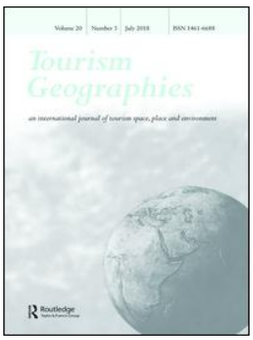

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Summers of war. Affective volunteer tourism to former war sites in Europe

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ABSTRACT

An important aspect of contemporary volunteer tourism is generated by the possibility of having personal, emotional and affective encounters and experiences. Volunteer summer camps on former war sites, organized by the German Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP), can be regarded as an expression of a contemporary form of tourism, which consists of the development of a personal, affective, and immersive approach to learning and volunteering on former war sites. A performative approach to studying emotion is applied, and helps to locate and understand the social, cultural, and political components that instigate the desire for affective volunteer tourism. For this study, 26 semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted with participants of ARSP volunteer summer camps that focused on conserving and maintaining former war sites in Italy, Lithuania, and France. The results indicate that volunteers expect war themed summer camps to be impactful (in terms of work) and emotional (in terms of personal experiences). Yet, the sought-after impact and emotion are not always found, which gives rise to contradictory feelings and tensions. Feelings of guilt about unmet expectations have caused volunteers to re-evaluate their motives and look for different ways to make the summer camps meaningful to them. Participants were encouraged to critically reflect, on this form of volunteer tourism in particular, and on societal debates about war and volunteer tourism in general.

摘要

当代志愿旅游的一个重要方面是有可能产生个人的、情绪的和情感的遭遇和经历。由德国和平行动调解服务处(ARSP)组织的在以往战场的志愿者夏令营，可以被视为一种当代旅游形式的表现，其中包括发展一种个人化的，情感的，沉浸式的方法，在以往战场进行学习与志愿活动。本研究采用展演性方法来研究情感，并帮助定位和理解激发情感性志愿旅游愿望的社会、文化和政治因素。为了这项研究，对ARSP志愿者夏令营的参与者进行了26次半结构化的深入访谈，重点访谈在意大利、立陶宛和法国以往战场的保护和维护活动。结果显示，志愿者们期望以战争为主题的夏令营活动，就工作来说具有冲击性，就个人经历来说具有情感性。然而，他们所追求的冲击和情感并不总能找到，这就产生了矛盾的感觉和紧张感。没有达到预期的内疚感促使志愿者们重新评估自己的

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关键词
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动机，并寻找不同的方式使夏令营对他们有意义。本研究鼓励参与者不仅批判性地反思这种特定形式的志愿旅游，而且还要更广泛地反思关于战争和志愿旅游的社会辩论。

Introduction

Every August, a group of volunteers travels to the wooded hills of Tuscany, Italy. Secluded between trees and bushes, they settle in a historical farmhouse where they work and live together for two weeks. The house is not only a monument to traditional Tuscan farm life, but also knows a more unsettling history. In March 1944, as an act of retribution, fascist forces from Siena captured and executed nineteen partisan fighters, who had taken shelter in the farmhouse. The volunteers who come here dedicate their time to preserving the memory of these events, by working on the maintenance of the memorial site, and by learning about its history. At the end of the two weeks, they will do the same in Sant'Anna di Stazzema, the village where Nazi German Waffen SS killed more than 500 villagers and refugees in 1944 (Di Pasquale, 2012). These killings served as revenge for the assumed support of the villagers to the Partisan resistance (Pezzino, 2012, p. 128). Here, the volunteers meet with survivors, historians and contemporary refugees, to connect the past to the present. As such, an important part of the summer camps consists of personal and direct contact with war history. By spending time on a former war site while doing physical work, meeting eyewitnesses, and scrutinizing violent histories, the volunteers develop a specific affective relationship with the site and its past.

Every year, volunteer summer camps like this one take place on various sites all over the world, like military cemeteries or war memorials. Volunteers of different ages and nationalities dedicate their free summer to work at places associated with war and death. Their work consists of maintaining monuments and war sites, cleaning, preserving and documenting cemeteries, or assisting war survivors with their daily chores. Most of the European summer camps are initiated by the Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP), a German organization with roots in the protestant peace movement and antifascist activism (Huener, 2001). Since the early 1960s, ARSP has been organizing volunteer projects, starting with one in Oświęcim (Auschwitz), Poland. Nowadays, around 25 summer camps take place each year, at locations such as St. Petersburg, Sarajevo, and Berlin. The costs of participation in these camps range from €40 to €130 for a two-week stay, depending on the participant's country of origin, and include food and excursions. The remaining costs are paid for by the ARSP, which is funded by different institutions and organizations: the church, the German government, the EU, international volunteering organizations, and by individual donations and contributions as well (Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste 2020). Compared to the traditional design of the ARSP summer camps, which focused on symbolic retribution and reconciliation, the current camps take a more international humanist perspective. Next to the manual work and leisure activities, the summer camps are dedicated to studying the past and discussing contemporary issues like migration, memory politics and right-wing extremism. Thus, their goal is to educate the participants about the effects and

consequences of war and conflict in the past and present. This is done with workshops, discussions, encounters with eyewitnesses and descendants of war victims, and by visits to memory sites. Although the camps are open to people of all ages and backgrounds, most of the participants and team leaders (who are involved in the creation of the daily program) are female European young adults. The camps can be regarded as an expression of a contemporary form of war tourism, which consists of the development of a personal, affective and immersive approach to visiting, learning and volunteering on former war sites (e.g. Buda, 2015).

