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An Explorative Note on Tourism Development along Former War Front Lines

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ABSTRACT

Current research about the pro-active role of tourism in valorizing war memories and landscapes still is in an explorative stage; learning from case studies, all marked by their political context, in time and space, and mainly describing local and/or regional key issues. Obviously, creating landscapes of memories for contemporary uses and visitors' experiences implies a trans-disciplinary understanding of the process of changing values (heritage landscapes) and of the intrinsic dynamics of tourism development. Shifting values and creativity in linking histories of war sites and their narratives with places and people today, leads to branding 'sites of memories' in the mindset of residents and visitors. We briefly scan four very different examples of border areas with a war history, that became landmarks on the tourist' maps today. The challenge for tourism development in former war related sites is to identify the dynamics - in time and space - to assess the political and economic forces and to identify shifts in the process of remembrance and valorization of war heritage sites, in terms of interests in war memories, narratives and experiences. These are now strategically integrated in national, regional and local tourism development planning.

Historical military front zones, political borders in past wars, presently marked as tourism destinations, are on the research agenda of 'War and Tourism'. The observations below on four different former war border zones with their specific landmarks and memoryscapes, are inspiring for current tourism development. Four different war border zones were briefly explored "The Great Wall in China", "The Roman Limes", The "Wire of Death" in the First World War and the "Iron Curtain" in the Cold War. These observations can inspire future research on tourismification of war heritage.

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Introduction: Revival of War Stories and Memories

War narratives and memories became key resources in the development and current valorisation of many cultural landscapes, widely supported by media and tourism agencies. The search for creating new experiences for visitors and a sustainable livelihood for local communities is anchored in war history and geopolitics, marked in the landscape, labelled as heritage sites, cited by historians and writers and now valorised as territorial cultural capital. Numerous historical war sites and landscapes are branded by strong physical markers (e.g. more or less authentic or reconstructed). In fact, most tangible testimonies of war are fully erased from the scene, from the maps and from the living memories.

Marketing practices in cultural tourism today are no longer focused on 'sightseeing' as a core product, but shifted to facilitating new, unique and integrated experiences for visitors and travellers. Creating opportunities to discover, enjoy, participate or learn about cultural identities and heritage of regions and sites visited, has become a mission. Since visitor experiences are a key issue in future cultural tourism, research efforts need to focus on the internal and external factors influencing 'experience-scapes' (Caru and Cova, 2003; Ryan, 2011). Current marketing strategies to promote war memories and experiences on site, become questionable: how to select, to include or exclude, to restore or to destruct (Ashworth, 2009)? So far, the divergence in interpretations of war landscapes, in terms of valorising war memories as 'national, political or ethnic heritage' and the present interest to claim this as potential tourism resources, has rarely been studied empirically in an international context (Hartmann 2014).

Two dimensions—distance in time and proximity in geopolitical space— are assumed to be relevant to understand the process of tourismification of war sites. Emotional affinity, professional knowledge and actual interest in war sites and stories are important dimensions. The results of an international web survey in 2012 about the memories of Great War (1914-1918) support the relevance of the variables mentioned above (Jansen-Verbeke and George, 2013, 2015). The impact of distance in *time and geo-space* on the tourism potential of historical war sites and stories is merely a hypothesis '*the further away in history, the less emotional affinity with war memories and experiences are*'. The time-distance factor might explain -to some extent- the often limited general knowledge about past wars and their historical context (with exception of historians). This leads to a selective and induced process of valorising historical war heritage, scenes, sites and stories of the past (Jansen-Verbeke, 2013). Scars of the past and shared opportunities today, support the trend of re-creating landscapes and staged

settings for cultural experiences. Obviously, strategies in tourism development strongly rely on stories and images, re-enactments of past events, legends and myths included, and above all, on communication skills and techniques (Egberts and Bosma, 2014).

