**The Determination of Behavioural Patterns in Tourism Destinations through Terrorism: Lessons from Crete, Greece**

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**ABSTRACT**

Tourists regard terrorism as an influencing factor in selecting travel destinations, as well as transportation means. The Mediterranean is the most famous tourist destination globally, whilst Crete is one of the most famous Mediterranean island destinations. Since most visitors use airplanes to reach the island, the purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of tourists travelling by air in accordance with the influence of terrorism, the process of destination selection, and their alternations in travelling behaviour. It also examines the perceptions of key informants which focus on risk and crisis management in aspects of terrorism and finally, compares tourists and key informants’ perspectives. In this study, the author began with a random starting method and then used structured interviewing in order to obtain objective, yet personal responses from the respondents (tourists). For key informants, the examination included the total population. For better comprehension of the perspectives’ formulation the author analysed four socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, level of education, and marital status). The results provide interesting outcomes concerning the degree of the perceived risk factors that tourists and key informants consider when travelling, revealing that even if terrorism is promoted as an exceptionally significant factor, in reality its importance is not semantic. It also emphasises that terrorism is a mean for creating a psychological impact to visitors which influences both visitors’ and locals’ decisions and behavioural patterns, since through the process of confusion, government agencies manipulate the reactions and perspectives of locals and implement fear as a tool for societal control.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Terrorism, Travelers Perspectives, Key Informants, Behavioural Influence

**INTRODUCTION**

The 9/11 terrorist strikes in the United States had a direct impact on tourist flows, especially for those who depended on air transportation. This economic blow to the travel industry, as a result of the terrorist strike, was also exacerbated by other chain reactions such as reorientation of tourist flows, collapse of air carriers like Sabena and Swiss, and empowerment of tourism destination that are perceived safe from visitors (Pappas, 2010). The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the strikes in Istanbul, Madrid, London, Cairo, and Amman did not help travellers feel confident about travel due to their increasing global mistrust and shift in the economy.

According UNEP (2012), the Mediterranean is the most famous global tourist destination, hosting approximately 1/3 of international tourism. Terrorist strikes have led to changes in tourist flows to traditional destinations. This has affected not only the local regional economies, but also their economic structure. These impacts are more profound in destinations that depend on tourism. Crete is a prime example. The island of Crete is situated in the southernmost part of Greece. It hosts approximately four million tourists per year (N.S.S.G., 2007). Its economy is dependant on tourism, whilst the vast majority of tourists reach the island by air (Spertou & Pappas, 2004).

Many studies discuss a wide variety of matters concerning the relationship of tourism and terrorism (Aziz, 1995; Weber, 1998; Stafford et al., 2002; Bhattarai et al., 2005; Coshall, 2005), but limited studies emphasise the impact of terrorist acts in tourism in a Mediterranean basin. In such cases, researchers must undertake extensive preliminary work to gain familiarity with the phenomena in the situation, and understand what is occurring (Sekaran, 2000). This paper examines the perceptions of tourists traveling by air, and visiting Crete. It also focuses on researching the perceptions of key informants in risk and crisis management dealing with potential terrorist acts on the island. The paper aims to seek out visitor and key informant perspectives regarding the impact that terrorism has in traveling behaviour and destination preferences.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

***Tourism & Terrorism***

The U.S. Department of state defines terrorism as “the premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against civilians and unarmed military personnel by sub-national groups.”, and international terrorism as “involving citizens or the territory of more than one country” (U.S. Department of State, 1997: 34). The relationship between tourism and terrorism gained international notoriety during the Olympic Games in Munich. After this, international tourists have been actually aware of this relationship (Lepp & Gibson 2003). The infrastructure and security in the tourism industry, the psychology of travel, and the way in which many people view the world have changed after the tragic events of 9/11 in America (Goodrich, 2002), and their chain reactions (Spertou & Pappas, 2004).

Many studies remark that safety and security are important concerns toward tourists travelling abroad (Poon & Adams, 2000). Tourists usually become targets of terrorist organisations (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). Tourism actually comes to represent capitalism and conspicuous consumption, and a terrorist attack on tourists signifies ideological opposition to these western values (Aziz, 1995). According to Richter and Waugh (1986), and Sonmez (1998) an attack on tourists can symbolise an attack on the government. Pizam (2002: 1) says that “every time a wave of crimes or a terrorist act is committed at a tourist destination, tourism demand declines and the industry goes through a period of economic slowdown or recession”. According FEMA (2006), terrorists often use threats for three reasons:

* To create widespread panic to masses;
* To convince citizens that their governments are helpless to avoid terrorism; and
* To gain direct publicity in order to serve their goals.

Lepp and Gibson (2003: 620) state that “tourism planners need to be aware of which risks might cause stress among tourists, an awareness that should also inform marketing strategies”, something that is very important in the developing societies where tourism industry is promoted as an important market sector (Burns, 1999) and is used as a key for further development (Andriotis, 2000).