Research on war-themed volunteer summer camps is limited. Besides Huener (2001), who discusses the ideology and politics of the ARSP from a top-down perspective, no recent studies have been conducted on this form of tourism. This raises questions about the present characteristics of the summer camps and their place within contemporary volunteer tourism to former war sites. Specifically, a bottom-up perspective could inform us about the way in which, nowadays, (young) European volunteer tourists engage with war history nowadays. Knowledge about volunteer tourism to former war sites helps to assess the potential value of war themed summer camps as a means for historical and civic education through personal, tangible, and emotional encounters with the past.

Whereas the emotional responses of day tourists to former war sites have recently been examined (Biran et al., 2011; Isaac et al., 2017; Nawijn & Fricke, 2015), less is known about tourists who spend a longer period at such places. In this article I will provide insight into the emotions and affects that are evoked through this immersive tourist experience. By focusing on the time spent at a site, the contact with tangible remnants of war, and the affective responses of the volunteers, I will discuss the often complex and contradictory emotions and affects related to this specific type of tourism. Debates about war and 'dark' tourism often have a moral and normative undertone that obscures deviant voices and experiences. By examining the personal experiences and emotions of volunteer tourists on war sites in-depth, I aim to give room to these experiences. Moreover, discussions about volunteer tourism often focus on the problematic dynamic of tourists from the global North who volunteer in the global South. Because these dynamics are less present in the ARSP summer camps, it is interesting to see which possible experiences of privilege, helping, or inequality arise in this specific case, and how these experiences affect the volunteers' self-image.

This paper contributes to empirical research on emotion and affect in both volunteer and war tourism. As such, this study adds to the emerging field of research that focuses on affective tourism to sites associated with war and conflict (cf. Buda, 2015). The theoretical contribution of this study lies with nuancing existing ideas about the nature of volunteer, 'dark', and war tourism. Also, it broadens the understanding of the appeal of auratic traces of the past. The study is based on 26 in-depth interviews with participants of three summer camps that took place in 2016 and 2017, in Italy, Lithuania, and France, and focused on conserving and maintaining former war sites. The camps were dedicated to different episodes of European war history: fascism and resistance in Italy, Jewish culture and the Holocaust in Lithuania, and migration in the Spanish civil war and the Second World War in the French-Spanish border area. What motivates participants to do volunteer work on former war sites? What kind of

connection do they establish with the place and its history? Which emotions and affective experiences do they have, and how do these experiences relate to the development of a self-image?

Volunteer tourism: motivations and morality

Volunteer tourism is usually regarded as a popular form of 'alternative tourism' – a form of tourism that diverges from activities commonly associated with mass tourism (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007). Traditionally, the intention of 'alternative tourists' is explained as the urge to contribute to host countries and communities (Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004). As a sub-category of alternative tourism, volunteer tourism has been researched from various perspectives. Many studies focus on the motivations of the volunteers and the impact of the experience: why do they wish to volunteer abroad and what do they expect to obtain from their stay? The main motivations distinguished in these studies include the desire to contribute something somewhere (e.g. Conran, 2011; Koleth, 2014), the search for personal development and transformation (e.g. Wearing, 2001), the urge to learn, travel and have authentic experiences of a place (Sin, 2009) and even the convenience of an organized holiday (Sin, 2009).

The impact of the volunteer experience has been discussed from two angles: the impact of the experience on the volunteer, and the impact on locals and communities in the host countries (McGehee & Santos, 2005; Sin, 2010). The impact on the volunteers is mostly seen as positive: through volunteering, volunteers develop social awareness, work on their international network and adapt a more activist attitude in their home country (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Yet, some volunteer experiences are characterized by feelings of powerlessness, forcing the volunteers to invent new strategies to deal with witnessed misery (Gius, 2017). The impact of the presence of volunteers in host countries is more ambivalent: while some communities are positive about the attention they receive from volunteers, it is questionable whether their work contributes something in a sustainable manner (Sin, 2010). Wishes of the volunteers might clash with the needs of local communities, and in the selection of the places, albeit well intended, volunteers are inclined to move to the places that they think are the most in need, thereby leaving out other sites (Sin, 2010).

Some scholars regard volunteer tourism as a neoliberal phenomenon in which power hierarchies are reinforced and where the volunteer work becomes a commodified, neoliberal experience (Burrai et al., 2017; Conran, 2011; Germann Molz, 2017; Mostafanezhad, 2013). Other scholars argue for a related research perspective in which volunteer tourism, and especially its relationship with gender, 'race', and religion, is seen as an exponent of broader political, historical and cultural developments and discourses (Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017). Yet, these perspectives have been criticized by some for being too normative or deterministic (Everingham, 2016). Everingham adopts a 'hopeful' approach to studying volunteer tourism, an approach in which the complexities, ambiguities and deviant experiences of volunteer tourism are recognized (p. 521, 523, 525). This call for more focus on individual, deviant and ambiguous touristic experiences is significant, as the exploration of possibilities, hopes, and imagination might open up new perspectives in tourism studies (Pritchard et al., 2011). Still, the

critical and hopeful approaches are not direct opposites, they may, in my opinion, strengthen each other when investigating the diverse experiences of volunteer tourists.

Affective volunteer tourism to former war sites

Contemporary volunteer tourism is generated by the possibility of having personal, emotional and affective encounters and experiences. Volunteer tourists are eager to undergo emotional experiences in order to provoke personal growth (Germann Molz, 2017). By putting themselves in situations that are designed for intimate encounters (Conran, 2011) and even cathartic responses (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007), volunteer tourists hope to build on their personality and gain 'emotional capital' (Germann Molz, 2017, p. 340). Yet, these experiences predominantly apply to encounters with people, pain, or poverty in the global South. When thinking about confrontations with remnants of war and violence, different affects, emotions and experiences are at play. Nevertheless, visits to places associated with war and violence are often emotional (Martini & Buda, 2020; Nawijn et al., 2016). As such, the combination of volunteer and war tourism presents a relevant case for researching affect and emotion in tourism.

