taken at the memorial ( Gallery Hall)

Therefore, the memorial has the ability to create such a feeling of shock through different ways such as the gallery with pictures of communism victims, original artefacts used by prisoners or the confessions about all the brutal methods of torture. The idea of how memorial transmits feelings of shock that can be seen at different tourists, is also supported by one of the memorial’s guides:

*“I think that the photo gallery has a great impact...so, for the most of them that is the trigger...this is what really shocks them <<Ah, I never knew this happened!>>...The information is also touching...than I believe the sculptures can impress them a lot.”*

*(MG, Romania, 2017)*

In other words, the feeling of shock is also correlated with the visual sensor when gazing at the overwhelming gallery hall, together with the sculptures from the courtyard as from the

picture below. (se fig. 8.1) The emotion of shock at dark site was also identified within both Kidron (2013) and Nawijn et al (2015) research studies.

Another pattern identified within the respondents is represented by feelings of sadness, emotion that even made several of the respondents burst into tears. Therefore, emotions such as sadness are, according to literature review, categorized as “basic emotions” that are considered to be involved in an evolutionary process that can lead to certain reactions (Plutchik, 1991). The emotion of sadness was also acknowledged by recent studies at dark sites (Thurnell-Read, 2009 cited in Nawijn et al, 2015; Krakover, 2005; Kidron, 2013). Further on, the emotion can be explained through the following statements:

*“An enormous pain...I don’t think it’s something that words can express...From the moment I came in, I kept turning around so that I could wipe of my tears.”*

*(I5, Romania, 2017)*

*“A feeling of deep pain...You can feel the pain of the past...probably the pain that was accumulated here, between these walls...that was kept in time.”*

*(I24, Romania, 2017)*

The above statements highlight the emotions of sadness that can be extremely complex, as individuals tend to visualize the sadness of “others” as being their own (Ashworth & Isaac, 2015). In addition, the memorial has the ability to awake such feelings to its visitors, sometimes just through simple objects, that visitors amplify them with emotional meaning, and this assertion is better exemplified by I22 who claims that:

*“We got such a feeling of sadness...those time-worn stairs from so much pain...so much deep pain.”*

*(I22, Romania, 2017)*

Taking into consideration the above assertions, the researchers can conclude that emotions such as disgust, sadness and shock, despite their negative connotations, they still express their interest in visiting other memorial sites. This comes as an acknowledgement for Nawijn & Fricke (2015) theory that even the negative emotions might have a certain positive outcome within a specific tourism sector and those kind of emotions become motivators for future visits.



This statement contradicts Fredrickson (2004) broaden-and-build theory that the only emotions that can have a positive outcome are the positive ones. In addition, the authors, based on their own findings support Nawijn & Fricke (2015) theory as the respondents of the research study expressed as well their interest and their desire to visit other similar dark places based on the positive outcome of their visit in terms of knowledge.

The next emotions encountered at the memorial are represented by great compassion for the victims as well as admiration and respect for their strength to freely express their beliefs in a society dominated by the lack of freedom of speech. These emotions became a pattern during the data collection as all the respondents expressed their compassion and gratitude for the victims. Therefore, I30 claims that she felt emotions such as:

*“Admiration for those people...in a certain way I feel a connection with those people as they contributed to the change of this country...they are an example for me...people’s memory can not be destroyed...so many people died in here.”*

*(I30, Romania, 2017)*

From an observational point of view, the authors noticed that feelings of admiration and respect for their ancestors were expressed by tourists’s intention to light a candle in their memory at the memorial’s sanctuary.

I6, as a history teacher, during his brief introduction of the memorial to his students, he urges them to have the patience to read, in the memory of the victims. The above statements highlight visitors’ admiration and pride for their ancestors, and paying a tribute to their memory leads to further emotions such as hope in preventing the past events to happen again. Further on, the researchers acknowledge that the emotion of hope was identified among several respondents which was also acknowledged by Thurnell-Read (2009, cited in Nawijn et al, 2015).

Another pattern identified at the memorial is related to visitors negative surprise in terms of having a certain difficulty in accepting that this kind of events actually happened. Therefore, when tourists have direct contact with the historical facts revealed by the memorial, it leads to visitors’ inability to deal with the cruel reality that was hidden for most of them and the next statements come as acknowledgement for the above:

*“I was not expecting quite something like this...I’ve even read something about it...But I never imagined in this way...we had a good life...but I never knew this other aspect.”*

*(I9, Romania, 2017)*

*“The society was not aware at that time...You were not allowed to know...I had the feeling that the entire society was something perfect...but here...I don’t know how this could happen!”*

*(I16, Romania, 2017)*

From the above statements, we noticed that the huge impact of the tragical events had a significant emotional response upon visitors that came in a contrast to their own knowledge regarding the related events. The seriousness of the events discovered at the memorial and the fact that they come in contradiction with their beliefs leads to tourists’ emotions of denial and inability to accept the cruelty of the events. In addition, the researchers noticed that the emotion of negative surprise was identified only within Nawijn & Fricke (2015) research who based his findings on Plutchik’s (1991) framework of basic emotions.

In addition, the researchers can acknowledge another emotion in terms of tourists’ self-reflection, encountered at a small group of tourists that was not identified in none of the dark site studies mentioned above. However, the emotion is acknowledged in relation to tourists’ emotional responses at a dark place (Best, 2007). Therefore, during the interview with I8, we found out that the concept of “death” and “dying” becomes more meaningful after his experience at the memorial:

*“It makes you more cautious and makes you reevaluate your life...and the way you perceive life...it matters the way you will die.”*

*(I8, Romania, 2017)*

Moreover, I7 comes with a personal reflection related to historical events:

*“Many times, I asked myself...on which side I would have been (victim or persecutor)...the persecutors from the former prison were recruited from poor families...they were told how benefic communism can be...they managed to overcome poverty...and for this reason they agreed to become persecutors...and they became somebody...and I keep wondering, as someone who comes from a poor family, would I be trapped in this huge scam...or would I have noticed this abuse and became a victim?”*

(I7, Romania, 2017)

Taking into consideration the above statements, we can see that tourists visit at the memorial can awake certain emotions such as self-reflections upon both the concept of “death” and transpose themselves within different situations, fact that gives them the opportunity to create their own narratives.

Further on, the researchers could identify a term that came in use frequently among several tourists in terms of forgiveness for the oppressed system. Even though, the researchers believe that the term can not be integrated into the emotions category, they still find it relevant based on the positive outcome it might have. The researchers’ statements are supported as well by Maltby et al (2007, p. 556) who claim that forgiveness, as a positive approach has evolved from an “abandonment of feelings, cognitions, and behaviors of resentment towards an individual who has transgressed against the individual, while fostering compassion, generosity, and goodwill to the person ”. Furthermore, the following statements can exemplify the above assertions:

*“<<I forgave my persecutors but I will never be able to forget.>> The power of forgiveness comes only from a strong faith.”*

(I16, Romania, 2017)

*“Some of the survivors were saying <<I forgive them and I am trying to forget them!>> This is how Romanian people are, forgiving.”*

(I11, Romania,

2017)

As we can see from the above assertions, both respondents chose to express their decision to forgive through the words of the survivors who became a model for them in terms of positive outcome. This confirms once again that negative emotions have the ability to evoke positive outcome (Nawijn et al, 2015). Such a trait can also be explained by the fact that, if survivors have the strength to forgive their persecutors, so should future generations do, by maintaining the victim's memory alive, in order not to be forgotten. This comes as an acknowledgement for the memorial purpose, that aims to preserve the memory alive for the future generations.

