



University of Palermo, Argentina

Department of Economics, University of Palermo, Argentina

St. Larrea 1079, 3 Floor, Capital Federal, Zip 1188

Buenos Aires, Argentina

ISSN 2250-5105

The Cultural Tourism Product, Meeting of Cultures: Safety, Security and Planning Guidelines.

Christopher Pratt¹

Peter Tarlow²

Abstract

This Article analyzes the value of culture as a product for the cultural tourism industry and the precautions that should be observed to guarantee the safety and security of its consumers. Cultural Tourism has become an important sector of the tourism industry; however the meeting of different cultures is not always a peaceful procedure. This article provides some examples of risks that have, in the past, been problematic for the industry and presents some planning guidelines that will help ensure a beneficial relationship for both the visitor and the visited.

Key-words: Cultural Tourism; Planning; Safety; Security.

Introduction:

Natural and cultural heritage have proven to be generators of tourist interest, adding value to destinations by stimulating local socioeconomic development.

³“El Patrimonio natural y cultural, la diversidad y las culturas vivas constituyen los Máximos atractivos del Turismo.”

⁴“Creating a strong relationship between tourism and culture can help destinations to become more attractive and competitive as locations to live, work and invest in.”

¹Dr. Pratt is a Master student at Polytechnic Institute of Tomar.

²Dr. Peter E. Tarlow is the President of T&M, a founder of the Texas chapter of TTRA and a popular author and speaker on tourism. Tarlow is a specialist in the areas of sociology of tourism, economic development, tourism safety and security. Tarlow speaks at governors' and state conferences on tourism and conducts seminars throughout the world and for numerous agencies and universities.

³UNESCO ICOMOS (1999) **Carta Internacional do Turismo Cultural**

⁴OECD (2009) **The impact of Culture on Tourism**

This development has paved the way to a greater awareness of the value of heritage and its consideration in political agendas.

The OECD report on culture and tourism (2009) indicated that the main drivers for developing culture and tourism policies are:

- Valorising and preserving heritage
- Economic development and employment
- Physical and economic regeneration
- Strengthening and/or diversifying tourism
- Retaining population

Developing cultural understanding and growing interest for cultural heritage has led to a rise in the number of cultural tourists and the development of new products.

⁵For instance, the World Tourism Organisation estimates that cultural tourism accounts for 37% of all tourist trips.

Risks associated to Travel and Tourism

As with associated to any type of travel there are risks involved and cultural tourists are also vulnerable to such hazards. These risks can be connected to the tourist's security, safety and also cultural differences that can, at times, cause complications for the visitors and the visited.

⁶A person at home understands risks and lives with them. But that same person as a tourist does not want to be worried about immeasurable risks from violence when on vacation.

Similarly complications such as communication issues, conflicting customs, ignorance to local etiquette and cultural/religious backgrounds. In this case, what measures can be taken to prevent more serious difficulties for tourists and greater quality of service for tourism destinations.

⁵McKercher, (2002) **Towards a Classification of Cultural Tourists**

⁶UNWTO (1996), **Tourist Safety and Security: Practical Measures for Destinations.**

Natural and Cultural Heritage along with the diversity of living cultures are major tourism attractions (UNESCO ICOMOS) and more than ever we have become aware of the value of culture and how it is now taking its place as the very cornerstone of economies and development agendas.” (Tourism culture and sustainable development. UNESCO, 2006)

So we are faced with the concept of cultural tourism, which can be broadly defined as the commercialized manifestation of the human desiring to see how others live in their “authentic” environment. Seen through the physical manifestations of their lives as expressed in arts and crafts, music, literature, dance, food and drink, play, handicrafts, language and ritual (Jafari 2000).

A growing number of cities and regions in the European Union are basing their tourism development strategies on the promotion of Cultural Heritage, and the number of cultural attractions is growing rapidly. Evidence of this growth can be found in the figures from the World Tourism Organization, indicating that the proportion of international trips accounted for by cultural tourists grew from 37% in 1995 to 40% in 2004 and in 2009 there were around 375 million international cultural trips. Local residents also seem to appreciate the potential benefits of cultural tourism, over 90% of Barcelona residents indicated that they would prefer to develop cultural tourism in the future (Richards, 2011).

To answer this growing demand the tourism industry (businesses, public agencies, non-profit organizations) create tourism products to facilitate travel and activity for people away from their home environment (Smith, 1994). Although tourism experiences are primarily about the pursuit of pleasure, for the tourist this pursuit is not without risk. During his travels a tourist is liable to complications which concern.

- ⁷Security: when tourists suffer harm as a result of the deliberate actions of others (e.g. mugging, assault, rape or murder).
- And Safety: where tourists are injured accidentally (e.g. traffic accidents, natural disasters, accidents relating to activities such as skiing or climbing).

⁷Peattie, Clarke, Peattie, (2005)

However, as many have experienced in the past the worst situations with the potential to ruin a trip come down to issues related to our personal security. Situations like mugging, accidents, violence, baggage or document theft, kidnap, murders, happen to a variety of travelers all over the world. (Andrade, 2003)

Another aspect often felt during travel, that can compromise the tourist experience is culture shock, an inability to adapt and assimilate to the destination's culture. (Andrade, 2003). Culture Shock is defined as a special kind of anxiety and stress experienced by people who enter a culture different from their own. Culture shock includes two kind of problems: being confused, anxious and puzzled by the way others behave, and doing the same to others by behaving in their own way. When one enters a new society, old ways of perceiving patterns of behaviour may not work as well and some conflicts and confusion lead to culture shock. (Jafari 2000).

