Rules, Rituals and Remembrance: Managing Visitor Experience at Gallipoli and Auschwitz-Birkenau

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Abstract
Dark tourism sites must balance remembrance, education, and visitor demand while safeguarding the dignity of tragic pasts. This comparative study examines the management of two emblematic sites: the Gallipoli Historical Site in Türkiye and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland. Using a qualitative, document-based analysis, the research examines official regulations and interpretive strategies through the conceptual lens of Stone's (2006) Dark Tourism Spectrum. The study focuses on how formal rules (codes of conduct) and informal rituals (commemorative practices) are deployed at each location. Findings reveal that Auschwitz represents a mature international model with a strict, rule-dominant framework that reinforces its universal educational mission. In contrast, Gallipoli's evolving, ritual-dominant framework—formalized through its 2014 directorate—focuses on managing large-scale national commemorations. The study contributes to the literature by highlighting how management choices directly shape the ethical experience of remembrance and offers a transferable framework for other sites of difficult heritage.

1. Introduction

Landscapes of trauma are not silent; they speak through the rules, rituals, and narratives imposed upon them. Tourism to places associated with death and collective trauma—often termed dark tourism—has become an established field of scholarly inquiry. Lennon and Foley (2000) first coined the term to describe visits to sites where death is central to the visitor experience. Building on this, Stone (2006) proposed a Dark Tourism Spectrum, positioning attractions from "lighter" entertainment venues to the "darkest" sites of mass death where education and commemoration dominate. The management of these sites involves negotiating the complex interplay of remembrance, education, commodification, and ethics (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). Central to this task are two key instruments: rules, the formal regulations governing visitor conduct, and rituals, the commemorative practices that shape the performance of memory. Site managers must therefore safeguard historical authenticity and accommodate rising visitor demand while maintaining the dignity of victims and survivors (Light, 2017; Martini & Buda, 2020).

Although research has examined visitor motivations and emotional responses, comparative analyses of management frameworks across national contexts remain limited (Causevic & Lynch, 2011). Yet governance structures and political histories strongly influence how sites negotiate remembrance and tourism (Logan &

Reeves, 2009). A cross-national comparison can therefore reveal transferable practices and context-specific challenges that single-case studies often overlook. This article addresses that gap by directly juxtaposing two of the world's most emblematic dark tourism sites: the Gallipoli Peninsula Historical National Park in Türkiye and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in Poland.

Auschwitz-Birkenau, established as a memorial in 1947 on the grounds of the former Nazi concentration and extermination camp, commemorates the more than 1.3 million people murdered there (Piper, 1994). Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979, it has developed a mature visitor-management system, including timed entry and a strict code of conduct, to accommodate over two million annual visitors and uphold the memorial's solemnity (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2023; Miles, 2002). In contrast, Gallipoli, the location of the 1915 First World War campaign and a focal point of national identity for Türkiye, Australia, and New Zealand, presents a different model (UNESCO, 2014). Its management framework is comparatively young and still evolving; while declared a national park in 1973 and added to UNESCO's Tentative World Heritage List in 2014, its governance was only recently formalized through its 2014 directorate and 2016 management plan. This juxtaposition of a mature, rule-centric site with an evolving, ritual-centric one offers a unique opportunity for analysis.

Using Stone's (2006) Dark Tourism Spectrum as a conceptual lens, the research asks:

1. How do governance structures and legal frameworks influence the management of dark tourism sites in Türkiye and Poland?

2. What visitor-management tools and codes of conduct are employed to safeguard the solemnity of these sites?

3. How do interpretive strategies and ritualized practices align with Stone's spectrum and affect the balance between education and commodification?

