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Changing Memorial Landscapes, Changing Approaches in the Study of the Memorial Sites for the Victims of National Socialist Germany: A Review

Summary: The purpose of this review article is first to reconstruct the main phases of the development of a new memorial landscape in Europe honoring the millions of victims of National Socialism 1933–1945. Secondly, the changing approaches in the study of the memorial sites and their management practices are reviewed. It is argued that it was not until the early 1980s that researchers gave due attention to the history of the sites. The early studies concluded that the sites were publicly neglected. This changed after reunification in the early 1990s when the educational work at the memorial sites was recognized and appropriately financed in Germany. First comprehensive documentations of close to 2,000 memorial sites in West Germany and former East Germany were presented by the mid and late 1990s. While the management at the main sites were examined mainly from an educational point of view, with the former concentration camp sites being recognized as places of learning (*Lernorte*), new approaches in the visitation of the sites emerged in tourism research: dark tourism, thanatourism and dissonance at the sites. In the last few years, studies were conducted that focused on sites associated with the victims as well as with the perpetrators (*Opfer-/Täter-Orte*). In the final part of the review, attention is given to the efforts made by geographers in this field. The conclusions outline the future task of a geography of memory

Keywords: memorial sites of the Holocaust, history of memorial sites, management practices, places of learning, dark tourism, geography and National Socialism, geography of memory

1 Introduction

Historic places honoring the victims of National Socialist Germany form a wide and expanding network of heritage sites in Europe. A number of high profile sites have become major tourist destinations visited by millions of people. Places like Auschwitz and Dachau continue to evoke strong emotions and conflicting responses in the public debate over the historic events. A complex collective memory or culture of remembrance (*Erinnerungskultur*), with distinct social and spatial expressions, has evolved in and outside Germany since 1945, which is the subject matter of this review article.

While the review's first agenda is to reconstruct the development of a new memorial landscape in Europe, with now thousands of markers, monuments, and museums for the victims of National Socialist Germany in place, it is important to understand that not only the memorial landscape has been changing over the years, but also approaches to study these sites and their management practices. It was not until the late 1970s/early 1980s that researchers gave attention to the history of memorial sites, to questions of how the sites and past formulations of commemoration practices emerged. Most of the early studies regarding the memorial sites were conducted from an educational point of view. The sites were considered an extended 'outdoor classroom', for the many students and young people touring the new memorials and museums, as 'places of learning' (*Lernorte*). From the late 1980s to the late 1990s, first comprehensive documentations and annotated lists of memorial sites of the victims of National Socialist Germany were presented which also included detailed information about the history of the memorials. New approaches in tourism research in the 1990s/2000s took a fresh look at the sites now conceived as places with a controversial history and shadowed past, exemplifying a 'dark heritage'. Researchers conducting studies along a new 'dark tourism' and/or 'thanatourism' agenda argued that there is an inherent desire among contemporary tourists for a symbolic encounter with death, dying, and disaster. They maintained that visitations to Auschwitz, for instance, were motivated by a sense of curiosity about the dark side of humanity. Other researchers closely analyzed the dissonance evident at some of these new heritage sites (as discussed later on). They argued that dissonance is intrinsic to all forms of heritage and that visitor motives and management strategies at atrocity sites differ between three groups, those of the victims, those of the perpetrators, and those of the more or less uninvolved or innocent bystanders. In recent years, a new thread of studies at the memorial sites has become more prevalent which focusing on both – victims' sites and perpetrators' sites (*Opfer-Orte* und *Täter-Orte*).

2 A Changing Memorial Landscape for the Victims of National Socialist Germany

In the following, an overview of the major phases in the evolution of a new memorial landscape is given, discussed elsewhere in detail (HARTMANN 2018a). The European wide memorial landscape for the victims of Nazi Germany is inextricably tied to the locations of the main Nazi concentration camps and the mass killing centers in Central and Eastern Europe (see fig. 1). During 1933–1945, 20 main concentration camps and over a 1,000 subsidiary camps were established. It was late in WW II that the Nazi concentration camps were liberated, with Majdanek, near Lublin in Eastern Poland, being the first of the major concentration and extermination camps that was reached by the Allied Forces (Red Army) in July 1944. Subsequently, Majdanek, then with intact and preserved gas chambers, storage areas with belongings of the murdered inmates, and a memorial monument designed before liberation of the camp, became the first memorial site. It is estimated that 300,000 to 400,000 people visited the site during the first two years 1945/1946 (TIME MAGAZINE 1944, 38; MARCUSE 2010; JALOCHA & BOYD 2014).

In the general absence of accessible and operative memorial sites in the 1950s/1960s, the camp liberation anniversaries were crucial events in the early commemoration practices. The dates of liberations for the larger camps – Buchenwald on April 11, 1945, Bergen-Belsen on April 15 1945, and Dachau on April 29 1945 – saw major annual gatherings, which brought thousands of former prisoners together. In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/7 recognized the liberation of Auschwitz on January 27 (1945) as *International Holocaust Remembrance Day*. It commemorates the genocide that resulted in the murder of an estimated six million Jewish people, two million Romani people (‘gypsies’), 250,000 mentally and physically disabled people, and 9,000 homosexual men, committed by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

Establishing memorials at the former concentration camps and at subsidiary camps proved to be a cumbersome process. In most cases, it took many years – if not decades – to reach the goal of setting up appropriate markers, memorial plaques, first exhibits, and finally official memorial sites, equipped with museums salaried staffs. In 1952, the first permanent memorial in Germany was established in Bergen-Belsen, site of a prisoner of war and concentration camp where more than 70,000 people died. At the dedication of this memorial, the West German President, Theodor Heuss, and the President of the Jewish Congress, Nahum Goldman, were present. Much later, in 1965, an official memorial at the first Nazi concentration camp in Dachau, with more than 40,000 victims, was inaugurated. While establishing memorial sites for the victims of National Socialist Germany marked a tedious and controversial step in the political culture of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), the East German Communist State (German Democratic Republic/GDR) was eager to honor the persecuted and murdered socialist comrades at the former concentration camps Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. Still, the newly created memorial sites largely neglected to commemorate the fate of other main prisoner groups whose lives perished in large numbers there. The elaborate and carefully crafted Buchenwald memorial site (as a *Nationale Mahn- und Gedenkstätte*) represented a paramount effort of the German Communist State to celebrate the ultimate victory of communism over fascism (MARCUSE 2010).

