PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN DARK TOURISM

Case: Topography of Terror

(Berlin, Germany)

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis was to analyse the Topography of Terror documentation centre as a dark tourism destination and offer suggestions for the improvement of its currently offered services. The site is located in Berlin, Germany, and houses exhibitions about the Nazi government and the Holocaust.

Theoretical background on the relevant concepts of dark tourism, product development and service product is provided. The analysis part is based primarily on qualitative data obtained through the author's own observations made during visits to the site in March and June 2014. The data is analysed using the method of product development.

Guided tours for individual visitors and the site's seminar programme were identified as areas containing gaps in their service offers. Suggestions were made for improving these services.

The research indicates that the currently offered set-up and services of the site correspond well with its objectives as a dark tourism attraction. However, there is potential for the improvement of its service offers which can be explored in future.

Key words: dark tourism, holocaust tourism, product development

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

Complex and multi-layered, dark tourism is an intriguing field of study gradually gaining greater awareness in academia and media alike (Sharpley 2009a, 6, 10). The term refers to any form of tourism connected to death and suffering (Stone 2006, 146). Covering a large variety of tourism sites throughout the world, it includes among many others sites related to the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazi government during World War II (Sharpley 2009a, 9-10).

Berlin, Germany, as the seat of government for the Nazi regime, is home to a large number of Holocaust-related tourist attractions, including museums, memorials and more. One of the newest such sites the city has to offer is the Topography of Terror documentation centre which was opened in 2010 on the site where various Nazi government buildings once stood.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse this site as a dark tourism destination, exploring the historical heritage and its interpretation on site, its objectives, the content and structure of the exhibitions, its services as well as other factors. Based on that analysis, possible improvements of the products and services currently at the visitors' disposal are suggested.

The analysis is based on qualitative research with the primary data for use in this thesis obtained through the author's own observations made during repeated visits to the site. Relevant theoretical background along with a more detailed explanation of the thesis topic is provided in chapter 2 which forms the thesis plan.

2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the topic of the thesis and why it was chosen. The purpose and objectives of the research as well as relevant concepts and theories are explained. Furthermore, this chapter introduces the research questions and gives a description of the data and methods used to carry out the research. Finally, the further contents of the thesis are outlined.

2.1 Thesis topic

For the topic of this thesis, the author has chosen to concentrate on the field of dark tourism, a general term used to describe all forms of travel and tourism activities related to disasters, death and suffering in any form (Stone 2006, 146). While the term "dark tourism" is gradually beginning to receive greater awareness in both academic literature related to tourism and in the media, it still remains a rather obscure and often controversial field of study (Sharpley 2009a, 6; Stone 2009, 56).

The practice of dark tourism and tourist attractions falling into this category, especially such connected to historical horrors and death on a large scale, may often face criticism regarding such sites' ability to present the historical knowledge that should be preserved for future generations as well as remembrance in such a way that the sensitive nature of the topic is respected rather than exploited for the entertainment of visitors looking to get a thrill out of visiting a place of pain and violence. For the purposes of this thesis, one such site is to be assessed in terms of set-up and presentation of its subject matter, products and services provided to its visitors and who those visitors are in order to analyse its product development potential.

Throughout the world exist a great number of sites and tourist attraction which fall into the category of dark tourism. Among these, especially in Europe, many of the first sites and destinations which come to mind are related to World War II and the Holocaust. One of these is the Topography of Terror documentation centre in Berlin, Germany, which was built on the remnants of several SS and Gestapo headquarters buildings and houses a permanent exhibition about the Nazi government and the strategic planning

and implementation of the Holocaust. Its opening in 2010 followed decades of contro-versies, arguments and debates regarding what to do with the site and how and to what extent to preserve it. (Lennon & Foley 2010, 33-35.)

To provide a better understanding of the special properties of the Topography of Terror documentation centre within the parameters of the dark tourism field in general and the wide array of dark tourism attractions in Berlin in particular, the author explores the his-torical background of the site as well as the exhibition's theme and presentation. The ex-hibition's currently offered products and services as well as the make-up of the tourism target markets these attract and cater to at the moment are analysed based on the author's own observations gathered during several visits to the site in March and June 2014. Gaps in the current range of provided services are identified and the site's potential for augmentations of and additions to these services are explored, using this analysis as a basis to discuss product development possibilities for this dark tourism site.

2.2 Concepts and theories

The most important concepts relevant to this thesis are those of dark tourism and product development, to both of which an introduction is provided in this chapter. Addi-tionally, the author draws on theoretical knowledge regarding the specific properties of service products which applies when engaging in the development of tourism products.

2.2.1 Dark tourism

The following introduction to the form of tourism that has become known as dark tour-ism provides definitions as well as a short overview of dark tourism throughout history, discusses motivation factors relevant to dark tourism and shortly introduces various forms dark tourism can take.

In the words of Philip R. Stone, Senior Lecturer in Tourism at the University of Lan-cashire and member of the Institute for Dark Tourism Research, dark tourism can be defined as "the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre" (Stone 2006, 146). Tarlow (2005, 48) defines the term somewhat more nar-

rowly as "visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives". For the purposes of this thesis, the broader definition by Stone is used. The Topography of Terror documentation centre is a site where tragedy or death has not directly occurred. However, it documents the atrocities of the Holocaust and stands on the site from which these were planned. It is therefore certainly associated with death and suffering, making it a dark tourism site as defined by Stone.

Dark tourism is also known under alternative terms such as black tourism, morbid tourism, grief tourism and thanatourism. While the latter is the academic term for this form of tourism, the term "dark tourism" is the most popular among media and students alike. (Institute for Dark Tourism Research.)

Destinations for dark tourism include e.g. battlefields, war memorials, holocaust-related sites such as concentration camps, cemeteries and sites of disasters (Sharpley 2009a, 17). Another example for dark tourism sites are former prisons such as Alcatraz and Robben Island which have been opened to the public (Sharpley 2009a, 20). Sites of murders, death sites and former homes of deceased celebrities can also turn into dark tourism destinations (Lennon & Foley 2010, 4).

As an area of study within the field of tourism research, dark tourism is quite young, but the practice itself is far older. Humankind has always been fascinated with death and suffering, which is one of the main reasons the popularity of dark tourism can be attributed to. Even though the term "Dark Tourism" has only been in use since the 1990s when the first studies in this field were made, behaviour that could be classified as dark tourism in one form or another has existed for millennia. (Stone 2006, 147-148; Sharpley 2009a, 4, 6, 9).

The following are only some examples of forms of Dark Tourism throughout the ages: In ancient Rome, gladiator fights to the death were a popular form of entertainment. From the Dark Ages on, pilgrims have been visiting tombs and sites of religious martyrdom and over many centuries public executions drew large crowds. (Sharpley 2009a, 4.) Nobles used the opportunity to observe the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 from a safe distance and during the American Civil War, the battlefield of Manassas was sold as an attraction site the day after the battle (Willis 2014, 19).

