Reciprocal Relationship Between Peace &Tourism

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As a steak-holder of tourism & hospitality we should think about the ways by which tourism would be capable of creating and maintaining the peace at a global scale. I have no doubt that this type of manuscript and workshops with the large selection of topics in hospitality and tourism sector, varying from tourism security to consumer behavior, education, training, marketing, ethical concerns and innovation with a specific focus on peace will produce fruitful outcomes, and shed light on future of tourism as well as peace and harmony in human relations in a general sense. For that reason, I would like to limit my writing to the value of this manuscript from the perspective of peace and leave the valuable discussion on contents to the readers.

Unfortunately, the history of humanity consists of wars and conflicts. The scope of some of these conflicts has been negligible, but some of it cost the lives of many millions, as in the case of World Wars, which came one after another. Although humanity created a mechanism to maintain peace as a response to these burdensome costs, especially with the help of international organizations such as United Nations, the effectiveness of these organizations has always been open to question. There are many examples in history, where the presence of organizations which were supposed to protect the well-being of individuals, remained futile. It was sometimes as obvious as Srebrenitsa where Bosnians were massacred in front of the army of United Nations. As Costalli (2014) states in the case of Bosnian War, these organizations "failed to have a significant impact on the reduction of subsequent violence" (p.358) because they merely failed to understand the urgency and necessity of peace at certain destinations and kept ignoring the realities at the expense of the lives of numerous innocent people. In current world, we unfortunately continue to witness the failure of peace despite the presence of international organizations and their ongoing efforts. Regardless of the destination, people are being hurt or they might be subject to discrimination or hate crimes. The recent terrorist attack in New Zealand, which resulted in the massacre of 49 people while they were praying in a mosque, is a clear example how the world still urgently and fundamentally needs the establishment of peace.

When global organizations such as United Nations fail to grasp the needs of a particular area for the establishment of peace, tourism may help improve the healing process. the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT), founded in 1986, is one of the many foundations which aims to contribute to the world peace for this reason. There might be difficult to observe the relationship between peace and tourism at first sight, but IIPT states that every traveller is potentially an "Ambassador for Peace", as travelling can play "breaking down the historical barriers of isolation" between cultures and people (D'amore, 2010,

p.559-562). Tourism can provide a method for the healing process of the areas that are in an open conflict, and the IIPT is an organization that believes the positive effects of tourism on peace which were once burdened with open conflicts and wars. IIPT and other institutions and scholars have the consciousness that peace is not something that drops out of the sky, rather, it is the result of collective effort of all parties, regardless of being a part of war or not. Stuart E. Levy and Donald E. Hawkins (2010) note that "the establishment of a casual relationship between peace and tourism is difficult as peace is usually framed in a negative way" such as absence of war or violence (p.570). Herein, it would be beneficial to make a distinction between different definitions of peace. Stephen Pratt and Anyu Liu (2015) quotes the definitions of two modes of peace: negative peace, as mentioned above, is defined as the absence of war and/or violence but positive peace is another concept that represent "international understanding, cultural learning, friendliness, harmony and active cooperation among people groups" (p.82), and these positive peace elements can be consolidated through tourism on a local and global level. For these positive elements to be improved, there should be a negative peace situation in a particular area, but individuals might have biased decisions when they belong to one part of a conflict, and therefore objective parties which are not directly part of war can effectively contribute to the resolution of a particular crisis in areas. Besides, peace also requires understanding others, a motivation for mutual living, readiness to compromise and tolerance. The nature of human relations is prone to conflict, especially considering the current world dynamics, where, for instance, people are making profits at the expense of others or states are competing for natural resources, political borders, and so forth. Given the complexity of peace concept, which is not de facto situation of the world and rather a condition which requires persistent effort from all parties, it would be impossible to maintain a peaceful environment as long as people fail to grasp why they need to live in peace. Regarding our perception of the world and other people, D'amore (1988) notes the following statement:

Throughout human history, our "mental map" of the rest of the world and the people of that world, has been constructed from behind borders -behind city walls; political borders; or the mental borders of political ideology and ethnocultural differences. (p.31)

It means that as we feel geographical and ideological closeness to people, we prone to identify them as "one of us", while identifying the rest of the people as "other"; and fail to understand the importance of living in peace and harmony with the people who are "other" to us. In this point, tourism's healing effect can be observed better when the "positive peace" is considered. As people travel around the world, or within a local place, they start to know each other, appreciate the customs of different group of people in a local or global level and start to build an improved attitude in an international understanding of peace. Also, studies show that tourism is one of the few sectors by which the 50 least developed countries (LDCs) have managed to increase their participation in the global economy (D'amore, 2010, p.564). It is known fact that as a country improves its economic

situation through tourism sector, it also improves its culture and material wellbeing framed within positive peace.

As can be seen, tourism can play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of peace at a global scale. Tourists engaging in international travel would secure the distribution of wealth, cultural exchange and long-lasting connections between tourists and hosts. However, the impact of tourism on peace is not unidirectional. There is a reciprocal relationship between tourism and peace, such that, tourism ensures the encounter of cultures, make people informed about the beauty in the difference of others, and hence increasing tolerance within societies; meanwhile peace contributes to the development of tourism further. In other words, tourism can make individuals to realize that differences between people do not necessarily end up in conflicts, and instead these differences might become the reason for others to explore something new. And in return, tourism would encourage "the differents" to co-exist despite their differences, which constitute the core of peace.

It goes without saying that peace is key to growth, development and success in all domains of human activity, and tourism might flourish within the peaceful atmosphere. It is natural that tourists will be looking for their physical and mental security when they make decision for destination to travel. On the other hand, countries need to protect their tourism potentials, as tourism industry brings an important degree of financial and social returns to the region. Therefore, they will be less likely to end up with decisions which trigger wars in any part of the world and hence undermining the world peace. Current humanitarian crisis related to African and Middle Eastern countries constitute a prominent example for how a crisis in a destination may spread to well-being of developed countries. Especially considering the political and economic efforts of European Union for managing the Syrian refugee crisis, the burden would have been less costly and tiring for European Union if they preferred to safeguard the social and political peace conditions in a proactive manner instead of seeking ways to prevent the arrival of massive number of refugees to Europe and maintaining immigration policies accordingly. Even the "threat" of the existence of refugees in Europe rendered the rise, or resurrection, of fascism, because most people adopt the discourse of right-populist fractions and political parties which mostly relies on defining the "other" as enemy, given the danger of losing their limited social and economic rights in the presence of refugees. In short, the failure of international organizations should no longer be repeated by individual countries, as they fundamentally require peace in every part of the world for their own well-beings, and these countries should grasp the value of tourism in building a reciprocal understanding between nations and individuals to decrease the discriminating attitudes against others in society.

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