In ‘Cold War’ Europe, different traditions in the commemoration of the victims of National Socialist Germany evolved. While the remains of the concentration camps in Poland were protected early by state law (1947) the purpose of designing and dedicating sites was to commemorate “the martyrdom of the Polish nation (and other nations)” (MARCUSE 2010) with barely mentioning the millions of Jewish lives that perished at the concentration and extermination camps on Polish soil. The enduring controversy over the “De-Judaization” of Auschwitz during the 1970s and 1980s is discussed by CHARLESWORTH 1994. The fall of the ‘Iron Curtain’ made many of the former concentration camp sites in Eastern Europe accessible for Western travelers. By the late 1990s/early 2000s, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site (now under new management) had surpassed Dachau not only in terms of visitors but also as “the most widely recognized symbol of Nazi atrocities” (MARCUSE 2005, 118) (1.3 million for Auschwitz versus 700,000 to 800,000 in Dachau in 2015).

By the 1980s, the term Holocaust was regularly applied to the sites where Nazi atrocities occurred. Former concentration camps became internationally as well as nationally in Germany known as Holocaust memorial sites. The relatively new term came up in 1961 in the Eichmann trial, widely popularized with the Holocaust TV Mini-Series in 1978/1979 (directed by Marvin Chomsky, starring Meryl Streep). The four part of the series were also shown in West Germany in January 1979, with an estimated audience of 20 million viewers. Holocaust education formed a part of public education in many school systems worldwide (see EHMANN et al. 1995 for Germany). Two leading Holocaust memorial museums were established outside Europe: *Yad Vashem. The World Holocaust Remembrance Center* in Israel in 1953 (KRAKOVER 2005) and the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* in Washington, D.C. in 1993 (PIPER 2006). They represent a new type of carefully designed places of commemoration, outside the *in situ* memorial sites in Central and Eastern Europe.

In the 1990s, the memorial sites of the Holocaust in West and East Germany at last found greater public recognition, and a new management and financial support system, providing a reliable framework for the German *Gedenkstätten-Arbeit* (public education at memorial sites), was implemented. Innovation centers for new memorial practices in Germany evolved in Berlin, Buchenwald, Cologne, and Frankfurt. While in the 1950s/1960s/1970s the public attitude towards the new memorial sites was largely guided by a reactive ‘coming to terms with the past’ approach (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) and formal ceremonies at the sites were marked by ‘quiet

Fig. 1: The Nazi concentration camp system (1933–1945) and present-day memorials of the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe (source: R. Hartmann)

The first Nazi concentration camp was established near the old market town of Dachau in March 1933. From there, the SS spearheaded an extensive concentration camp system which would eventually comprise some 20 major camps and more than 1,000 subsidiary camps in Central and Eastern Europe including the following: Dachau (March 1933–45), Esterwegen (July 1933–36), Sachsenhausen (July 1936–45), Buchenwald (July 1937–45), Flossenbürg (May 1938–45), Mauthausen (Aug. 1938–45), Neuengamme (Sept. 1938–45), Ravensbrück (May 1939–45), Stutthof (Sept. 1939–45), Auschwitz (June 1940–45), Groß-Rosen (Aug. 1940–45), Breendonk (Sept. 1940–44), Natzweiler (May 1941–44), Treblinka (June 1941–43), Majdanek (Nov. 1941–44), Chelmno (Nov. 1941–45), Theresienstadt (Nov. 1941–45), Belzec (Feb. 1942–Dec. 1942), Sobibor (March 1942–43), Westerbork (July 1942–45), Vught-Hertogenbosch (Jan. 1943–44), Bergen-Belsen (April 1943–45), Mittelbau-Dora (Aug. 1943–45). The main concentration camps in Germany/Austria were Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, Mauthausen, and for female prisoners Ravensbrück. As the concentration camp system expanded into Nazi occupied countries during WW II a functional differentiation of the camps occurred. Some camps served as transfer camps like Westerbork in the Netherlands, other camps like the concentration camps Auschwitz and Majdanek in Poland included large extermination camp complexes. Several camps in Eastern Europe, notably Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, were exclusively death camps. Millions of lives perished in the Nazi concentration camps. All of the camps mentioned above have become historic sites and now house museum exhibits and memorials. The liberation of the camps continues to be commemorated in many instances. In particular, the anniversaries of the liberation of Auschwitz (Jan. 27), Buchenwald (April 11), and Dachau (April 29) mark major commemorative days in present-day Europe.

commemoration' practices (ROSENFELD 1991, 263–264; KNOCH 2010, 117–120), a more engaging 'memorial work' (*Erinnerungsarbeit*), with an active search for (lost) traces of the National Socialism (NS) past (*Spurensuche*), was now pursued by younger generations in Germany. This happened, for instance, in Frankfurt with the search for historic sites associated with the Frankfurt born Annelies Marie ('Anne') Frank in a 1993/1994 *Spurensuche-Projekt* and the result of a new Anne Frank Youth Meeting Center in the Frank family's former neighborhood, and in Buchenwald, with the reconstruction of the prison cell of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, an outspoken member of the 'confessing church' (HANTSCH 1994).

A most creative memory project was started by Cologne artist Gunter Demnig in 1995, with the placement of commemorative stumbling blocks (*Stolpersteine*) in front of the last residential home of murdered Jewish citizens, indicating their names and their dates of deportation and death in concentration camps. Since then, more than 48,000 brass plaques have been installed in close to 1,000 German/European cities.