Many attempts have been made by researchers of the topic to divide the big field of dark tourism into different segments. Some of these typologies may co-exist side by side and complement each other, others may contradict each other concerning the way the researchers in question have grouped or separated dark tourism attractions and activities for their own specific purposes according to particular destinations, types of sites, visitor motivations or other attributes. (Stone 2013, 312.)

Richard Sharpley from the University of Lancashire lists sub-categories including graveyard visits, holocaust tourism, atrocity tourism, prison tourism and slavery-heritage tourism as forms of dark tourism in his introduction to the 2009 publication "The Darker Side of Travel", but goes on to point out that due to the huge diversity of dark tourism sites and attractions "a full categorisation is extremely complex". (Sharpley 2009a, 10.) Gregory J. Ashworth defines "atrocity" by four characteristics: there are both human perpetrators and human victims; the perpetrators' actions are deliberate and aimed at innocent victims; the acts involved are of an extraordinary seriousness in scale or unusualness; and the event is known and remembered. The holocaust perpetrated by the Nazi regime in 1933 to 1945 fulfils all these requirements and can therefore be termed an atrocity. As an exhibition centre on this regime and the holocaust, the Topography of Terror documentation centre can accordingly be categorized as an atrocity tourism site and specifically a site for holocaust tourism, which is in itself a sub-category of the broader term atrocity tourism. (Ashworth 2004, 96.)

Some researchers also specify genocide tourism as a sub-category of atrocity tourism, calling it the "arguably most extreme form of dark tourism" (Beech 2009, 207-209) Holocaust tourism is then listed as a sub-form of this, with Beech (2009, 216) referring to it as the most extensive variety of genocide tourism. The Topography of Terror documentation centre can therefore also be counted as a site for genocide tourism.

Human beings today are no less fascinated and attracted by the darker aspects of life and of history than their forebears. Many people engage in forms of dark tourism at some point in their life even though they may never have heard the term itself.

A fascination with death and the darker parts of history is however far from the only motivation factor than can be found in dark tourism. The reasons travellers have for par-

ticipating in dark tourism activities and seeking out sites associated with death, disasters and atrocities are manifold just as such sites themselves are manifold. Researches have suggested motives ranging from simple curiosity towards the morbid and macabre via schadenfreude, nostalgia and the search for new experiences to the desire to feel a "collective sense of identity or survival" when confronted with violence or upheaval (Sharpley 2009a, 11). An element of voyeurism has also been suggested as playing a role, as have a variety of other motivation factors or a combination thereof, which can vary widely from person to person and from site to site given the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the dark tourism field (Sharpley 2009a, 16-17).

In specific reference to attractions belonging to the category of genocide tourism such as the Topography of Terror documentation centre, remembrance and memorialising of the victims' fates and the events that caused them, education both as regards learning concrete data and facts surrounding shocking and significant historical events and in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of why such atrocities have occurred have been cited as reasons why people seek out such sites. Furthermore, grieving for one's friends, relatives or ancestors may play an important role for visitors to such sites, as may a wish to find a way to reconcile with the past or perhaps even be able to feel a certain sense of forgiveness. Some sites, including the Topography of Terror documentation centre, are also specifically intended to serve as research resources, drawing students and scholars for academic purposes. (Beech 2009, 222-223.)

There is as yet no single official categorisation of different dark tourism types in existence, owing to the relative youth of dark tourism as a field of academic study as well as its complexity (Stone 2013, 312). Studies in the field continue, with research into the dark tourism phenomenon being deepened and considered from different angles as well as new facets of the subject being highlighted in press and academic publications alike.

2.2.2 Product development

Product development is defined as "the process of bringing a new project to the market"(Lominé & Edmunds 2007, 147). This process is important in many forms of business, including the tourism industry. Hudson (2008, 167) states that the development of new products is in fact essential to a company's survival. The development of a

new product frequently represents a high risk venture in the field of marketing. In order to minimize the risks inherent in such an undertaking, it is important to choose the most suitable product development strategy for the business and its markets. (Holloway 2004, 151-152.) Marketing theory distinguishes between four different strategies used for product development, as can be seen in figure 1 (Holloway 2004, 152).

FIGURE 1. Product Development Strategies (Holloway 2004, 152)

The strategy of developing an entirely new product or service intended for the business's already existing customer base is the one generally known as Product Development. The development of a new product to be launched to a new target market is the strategy known as Diversification. Instead of developing completely new products from scratch, a company or organization may also choose to augment or modify already existing products and services. These can be aimed at the existing customers in a strategy known as Market Penetration. The last of the four product development strategies involves launching existing products and services to a new market, thus making them new products for those customers that had not been targeted before. This strategy is called Market Development. (Hudson 2008, 165-166.)

With visitor numbers exceeding 1 million a year as of 2013, the Topography of Terror documentation centre already reaches a huge and diverse target market with more visitors coming each year since the centre was opened in 2010 (Topographie des Terrors 2014; BerlinOnline Stadtportal 2013.) Therefore, it makes more sense in this case to concentrate on product development strategies that utilize the pre-existing customer base such as Market Penetration and Product Development rather than attempt to reach an entirely new target market.

2.2.3. Service Product

The tourism industry is often referred to as a service-based industry, owing to the fact that the majority of tourism products are service products. In order to engage in product development within the field of tourism, it is therefore important to understand the nature of service products. They are set apart from products that are goods by four important characteristics. (Holloway 2004, 16-17; Lominé & Edmunds 2007, 167-168.)

These four characteristics are as follows:

1) Intangibility

Different from material goods, services are intangible and thus cannot be seen, touched or sampled in advance. This adds an element of risk for the consumer purchasing the product that is not present to this extent when it comes to the purchase of goods. (Holloway 2004, 16; Lominé & Edmunds 2007, 103; Hudson 2008, 14.)

2) Heterogeneity

Also known as variability, this characteristic refers to the fact that due to inherently changeable elements such as the staff providing the services, it is impossible to guarantee a consistently homogeneous product. This makes quality control difficult. (Holloway 2004, 16-17; Lominé & Edmunds 2007, 201; Hudson 2008, 14.)

3) Perishability

A tourism product cannot be stored in the same way as material goods can and there is only a limited period of time in which it can be sold. The product can thus not be held in stock for an unlimited amount of time. Additionally, time-variable demand is an important factor in tourism services, meaning the amount of potential customers varies between seasons as well as days of the week. (Holloway 2004, 17; Lominé & Edmunds 2007, 140; Hudson 2008, 14.)

4) Inseparability

In a service industry such as tourism, the product is produced and consumed at the same time. This means that the service is inseparable from its provider. The professionalism of the staff is therefore of very high importance, as it plays a major role in the cus-

tomer's experience. (Holloway 2004, 17; Lominé & Edmunds 2007, 102; Hudson 2008, 14.)