***Terrorism and Tourist Destinations***

Since 1998, tourism is the largest economic sector worldwide. It is also very vulnerable to the negative impacts of a potential terrorist strike. Nowadays, tourists are in alert as they must deal with terrorism and security issues. These aspects are fundamental concerning the attractiveness of a tourist destination (Yilmaz, 2007).

During such times of high alert terrorist strikes in destinations occur more frequently. The reasons for these strikes vary from destination to destination. For example, in some countries, terrorist strikes occur with the tolerance of locals, dramatically increasing phenomena such as xenophobia which leads to violence (Mathieson & Wall, 1990). It can become more problematic when locals are not directly involved with the beneficial financial impacts of tourism. These locals often become resentful and believe that tourism is exploiting and violating their religious and social values, as well as their land use, civilisation, culture and way of life. In their mind, they are not and should not be tourist attractions. (Aziz, 1995).

A terrorist strike in a destination does not only influence the destination itself, but also the neighbour host societies (Drakos & Kutan, 2003). This happens since tourists decide their vacations based on the global scenario of potential terrorist acts, thus they evaluate the produced risk (Viscusi & Zeckhauser, 2003). The potential visitor may change his or her travel plans and destinations may have significant economic losses (Coshall, 2005). This negative impact might be circumstantial, whilst the destination recovers from the “terrorist shock” (Narayan, 2005).

The impact of a terrorist strike is different towards domestic and foreign tourists, since the last are more influenced (Yechiam et al., 2005). The role of anti-terrorist policies and promotional campaigns aimed to convince foreign tourists to re-visit the destination, might produce better and faster results in domestic tourism (Paraskevas & Arentell, 2007). Nevertheless, regardless of the motives, the time and the attention terrorists want, the publicity of terrorist strikes is mainly beneficial in both terrorist groups and media (Yilmaz, 2007). The losers are the locals and the destinations themselves because of the negatively produced image (Sonmez et al., 1999).

***The Excuse of Terrorism***

Both governments and industry use terrorism widely as a mean to collect various kinds of private and sensitive information. For the past three decades the use of forensic and identity tracking data have been the principle means to locate, identify and prosecute criminals and terrorists. As Arndt (2005: 6) states, “both governments and industry has learned the value of personal data. The value of data increases as more information is collected or aggregated about an individual; as a result, government organisations are gathering more data about individuals than ever before”.

Many of the antiterrorism law’s provisions with privacy implications increased governments’ surveillance powers (Pounder, 2002). Governments are continually collecting more and more data and reducing the public’s privacy and anonymity (Arndt, 2005). Under this escalation of data collection it is safe to predict that future events and legislations will affect privacy rights and interests, whilst some privacy rights and interests are likely to diminish, and serious losses in privacy protection are possible (Gellman, 2002).

Terrorism also deals with the extent of governments’ reputation. This is because a series of state agencies create and implement strategies in order to minimise the impacts of the terrorist strike and resolve other parallel issues such as destination image, perceived safety from locals and visitors, and political stability. Norris et al. (2003) suggest that terrorist attacks may trigger processes of political communication that can become extremely complex, particularly in what they call “two sided contexts”: when alternative views of the situation compete, and different communities dispute the meaning and interpretation of similar events. According to Canel (2011), “framing involves political actors selecting a particular viewpoint, struggling over the right to define and shape issues, and skewing the flow of information and opinions to their advantage. As such, framing becomes a discursive means to achieve political strength in influencing public deliberation”.

Produced hypocrisy is another aspect of the use of terrorism from governments. An example is the case of the 2001 Afghan war. As Rawi (2004) suggests, the Western leaders and media were speaking about the ‘‘liberation’’ of Afghanistan when the U.S. was lending its generous support to the Northern Alliance, brethren-in-creed of the Taliban. The Northern Alliance was responsible for killing more than 50,000 civilians during their bloody rule in the 1990s, whilst the selected rulers from the U.S. coalition were those who imposed the first anti-women restrictions as soon as they came to power in 1992, and started a reign of terror throughout Afghanistan (Rawi, 2004).

One more issue is the confusion on who is finally a terrorist, who is not and for whom. An indicative example could be the former PLO (Palestinian Liberal Organisation) leader Yasser Arafat. For many decades Yasser Arafat was one of the most notorious terrorists globally as many accused him of having direct implication on a series of terrorist strikes such as aircraft hijackings, the massacre of Israel’s Olympic athletes in 1972 at Munich, the murder of U.S. ambassador to Sudan (Cleo Noel) in March 1973, and his active support of Sadam Husein in 1990 when he seized Kuwait (Sicherman, 2011). On the other hand, The Norwegian Nobel Committee bestowed the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize jointly to Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin *"for their efforts to create peace in the Middle East"* (Nobel Foundation, 2011). A couple of years later, Arafat’s reputation as a terrorist rebounded as critics, including Israeli Arabs in Israel itself, accused him of encouraging deadly demonstrations throughout the Palestinian Authority (Sicherman, 2011). It is important to mention that only some western governments and Israel officially regardedt Yasser Arafat as a terrorist, whilst at the same time he was a hero for the whole Arab world.