Furthermore, this research will analyze the positive outcomes that negative emotions in particular emotions might have upon tourists' behaviour which will be discussed into the following section.

## **8.2 Revisitation and word of mouth**

Since the literature review revealed that the study of emotions within the dark tourism context is rather limited, this research is aiming to adapt a different approach. This study aims to fill in this gap by analyzing the concept of emotions, and their contribution in enhancing meaningful tourist's experiences. Therefore, tourists emotional responses can be further analyzed in terms of tourists' intention to revisit a dark attraction and positive word of mouth. During the data collection at the memorial, several tourists' motivated their visit as a consequence of the recommendation of one of their relatives while other expressed their desire to reconnect with the past, even though this will imply to get in contact again with certain negative emotions felt from the first time.

To begin with, the two different categories of tourists mentioned above, will be separately analyzed in order to illustrate how future behavioral intentions are shaped in accordance to emotions felt at the memorial.

The study conducted at the dark attraction revealed that tourists motivations to visit the memorial came as a consequence of positive word of mouth from either friends or relatives and the following statements might come as examples in this regard:

*“For us is the second time here and for my sister is the first time...We've been here several years ago...About the memorial, we found out from a friend interested in history and the first time we came together with him.”*

*(I20, Romania, 2017)*

*“And now I came at my daughter's invitation...I regret waiting so long before coming here”*

*(I2, Romania, 2017)*

*“My father visited it and he liked it alot and he told us that it is worth seeing it...”*

*(I3, Romania, 2017)*

Moreover, the need to recommend the attraction to other future tourists is also emphasized through statements such as:

*“I would suggest to all those people passing by, to come and visit the memorial.”*

*(I28, Romania, 2017)*

*“There’s no reason why you shouldn’t visit the memorial because is about remembering some sad pages from our history...We have to recommend it.”*

*(I12, Romania, 2017)*

To conclude, if several scholars would catalogate the word of mouth as a sign of tourists loyalty (Oppermann, 2000) or as a consequence of positive emotions felt at the dark attraction (Hanzaee & Khanzadeh, 2011) that can lead to memorable tourism experiences, other scholars such as Soscia (2007) claims that negative emotions tend to have an opposite effect than positive ones. Therefore, in contradiction to Soscia (2007) theory, this study aims to reveal that negative emotions have also the power to attract a positive word of mouth and the above statements can only come in support in this regard.

The following statements will highlight even more this section’s aim to reveal that negative emotions have the ability to attract visitors intention to revisit the attraction due to their intensity felt:

*“I can assert for sure that I’ve been at the memorial at least 3 times...everytime we are in the region we visit Sighet and the memorial as well...the fact that we always come back is motivated by the different emotions felt at different stages of age.”*

*(I17, Romania, 2017)*

*“It’s my second time at the memorial and every time I feel these emotions differently...we (history teachers) bring students at different ages...for them, you have to tell the story the way you would tell the story about Dracula...but me, and I am sure others older than me as well, stop for a moment and reflect upon this.”*

*(I7, Romania, 2017)*

As we could reveal at the beginning of this section, most of the emotions felt at the memorial can be classified as negative emotions and as highlighted through the above statements, they have the ability to attract tourists intention to revisit a dark attraction and to create memorable tourist experiences. The statement comes as a contradiction for Han & Back (2007) theory which asserts that only positive emotions can generate tourist intention to return.

In addition, the data collected at the memorial revealed that tourists manifest their desire to experience other similar dark attractions that can generate intense emotions. Several respondents (I26, I25, I29, I21, EG1, EG2, I9) claim that their motivation for visiting Sighet memorial came as a consequence of one of their previous visits to a similar dark attraction, such as Auschwitz, and the intensity of the emotions is very much similar.

*“I’ve been to Auschwitz twice...you get the same emotions as in Sighet memorial...Auschwitz is more focused on amplifying the emotions.”*

*(EG1, Romania, 2017)*

*“I’ve been to Auschwitz as well...You get the same feelings of shock as in here (Sighet memorial)”*

*(I29, Romania, 2017)*

Other respondents, after having their first impact with the memorial, they expressed their desire to explore some other dark attractions as well. For instance, I2, after her first visit at the memorial, she states that: *“It shocked me...I wish one day to also visit the nazi camp”*.

We can conclude once again that negative emotions at dark attractions can generate tourist desire to both visit some similar dark attractions and recommend the location to others as well.

Therefore, the purpose of this section was to illustrate visitors’ emotions at Sighet memorial and also the long-term consequences that tourists might experience at the attraction. If, according to literature review, the positive emotions were considered more intense at “hedonic tourism locations” than negative emotions at dark sites (Zins, 2002; Nawijn, 2011), the present study shows exactly the opposite way to literature review. Moreover, the negative emotions felt at dark sites, can generate repeat visits to similar attractions and positive word of mouth. In addition, Ashworth & Isaac, (2015) claim that emotions, such as anger, sadness might be perceived as negative, however they might lead to actions with a positive consequence, such as express desire to revisit similar attractions and positive word of mouth.

### **8.3 Sought benefits at the memorial**

As we could reveal in the previous section, tourists experiences at a dark tourism site might be a consequence of the emotions experienced at the attraction. Since this research revealed that most of the emotions lived at a dark attraction are negative, this raises another question that was also highlighted by Ashworth and Isaac (2015) in their study. Therefore, the following section aim will be to investigate why tourists willingly visit dark attractions that can generate them negative emotions and what could be the benefits after visiting a dark attraction?

The literature review showed that there was a general interest in revealing emotions felt by tourists. However dark tourist attractions might lead to tourists' emotional behaviour, who can feel a certain connection with that particular site and the emotions that they experience might come as a consequence of their own knowledge, observation of the tourist experience (Ashworth & Isaac, 2015). In other words, the memorial has the ability to develop a certain tourists' behaviour based on a personal connection with the site and their own knowledge. In terms of sought benefits that the researchers could identify at the memorial, it is mainly represented by visitors emotional implication into the historical events together with their desire for understanding. Firstly, the participants motivated their visit through expectation that the attraction will make its contribution to the overall understanding of the past events followed by their expressed implications and sympathy for the victims. In addition, this explains even more several respondents' desire for repeat visit as this might contribute to a better understanding and knowledge enrichment. Furthermore, the tourists' desire to develop their knowledge, became a second beneficial factor into tourists' motivation. Third benefit encountered among visitors at memorial is represented by tourists' desire to identify themselves and reconnect with the past. In this regard, we could determine that some visitors came at the memorial in order to reconnect with their ancestors while others find the memorial as a way to bring back memories from their recent past.

