

# **TOURISM ORIENTED POLICING AND THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Practitioner Paper

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Tourism & More

## **ABSTRACT**

This article provides an overview of tourism security. The article concentrates on the world of tourism oriented policing and protection services (TOPPs) and how the TOPPs initiative is becoming an integral part of both police and private security programs. The article touches upon how tourism security is different from others forms of security, how police departments need to adapt new and innovative models and how the former paradigm of police generalists is no longer valid in an age of cerebral security and professional specification. This article also reviews some of the psychological and sociological factors that separates tourism security from other forms of security.

## **KEYWORDS**

Police, Safety, Security, Surety, TOPPs, Tourism

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In much of the world, the summer (or in ski areas, the winter) months usher in the traditional vacation periods. These are the months when people not only travel the length and breadth of their land, but the nations host a sea of foreign visitors who come to see that country's attractions and to attend special events such as Olympic games. In countries such as the United States, England and Brazil, the hosting of the Olympics games serves as a demonstration of the economic and social importance of tourism to local citizens. For many countries tourism has been both a valuable source of economic development and it has also served as a vehicle by which a nation showcases its culture, products, and even its political system to its own citizens and to the world. Being a tourist, however, is not always easy. Tourists suffer pains of vulnerability and anomie, and it may be hypothesized that the further one is from home, the more prone one is to these problems. Violent crimes of both a social nature (murder, rape, armed robbery) and of a political nature (acts of terrorism) have made many individuals fear travel.

Violence directly impacts a nation's image to the world and to its own citizens. Violence, whether it emanates from crime or terrorism, can destroy the fabric of a society, and interfere with the free flow of people and ideas. Few people travel to places where they feel threatened. When people fear to travel, isolation begins, xenophobia reigns, and cross-cultural fertilization ceases. If the world's travel industries cannot promote a safe and worry-free travel experience then

nations suffering from the social cancer of crime suffer economically, sociologically, morally, and spiritually. Only in recent years have Tourism industry and government leaders begun to address the issue of crimes against visitors. Many of the industry's leaders are coming to admit that they can only be successful in protecting their visitors if law enforcement officers and policy makers understand the special needs of tourists and the tourism/visitor industry.

Tourism is a unique industry in that it is one of the world's largest, and also perhaps the world's least protected industry. For example, to quote the "World Travel & Tourism Council", "Travel and Tourism continues to be one of the world's largest industries. The total impact of the industry means that, in 2012, it contributed 9% of global GDP, or a value of over US\$6 trillion, and accounted for 255 million jobs. Over the next ten years this industry is expected to grow by an average of 4% annually, taking it to 10% of global GDP, or some US\$10 trillion. By 2022, it is anticipated that it will account for 328 million jobs, or 1 in every 10 jobs on the planet."

In reality, tourism is a composite industry composed of numerous smaller industries, and as such no one really knows the industry's true economic impact. Many of the numbers cited depend on which components are included in the industry and if we are measure solely the direct impact of tourism or also its indirect impact. In any other industry, security is considered to be a vital industry component. In tourism, on the other hand, many of its officials have laboured from a schizophrenic position in which they fear violence against their clientele (visitors) and at the same time fear that overt protection of visitors would produce its own challenges and fears.

This schizophrenic industry position can be noted as far back as the 1990s when the state of Florida received a great deal of negative publicity due to the unfortunate murders of and assaults on foreign tourists. In reality, there were many more deaths due to road accidents than due to attacks on tourists. The media, however, rarely transform a particular road accident into a major "cause celeb". In the case of tourism, however, the media are attracted to incidents that involve visitors. Consequently, the very thing that the industry has hoped to avoid, negative media publicity, becomes its reality.

