Chapter 1

The Theory of Risk Perception Geared to Tourism and Hospitality Fields

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the author lays the foundations to a new debate about risk perception and the securitization process within the constellations of tourism fields. The chapter represents not only a critical insight on the already-established paradigms but also to the ethnocentrism of English-speaking scholars who have developed an economic-based paradigm of risk perception. The chapter explores the dichotomies and differences among risk, threat, danger, security, and fear while gives a new fresh insight to forge a new sub discipline in tourism: the anthropology of tourism security. While the economic-based theories enthusiastically accept quantitative-related methods, this position reached a state of stagnation. Qualitative-led methodologies as ethnography and analysis content would fill the gap in the years to come. Today, the emergence of some alternative theories as post disaster or post-conflict theories evinces that the doctrine of precautionary principles rested on shaky foundations.

INTRODUCTION

In the mid-twentieth century, Europe and the US bore witness to how the technological advances which were originally related to less working hours, better wages and mobilities, paved the way for the consolidation of the tourism industry (Mathiesson & Wall, 1982; Urry, 2016). Today, the Academy agrees travels and tourism are considered as inalienable rights that mark the center of a free society (Meethan 2001). Not only the cyphers of international tourists have been notably increased, but it suggests tourism is a sign of prosperity and economic maturation which characterizes the life in developed societies (Santana-Talavera, 2016; Frechtling, 1993; Urry, 1992; Karl, 2018; Korstanje, 2018). Over the recent years, some unseen global risks placed this growing industry in jeopardy. Ranging from lethal virus outbreaks to the scourge of terrorism, without mentioning natural disasters, policy-makers and specialists acknowledged the importance to work on a shared agenda that keeps the stability of international tourist destinations (Somnez & Graefe, 1998; Blake & Sinclair, 2003; George, 2003; Glaesser, 2006; Laws, Prideaux & Chon, 2007).

As this backdrop, terms as tourism security, political instability and of course tourism crisis management circulated in the main international conferences as an object of study, as well as populated the top-ranked journals in tourism and hospitality through the turn of the century (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006; Williams & Balaz, 2015; Karl, 2018). As Peter Tarlow (2014) puts it, tourism security—as a cursory object of research—appears to be hard to grasp in view of the multiple sub-sectors which should be adjusted to the local context. The priorities and needs of hospitality are pretty different than cruises or event-management. This suggests that tourism security evolves in a differentiated way than other leisure industries (Korstanje, Tzanelli & Clayton, 2014). This raises a more than a pungent question, to what extent may we present an all-encompassing model to understand tourism security?

An additional problem associated with the great fragmentation in the fields of tourism security. Over more than one decade, scholars have published thousands of paper-works, books and Ph. Doctorate dissertations which led invariably towards a state of dispersion and confusion respecting the nature of security. Third, some voices recently alerted on the methodological limitations of tourism security works which rests on an economic-centered paradigm (Bianchi, 2006; Korstanje & Clayton, 2012). We mean "economic-centered paradigm" as the corpus of theories and ideas aimed at presenting tourism as

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