Taking into consideration the above assertion, we can conclude that emotional experiences for visitors can be different according to time and each individual. Therefore, each tourist at the memorial, is motivated by various reasons and as a consequence he can experience all kinds of emotions starting from his curiosity for the unknown and ending with emotions such as sadness,

anger and compassion. Moreover, as we could reveal in previous chapters, each individual is different based on his level of knowledge and understanding and for this reason, he might experience certain emotions in a complete different way than other visitor. In other words, if for some tourists the experience might come as personal identification with the heritage site or as an educational achievement or simply just as a way of satisfying a curiosity, for some others, might represent just a “must see” attraction.



## 9. Conclusion

The main purpose of this thesis was to answer the research question, related to how memorial tourism, as a subset of dark tourism sector can create and amplify emotions in order to enhance tourist experiences. The case study was conducted at the memorial from Sighetu Marmatiei in Romania. Moreover, the fact that the research process was built on the social constructivist paradigm, gave the authors the possibility to interpret a problem related to emotions from multiple angles, as the paradigm emphasises that there is no single truth and all the “possibilities are opened for alternative means” (Gergen, 1985, p. 267). In addition, all the participants involved in the research had their own contribution within the research stage which led them to co-create the reality of this thesis (Bryman, 2012).

In order to answer the main question, the researchers took into consideration several aspects such as the memorial’s image, tourists’ travel motivation together with the understanding of the authenticity factor and last but not least, the emotions felt at the attraction.

Firstly, the researchers can conclude that the image formation of the memorial is very much depending on each individual’s level of knowledge and multiple information sources that can influence tourist image formation. Within the study conducted at the dark attraction, the authors could identify several images that can highlight the various perceptions that tourists might have about the memorial. Therefore, the research’ case study showed the multiple images that tourists have created:

- As a memorial through its explicit purpose of maintaining the memory of the victims alive for the future generations by having the memory and the concept of remembrance as a core centre of its functionality.
- As a museum though its multiple cultural artifacts and different personal objects and confessions of the victims.
- As a heritage site through its incontestable connection with the past events. Even though, the memorial is concentrated on the not so distant past of a nation, what really integrates the attraction into the heritage category is the value and the utilitarian function that the society gave to the memorial (Chhabra et al, 2003, p. 703).
- As a former prison though its initial purpose of being a place where many important figures have been incarcerated due to their political beliefs.

- As a dark attraction, based on its connection with victims' pain and sufferings.

As initially mentioned, the level of knowledge of each individual played a significant role into the image formation of the attraction. Therefore, if the majority of respondents perceive the attraction as a site of memory, museum and a historical attraction, only a small segment of the respondents perception came in contradiction with the above mentioned based on their initial expectations to visit a former prison. On the other side, the research showed that none of the participants at the interviews perceived the location as a dark site. The researchers could attribute this perception on the fact that the dark tourism concept is particularly known within the academic field and tourism oriented studies. Nevertheless, the attraction association with death and sufferings was unanimously recognised by the participants.

To sum up, the image formation of the attraction is relevant for answering the main question as it provides understanding over the memorial tourism concept, in the context of dark tourism, and creates a linkage with the other objectives of the thesis.

The second objective of this thesis, was to reveal the tourist travel motivation for a dark site together with the importance of the authenticity of the attraction. In addition, the researchers showed also the relevance of the way the memorial communicates its message for the visitors.

Therefore, the research showed that the main reason for visiting the memorial is memory and remembrance followed by tourists' intention to identify with their ancestors, but also visitors' desire to require more understanding of the events through a process of learning followed by their curiosity in order to confirm the reality of the historical events.

In relation to the attraction's authenticity, the context was analyzed from two different approaches: the authenticity of the experiences that tourists encountered at the dark location and the object's' authenticity through the various artifacts exhibited at the memorial. The research followed Wong (1999, p. 351) approach towards classification of authenticity into three main categories as objective, constructive and existential. If the objective and constructive authenticity concerns how and if the objects are perceived as genuine, the existential one is meant to focus on individuals' emotions that can lead to authentic tourist experiences (Wong, 1999).

The research showed that the tourists perceive the objects from the memorial as authentic, while the concept of authenticity was even connected with tourists' cultural identification by placing the objects within their not so distant past. Therefore, the exhibited items become a signifier for the culture (Hall, 1997), as they have the power to produce meanings based on their knowledge.

For the respondents, by sharing among them the same background, the concept of authenticity can provide a common understanding that can lead to feelings such as nostalgia. The feeling of “nostalgia” was encountered among the majority of the participants as being associated with their past, as part of their life, fact that highlights the concept of existential authenticity through emotions that can enhance tourist experiences.

In addition, the authenticity of the attraction is also perceived through the originality of the building as a former prison. The research showed that, authenticity of the location plays a significant role in amplifying emotions for the tourists through a process of envisioning themselves walking through the building as many other victims did before.

Another aspect of the attraction’s authenticity is related to tourists’ interpretation of the site in terms of how they understand the message transmitted by the memorial. On the contrary, if the dark attraction fails in communication the knowledge for its visitors, this might have consequences in misunderstanding the purpose and value of the attraction. In this regard, the research showed that the memorial follows a traditional approach based on heavy written text displayed in each thematic room. Even though, all the respondents acknowledged and admire the great efforts of the exposed vast information, they confirmed that the information might be difficult to comprehend, especially for those not initiated into the field. The respondents also confirmed that the level of understanding of the tour would significantly increase with the help of either an audio guide or one of the memorial’s guides. therefore, the broad knowledge offered by the memorial, becomes challenging for the unfamiliarized visitors and in this perspective the purpose and the value of the memorial are not reached. As a consequence, the researchers can conclude that the tourists are more interested in acquiring knowledge through more engaging methods, fact that was also supported within the literature review through the concept of “learning for fun” (Styliani et al, 2009, p. 525). Additionally, since the memorial’s current approach comes in contradiction with the above mentioned, in terms of implementing new interpretation media such as adopting more interactive technologies especially for future generations, the researchers could come with another conclusion based on both literature review and the research case study. Therefore, since the number of tourists directly connected with the events is likely to decrease over time based on the mortality factor (Beech, 2000), the researchers consider the implementation of more innovative and interactive approaches towards visitors as being crucial for future attraction’s sustainability.

The third objective of this thesis was to reveal the emotions felt at the attraction and their power to enhance tourist experiences. The research showed that the respondents who manifested direct involvement to the past events expressed emotions more intensely. So, from participants' direct involvement, the statement was also supported by analysing the tourists reactions that were noticed in their voice fluctuations and moisty eyes, that in several cases lead to tears. In addition, the same respondents that felt more connected with the memorial, due to their relatives implication into the events, were also the ones who claimed that they had several other visits before and also manifested their interest in visiting the memorial again. However, since the number of visitors that presented some degree of closeness to the memorial is reduced, and the majority of the visitors is represented by those with no connection with the memorial, but with a certain degree of knowledge about the historical events revealed by the memorial, the researchers claim that the intensity of the emotions is slightly decreasing. As a consequence, the researchers can conclude that the intensity of the emotions felt at the memorial will decrease from one generation to another and they can also lead to less meaningful experiences for the tourists. The researchers believe that this comes more like a duty for the memorial to reinvent itself in order to create and amplify emotions for the generations that had no connections with the past but they wish to reconnect with it in a way that can provide them a better understanding. Nevertheless, in contradiction to the above mentioned, during the research, the memorial's management expressed their approach towards presenting the authenticity of the historical events and the authenticity of the exhibited objects as well, rather than amplifying tourism emotions that can lead to meaningful tourist experiences.