A second hypothesis refers to the *geo-political* context of former war sites which could explain a variable degree of awareness and connectivity, divergent interpretations, emotions and experiences regarding past wars. For example, the Roman history is much closer in the mindset of many Europeans than the wars in medieval times in the Mongolian plains. Geographically rooted war histories offer a wide spectrum of tourism opportunities, often by creating memory landscapes, even with several time layers of war artefacts. (e.g. the Trojan war sites - 1184 BC). The challenge is to identify changes induced by the tourism vocation of historical war sites and this by analysing, not only conceptually but also empirically, the interdependency of cultural, social, economic and political processes. Many new tourism projects and memoryscapes based on, or inspired by past war settings emerge in which national and regional governments, local and international stakeholders play an important role. Geographically comparative and balanced research is required to understand the complex relationship of the 21st century nations and people with tangible and intangible war heritage of previous centuries.

Mapping 'intangible heritage' implies an inspired dialogue between the virtual past and the experienced present (Jansen-Verbeke, 2010). The exercise of mapping visits to memorial sites and events of the Great War, based on the results of a World Heritage Tourism Research Network (WHTRN) survey (2012), indicates the complexity of post-war memoryscapes. The process from mental maps to actual visitation patterns is a key issue in the research of war-based tourismscapes (Vanneste *et al.,* 2016). In addition, a critical reflex regarding the interpretations of war stories is needed. War memories are intentionally revived or (re)created today by various media channels - literature, film, theatre and arts - and not in the least by the widespread creation of visitor centres, museums and memorial events (Kovacs and Osborne, 2014; www.whtrn.ca). These impulses affect the way we see and understand signs and symbols of past war scenes and how this is eventually communicated in the perspective of tourism development (Waterton and Watson, 2014). Research regarding tourismscaping of war sites implies the introduction of new concepts to link past and present, heritage and memorials, in time and place. Writing *'the biography of war sites'* is a new challenge indeed for interdisciplinary research, policy makers, planners and marketers (Sörensen and Dacia Viejo, 2015).

The assumption that war tourism in and to former border zones or frontlines promotes a mind-setting of peace is definitely under-researched and lacks empirical evidence (Butler and Suntikul, 2013). In fact conflict heritage attractions along border areas do not disappear, as observed along the Israeli borders, but can change in terms of experiences and dynamics (Mansfeld and Korman, 2015). The tourism vocation of war heritage landscapes, of borders in wartime and of frontlines between enemies, is inducing new dynamics and generates selective memoryscapes and staged experiences. This exploration of tourism development along former war frontlines focusses on four

distinct time-space settings of war memories, illustrating the opportunity spectra to link past and present.

1. The Great Chinese Wall "Legend Tourism Works"

This unique military structure is the largest and probably worldwide the oldest (220 BC) landmark - a historical defense system-, including miles and miles (6000 km) of robust walls and fortifications in strategic places, perfectly integrated in the landscape. A great miracle of construction in human history! Because of the scale, the geographical pattern, its symbolic value and the rich resource of legends, myths and historical storytelling, these historical landscapes can offer unique cultural experiences for visitors from all over the world. The Great Wall is the national spiritual symbol of China and a top attraction, initially for adventurers, nowadays a magnet for mass tourism. The management challenges regarding heritage conservation, preservation and valorization are complex. Natural scenic qualities, but also political selection criteria, explain the concentration of visitors in specific locations (e.g. the robustness of the architecture) and, above all, in terms of accessibility.

The annual visitation to the Badaling and Mutianyu areas combined is 10,720,000 in 2012 (UNWTO 2013). The most visited sites on the Chinese Great Wall are the closest ones to Beijing (about 60km). Badaling Great Wall Zone was selected for tourism development for its symbolic power and a most strategic location; over 8 million visitors in 2012. A second highway was under construction in 2015 and a high-speed rail connection as well. In addition to the conservation policies for the military heritage site, since 1987 on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the need to develop tourism management and development plans became a high priority. 'The Great Wall National Park of Badaling' area was recently created, based on joint ventures with local governments.

Clearly, this historical cultural landscape and its authentic setting offers a rich spectrum of experiences to visitors. The tourism vocation is beyond discussion, when listing the numerous innovative plans for this area. The development of spectacular shows on the Wall, renovation of a historical fortress village, building of an inner transportation system and last, but surely not least, a holiday resort area (67 ha). The Great Wall show is seen as a communication medium for story telling on the rich heritage of China (night time show, spectacular visual effects, etc.) The rebuilding of the Chadao village as the main entrance and visitor centre, allows for more attractions and activities in a combination of intangible heritage with the souvenir industry, shopping, museum and exhibitions, adapted programs for special interest groups, re-enactment of military events. The overall improvement and transformation of older scenic sites along the wall is to provide the visitors with high-quality experiences. All ingredients are there, in an unique and authentic setting. Can the intellectual links with the historical landscape survive the changing 'sense of place' when becoming an exciting holiday resort,

including health and wellness facilities, an art center, attractions, re-enactments and various shows?

