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## Research Paper

## Terrorism prevention in tourism destinations: Security forces vs. civil authority perspectives

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate both the importance and the feasibility of practices to prevent terrorism in tourism destinations from the perspective of public authorities related to terrorism (security forces authorities) and tourism (civil authorities). A nationwide study was conducted in all 81 provinces of Turkey by surveying two different types of high-ranking public officials (the chiefs of police departments in the case of security forces authorities and the directors of culture and tourism authorities in the case of civil authorities). The study revealed six categories of terrorism prevention practices: (1) *education*, (2) *cooperation*, (3) *industrial human resources*, (4) *physical*, (5) *policing*, and (6) *prediction*. The results demonstrated differences and similarities in preventing terrorism between popular and emerging destinations. The study supports the argument that security forces and civilian authorities have different perspectives on terrorism prevention. Specifically, *civilian authorities* are more likely to be *cooperation* and *education* oriented, while *security forces* are more likely to be *prediction* and *physical-measures* oriented.

## 1. Introduction

In today's fragile business environment, tourism is among the most vulnerable industries to crises and disasters such as economic downturns (Eugenio-Martin & Campos-Soria, 2014; Okumus & Karamustafa, 2005), natural disasters (Huan, Beaman, & Shelby, 2004; Hystad & Keller, 2008), wars (Anderson, 2006; Chan, Hui and Yuen, 1999), political unrest (Avraham, 2015; Causevic & Lynch, 2013), outbreak of disease (Mao, Ding, & Lee, 2010; McKercher & Chon, 2004) and terrorism (Araña & León, 2008; Peter, Poulston, & Losekoot, 2014; Wolff & Larsen, 2014). Although their level of impact may not be the same, all these crises and disasters have adverse effects both on tourism demand and supply. Therefore, the absence of such crises and disasters is a precondition generally accepted for the development of tourism (Araña & León, 2008; Israeli & Reichel, 2003; Ritchie, 2004). However, terrorism is one of the most significant disasters facing tourism destinations (Faulkner, 2001; Israeli & Reichel, 2003). The recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels, and Istanbul remind us once again of the threat of terrorism. In the November 2015 Paris attacks, 130 people were killed and hundreds were wounded by gunmen and suicide bombers who attacked a concert hall, a major stadium, restaurants and bars (BBC, 2015). In the March 2016 Brussels attacks, 35 people were killed in the three coordinated bomb attacks: two at Brussels Airport

and one at a metro station (BBC, 2016a). More recently in the Istanbul attacks, 44 people, at least 13 of them foreigners, were killed and more than 240 people were injured by gun and bomb attacks at the Ataturk International Airport. (BBC, 2016b). Whether tourists or tourism establishments were directly targeted in these attacks or not, it will undoubtedly have an impact both on these cities as being popular tourist destinations and on the global tourism industry.

In their seminal work, Pizam and Fleischer (2002) found that the frequency of terrorist attacks had a greater impact on tourism demand than the severity of the attacks, indicating that the tourism industry will eventually stagnate if the terrorist activities are not prevented, regardless of their severity. Nevertheless, studies focusing on strategies or practices to prevent terrorism in tourism destinations are quite limited (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007; Paraskevas, 2013). Extant research on terrorism and tourism has focused mainly on: (1) the economic impact of terrorism on tourism (e.g. Bassil, 2014; Blake & Sinclair, 2003; Chang & Zheng, 2011; Enders & Sandler, 1991; Enders, Sandler & Praise, 1992; Enz, Canina et al., 2002; Feridun, 2011; Pizam & Smith, 2000; Sloboda, 2003), (2) the logical explanations of the terrorism-tourism relationship (e.g. Aziz, 1995; Korstanje, Clayton et al., 2012; Richter & Waugh, 1986; Ryan, 1993; Sönmez & Burnett, 1997), (3) the impact of terrorism on tourist preferences or perceptions (e.g. Araña & León, 2008; Bonham, Edmonds, & Mak, 2006; Coshall,

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2003; Floyd & Pennington-Gray, 2004; Fuchs, Uriely, Reichel, & Maoz, 2012; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009; Uriely, Maoz, & Reichel, 2007; Wolff & Larsen, 2014), and (4) the implications of terrorism for tourism marketing and management (e.g. Conant, Clark, Burnett, & Zank, 1988; Hurley, 1988; Stafford, Yu, & Armoo, 2002; Taylor, 2006; Taylor & Enz, 2002). Hence, how to prevent terrorism in tourism destinations remains largely unresearched.

Paraskevas and Arendell (2007) propose that organizations need to be proactive rather than reactive to terrorist events, suggesting that identifying practices to prevent terrorism is essential for tourism destinations. Unlike much of the previous research, which has largely adopted a reactive approach, the present study adopts a proactive approach by focusing on practices to prevent terrorism. Both the importance and feasibility of such practices should be considered together since a practice with high importance may also be low in feasibility or vice versa. Through the administration of practices that are high in both importance and feasibility, it is possible to prevent or at least decrease the occurrence of terrorist activities.