Probably the most ambitious memorial project was realized in Berlin, with a lengthy and lively debate over the design of the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* established in 2005 not far from the Brandenburg Gate landmark. Further, new memorials and innovate commemoration practices are added continuously to create a distinct memorial landscape in and near Berlin. A major effort in the commemoration of inmates at subsidiary camps built in the final phase of WW II and managed by German industrial corporations has been made by the Frankfurt Fritz Bauer Institute and students of the Frankfurt University. They established a Wollheim Memorial in honor of Norbert Wollheim, who – as one of the few survivors of the Auschwitz III Monowitz Camp – courageously took the IG Farben Company to court, responsible for providing an industrial site to the Nazis where more than 15,000 lives perished 1941–1945. More recent initiatives of the Fritz Bauer Institute are reviews of the early post WW II years, with the conception of innovative workshops for employees at memorial sites presented and discussed as places with a disconcerting past (*Verunsichernde Orte*) (HARTMANN 2017).

Despite a rapidly expanding memorial landscape, now with a dozen of memorial sites in Central and Eastern Europe, each receiving 300,000 to 1.3 million visitors annually, and broad public support for the continued maintenance, upgrading, and promotion of the sites, a serious political challenge has been posed by the activities of neo-Nazis and other right wing groups. While they represent a relatively small segment in German/European societies, they have been a disturbing factor in the management of the memorial sites. They publicly deny the Holocaust or question the validity of Holocaust research. Some have deliberately set their goals on vandalizing or disgracing memorial sites for the victims of National Socialist Germany. There are hardly any Jewish cemeteries in Central and Eastern Europe, mostly in peripheral locations, which have remained unscathed by physical damage or graffiti. Even the *Memorial for the Murdered Jews in Europe* has been marred by acts of vandalism. Most notably, the entrance gates to Auschwitz and Dachau with their iconic (and cynical) ARBEIT MACHT FREI ("Work Sets You Free") inscriptions were stolen in 2009, resp. in 2014. After all, both gates were eventually

retrieved. While the neo-Nazi thefts of the Auschwitz gate were apprehended and jailed, the criminals behind the Dachau gate incident have not yet been identified. The gate was found near Bergen, Norway and returned to Dachau two years later. The *Dachau Memorial Site Administration* decided to leave the replica gate in place whereas the original gate was restored and is shown as an exhibit artifact unveiled on April 29, 2017, the 72nd anniversary of the liberation of the camp. The case of the Dachau gate serves as an example how the continued wide-spread support of *and* the occasional erratic opposition to the memorial efforts made since the late 1940s are intricately interwoven in the spatial and social expression of Germany's new memorial landscape (QUINN 2009; SIDDIQUE 2009; LIBELL & EDDY 2016; KZ-GEDENKSTÄTTE DACHAU 2017; HARTMANN 2017).

The process of designing and/or re-designing the memorial sites and formulating new commemoration practices at the sites remains work in progress, with the need for introducing new media and new communication technologies to reach younger audiences. Survivors and witnesses (*Zeitzeugen*) of National Socialist Germany hardly live anymore. Still, historic research generates new results for the thousands of sites that span the present-day memorial landscape.

3 Changing Approaches to the Study of the Memorial Sites

3.1 *Reconstructing the Holocaust 1933–1945, Reconstructing the History of the Memorials*

Over the past years a great number of studies have been conducted with regard to Nazi Germany, and a detailed reconstruction of the historical events 1933–1945 is at hand. Several comprehensive studies of the Nazi concentration camps have been presented including the following: “Der Ort des Terrors: Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager”, a German series edited by Wolfgang BENZ and Barbara DISTEL (2005–2009, with nine volumes on the history of the concentration camps published), two volumes of the *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933–1945*, edited by a *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* team (MEGARGEE 2009; 2012), and, most recently, a systematic study and detailed analysis of the history of the Nazi concentration camps by Nikolaus WACHSMANN (2015, 865 pp.). Two atlases of the Holocaust depict the locations of the main 20 concentration camps, their satellite camps, the deportation centers, and the deportations to the death camps (GILBERT 1982; UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM 1996).

While there is a tremendous wealth of information about the Holocaust, studies on the history of the memorial sites for the victims of National Socialist Germany fall behind. Systematic or selective in-depth research on the memorials and commemoration practices were not conducted until the early 1980s. Harold MARCUSE, a historian with pioneering work in this field, argues that it has been a neglected topic and that there remains work to be done, in particular for the lesser-known memorial sites. In the concluding section of his seminal article on the “Afterlife of the Camps”, where he summarizes all the efforts made in the different countries to

memorialize the historic events, he writes: "... the study of memorial site didactic and the effects of those memorial conceptions on the millions of visitors to former concentration camps each year is still in its infancy" (MARCUSE 2010, 204).

In the following, it will be attempted to reconstruct some of the research traditions regarding an examination of the memorial sites, of their history as well as the discussion of current issues. The emphasis is particularly on visitation to the sites and their management for tourism. Further, a review of the changing approaches in the heritage and tourism research field is given, as they apply to the study of memorial sites for the victims of National Socialist Germany. In the last section, a summary of and some reflections about the work of geographers in this field will be presented.

3.2 *Initial Studies about the Memorial Landscape in the 1980s/1990s*

While many more memorial sites were established in the 1960s and 1970s, it was also noted that they had received little attention in the public and that the support for the new sites (in terms of financial resources, staff and recognition in the bureaucracy) was negligible. Detlev GARBE, an early observer – as a researcher and administrator at sites in West Germany – talked about the forgotten legacy of the former concentrations camps in the 1980s already (GARBE 1983). Furthermore, he was able to witness substantial changes by the mid/late 1980s and in particular after the re-unification of Germany, namely a path *Von den »vergessenen KZs« zu den »staatstragenden Gedenkstätten«* (from the forgotten concentration camps to memorial sites [now] appreciated and carried by the authorities) (GARBE 2001, translation and comment R. H.). Other authors of early studies about the memorial sites came to similar conclusions, e. g. BERND EICHMANN (1985). He characterized the deplorable situation of the memorial sites at the former concentration camps with three adjectives: *versteinert*, *verharmlost*, *vergessen* (physically and institutionally "petrified" sites, where the historic events were "downplayed", with the result of the memorial sites being ultimately "forgotten"). In a journalistic review and close-up of the leading nineteen concentration camps Konnilyn FEIG critically examined a disturbing situation regarding the memorialization of the historic events at the memorial sites as well (FEIG 1981).