***Tourism in Crete***

Crete is the largest island in Greece, and the fifth largest in the Mediterranean Sea. The island is the most famous tourist region of Greece, hosting more than 20% of the total tourist arrivals in the country (Pappas, 2005). The island has also recorded the largest increase of bed nights (Andriotis, 2000) all over Greece. Greece’s Ministry of Economy regards it as the wealthiest region in the country (Ministry of Economy, 2003). The local economy is based in the tertiary sector, placing tourism as the most important economic activity.

Within tourism, Crete is primarily a family resort. Approximately 42% of total tourist arrivals represent families with children, 38% couples and 20% singles. The island also attracts younger segments of the tourist market, with 49% of tourists in the 18 – 35 year old age group, 22% between the ages of 36 – 45, 18% from 46 to 60 years old and 11% in the over 60 age group (R.I.T.T.S., 1999). Although tourism creates income and employment, as Proust et al. (2009) state, the sector is dominated by big foreign tour operators mostly from Northern Europe, providing “all inclusive” packages to their customers. This structure deprives Crete a part of the revenue as the “outside” agencies cream off a portion of the profits.

In 2010, the majority of tourists that visited Crete were northern Europeans, especially Germans, British, French and Scandinavians. This amounted to approximately 68% of total foreign tourist flow (H.S.A., 2011). Undoubtedly, the countries of Eastern Europe offer a new potential market for the island, since they have a religious relationship with Greece, the centre of Orthodox Christianity (Andriotis, 1995). Unfortunately, these markets have not been fully exploited and therefore appropriate marketing strategies are required for their attraction (Association of Cretan Hoteliers 2003).

Air transport plays a crucial role on Cretan tourism since approximately 90% of foreign tourists arrive by charter flights. In the last decade the arrivals by charter flights increased approximately 40% (H.S.A., 2011). The two main Cretan airports (Heraklion and Chania) are entrance gates for approximately one-third (In 2010: Heraklion 24.1%, Chania 8.8%) of international charter passengers arriving in Greece (Europe Travel, 2012).

The rapid development of the touristic sectors made Crete totally dependent on its healthy and growing perspectives (Proust et al., 2009). As a result, Crete became vulnerable to crisis, as the previous decrease of the total nights that tourists spent on the island during the Gulf War period or during the Kosovo conflict showed (OECD, 2005). Consequently, various crises threatened the island’s economy (OECD, 2008).

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

***Research Characteristics***

The author conducted his research in the city (key informants) and the airport (tourists) of Heraklion, Crete, from May until August 2007. In both cases, the author used the technique of personal interviewing in order to reach the objectives since it is “the most versatile and productive method of communication, it enables spontaneity, and also provides the skill of guiding the discussion back to the topic outlined when discussions are unfruitful” (Sekaran, 2000).

The author selected his key informants from the total population, but sought those involved in relevant senior posts who deals with risk and crisis management in Crete. These respondents can provide useful information since they have sufficient knowledge dealing with the research theme and can offer a unique perspective of the research’s social action (Schwandt, 1997). The tourists’ research focused on a sample of air travellers visiting Crete through the International Airport in Heraklion. The tourists in the respondent pool were German and British nationals since these are the main tourist nationalities visiting Crete every year. In order to select a relevant and sufficient sample, the author adopted the following process. He selected a random starting method (systematic sampling) in order to reach the respondents. He selected passengers from every fifth flight that arrived at the International Airport selected to participate in study. All the respondents had to be adults, whilst the author conducted research during equal distance periods of time to create consistency in the sample pool.

***Determination of the Examined Population***

Focusing on the examined population, there were two ways for data collection. The first one was to include the total population able to provide useful information. The second one was dealing with the determination of a representative sample.

The author selected the first data collection method for the key informants. The aim was to collect interviews from all the key informants in Crete, or at least, the vast majority of them. Out of 26 key informants that the author identified and included on the examined population, 23 finally provided an interview. As a result, the response rate reached 88.46%. Since the response rate is very high (more than 80%), the author considered the research findings credible.

Dealing with tourists, the sampling size had to be representative and was a fundamental criterion in order to determine the amount of the sample and the research time period. Of the total tourist population, over 80% of island visits are during summertime (G.N.T.O. 2003). Since the author did not know the population proportions, he took a conservative response format 50 / 50%, which assumed that 50% of the respondents have negative perceptions, and 50% have not. The author selected at least a 95% confidence and 5% sampling error. The sample size was:

 **Rounded 400**

The sampling size calculation was independent of the total population size hence the sampling size determines the error (Aaker & Day, 1990). The sample stratified towards gender and nationality (200 tourists per gender and nationality). The total statistical error was 4.9%, whilst the statistical error per gender and nationality was 6.9%.