2.3 Research questions

Two main research questions regarding the topic of product development in dark tourism for the Topography of Terror exhibition as a dark tourism site are to be answered by this thesis. These concentrate on the approach the Topography of Terror exhibition uses to present its subject matter and the services it offers while exploring where there is room for improvement of its set-up and services.

5) *What products and services does the Topography of Terror documentation centre currently offer and for what target market?*
Based on the author's personal observation of the site and its visitors as well as official information from the Topography of Terror web presence, the products and services this dark tourism site offers and the target market these reach are to be analysed. This comprehensive assessment will form the basis for the second research question.

2) *How to improve the Topography of Terror documentation centre's products and services?*
Taking into account the currently reached target markets and offered products and services of the Topography of Terror documentation centre as analysed by the first research question, the as yet unrealized product development potential for this dark tourism site is explored in this question. Suggestions for improvements and additions to the destination's product portfolio are outlined.

2.4 Data and methods

Both primary and secondary data will be made use of in the course of this work. Primary data is to be understood as new data which is produced specifically for use in the research being undertaken by means of surveys, observation or various other data

collection methods, whereas secondary data refers to data which had already been generated for a different purpose not connected with the research being undertaken here but is now used and analysed by the researcher for their own purpose. (Finn, Elliot-White & Walton 2000, 40-41.) The analysing method to be used in this work is product development.

The nature of the research is to be qualitative rather than quantitative. This means that instead of making use of empirical data in the form of numbers and statistics, primary data for use in this thesis is obtained from the author's own observation and experiences (Finn, Elliot-White & Walton 2000, 8). In addition to observation of the site itself, the set-up and subject matter of the exhibitions as well as the way it is presented, particular attention was paid to observation of the site's visitors. Visitor ages, group sizes, origins and reactions to the exhibited material were taken note of to gain a close impression of the target market the site currently attracts. These observation criteria were chosen by the author as data judged necessary to analyse the site and identify gaps in currently offered services. The primary data was gathered during several visits by the author to the site in March and June 2014. This data will be used alongside secondary data acquired from the Topography of Terror website as an additional information source.

2.5 Research process

Chapter 3 gives a detailed account of the Topography of Terror exhibition including general background information on its subject matter, the history and development of the site itself, the structure, content and objectives of the exhibition as well as the services it currently offers. It aims to familiarize the reader with the destination and its background by providing a comprehensive picture of this dark tourism attraction and its historical significance. Furthermore, an examination of the currently reached target market and the existing products and services forms the basis for the following chapter.

Chapter 4 contains suggestions for possible improvements of the exhibition and new additions to the services currently offered by it, based on the assessment of the current situation discussed in the previous chapter.

Chapter 5 as the final chapter of the thesis consists of the conclusion, summing up the research and its results and bringing the topic to a close.

3   TOPOGRAPHY OF TERROR

Berlin has a long and varied history, which is reflected in its wide array of sights and tourist attractions both historical and modern. From medieval trading centre to royal capital, through the ravages of war and decades of division until the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification - Berlin's eventful past is filled with radical changes, traces of which still remain all over the modern city. The years 1933-1945 during which Berlin served as capital to Hitler's Third Reich and was the seat of both the Nazi government and the headquarters of its police and security forces span what is arguably the darkest period in the city's existence. It is thus not surprising that this period especially has left its mark on Berlin and the list of sites and memorials in the city and its surroundings which can be categorized as falling into the field of dark tourism attractions is a long one. (BerlinOnline Stadtportal a.)

Among these is the Topography of Terror documentation centre. Located in the centre of Berlin between Potsdamer Platz and the former border crossing between East and West Berlin known as Checkpoint Charlie, right next to one of the few remaining sections of the Berlin Wall within the city, it has become one of Berlin's most visited memorials and museums with visitor numbers in 2013 exceeding 1 million for the first time – the exact visitor number given for the year is 1.195.581 (Topographie des Terrors 2014). Situated on top of what remains of the foundations of several buildings that once served as headquarters to the SS and the Secret State Police, known as the Gestapo which is short for Geheime Staatspolizei, it houses a large permanent exhibition focussing on one of the darkest aspects of German history: the institutions once located at this site and their crimes, including the systematic large scale extermination of millions of people throughout Europe (Topographie des Terrors a).

3.1 History and development of the site

The area of Prinz-Albrecht-Straße and Wilhemstraße now known as the Topography of Terror site is also referred to as Gestapo-Gelände (Gestapo terrain), as it was the where that institution's headquarters with its own "house prison" was located along with sever-

al other Nazi institutions including the SS. Prinz-Albrecht-Straße was renamed Nieder-kirchnerstraße in 1951 (Information Portal to European Sites of Remembrance).

At the end of World War II, due to heavy Allied bombing of the city, these buildings were largely destroyed. What remained standing afterwards was demolished by the city authorities during the initial post-war reconstruction efforts with a view to allowing commercial use of the area. For decades, however, the site remained undeveloped, although different plans for its use had been proposed and considered since the 1950s, including using the place to build a helicopter landing pad. Following the construction of the Berlin Wall through this very area, any development plans for the site in discussion so far became moot and were postponed indefinitely. Meanwhile, temporary use of the undeveloped site was made to store construction material and serve as a place where people could practice driving without a license. (Sledz.)

Over the years, the site's history was gradually forgotten, but public interest began to re-emerge in the 1970s (Topographie des Terrors b). It still took a while longer, until the early 1980s, for increasing demands for developing the site in a way that would be appropriate in light of its historical significance to be voiced (Sledz). The Active Museum of Fascism and Resistance in Berlin, an organization derived from a citizens' initiative in 1983, made the development of the site as some form of memorial one of its main focus points and engaged in various actions and demonstrations to reach its goal (Aktives Museum Faschismus und Widerstand in Berlin e.V.). In the same year, the first of several contests calling for plans and suggestions for the development of the area was held. 194 ideas were submitted, but owing to heavy criticism regarding among other points of contention unclear instructions and requirements for the entries to be submitted, the contest eventually failed. (Sledz.)

Discussions and debates on the subject of what to do with the site continued with no consensus reached for several more years. In 1985, to mark the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II on 8 May, the Active Museum of Fascism and Resistance called for volunteers to dig at the site as a symbolic excavation of Germany's past that had been buried until now. In the course of this event, some of the ruins and foundations that came to be the origins of today's Topography of Terror site were uncovered. (Lennon & Foley 2010, 34.)

As part of the celebrations for Berlin's 750th anniversary in 1987, these excavated ruins along with what was at that time intended to be a temporary exhibition documenting the site's history was first made accessible to visitors. It was then that the area received the name "Topography of Terror". The exhibition enjoyed a tremendous success which led to the decision to extend it first for another year and later indefinitely. (Topographie des Terrors b, c.)

A commission was appointed by the Berlin Senate in 1989 to develop a long-term concept for the use of the site. Its final report a year later included recommendations to establish a documentation centre while preserving the historic site with its excavated building remains mostly in its present state. These recommendations were used as a basis for all future planning of the site's development. (Topographie des Terrors c.)