Current managers are aware of the risks of this entertainment policy no longer touching the intellectual and emotional expectations, and of the threats of a large-scale tourism development plan, which implies:

• Concentration of crowds of visitors, mainly in spring and summer months, in time of arrival and duration of stay and in this space, being the closest accessible sites on the wall (for visitors coming from Beijing)

• Traffic congestions and (over)crowded attractions

• The average length of stay is less than 2 hours

• Poor management policies

The problems risk to increase the gap between expectations and experiences of visitors. Yet, all conditions to offer multi–facetted experiences in an unique setting are met. Management challenges with this type of World Heritage Sites are indeed complex, not only regarding heritage conservation, preservation and valorisation, but mainly in terms of tourism development, monitoring and initiating strategies to cope with (mass) tourism facilities in the most accessible sections of the Great Wall.

Mayor investments in the first development phase include a spectacular visual show, 'Memory of the Great Wall,' the most compelling night time show in China, on a location along the wall, with spectacular visual effects, light sculptures, holograms and 3D techniques. In addition, the renovation of a historical fortress village and the construction of an inner transportation system are in progress. In a second stage, the development of a 67-hectare vacation resort nearby is planned to bring the original Great Wall to life.

The main objective to develop the **Great Wall Resort** is to cope with more visitors and create incentives for a longer stay by offering high quality hotels, a Great Wall Art Center and many more attractive options. The traditional Chadao village will be rebuilt as the entrance and visitor center of the National Park. With a combination of intangible cultural heritage and shopping, museum clusters, children's programs and re-enactment shows, the idea is to re-stage the military village in full respect of history, exposing the visitors with the spirit of the place and the soul of the Chinese people. Legends and cultural entertainment are the impulses for high quality experiences in this unique world heritage scene.

Photo 1 *Experience-scapes along the Great Chinese Wall: Opportunities for visiting the past*

Photo 2 *Threats : Carrying capacity of sites and overcrowding- variable experiences*

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Photo 3 *The Great Wall Art Center (planned)*

Photo 4 *Museums along The Great Wall (planned)*

Photo 5 *Re-enactments on site; successful public attractions*

2. Visiting the Past, Meeting the Limes[1]

The archaeological remains of the Limes, the frontiers of the Roman Empire, starts in Western Europe and runs through the Middle East all the way to North Africa. Several archaeological sites along the Roman borderline are marked on the World Heritage map, which includes Hadrian's wall (in the UK), and selected sites in the Netherlands, Germany and Central Eastern Europe (17 in total). The nomination of (parts) of the Limes as "World Heritage" reconnects the history of man-made landscapes, including settlements, rivers, defence lines and fortifications.

For centuries, Hadrian's Wall (UK) remained an iconic landscape, mainly appreciated by hikers along the Hadrian's Wall Path. A walk of 135 km from the west coast (Segedunum by Walls end) to the east coast, following the Hadrian's Wall, passes Roman settlements and forts with attractions such as the House stead Roman Fort, managed by Northumberland National Park, and more visitor centers and locations for events managed by the English Heritage and National Trust.

Photo 6 *Part of Hadrian Wall, East of Cawfields quarry, Northumberland*

There is 'history' every step of the way in this scenic landscape! All along this historical borderline, numerous excavations, larger and smaller sites, were mapped. The current interest to develop these Roman heritage sites for cultural and educational visitor centres is remarkable, so is the creativity to develop a strong synergy between tangible and intangible heritage. In the Netherlands and Germany, the importance and ingenuity of water transport along the Rhine river and other water management systems, are well remembered, with reconstructions in several locations, museums, educational centres, workshops on archaeological sites, replica boats, etc.