***Selection of Variables***

The variance of the expressed opinions and the statistical significances that are formulated toward the expressed perceptions are directly connected with the individual characteristics of the sample population. Many studies reveal that gender is the main factor of the tourist perspectives’ formulation (Fairburn-Dunlop, 1994; Kinnaird & Hall, 1996; Mason & Cheyne, 2000). Other researchers such as Collins and Tisdell (2002), Trakolis (2001), and Trethway and Mak (2005), support that the differentiation in the respondents’ age create very important alterations to their perceptions. On the other hand, the level of education of the sample population is a crucial factor for the creation of significant differences in the expressed perspectives (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Stern & Krakover 1993; Teye et al., 2002). Other studies’ findings remark the importance of the marital status for the respondents’ decision making (Arentze et al., 2004; Cao & Mokhtarian, 2005).

This paper considers all the above studies and research. It examines the variation of perceptions toward gender (in tourists), age, level of education, and marital status (both: key informants and tourists).

***Data Analysis***

The interview questions were ‘close-ended’ statements, structured with a 5-point Likert Scale (1: strongly disagree, 5: strongly agree). The author used the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS, 13.0) to analyse the collected data. To identify the existence of statistical significances be­tween the variables, the analysis used t-Test, frequency tables, and ANOVA. The indication of statistical significance is at the 0.05 level of confidence. For the contradiction and presentation of the research findings, the author also used cross tabulations.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

**Profile of the Examined Population**

Out of 26 key informants that the author identified, 23 provided an interview. The vast majority were over 36 years old and married, whilst all of them had at least a bachelor degree. Dealing with tourists, the socio-demographics of nationality (British and Germans) and gender were stratified (200 respondents respectively). The largest age group was people under 35 years old, whilst most of them were married, and had fulfilled secondary (obligatory) graduation requirements.

**TABLE 1**

***The Influence of Terrorism***

The brutality and lack of safety produced by terrorism has a direct impact in the tourism industry. It is vital for decision making that key informants know the extent of stress that terrorist strikes produce to tourists, especially when tourism is the main economic sector (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). The research indicated that even if key informants understand the influential effect of terrorism to tourism, they do not perceive that it is a major one. They also perceived that terrorism does not influence the interaction of tourists with locals.

The only statistical significance on key informants’ perspectives (Table 2) appears on the socio-demographic characteristic of level of education, dealing with the interaction of tourists with locals. For the higher education graduates the positive trends reached 27.8%, whilst two-thirds of the population disagreed. In postgraduates, the proportion was approximately 20% in both trends.

**TABLE 2**

The tourists’ perspectives are very close with the key informants’ perceptions. Terrorism does not seem to influence tourist decision making, and it does not produce a significant change of their habits. Visitors perceive that terrorism mainly influences the travel mean instead of destination selection. Nationality does not seem to actually affect tourists’ perceptions.

Dealing with gender, terrorism seems to have a slightly higher influence on women than men. The level of education indicates that the more educated people are, the lower the interaction they have with locals. This might be something unexpected since ‘education is considered as an important factor in widening the horizons and guide travel desire’ (Cooper et al., 1999: 43), whilst it helps on the communication and understanding of different types of people and cultures. Nevertheless, there is no statistical significance in the above.

On the other hand, when dealing with age, all statements produce statistical significance. In all cases, the older the people, the more they were influenced by terrorism. As a result, the younger age groups were influenced less from a potential terrorist strike; whereas, the older ones were seriously influenced by potential terrorist activities. We can interpret this that age is an important fear factor, meaning that the older a person is the more possible he or she is influenced by a terrorist strike. The psychological pressure of a potential terrorist strike can alter the tourist’s destination preferences.

There is also a statistical significance regarding marital status and interaction with locals. The strong agreements from singles barely reached 0.7%, whilst 12.5% of the married ones had the same proportion. In addition, the respondents that just agreed were 16.9% for the singles and 31.4% for the married ones. On the other hand, the strong disagreements were 22.1% and 7.2% respectively. One can confidentally state that generally, during vacations, married people considerably minimise their interaction with locals, as they want to have some personal, quality time with one another away from the normal everyday hustle and bustle, whilst singles are more open and seek out a higher involvement with the destination’s inhabitants.

***Factors Influencing Destination Selection***

Excluding local religion, the research on key informants indicated their various factors play an important role in their tourist destination selection. Criminality was the most important factor, followed by political stability, sanitation, local culture and finally terrorism. Even if key informants perceived that terrorism was an important factor for destination selection, they considered a series of other factors as more important.