This study argues that the management choices at each site produce distinct ethical experiences of remembrance. The analysis will demonstrate that Auschwitz's mature, rule-based system reinforces its solemn educational mission, while Gallipoli's focus on national commemoration and event-based management presents both unique strengths and significant challenges for its developing framework. The article proceeds by reviewing key literature on dark tourism management, outlining the comparative methodology, presenting the findings, and discussing their implications for policy and practice.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Dark Tourism and Heritage Management

Dark tourism has been defined as travel to sites of death and tragedy (Lennon & Foley, 2000). A central framework for its analysis is Stone's (2006) Dark Tourism Spectrum, which distinguishes between "lighter" attractions—such as horror exhibitions—and "darker" sites of mass death and genocide where commemoration and education dominate. This framework remains central to contemporary analyses (Light, 2017). Managing such sites requires balancing historical authenticity, visitor demand, and ethical remembrance. Scholars highlight the dangers of commodifying tragedy and the necessity of sensitive interpretation (Sharpley & Stone, 2009; Martini & Buda, 2020). This process is not neutral; it is an exercise in what Smith (2006) calls the "Authorized Heritage Discourse," where site authorities actively select and present a specific narrative. Managers must conserve fragile material remains and establish clear behavioral guidelines to ensure respectful visitor conduct (Biran & Hyde, 2013).

2.2 Visitor Experience and Ethical Dilemmas

Visitor experiences at dark sites are characterized by powerful emotions such as grief and empathy (Biran et al., 2011; Poria et al., 2006). These reactions can foster deep learning but may also risk descend into mere voyeurism or "thanatourism" if not carefully mediated by management (Brown, 2015; Martini & Buda, 2020). To mitigate this, sites employ rules and rituals—for example, moments of silence, restricted photography, and prescribed pathways—which help structure visitor behavior and preserve a solemn atmosphere (Miles, 2002; Kidron, 2013). A continuing debate concerns the tension between remembrance and commercialization. While educational programming, such as guided tours and interpretive panels, can promote moral reflection, commercial amenities like cafés or souvenir shops must be carefully managed to avoid trivializing tragedy (Cole, 2000; Logan & Reeves, 2009; Unur & Kınıklı, 2020).

2.3 Comparative Perspectives and Governance

Cross-national studies of dark tourism management remain scarce (Causevic & Lynch, 2011). Yet governance arrangements—legal protection status, management plans, and stakeholder involvement—strongly influence visitor management and interpretation strategies (Logan & Reeves, 2009). This is clearly visible in the two cases. Gallipoli's inclusion on UNESCO's Tentative World Heritage List in 2014 underscored the need for coordinated management of a site with a complex dual role: a sacred space for Turkish national memory and a site of pilgrimage for former adversaries, particularly Australia and New Zealand (UNESCO, 2014). Its governance must therefore navigate competing national narratives. By contrast, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, a World Heritage Site since 1979, has long employed a comprehensive system of timed entry and a published code of conduct (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2023). Its management reflects its status as a site of "cosmopolitan memory," whose lessons are framed as a universal warning to humanity rather than a story tied to a single national identity (Levy & Sznaider, 2002).

2.4 Knowledge Gap

Although the literature on visitor motivations and ethical debates is extensive, comparative research on management practices—especially juxtaposing an emerging site framework such as Gallipoli with a globally recognized benchmark like Auschwitz—remains underdeveloped. This study addresses this gap by not only comparing their governance structures but by systematically analyzing how these structures translate into the daily management of the visitor experience through the specific lens of rules and rituals. It contributes by applying Stone's (2006) Dark Tourism Spectrum to illuminate how interpretive practices and visitor regulations interact to maintain the integrity of remembrance while accommodating rising tourist demand.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative comparative case-study design (Yin, 2018) to examine how two emblematic dark tourism sites—Gallipoli Peninsula Historical National Park in Türkiye and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in Poland—manage visitor experience. This approach is particularly effective as it allows for an in-depth contextual analysis while simultaneously identifying transferable patterns in management strategies across

different national and cultural settings (Stake, 2013). The analysis is guided by Stone's (2006) Dark Tourism Spectrum, which provides a conceptual framework for assessing the "darkness" of each site and its implications for governance and visitor management.

3.2 Case Selection

The two cases were selected through purposive sampling for their global recognition and contrasting stages of management maturity. Gallipoli represents an emerging management framework, having been placed on UNESCO's Tentative World Heritage List in 2014 (UNESCO, 2014) and recently strengthening efforts to coordinate commemoration and tourism. Auschwitz–Birkenau represents a mature and internationally benchmarked model, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979 (UNESCO, 1979) and hosting more than two million visitors annually (Auschwitz–Birkenau State Museum, 2023). This contrast enables an analysis of how differing historical and political contexts shape visitor-management practices.