The research revealed that the most felt emotions at the memorial were anger, disgust, shock, sadness, compassion, gratitude negative surprise and hope, with only three of them integrated as positive, such as compassion and gratitude for the victims and the hope for the future generation to have learned the lesson in order not to happen again.

In addition to the above mentioned emotions, the researchers find it relevant to integrate another emotion discovered within the research' participants in terms of tourists self-reflection about the concept of death and give them the opportunity to transpose in different situations and in the same time create their own narratives. Further on, the researchers identified a certain trait that even though can not be integrated within the emotions field , it was frequently expressed by the participants in terms of forgiveness for the oppressed system, fact that leads to the conclusion that negative emotions felt at the memorial can lead to positive outcomes.

The fact that negative emotions have positive consequences was also revealed the current study in terms of tourists' intention to revisit the memorial or other similar attractions and positive word of mouth.

Taking into considerations the above statement, the researchers can conclude that the current study comes in contradiction with Fredrickson's (2004) broad-and-built theory, which claims that only positive emotions can lead to positive outcome.

To sum up, the memorial has the ability to create meaningful tourist experiences through the images that tourists created about the memorial, through the authenticity of the location, the historical events and the exhibited objects through which tourists identify themselves with and last but not least through the emotions evoked by their connection with their not so distant past. The researchers want to emphasize that tourists involved into this research presented a certain connection with the events by either their direct involvement or by narratives from their parents or grandparents which means that they had already a baggage of knowledge and certain emotions prior to their visit. The same fact that can not be stated for the future generations which will have no connection at all with the events and the only way for them to acquire more knowledge and emotional responses would be throughout the memorial. Therefore, the authors can conclude that at the time of the research, the memorial does not provide interactive ways of learning in order for the message to be easily comprehended and as a consequence it can not create meaningful emotions for the future generations due to its traditional approach towards its visitors.

## **9.1 Managerial implications**

The memorial main purpose is to educate visitors about the historical events and the research showed that the respondents manifested a great interest in acquiring more knowledge in this regard. However, the context of the memorial is more focused on self-guided tours, rather than audio or personal guided tours that can create certain narratives and bring them to life in order to amplify emotions that can lead to tourists' intention to revisit the attraction.

Based on the findings of this research, we can conclude that emotions such as shock, sadness, disgust, compassion and anger are very much associated with the intention to visit a memorial. In other words, despite the negative valence of most of the emotions felt at the attraction, they become a trigger for revisitation and positive word of mouth. Moreover, the

findings showed that even the tourists that have not been closely related to the memorial still decide to visit it in order to confirm themselves the reality of the events. This could become an important aspect for the memorial management, to further on focus on adopting additional methods of communicating its message in order to be accessible to all types of visitors. Therefore, an interactive approach within the process learning in addition to the traditional one might cover different segments of visitors.

Nevertheless, the researchers can acknowledge that the recent efforts in inaugurating an additional area that can satisfy a certain category of tourists need to encounter elements from the former prison, will significantly contribute to place authenticity.

## **9.2 Limitations and further research**

Our study main objective was to reveal that emotions are important for enhancing tourist experiences at a dark site location. However, future research should focus on emotions at a different type of dark tourism site other than memorials and probably in different countries.

Since the present study was built on a qualitative research, further research could focus on a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research. Additionally, the study showed that several respondents expressed their interest in visiting the attraction in its initial phase, as a former prison, rather than the memorial. Therefore, a quantitative research in this regard could be relevant for future studies.

Since the research was focused on domestic tourists, further research could investigate the input of international tourists within a dark tourism context at the researched memorial. The findings of this research will provide valuable information in relation to international tourists contribution for the future sustainability of the region. Furthermore, during the data collection, the researchers found out that there seems to be a lack of interest within the local tourists, despite the short distance to the location, fact that can lead to more studies within this area., research that was also suggested by the memorial curator.

Last but not least, the researchers must point out to the reader that there is a lack of knowledge within the emotions' studies at dark sites, including the memorial tourism niche. Therefore, further research into this area is needed in order to understand tourists behaviour, reactions and future decision-making.

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## Appendix A: Interview questions for tourists (English and Romanian)

1. What is the main reason for visiting Sighet? What do you intend to see here?

Care este motivul principal al vizitei in Sighet? Ce anume intentionati sa vizitati?

2. Is this your first time visiting this memorial? If not, why did you decide to come again?

Este prima oara cand vizitati memorialul? Daca nu, ce v-a determinat sa veniti din nou?

3. How did you find out about this memorial? (media)

Cum ati aflat despre memorial?

4. Did you have any knowledge regarding the communism period or about the memorial?

What?

Aveti cunostinte legate de perioada comunista sau despre memorialul din Sighet? Ce anume?

5. Why did you choose to visit this particular memorial, in Romania? What is the reason (educational, remembrance, nostalgia, *history*, *guilt*, hope, curiosity, or *dark site*)?

De ce ati ales sa vizitati tocmai acest memorial?

6. Do you or any of your relatives or friends have/had any connections with the memorial?

How close are you with this?

Este vreo conexiune intre dumneavoastra sau rudele si prietenii dvs si memorial? Cat de apropiat sunteti de memorial: aveti rude, ati trait in perioada aia.



7. Have you visited similar places before? Which ones? What did you feel during the visit?  
Why?

Ati mai vizitat locuri similare si inainte? Care ar fi acestea? Ce emotii v-au produs? De ce?

8. What do you expect to gain from this visit?

Ce anume vreti sa dobanditi in urma acestei vizite?

9. What is your opinion on the information received from the memorial? Did it reach your expectations?

Ce parere aveti despre informatiile oferite de memorial? Sunt ele in concordanta cu asteptarile dumneavoastra?

10. Did the memorial change your initial perception regarding communism period? And how?

V-ati schimbat parerea despre perioada comunista in Romania in urma acestui tur? Cum anume?

11. What kind of feelings did you experience after/while visiting? Why?

Ce fel de sentimente ati experimentat in timpul /in urma vizitei? De ce?

12. What do you think is the purpose of the memorial?

Care credeti ca este rolul memorialului?

13. What impressed you the most in the memorial? (related to rooms, objects, building, information)

Ce anume v-a impresionat cel mai mult in memorial? (legat de camere, obiecte, cladire, informatii)

## **Appendix B: In-depth interview questions (English and Romanian)**

1. Is there a typology of tourists that visit Sighet Memorial, for example a specific age cohort? Does any group composition stand out?