Most internal studies and surveys were aimed to improve the management practices at the memorial sites for educational tourism. Dachau and other destinations were conceived as 'places of learning' (*Lernorte*) for the rapidly growing incoming groups of young people after the Holocaust TV series was shown and widely discussed in 1979/1980. In the 1980s, memorial sites were considered an extended 'outdoor classroom' – frequently used by committed German teachers born after 1940, with little personal (emotional) baggage and involvement in the era which was often the case with representatives of the older generations. An example for this type of approach and literature in the field is Peter STEINBACH's "Modell Dachau" (STEINBACH 1987). Here, he explains the *Lernort* concept, its potential and the need to educate a younger generation about the facts of a troubled past.

Another trend in the literature discussed here was the inclusion of studies that shed light on the complicated and difficult relationship several towns had with

the nearby concentration camps, such as Dachau and Kaufering (with a series of nearby subsidiary camps), Weimar (with the nearby Buchenwald camp), and Neuengamme near Hamburg (see studies by RAIM 1989, 2009; HARTMANN 1989; MARCUSE 1990; STEINBACHER 1993; SCHLEY 1996; KAIENBURG 1996). MARCUSE presented an in-depth study of the Dachau concentration camp 1933–1998 including the relationship that Dachau developed with the camp before and after 1945. He discussed and connected both periods – the time, while the concentration camp was in existence (1933–1945) and the time after liberation, when the site eventually became a memorial site (1965) with changes of the site up to the 1990s (MARCUSE 2001). Later substantial changes were covered by SCHOSSIG 2010, including changes that characterized the more open and constructive relationship Dachau and its residents cultivated with the memorial site including a new Youth Meeting Center in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

3.3 *Comprehensive Documentations of Memorial Sites to the Victims of National Socialist Germany*

By the mid/late 1980s, a need for a more comprehensive assessment of the history of the camps and the memorial sites became evident. A new journal series, *Dachauer Hefte* (with a focus on studies and documents pertaining to the history of the Nazi concentration camps), was launched in 1985. This series and related research efforts paved the way for a systematic documentation of more than 1,000 memorial sites in West Germany/Federal Republic of Germany. A first version – initiated and supported by the federal agency for political education (*Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung*) – was published in 1987, with a revised and expanded edition presented in 1995. This volume (840 pp.) as well as volume II, focusing on the memorial sites in the new states (*Neue Bundesländer*) in former East Germany (991 pp.), have become a valuable resource and standard reference (BUNDESZENTRALE FÜR POLITISCHE BILDUNG 1995; 2000). In 1998, a detailed map showing the memorial sites in re-unified Germany (as listed in the two volumes) was presented. It introduced memorials and memorial sites in the following eight categories:

- larger concentration camps,
- subsidiary camps,
- memorials at synagogues,
- memorials at prisons/euthanasia sites/sites associated with the German resistance,
- memorials at cemeteries for the victims of National Socialist Germany,
- other monuments and plaques,
- memorials at Jewish cemeteries, and
- memorials for the victims at Death Marches.

While this map includes close to 2,000 places, the authors of the map (and of the two volumes) emphasize that it is not a complete list and that it does not include every place in the public memory (*Ort des Gedenkens*) of Germany.

3.4 *Changes in the Remembrance Culture after the Reunification of Germany*

Besides a greater appreciation of the education efforts at the memorial sites which eventually led to a highly improved support system on a state basis in unified Germany, a new theme entered the public debate: the ‘dark heritage’ of the GDR, East Germany’s years of autocratic rule with many political crimes committed during 1945/1949–1989 (MÄRZ & VEEN 2006). The public *Erinnerungskultur* in reunified Germany shifted to a partial recognition and inclusion of the GDR practices, but did not demand to erase the early efforts made by the East German State at the memorial sites physically. The new management in Buchenwald, for instance, left the commemorative markers of an elaborate memorial landscape in place but added new amenities and reconstructions: a re-orientation to the original camp with new markers for neglected groups, with a new *History of the Buchenwald Memorial site*, and an exhibit about the crimes committed under communist/Soviet military occupation 1945–1950 (KNIGGE et al. 1998; KNIGGE 2006; AZARYAHU 2003). New ideas and forms of public education were introduced including more options for self-guided tours and the attempt to connect the Buchenwald concentration camp spatially and socially to Goethe’s Weimar in a time path (“Zeitschneise”) project (HÄRTL 1999).

3.5 *Remembrance of Uprisings and Resistance against National Socialist Germany: A Revived and/or New Theme in the Public Memory*

Memories of forms and acts of opposition to the National Socialism (NS) regime have become an important theme in recent years. The establishment of memorial sites for the victims in resistance to Nazi Germany has gained a considerable role in the public memory, within and beyond the international Jewish community, in and outside Germany, and in many of the countries occupied by Germany – discussed elsewhere in detail (HARTMANN 2018a).

The most prominent memorial is the memorial that honors the 13,000 victims of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising April 19 to May 16, 1943 (YOUNG 1989; 1993, chapter 6). Several open revolts against the SS at the death camps, like armed uprisings and prisoner escapes, have been documented for Treblinka, Sobibor and Auschwitz-Birkenau. In all three camps, commemorative notes, plaques, and monuments as well as an oral history of the events now exist. In his reconstruction of the Nazi concentration camp system and its final stage, WACHSMANN included a section on defiance, resistance, and uprisings entitled the “Resistance by the Doomed” (2015, 536–541). In various recollections of Auschwitz survivors, memories of defiance in the camp were presented to the outside world.

