
THE IMPACT OF TOURISM ON CRIME IN CYPRUS

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ABSTRACT

Many are those who believe that tourism is the reason for the increase of illegal behaviour and higher rates of criminality. The research reported attempts to investigate and measure for the first time the involvement of tourists in crime in the Republic of Cyprus. Unlike previous work, the interaction of tourism and crime is examined by concentrating on tourists as perpetrators and not as victims. Data was collected by surveying a representative sample of police records, where insufficient information is usually kept. Estimation of the whole situation is made and the analysis is performed, along with the results of the passenger survey conducted by the Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT). For consistency with the passenger survey, the survey within the police is based on similar methodology and expansion techniques. The results of this study estimate the involvement of tourists in crime, verify their characteristics and identify several factors affecting criminal behaviour by tourists. Important findings, concerned with the prevention of crime and promotion of Cyprus as a safe tourist destination, are now available and are expected to raise awareness for stakeholders involved in the tourism industry, as well as in the national crime prevention strategy of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order. Additionally, the findings yielded by the research provide a new framework and ultimately the basis for further research.

Key Words: Tourism, Crime, Interaction, Offenders

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

For many countries, tourism is a vital source of income for their economy and each year they compete with each other to attract more and more tourists. Cyprus is one of these many countries that actively promote inbound tourism. The impact of inbound tourism on a country's socio-culture may be both positive and negative. According to Witt (1991), the influence of tourism on the country's society is expected to be greater as the difference between locals and tourists increases. The fact that many products, services and parties are involved and related to tourism, makes it very difficult to measure the consequences of tourism. Thus, the challenge for decision makers still remains as there is a dilemma as to which type of tourists they should attract so that the resulting benefits from tourism are in excess of the losses (Spanou, 2006). A further reason for this dilemma is that there is no empirical data available and most of the research available has been based on estimates, therefore the resulting measures of tourism impact cannot be accurately ascertained or universally applied.

The consequences and impact of tourism is apparent in other spheres of social life on the island. The development of tourism is often associated with the increasing tendency that shows certain types of crime (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Pizam & Mansfeld, 1996). Linking crime to tourism is an emerging field in both criminology and tourism studies (Steyn et al. 2009). However, it cannot be proven that this evolution in crime and social instability is entirely originated from the tourism development and not from the overall modernisation and globalisation processes that are in fact highly associated with the growth of tourism. Even though a number of researchers have examined the association between tourism and the development and growth of crime, conflicting findings have been reported (Lankford, 1996 in Gursoy et al., 2002: 83). The phenomenon is unexpectedly compound and multifaceted, emerging from the conduct of visitors in unknown environments and societies to the institutional activities, legal systems and measures that intend to provide security and safety to them. In recent years, growing interest by media and politicians about the issue of tourism and crime is observed in many countries (Botterill & Jones, 2010), with criminal activities against tourists being among the main concerns. To date, however, this tourism-crime nexus has received little scholarly attention.

Inbound tourism and massive arrivals of foreign visitors might affect and alter a country's or community's social values, customs and traditions (Tran et al., 2008). Since the independence of Cyprus in 1960, both tourism and crime have been increasing. This could be considered as a warning of the change of Cyprus' small, closed and traditional society to a bigger and more multicultural one. The involvement of tourists in crime is paramount and can be thought of as acting in two ways, namely (a) tourists seen as a target of criminal activities and (b) tourists committing criminal activities. Regarding tourists as criminal offenders, either against locals or other tourists, is something that little is still known about as far as Cyprus is concerned. In fact, no official quantitative data exists to measure this, apart from occasional media reports.

Tourism and Crime in Cyprus

Cyprus has only become famous among tourists since its independence in 1960. The increase in tourist arrivals has been impressive, from 24,000 in 1960 reaching the maximum of 2.696,700 in 2001, with the revenue being estimated at €2.172,7 millions, the maximum value recorded ever (CYSTAT, 2013). Cyprus tourism, like world tourism, was highly affected in the last decade of 2001, by the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 and the "bird flu" virus which was spread all over the world mainly during 2007. Yet, unlike other destinations, Cyprus managed to keep the island safe enough and, consequently, its tourism at high levels.

Cyprus has traditionally been established as a popular tourist destination mainly for visitors from Europe. During 2012, the majority of holidaymakers (94,0%) arrived from European countries while 73,4% from countries of the European Union. The United Kingdom remains the country's most important source of tourism, making up the biggest share of the entire tourist arrivals. Specifically in 2012, tourist arrivals reached 2.464,908, with the British tourists accounting for 38,9%. Russia increases year by year reaching 19,2%, while Germany and Greece follow with 5,9% and 5,4% and Sweden with 4,8% (CYSTAT, 2013).