Photo 7 *Replica of a Roman river boat on the Mosel (Germany): A touristic Roman experience*

As the ambition of public and private cultural agencies to promote the Limes and its Roman heritage becomes more tangible and effective, the connection with borders and rivers as transport axes (and water management systems), becomes a crucial historical endowment. The Roman defense structures re-discovered and re-constructed all along the Limes are valued as important heritage resources in the cultural landscapes today and successfully branded on the 21st century tourist maps.
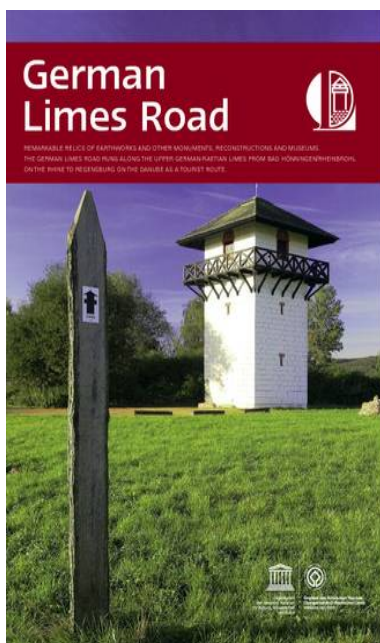
Photo 8 *Roman markers in the landscape today*

Photo 9 *Roman reconstructed Castellum (Saalburg- Germany)*

The military narratives about Roman armies, emperors and soldiers, victories and lost battles were transferred from one generation to the other, supported by many artifacts, writings and maps in museums. There is a time gap of almost 18 centuries since the end of the Roman Empire and the present valorization of various elements of the Roman (military) heritage. Roman heritage, tangible in some sites, mostly intangible, is being translated into contemporary projects for education, entertainment, events and numerous workshops in archaeological sites. The glorious deeds of the Romans are well known and famous battles are re–enacted in arenas and amphitheaters. The popularity of re-enactments is growing. Festivals with a historical theme can now be found on many event agenda. The roman centurions play their role: "When the past comes to life" (Van der Plaetsen, 2014).

To many Europeans, the story of the Roman Empire, the wars and the battles are part of the educational curriculum - cradle of our culture. Numerous sites, fortresses, castella and villas, roads and bridges, amphitheaters, aquaducts and city walls are marked on the 21st tourist map, today using the historical roots in Roman time as a selling point for cultural experiences with an educational vocation. The fascination for the Roman heritage seems to be reviving in many places all along the Limes archeological sites, sometimes with limited tangible heritage, but as a rule, rich in narratives.

Photo 10 *Archeon Theme park - Alphen aan de Rijn (Nl), Xanten in Germany et al. Edutainment for different target groups: a successful formula.*

The Roman heritage of the Limes, both tangible and intangible, offers multiple opportunities for educational tourism mainly in historical sites, infrastructures and artifacts linked with wars, battlefields, military history, witnesses of a progressing civilization from two centuries ago (Egberts and Bosma, 2014).

3. World War I (1914-1918): A fenced borderline between War and Peace

The 'wire of death' was an electric fence along the border of Belgium and the Netherlands during   the First World War.

The Centennial of the First World War '1914-1918' is an important impulse for creating war memoryscapes all over the Western Front, former battlefields in Northern France and Belgium. Geographically balanced and comparative research reveals the complexity and diversity of the present memories and the way nations and people valorize tangible and intangible war heritage of the previous century. New tourism landscapes emerge in which the interests of national and regional governments, local and global stakeholders play an important role (Butler and Suntikul, 2013; Jansen-Verbeke and George, 2013). The hype of re-creating war memories can be questioned in this 'borderline' case study, the motives of stakeholders, and residents in particular.

The high voltage fence between the Netherlands and Belgium (1915-1918) is yet another example of a reconstructed war memoryscape - a repressed memories recall. The lack of tangible traces and officially recorded information on historical facts was compensated by narratives, oral legends, real and imagined stories about the 'Wire of Death', the mystery of electricity for a rural population at that time! This specific chapter of WWI could easily have been deleted from the war archives, a local-regional story with modest infrastructure and hardly competitive with the current boom of war tourism to the battle fields in Flanders and Northern France (Vanneste, 2013). In fact, fenced borders as war relicts are not unique; comparative geo-political cases were registered in several places (e.g. Slovenia-Italy / Hungary-Austria). Most fences of WWI disappeared soon after the ending of the war.