3.3 Data Sources

Confirming the scope of this study, the research relies exclusively on documentary evidence drawn from publicly accessible and peer-reviewed materials:

- **Official documents and policies:** UNESCO World Heritage nomination dossiers and management guidelines for Gallipoli (UNESCO, 2014) and Auschwitz (UNESCO, 1979); The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum's visitor regulations (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2023); and Turkish national legislation relating to the Gallipoli Historical National Park.
- **Secondary academic literature:** Peer-reviewed journal articles and monographs addressing dark tourism management, visitor ethics, and heritage governance (Light, 2017; Miles, 2002; Sharpley & Stone, 2009).
- **Supplementary grey literature:** Government reports and site management plans where peer-reviewed sources are limited.

3.4 Analytical Procedure

All documentary sources were subjected to a systematic qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014). The process involved:

1. **Deductive coding** based on themes derived from Stone's (2006) spectrum and from the dark tourism management literature: governance structures, visitor regulations, interpretive strategies, and ethical considerations (Sharpley & Stone, 2009; Martini & Buda, 2020).
2. **Inductive coding** to capture emergent themes such as digital ticketing or crowd-management innovations.
3. **Cross-case comparison** to identify convergences and divergences in management strategies between Gallipoli and Auschwitz–Birkenau.

This dual coding approach allows for both theoretical alignment and sensitivity to context-specific findings.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Triangulation across multiple documentary sources enhanced the credibility of findings (Stake, 2013). To ensure reliability, only materials from recognized international organizations (e.g., UNESCO) and peer-reviewed

academic publications were included. A transparent audit trail of document selection and coding decisions was maintained.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

As the study analyses publicly available documents and published scholarly work, no human subjects were involved, and institutional ethics approval was not required. All sources are accurately cited to respect intellectual property and maintain academic integrity.

While a document-based approach ensures reliability, the author acknowledges its limitations. This methodology cannot capture the 'lived experience' of visitors or the informal ways in which management rules might be negotiated or resisted on the ground. Future ethnographic research would be required to explore these dimensions.

4. Findings

4.1 Governance and Planning

Gallipoli Peninsula Historical National Park

The governance of Gallipoli is a state-led framework primarily concerned with preserving national heritage and facilitating large-scale international commemorative events. First established as a national park in 1973, its inclusion on UNESCO's Tentative World Heritage List in 2014 prompted a more formalized approach to its management (UNESCO, 2014). Oversight is provided by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Official documents emphasize the dual objectives of preserving war cemeteries and memorials while managing the intense logistical demands of annual ANZAC Day commemorations. The relative youth of its formal management plan highlight a system that is still consolidating its strategies for balancing heritage conservation with rising visitor numbers.

Auschwitz–Birkenau Memorial and Museum

In sharp contrast, Auschwitz-Birkenau operates under a long-established, institutionalized model of a global memorial. Established as a state museum in 1947 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979, its governance is vested in the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (UNESCO, 1979). Museum reports and UNESCO documents reveal a mature management framework with a long history of investment in conservation science, international educational programs, and the strict preservation of original camp structures (Cole, 2000; Miles, 2002). This long history of formal planning contrasts sharply with the more recent and still-evolving management structures at Gallipoli.

4.2 Visitor Management Rules

Gallipoli

Visitor management at Gallipoli is overwhelmingly ritual-dominant and event-focused. Official documents show that planning peaks dramatically around the annual ANZAC Day commemorations (24-25 April), with strategies focused on seasonal crowd control through temporary traffic regulations and cooperation with Australian and New Zealand authorities (UNESCO, 2014). While general park regulations exist (e.g., prohibitions

on littering), the analysis found no single, detailed visitor code of conduct comparable to Auschwitz's. For the everyday visitor outside of major events, conduct and photography are largely self-regulated, placing the emphasis on the visitor's personal sense of reverence rather than institutional enforcement.

Auschwitz–Birkenau

Conversely, visitor management at Auschwitz-Birkenau is explicitly rule-dominant and systematically structured. The "Visitor Regulations and Code of Conduct" is a detailed, publicly available document that governs the visitor experience (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2023). Key provisions include mandatory timed entry tickets, required guided tours for organized groups, restrictions on photography in sensitive areas (like Block 4 with the display of human hair), and a strong recommendation that visitors be at least 14 years old. These rules are not merely logistical; they are designed to actively produce a solemn atmosphere and have evolved over decades to manage annual visitor numbers exceeding two million (Miles, 2002).