Koleth (2014) discusses the affective responses of volunteer tourists who visited Cambodia's war heritage. These trips served as excursions for the volunteers who were working on activities like teaching and medicine. The confrontation with physical traces of horrific events caused the volunteers to develop a different attitude toward their work in Cambodia. Their initial idealism, roughly defined as 'I want to contribute to a better world', changed into a more immersed and realistic attitude, in which the limitations of volunteers' capacities to contribute to that better world were also included (Koleth, 2014, p. 688). In this way, confrontations with tangible war history affected the volunteers' perspective on their work and self-image.

In the last decade, various researchers have studied the emotional responses of day tourists to former war sites. In their work on visitors to Auschwitz, Biran, Poria and Oren state that aspirations for emotional experiences formed a key part of the motivations of the tourists to visit the site, next to the desire to be educated (2011, p. 836). Nawijn and Fricke (2015) investigated the 'positive' and 'negative' emotional responses of visitors to the Neuengamme concentration camp memorial, and found that the 'negative' emotions (shock, sadness, anger) overshadowed the positive ones (fascination and positive surprise). 'Negative' emotions were also felt more intensely (p. 226). Although such a binary division of positive and negative emotions is questionable – feeling sad is not necessarily something negative – their study did find that day tourists were content with their visit, despite the 'negative' emotional experiences (p. 226). These results expose the complexity and ambiguity of emotional experiences undergone at former war sites, as well as the subjectivity of interpreting emotional experiences.

Studies like these illustrate that the desire to be affected is an important part of the volunteer and war tourists' motivation to visit a site. Yet, much remains unclear about the way these affective experiences are formed. Do tangible war sites indeed 'impress' feelings on their visitors (Buda et al., 2014, p. 108), or is affect rather created

in the open-ended encounter between tourist and site (Everingham, 2016, p. 525)? In what ways do previous experiences and socio-cultural contexts shape tourists' affective responses? Where earlier studies tend to concentrate on the experiences of day tourists, in this paper my focus is on tourists who spend a significant period of time on former war sites. In this way, I intend to get a better understanding of the processes underlying these tourist experiences.

A discussion of affective volunteer tourism to former war sites brings up questions about terminology. These visits are often framed as a form of 'dark tourism' (Foley & Lennon, 1996). Tourism to sites related to twentieth-century conflicts, in particular, is studied from the perspective of 'dark tourism' (Light, 2017, p. 280). This has resulted in a large number of quite similar case studies about tourism to 'dark' locations (Light, 2017). Despite the popularity of the concept, its applicability has been questioned (e.g. Biran et al., 2011; Dunkley et al., 2011). Critiques of the concept include its lack of theoretical substantiation, its assumptions about the sensationalist and voyeuristic attraction of death and disaster, its minor differences from 'heritage tourism', and its normativity (Light, 2017). For these reasons, I will refer to 'war tourism'; although this is a rather descriptive concept, it allows me to explore a wider range of (emotional) experiences than the typical 'dark' tourist ones, which are framed by the morbid attraction of everything that is assumed to be 'dark'.

Conceptualizing affect and emotion

The recent 'affective turn' in tourism studies has brought forward a cluster of research that focuses on the emotional and affective responses of visitors to former war sites, some of which has been discussed above. Emotion and affect have only recently been included in tourism research, and applicable theories of emotion and affect are in development (Buda, 2015, pp. 25–29; Martini & Buda, 2020). When discussing affect and emotion in tourism, scholars rely on studies done within a broad range of scientific fields, such as critical theory, feminist studies, geography, psychology or neuroscience. A main point for discussion is the difference between affect and emotion. While some scholars see little need to differentiate between affect and emotion (see Gorton, 2007, p. 334), others underline the necessity of separating the two notions (Massumi, 1995, p. 88). Massumi regards affect as an 'intensity', while emotion serves as a 'qualified intensity'. In his view, 'affect' is abstract and autonomous, while 'emotion' refers to affect in its cultivated, subjective state (p. 88). Massumi's approach to affect and emotion can be associated with a Deleuzian perspective on affect, in which affect involves a certain transition from one phase to another. Here, affect is also seen as an intensity, yet an intensity that takes form in movement (Thrift, 2009, p. 83). Affect thereby pertains to impersonal and unexpressed experiences – that are nevertheless corporeal – while emotions can be regarded as the personal, social and cultural expressions of these experiences (see Probyn, as quoted in Gorton, 2007).

Instead of concentrating on the exact differences between the notions of affect and emotions, other scholars study emotions and affect from a performative point of view. Ahmed famously argued for asking 'what emotions do, instead of what they are' (Ahmed, 2004, p. 4). In her work, Ahmed not only emphasizes the quality of emotions

as cultural practices, which are shaped in contact with others (p. 10), but also discusses how hierarchy, power and privilege are inherent to the possibility of being emotional (pp. 2–4). As such, they have the power to in- and exclude (groups of) people. In a similar way, Berlant takes on a performative approach to studying collective, social and political manifestations of affect. In her work on compassion, she defines the term compassion as 'an emotion in operation' (Berlant, 2004, p. 4). This approach to defining compassion does allow us to ask what compassion does, how it operates within power structures, and how it manifests itself within different contexts. Thus, the attention Ahmed and Berlant pay to the performative quality of emotions assists in conceptualizing emotions as situated and cultivated practices that are constituted by power relations and social discourses.

