

## “Also, ich bin Ihr Führer für heute Morgen”: Exploring Tour Guide ‘Performance’ Through the Lens of Moral Blindness at the Nuremberg Rally Sites

The role of the tour guide (TG) and their performance is an ongoing theme in the tourism literature. This paper explores TG performance at ‘difficult heritage sites’ through the lens of Moral Blindness (MB) at the Nazi Party Rally Grounds. Adopting an ethnographic approach, the work reveals TG motivations to engage in MB and we present three different dimensions of MB at the site- (1) Volitional, (2) Facilitated, (3) Ignored MB.

### Main Body

A TG is a “professional employee who leads, communicates with, and informs visitors about the destination in an efficient and interesting way in the language of their choice” (Cetin & Yarcın, 2017, p.346). TGs require training and an elevated level of emotional intelligence (Cheng et al., 2021) as they impact on multiple aspects of the visitor experience shaping the desire to revisit, shop and enhance perceptions of a given culture (Quang et al., 2022). Their role is myriad (Zhao & Timothy, 2017). They provide insight, disseminate knowledge (Holloway, 1981), provide experience, and function as a bridge between visitor and site (Ren, & Wong, 2021). Prior work has suggested that TGs are role models (Cohen et al., 2002) and indeed at the Nazi rally sites Walter (2009) suggested that TGs operate as political mediators given its complexity. At such sites a the TG interprets (Ap and Wong, 2001) the site and its message to transform it so all can encode it and operate within a “post-modern mix of boundaries between cultures and identities, accelerated by the dynamics of capital and consumption” (Scherle and Nonnenmann, p. 123, 2008)

Despite the above, in relation to dark tourist and particularly penal sites Brown (2009) posited that TGs may have a ‘shallow understanding’ of a dark heritage sites and can resort to stereotypes to convey their message. Therefore, we explore TG performance through the lens of MB. MB centres on the proposition that individuals do not always follow expected standards of conduct, or indeed their own moral code, a practice termed ‘moral blindness’ (Bauman, 1990, 1991; Bauman & Donskis, 2016). Fieldwork was conducted late summer/ Autumn 2023 at The site of the Nuremberg Party Rallies (Reichsparteitag) site. In relation to site choice, the Rally Grounds (Reichsparteitagsgelände) are said to exude ‘Nazi criminality (Manka, 2008) and ‘the battle for victory of the Aryan man’ (Faye, 1935,p. 205), and a significant dark heritage site ( Manka, 2009). For the data collection the researcher integrated as a ‘tourist’ observer (Seim, 2021) to capitalise on opportunities to in real time (Doran and Pomfret, 2019). Data were collected via eleven guided tours and eleven interviews with TGs.

Findings reveal that TGs incorporate MB in to tours to ‘assist’ with professional demands, facilitate interpersonal exchange, and to help with emotional regulation. TGs believe that acts of MB can elevate performance (charismatic identification), assist with participant emotional regulation, and remove emotional weight, to reframe and recontextualise the Nuremberg site (demonstrate cultural progress), ‘defuse’ Nazism (meaning making), and enhance the tour itself (MB as a point of ‘Professional Differentiation’) with an overarching aim of ‘deconstructing’ the “*größtes Nazi-Museum der Welt*” (biggest Nazi museum on the planet). Such acts are volitional (instances of TG ‘Goosestepping’), facilitated (allowing participant MB- selfies on the Führer's Rostrum) and ignored (participants making Nazi Salutes and mimicking Hitler’s speeches). Motivations for individual TGs to engage in MB were personal (site

desensitization), proximal (living and working in an around the site), and professional (enhancing tours).

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