The Netherlands were neutral during World War I, so the Belgian-Dutch border (about 450 km) was a space between war and peace. Belgium was occupied territory. The German occupiers could not accept the fact that about one million Belgians fled to the

Netherlands to escape from war. Amongst these fugitives were spies, smugglers and potential workers in the Allied war industry. More than 30,000 Belgian war volunteers succeeded in going to the Netherlands, Great Britain and France with the intention to join the Belgian army on the Western Front (behind the Yser river). In addition, the Allied Intelligence services were based in the Netherlands, operating with a network of more than 6000 agents in occupied Belgium. The cross-border postal networks were very well organized. And of course, clever smuggling methods were established. These routes also allowed German soldiers to desert. Belgians, Dutchmen and Germans smuggled because basic foodstuff was insufficiently available in Belgium. All these activities inspired the German occupiers in April-May 1915, to construct an electric fence all along the Belgian-Dutch border - a high voltage (2000 V) wire from the coast at the West side of Belgium to the suburbs of Aachen (Germany) in the East. Initially, in the zones close to the main roads, barriers were placed and soldiers patrolled, but gradually every passage was closed off. This strategy, the 'Wire of Death,' also served the purpose of the Netherlands wanting to maintain their neutrality. The fence helped the Dutch against all illegal intrusions that could harm their neutrality.
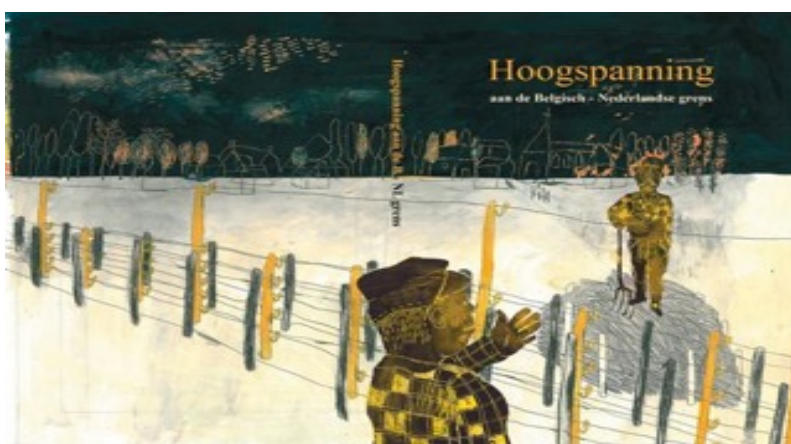
Photo's 11 -12 *Electrified fence between occupied Belgium and neutral Dutch territory (built in 1915- destructed in November 1918)*

The mainly rural population in this border territory was cut off from family, relatives, schools, church, sometimes even from their own agricultural fields and meadows. All cross border passage and the system of permits, for a few hours only, was under severe control. The fence was guarded, day and night, mostly by the *Landsturm* guardsmen and petrol (Vanneste, 2013). Official registers of the number killed by the high voltage wire when trying to cross or shot by the patrols near the fence are missing. Hardly any German reports on the border control were preserved. The Belgian resistance developed clever strategies to cross over (spies, military informers, post carriers, smugglers, etc.). Clandestine postal networks were very inventive and active; hundreds of thousands of letters for and from the soldiers at the western frontline crossed this border. Probably the most commonly used method was bribery of the German guards or patrols near the border. There were also more active techniques to confront the fence and the guards, and some people indeed succeeded by sneaking over, under or between the wires. However, more than 1,000 persons have been listed as having died at the fence, whether by electrocution or by having been shot by the guards (Vanneste, 2014.) After the Armistice signed in November 1918, the fence was immediately -within a few days- demolished by the locals, leaving no traces of the deadly wires. The different materials used for constructing the fence were most welcome for the farmers in the difficult post war days (Vanneste, 2013).