As indicated by Eurostat, the level of crime in Cyprus is among the lowest in Europe (Eurostat, 2013). Indeed, for a country with a population of 865,900 inhabitants, only 7,973 cases of serious crime were reported in 2012 (Cyprus Police, 2013). Most of these cases concerned thefts, burglaries and other offences against property. Whilst the average^[1]crime/population ratio in the member states of the European Union was almost 5,000 serious crime cases per 100,000 people in 2010, the corresponding ratio in Cyprus

was only about 1,000. Even though comparisons between countries are not absolutely consistent since definitions of crime types and collection methods vary, the differences in these figures are big enough to suggest that on a comparative level the rate of serious crime in Cyprus can be described as very low. However, several political and social changes which have occurred in Cyprus during the last decade show an increase in various types of crime. Specifically, the opening of the crossing points in the UN-patrolled buffer zone separating the Turkish-occupied northern part of Cyprus from the free areas of the Republic of Cyprus, known as the "green line", on April 23, 2003, has contributed to increases in crime, since it has facilitated the movement of offenders from both the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot communities. It should be noted in this context that there is no direct cooperation with the occupied northern part of the island, which is only recognised by Turkey. Thus, the justice system and laws of the Republic of Cyprus cannot be applied throughout the whole island. Total crime in Cyprus over the last decade, has a slow but constantly increasing trend, starting from 17,741 reported cases in 2003 and reaching 21,042 cases in 2012 (Cyprus Police, 2013).

In the next section, a brief review is provided of the international bibliography concerning the phenomenon of tourism and crime, followed by the research methodology, data analysis and findings. Finally, the conclusions that can be reached on the basis of the findings obtained and their policy implications are considered.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The terms and conditions for most tourists were and still are safety and peace in the place of destination (Holcomb & Pizam, 2006; Avraham & Ketter, 2008). The international literature is concerned with and troubled not only by the attractions that lead tourists to a destination but, also, tourists' worries regarding their personal safety (Kozak et al., 2007). Most researches conclude that the increased risk in an area spoils its reputation as a tourist destination (Dimanche & Lepetic, 1999; Ferreira & Harmse, 2000; Holcomb & Pizam, 2006; Kozak et al., 2007). They also register the behaviour of tourists, as well as how and to what extent their behaviour changes during vacations (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Ryan, 1993; Mawby, 2000; Mawby et al., 2010).

The motives for tourists' choices, as well as what prevents them from going to a destination (Crotts, 2003; Kozak, et al., 2007), have also been the subject of research. Social scientists have attempted to prove whether the common view that an increase in tourism entails an increase in crime (Fujii, & Mak, 1980; Pelfrey, 1998) is true, and if so,

what supports this entailment. Their interest is challenged by the importance of tourism in economic development and its interrelationship with crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Apostolopoulos et al., 1996). Even though a number of researches have been carried out to examine the association linking tourism and the development and growth of crime, contradictory results have been reported (Lankford, 1996 in Gursoy et al., 2002: 83). There are reports by researchers claiming that locals' perceptions and beliefs about tourism development is highly associated with crime (Rothman, 1978; Runyan & Wu, 1979; Sethna, 1980; Belisle & Hoy, 1980; Pizam & Pokela, 1985; Liu et al. 1987; Milman & Pizam, 1988; Long et al. 1990; Lankford, 1996). Concerning the case of Cyprus, while tourism has facilitated the country's development and economic growth, there are still concerns among the locals about the negative impact of tourism, mainly the modification of the traditional culture, change in lifestyle and influence on crime (Peristianis & Warner, 1996).

Although there is still no consensus on whether an increase of tourism increases crime in an area or whether there are other independent variables that contribute to crime rise, the approaches describing the causes that make the tourist an easier victim of criminal violence are better demarcated (Ryan, 1993; Harper, 2000). Several researchers, studying mostly the statistical data of local police authorities, have reported that tourists are a population more vulnerable to criminal assaults than local residents (de Albuquerque & McElroy, 1999; Harper, 2000). The vulnerable position of tourists is also evidenced by the fact that they experience property crimes (larceny, robbery) more often. This is shown by significant increases in crime in high tourist areas and during tourist seasons (Mawby et al., 2010).