Cine viziteaza acest muzeu? Ati observat anumite particularitati ale turistilor cum ar fi o anumita categorie de varsta, un anumit tip de grup?

2. Where do you think most of your visitors come from: domestic or international?

Ce fel de turisti viziteaza muzeul: locali sau internationali? In ce proportie?

3. What is the average number of visitors each year at the Memorial?

Care este numarul de vizitatori pe an la Memorial?

4. When do they visit? Are there peak visitation times?

Care este perioada cea mai aglomerata?

5. How is the site presented: as a memorial, as a museum or both? Is it meant to be perceived as a historical place or as a dark tourism site?

Cum este destinatia turistica prezentata: ca un memorial, ca un muzeu, poate amandoua? Este creat sa fie perceput ca un loc istoric sau ca o locatie asociata cu turismul negru?

6. What do you think is the role of the memorial? Is it more focused on amplifying the emotions of tourists or it describes the historical events of a period?

Care este scopul memorialului? Se axeaza in principal pe evenimentele istorice din perioada comunista sau pe crearea si amplificarea unor anumite sentimente ale turistilor?

7. Do you notice if they stay longer at any exhibit(s) in particular? What are they most impressed by?

Ati observat daca turistii in sunt atrasi de anumite exponate sau locuri ale Memorialului in mod deosebit? Care ar fi acestea si de ce?

8. Have visitors, either directly or indirectly, spoken to you about the reasons why they are visiting the museum? If so, what kind of reasons do they give?

Care credeti ca sunt motivele principale pentru care turistii viziteaza acest muzeu?

9. Why do you think tourists choose this particular destination, in Romania? Why Sighet?

Ce anume face Memorialul din Sighet sa fie unic prin specificul locatiei atat in Romania cat si in Europa?

10. Are there any other places similar to the Memorial in Romania that tourists can visit? What about Europe?

Mai sunt si alte destinatii in Romania similare Memorialului din Sighet? Dar in Europa?

12. Have you any ideas, suggestions, or knowledge of why tourists visit other such sites?

Care considerati ca sunt motivele pentru care turistii viziteaza si alte destinatii similare cu cel din Sighet?

13. Do you feel that some people are drawn to the museum because of a personal connection to the memorial?

Considerati ca oamenii sunt atrasi de acest muzeu datorita unei conexiuni personale cu memorialul?

15. What kind of feelings tourists might experience when visiting the memorial? Why? Ex.: Guilt, curiosity, death, remembrance, closeness, education, history, nostalgia,

Care credeti ca sunt sentimentele principale pe care le traiesc turistii cand viziteaza acest memorial? De ce?

16. Do you think that media has any impact on tourists when choosing the museum? How do you promote yourselves? Tv, facebook, tour operators

Considerati ca mass media are o influenta majora asupra deciziei turistilor de a vizita memorialul? Care sunt metodele de promovare a locatiei?

17. Do you ever get any challenges in relation with tourists? Are those challenges related to the way events are presented to the visitors? How do you handle them?

Care sunt posibilele provocari in relatia cu turistii? Mai exact, felul cum memorialul a ales sa prezinte istoria intra in contradictie cu cunostintele turistilor? Cum se ocupa de asa ceva?

18. Is there a different approach in relating the events to the locals and internationals? If yes, why?

Memorialul abordeaza in mod diferit relatia cu turistii in functie de provenienta lor? Mai exact, exista o relatare diferita a evenimentelor pentru turistii localnici fata de cei internationali?

## Appendix C: Table on participants in the qualitative interviews

<b>Code</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>Duration of interview</b>	<b>Type of interview</b>
MC with comments from MG	2	2:07:45	In-depth interview
MF	1	42:55	In-depth interview
MG	1	1:16:04	In-depth interview
EG1	1	1:44:05	In-depth interview
EG2	1	11:46	Semi-structured interview
I1	1	2:52	Semi-structured interview
I2	2	9:49	Semi-structured interview
I3	2	6:16	Semi-structured interview
I4	5	11:25	Semi-structured interview
I5	1	15:53	Semi-structured interview
I6	1	13:40	Semi-structured interview
I7	1	25:10	Semi-structured interview
I8	1	10:39	Semi-structured interview
I9	2	47:49	Semi-structured interview
I10	1	5:43	Semi-structured interview
I11	1	35:00	Semi-structured interview
I12	2	7:32	Semi-structured interview
I13	4	7:34	Semi-structured interview
I14	1	6:17	Semi-structured interview

I15	1	12:08	Semi-structured interview
I16	1	16:59	Semi-structured interview
I17	2	26:01	Semi-structured interview
I18	2	8:55	Semi-structured interview
I19	2	6:12	Semi-structured interview
I20	3	15:37	Semi-structured interview
I21	2	10:05	Semi-structured interview
I22	2	12:01	Semi-structured interview
I23	1	2:51	Semi-structured interview
I24	2	7:15	Semi-structured interview
I25	2	8:04	Semi-structured interview
I26	2	5:57	Semi-structured interview
I27	2	5:57	Semi-structured interview
I28	1	3:01	Semi-structured interview
I29	1	14:04	Semi-structured interview
I30	1	15:00	Semi-structured interview

## **Appendix D: Mail to the memorial staff**

Mail version in English

Dear director of the memorial,

We are two Master tourism students at Aalborg University in Copenhagen that are currently doing a research on visitor motivations to Sighet Memorial for our Master thesis project.

The reason for choosing Sighet Memorial for our researched topic is that it has a great potential to provide information about tourists' interest into this particular location and it's symbolic for the communist period in Romania. We strongly believe that our research can have an impact on memorial's future tourism through the knowledge that can be provided by us and be used by the museum in order to understand consumer behaviour.

Therefore, we will be in Sighet for this research between 22 and 29 March, this year and we would very much appreciate if we can have a discussion with you or any representative personnel able to provide information regarding tourists perceptions and emotions when visiting the memorial.

We would very much appreciate your collaboration and support into this research and we would like to schedule an appointment with you in order to set up further details on the 22nd of March, as our time for research in Sighet is very limited.

Looking forward to your answer.

Best regards,

Alina Fluturas and Anca Jandonschi

Mail version in Romanian

Stimate Dl Director,

Suntem doua studente la Facultatea de Turism din cadrul Universitatii Aalborg din Copenhaga si ne-am propus sa facem un studiu de cercetare pentru teza noastra de masterat



despre perceptia turistilor asupra Memorialului din Sighet.

Principalul motiv pentru care am ales Memorialul din Sighet este potentialul sau urias de a furniza informatii legate de interesul turistilor pentru aceasta locatie speciala, locatie care este asociata cu perioada comunista din Romania. Consideram ca rezultatul acestei cercetari poate avea un impact benefic asupra memorialului in ceea ce privesc informatiile dobandite in urma efectuarii analizei si poate fi folosita mai departe de catre muzeu in vederea unei mai bune intelegeri a comportamentului turistilor.

Asadar, avand in vedere cele mai sus mentionate, am planuit ca cercetarea sa aibe loc in perioada 22-29 Martie, 2017 si am aprecia foarte mult colaborarea cu dumneavoastra sau cu oricare alt reprezentant al muzeului care ne poate acorda informatii relevante legate de perceptia turistilor si emotiile traite in momentul vizitei lor la Memorial.