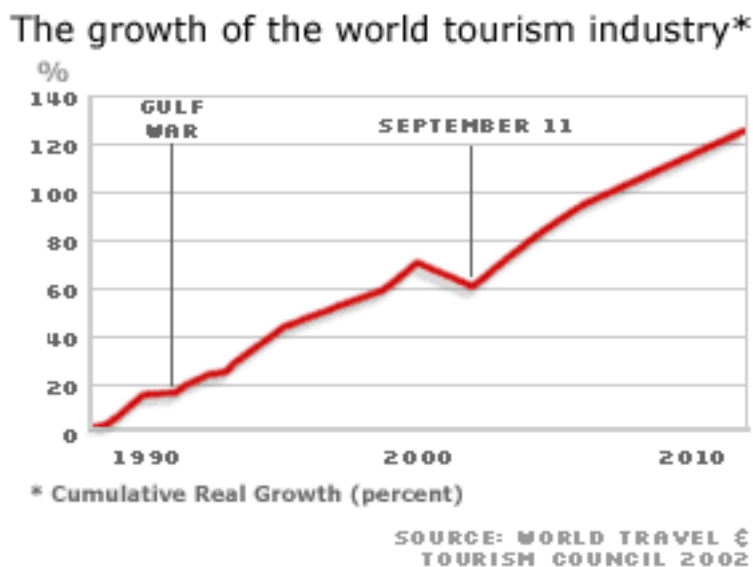
Over the last two decades nations around the world have become aware that the tourism industry requires a safe and secure environment in which to thrive. Although the attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001 were not aimed at other nations, the fallout from those attacks resonated across the world. Perhaps nowhere were these shock waves more keenly felt than in the world's tourism industry. Thus, the journal *Rejuvenate* reported the following regarding US post 9/11 travel:

"America missed out on 78 million inbound travelers and \$606 billion because of September 11, according to economic data provided by the U.S. Travel Association. In a discussion with the media, Roger Dow, president and CEO of the USTA (US Travel Association), addressed the impact of the terrorist attacks on travel during the last decade and offered principles to help strengthen security and eliminate barriers that are discouraging travel to and within the United States." (rejuvenatemeetings.com, March 31, 2013).

The lost revenue and travellers, which were based on the assumed pace of growth of global long-haul international travel in the decade after 9/11, would have supported 467,000 additional U.S. jobs annually. Dow also showed that U.S. market share of the global travel market dropped from 17 percent in 2000 to 12.4 percent in 2010 during a time in which global long-haul travel grew 40 percent. Business travel total volume declined 21 percent (as a result of both 9/11 and the meetings crisis in the late 2000s), but returned to growth mode in 2010, increasing nearly 4 percent, and growth is expected through 2014. Leisure travel volume increased 17 percent since 2000, despite a few years of negative growth, and slow but steady growth is expected through 2014.

The graph below also illustrates this point. The graph demonstrates the dip in world tourism due to the September 11th terrorist attacks.

Table 1: Tourism Growth



Adapted from

<http://www.rejuvenatemeetings.com/2011/09/21/u-s-lost-606-billion-in-tourism-after-911/> March 31, 2013.)

#### IDENTIFYING THE LITERATURE

Over the last decade scholars of both tourism and criminology have published numerous articles and books on the field of tourism security. The great majority of these articles are found in English, however, there is a growing number of articles also published in both Spanish and Portuguese. The Spanish and Portuguese publications reflect the growth of tourism in Latin America and the challenges that Latin American tourism faces in a world that has been scared by kidnappings, street gangs, and violence against visitors. Prior to the late 1990s the literature could be divided into two major historical divisions: the early years made the Marxist assumption that violence against tourists was in a large part the fault of the tourist. The second stage came to a non-Marxist view in that victims of crimes were victims and not crime producers.

### **The Marxist View**

It is interesting to note that the early studies of crimes against tourist assumed then that the fault lay with the visitor and thus reflected a pseudo-Marxian outlook in which the victim was blamed for instigating the crime. Starting with the work of Thorstein Veblin's (1899) *The Theory of the Leisure Class* scholars followed what may be called a Robin Hood analysis. That is to say criminals were merely redistributing wealth. For example a 1986 article published in the *Annals of Tourism Research* by Meda Chesney-Lind and Lind, the authors notes that tourist possess characteristics that produce crime. The authors note that tourists tend to: (1) carry large sums of money (2) have desired items such as jewellery and cameras, (3) are often in anomic states (they pay little attention to where they leave their valuables), (4) they participate in activities where crimes are high (such a nightclubs), (5) they travel to areas of the locale in which they are unfamiliar. Another example is that of Trumbell (1980) who stated that Tourists are often perceived as aggressive and insensitive to the feelings of residents when they fail to recognize or respond to local norms. A New York Times article quotes a young Hawaiian commenting that "we never go to the beach where tourists are, because they make you feel like animals in a zoo".