The year 1992 saw the establishment of the Topography of Terror foundation and a competition calling for architectural design plans for a documentation centre. Construction on the winner's design was begun in 1997, but halted in 1999. Due to technical problems in the building process as well as for financial reasons, the official decision not to complete the project was made in 2004. (Topographie des Terrors c.)

Rather than putting a complete stop to plans for establishing the recommended documentation centre, however, this sparked a period of extensive preparation for a new design competition which was launched in 2005 (Topographie des Terrors c, d). The winning entry, chosen unanimously in January 2006, came from architect Ursula Wilms and landscape architect Professor Heinz W. Hallmann. Construction on their design, which included an idea for the design of the main indoor exhibition, was begun towards the end of 2007. (Topographie des Terrors d.)

On 7 May 2010, the newly built documentation centre and re-designed outdoor terrain of the Topography of Terror site welcomed their first visitors. The permanent indoor exhibition, the site tour and the seasonal outdoor exhibition "Berlin 1933-1945" could all first be seen on this occasion and have remained available to visitors in the same form ever since. (Topographie des Terrors d.)

3.2 Heritage interpretation, structure, content and objectives of the exhibition

How to interpret the dark heritage the site now known as the Topography of Terror was long a subject of controversy, which played a major role in the delay of the site's development as a tourism site that lasted over six decades until the current set-up of the site was made accessible to the public in 2010 (Lennon & Foley 2010, 33; Topographie des Terrors d). As Sharpley (2009b, 147) points out, the dark heritage represented by atrocities and disasters contains the potential to be exploited for the conveyance of political messages depending on how related sites opt to represent their subject matter. The Topography of Terror site is far from the only dark heritage site in the world which has faced controversy in terms of how the tragedy it is associated with should be interpreted and commemorated. Other examples of sites that gave rise to such controversies and debates include a planned memorial to commemorate the victims of the 2004 Tsunami in Thailand as well as the American National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. (Sharpley 2009b, 145-146.)

The concept of "dissonant heritage" introduced by Tunbridge and Ashworth in 1996 regarding the interpretation of the past at heritage sites is widely cited in dark tourism research in connection to management issues at dark heritage sites. Concerning the way the representation or interpretation of the past as influenced by various stakeholders with interest in a heritage site may distort or displace the past in the eyes of some of those stakeholders, such heritage dissonance is a challenge faced frequently in the field of dark tourism, particularly in association with atrocity heritage sites. (Sharpley 2009a, 12.)

Arrunnapaporn (2014, 154) writes that dissonance is inherent to all heritage, but, in the words of Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), "dissonance created by the interpretation of atrocity is not only peculiarly intense and lasting but also particularly complex for victims, perpetrators and observers". However, despite the controversies and dissonance problems that often surround the interpretation of atrocity heritage, it is possible to balance and reduce these issues. (Arrunnapaporn 2014, 154.)

Building on Ashworth's concept of dissonant heritage, Seaton's "heritage force field" model identifies four groups of stakeholders concerned in the development of dark heritage sites between which dissonance may occur, as illustrated by figure 2.

FIGURE 2. The Heritage Force Field (Sharpley 2009b, 162)

These groups are defined as follows: those who own or control the development, the subject group the heritage focusses on, the host community the site is located in, and those who come to visit the site. How far the interests of these groups differ and the influence each of them has can vary widely between different sites and may depend on the nature of the heritage site in question. Particularly sites related to the Holocaust, such as the Topography of Terror site, can spark much contention in terms of how best to interpret the difficult heritage the site represents. (Sharpley 2009b, 161-162.)

In the case of the Topography of Terror site, these stakeholders can be identified as follows:

  ☻ Controllers of the site:

The site's administration is handled by the Topography of Terror foundation with support from the state of Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany (Topographie des Terrors e).

  ☻ Subject group:

The heritage of the site focusses on two groups: the perpetrators and, to a lightly lesser extent, the victims of the atrocities committed by the Nazi government.

  ☻ Host community:

The site's location in the centre of Berlin makes the residents of Berlin, particularly the area the site is located in, the host community in this case.

🕐 Visitor groups:

The visitors to the site are a large and very diverse group consisting of local, domestic and international visitors that may include those descended from or connected through joint heritage to both subject groups of the site.

The Holocaust remains a highly sensitive subject, especially in Germany, the land of the perpetrators, as there is a lot of guilt and shame involved even among the younger generations born decades after the events of 1933-1945. Poria (2007) refers to this kind of heritage as "bad active history", defined as "past actions undertaken by [one's own] social group which inspire negative feelings, such as shame" and states that such history is rarely included in heritage interpretation (Sharpley 2009b, 162).

The Topography of Terror site, as a dark heritage site not only commemorating the victims of one of the worst atrocities in the history of mankind but documenting the lives and actions of the perpetrators at the authentic site where many of those actions were planned and coordinated, however, is one of the rare cases that does interpret such history. This sets the site apart from the majority of Berlin's other well-known Holocaust-related sites, which mostly concentrate on memorialising the victims rather than presenting detailed information on the perpetrators. Neutrality and a strong emphasis on facts and historical authenticity is the approach the site uses in its interpretation of its difficult bad active history heritage. The avoidance of any kind of glossing over any of the dark and horrifying facts or slightest hint of condoning any part of these events of the dark past is essential to the site's presentation and serves to keep the problem of heritage dissonance at a minimum.

The 2005 design competition from which the Topography of Terror site's final design originated declared the development of a site concept which "would do justice to the historic site's national and international significance in the heart of the capital, while at the same time avoiding a glorification of this area as the "site of the perpetrators"" (Topographie des Terrors d) to be its express aim. This design concept was to encompass both the terrain and a neutral building to house exhibitions as well as fulfil functions of a scholarly and educational kind (Topographie des Terrors d). The preservation of the historic site and its use as a vast resource of information without allowing it to become a site of attraction for Neonazis was thus the main consideration in the site concept's de-

velopment, with a strong emphasis being placed on a neutral and authentic interpretation of the site's historical heritage.

This neutral and detailed fact-based approach to the presentation of the site's difficult subject matter is consistent through all parts of the Topography of Terror documentation centre's exhibitions. The Topography of Terror documentation centre and its grounds house up to four distinct exhibitions according to season, all centred on various aspects of the overall topic. Two of these are permanently available all year round: the main indoor exhibition, which is the most extensive part, and the site tour of the outside grounds, which complements the former. During the time from spring to fall, an additional outdoor exhibition chronicling the history of the city of Berlin during the years from 1933 to 1945 is also on display. Finally, a separate room inside the documentation centre houses smaller, periodically changing exhibitions typically focussing in detail on a certain aspect of the documentation centre's historical subject.