It has been suggested that terrorism is not only a local problem, but one that must be dealt with on a national level (Smith, 2006). However, there has been no national study focusing on the strategies or practices used to prevent terrorist attacks in tourism destinations. Therefore, this study has been conducted on a national level in Turkey, one of the world's top tourism destinations as well as a country that has suffered from terrorism for many years. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, no study has yet investigated the issue from a public sector perspective. According to Czinkota, Knight, Liesch, and Steen (2005), very few private firms have devised plans or restructured operations to deal with terrorist attacks, indicating that the great majority of the private sector is unprepared for terrorism. Although largely part of the private sector, tourism businesses play a significant role in preventing terrorist activities: many of the strategies are determined or the measures against terrorism are taken by the public authorities. For this reason, this study focuses on the issue from the perspective of public-sector officials, by surveying two types of high-ranking public officials whose work is related to terrorism (the chiefs of police departments) and tourism (the directors of culture and tourism authorities).

## 2. Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate both the importance and the feasibility of practices to prevent terrorism in tourism destinations from the perspective of two different types of public authorities (security forces vs. civil authority), namely the chiefs of police departments (hereafter, 'police chiefs') and the directors of culture and tourism authorities (hereafter, 'tourism directors'). The present study argues that security forces and civilian authorities have different perspectives on terrorism prevention since the two groups have different educational backgrounds (security personnel will have science-oriented education and armed training vs. while civil-authority staff will have social-sciences-oriented education, such as business, economics, management, and tourism) and responsibilities (safety/security vs. industrial development and management). Thus, a comparative analysis between police chiefs and tourism directors will also provide an understanding of the potential differences regarding terrorism prevention between a security force authority perspective and a civilian authority perspective. Additionally, the barriers to implementing effective terrorism prevention practices were examined within the context of the study. It is important to note that this study is exploratory in nature since it addresses an area of research that has been little developed. Accordingly, the following research questions (RQs) were used instead of hypotheses:

**RQ1:** What practices are important to prevent terrorist attacks in tourism destinations as perceived by police chiefs and tourism directors?

**RQ2:** Are there any differences between police chiefs and tourism directors' perceptions in terms of the importance of terrorism prevention practices?

**RQ3:** What practices are feasible to prevent terrorist attacks in tourism destinations as perceived by police chiefs and tourism directors?

**RQ4:** Are there any differences between police chiefs and tourism directors' perceptions in terms of the feasibility of terrorism prevention practices?

**RQ5:** What are the major barriers to implementing effective terrorism prevention practices in tourism destinations?

## 3. Preventing terrorism in tourism destinations

Bianchi (2007) suggests that tourists' freedom to travel is increasingly mediated by heightened concerns of risk and security due to the growing insecurities engendered by the globalisation of terrorism. Specifically, the 'September 11' and other major attacks in popular destinations served as a platform to create fear in global population (Korstanje, 2015). In other words, a logical connection exists between terrorism and tourism (Korstanje & Tarlow, 2012; Korstanje, Clayton et al., 2012; Richter & Waugh, 1986; Ryan, 1993) indicating that terrorism affects tourism. Indeed, the econometric studies confirm this relationship, but not the reverse (Enders & Sandler, 1991; Enders, Sandler, & Parise, 1992; Yaya, 2009). Therefore, it is vital for tourism destinations to prevent the terrorist attacks.

Most of the previous studies (as indicated in the introduction of this paper) focused mainly on the post-attack recovery strategies and the effects of terrorism on the tourism industry, rather than directly investigating how to prevent terrorism in tourism destinations (Paraskevas, 2013). This is perhaps due to the fact that crises and disasters have been viewed as almost inevitable in the tourism industry (Faulkner, 2001; Ritchie, 2004). However, it is possible to prevent terrorist attacks by taking anti-terrorism measures that eliminate the weaknesses or vulnerabilities of destinations in general and tourism organizations in particular. Indeed, several researchers offered strategies or practices to prevent terrorism. For instance, in their study of discussing how to manage the effects of terrorism as a crisis, Sönmez, Apostolopoulos, and Tarlow (1999) recommend that developing a crisis-management plan and a guidebook, and partnering with law enforcement officials is critical in preventing future terrorist attacks. However, these conventional measures of crisis management may offer little help to tourism authorities and therefore a more comprehensive approach is needed specifically for tourism destinations. In response to this need, Paraskevas and Arendell (2007) proposed a conceptual framework for destination marketing organizations (DMOs) in preventing terrorism based on interviews with 16 experts on terrorism and tourism. However, this framework did not specifically focus on developing or identifying effective physical measures to prevent terrorism, rather the development, implementation and evaluation of a destination-specific anti-terrorism strategy was comprehensively introduced.

Although the above-mentioned strategies could be considered very broad, more specific practices were also developed in response to the rise of terrorism in the new millennium, especially starting with the terrorist attacks on the USA on September 11, 2001. A review of research reveals that these specific terrorism prevention practices focused primarily on the following areas: (1) travellers, (2) employees, (3) facilities, (4) security forces, and (5) the public. First, terrorism prevention starts with focusing on *travellers* since the traveller is the main element of the industry. Thus, better screening of travellers and their luggage (especially at airports) has been considered a key practice in preventing terrorism (Goodrich, 2002a). While requiring a photo ID is a common practice at check-in, Feickert, Verma, Plaschka, and Dev (2006) suggests that checking guests' identification against law enforcement records could be an improved security measure for hotels. Additionally, some authors provide educational practices for an effec-

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