The examination of destination selection influences on key informants’ views about tourists produced three statistical significances. The first one was towards age and local religion. The overall agreements in the 18-35 year old range reached two-thirds of the respondents, whilst the same trend for people over 50 years old was approximately 10%. The second one was towards level of education and political stability where higher education graduate key informants strongly agreed by 55.5% when the same proportion in postgraduates was 20%. The last statistical significance was towards marital status and local religion. The married key informants agreed by 15%, and disagreed by 50%, whilst all the single ones perceived that local religion is something neutral. As a result, the diversion of perspectives in married key informants was considerable when for the single ones it did not actually exist.

**TABLE 3**

The research in tourists revealed that in general terms their views confirm the key informants’ perspectives. The travellers perceived criminality as the main factor influencing destination selection, followed by sanitation, political stability, local culture, and finally terrorism. Both key informants and tourists do not perceive local religion as an important influential factor for destination selection.

In terms of nationality, Germans appeared to be more focused in cultural aspects. Dealing with age, there were statistical significances in all statements. The important thing is that in all cases, the older the people, the more they considered the examined factors in order to select a destination. Many researchers, such as Derrick and Linfield (1980), and Kotler (2000) suggest that as the age changes, needs and desires change, the consumption patterns alter, and dealing with the decision making, the consumers’ behaviour focuses on different aspects.

Two more statistical significances resulted given respondents’ marital status. The first appeared on the examination of local culture where the overall agreements of married people reached 70.8%. The same trend for the singles was 58.8%. The other one was in terrorism where the strong agreements for married were 11.4% and for singles were 2.2%. The overall agreements were 48.1% and 29.4% respectively. In both cases (local culture and terrorism) respondents belonged in young age groups, considerably more in singles that in married ones. As a result, married tourists (most of them travelling with their families) were more interested in local culture and more influenced by the possibility of a potential terrorist strike.

***Crete as a Potential Terrorist Target***

Only key informant perspectives, which the author examined, dealt with the possibility for Crete to become a potential terrorist target. On that question, one-third of key informants (eight respondents) perceived that Crete was a potential terrorist target, whilst the rest (15 respondents) disagreed with that perspective. Even if they perceived Greece (and Crete as a prefecture) as a safe region, a considerable amount of key informants seemed concerned with the perspective of a potential terrorist strike. Most of the agreeable key informants were working in security services (i.e.: army, police, etc.), whilst most of the respondents that disagreed had political positions (i.e.: mayors, prefectural heads, civil crisis management authorities, etc).

The majority of key informants (62.5%) who perceived that Crete is a potential terrorist target support the argument that the main reason was the existence of the largest European NATO base in Souda, in the area of Chania. A potential terrorist strike in Souda could have an international impact, something that terrorists want. Some of the agreeable respondents also stated that Crete is a potential terrorist target since it had a developed economy and was one of the most popular tourist destinations globally, whilst the vast amount of its tourists comes from foreign countries.

**TABLE 4**

More than half of the respondents who perceived that Crete was not a potential terrorist target based their perspectives on the exceptional international relations that Greece had, especially with Arab world, and the non existence of a specific target in the region that terrorist groups could have a specific interest. The key informants contradict the last perception with the main argument (Souda NATO base) that Crete was a terrorist target. This direct differentiation of perspectives indicates that even people in senior posts having the responsibility of crisis management after a potential terrorist strike did not have a clearly agreeable view.

***Discussion***

The perceptions that tourists hold on the influential impacts of terrorism, affect their final decisions in selecting a destination. These results contribute to the better understanding on how travelers formulate their behaviour and give useful evidence in destination decision makers. They also indicate the way crisis implementation management key informants operate in a destination and the extent that they are actually aware of the visitors’ needs, wants and decision making patterns.

The most crucial socio-demographic variable in this study appeared to be the travellers’ age, followed by the marital status. The influential impact of terrorism was higher as people became older. In addition, older people were more cautious on destination selection factors than the younger research segments. The perceptions of married, and older people seemed more vulnerable in terrorism incidents and other risk factors such as criminality and sanitation. They also had lower interaction with locals than the singles. Associating with genders, women had higher concern in destination risk factors than men. The above indicates that specific socio-demographic characteristics alter the impact of terrorism since they alter the psychological influence of specific unexpected events.

Another aspect was that instead of terrorism, some other factors such as criminality, political stability, sanitation and local culture were more important for tourists in order to select a destination. Key informants seemed very well aware of that issue. On the other hand, the media and governments widely use terrorism in order to create specific fear conditions and influence consumers’ behaviour. Maybe terrorists and media have different motives, but as Yilmaz (2007) suggested, these are the two groups that benefit most from the publicity of terrorist strikes. Why governments should be excluded, since often there is a direct connection towards media and governmental communication tactics?