So far, researches have focused on the causal relationship between crime and tourism but are limited by virtue of studying the causes that victimise the tourist (Ryan, 1993; Harper, 2000). The international literature is lacking in studies of the profile and the actions (wherever there are any) of the tourist as offender, whether adult or juvenile. There are no research findings that trace the profile of the tourist predator. The exception has been Ryan (1993) in the third type of his classification, namely crime as a by-product of tourism development committed not by local residents but by tourists as well. Josiam et al. (1998) in their research on young students' damaging behaviour during their vacations confirmed their inclination to excessive alcohol and drug consumption and promiscuity and also the responsibility of the tourist industry that encourages such behaviours. A comparative study (Hughes et al., 2008) based on a sample of young tourists who visited Majorca and Ibiza, indicated that a main holiday priority among young tourists travelling abroad is nightlife participation. Youth-focused resorts comprise a large number of bars and

nightclubs featuring extensive use of alcohol and drugs, which are among the key risk factors for aggression and violence.

Muehsam and Tarlow (1995), estimating that safety as guarantor of tourism development is based on police (the means, the directness and the effectiveness of police action), dealt with police's operation and training, surveyed the literature and interviewed high-ranking police officials in the USA. They found lack of cooperation between police and the tourism industry. Although police officers are called in to protect not only citizens (local residents and tourists) but the economy of a place as well, they are not well trained for the needs of local tourism development. They act spontaneously and ignorantly. In some exceptional cases (see Caribbean) the police is part of the problem (McElroy, 2006). The profile of police, more of a repressive apparatus and inefficient for the prevention and management of aggressiveness and delinquency, results in the tourism industry's refusal of police presence because tourists are scared away (Tarlow, 2006). Tourists, however, evaluate positively the effective intervention of police (Holcomb & Pizam, 2006).

Research design and methodology

This research reported in this paper has been concerned with the study of inbound tourism in Cyprus and its involvement in crime, in an effort to investigate the hypothesis of whether crime is directly related to tourist arrivals, as perceived by some locals. Multiple sources of data can be used for better understanding (Ferrance, 2000), such as interviews, focus groups, portfolios, questionnaires, journals, individual files, checklists and case studies. The present study has utilised the findings of the passenger sample survey conducted by CYSTAT that took place at the departures of the airports during the period 2009-2012. In addition, as far as offending is concerned, the analysis is based on Cyprus Police recorded crime data for the same period.

As most of the information on tourist offenders is kept in written form in police records, a sample survey within the police records was the ideal methodology for gathering the necessary data. The main use of this police data is to estimate the involvement of tourists in criminal activities during the period 2009-2012. This is achieved by expanding/projecting the cases included in the sample of police records involving a foreigner to the total population of police cases involving a foreigner, thus estimating its composition. The estimation of the entire population of foreign offenders is based on the ratio between the sample and the benchmark population (i.e. total number of cases reported to the police that involve a foreigner). This benchmark population is known from

the annual police statistics. The ratio methodology applied needs to consider other factors as well in order to represent the actual composition and characteristics of the population. Therefore, adjustments need to be made on the original sample data with the aid of projecting ratios. In particular, the projecting ratios are computed by taking into consideration the year, district and type of offence (serious and minor). Finally, since the researchers' interest is only tourist offenders, an alteration is made to extract the total estimated population of tourist offenders.

This methodology is similar to the methodology used in the passenger survey of CYPSTAT, where prior to projecting the sample measures to estimate the population parameters, sample data is adjusted with ratio factors based on the year, tourist's nationality, and airport of entry. Then the sample data is expanded to map the total number of travellers, as supplied by the Civil Aviation.

Finally, it should be clarified that the study reported has been carried out under certain constraints, including the lack of detailed and accurate information about tourists' involvement in crime due to the limitations of official police criminal statistics, the complexity of the nature of criminal statistics and the identification of real tourists from those who claim to be tourists. The absence of any local estimates of the size of the dark figure of crime in general and tourists as offenders and victims in particular is another such limitation. Thus, it should be understood that the findings of this project are based on the cases reported and detected by the police. This means valuable information and data is missing and the picture yielded by the official data is thus not complete.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The primary data from the survey was coded and analysed using SPSS. Analyses employed both simple and advanced statistical methods. As well as the frequency distribution and cross-tabulations, which enabled analysis of the survey data, Chi-square tests, t-tests, Pearson Correlations, Anova, post-hoc tests and Correspondence Analysis enabled inferential statistics and verifications of the results drawn from the survey data and conclusions reached about the population under study. Inferential data analysis involves "...using quantitative data collected from a sample to draw conclusions about a complete population" (Hussey & Hussey, 1997, pp.187).