I look at the aforementioned popularity of experience oriented, emotional and affective volunteer tourism in the light of these arguments. When considering volunteer tourism to former war sites as an expression of a contemporary desire to be touched, a performative approach to studying emotion and affect helps to locate and understand the social, cultural and political components that instigate this desire. By focusing on what emotions 'do', it becomes possible to address their performative qualities on different levels. We can explore the ways in which emotions are shaped and reshaped during touristic encounters, and to deepen the understanding of emotion and affect as experienced in the specific socio-cultural setting of the volunteer summer camps.

Methods

This study is based on data obtained in interviews and during participant observation conducted during three volunteer summer camps: one in Lithuania (2016), one in France (2017) and one in Italy (2017). I joined the 2017 camps, while a research assistant participated in the 2016 camp. Both of us signed up as participants and joined all activities. During our weeklong stay, we conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 26 participants, including the team leaders. We wrote down field notes, and had many more informal conversations. The three summer camps were selected because of their content and their variety in terms of location. This has resulted in a diverse sample in which the chosen camps address different facets of war: Jewish culture and the Holocaust in Lithuania; migration and refugees in France; ideology and violence in Italy.

The Lithuanian summer camp took place in Švenčionys, a small town on the north-east border with Belarus. During the Second World War, Nazi German troops built a ghetto in the town, where they captured and killed the Jewish residents living in the area, or transported them to extermination camps. This resulted in the deaths of thousands of Jewish persons in the area (Arad, 2009). One of the remnants of the former presence of the Jewish community is an 18th-century cemetery that can be found at the edge of Švenčionys. Yet, the cemetery is neglected and now and then vandalized. ARSP volunteers spent two weeks at the cemetery, cleaning the vegetation off the tombstones and documenting the names of the deceased. According to Jewish burial

tradition, the overgrown tombstones cannot be moved and are left to nature, which evokes a romantic atmosphere.

In France, volunteers stayed at a 12th century monumental priory in the eastern Pyrenees. Under the guidance of a specialist, they worked on the dry-stone walls that protect the monument, by first dissecting the old and collapsed walls, and then rebuilding them. Whereas the volunteer work in Lithuania was directly connected to the place we stayed at, this was different in France, as the priory did not have a clear connection with refugees of either the Spanish civil war or of the Second World War. Still, the connection with history was sought by hiking along routes in the mountainous area that had been used by refugees.

The Italian summer camp took place at two different sites in Tuscany. The first site was the aforementioned old farmhouse, not far from Siena, which was used as a partisan shelter during the Second World War. Nowadays, the house serves as a monument to the partisans who were captured and executed by the fascist militia. During the summer camp the volunteers worked on the preservation of the house by doing light manual work. The second site was the village of Sant'Anna di Stazzema, where volunteers studied the history of the village and met with Italian relatives of the victims of the Waffen SS.

All interviews took place during the summer camps, had an average duration of 45 minutes, and were conducted in English. The participants could choose the location of the interview. In this way, we were able to interview in a setting that was comfortable for the interviewee. Meanwhile, this also allowed us to speak about the motivation for selecting a specific place, which generated knowledge about the reasons for feeling at ease on specific spots on site. The interviews were based on an interview guide that contained questions about the motivation to join a summer camp, expectations, the meaning of the (local) historical events to the participants, working with tangible history, emotional responses, as well as the personal developments that took place during the camp. Semi-structured interviewing allows for flexibility while at the same time preserving the coverage of all designated topics (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2007). Such flexibility was necessary in order to adapt to the different phases the volunteers were in: from a more forward-looking perspective during the first days of the camps to a more reflective stance during the later days.

All 26 interviews have been recorded and transcribed verbatim. All participants have consented to collaborate in this study, and the project was approved by the ethics committee. The persons who wished to preserve their anonymity were assigned a pseudonym. I have analyzed transcripts and field notes with an inductive thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through different rounds of open and selective coding, four different themes have been found, that I will elaborate on below. During the analysis, specific attention has been paid to deviating voices, by contrasting individual stories to existing narratives of war and volunteer tourism.

Unavoidably, this study knows limitations. English was not the native language of any of the interviewees, nor of the interviewers, who are Dutch and Moldovan. Though the interviewees' level of English differed, most of them were able to express themselves well. Still, two of the interviewees mentioned at the end of the interview that they would have liked to tell more, but had been unable to, because of the

language barrier. While our presence during the summer camps provided us with a frame of reference that allowed us to partially overcome these language issues, the interview answers should be regarded as being produced in a setting that is neither a reflection of daily life nor a completely artificial setting (Michael, 2017, p. 35). The interviewees were primarily highly educated German women in their twenties. Although this demographic is similar to the population of the ARSP summer camps, the results have to be read with this in mind. Additionally, our presence during the camps and our openness about our purposes might have influenced the group dynamics. However, there are many benefits to such an immersive approach: it is not only easier to interview in the setting of the camps and get back to specific topics at a later moment, but it also facilitates observation of whether the interviewees' attitude and behavior during the camp matched their answers. Most importantly, by participating in the camp, we gained an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding that was beneficial when speaking about difficult topics.

Motivations, attitudes, and (moral) responses

When looking at the motivations of summer camp volunteers, two types of volunteers can be discerned. The majority of the participants signs up for the camp because of an interest in history, but without any specific concern for the country or the wartime event. For them, the camp's value lies in increasing their historical knowledge, in meeting new people, and in doing something good in general. Then, there is a smaller group of people with a specific interest in the history of the site. Most of these volunteers have had earlier experiences with working on former war sites and memorials, either by participating in a previous summer camp or by engaging in a long-term volunteer project.