On the other hand, state communication mainly focuses on the importance of terrorism deliberately underestimating all the other factors. As already mentioned, a terrorist strike has an important regional, national and international impact on governments’ reputation. At the regional and national level this impact mainly deals with the capability of state agencies to resolve the disaster and crisis produced by a potential terrorist strike, and consequently minimise its impacts. At the international level it deals with the presence of visitors since they are supposed to be ambassadors of their countries and how people perceive them reflects on their origin destination. The mistakes in crisis management related to terrorism can even lead governments to collapse or lose forthcoming elections. For example, in Spain in 2004, a week before the elections, polls put the governing party four points ahead of the Socialists; however, the latter won the elections with 5% more votes than the governing party mainly because of the false governmental crisis management policies in the terrorist strike in Madrid (Canel, 2011). As a result, governments implement propagandistic strategies in order to gain higher obedience from locals and finally to control their behavioural patterns.

The research also indicated that even the people responsible for crisis management implementation after an unexpected event can not agree whether Crete is a potential terrorist target or not. The confusion of perspectives on key informants naturally reflects the confusion of perceptions in locals and visitors. Governmental authorities can exploit these contradictory messages coming from key informants in order to create widespread confusion, at least at local and regional levels. Even if the confusion of key informants is true and sincere, it still gives the media and agencies the opportunity to increase their societal influence and succeed in influencing the population.

Similarly, wherever there is confusion of a fear factor such as terrorism, local, regional and mainly national (governmental) authorities can easier implement measures and tactics that increase surveillance, collect various kinds of sensitive information, and finally minimise people’s privacy. Through fear, authorities can also partially control locals’ behaviour and finally manipulate a considerable amount of the society. The main concern is not to pass from fear to panic since we cannot easily control it and we cannot predict the outcomes of irrational behaviours that panic creates.

One of the fundamental aims of all governmental parties is to regain power on the forthcoming elections. As Biswas and Marjit (2008) state, it is important to remember that the governmental success in the elections is contingent not only on its own relocation capabilities, but also somewhat on the past administration's performance. The worse the performance of earlier administrations, the higher the current party's approval rating will be, at least initially. The expressed confusion of crisis and disaster management decision makers strengthens the confusion of locals through an unknown aspect as terrorism. This gives governments the opportunity to create legislation that violates civil rights, reduces peoples’ privacy and anonymity, and overall, minimises societal freedom. The amazing aspect is that through widespread societal panic and fear, the inhabitants not only accept these measures, but a considerable amount of population also demands their existence. As a result, governments not only have the ability to pass legislation that decreases human rights, but also present themselves as the protectors of the society, strengthen their position in comparison with previous, more democratic administrations, and finally increase their possibility to re-elect. For example, after the 9/11 terrorist strikes, the G. W. Bush administration in the U.S. significantly reduced civil rights, rapidly increased public surveillance, imprisoned people without trial. Interestingly, despite this widespread fear, the American citizens re-elected G.W. Bush as president in 2004. Perhaps this explains why governments deliberately use terrorism as a mean to create fear on citizens, with the aim to manipulate their behaviour and finally their electoral preferences.

***Conclusions***

The author examined socio – demographic variables which included nationality, gender (only for tourists), age, level of education, and marital status (for both tourists and key informants). The travellers’ sample included the adult visitors in a traditional Mediterranean summertime island tourist destination. As a result, one can generalise the research findings in other similar Mediterranean host destinations.

The research primary revealed that terrorism as a key factor for destination selection is not the most important. Other factors such as sanitation, criminality, political stability and local culture play a more significant role. The real importance of terrorism is the produced psychological effect after a potential terrorist strike to both locals and tourists. This disastrous effect of terrorism in comparison with the created psychological impact is virtually minimal.

On the contrary, peripheral and regional authorities mainly use terrorism in an effort to determine both visitors’ and locals’ behavioural patterns. This is important, especially under a governmental perspective, in order to control and manipulate the potential behavioural attitudes under its best interest. Confusion is one more factor that governments and public agencies use. The main objective of these tactics mainly focuses on societal control and peoples’ compliance through the production of anxiety. When combined with fear it can reduce any objections and behavioural resistance of citizens in terms of privacy and anonymity reduction, minimisation of human rights, and higher public surveillance.

One must conductd further research in order to better comprehend the formulation and the evolution of perspectives. The perspectives of key informants and tourists are not standardised and unchanged during time. These perceptions in traveling and visiting tourist destinations have significantly changed after the 9/11 terrorist strikes (Goodrich, 2002; Stafford et al., 2002), and are still changing. Because of this, researchers must repeat their investigation into travelers’ and key informants’ perspectives in order to shed light on the recent trends and perceptions that have emerged as a result of our constantly evolving world state and socio-political-economic dynamics between different countries.