Re-constructed memoryscapes

In the wake of the Centenary hype (2014-2018), there is an emerging interest of local communities to (re)identify war heritage in their region, to publish and promote local stories and to revalorize any tangible artifact or exciting narratives, thus creating a 'landscape of memories'. This bottom-up revival of interest is stimulated by an intensive media attention for the Great War, despite the fact that hardly any tangible marker of this regional war story could be traced in the landscape today. Inspired by the media hype about the Great War Centennial, particularly on the Western Front (Belgium-France border), the ambition of various agencies in Flanders and in the South of the Netherlands grew to focus on the 'Wire of Death' as 'the war icon' for this border zone. The challenge was, and still is, to catch the attention of a wider public and to link interesting war stories with specific locations in a mainly rural landscape. This is of course very unlike the Western Front zone in Flanders where numerous tangible war relicts and artifacts, battlefields, cemeteries and memorials are attracting numerous visitors worldwide (Jansen-Verbeke and George, 2015).

The most realistic way to promote this regional war episode was to recreate a tangible testimony in an authentic landscape. Integrating a cycling path was the best option, supported by storytelling information panels thus linking local narratives with artefacts in the landscape, and with reconstructed 'Schalthaüse' (sources of electricity), guardian

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shelters and a few memorial milestones. Unlike in other border zones with a war history, this regional, cross border initiative is an interesting example of a bottom-up revival of war memories.

Photo 13 *Guardian shelters along the 'Wire of Death'*

Photo 14 *A well organized cycling route along the former fence tracks*

Photo 15 "Creating" War Memoryscapes

4. The Iron Curtain: Border between West and East Europe

"From [Stettin](#) in the [Baltic](#) to [Trieste](#) in the [Adriatic](#), an iron [curtain](#) has descended across the Continent."
Winston Churchill, March 1946

At the end of World War II (1945) it was decided to divide the German territories into four Allied occupation zones. The Soviets took the eastern half, while the other Allies took the western. This four-section occupation model of Berlin dates from June 1945.

Photo 16 *The Iron Curtain construction between communist Eastern and capitalist Western Europe .*

When the Western Allies created the BRD (Deutsche Bundes Republik) in 1949, the way was open for the Eastern parts of Germany (occupied by the communist Soviets) to establish the DDR (Deutsche Demokratische Republik). This was the beginning of a major migration flow (2.6 million people in 1961) from Eastern Germany but also from Poland and Czechoslovakia to West Berlin. For this reason, in 1961 the communist government decided to construct the Berlin Wall. East and West Berliners were separated by a 45-km long wall, 10 meters wide and linked with barbed wires and military control posts. Until today, the images of the Cold War remain deeply anchored in the mind of many people worldwide.

Photo 17 *The Brandenburger Gate in Berlin: a strong landmark and symbol of the Cold War/ Source : Encyclopedia Britannica, Iron Curtain 2016* `

Starting with the communists' abandonment of the one-party rule in Eastern Berlin, came the physical destruction of the 'Iron wall'. The fall of the Berlin Wall (9 November 1989) ended the Iron Curtain tragedies and the Cold War, to be remembered as a dark historic episode. Until today, the Berlin Wall remains one of the most powerful and enduring symbols of the Cold War and on top of visitors' itineraries.

Photo 18 *Scars of the past = Tourist attractions today. East side gallery painted by 118 artists in 1990*

Photo 19 *The Berlin Wall remains a crucial tourism resource for Berlin*

Memoryscapes of the Iron Curtain

The history of the Cold War dividing Western and Eastern Europe, is much closer in the public mind than is the case in the previously commented examples of war memoryscapes. Many living testimonies of eye witnesses, multiple landmarks, both in the urban landscapes as well as in the countryside, keep the memories alive. Narratives, books and images such as the film *'Das Leben der Andere,'* released in 2006 (translated *Lives of Others*) gave strong impulses for visits to Berlin. The Brandenburger Gate, the Berliner Wall Memorial, Checkpoint Charlie, the rebuilt Reichstag and the new Holocaust Memorial, became important tourism hotspots. Several tangible testimonies were preserved or restored and hold the DNA of war-related tourism to Berlin. An important added-value to this cultural experience-scape is the 'Museum Insel', a cluster of outstanding museums which is an UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1999.

Photo 20 *Subtlety of the tourism industry …*

Throughout recent political, social, economic and demographic changes in Berlin, memories of the cold war remain very much alive in the minds of the people and visible in the post war urban landscape. The Geography Department at the Humboldt University, located in the heart of Berlin was, and still is, leading in urban field studies and post-war development planning for the new Berlin metropolitan area in the light of the 200-year tradition of Alexander von Humboldt's holistic approach.