The estimation and extraction of the data concerning tourists, provides an answer to the major research question of what the participation of tourists in crime is. On average,

during the period 2009-2012, it is estimated that tourist offenders were responsible for 2,7% of the total officially-known and recorded crime. Bearing in mind that tourist arrivals during 2009-2012 were about 2.3 million per year, this result on its own could be used to state that generally tourist offenders have not significantly contributed directly to any crime increases as a total. As suggested by Spanou (2006), it cannot be proven that the 3% increase in serious crime in 2000 was the result of the increase in the volume of tourists. However, on its own this does not imply that tourism has not contributed at all to the country's crime level since tourists may indirectly tempt criminal activities committed by locals.

Comparing the ratio of tourists and foreigners (i.e. non-Cypriot nationals), we can state that the proportion of tourists as part of foreigners is kept at low levels. On average, tourists count for only 7,4% of the total crimes committed by foreigners. This result could be used to argue that any increase in crime attributable to foreigners is not caused by tourist offenders but by foreigners residing in Cyprus in other capacities such as third-country nationals on working visas, asylum seekers or European Union nationals in employment. This, together with the "adverse publicity of the press which tends to present tourism as the cause of all evils" (Spanou, 2006), explains the negative impact the occasional crime committed by tourists has on the image locals have of tourists and their status since the locals generally talk about tourists as 'foreigners'. Regardless of the pejorative media reporting of both Cypriot and foreign offenders, foreigners are described worse than the Cypriots. This can be blamed on the perception of locals that foreigners threaten the society's culture and civilization (Tsoudis, 2001).

An unexpected finding of the data analysis is that, during the period 2009-2012 inclusive, tourists committed more serious offences than minor ones. On average it is estimated that 55% of the crimes committed by tourists are serious and 45% are minor. This result also contributes to the negative perception and reputation of tourists, since, as found, the crimes committed by tourists are usually serious and thus remain longer in people's minds.

In order to verify whether there is a significant difference between the observed crime in each district and the expected crime according to the volume of tourists in each district, the Chi-square test was used. It was found that tourists in Ammochostos/Famagusta and Limassol are more frequently involved in criminal acts than expected whereas tourists in Paphos and Nicosia are less frequently involved in crime than expected. It was also found that there is a vital difference in the seriousness and the type of the crimes committed in

different districts. Thus, the perception of tourism and crime may vary depending on the location's characteristics and association with tourism and crime levels.

Gender differences in criminality have long-ago been identified (Sporer & Salfati, 2006). In support of other studies, males were most probable to participate in anti-social behaviour (Hughes et al., 2008). Based on the passenger survey's and this study's survey results, it is estimated that even though males account for approximately 45,8% of tourist arrivals during 2009-2012, they are responsible for 81,5% of the total crime committed by tourists. In contrast, females, who comprised 54,2% of the arrivals, make up the remaining 18,5% of the total crime. Moreover, it is found that male tourists are more likely to commit serious offences than minor ones while the reverse was found to be the case with female tourists.

Based on the survey's results it was calculated that the mean age of tourist offenders is 30 years old, compared to the mean age (41 years) of the tourists in Cyprus. It is concluded that tourist offenders are younger tourists, "who tend to reach their limits once they are abroad" (Spanou, 2006). Tourists aged 20-31 years were found to be the most problematic since they are responsible for most of the crimes (57,0%) committed by tourists, while they comprise only 19,5% of the total tourist arrivals. For older age groups the situation in terms of their involvement in crime is very small. Clements and Richardson's statement that "Cyprus is still an up-market sunshine destination offering a friendly atmosphere and high quality service" is also supported by Laffeaty (1993). It is noted that Cyprus has always been an attractive destination for the age group of 45 to 60 and professionals around 30. Offending rates of juveniles under 15 years is also kept at very low levels at about 0,1%.

As expected, most of the crime committed by tourists occurs during the peak season of summer with the highest number of tourists, which is during June-August, accounting for approximately 53% of the total crime committed by tourists over the remaining nine-month period for the years in question. It has to be noted that tourist arrivals during the same period June-August amount to approximately 43% of the total tourist arrivals. As already stated, tourists' involvement in crime has not contributed directly to the crime increase. To further demonstrate this, a comparison of the total crime is made with and without tourists as shown in Figure 1. As seen, the distribution of crime supports the hypothesis that tourists do not impact significantly on the volume of crime. Even for the period June-August, the change is very slight. Similar to the case of Italy, overall results indicate that the resident population has a greater effect on crime than the tourist population (Biagi et al., 2012); in other words, most crime in Cyprus is committed by

residents and not by tourists. The latter, however, is an easy scapegoat for those residents who are prejudiced.