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**TABLE 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **KEY INFORMANTS** | **N** | **%** |
| **Age** |  |  |
| 18 – 35 | 3 | 13.0 |
| 36 – 50 | 10 | 43.5 |
| Over 50 | 10 | 43.5 |
|  |  |  |
| **Level of Education** |  |  |
| Secondary | - | - |
| Higher | 18 | 78.3 |
| Postgraduate | 5 | 21.7 |
|  |  |  |
| **Marital Status** |  |  |
| Single | 3 | 13.0 |
| Married | 20 | 87.0 |
|  |  |  |
| **TOURISTS** |  |  |
| **Nationality** |  |  |
| U.K. Nationals | 200 | 50.0 |
| German Nationals | 200 | 50.0 |
|  |  |  |
| **Gender** |  |  |
| Men (U.K.) | 100 | 25.0 |
| Women (U.K.) | 100 | 25.0 |
| Men (Germans) | 100 | 25.0 |
| Women (Germans) | 100 | 25.0 |
|  |  |  |
| **Age** |  |  |
| 18 – 35 | 174 | 43.5 |
| 36 – 50 | 123 | 30.7 |
| Over 50 | 103 | 25.8 |
|  |  |  |
| **Level of Education** |  |  |
| Secondary | 219 | 54.7 |
| Higher | 133 | 33.3 |
| Postgraduate | 48 | 12.0 |
|  |  |  |
| **Marital Status** |  |  |
| Single | 139 | 34.8 |
| Married | 261 | 65.2 |

**TABLE 2: The Influence of Terrorism**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Transportation Mean** | **Frequency of Travel** | **Destination Selection** | **Interaction with Locals** |
|  | **Key Inform.** | **Tourists** | **Key Inform.** | **Tourists** | **Key Inform.** | **Tourists** | **Key Inform.** | **Tourists** |
| ***Means*** | 2.65 | 2.64 | 2.74 | 3.08 | 2.43 | 2.80 | 3.57 | 3.13 |
| ***Std. Deviation*** | 1.43 | 1.11 | 1.32 | 1.19 | 1.12 | 1.14 | 1.16 | 1.18 |
| **Nationality** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| U.K. | - | 2.64 | - | 3.22 | - | 2.71 | - | 3.02 |
| Germans | - | 2.64 | - | 2.94 | - | 2.90 | - | 3.24 |
| T Ratio | - | .000 | - | 2.374 | - | -1.675 | - | -1.908 |
| Sig.\* | - | .766 | - | .482 | - | .050 | - | .883 |
| **Gender** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Men | - | 2.68 | - | 3.05 | - | 2.86 | - | 3.24 |
| Women | - | 2.61 | - | 3.11 | - | 2.74 | - | 3.02 |
| T Ratio | - | .630 | - | -.505 | - | 1.055 | - | 1.823 |
| Sig.\* | - | .983 | - | .783 | - | .660 | - | .781 |
| **Age** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 – 35 | 2.67 | 2.81 | 3.33 | 3.39 | 3.33 | 3.01 | 3.67 | 3.68 |
| 36 – 50 | 2.40 | 2.79 | 2.40 | 3.04 | 2.60 | 2.82 | 3.30 | 2.85 |
| Over 50 | 2.90 | 2.17 | 2.90 | 2.60 | 2.00 | 2.42 | 3.80 | 2.52 |
| F Ratio | .284 | 12.913 | .686 | 15.448 | 1.988 | 9.222 | .453 | 43.890 |
| Sig.\* | .755 | **.000** | .515 | **.000** | .163 | **.000** | .612 | **.000** |
| **Level of Education** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Secondary | - | 2.63 | - | 3.05 | - | 2.69 | - | 3.19 |
| Higher | 2.78 | 2.60 | 2.89 | 3.08 | 2.39 | 2.98 | 3.72 | 3.11 |
| Postgraduate | 2.20 | 2.81 | 2.20 | 3.25 | 2.60 | 2.81 | 3.00 | 2.92 |
| F Ratio | .790 | .676 | 1.033 | .585 | -.365 | 2.678 | 1.685 | 1.065 |
| Sig.\* | .058 | .509 | .056 | .558 | .253 | .070 | **.047** | .346 |
| **Marital Status** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Single | 2.00 | 2.76 | 2.33 | 3.35 | 2.33 | 3.03 | 3.00 | 3.68 |
| Married | 2.75 | 2.58 | 2.80 | 2.93 | 2.45 | 2.68 | 3.65 | 2.83 |
| T Ratio | -.839 | 1.519 | -.561 | 3.397 | -.164 | 2.965 | -.900 | 7.644 |
| Sig.\* | .669 | .242 | .983 | .322 | .617 | .731 | .313 | **.004** |