Prin urmare, am dori sa profitam de prezenta noastra in tara, in perioada mai sus mentionata si sa fructificam aceasta vizita printr-o intrevvedere prin care putem stabili modalitatile de colaborare in scopul acestei cercetari. Avand in vedere ca timpul nostru in tara este destul de scurt si implica o cercetare destul de ampla asupra proiectului speram sa primim raspunsul dumneavoastra cat mai curand posibil.

Cu respect,

Alina Fluturas si Anca Jandonschi

Universitatea Aalborg, Copenhaga

Danemarca

## Appendix E: Original transcripts of quotes

I10, p. 62: “Particip la un simpozion...memorialul, il stiu de mult, dar n-am avut niciodata ocazia din cauza distantei...si printre alte destinatii...ultima a fost memorialul”

I5, p.62: “Am venit pentru nunta colegei mele...Nu am fost niciodata in Sighet, ei mi-au propus sa vin aici...Cand aud de memorial, ma trec fiori”

MC, p.63 : “Romanii vin pentru a vedea Maramuresul, nu memorialul...In Sighet avem un turism de tranzit. Turistii vin de la Cimitirul Vesel, Mocanita, Barsana si apoi memorialul.”

I17, p. 63: “Pot spune cu siguranta ca am fost la memorial de cel putin 3 ori...de fiecare data cand suntem in zona, vizitam Sighetul si memorialul...faptul ca intotdeauna revenim este motivat de diferitele emotii traite la varste diferite.”

MF, p. 65: “Scopul este de a resuscita memoria colectiva referitoare la istoria recenta...memorialul nu este un drum spre trecut, ci spre viitor”

I18, p. 65: “Scopul este sa ne aduca aminte de istorie.”

I7, p. 65: “Este datoria romanilor sa nu-si uite istoria...ca sa nu se repete.”

I5, p.65: “Scopul memorialului este de a nu uita.”

I30, p. 65: “Face parte din istoria noastra...memoria lor trebuie sa ramana vie ca un exemplu.”

MF, p. 66:“Este structurat stiintific si tot ce este prezentat in interior este rodul unei cercetări proprii... muzeul facut pe urmele propriei noastre cercetări pe de o parte, pe de alta una din obsesiile mele a fost nu numai sa transmită informatii ci si intensitatea suferintei si asta nu putea fi facut decat prin mijloace artistice... am vrut sa existe niste accente de ordin artistic... acele petice de iarbă, niste opere de artă, spatiu de reculegere, sunt un fel de subliniari cu mijloace artistice a unor adevaruri pe care le-am prezentat.”

MC, p. 67: “Unii vin aici si ies dupa 20 minute si spun <<Ati facut aici un hotel. Foarte mișto, e zugrăvit in alb... foarte mult text... pe mine nu ma intereseaza... am vrut sa vad catuse>>”

I27, p.67 : “Este foarte modernizat...ar fi trebuit sa-l pastreze asa cum era...pre putin s-a pastrat din ce a fost”

I10, p. 67: “Am auzit de inchisoarea din Sighet...am vrut sa vad inchisoarea...nu am vazut niciodata una, numai in filme...Percep locul asta precum o inchisoare.”

MG, p. 67: “Romanii eu cred ca vin inprincipal... vrem sa vedem o închisoare... cred ca asta este perceptia”

MC, p. 67: “Alții vin aici și petrec câteva ceasuri pentru ca descopere lucruri pe care nu le stiau sau le stiau într-o prea puțină măsură și atunci au răbdare și citesc, se documentează...sigur proporția lor e mai redusă, care vin special pentru muzeu...care revin a doua zi și continuă pentru că e greu să procesezi atâtea informații. Nu să vezi, pentru că ei nu văd, ci procesează și petrec 2-3 zile doar pe memorial...este un procentaj foarte mic.”

MC, p. 69: “Memorialul merge pe partea de istorie, deloc pe partea de dark tourism.”

MG, p.70 : “Nu pot să-l percep ca fiind negativ sau întunecat...pentru că vezi că lucrurile se pot schimba și locația asta a devenit una a libertății.”

I5, p. 70: “A fost întunecat, dar acum i s-a schimbat destinația...de aducere aminte”

I11, p.71 : ”Eu am citit foarte mult și citesc și la ora actuală... pentru mine cartea e sfântă...Sa aflăm mai multe amănunte, să aflăm mai multe detalii pentru că într-o carte nu poți să cuprinzi toate textele astea.”

I26, p. 71: “Am avut informațiile de dinainte, le-am citit. Acum doar am acoperit golurile.”

I29, p. 71: “Am citit multe cărți...chiar am un unchi care scrie mult despre închisori..Aici mi-am amintit tot ce-am citit și am auzit.”

I11, p.71 : “Nu sunt foarte multe cărți orientate pe micile detalii...să descopăr mai multe detalii...pentru că aici găsești documente oficiale.”

I15, p. 72: “Ca informații le aveam... le-am revăzut cu plus cu minus.”

I5, p.72 : “Ceea ce poți experimenta aici este realitatea...înțelegi totul în momentul în care vezi.”

I2, p.72 : “Trec zilnic pe lângă el...când voi avea 50 de ani și astăzi este prima dată când îl vizitez...și acum am venit la invitația fiicei mele...regret că am așteptat atât de mult să vin aici.”

I3, p. 73: “Nu am venit special pentru memorial. Am venit să vedem zona Maramureșului...tata meu l-a vizitat și i-a plăcut foarte mult și ne-a spus că ar trebui să-l vedem...în plus, reclamele...asta ne-a atras...deasemenea am citit pe internet.”

I1, p. 73: “Am venit special pentru Cimitirul Vesel...am vrut să vizităm toate obiectivele turistice...am căutat pe internet atracții turistice în Maramureș.”

MC, p. 76: “Rolul memorialului este de conștientizare, de a menține memoria vie.”

I6, p.76 : “Nu avem voie să uităm, dar sunt puțin sceptic cu tinerii...tinerii au obligația să vină, astfel nu își atinge scopul.”

I7, p.76 : “Este datoria românilor să nu își uite istoria.”

I17, p. 76: “Nu avem voie să ștergem.”

I25, p.76 : “Avem obligația să conștientizăm...este foarte important să știm.”

I17, p. 77: “eu simt legatura peste timp cu bunicul meu...cu care seman foarte mult...din poze poti sa-ti dai seama...poate structura, poate sufleteste ma sima foarte legata desi nu l-am cunoscut...este si pentru mine un loc de reculegere poate mai mult decat orice altceva”

I25, p. 77: “tinand cont de ce-am ascultat la intrare, ca unul din 8 romani a fost incarcerat in '56 aici, fiecare familie are o radacina in acest memorial...mi-am gasit o radacina...noi suntem medici si-am gasit un medic cu numele meu din zona de unde provine familia mea de care un stiam ca a murit aici...si aproape sigur este din familia noastra.”