Compared to the previous examples, this recent 'war and tourism' development model suggests more emotional experiences. However, the hypothesis that proximity to war, in time and in space, also stands for a higher emotional involvement, would require confirmation from empirical survey data.

Photo 21 *Artistic Expression of War Memories (Berlin)*

Conclusion: Emerging research tracks in the field of 'War and Tourism'

This brief sketch of four war memoryscapes, marked on the tourist' maps today, yet different in terms of time and space contexts, indicates a growing interest in war narratives and (reconstructed) war sites. The actual mental and tangible connection between 'war and tourism' is a key issue. However, to create and promote tourist attractions based on war-related heritage resources is a sensitive exercise. This requires the development of some core accepted definitions, terminology, values and concepts that could bridge the gap between preservation of cultural heritage and tourism business. (Tunbridge, Ashworth, Graham, 2012)

The move from military history towards interdisciplinary views on war history implies a cross-examination of various projects; it is no longer sufficient to have descriptions of former war sites and tangible heritage resources, but an integrated analysis of the process of reconstructing memories is required (Winter, 1995). This process is by definition selective: 'what and how' to remember, 'how' to balance personal remembrance and collective memories and 'what' to include or exclude. Above all, national and/or political interpretations of former war landscapes need to be framed in an international context and based on a consensus about historical facts (Scates, 2006).

The interaction between visitors and locals, between enterprises and customers can be staged, organized in time, space and content, and promoted. This implies more understanding of the DNA of war experiences, including the shift from a traditional emphasis on 'sightseeing' of war heritage sites and visiting museums to discovering and connecting with intangible heritage resources -the narratives, the stories with local and social notes (Iles, 2008). In the process of commodifying war heritage, norms and values cannot be objectively justified; they are rooted in a social concensus (Dunkley, Morgan and Westood, 2011; Salazar, 2012).

In each of the four sites (briefly sketched above) the main motive of local, national, public or private agencies is to revalorize war heritage and attract visitors. Common targets of local enterprises and site managers are to generate economic benefits from regional war heritage (tangible and intangible). Intensifying international cultural exchanges by developing sustainable tourismscapes is a main target in many development planning of former war sites and landscapes. However, the mission statements and the spectrum of experiences are diverse. In some historical or reconstructed sites, the educational experience is programmed, whereas in many other war memorial sites, cemeteries, museums, a contemplative silence is the code of conduct.

The ongoing tourismification[2] of war heritage, leads to an increasing concern about the integrity of experiences and the carrying capacity of some historical war sites, now on the tourist' map and agenda (Hartmann, 2014). Calls for an ethical code are popping up (cfr. UNWTO, 2014) regarding the commodification of war heritage, icons and artifacts in the souvenir industry, a market-driven development. Obviously the commercialisation of war narratives for cultural media purposes (film, digital shows, musicals, literature, re-enactments, etc.) became a booming business.

Tourismification of war heritage (tangible and intangible) is not limited to some geo-locations only and in addition, the attraction of war sites is variable. The quality of visitors' experiences, in situ, is even becoming a concern in overcrowded hotspots; visitor management and site planning have gradually been introduced. In some war memorial sites, there are signals about intrusion of visitors in the daily biotope of the local community, whereas other examples of friendships between locals and Australian visitors to the cemeteries in Fromelles (Fr) and others have been established as well (Winter, 2011).

So far, research in this field tends to be characterized by small-scale and descriptive case studies mainly, with limited communication about survey results, hence with a limited accumulation of knowledge and insights. The future of war heritage tourism (and its impact on the hospitality sector and the souvenir industry) is in hands of public and private agencies, the tourism sector in particular. Surely the empowering of research in this field of experiencescapes requires much creativity, interdisciplinary concepts, empirical data and a fair portion of serendipity.

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[1] From the title 'VISITING THE PAST, MEETING THE LIMES' An international symposium on heritage, tourism, planning and design practices 11th and 12th October 2007 Central Museum, Utrecht, the Netherlands.

[2] TOURISMIFICATION refers to the processes of change that are caused by an increasing impact of tourism on a place, a community, a territory, a landscape. By definition a multi-dimensional process of changes: environmental, economic, social, cultural, implying the need of a set of indicators of change (quantitative & qualitative) Jansen-Verbeke, 2007