Major changes in the way tourism security was seen began with scholars such as Abraham Pizam, Yoel Mansfeld and Peter Tarlow. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to touch upon all of their individual and collective writings, the following produces a summary of some of the major works in the field. It should be noted that the great majority of their work touches upon tourism security rather than on the tourism policing. These include: "The Role of Making Tourists Feel Safe: The Police Role in Orlando, Florida, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Cape Town, South Africa" *Twenty-seventh Annual Conference Proceedings, Travel and Tourism Research Association* (Pizam, Tarlow & Bloom) and *Tourism Crime, and International Security Issues* (Edited by Pizam & Mansfeld). In 2005 two major works on tourism security were published. Dec, 2005. *Terrorism and Tourism* (Edited by Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006) and *Tourism in Turbulent Times* (Edited by Wilks, Pendergast & Leggat), 2006. Both books featured chapters by Tarlow dealing with the issue of crimes against tourists.

In the area specific to tourism policing, Tarlow has published a number of articles, both from the academic and the applied perspective. These articles are both geared toward the police and civilians and cover everything from risk management to practical police training. Articles have been published in numerous languages including English, Hebrew, Portuguese and Spanish. Included among this list from the most recent to the least recent are:

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- Dec. 2009. "Western Religions and Terrorism, Do They Interact?" in *Ethics of Terrorism*, edited by Gilly et al.
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- Nov. 2009. The Role of Proportionality in War. *The Journal of the European & International Research Group on Crime, Ethics and Social Philosophy* (ERCES).
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- November, 2004. "*Journal of European International Research Group on Crime, Issues in Tourism Security (ERES)*. Vol-3. <http://www.erces.com/journal/Journal.htm>
- September, 2004 "Pirke Avot" ("Ethics of the Fathers") - Revisiting a Mishnaic tractate from the Perspective of Jewish Legal Philosophy." *Journal of European International Research Group on Crime, Ethics and Social Philosophy (ERCES)*. Vol-2.
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#### **TOURISM SECURITY AND POLICE: THE BIRTH OF TOPPS**

Prior to September 11, 2001 most nations' police departments were unaware of their responsibilities toward the tourism industry. The tourism industry did practically nothing to change that fact. For example, prior to and for a time after 9/11, US police departments' involvement with tourism was minimal. It was not uncommon for police departments to state that they took pride in the fact that they treated tourists just like anyone else. Police departments argued that they were responsible to the people that paid taxes, e.g., the local population, and that it was their duty to treat everyone on the same basis. The idea that tourists were at high risk of being victims of crime, that police might need special training in working with a location's out-of-town guests, that tourists paid a great deal of taxes, or that the industry needed special protection were simply either unknown to most police departments or had not entered their realm of consciousness. Furthermore, the relationship between tourism and a community's economic viability was not taken into account.

The following provides a glimpse at the history of what has now come to be known today as: "Tourism Oriented Policing/Protection Services" (TOPPS) not only in the US but also in much of the English-speaking world. This article provides an overview of some of the major changes that have taken place in the USA and other nations since 9/11. The article addresses the following areas: an overview of Tourism Oriented Policing/Protection Services (TOPPs); some of the key philosophical principles upon which TOPPS is based; some of the major conferences that have taken place around the world and a history of these conferences; some of the Tourism Networks that have been established around the world based on the TOPPs Philosophy.

#### **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TOPPS PROGRAMS AND THEIR PHILOSOPHY**

Those police departments engaged in TOPPs have come to recognize that the protection of visitors is different from other forms of police protection. In some communities there are special TOPPs units, while in other communities the police department has embraced the TOPPs philosophy and has integrated this philosophy into its everyday policing. Some police departments use other names, from community action policing to tourism safety units, but despite the differences in names, there is a common philosophy that unites these diverse police departments and protection professionals.

