

Chapter 1

Peace: A Roadmap for Heritage and Tourism

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ABSTRACT

On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted an Agenda for Sustainable Development establishing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030, on which states, civil society, and the private sector are called to contribute. In this context, tourism, which is based on billions of encounters between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, is hailed as the industry that can foster tolerance and multicultural and interfaith understanding, laying the groundwork for more peaceful societies. This chapter critically analyses the current discourse on tourism and peace, exploring opportunities and limitations. The authors affirm the urgency for a more complex approach by informing the debate with concepts, theories, and ideas coming from areas different than tourism (cultural anthropology, history, cultural heritage, cultural diplomacy, peace and conflict studies, peace education and sustainability science). The authors focus mainly on the role of cultural heritage and its management as the central hinge in the association between tourism and peace.

INTRODUCTION

Strive,

at individual and collective level,

for a better understanding of the world surrounding us and

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act without hesitation,

because History will not forgive

the apathy or inconsistency of the commitment to a better future.

This chapter critically presents the evolution of the academic and non-academic discourse relating to the conceptual association between tourism and peace and in particular tourism and peacebuilding. The first section provides a background of the work by adopting a complex approach. The authors highlight in this first section some current socio-cultural traits to be considered in the context of the study, as well as some contemporary geopolitical aspects. Afterwards, the very concept of peacebuilding is presented and, finally, the last subsection focuses on the state of the art of the debate on the relationship between tourism and peace, namely tourism and peacebuilding, by highlighting issues, controversies, theoretical and practical limitations of the current discourse.

The second section contains the main focus of the chapter and, in response to the need highlighted in the first part of the chapter to raise the level of complexity of the debate, the authors propose the integration of models and ideas from areas other than tourism. In particular, reference is made to studies on the management of cultural heritage and their social value. Cultural heritage and its management and its association with tourism are presented as the keystone in the conceptual architecture binding together tourism and peace.

BACKGROUND

This section presents the background of the present study by contextualising it in the socioeconomic and sociocultural current situation (at least with regards to Western society) and through some geopolitical considerations. Afterwards, the main theme is introduced with a brief note on the meaning of peacebuilding. For space limitations and to avoid going off-topic some very specific aspects such as the debate on liberal peace, its internal components and the often-ignored tensions between them (Richmond, 2006) are not included here. Once defined this broad context, the analysis of the current debate on the link between tourism and peacebuilding will represent the focus of the last subsection.

Current days present us with challenges that were unthinkable just a few decades ago. The utopia of a new world order in the name of a peaceful interdependence of peoples and nations – favoured by the rapid process of globalisation – has given rise to several and often conflicting needs. From a socioeconomic point of view, for instance, half of the world's 736 million impoverished people lived in just five countries, and 85% of them (629 million) in Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 1).

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