4.3 Interpretive and Commemorative Practices

Gallipoli

Interpretive materials at Gallipoli—including monuments and memorial panels—emphasize narratives of national sacrifice and shared remembrance. The UNESCO nomination notes the site's unique role in creating a transnational commemorative space for Türkiye, Australia, and New Zealand (UNESCO, 2014). The primary rituals, such as the ANZAC Day dawn service, are highly structured military ceremonies that combine national pride with expressions of shared loss. However, these highly formalized rituals stand in contrast to the comparatively informal everyday visitor experience, which lacks prescribed moments of reflection outside of major commemorations.

Auschwitz–Birkenau

Interpretation at Auschwitz focuses squarely on Holocaust education and remembrance of the victims. Museum documents describe a pedagogical approach that uses preserved camp structures and curated exhibitions to confront visitors with the historical realities of genocide (Cole, 2000). Crucially, ritualized practices—such as moments of silence at the Death Wall or the laying of wreaths at the ruins of the crematoria—are reinforced by the museum's code of conduct and embedded into the daily visitor experience, not confined to specific anniversaries. This fusion of strict rules and daily ritual firmly positions Auschwitz at the "darkest," most educational end of Stone's (2006) spectrum.

4.4 Comparative Synthesis

The analysis reveals a fundamental divergence in management philosophy and execution. To synthesize these findings, the following Table 1 provides a direct comparison:

Table 1. A Synthesis of Commemorative Models: Gallipoli and Auschwitz-Birkenau

Feature	Gallipoli Peninsula Historical National Park	Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum
Governance Maturity	Evolving: Formal management plan is recent (post-2014), still consolidating.	Mature: Decades-old, institutionalized framework (UNESCO site since 1979).
Visitor Management Model	Ritual-Dominant & Event-Focused: Centered on seasonal ANZAC Day crowd control.	Rule-Dominant & Systematic: Enforced by a detailed, year-round code of conduct.
Primary Rituals	Temporally Concentrated: Highly structured ceremonies on specific commemorative days.	Embedded in Daily Operations: Moments of silence and reflection are part of the standard visit.
Narrative Focus	National & Transnational Commemoration: Emphasizes sacrifice, national identity, and shared loss.	Universal & Educational: Emphasizes victim memory and lessons on genocide for humanity.

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the management of dark tourism sites is not a neutral, technical exercise but a powerful act of narrative construction. By interpreting the comparative data through the literature, this section explains how the divergent approaches at Gallipoli and Auschwitz-Birkenau are shaped by their unique historical contexts and commemorative purposes, and considers the broader implications for policy and scholarship.

5.1 Governance, Rules, and the Production of Solemnity

The findings confirm that governance maturity directly correlates with regulatory sophistication. Auschwitz, with over seventy years of institutional development and its early UNESCO World Heritage status, exhibits a robust management framework that translates ethical imperatives into enforceable visitor policies (Logan & Reeves, 2009). Its detailed code of conduct—with rules on timed entry, photography, and age limits—is a powerful tool for producing a specific atmosphere of solemnity (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2023). This rule-dominant approach reflects the site's universalist mission, creating a space of cosmopolitan memory that transcends national identities and speaks to a global audience about human rights.

In contrast, Gallipoli's more recently formalized governance results in a less rigid regulatory environment (UNESCO, 2014). Its reliance on event-specific crowd control rather than a detailed, year-round code of conduct is not necessarily a failing, but a reflection of its primary identity as a national park and a site of pilgrimage. Here, a sense of reverence is largely assumed to be inherent in the visitor—particularly those from Türkiye, Australia, and New Zealand—rather than being actively enforced through a comprehensive set of rules.

5.2 Rituals, Remembrance, and the Politics of National Memory

The comparison confirms Stone's (2006) proposition that sites can be located along a continuum of "darkness," and it shows that this position is actively shaped by management choices. Auschwitz-Birkenau clearly occupies the "darkest" end; its mission is explicitly educational, and its embedded rituals, like moments of silence, reinforce the

moral gravity of the site (Miles, 2002). These practices support a narrative focused on victimhood and the prevention of future atrocities.