The main exhibition consists largely of an amalgamation of factual information, informative texts and accompanying photographs covering a wealth of different aspects of the history, development and horrors perpetrated by the Nazi government and its police and security forces. Additionally, original historical documents are displayed. They are accompanied by explanations of their content and significance. It remains permanently in place, chronicling the history of the site itself and its place within a larger context.

Long, numbered boards as seen in picture 1 provide a trail of information for the visitor to follow. The spacious set-up of the exhibition allows a large number of visitors to access the information boards simultaneously. All texts and descriptions are presented in both German and English.

PICTURE 1. View of the main exhibition (Photo: Denise Böhme 2014)

The presented information is divided into different topic sections. These are the five main topic segments:

1) The National Socialist Takeover of Power
2) Institutions of Power (SS and Police)
3) Terror, Persecution and Extermination on Reich Territory
4) SS and Reich Security Main Office in the Occupied Countries
5) The End of the War and the Postwar Era

Here visitors find an extensive amount of detailed information, including not only plain text, but also time lines, newspaper articles and government documents. Furthermore, biographies of numerous key figures as well as lesser known individuals who had a part in the administration of the Nazi government and carried out its orders can be found here.

The long stretches of text are kept in a starkly factual tone, providing facts and figures without any attempt to gloss over any part of the shocking contents. The most striking feature of the exhibition, however, are the many pictures, displaying smiling government officials and SS officers side by side with pictures of graphic violence, mass graves and executions. Combined with the staggering figures regarding incarcerations and deaths, their impact on the visitor confronted with them is one of visceral horror.

For those wishing to access yet more information than the boards can hold, further data can be obtained from computers which are at the visitors' disposal. Reading folders also offer more in-depth information and include subjects the exhibition itself does not cover. In addition, some audio and film recordings are made use of in this part of the exhibition.

Permanently accessible in the grounds outside the documentation centre building, the historic site tour gives the visitor information about the history of the terrain. The tour consists of 15 stations, at which information lecterns provide background information, photos, documents and 3D graphics giving the visitor a better picture of the buildings and offices that used to be located at this site (picture 2). Remains of those buildings are pointed out and are accompanied by pictures of what the area used to look like in the past.

PICTURE 2. A station of the site tour (Photo: Denise Böhme 2014)

The part of the Berlin Wall (picture 3) which remains at the side is integrated in the tour, as are parts of the historic Prinz-Albrecht-Straße side-walk next to it. Like the main indoor exhibition which the site tour was designed to complement, it is presented in German and English.

PICTURE 3. Berlin Wall above excavated building fragments. (Photo: Denise Böhme 2014)

Between spring and fall, visitors have the opportunity to see an additional outdoor exhibition entitled "Berlin 1933-1945. Between Propaganda and Terror". Located in a trench along the excavated segments of a cellar wall along the Berlin Wall (picture 4), this exhibition presents information including photos, documents and newspaper articles on glass panes allowing visitors to see the ruins behind them at the same time.

PICTURE 4. The outdoor exhibition "Berlin 1933-1945" (Photo: Denise Böhme 2014)

In similar fashion as the main indoor exhibition, the information is divided into different sections. The five main chapters are as follows:

1) Berlin in the Weimar Republic
2) Establishing the Führer's Dictatorship
3) Berlin and the "People's Community"
4) Wartime in Berlin 1939-1945
5) Berlin and the Consequences of the Nazi Regime

More in-depth information is offered at media stations placed at intervals along the exhibition trench. All information is presented in English as well as German.

The special exhibitions are typically located in a second room next to the one housing the main exhibition inside the documentation centre, although special outdoor exhibitions are also possible. As an example, a special open air exhibition entitled "Warsaw Uprising of 1944" was held during the time from 30 July 2014 to 26 October 2014 (Topographie des Terrors f). The majority of special exhibitions are, however, indoor exhibitions set up in a similar fashion as the permanent indoor exhibition, presenting their subject matter through a mixture of factual texts and figures, documents, numerous pictures and the occasional use of audio/visual media. Shedding light on particular aspects of the Holocaust not necessarily as closely connected to the site itself as the main exhibition, they usually remain in place for a few months before giving way to a new subject. Special exhibitions in 2014 have included subjects such as the November Pogroms of 1938 as well as persecution and murder of the sick and disabled under National Socialism. At the time of writing this thesis, a special exhibition about war correspondent Hans Bayer is being shown. Topographie des Terrors f.)

Having thus explored the topic and features of this site, it is possible to undertake a closer analysis of where it fits within the large and multi-layered field of dark tourism. As stated in chapter 2, it can be generally categorised as a site for atrocity tourism, genocide tourism and Holocaust tourism. However, categorising dark tourism attractions by subject is far from the only dark tourism typology that has been proposed by researchers. A different form of distinguishing between different varieties of dark tourism sites comes from Philip R. Stone, whose dark tourism spectrum approach differentiates between different shades of darkness in such attractions to account for the diversity, complexity and multifaceted nature of the broad range of tourism products grouped under the general heading of dark tourism (Stone 2006, 150).

Rather than categorising dark tourism products only by the specific topic of the tourism site in question, such as the Holocaust in the case of the Topography of Terror site, this model pictured below in figure 3 takes into account a variety of features. The dark tourism spectrum model analyses factors such as the authenticity of the location, whether it is a site where death and suffering actually took place or whether it is only associated with them, whether the site is more commemorative or commercial in intent and wheth-

er it is geared more towards education or entertainment in order to place the site on a spectrum from darkest to lightest forms of dark tourism.
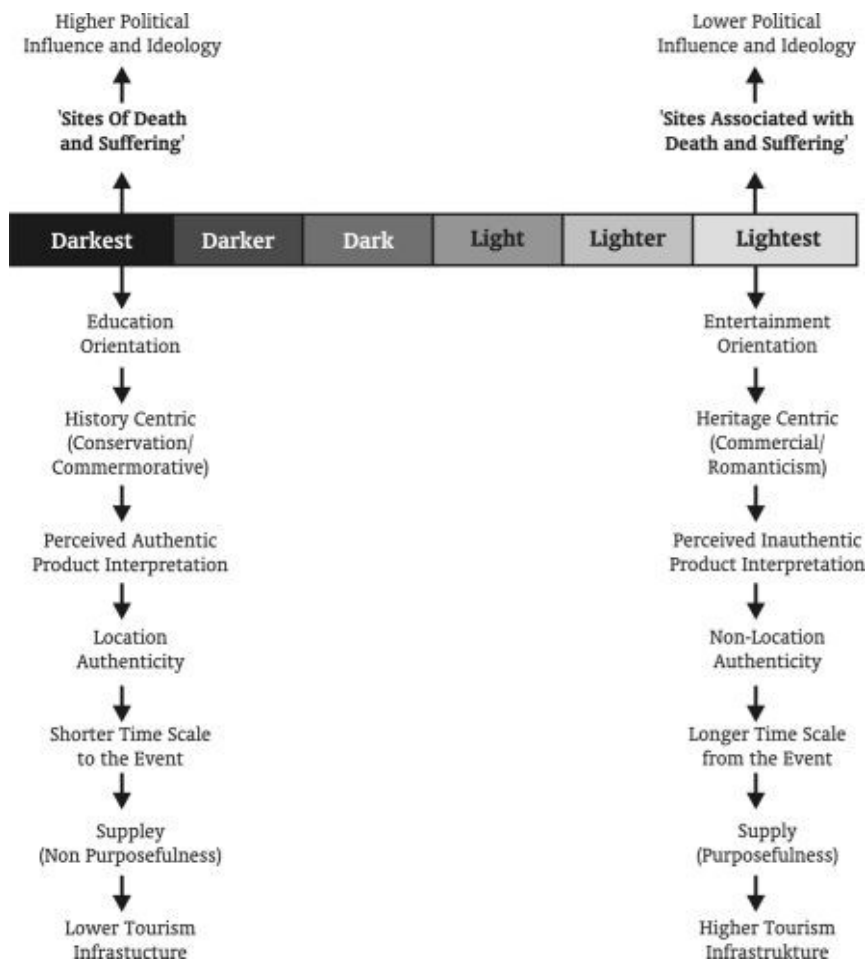