An important part of the motivation to join a volunteer summer camp is formed by the desire to have an impact, to contribute something of value to a society or community. During the interviews, this desire to have an impact through volunteer work surfaced often. Working hard and doing important work was a main incentive for all participants. This echoes the results of earlier studies on volunteer tourism (e.g. Conran, 2011; Koleth, 2014). Some interviewees also regard the reactions of the communities they are supporting as a valuable aspect of their work. Yet, not everyone spoke about such need for recognition. Maike talked about the way in which she dealt with her initial urge to focus on personal achievements during the work:

> And for example at first I, kind of stupid but I … The first three or four stones I cleaned, I actually counted them, and then I was like 'Wait, that's absolutely not what it's about', like saying that I cleaned like 150 gravestones or anything, and I was just like 'No, that would make it, like kind of a proud or self-righteous thing, a bit'. So, at some point I was like 'No, I don't … that's not how I want to do it, I want to be here and do this work and be here in the moment'. (Maike, 25, Germany)

Maike's remark contains a question that many of the volunteers struggled with: what attitude should you adopt as a volunteer? Should you focus on doing hard and impactful work, on the effect the work has on others, or is it better to focus on your personal state of mind? These questions about attitude are coming from conflicting

expectations about the impact of the work and disappointment about the actual amount and quality (Gius, 2017). Many participants had higher expectations, both in terms of impact and in terms of the time spent on the volunteer work. For Miri, the limited possibility to work during the summer camp even resulted in feelings of guilt:

> I don't feel like, that's one thing I'm not feeling good about, that I don't work that much, (.) and also I get food, and I can stay here for free, and I don't feel that I'm giving enough back. (Miri, 22, Germany)

Miri clearly worried about the idea of reciprocity. She wanted to do something in return for her stay in Italy, but has no insight into the way the ARSP pays for the stay of the volunteers. Other participants, too, mentioned that they would have liked to work more, so as to feel better about their cheap stay. Interestingly, where doing volunteer work is sometimes seen as a way to deal with feelings of guilt about experienced privilege (Germann Molz, 2017), involvement in an ARSP summer camp did not resolve such guilt. Instead, participation made the volunteers conscious of the commodified character of the summer camps and volunteer work in general. Such consciousness caused discomfort with the experience as a whole. This discomfort was strengthened by feelings of uneasiness about the nature of war tourism (see Gius, 2017, p. 1626). When participants experienced that the logic of giving and paying back did not work out for them, they were confronted with their position as war tourists, and the societal discourse of sensationalism and voyeurism that surrounds this form of tourism (Buda & McIntosh, 2013). Additionally, feelings of disappointment and guilt were reinforced by the original aim of the ARSP to have German volunteers doing work on war sites affected by Nazi-German aggression as a symbolic means of reconciliation and reparation: when confronted with the futile character of such reparations, participants feel powerless. Moreover, for some of the volunteers, a general sense of shame and guilt about Germany's war history played a role as well.

Still, feelings of disappointment and guilt did not cause the volunteers to turn away from the summer camps. Instead, such feelings made participants re-evaluate their initial expectations, adjust attitudes, and search for different ways to make the camp relevant to them. Gius (2017) names three strategies for the re-evaluation and legitimization of a volunteers' presence abroad: 'the sympathetic response', 'the overturn' and 'taking charge'. The 'sympathetic response' implies a focus on the establishment of emotional relationships with communities and the gratitude of these communities toward the volunteers. This sympathetic response is visible in the volunteers who emphasize the gratitude of local communities. The 'overturn' and the 'taking charge' strategies entail a shift in focus to the volunteers' personal development and agency, either through emotional growth (e.g. Germann Molz, 2017; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007), or by employing a more activist attitude in the home country (e.g. McGehee & Santos, 2005). In both cases, the volunteers have accepted their position as spectators of suffering (Gius, 2017, p. 1627). In the case of the summer camp volunteers, these strategies are discernible too, but with a stronger focus on increasing one's historical knowledge and the search for personal connections with the past.

Personal connections and identification

Besides the manual work, an important part of the summer camps is dedicated to studying the (war) history of the sites the volunteers visit and stay at. As

mentioned, many participants join the camps because of a general interest in history. Yet, some volunteers said that their personal background had also influenced their motivation to join. Franziska, for example, a 29-year old German volunteer, explained her interest in war history as rooted in frustrations about the nonpolitical household that she grew up in. Because of the absence of a political attitude within her family, Franziska has assigned herself with the task of paying attention to the life stories of others. It is not only important for Franziska to do volunteer work on war heritage sites, but also to pass her story on to people who come from a similar situation and show them that it is possible to disengage from one's background. In doing so, she articulates a moral understanding of the volunteer experience (Burrai et al., 2017).

