Chapter 4
Tourism Security:
A Conceptual Insight

ABSTRACT

The chapter explores the problem of terrorism and security in tourism fields. Certainly, plans and policies provided by guidebooks are not being followed in disasters. Simply chaos and disorder are the nature of emergencies. Beyond any protocol, crises and security are not properly defined by scholars. In this essay-review, the authors do not define what tourism security means. Instead, they view it through the lens of three senior scholars, Sevil Somnez, Abraham Pizam, and Peter Tarlow, who have accomplished this task. They have explored not only the roots of terrorism but also security over 20 years. Despite the criticism, they deserve recognition for this legacy. Based on substantial point of divergence, these specialists are concerned by the financial dependency of societies respecting mass media and its coverage of terrorist attacks.

INTRODUCTION

Although terrorism has become a major treat for the world, no less true is that Latin America debates its problem of security from another angle. Syllabuses, courses and Ph. D programs in tourism and hospitality have a marginal presence of security and safety studies in Latin American universities. The trend of securitization, which was coined by 9/11 worldwide, gained little attention in this corner of the globe and of course, this happens by two main reasons. With the exemption of Colombians, Latin Americans are not concerned

about terrorism. In a major or lesser degree, the problem of security is strictly associated with local crime and drug traffic. Secondly, Latin Americans do not wholly support the War on Terror declared by Bush´s administration based on ideological convictions. This raises a more than interesting question: how important is tourism security for Latin American economies?

Paradoxically, the region experienced a legacy of violence and bloodshed in the past centuries –ie the guerrilla or terrorism wreaked havoc in the social fabric of Latin American societies- but now terrorism is considered as "a problem of the gringos". Doubtless, 9/11 subordinated the definitions of terrorism as well as the traumatic experiences of other similarly-based events. Of course, the region is not immune to terrorism and the reason of this chapter intends to discuss the legacy and trajectory of three senior lecturers who have focused their insight on the problem of terrorism and its effects on tourism. For Sevil Somnez, the Luxor Massacre was the cornerstone of her studies. The tragic events of 9/11 were very far from her foci. Rather, Abraham (abe) Pizam alternates diverse disciplinary methods to understand tourism security as an incipient field. In this token, Rabi Peter Tarlow acknowledges that security is a matter of further complexity than terrorism. The question of whether terrorism follows a religious nature is fine for Pizam and Somnez, but not for Tarlow. He goes in the opposite direction. Terrorism only gains strength according to the degree of terror it can generate. This sentiment of panic can be exploited by the imposition of violence and brutality to the extent the "Other" is objectified. At some point, terrorists are indifferent to human suffering confirming that religion has nothing to do with terrorism, Tarlow adds.

With strengths and weaknesses, each one gives a clear diagnosis about the role of the state not only in homeland security but also in the protection of tourists. Experts and academicians agree that the success of "international terrorism" to cause political instability in western states is based on two main points. First and foremost, local economies have developed a strong dependency from the tourism industry. Over years, tourism was esteemed as a fresh industry which helps local to alleviate poverty and boosting local economies. The second point of entry in this discussion is that this dependency, conjoined to the coverage terrorism received from the media, jeopardizes the image of tourist destination causing serious financial losses in the periphery. Terrorist not only appeals to kill "innocent travelers" to shock western societies but look for the decline of tourism demand.

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