FIGURE 3. A Dark Tourism Spectrum (Stone 2006, 151)

To find out where on this spectrum the Topography of Terror documentation centre falls, many factors must thus be taken into account. Being more associated with death and suffering than being an actual site where large-scale death took place would position the site towards the lighter end of the spectrum. The authenticity of the location, its orientation towards education, the conservation of knowledge and commemoration of historic events as well as fact-based, authentic interpretation however place it in the darker part of the spectrum. Also, while not a site where death took place, it is nonetheless a site where suffering happened as one of the institutions situated here was the Secret State Police Office with its own prison (Topographie des Terrors). Part of the main exhibition documents instances of violence and torture against those imprisoned there, giving evidence to such events taking place at this site.

Stone's article (2006, 152) makes mention of two other Holocaust-related sites, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Auschwitz-Birkenau, in terms of their locations on the dark tourism spectrum. Citing Miles (2002), it places the latter closer to the darkest end of the spectrum due to its being a place where death actually took place while the museum in the US is merely a site associated with death by way of its subject matter. (Stone 2006, 152.) Located in a historically authentic location, but not a place of death itself, the Topography of Terror documentation centre should therefore take its place between those two sites on Stone's dark tourism spectrum, firmly on the darker part of the scale but not quite at its end. Awareness of the inherent seriousness and significance of the site and its subject can easily be observed in the behaviour of visitors at the site. This is not a site visitors seek out for entertainment purposes. Visitor behaviour is generally respectful, subdued and studious, as is appropriate to a site located at the darker end of the dark tourism spectrum and a stated part of the site's intentions.

Building on the dark tourism spectrum concept, Stone's (2006) work towards a typological framework for the field of dark tourism continues by outlining seven categories of what he refers to as dark suppliers. These suppliers range from "Dark Fun Factories", commercial and entertainment-based attractions such as the London Dungeon, at the lightest end of the spectrum to "Dark Camps of Genocide", sites representing genocide and atrocities at the actual locations where they occurred with an educational and commemorative focus such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, at the darkest end. Within this framework, the Topography of Terror site fits into the category Stone (2006) entitles "Dark Exhibitions". These are defined as sites and exhibitions "which revolve around death, suffering or the macabre with an often commemorative, educational and reflective message" (Stone 2006, 152). This definitions applies completely for the case of the Topography of Terror documentation centre, allowing its place in the dark suppliers model to be clearly identified from the site's subject, form of presentation and objectives. Situated towards the darker end of the dark tourism spectrum, these exhibitions are frequently but not necessarily located at sites away from where the events they document actually occurred and are designed to conserve and disseminate knowledge rather than provide entertainment. Another example for this kind of dark supplier which also focusses on the Holocaust is the previously mentioned US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. (Stone 2006, 152-153, 157.)

3.3 Existing services

Entrance to the exhibition centre itself is free of charge. The visitors can peruse the in-formation boards and walk the grounds at their leisure throughout the opening hours of the exhibitions. The site is open to visitors on all days of the week. Opening hours ex-tend from 10:00 until 20:00, with the grounds accessible until dusk, but no later than 20:00. The documentation centre and its grounds are open around the year with the ex-ception of 24 December, 31 December and 1 January. (Topographie des Terrors e.) Long opening hours and very few closing days allow for many prospective visitors to find a time and day suitable for them to come see one or several of the exhibitions presented, while free entrance to the documentation centre makes it easy for those in the area to visit repeatedly without incurring costs other than for the transportation needed to get to the site.

Right across from the entrance of the documentation centre, a front desk provides an op-portunity to approach staff members directly for information or in case of questions re-garding the exhibition. This front desk remains staffed throughout the opening hours of the exhibition area. Visitors can find free flyers in German and English here which provide some basic information about the exhibition and its grounds as well as other Holocaust-related sites around Berlin. In addition, various publications about the exhibi-tions, the Topography of Terror foundation and related subjects are available for pur-chase at the front desk. These include exhibition catalogues for both the permanent ex-hibitions as well well as current and past special exhibitions, most of which are avail-able in both German and English. A number of additional publications are available only in German. All of these published works can also be ordered via the Topography of Terror website, which lists the entire catalogue of works available. (Topographie des Terrors g.)

Audio guides for the site tour are available from the front desk as well as downloadable for smart-phones and tablets from an internet portal. Guided tours for individual visitors are offered free of charge at set times every Sunday in German and English language. Limited to a maximum number of 17 participants, these guided tours take place at 14:00 in German and at 15:30 in English. Participation in these free tours cannot be booked in advance. Visitors interested in taking part in such a guided tour are asked to sign up at

the front desk half an hour before the beginning of the tour they wish to join. Participation in such a tour allowed the author to get a good impression of this service. An introduction to the main exhibition is provided, with a few chosen parts according to the participants' wishes and interest explored in more detail. As the staff providing a service is one of the most important aspects when it comes to the perceived quality of a service product such as a guided tour, the tour guide's skill in sharing his knowledge and ability to keep the visitors' interest engaged throughout the duration of the tour were paid particular attention to. These skills were demonstrated to the stated satisfaction of all participants of the tour on this occasion, giving an overall favourable impression of the service provided.

Larger groups of more than seven participants also have the possibility to book a guided tour of approximately 60 minutes duration in advance for a fee of 70€. These tours are available not only in the main languages of the exhibition, German and English, but also per request in French, Spanish, Italian, Russian and various other languages. Tours for groups of this size can be booked for all exhibitions on view at the time. For groups from educational institutions the tours are free of charge, provided that a certificate of attendance is shown. Special guided tours through the main exhibition are also available for blind and visually impaired visitors. The layouts for all exhibitions are designed to be accessible for visitors in wheelchairs as well. (Topographie des Terrors h.)