For many participants, such a connection between one's personal background and the history of a country or region shaped their experience of the summer camp. Obviously, because of the different backgrounds of the participants, the way this connection is sought for and established differs, and ranges from highly political or activist to more imaginary. In some cases, however, identification with historical events also caused tensions. Some volunteers explicitly mention that they experienced difficulties with their identification as German citizens and the history of the Second World War. They indicated that their choice to join a summer camp about Italian fascism was rooted in the desire to not be confronted with their German background in any explicit way. As Lisa told the interviewer:

> Yeah, I think that's the reason, it's overwhelming and here [in Italy] you can deal with it, and you're not personally affected. In a way, you are personally affected when you are German and going to Auschwitz, in a way. You are, you know? (.) I think I could never stand to go to Auschwitz, actually, because I don't know, I just, I'd just cry all the time actually. I don't know that it would deepen my knowledge of this history. (Lisa, 27, Germany)

Where a visit to Auschwitz would only result in an overwhelming yet unproductive emotional experience, studying fascism from an Italian point of view allowed her to distance herself. Hence, where for some of the participants a connection with their (national) past served as a means to make studying the past relevant to them and 'take charge', others expect to experience such a connection as being too confronting. For them, visiting war crime sites as a citizen of the perpetrating country is seen as too burdensome. This exposes an interesting dynamic in relation to what Boltanski (1999) has called 'distant suffering' – the assumed (mediatized) attraction of the simple, far-away suffering of others. A similar logic is often found in 'dark tourism' research (e.g. Stone, 2009). Yet, such logic does not seem to apply here. On the one hand, Lisa indeed seems to be looking for an impersonal confrontation with war history. On the other hand, this confrontation is her only way to deal with her national background and (learned) feelings of guilt. Rather than being 'attracted' by the suffering of others, learning about this suffering allows her to access and reflect on her personal situation. Here, less personal emotional responses to confrontations with war history seem to be more productive than the very personal and overwhelming ones. As such, here we could see the difference between the desire for an emotional response and an affective response to visiting a former war site.

Experiencing sites of conflict

Identification with past events functions as a means to make the volunteering and the study of the past more relevant to the participants. Yet, staying on a tangible war site also gives rise to specific experiences. Places associated with war and conflicts are thought to impress specific experiences on their visitors (Buda et al., 2014). The confrontation with material and 'authentic' traces of the past is thereby seen as auratic (Jones, 2010, p. 189). Seeing and touching material remnants of the past, with all their references to earlier times and users, causes people to establish personal relationships with those remnants and the networks they belong to (p. 181). As such, material objects serve as points of connection within larger networks that help persons to reflect on themselves. Furthermore, auratic experiences of 'authenticity' are closely connected to affect (Carter, 2019). Visitors are inclined to be affected by auratic experiences of places, objects, or people: through these experiences, long-lasting memories of places and encounters are created (p. 312). Hence, on-site experiences and emotions are created in a negotiation between the site, its network, and the visitor, and have the potential to create long-lasting memories of specific places and encounters.

According to all interviewees, staying on a tangible site provided something extra to their experience and increased their knowledge about the past, precisely because of the physical closeness of the past. Again, the proximity of historical traces allows for making war history more personal, emotional, and memorable. Jacob explained how this worked for him:

> Yeah, you know, and you feel somehow … people are buried here and they're … all of them have a history and personality and it's not just a number … Like, usually when you read about the Holocaust it's just numbers … So you have one grave – that's one person, that's one life … So, for example, this cemetery has around, like, 2000 tomb stones, and in comparison to the numbers you normally hear, it's quite a small number. But if you're at the cemetery and see that it's a big area, territory, you … you … it's more individual. (Jacob, 22, Germany)

Many interviewees had experiences similar to those of Jacob. Contact with physical traces of the past caused them to think about individuals who lived in the past and 'feel' their presence. Traces of their lives, such as a name on a gravestone, thereby function as triggers of their imagination. Even volunteers who were located on sites with fewer historical traces were present still felt encouraged to use their imagination. For instance, the summer camp in France took place in a 12th century priory, yet this specific site had nothing to do with refugees in the Spanish civil war and the Second World War, the topics of the camp. Here, it was only an indistinct mountainous landscape that referred to refugee routes in those wars. Lisa, a 20-year-old German student, talked about how she was still able to imagine the past on this site:

> Even though you don't see anything at all, it's just the imagination that makes you understand a little more what this, the people's situation was … (Lisa, 20, Germany)

Like Lisa, many interviewees were convinced that a visit to a former war site makes the past more real and more understandable. This image of the past is mainly about obtaining information that is not present in a history book, details that seem too unimportant or too common to write about. By seeing the consequences of past

violence, it is easier to believe that such violence took place. Importantly, it is not only seeing these consequences that matters, but also feeling them. Desislava explained:

> We visited Sant'Anna, the city that's been burnt down, where everyone was killed and so on. And you go and you see it with your own eyes, because even now people aren't living there. There are not, not some, it's like a dead city. And then you see what it really means that everyone was killed, because if so many people have been killed it doesn't matter how many years ago, still – like, it's empty. You get the feeling. (Desislava, 22, Bulgaria)

In Desislava's account, a corporeal understanding of the events at Sant'Anna is present. This understanding is not directed at the committed crimes, but rather at the consequences of these crimes. By visiting a village that still breathes a feeling of violence because of its emptiness, Desislava affectively understood what happened to the place. The time spent on site plays a role in this: by gradually learning about a place, and by discovering more and more details on site, the past becomes more real, and, as a consequence, more emotional. As such, an affective relationship with the past is developed in phases, and new layers of emotions, feelings, reflections, and memories are continuously added to the experience.

Encounters with physical remnants of the past 'do' something to their visitors. They work on their imagination, even if those remnants are mainly geographical, and help them to understand and remember specific histories better. The shared belief in the fact that physical remnants contain traces to a more realistic past is fascinating. Lisa's description of how an indistinct landscape triggered her historical imagination illustrates that, at least in her case, not many historical remnants are needed to invoke an image of the past. Here, it is rather a series of personal and cultivated associations that make up this image of the past (Jones, 2010). Auratic experiences seem less important, at least for Lisa. Still, this does not undermine the (affective) power of seeing and feeling the consequences of war and violence on site – for many other volunteers, the encounters with auratic traces of the past were, indeed, powerful and affective. An important factor that impacts the experience of the volunteers is the period of time spent on a war site. By being confronted with the same site for a long(er) period than a few hours, the emotional and affective responses of the volunteers become more layered. Importantly, such a longer period of time spent on site sometimes also results in the development of more contradictory experiences. As we will see in the next section, this also has consequences for the volunteers' behavior during the summer camp and their reflection on their experiences.