**TABLE 3: Aspects Affecting the Selection of a Destination**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Political Stability** | **Local Culture**  | **Local Religion** | **Sanitation** | **Criminality** | **Terrorism**  |
|  | **Key Inf.** | **Tourists** | **Key Inf.** | **Tourists** | **Key Inf.** | **Tourists** | **Key Inf.** | **Tourists** | **Key Inf.** | **Tourists** | **Key Inf.** | **Tourists** |
| ***Means*** | 1.65 | 2.18 | 1.78 | 2.31 | 3.43 | 3.21 | 1.74 | 1.91 | 1.61 | 1.76 | 1.87 | 2.44 |
| ***Std. Deviation*** | .78 | .91 | .52 | 1.02 | 1.04 | 1.12 | .54 | .77 | .78 | .71 | .69 | 1.07 |
| **Nationality** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| U.K. | - | 2.26 | - | 2.51 | - | 3.16 | - | 2.03 | - | 1.80 | - | 2.36 |
| Germans | - | 2.09 | - | 2.12 | - | 3.25 | - | 1.78 | - | 1.72 | - | 2.53 |
| T Ratio | - | 1.865 | - | 3.854 | - | -.803 | - | 3.423 | - | 1.128 | - | -1.585 |
| Sig.\* | - | .104 | **-** | **.010** | - | .109 | - | .286 | - | .462 | - | .298 |
| **Gender** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Men | - | 2.23 | - | 2.31 | - | 3.18 | - | 1.84 | - | 1.82 | - | 2.53 |
| Women | - | 2.13 | - | 2.32 | - | 3.25 | - | 1.98 | - | 1.69 | - | 2.36 |
| T Ratio | - | 1.094 | - | -.147 | - | -.625 | - | -1.824 | - | 1.837 | - | 1.585 |
| Sig.\* | - | .448 | - | .877 | - | .344 | - | .784 | - | .882 | - | .354 |
| **Age** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 – 35 | 2.00 | 2.36 | 2.00 | 2.76 | 2.00 | 3.56 | 2.00 | 2.12 | 1.67 | 1.97 | 2.33 | 2.95 |
| 36 – 50 | 1.80 | 2.12 | 1.80 | 2.05 | 3.70 | 3.13 | 1.70 | 1.86 | 1.90 | 1.66 | 2.00 | 2.26 |
| Over 50 | 1.40 | 1.92 | 1.70 | 1.86 | 3.60 | 2.72 | 1.70 | 1.59 | 1.30 | 1.52 | 1.60 | 1.80 |
| F Ratio | 1.014 | 8.052 | 3.74 | 37.050 | 4.335 | 20.425 | .379 | 16.755 | 1.553 | 15.730 | 1.701 | 49.302 |
| Sig.\* | .381 | **.000** | .693 | **.000** | **.027** | **.000** | .690 | **.000** | .236 | **.000** | .208 | **.000** |
| **Level of Education** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Secondary | - | 2.22 | - | 2.39 | - | 3.25 | - | 1.84 | - | 1.77 |  | 2.48 |
| Higher | 1.44 | 2.05 | 1.78 | 2.26 | 3.50 | 3.23 | 1.67 | 1.95 | 1.50 | 1.80 | 1.83 | 2.33 |
| Postgraduate | 2.40 | 2.29 | 1.80 | 2.13 | 3.20 | 2.98 | 2.00 | 2.08 | 2.00 | 1.63 | 2.00 | 2.56 |
| F Ratio | -1.824 | 1.901 | -.083 | 1.637 | .563 | 1.181 | -1.234 | 2.476 | -1.282 | 1.060 | -.466 | 1.147 |
| Sig.\* | **.007** | .151 | .484 | .196 | .723 | .308 | .756 | .085 | .265 | .347 | .496 | .319 |
| **Marital Status** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Single | 1.67 | 2.22 | 1.67 | 2.58 | 3.00 | 3.53 | 1.33 | 2.06 | 1.67 | 1.94 | 1.67 | 2.75 |
| Married | 1.65 | 2.15 | 1.80 | 2.17 | 3.50 | 3.04 | 1.80 | 1.82 | 1.60 | 1.66 | 1.90 | 2.28 |
| T Ratio | .034 | .766 | -.407 | 3.605 | -2.032 | 4.192 | -1.426 | 2.920 | .134 | 3.815 | -.534 | 4.166 |
| Sig.\* | .465 | .451 | .822 | **.000** | **.018** | .572 | .822 | .879 | .443 | .435 | .729 | **.031** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**TABLE 4: The Potential for Crete to Become a Terrorist Target**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **PERSPECTIVES OF KEY INFORMANTS** | **Ν** | **%** |
| **S** | Existence of Potential Terrorist Target (Souda Military Base) | 5 | 21.7 |
| **E** | Tourism | 4 | 17.4 |
| **Y** | High Economic Activity  | 3 | 13 |
|  | Traditionally Good International Relations | 8 | 34.8 |
| **O** | No Existence of Potential Terrorism Target | 8 | 34.8 |
| **N** | Difficulty for Terrorist to Escape from Crete | 1 | 4.3 |
|  | Crete as an Exceptionally Difficult Target | 1 | 4.3 |