There were also forms of resistance at the concentration camps in Germany, most notably during the final days of Dachau and Buchenwald. However, the outcome as well as the memorialization of the revolts differed significantly. While the Buchenwald prisoners, headed by well-organized political prisoners, were able to take over the camp in the final hours before the arrival of the U.S. troops, the Dachau revolt failed. The people who died in the *Dachauer Aufstand* attempt are remembered, though (RICHARDI et al. 1998). In the case of Buchenwald, a ‘self-liberation’ myth was born and effectively disseminated by the East German state, the

SED party¹, and the prisoner organization throughout the 1950s until the 1980s. After the changes in the management of the memorial site in the 1990s, a different (compromise) version was told: “The camp was freed from the inside and from the outside”. The historic facts supported the more important role of the approaching U.S. troops in freeing all the prisoners – as the leading SS officials left the site and willingly turned over the control of the camp to the Communist elders.

There was opposition to the Nazi movement in Germany, in particular during the early years after the Nazi seizure of power (1933/1934) and during the years of WW II (1939–1945). A great variety of resistance initiated and carried out by different groups and individuals in National Socialist Germany have been documented (see BENZ & PEHLE 1996). Again, there were evident differences in the commemoration of persecuted and murdered individuals and groups in the German resistance in West and East Germany. Early on, the East German state paid tribute to people who were in opposition to the Nazi regime, focusing on the resistance among communists, socialists, and the labor unions (YOUNG 1993; PUVOGEL 1999; ENDLICH 1999). The main official memorial to the German resistance for West Germany is located in West Berlin, in the courtyard of the *Bendlerblock*, the site of the former German *Reichswehr* headquarters. Here, Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg and several other members of the military in opposition to National Socialist Germany were executed after the unsuccessful Hitler assassination attempt on July 20, 1944. The anniversary of the attempted assassination was declared a ‘Day of Remembrance’ in West Germany/Federal Republic of Germany.

Two resistance events and groups have gained broad acceptance in Germany in the 1990s/2000s/2010s, with highly recognized and well visited memorials in Berlin and in Munich. Firstly, the memorial for the women of the Rosenstraße who demonstrated for the release of their Jewish husbands, and secondly, a memorial at the Munich University depicting headlines of the distributed leaflets with a call to disobedience and individual faces of members of the *White Rose* (‘Weiße Rose’) student resistance group. The Rosenstraße memorial near Alexanderplatz in Berlin has become a major stop for historic tours as well as casual bicycle explorations. The square where the group of memorials was placed in 1995 and the adjacent new Plaza Hotel offer information about this part of the old Jewish community in Berlin in general and the protest of Jewish women in 1943 in particular. The arrest of about 2,000 Jewish men who were married to ‘Aryan’ women triggered a persistent unwavering push for the release of their husbands, which eventually happened after several days. The events may have been embellished in the oral history during the early post WW II years (JOCHHEIM 2002; GRUNER 2002), but speak for themselves. Like the *White Rose* resistance in Munich, it was a selfless, humane mode of rebellion – a courageous joint action the younger generation of Germans can admire and identify with. Only a few of the Rosenstraße women are known and mentioned by name during the tour stops, but the six inner core members of the *White Rose* resistance group have become household names. Several movies and TV productions, most prominently the Michael Verhoeven movie *Die Weiße*

¹ SED = *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Socialist Unity Party of Germany).

Rose/The White Rose (1982) and the film *Sophie Scholl: Die letzten Tage/The last days* (2005, directed by Marc Rothemund), contributed to the continued, high recognition of the student resistance group. More than 100 high schools in Germany have been named in their honor; the siblings Sophie Scholl and Hans Scholl are resistance icons in present day German society. Besides the display of a permanent exhibit near the entrance hall of the Munich University, almost 20 monuments and markers are now in Munich, at the places where the members of the *White Rose* lived, where they were arrested, held in prison and executed, and where they are buried. Additionally, there is a plaque at the Palace of Justice where the trials were held in 1943 and where young Sophie Scholl in a most memorable way stood her ground and confronted her Nazi judge with ethics and human principles (PFÖRTNER 2001; BAYERISCHE LANDESZENTRALE FÜR POLITISCHE BILDUNGSARBEIT 2013; KRONAWITTER 2014, 80–91).

A dramatic shift in Germany's public memory has occurred. In 1951, the attempt of 'the military men of the 20th July 1944' to kill Hitler was still widely considered an act of treason in the German public (STEINBACH 2014). 60 years later a broad variety of remembrances of people in resistance are highlighted and effectively communicated to local and national audiences: a second memorial site and exhibit of the *White Rose* in the city of Ulm (some of the members and helpers come from there), newly refurbished memorial sites at the Plötzensee Prison (where close to 3,000 people in opposition to the NS regime were hung or decapitated), and the *Berlin Memorial Site of the German Resistance (Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand)* now showcase an ethnically, politically, socially, and culturally wide diversity of people in resistance.² On a local level, some of the resistance to the National Socialist regime has been introduced to the public by people involved in contemporary history workshops (*Geschichts-Werkstätten*), with continuous efforts to contribute to a specific local culture of remembrance of the National Socialist era.

3.6 *New Approaches in Tourism Studies: Dissonance at Heritage Sites, Dark Tourism and Thanatourism*

As the number of memorial sites – and studies on them – increased new approaches studying tourism to these sites and other sites of atrocities were introduced to the multidisciplinary field of heritage tourism research. Memorial sites were now understood as places with a controversial past and a dark heritage. In the mid-1990s, three new terms appeared in the academic tourism literature denoting dissonance at contested heritage sites, including places of atrocities, and the tourist's fascination with death and tragedy: *dissonant heritage*, *thanatourism*, and *dark tourism*. Tunbridge and Ashworth presented a book entitled *Dissonant heritage: The management of the past as a resource in conflict* (TUNBRIDGE & ASHWORTH 1996) while shortly thereafter, Lennon and Foley published a volume with a dozen case studies in *Dark tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (LENNON & FOLEY 2000). The latter received considerable attention in the media and among tourism

² German Resistance Memorial Center 2014. Permanent exhibition "Resistance against National Socialism". Berlin.

researchers. In both publications, one of the selected case studies was Auschwitz, which became accessible to international tourists by 1990. Both book covers show the iconic picture of the rail tracks to the gate.