Feeling (un)touched

One of the reasons participants join war themed summer camps is to search for emotional experiences. They want to be touched by stories about events that occurred in the past. This desire for affective experiences was noticeable, for example, in the way in which some of the participants reflected on the historical explanations we obtained. They emphasized that these explanations were nice but it did not make them 'feel' anything, even though they were expressed on the site where the historical events took place. The way participants spoke about encounters that were more personal,

such as meeting different eyewitnesses and survivors of the Second World War, revealed that they valued these experiences the most, precisely because they said to have 'felt' something. The same goes for visits to places of extreme violence, like the Rivesaltes transit camp in France or the village of Sant'Anna di Stazzema in Italy. Sites with strong symbolic meaning were also said to be highly affective. Hence, for the participants, 'feeling' something is a key element in the evaluation of their experience, and such feelings are more easily obtained through personal encounters and confrontations with traces of and references to extreme violence.

When speaking about their affective responses to the places visited during the summer camps, interviewees often referred to earlier visits to other former war sites, with which they could compare their experience. Especially the German participants had been on quite a number of school visits. Miri spoke about how a trip to the former Stasi prison Hohenschönhausen in Berlin had affected her in a physical way:

> We went there and it was horrible, it was like the worst place I've ever been to. I felt it [emphasis on felt], I felt it like everything in me like froze and wanted kind of like I wanted to make myself short and small, and I was in a really horrible setting, there was nothing horrible anymore there, sure there were the buildings, but they didn't, there was nobody like actually doing me any harm, but it felt like somebody would do that at the moment. I was scared it would happen like any second, and it was so bad that I actually had to leave and take a break. (Miri, 22, Germany)

Miri's description of the disturbing experience she had in Hohenschönhausen is a clear example of the bodily quality of affect, in this case in a quite literal sense, as Miri even felt she wanted to make herself small. Franziska, who took part in multiple summer camps, talked in a related way about how tremendously the Jewish cemetery she had to work on scared her. Yet, by returning to a similar cemetery years later, she had also experienced that her anxiety to work on such a site had disappeared:

> I've, I've had different phases, let's say … Like four years back, I'd be anxious about going to the cemetery, because it would confront me with death … And I hated that. (.) After one day or two, we ended up not working on the cemetery, but in their garden … I was so, so incredibly relieved about that, you can't imagine … (.) And last year, it kind of changed, last year I … It was such a beautiful work, we were such a nice team, so I was like sitting quietly on that cemetery, I would be like listening to music all the time, painting all day long … (.) It gave me like a really peaceful feeling being on the cemetery, so I kind of lost all the anxiety I had before … (Franziska, 29, Germany)

Hence, for Franziska, her repeated presence on a cemetery made her to get used to being close to references to death and dying, and made her develop an attitude that allowed her to feel relaxed and peaceful. Again, the development of an affective relation with the work and the place here occurred here in phases, and emotions changed because of earlier emotions. Importantly, Franziska mentioned the nice team that she was part of during the second time she volunteered at a cemetery. Here, the attitude and emotional state of other members of the group volunteers had an impact on how she felt on the cemetery and gave her a positive experience. Hence, group dynamics make up a significant part of the volunteer experience. Thus, while auratic experiences of the past are important to the volunteers, group dynamics have an equally important impact on the volunteer experience. Daniele, a 29-year-old volunteer from Italy,

explicitly alluded to the fact that group processes play a role in the way emotions are transmitted on site:

> Yeah, if you, if you go there, if you see where it happened … And it's important to do this experience in a group, I think that it can contribute to the transmission of emotion … (Daniele, 29, Italy)

Daniele was convinced that being in a group helps in getting feelings across, and as such, making those feelings more intense. Moreover, Daniele regarded being emotional as something valuable, something that you want to happen. Yet, while Daniele had no difficulty feeling it affected, others had much more problems with this, in which on might distinguish a mechanism of in- and exclusion (Buda et al., 2014). From my own observation, mentioning not to feel involved or affected incited negative judgment by some of the group members. Noteworthy, Miri, who was so impressed by her visit to the former Stasi prison, told me she had not felt much during the summer camp. Realizing that she was not affected as much as she had expected even troubled her at night:

> On the second night [of the summer camp] I couldn't sleep well, because I thought about that, well, because it didn't bother me at all, and I kind of feel that because I expected to be feeling bad about it, and that was what was keeping me awake, because I kind of wanted it to bother me, but it didn't. (Miri, 22, Germany)

Worries about not feeling affected were present in the accounts of other interviewees too. While they expected to feel a great deal during the summer camp, reality was different. Some of the German volunteers mentioned that they felt extremely numb earlier on, due to their extensive German education about the Second World War, which had saturated them with historical information. Nele even related this saturation to her desire to learn about that war in a different, more personal way during the summer camp in Italy:

> I don't know whether it's maybe because it doesn't seem to be so cruel in, in comparison to other things that happened in the World War. Or just, I mean, I heard a lot about some massacres and stuff in school, and also afterwards … It's maybe not that sensitive to me anymore. And then I thought maybe when I come here and see the places, that will change. But it, it doesn't seem like it's really here. I don't know, it, it doesn't seem to be very close. (Nele, 21, Germany)