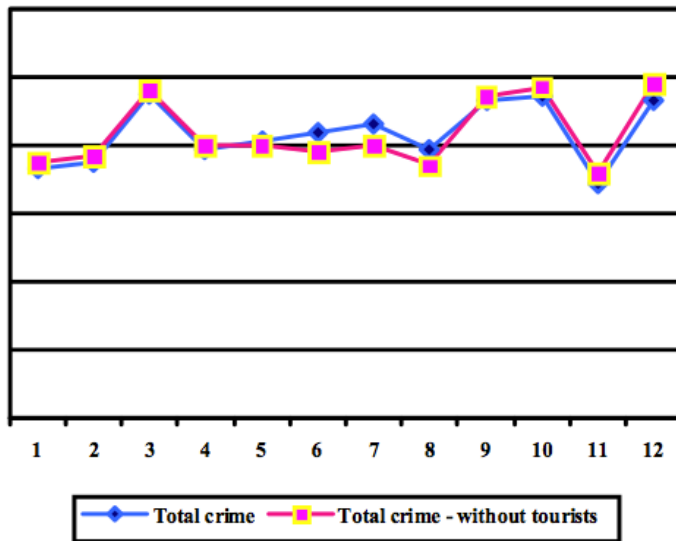


Figure 1: Total crime with and without tourists by month

It is interesting to observe that the majority of serious crimes committed by tourists, concern three specific offences, namely conspiracies (29,5%), burglaries, housebreaking and similar offences (28,1%) and forgery (22,2%). The most common minor offences committed by tourists involve mainly common nuisance, idle and disorderly persons, theft of property under €1000, indecency, offences related to the Law for aliens and immigration, common assault, malicious damage to property up to €1000, assaults causing actual (but not serious) bodily harm.

Conclusions and recommendations

Tourism is a global and fast moving industry. Since security and safety are important factors for a community's tourism development and growth, it must be ensured that Cyprus continues to be a safe country by effectively tackling known causes of crime.

The key finding of the present study is that Cyprus attracts tourists with low involvement in criminal activities, thus not contributing significantly to the country's total crime trend.

This finding should be used in promoting Cyprus as a safe and fine-quality tourism destination, thus helping to improve the country's economic status, especially at present when the country is experiencing its worst-ever financial crisis following the collapse of its banking system at the end of 2012 as a result of which the country's economy was 'bailed in' in March 2013 by the European Central Bank, the IMF and the World Bank. Even though, as indicated by other studies, locals associate tourists' behaviour with antisocial, violent and drug-related crimes, there was not enough statistical evidence to support this. However, the study revealed that tourists seem to commit more serious crimes, reinforcing a negative image.

As criminologists would have predicted, younger male tourists aged 21-30 years committed both more offences and more serious ones and, also, regional variations by administrative district in crime rates were found. Based on the study's findings a complete profile of the tourist offender in Cyprus in terms of the location and the offence is highlighted. This knowledge can be used by the agencies concerned - police, government and tourist organisations - in creating and implementing an effective tourism development plan that would reduce criminal offending by tourists and its negative consequences. Failure to do so means there would be a risk that tourist resorts suffering from bad reputation as high-crime ones, may well suffer economically with dire consequences for the country's economy which relies largely on tourism. It should be pointed out that, as the findings were obtained based on the case of Cyprus, one cannot generalise them to other countries.

It is hoped that the originality of this project as far as Cyprus is concerned will stimulate future research. In order to obtain a holistic view of the impact of tourism on crime and the involvement of tourists in crime, it is particularly recommended that crimes in which the victim is a tourist be examined. Only then will a complete picture of tourism and crime be possible, especially if such research also addresses the issue of the dark figure of criminal offending and victimization by tourists and locals alike. No single study can ask all the relevant research questions let alone answer them. Despite its limitations, the study reported has laid to rest the belief by locals that tourists contribute disproportionately to criminal offending in Cyprus.

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[1] Data provided may not be strictly comparable as different countries may choose to process their national crime statistics in a different way, depending on the severity of the offence, the relevant legislation and procedures.