

# 6

## **Tourism and terrorism: The determinants of destination resilience and the implications for destination image**

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### **Introduction**

Safety is essential in order for a destination to maintain and increase tourism activities (Gupta et al., 2010; Hall et al., 2004). In comparison, terrorist attacks are more likely to have negative effects on tourism than natural disasters (Sönmez et al., 1999). During the last decades, several terrorist acts have been committed in touristic cities of the North and South (including Boston, Istanbul, Manchester, New Delhi, New York, Paris, and Tunis). Security concerns and the threat of violence perpetrated by certain groups with radical political and religious demands do not only affect a destination's image and reputation and individual decisions about whether to visit a given destination. They also influence the political and economic balance, which in turn affects the environment in which the tourism industry operates (Hall et al., 2004). While some destinations appear to be suffering the long-term consequences of terrorist attacks on their tourism industry (Liu and Pratt, 2017), others are successfully keeping their industry afloat and avoiding significant economic downturns (Gurtner, 2007; Putra and Hitchcock, 2006). We are therefore seeking to understand the reasons

why some destinations manage to maintain their image and remain attractive to tourists despite terrorist acts and others struggle to overcome the consequences of such acts on their industry, even years after the fact.

To date, some case study-based research has documented recovery strategies for tourism destinations following one or more attacks (Mansfeld, 1999; Thapa, 2003; Fletcher & Morakabati, 2008; Jallat & Shultz, 2011). Research has also addressed the link between political instability and difficulties in tourism destination recovery (Sönmez, 1998; Saha & Yap, 2014; Bhattarai et al., 2005) and the ways in which risk perception influences how tourists plan their itineraries (Gupta et al., 2010; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). The literature shows that, following one or more crises, factors such as risk perception and political instability affect variations in tourist flows to destinations. It also demonstrates that vulnerabilities such as political and economic inequalities (Calgaro et al., 2014) impact a destination's image and reputation, revealing an interplay between power, resource distribution and resilience. Calgaro et al. (2014) also proposed a link between destination vulnerability and resilience, clarifying how some vulnerability factors influence the resilience process following shocks or stressors.

Inspired by this existing framework, this chapter addresses the link between vulnerability factors and internal/external determinants, that, in the context of a terrorist attack, support or undermine the resilience of tourist destinations in southern countries. In this approach, we want to identify, from a documentary corpus on the subject, the determinants of resilience for a tourist destination and the vulnerability factors (weaknesses) that influence them. We therefore propose considering the tourist destination as a complex, dynamic political entity where past, present and expected transformations are interacting with internal and external elements.

Terrorism represents a rupture in tourism development, making more linear understandings of destination evolution, like Butler's (1980) tourism area life-cycle analysis, harder to apply. In the aftermath of terror, a different frame of analysis based on resilience may be more fitting, as it invites an investigation into how vulnerability factors take form, and why they become obstacles to resilience for some destinations and not others. Based on an exploratory approach, we will first present the main concepts of our analysis and build on the cases of Bali and Nepal, which are among the best-documented from

the Global South. These will allow us to better understand the relationship between vulnerability factors and the determinants of destination resilience in post-terrorism and ongoing conflict contexts and examine how a destination's image is transformed within this process.

## Tourism: a political risk factor

Although travellers are not systematically targeted by terrorism, the perception of potential risk is sufficient to influence whether they will visit a destination. Agnew (2010) describes terrorism as "the commission of criminal acts, usually violent, that targets civilians or violates conventions of war when targeting military personnel; and that are committed at least partially for social, political, or religious ends." The fear of travelling to so-called high-risk destinations (those with active advisories and alerts) is fuelled by the fact that some radical groups target tourism, which to them, represents Western hegemonic power and a predominantly liberal version of its modernity (La Branche, 2004).

Terrorism directly affects tourism demand (Liu & Pratt, 2017; Sarrasin, 2004). These effects have an influence on a destination's image and tend to dissuade travellers, who will choose a destination with similar characteristics without risk factors. According to Liu and Pratt (2017), effective post-attack crisis management and quickly-applied image restoration can minimize the effects of terrorism on tourism. Thus, isolated terrorist attacks that do not result from recurring political conflicts have a negligible influence on destination choice (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006). The cases of Bali and Nepal confirm this hypothesis and reveal different variations of vulnerability.

## From vulnerability to destination vulnerability

The notion of vulnerability is closely linked to that of social resilience and corresponds to components that are likely to weaken a community's ability to adapt to change (Maguire & Cartwright, 2008). Traditionally associated with the field of geography, in relation to natural disasters and poverty and, more recently, climate change and adaptation, vulnerability is largely determined by the lack of opportunity inherited from the inequitable distribution of land, power and resources (Maguire & Cartwright, 2008, Calgaro et al., 2014).