Gallipoli represents a "mid-dark" site, where rituals serve a different function. Its temporally concentrated ceremonies, such as the ANZAC Day dawn service, are highly performative acts of national memory politics (UNESCO, 2014). They are designed to forge and reinforce national identity through the commemoration of heroic sacrifice. This management of ritual is essential for its function as a foundational site for multiple nations but results in a visitor experience where solemnity can be blended with national pride. This finding supports research showing that socio-historical context profoundly shapes the management strategies adopted at sites of memory (Light, 2017; Martini & Buda, 2020). The need for management to actively structure this emotional encounter is crucial to avoid trivialization (Kidron, 2013; Brown, 2015).

5.3 Policy Implications for Evolving Sites of Memory

Several lessons emerge for heritage managers, particularly for a site like Gallipoli that is balancing its national commemorative role with the demands of global heritage tourism.

- **Codified Behavioral Guidelines:** Gallipoli could adapt elements of Auschwitz's detailed code of conduct to protect the site's solemnity year-round, making explicit the behavioral expectations for a diverse international audience.

- **Year-Round Interpretation:** Beyond the ANZAC ceremonies, developing more structured tours or interpretive signage that embeds remembrance rituals more consistently could enrich the everyday visitor experience.

- **Formalized Stakeholder Collaboration:** Creating formal mechanisms that include international partners (e.g., Australian and New Zealand heritage bodies) in year-round planning would strengthen the site's transnational character and ensure multiple narratives are respected. These recommendations align with UNESCO's call for management plans that integrate conservation, education, and visitor management (UNESCO, 1979, 2014).

5.4 Contribution to Dark Tourism Scholarship

This study extends the dark tourism literature in three ways. First, it provides a cross-national comparative analysis, a dimension often lacking in existing research (Causevic & Lynch, 2011). Second, it shows how governance maturity and international recognition influence the codification of visitor conduct. Third, it highlights the role of ritualization as an operational tool for translating ethical remembrance into daily visitor practice, thereby reinforcing Stone's (2006) conceptual framework.

6. Conclusion

This comparative analysis of the Gallipoli Peninsula Historical National Park and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum demonstrates that the management of dark tourism sites is a profound act of narrative and ethical construction. The study's central argument—that visitor experience is shaped by a framework of rules and rituals—is clearly evidenced in the divergent paths these two sites have taken. The findings show that Auschwitz-Birkenau occupies the "darkest" end of Stone's (2006) spectrum, with its explicit educational and commemorative

mission supported by a highly developed, rule-dominant visitor-management system. Gallipoli, by contrast, represents a "mid-dark" site, where national and transnational remembrance coexist with heritage tourism, and where the management structure is ritual-dominant and still evolving, a process catalyzed by its 2014 UNESCO Tentative List recognition.

The findings underscore two overarching insights. First, governance maturity is the critical factor that enables the codification of ethical remembrance into daily operations, as exemplified by Auschwitz's decades of institutional development. Second, ritualization emerges as a key mechanism for translating remembrance into a tangible visitor experience, whether it is embedded in routine practice as at Auschwitz or concentrated in annual commemorations as at Gallipoli. For heritage managers in Türkiye, the analysis points to several actionable recommendations: adopting clearer year-round behavioral guidelines, enhancing interpretive content outside of peak events, and formalizing stakeholder collaboration with international partners. These steps would help embed remembrance rituals more deeply into the everyday experience of the site, strengthening its transnational character while accommodating growing visitor numbers.

This study contributes to dark tourism scholarship by providing a document-based, cross-national comparison of management practices—an area that remains underexplored (Causevic & Lynch, 2011). It reinforces the utility of Stone's spectrum for evaluating how management strategies shape the ethical encounter with difficult heritage and shows how national memory politics mediate the translation of global heritage principles into site-specific policies. Future research could expand this comparative framework to other sites of memory—such as other First World War battlefields or former political prison memorials—to test the transferability of these findings. Furthermore, ethnographic studies are needed to explore how visitors themselves experience and negotiate these carefully managed landscapes of rules and rituals. In doing so, scholars can further refine our understanding of how the practice of remembrance is governed in an increasingly globalized world.

Acknowledgement

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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