Ashworth and Tunbridge argued that dissonance is intrinsic to all forms of heritage – whatever the scale, context, or locale. Dissonance is implicit in the commodification processes, in the creation of place products, and in the content of messages, which may in some cases lead to disinheritance. Further, they discussed visitor motives and management strategies for atrocity sites, elaborating how motives and strategies differ between three groups: the victims, the perpetrators, and the (more or less uninvolved or innocent) bystanders. For their discussion, they chose the example of the Nazi concentration camps in Central and Eastern Europe. In separate publications ASHWORTH (1996; 2002) examined the case of revived tourism in Krakow-Kazimierz, the former Jewish neighborhood in Krakow, which was featured in the 1993 academy award (‘Oscar’) winning movie *Schindler’s List* directed by Steven Spielberg (see also TUNBRIDGE & ASHWORTH 1996; ASHWORTH & HARTMANN 2005; HARTMANN 2014).

Thanatourism and dark tourism are complementary concepts (‘sister terms’). Tony SEATON, who introduced the concept of thanatourism (SEATON 1996; 2009), recognized the deep fascination some visitors to battlefields and cemeteries have with death and dying. His analysis of the motives and lifeworld of thanatourists (“motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death”) were paralleled in studies launched by fellow researchers John LENNON and Mark FOLEY from Glasgow, Scotland who came up with a much wider, albeit more nebulous concept – dark tourism (LENNON & FOLEY 2000). The ‘dark tourism’ agenda has been substantially expanded by Philip STONE at the University of Central Lancashire, founder of a dark-tourism forum on the internet (www.dark-tourism.org.uk). He defined dark tourism as “the act of travel and visitation to sites, attractions, and exhibitions which have real or recreated death, suffering or the seemingly macabre as a main theme” (STONE 2006, 146). While Seaton focused his research largely on tourism to WW I sites, Stone included Auschwitz in his in-depth studies. At a newly founded research center, ‘dark tourism’ was given new conceptual dimensions and philosophical underpinnings. Among others, Stone developed a dark-tourism spectrum, from lightest sites (such as a ‘Dracula Castle’ commercial venture) to darkest sites (like the *Auschwitz-Birkenau State Memorial and Museum*), which served for a categorization and analysis of a numerous sites to be included in a broadening dark tourism research agenda (MILES 2002; SHARPLEY 2005; STONE 2006). The notion of dark tourism – for a long time confined to scholarly research in the UK (HARTMANN 2018b) – eventually found acceptance in other countries and regions such as the United States and the German speaking countries (QUACK & STEINICKE 2012; HARTMANN 2014). The history of a still expanding dark tourism agenda is not nearly completed yet, as reconstructions that are more scholarly and personal reflections of the original proponents emerged and have become available (see, for instance, LIGHT 2017; STONE 2018; HARTMANN 2018b). Auschwitz and other places associated with the darker side of humanity will continue to be the focus of dark tourism studies.

3.7 *Research about Places Associated with the Victims and about Places Associated with the Perpetrators*

With a widely established network of memorial sites honoring the victims of the National Socialist regime 1933–1945, a secondary type of attractions has started to emerge in Germany and Austria: sites associated with Adolf Hitler and other leaders of the Third Reich. Thus, the ‘Eagle’s Nest’ (Obersalzberg near Berchtesgaden), Hitler’s second home and alternative government center, receives approximately 250,000 to 300,000 visitors annually. Subsequently, a new type of research has developed, which focuses on tourism to sites of victims *and* perpetrators (*Opfer-Orte und Täter-Orte*). While PETERMANN (2012) compared and contrasted tourism to Dachau and the Obersalzberg, JOHN-STUCKE (2012) examined visits to the *Wewelsburg SS Nordic Academy* and the adjacent Niederhagen concentration camp.

In recent years, there has been a developing trend of ‘documentation centers’ at the sites of the perpetrators, e. g. at the above-mentioned second home of Hitler in Berchtesgaden and at the Nazi Party rally grounds in Nuremberg. The new documentation centers present background information about the sites and historical events. Recently, a documentation center has been completed in Munich, with a critical analysis of the role the city played in the formation of the Nazi movement. The author has developed a four-quadrant model *Places Associated with the Victims and Perpetrators in National Socialism 1933–1945* (see fig. 2). The quadrants show

- a) high recognition places for the victims of Nazi Germany such as Auschwitz and Dachau;
- b) little known, neglected, or forgotten places associated with the victims;
- c) high recognition places associated with the perpetrators such as Hitler’s second home in Berchtesgaden and the Wannsee Villa in the outskirts of Berlin where the NSDAP³ conference on the ‘Final Solution (of the Jewish Question)’ was held on January 20, 1942; and
- d) places associated with the perpetrators but no longer accessible to the public such as the prison cell in Landsberg where Hitler was jailed in 1924 (a popular tourist site 1933–1945).

It should be mentioned that many of the above mentioned victim places are also closely tied to the perpetrators. The memorial site in Auschwitz I shows, for instance, the site where camp commandant Rudolf Höss was executed by hanging in 1947. The Buchenwald memorial site offers not only several tours of the campsite with reference to the prisoners but also one tour focusing on the perpetrators. The four-quadrant model serves as a classification of the sites and is well suited for suggested further action in the commemoration of the events at various types of sites.

³ NSDAP = *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Worker’s Party).