In keeping with the documentation centre's educational focus, it also offers the possibility to book seminars on various subjects of the exhibitions for school groups, university students as well as other youth and adult groups. These seminars allow participants to delve deeper into different aspects of the Topography of Terror's exhibitions and themes in five hour intensive courses including a guided tour of the main exhibition as well as independent work with historical sources and documents and a presentation of the results at the end. Use of the seminar programme is free of charge and can be applied for through booking forms found on the Topography of Terror website. A minimum group size of seven participants is required. Seminars are currently only available in German language. (Topographie des Terrors i.)

Another way of going deeper into the subject matter than the scope of the exhibitions allows is provided by presentations and events taking place in the documentation centre which include lectures, book presentations, discussions and more. Typically, at least one

such event is scheduled per week. Most take place at 19:00 on weekdays. Attendance of these events is generally free of charge. Individual events may require registration beforehand. A calendar listing both upcoming and past events is available on the Topography of Terror website, where detailed information for each event is listed. Like the seminar offers, however, these events are German language only. (Topographie des Terrors j.)

Those wishing to research the exhibition topics and related subjects and historical events independently in more depth can find an extensive collection of freely accessible books and periodicals in the Topography of Terror Foundation's library, which is also located in the documentation centre. The library contains material not only in German, but also in English and other languages, including international periodicals. Library visitors can make use of individual and group study areas as well as computers, a media station and microfiche reader. (Topographie des Terrors l.)

3.4 Currently reached target market

According to the Topography of Terror website, visitor numbers for the documentation centre continue to grow and exceeded 1 million for the first time in 2013. The exact number of 1.195.581 visitors given for that year amounts to twice the number of visitors originally expected during the planning phase of the documentation centre, which was estimated to be around 500.000-600.00 per year. (Topographie des Terrors 2014). This means that despite only having been opened in 2010, the documentation centre is already well enough established to attract almost as many visitors in a year as the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, perhaps the most famous Holocaust-related dark tourism destination in the world, which reports a total visitor number of 1.33 million for 2013 (Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2014).

To gain an overview over the demographics of visitors the Topography of Terror documentation centre attracts, observation was conducted on different days of the week as well as in different seasons in order to find out if and how visitor groups differ between regular working days and weekends and between early spring and summer. This way it was also possible to draw a rough comparison between days when only the permanent indoor exhibition and the historic site tour are available to visitors and days during the

open season of the outdoor exhibition and while an additional special exhibition is on display.

During each observation occasion, a large variety of visitors could be observed. The visitors' ages ranged mainly from high school students to senior citizens, with younger children being the notable exception from what could otherwise be described as an audience of all ages. Considering the dark and violent subject matter of the exhibition, however, this is not surprising, as neither the subject itself nor the exhibition's set-up of long, factual texts and graphic, disturbing images make it suitable for a younger audience. Families with younger children can occasionally be observed among the visitors, but typically do not stay very long. Other visitors on the other hand, depending on the depth of their interest in the subject and the extent of their previous knowledge of the facts and events documented in the exhibitions, may spend many hours perusing the in-depth information the exhibition has to offer.

The site attracts locals as well as visitors from all over the world. Observation of visitors during different seasons reveals that in comparison, a larger part or the overall group of visitors is international, with the amounts of German and international visitors in the exhibitions appearing roughly equal. Given that the summer months are often the prime travelling time for the working population as well as students, this does not surprise. With all information presented in English as well as German, the exhibition is geared towards an international audience and allows international visitors to easily receive the same information from the site as domestic visitors. All publications sold at the site are also available in both languages. Additionally, the availability of guided tours in numerous languages also allows groups of international visitors to obtain or request information in their native languages which may enable them to gain a deeper understanding of the materials presented than studying them in a foreign language allows.

The weekend days unsurprisingly draw a greater number of visitors. However, also on regular working days many people visit the site. Despite now reaching twice the number of visitors originally expected, the documentation centre's layout is capable of supporting even a large number of visitors simultaneously without their ability to move through the exhibition at their own pace being significantly hindered (Topographie des Terrors 2014). Larger groups such as school classes being led through the exhibition can occasionally provide a bit of an obstacle to other visitors as they lead to numerous people

crowding around their exhibition guide and remaining stationary in one part of the exhibition for some time, which may temporarily block other visitors' access to and view of the information boards.

Part of the site's large visitor number is also made up out of prominent German and international personalities. An exhibition diary viewable on the Topography of Terror website collects comments and reactions from these guests, giving testament to the exhibitions' success and favourable reception among influential figures from politics, religion, media and other areas. (Topographie des Terrors k.)

4 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES

With its current set-up and operations, the Topography of Terror documentation centre already reaches a vast and diverse target market which continues to grow, having reached the milestone of more than one million visitors for the first time in 2014 (Topographie des Terrors 2014). As stated in the previous chapter, visitors reach across all age groups with the exception of young children the subject matter is unsuitable for and includes domestic and international visitors. Expanding the target market to include previously not reached groups through the application of product development strategies aimed at reaching new markets is therefore unnecessary in the case of this site. The site enjoys a good success in its current set-up and organization, which both the rising visitor numbers and the positive reactions from many visitors, including numerous prominent figures, speak to. The currently offered range of services is well suited to fulfilling the primary objectives of the documentation centre and its grounds as set forth during the planning phase. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify small gaps in the available services which may be improved on. It is therefore suggested to use the method of Market Penetration, meaning the augmentation or modification of already existing products and services aimed at the existing target market, as the most suitable product development strategy for the Topography of Terror site (Hudson 2008, 165).

Having chosen to concentrate on already existing services in a product development approach, the most promising areas for improvement or expansion of these services must be identified. The previous chapter explored the services currently available at the site. Based on that analysis, it is possible to find out where current offers can be modified. One area containing visible gaps in its current scheduling are the guided tours in which visitors can participate.

The possibilities for groups of more than seven participants to receive guided tours offer a lot of flexibility and many different options. When booking a tour, groups of that size may request a day and time of their choosing at any point during the regular opening times. Group tours are available in 11 different languages and can be booked for any of the exhibitions on display at the time of the tour, including outdoor and special exhibitions. (Topographie des Terrors h.)

The possibilities for smaller groups and individual visitors, on the other hand, are much less extensive. The current set-up of guided tour offers means that those visitors have no opportunities to participate in a guided tour other than the free tour of the main exhibition organized once in German and once in English at set times on Sundays. They can neither sign up for these tours in advance nor book a tour on any other day of the week or at any other time. Neither do they have the possibility to participate in a guided tour of the outdoor exhibition, a special exhibition or the site tour, as these can only be booked for groups of seven or more participants. While there are audio guides in German and English available for the site tour that give more detailed information at each of its stations, these do not offer the same possibilities of asking questions or allowing for discussion of points of interest as a tour led by a human guide does. Additionally, the tours for individual visitors are limited to a maximum of 17 participants, which when combined with the fact that no advance reservations are accepted means that should more than 17 visitors wish to participate in the tour on any given Sunday, some visitors will not be able to take the tour at all during that week. While for local residents visiting out of private interest this does not necessarily constitute a problem or source of disappointment as they easily have the opportunity to return on another Sunday to participate in a tour then, visitors from further away who are only in Berlin for a limited amount of time are unlikely to have that option. Individual visitors who are not able to visit the Topography of Terror site on a Sunday afternoon have no possibility to participate in a guided tour at all.