MF, p. 78: “Este in acelasi timp si scoala si muzeu si institut de cercetare.”

MF, p. 79: “Scoala de vara... erau 100 de elevi între 15 si 18 ani care dădeau examen scris... si conferentieri erau istorici, sociologi, specialisti in general in istoria comunistă din toata lumea; deci nu numai din țările de Est ci si mari specialisti in istoria comunista din America, din Franța... chiar si rectorul Scolii de vara a fost Stephane Courtois, autorul “Cartii negre a comunismului”, un mare istoric francez”

EG1, p. 80: “Este genul de istorie care nu se invata la scoala...este povestea din spatele atractiei.”

I13, p. 80: “Una este cand citesti o poveste în cartea de istorie si alta e cand vezi cu adevarat.”

I4, p. 80: “Sa vedem si noi despre ce este vorba aici... cum arată o celula asa pe viu ca nu am mai văzut niciodată... din curiozitate. Una este sa citesti si alta e sa vezi.”

MC, p. 81: “reconstituire istorica si documente autentice”

MC, p. 81: “Pentru generațiile care au trăit comunismul... exista la etajul 2 camera cu viata cotidiana în anii 50, alta in anii 60, anii 70 si alta in anii 80... ajungand aici, imediat se regăsesc... vad tot felul de lucruri...un termometru pe perete...canistra de benzina...stateam la coada ...aveam ratie...sticlele de lapte...sunt oameni care intra in muzeu...si isi regasesc propria tinerete, adolescenta”

I25, p. 82: “Foarte bine reprezentata acea celula...sa vedeti lucrurile carea u reprezentat viata cotidiana...sticlele de lapte, sifonul...papusile cu care m-am jucat...cat de simpla era viata atunci, limitata...dar stiam sa valorizam micile placeri...si asta nu tine de nostalgie, dar face parte din viata noastra...e important pentru ca noi ne-am format in epoca comunista.”

I11, p. 82: “Chiar cand urcam scarile ma uitam cat de roase sunt si ma gandeam ca uite pe scarile astea au urcat atatia mamen si mamen politici de baza, intelectuali ai Romaniei si eu urc si...imi venea sa plang pur si simplu.”

I2, p. 83: “Aici total este adevarat...Daca intri ai asa un impuls ca intelegi tot...cand intri si vezi originalitatea peretilor...cladirea in sine transmite totul...e ceva foarte clar, foarte transparent...nu e nimic musamalizat, nimic ascuas...aici este total adevarat...aici ne intoarcem in timp, dar din pacate intoarcerea asta in timp inseamna suferinta celor de aici...aparentele explica tot...nu intelege nimeni, numai cine trece.”

MC, p. 83: “sunt doamne care zabovec mai mult la sala cu femeile in inchisoare...trebuie sa vedem si ce profil are vizitatorul...intra in sala cu femeii si zic <<Noi un am stiut sa o femeie poate san asca in inchisoare>>...sau unii care sunt mai sensibile, fie doamne, fie domni merg la sala cu poezia in inchisoare...unii trec pasiv...altii se indentifica, altii o FIRE mai sadica merg la sala cu securitatea <<ah, aici e de noi!>>...teroare...si tipul uman al celui care viziteaza muzeul se regaseste in salile in care sta mai mult.”

MC, p. 84: “E primul in ordine cronologica...proiectul a aparut la sfarsitul anului 1993...primul muzeu in spatiul Est-European...Doamna Ana Blandiana obisnuieste sa spuna ca este primul muzeu al victimelor comuniste din lume. Pentru ca dansa a vizitat foarte multe tari si nu a gasit un alt muzeu de acest gen care sa fi functionat inaintea Sighetului...in privinta unicitatii, Ana Blandiana sublineaza mereu ca acest muzeu este in acelasi timp un muzeu de istorie, un spatiu de educatie si un loc de cultura.”

EG1, p. 84: “este primul memorial de acest gen din lume...locatia in care este desfasurat...si toate povestile care sunt in spate. Sunt foarte multe documente, carti de la memorii...tot felul de studii facute de catre specialisti sau de supravietuitori sau de cei persecutati...un material extraordinar...si cel mai important mi se pare mie ca e genul de istorie care nu se invata la scoala...este adevarul gol gol.”

I25, p. 84: “N-are nicio legatura cu a fi nostalgic, dar face parte din viata noastra”

MC, p. 84: “Sunt oameni care privesc cu parere de rau...si ce m-a surprins pe mine, eu ii inteleg pe cei care nu au reusit sa se adapteze foarte bine in peritada asta de tranzitie si post-tranzitie...pentru ca inainte aveau o anumita stabilitate si financiara si profesionala.”

EG1, p. 85: “Mai ales ca unii dintre romani au si regrete din nefericire...siguranta zilei de maine, siguranta unei case, siguranta unui job...asta se intalneste undeva la categoria mediocra...la intelectuali nu ai sa gasesti regretul asta chiar daca sunt romani...pentru ca ei inteleg...am citit intr-un studiu sociologic si cred ca este foarte adevarat...oamenii astia un cred daca regreta neaparat regimul comunist cu toate sa le spunem “facilitatile”...cat regreta faptul ca atunci erau tineri si mai in putere si mai fericiti...e foarte interesant.”

I20, p. 85: “Si le-am dori tuturor celor care le este dor de perioada comunista sa vina sa il viziteze si sa se gandeasca putin la ce s-a intamplat atunci...si in ultima perioada am auzit des asta...si am dori sa-i trimitem pe toti pe care i-am auzit sa vina sa viziteze...sa-si aminteasca ce inseamna...cate categorii sociale, oameni de cultura, politicieni...au fost afectati de comunism intr-un mod groaznic”

I11, p. 86: “Nu poti sa cuprinzi toate aceste texte intr-o singura carte”

I8, p. 87: “Consider ca niste ghizi ar fi mai potriviti ca sa explice poate camera cu camera ce inseamna si sa-ti dea cateva indicatii sau un ghid audio care sa te conduca, sa le ai tot timpul, ceva gen Schonbrunn in care fiecare camera este explicata fiindca este foarte foarte multa informatie pentru ca cei care sunt familiarizati afla ceva, dar cine nu e familiarizat cu istoria, cum intra asa si iese.”

I6, p. 88: “Mie nu mi-a placut modul in care am fost noi ca si grup adusi la partea asta de exprimare...Oamenii au venit sa inteleaga pentru ca multi nu inteleg despre ce e vorba aici. Eu ca si ghid, vedeam de la inceput si explicam...nu intram in fiecare celula, dar macar in cele mai importante...altfel nu-si atinge scopul...eu ca si profesor de istorie inteleg mai bine ca cu asta ma ocup, dar ei...foarte putini dintre ei raman cu ceva...ma asteptam la mai mult...nici nu ma mira ca i-am pierdut...ghidul nu si-a facut treaba.”