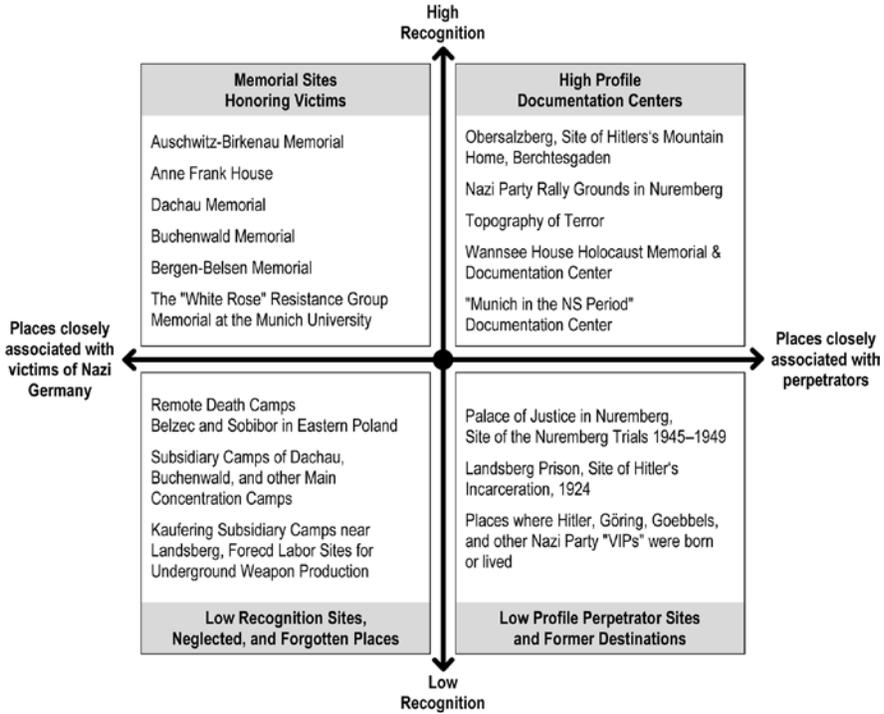


Fig. 2: Four-Quadrant Model for a Categorization of ‘Victims/Perpetrators’ Places (source: R. Hartmann)

3.8 Geographers’ Contributions to Holocaust Studies and Studies of the Memorial Sites and of their Management Practices

Can geographers contribute to research on the Holocaust and on the commemoration of the historic events at the various sites? If so, what are some of the research fields geographers work on?

The historical geographer Andrew CHARLESWORTH (1992) outlined the first *geographic* research agenda in a review article: “Towards a Geography of Shoah”. A detailed reconstruction of the history of the Auschwitz memorial site and an analysis of the conflicts between several groups in the 1990s followed (CHARLESWORTH 1994). Inspired by Charlesworth a team of historical geographers, historians, and architects arose at the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* in the late 1990s and in the 2000s. Their goal was to develop and articulate the fundamentals of a new research field: ‘Geographies of the Holocaust’. With current geographic techniques (GIS applications and creative spatial visualizations), they delved into an examination of places and spaces of the genocide during National Socialism. Their first book publication comprises six case studies – among them Auschwitz, Budapest, and Italian ghettos and camps (KNOWLES et al. 2014).

Probably, the first geography textbook that gave special attention to the Holocaust, in form of a vignette section on Nazi concentration camps, was presented by

Douglas JACKSON (1985). He argued in a chapter on “spatial expressions of exclusion” – coined *Pariah Landscapes* – that Nazi concentration camps represented the most extreme and cruel form of spatial banishment. The social geography section of the book, with many other examples of spatial banishment prevalent in the U.S. society of the 1970s and 1980s, opened the door to other uses of the ‘Pariah landscape’ notion in the geography classroom (HARTMANN 1997; 2002).

In the context of geographic work on the Holocaust, Walter Christaller’s *Central Place Theory* (CHRISTALLER 1933) has to be discussed. It was not until the 1980s/1990s that Christaller’s later ‘application’ of his theory to the newly acquired Eastern territories 1940–1945 was revealed. Christaller, once close to the German Communist Party, became a member of the Nazi Party 1940 and developed several plans for the new, to be Germanized *Lebensraum* in the East. In the late 1980s, young German geographers like Mechthild RÖSSLER who at last opened the page to an overdue chapter, the review of what German geographers had done in the 1920s/1930s/1940s, discovered the links between Christaller’s creative thinking and the devastating consequences of his later work (see FAHLBUSCH et al. 1989; RÖSSLER 1990). In a general treatise discussing the various threads of German ideology that eventually contributed to German spatial thinking and political geography in the 1930s/early 1940s, BARNES & MINCA (2012) were able to reconstruct the “dark geographies of Carl Schmitt and Walter Christaller”. In a short section of the essay, they gave a summary of the many studies undertaken by geographers and non-geographers regarding the National Socialist era. The changing appreciation of Christaller’s *Central Place Theory* in German spatial and regional planning was reviewed by DEITERS 2016. A most concise study of the relationships between the drive for Germanizing the East and the development of Auschwitz as an extermination camp was presented by STEINBACHER (2000; 2005).

There have also been contributions (though, hardly known because of a lack of published materials) made by geography teachers who introduced topics relating to the National Socialist concentration camps and the Holocaust in the geography classroom. A systematic effort of how ‘to deal with Dachau in geographic education’ was proposed by Hartmann (HARTMANN 1997). Over the past years, geographers have presented a variety of studies, mostly of selected individual sites and the examination of their management practices. Some of the authors and their works have been quoted earlier in this article (ASHWORTH 1996; 2002; AZARYAHU 2003; HARTMANN 1989; 2003; 2005; 2013; 2014; JALOCHA & BOYD 2014; TUNBRIDGE & ASHWORTH 1996). Recently, efforts have been made by geographers to discuss the phenomenon of dark tourism to the memorial sites and the dark heritage the victim sites and/or perpetrator sites represent in present-day society (see, for instance, QUACK & STEINICKE 2012; PETERMANN 2012).