It follows that an expansion of the site's guided tour services for individual visitors for is a logical choice when identifying areas where current products and services on offer at the Topography of Terror documentation centre leave room for improvement. Providing more extensive tour offers for individual visitors and small groups is in theory also relatively easy to accomplish, as it constitutes an augmentation of services that have already been developed and tested as opposed to the development of entirely new services to add to the site's programme. It is suggested to expand the offers in two ways.

Firstly, offering the guided tours for individual visitors through the main indoor exhibition which are already a well-established part of the site's product portfolio and which are now restricted to one set time on Sundays per language during other times of the week as well will allow a much larger number of visitors the chance to participate in one of these tours which they currently do not have. Certainly not every visitor is inter-

ested in participating in a tour and many are content to take in the exhibition by themselves by simply studying the information boards and audiovisual material it offers. For others, however, participation in a tour makes for a much appreciated introduction to the extensive exhibition, giving the possibility to ask for clarification or background information where needed and providing the opportunity to engage in a discussion if so inclined. Personnel that can give tours is on hand, as several staff members are on the premises at all times while the documentation centre is open. By adding the option of guided tours for individual visitors for at least one other day during the week, a lot more flexibility in scheduling can be achieved for local visitors wishing to participate in a tour and more non-locals will have the chance to take a tour if doing so no longer depends solely on being present on a Sunday. This is a simple, not cost-intensive measure to implement to improve the services the site offers its visitors. Based on how popular the new option turns out to be after a trial period, more possible times and weekdays for such tours can be added at a later point.

Secondly, it should be considered to also make tours of other exhibitions available to individual visitors and small groups. While observing visitors in the outdoor exhibition, for instance, the author took notice of such visitors wondering about certain facts or expressing a wish for more background information on several occasions. With the great diversity among exhibition visitors it stands to reason that the level of pre-existing background knowledge visitors enter the exhibition with varies widely. Having the opportunity to receive an introduction to the exhibitions through a guided tour which allows them to ask questions coming up and request further information when needed makes it possible for visitors who enter the Topography of Terror grounds with comparatively little background knowledge to understand the subject matter presented in the various exhibitions more fully. For organized larger groups tours of all exhibitions are already available, meaning that the structures for tours of each exhibition have already been developed and can be used for individual visitors rather than requiring the planning of something entirely new. Personnel working at the documentation centre already has experience with giving tours of the various exhibitions. It is suggested to introduce this service for individual visitors slowly, one step and one exhibition at a time, to be able to get an accurate picture of how popular the option proves to be and at the same time avoid having to handle organizational challenges that could arise from making a large number of extra services available all at once. Beginning with one tour in German and one in English at set times once a week, following the same system as the tours of the

main indoor exhibition for individual visitors as they are at the moment. The offers can then be extended depending on popularity.

Another area where a possibility to expand the Topography of Terror's services exists are the seminars organized at the site. Education is one of the site's main objectives, and the in-depth seminars offered for students of different ages and educational levels and adult groups alike are tailored specifically to fulfil this objective. However, currently the opportunity to benefit from the seminar programme is limited to German-speaking visitor groups only. Making the opportunity to participate in a seminar available to international visitors as well by offering them also in English would allow the Topography of Terror to extend its educational services to a far larger amount of visitors. Berlin, as the former capital of the Third Reich and home to a myriad of buildings, memorials and museums associated with World War II and the Holocaust, is a prime destination for anyone wishing to study these events, be they from Germany or from anywhere else in the world.

Furthermore, Berlin is home to four universities and 140.000 university level students, approximately 15% of whom come from countries other than Germany. Additionally, Berlin's universities cooperate with about 1.500 partner universities all over the world. (BerlinOnline Stadtportal b.) The city also offers upper secondary education in English with four bilingual or English language schools, an international high school and a British school all operating in Berlin (Business Location Center 2014). Two more upper secondary level international schools are located in and around nearby Potsdam, which is also home to Helmholtzschule, an upper secondary school offering a bilingual German-English branch teaching history and political science classes in English, making its students in that education branch a perfect target market for in-depth seminars taught in English (Potsdam.de; Helmholtzschule). These are just a few examples of visitor groups the seminar programme if organizable in English language in addition to the already established German language ones can be offered to.

To develop a suitable seminar programme in English, some parts of the currently used assignments have to be adapted. The work with original texts and documents is an integral part of the seminars as they are currently planned which the need to use English language materials would necessarily curtail. However, the Topography of Terror documentation centre's in-house library also contains many texts in English and the exhibi-

tions themselves are presented in English as well. The use of translated documents and secondary sources does not negate the educational benefits seminar participants can derive from attending an in-depth, specially tailored learning experience at this authentic site, which certainly holds the potential to attract many interested visitor groups including but not limited to student groups from the area's universities and international as well a bilingual schools.

Expansions of these two areas of the Topography of Terror documentation centre's currently offered services, guided tours and seminars, as outlined above, present promising product development possibilities for the site that are in keeping with its objectives. As neither of the suggestions listed in this chapter involves the development of an entirely new service product from scratch but relies instead on an extension and augmentation of already established services, these are low risk opportunities through which the site can easily improve its currently offered range of services.

5 CONCLUSION

The research undertaken for the purposes of this thesis allowed the author to gain a clear picture of where the Topography of Terror documentation centre fits into the large and multidimensional field of dark tourism by exploring its historical heritage and the way it represents its complex and complicated subject matter. The author found that the neutral, detailed and fact-based interpretation approach used by the site to present the wealth of information its exhibitions contain is well in keeping with its stated objectives of doing justice to the significance of its historical heritage and serving an educational and scholarly function while avoiding allowing the area to become an attraction to those who condone the dark events of the past the location is associated with.

The large number and diversity of visitors the site attracts on a yearly basis speaks to its success. The site provides a range of services to its visitors, including guided tours in different languages, an extensive research library, the possibility to purchase exhibition catalogues and other publications, seminars and a variety of events that can be attended by anyone interested in their topics.

The comparatively limited offers of guided tours for individual visitors and small groups as well as the lack of opportunities for non-German speaking visitor groups to benefit from the in-depth seminars the site offers have been identified as gaps in the current service offers. Suggestions for future product development options for the Topography of Terror documentation centre therefore focus on expanding these two categories of the site's services. Implementing these measures would allow this already much lauded and successful dark tourism attraction to fulfil its objectives yet more fully, ensuring that the of its historical heritage is better and more widely understood and its educational value yet more fully realized.

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