In tourism, that culture shock may derive from several causes, such as loss of familiar cues in one's ability to interact with people of different cultural backgrounds, the language differences and non-verbal communication difficulties with local communities. Not only tourists experience the shock; the host population can also be stressed by contacts with the tourist culture. (Jafari 2000).

Many tourists experience communication problems in the country they are visiting, rendering them unable to understand the local language or culture. Communication difficulties such as the signing of forms or interpretation of signs make tourists more prone to safety and security problems. The lack of preparation and training to avoid these issues for tourists and locals alike results in aggravated difficulties for both parties. Initiatives to reach out to tourists with safety and security information should be designed with the tourist's language and cultural background in mind. (Safety and Security Practical Measures for Destinations, UNWTO).

The relationship between tourism safety and security issues has gained substantial interest since 9/11 in the US. These events affect the industry and its customers in both receiving and generating markets (Mansfeld & Pizam 2005).

The frequent threats to the tourism industry, has made addressing these issues a priority. Areas such as the dissemination of risk and crisis management techniques and

guidelines for national security plans are vital. Specific methodological guidance and international standards regarding security systems in tourist destinations and facilities must be considered. (UNWTO White Paper, 2011)

Tried and tested measures to provide tourist security and safety should be considered in national planning strategy, measures like creating Tourist Police departments in major tourism destinations (Benescu, 2010).

Specialist tourist police units are a recent development in many countries where tourism is important to the economy and where crimes associated with tourism are recognized as a threat to the industry. However, such developments are scarcely universal. (Mawbya, Boakyeb & Jonesc, 2014)

Tourist Police in Greece receive special training for interacting with tourists along with knowledge of foreign languages. Malaysian Tourism Police, apart from speaking foreign languages, go as far as offering information concerning local law, local customs and cultures. (Benescu, 2010)

It is important to train locals to deal with visitors who speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds and religions.

Multilingual communication methods via tourist police, information kiosks and signs, or by having electronic touch screens programmed to answer the most likely questions in a variety of languages in areas frequented by tourists is a means to ameliorate some communication problems is a way to provide tourist protection. (Safety and Security Practical Measures for Destinations, UNWTO)

In exceptional situations due to overcrowding or overuse of scarce, resources relations can become strained between tourists and residents, and in extreme situations can result in conflict. Volatile situations arise like confrontations between exclusive tourist centers and poverty areas, and in some cases the tourist sub-culture posing a threat to local customs, religion and identity. (Safety and Security Practical Measures for Destinations, UNWTO)

In Colombia, during Andrés Pastrana's presidency (1998-2002) Tourist security measures to guarantee foreign and national tourists physical security were defined not

only as a strategic development plan but as state responsibility, resulting in an increase in tourism activity. (Ojeda, 2003)

Conclusion:

Culture, as a physical manifestation of people's lives, has started taking its place as the very cornerstone of economies and development agendas. Following this we looked at culture from a commercial point of view, as a marketable product to the tourism market and how the numbers of cultural tourists have grown over the past few years. From 37% in 1995 to 40% in 2004 and in 2009 there were around 375 million international cultural trips. Relating to this rising number of tourists we address the issue of their security and safety, distinguishing between the two, and following Peattie, Clarke, Peattie, 2005 we considered the differences between Security: when tourists suffer harm as a result of the deliberate actions of others and Safety: where tourists are injured accidentally.

The effects of insufficient planning and training with the resultant liability tourist safety and security issues, brings with it difficulties for locals and tourists according to the Safety and Security Practical Measures for Destinations, UNWTO.

Finally we looked into tried and tested measures to provide tourist security and safety such as a Tourism Police Force and the use of multilingual signage to avoid some communication problems and in a way, to provide tourist protection.

References:

- Andrade, D. (2003) **Guia da Viagem**. Noticias editorial
- Benescu, O. (2010) **"The Safety of Tourist" - Required Community Standard**
- Jafari, J. (2000) **The Encyclopedia of Tourism**, Routledge
- Mansfeld&Pizam (2005), **Safety and Security in Tourism: Relationships, Management and Marketing**
- Mawbya, Boakyeb&Jonesc, (2014) **Policing tourism: the emergence of specialist units**
- McKercher, B. (2002) **Towards a Classification of Cultural Tourists** (INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TOURISM RESEARCH)
- Ojeda, D. (2003) **War and Tourism: The Banal Geographies of Security in Colombia's "Retaking"**

Peattie, Clarke, Peattie, (2005) **Risk and responsibility in tourism: promoting sun-safety.**

Richards, G. (2011) **Cultural tourism trends in Europe: a context for the development of Cultural Routes.** In: Khovanova-Rubicondo, K. (ed.) Impact of European Cultural Routes on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness.

SMITH, S. (1994) **The Tourism Product.** Annals of Tourism Research, 21

Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, pp. 21-39.

UNESCO (2006) Tourism culture and sustainable development.

UNESCO ICOMOS (1999) **Carta Internacional do Turismo Cultural.** UNESCO ICOMOS documentation centre.

UNWTO (1996), **Tourist Safety and Security: Practical Measures for Destinations.**

UNWTO (2011) **Report on the progress of the reform of the Organization (White Paper)**