I7, p. 88: “Apropo de turism, ceea ce se-ncearca acum e sa joci piesa, sa ai personajele. Probabil ca candva si astfel de muzee vor avea actori voluntari care vor juca foarte bine rolul detinutilor, rolul calailor...probabil candva si aici vor fi pentru grupuri mari actori care reusesc sa nu transmita amuzament, ci pur si simplu sa atraga mai mult si sa explice mai mult...dincolo de ziduri, de poze, de grilaje, ei trebuie sa plece de aici cu lectia de care vorbeam...in buna maniera transmit toate fotografiile lectia...e mult de citit...un ghid cu traire, un actor cu traire poate da lectia mai bine, cel putin la nivelul asta de vizitatori.”

EG1, p. 89: “Atunci intercalez partea asta dureroasa cu una mai putin dureroasa, funny...Uneori am la mine o fotografie cu mine pionier...un muzeu extraordinar trebuie sa creeze senzatie, emotie...Ma gandeam ca n-ar fi rau sa vorbim cu cei de-acolo sa existe tururi ghidate...ca nu toata lumea merge acolo cu ghid...ma gandeam la un moment dat ca poate ar fi bine sa faca un audio guide din ala cum este de exemplu la Schonbrunn...cand treci prin raza unui sezor sa-ti explice despre sala respectiva...memorialul a fost deschis acum aproape 20 de ani, dar trebuie sa fii in pas cu tehnologia.”

MF, p. 89: “Eu sunt scriitor...si aceasi problema se pune si pentru scriitori...cititorul trebuie sa se ridice la opera literara, nu opera literara sa coboare la el...asa este si cu memorialul...trebuie sa existe si sa spuna in formele cele mai inteligente...trebuie sa se adreseze si sufletului si mintii pentru ca tanarul sa poata intelege ce traieste.”

MG, p. 89: “Eu nu pot sa merg niciodata intr-un muzeu si sa-mi iau casti...trebuie sa am chestii scrise...sper ca o sa mai tina asa sa-mi ofere scris...sa nu trebuiasca sa merg cu castile...Eu sunt fan citit...si turistii...si asta este o forma de educatie...trebuie sa cititi...eu pun presiune pe ei, mai ales pe copii, pe adolescenti.”

MC, p. 90: “Eu as fi cumva departe de MG...este o alta lume...as merge putin pe o combinatie si cu noile tehnologii pentru ca e greu sa captezi atentia unui tanar.”

EG1, p. 93: “Turismul in general se naste pe emotii...orice experienta iti creeaza un sentiment si omul aia tine minte.”

I23, p. 94: “Te ingrozește, nu te impresioneaza...chinurile prin care au trecut oamenii astia...groaza, au sunt miscat...au fost niste oameni necajiti care au suferit pentru o cauza, au crezut in ea.”

I2, p. 95: “M-a socat din punct de vedere emotional, sentimental m-a socat. Nu ma asteptam sa aibe asa un impact sentimental asupra mea...deci un fior rece...intre peretii astia cineva a suferit...aici am fiori..nu mi-am imaginat ca peretii astia din exterior ascund asa ceva din interior.”

I29, p. 95: “Mi se pare tragic ca omul sa persecute semenii lui...mi se pare foarte tragic.”

MG, p. 95: “Cred ca galeria de fotografii are un impact...deci majoritatea...cred ca acolo se face clickul...asta socheaza...<<Ah, dar n-am stiut ca s-antamplat!>>..ii misca cumva si informatia..apoi sculpturile cred ca impresioneaza foarte mult.”

I5, p. 96: “O durere imensa...Cum am intrat, ma intorceam sa ma sterg sa nu ma vada nimeni ca plang....nu cred ca se poate exprima in cuvinte”

I24, p. 96: “O emotie de apasare...se simte apasare trecutului prezenta...probabil durerea care e acumulata acum aici intre ziduri, pe buna dreptate...pastrata in timp.”

I22, p.96: “Ne-au transmis asa o stare...scarile uzate de atata durere...atata apasare.”

I30, p. 97: “Admiratie pentru oamenii astia...intr-un fel ai legatura cu oamenii astia ca au facut ceva pentru tara...sunt un exemplu pentru mine...constiintele oamenilor nu pot fi distruse...au murit atatia oameni.”

I9, p. 98: “Nu ma asteptam chiar atat de...am citit ceva despre...nu mi-am imaginat niciodata...noi am trait bine...dar nu am stiu si cealalta parte.”

I16, p. 98: “Nu se stia atunci, nu erau informatii, nu se spunea nimic...mie mi se parea ca toata societatea este OK...ca este ceva perfect... dar aici...nu stiu cum s-a intamplat una ca asta.”

I8, p. 98: “Te face sa fii precaut si sa-ti reevaluezi viata...felul la care te raportezi la viata...conteaza cum vine moartea si ce te incearca.”

I7, p. 98: “De multe ori mi-am pus intrebarea, ma intreb de care parte as fi fost eu?...calaii de aici au fost recrutati din familii sarace...li s-a spus ce bun e comunismul...au reusit sa iasa din saracie...si din cauza asta au acceptat sa fie calai...ajunsesera cineva...si ma intreb, eu care provin dintr-o familie modesta, as fi cazut oare in pacatul sau in pacaleala asta mare? Sau as fi sesizat nedreptatea si as fi fost o victima?”

I16, p. 99: “I-am iertat pe calaii mei dar nu ii voi putea uita niciodata...puterea de a ierta vine din credinta.”

I11, p. 99: “Chiar unii dintre ei spuneau <<Ii iert si incerc sa-i uit!>>...Asa este neamul romanesc, iertator.”

I20, p. 100: “Pentru noi este a doua oara aici, iar pentru sora mea e prima oara...am mai fost cu cativa ani in urma...despre memorial am aflat de la un prieten pasionat de istorie si prima data am venit cu el.”

I2, p. 100: “Si acum am venit la invitatia fiicei mele...regret ca am asteptat atat pana sa vin aici.”

I3, p. 100: “Tatal meu l-a vizitat si i-a placut mult si mi-a spus ca merita sa-l vedem.”

I28, p. 101: “Recomand tuturor celor care sunt in trecere sa vina sa il vada.”

I12, p. 101: “N-ai cum sa nu treci pe la un asemenea asezamant de aducere aminte pentru ca e vorba de reamintirea unor pagini de istorie triste...e de recomandat.”

I17, p. 101: “Pot spune cu siguranta ca am fost la memorial de cel putin 3 ori...de fiecare data cand suntem in zona, vizitam Sighetul si memorialul...faptul ca intotdeauna revenim este motivat de diferitele emotii traite la varste diferite.”

I7, p. 101: “E a doua oara cand vin aici si de fiecare data retraiesc altfel...noi aducem si elevei de diverse varste, pentru ei trebuie sa explici povestea ca si cum le-ai explica de Dracula...dar eu si sunt sigur ca si altii mai in varsta stau un pic sa respir aerul asta.”

EG1, p. 102: “Am fost la Auschwitz de 2 ori...este acelasi sentiment ca la Sighet...Auschwitz merge pe intensificarea emotiei.”

I29, p. 102: “Am fost si la Auschwitz...Sunt aceleasi sentimente de groaza ca aici.”



I2, p. 102: “M-a socat...Imi doresc sa ajung si la lagarele naziste.”