Miri's and Nele's remarks about feeling untouched concerned the first week of the Italian summer camp, when the places associated with mass atrocity, such as the village of Sant'Anna, had not yet been visited. Still, their accounts reveal their struggle to deal with their unmet expectations. This struggle was confronting to them, as it gave rise once more to questions about their motivation and guilt about their incapacity to relate to 'smaller' histories of violence and death, histories less saturated with recognizable symbolic references to war and violence. Here, the unbalance in the dynamics of giving and taking as formed by the experience of volunteering on a former war site seems to be resurfacing, yet this time concentrating on absent emotional responses. As a consequence, a self-judgment is distinguishable, related to the preferred (or imposed) reaction to being part of a war themed summer camp. However, as was the case with the question of the desired impact of the work, the inner debates also caused some volunteers to reevaluate their motivation, adjust their

attitude, and shift their focus (e.g. Gius, 2017; Koleth, 2014). Such shifts in focus took the form of obtaining historical knowledge and focusing on the beauty of a site, separated from its history. This resulted, for example, in lyrical descriptions of the Lithuanian cemetery as beautiful, magical, or romantic, or in developing a caring relationship with the partisan refuge in Italy. In this way, the volunteers were able to create a more layered narrative about the sites and their experience of the summer camp. Here, we see the impact of a longer stay on a former war site. By having the time to explore, reflect, and re-evaluate one's expectations and experiences, different stories are created – stories that surpass the traditional narrative of the 'dark' or war tourist.

Conclusion

In this article, I have discussed the motivations, expectations and emotional experiences of volunteer tourists who participated in war-themed summer camps at different European locations. I focused on the different forms and outcomes of emotion and affect, as generated within a specific socio-cultural context. As argued, volunteers join war-themed summer camps in search of emotional experiences. They hope to find these experiences by employing a personal, embodied and located approach to studying the past. The ARSP summer camps provide a framework for combining this urge for emotional experiences with the possibility to do something in return: volunteer work. In this way, participants can symbolically pay for their stay, education, and experiences. The unmet expectations about the impact of the volunteer work reveal that for a part of the participants, this logic of a symbolic payback did not work out. Still, witnessing the limited impact of the work did something to the participants: it made them re-evaluate their motives and expectations, and made them think critically about this form of volunteer tourism. Volunteers found new ways to relate to volunteering after having witnessed places of (former) suffering, either by becoming more realistic in their expectations about having a significant impact, or by shifting their attention to their personal development and identity building. This is in line with the findings of Gius (2017) and Koleth (2014).

With regards to the sought emotional experiences, a similar process took place. Once volunteers realized that they remained untouched by a local history, they began to deliberate on their urge to be affected and started to look for different ways to make the summer camp meaningful to them. In both cases, confrontations with unfulfilled expectations and desires could be regarded as moments of personal growth, and in that sense, as a positive consequence of the volunteer tourist experience. Still, not everyone wants to be overwhelmed by war history: sometimes, distancing oneself from one's personal and socio-cultural background is more productive. Here, we see a difference between the desire to be emotionally touched and the desire to be affected.

Auratic experiences of place are closely linked to affect (Carter, 2019). And indeed, the volunteers regarded the tangible encounters with traces of war as an opportunity to be affected or emotionally touched. This research indicates that personal expectations, cultural codes, the design of the site, as well as group dynamics play an

important role in the volunteers' emotional experiences. Hence, research about affect and emotion needs to take these dynamics into account. Moreover, studies on visitors to former war sites predominantly discuss day tourists who only spend a few hours on site (e.g. Biran et al., 2011). This study shows that the time spent on site has a considerable impact on the tourist experience; thus, it is an important factor in research on tourists' emotional and affective responses.

This study includes a limited number of summer camps organized by a single German organization. To gain a better understanding about this particular type of tourism, further research should focus specifically on its relation to emotion and affect. Longitudinal research would be necessary to gain more insight into the impact of the summer camps on the lives of the volunteers, their self-image, and their experiences of privilege. In addition, studies about the influence of the presence of volunteers on local (mnemonic) communities could add to the understanding of the impact of the summer camps on a local level. As experienced emotions are dependent on the cultural background of the participants, it would be interesting to conduct this research in different cultural settings.

A focus on 'what emotions do' makes it possible to expose various and deviant experiences of volunteer and war tourism. By paying attention to the processes that underlie individual tourist experiences, the opportunity arises to explore the changes, complexities, and ambiguities of emotional and affective experiences on former war sites.

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Appendix. Overview of 26 interviewees

Švenčionys, Lithuania, 2016.

Name	Age	Nationality	Gender
Andrea	27	German	f
Franziska	29	German	f
Hanna	24	Belorussian	f
Jacob	22	German	m
Jan	26	German	m
Julian	20	German	m
Maike	25	German	f
Miriam	26	German	f
Nele	19	German	f
Sammy	24	German	f

Marcevol, France, 2017.

Name	Age	Nationality	Gender
Chrisoula	49	Greek	f
Lisa	20	German	f
Manon	23	French	f
Mina	24	German	f
Seyit	24	Turkish	m
Smaragda	20	Greek	f

Montemaggio/Sant'Anna di Stazzema, Italy, 2017.

Name	Age	Nationality	Gender
Alicja	63	Polish	f
Daniele	29	Italian	m
Desislava	22	Bulgarian	f
Jana	22	German	f
Justine	24	German	f
Laura	23	German	f
Lisa	27	German	f
Mevisa	26	Albanian	f
Miri	22	German	f
Nele	21	German	f