4 Conclusions: Towards a Geography of Memory and a Culture of Remembrance for National Socialist Places of Horror

In recent years a revived geography of memory has formed a valuable perspective chosen for the study of horrific historic events, in particular in the United States (see FOOTE 2003, DWYER & ALDERMANN 2008; ALDERMANN et al. 2016;

HARTMANN 2014, 174–176). In his analysis of America’s landscapes of violence and tragedy, Foote argues that there are four outcomes for places associated with horrific events. The most common outcome is the process of rectification, with the physical traces of the violent occurrence being corrected and repaired. Another outcome is the designation of a site that eventually may pave the way to sanctification. On the other end of his proposed continuum is the process of obliteration. Foote argues that this is a frequent situation in places that experienced acts of violence and tragedies now forgotten in time. Further, he maintains: “(...) no one outcome is ever final. Sanctification, designation, rectification, and obliteration are not static outcomes, but only steps in a process. Almost all of the historical sites I have studied change through time, sometimes quite dramatically, and even outcomes like sanctification may take years, decades, or centuries to occur. Sanctified or designated sites might be vandalized or destroyed to protest the value they embody. Obliterated sites may be rediscovered and marked, again as protest, but sometimes to acknowledge belatedly the victims of a long-past tragedy” (FOOTE quoted in HARTMANN 2014, 174–175).

The geography of memory has been conceptually expanded and applied in many instances, most notably by Foote & Azaryahu (FOOTE & AZARYAHU 2007; 2008; FOOTE 2016). The thematic and spatial narratives at memorial sites were carefully examined, for instance, for the situation at Buchenwald (AZARYAHU & FOOTE 2008, 189–190; RYAN et al. 2016, 175–176).

In Germany, the public memory of the terrible events between 1933 and 1945 has undergone considerable changes in the debate. After a more reactive practice of dealing with the past up to the 1970s/early 1980s, an active search for and a continued discussion of the difficult past in Germany have eventually led to the new term *Erinnerungskultur* (culture of remembrance) – a synonym for Germany’s collective memory of the National Socialist past and the Holocaust (ASSMANN 2006; KNOCH 2010; SCHMID 2010). Geographers have contributed to this discussion with an examination of the spatial aspects of the processes of memorializing events and their physical representations. One of the questions was how and why we remember or forget places and the meanings they have had in a locale (see, for instance, BISCHOFF & DENZLER 2009; SCHARVOGEL & ROST 2009). These approaches, with the analysis of *Erinnerungsräumen* (spaces of remembered events), can also be applied to remembered or forgotten places of the Holocaust.

Tourism to now well-known sites closely tied to the Holocaust as well as to lesser-known places associated with various victim groups and the perpetrators of Nazi Germany, expands. New memorials and new forms of commemoration evolve in Germany and Europe. An example for this trend is the only recently public respond to the horrific events that occurred on July 24, 1942 – the deportation of more than 1,000 Jews from Cologne and Bonn. The place, where the journey tragically and cruelly ended (a forest clearing near Minsk, Belarus), finally became a memorial. The drive for a memorial was the result of the tedious efforts of local historians (*NS-Dokumentationszentrum der Stadt Köln*) and of a descendant of the victims saved by a *Kindertransport* 1939, who analyzed the timetables of the 1942 trains and identified the locale where the tragedy occurred. The German president

Frank-Walter Steinmeier was present at the first commemoration services in 2018, some 76 years after the events (SCHMITZ 2018). Remembering and forgetting is all too often almost accidental and unforeseeable – as Foote recently acknowledged in his reflections on ‘Why Remember?’ referring to the Waco inferno 1993 and the Oklahoma bombing 1995 which occurred in President Clinton’s governing period: “Clinton’s most recent award (*Steinmeier’s participation in the belated Minsk commemorative services*) is, however, a reminder of the thin edge separating remembering from forgetting. Too often, it is simply easier to forget than to confront head-on the roles that violence, terror, and political dissent have played in America’s (*Germany’s/Europe’s*) past and present. Forgetfulness may be the rule, but there is much to be learned from remembering – and examining more critically – America’s (*Germany’s/Europe’s*) landscapes and legacies of violence” (FOOTE 2016, 121–122; additional text passages highlighted in parentheses by the author).

Elie WIESEL, author of *Night* (1960) and many intriguing statements about the importance of memory in human civilization, is attributed to having once said: “Survivors are understood by survivors alone. They speak in code. All outsiders could do, was to come close to the gates. Those who were not in Auschwitz will never enter Auschwitz” (DEL CALZO 1997, 13). Yet, a great number of survivors’ saved stories have helped outsiders and younger generations to understand dimensions and details of the Holocaust better. Geographers can elucidate the situation by reconstructing the spatial narrative of such stories, for instance, in the case of Emil and Zesa, two brothers who were tattooed the consecutive inmate numbers 111834 and 111835. They arrived together at a Poznan labor camp in Poland, survived Auschwitz-Birkenau and eventually passed through (altogether) more than a dozen concentration camps to be freed in Bergen-Belsen on April 15, 1945, resp. in Dachau on April 29, 1945 (DEL CALZO 1997, 54–55).

A project for saving memories is found near Landsberg, in Southern Bavaria. It marks work in progress: the memorial site *KZ-Lager Kaufering VII*, a European Holocaust Memorial (see fig. 3).

The site is largely on non-profit organization owned land where committed local historians have managed to restore the once dilapidated housing areas for forced labor. In addition, they are in the process of developing a new documentation center. At the ‘Kaufering’ camps (established within the Dachau concentration camp system to build jet fighters in hidden cement bunkers) close to 15,000 lives perished in the last ten months of WW II (RAIM 2009). It could serve well as a geography project where experts in GIS and spatial visualizations reconstruct the spatial narrative of the 30,000 Jewish prisoners arriving there mostly from other camps in Eastern Europe. More information has become available for re-drawing the life paths of the inmates. It was in the restored housing structures where several babies were born to young mothers who arrived pregnant in Kaufering. In 2010, a reunion brought six ‘Kaufering babies’ and two of their mothers together (HAMMERMANN 2010). While the efforts in remembering the events have at times made remarkable progress, doubts remain whether the site will find sufficient public support to allow a memorial landscape and a culture of remembrance to persist and flourish.



Fig. 3: Restored Kaufering VII forced labor housing area (for female inmates) each structure holding up to 80 women and children in the winter months of 1944/45 (photo: R. Hartmann)

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