#### **The TOPPs Philosophy of Policing**

TOPPs radically challenges the standard paradigm of law enforcement. Below is a listing of some of the major TOPPs philosophical concepts that TOPPs uses to challenge the existing paradigm. Tourism security is part of the entire tourism system and a failure in security can cause system shut down or collapse. This principle is a fundamental concept of TOPPs. The TOPPs ideal challenges the notion that security is a "needed headache" that must be kept to a minimum. For example Venezuela's El Universal in an article published in March of 2013 asks the question: "Where are the tourists?" The paper notes: among the factors that have done the most harm to this country is its being ranked as an insecure nation. It states:

“We are well aware of the frequent kidnappings, the violence and crime that has plagued Venezuela during the last decade and that this has now become a frequent international topic of conversation and (this lack of security) has its consequences. However, these dangers, as bad as they are, are not sufficient to explain how a country with so many advantages has succeeded in winning the dubious honor (of lack of security). Indeed among those few countries even more insecure than Venezuela, Honduras and Sierra Leon, almost all are considered to be more hospitable than Venezuela”(eluniversal.com).

The article demonstrates the importance not only of security but also of another TOPPs principle, that: customer service and good security are part of the same tourism system and without them, tourism often withers. Tourism Security encompasses a far greater role than classical law enforcement. TOPPs officers are expected to interact with other professionals in issues as diverse as food safety to port security, from lost children and festival planning to traffic control and counter-terrorism. Tourism security and policing are specialized professions in and of themselves.

Police successes reflect the lowering of the number of citations issued or the reduction of accidents. The TOPPs emphasis is not on the number of crimes solved but rather on the number of crimes prevented. TOPPs units tend to be proactive in fighting crime rather than reacting to criminal actions. This change of attitude presents police departments with a serious statistical challenge. Police departments around the world tend to be highly statistically oriented. Statistically it is a lot easier to determine the number of crimes committed and solved than the number of crimes committed. From the TOPPs’ perspective, a tourism safety unit is far superior to a tourism crime unit. The former name implies a proactive policy of crime prevention while the latter indicated the seeking to solve crimes that have occurred. TOPPs specialists then measure their successes in “non-events” rather than events. That is, the task of a private and public security officers to prevent crime rather than react to crime. Classically tourism officials, and many police officials, saw security as an unwanted but necessary expense. The prevailing opinion was that “security added nothing to the bottom line”. The TOPPs philosophy reverses this assumption and sees security as an important post 9-11 marketing tool. Those who embrace the TOPPs philosophy argue that if used properly security (TOPPs) adds to a community or an attraction’s bottom line.

Those who accept the TOPPs philosophy of policing argue that security officers are not only professionals but are also specialists in their field. TOPPs practitioners argue that police departments can no longer shift their specialists from one area of expertise to another. From the TOPPs perspective, shifting a police officer each time there is a rise in the person’s rank is an education lost and is somewhat akin to being a podiatrist one day and a cardiologist the next day. Security today is too complicated to learn in a matter of weeks and therefore TOPPs assumes that “tourism oriented policing and protection services” is a career in and of itself. Among the various areas in which a TOPPs officer needs to have at least some proficiency are: Language skills, communication skills, cultural diversity skills, sensitivity training, understanding of gender roles, an understanding of world geography, the ability to listen without becoming defensive, customer service skills, and anger management. Furthermore, TOPPs practitioners need a good understanding of both the psychology and sociology of tourism and how to cross reference these knowledge bases with criminology. TOPPs specialists understand that tourism security is as an



integral part of the tourism experience. For this reason TOPPs officers have developed special uniforms and are keenly aware of the fact that what they say and how they act impacts the entire tourism structure.

In order to fulfill the philosophical principles stated above, TOPPs programs are designed to meet the following objectives. Firstly, protection of visitors to a community. By definition, TOPPs specialists need to have a local perspective. That means that they must understand every aspect of the community, and be able to deal with problems in that community before they arise. TOPPs specialists do not use a specific definition of who is a tourist or visitor, but rather assumes that any one from out of town is considered to be a visitor. Secondly, protection of people working in the tourism industry is important. The protection of tourism and visitor industry employees is often overlooked by security professionals. People who work in hotels and restaurants are subject not only to the potential of assault, but also to numerous potential illnesses. Often these people work for low wages, some may be at the employment location illegally and are therefore afraid to report crimes committed against them, and are wholly or partially dependent on their employer's whims for survival. These employees often do not report criminal acts. Additionally they may tend to keep silent when they are the victims of a crime due to fear of being deported or of losing a job. Thirdly, protection of locale's tourism sites. TOPPs officers should always place a person's welfare above the welfare of an object, thing or ideal. Site security, nevertheless, is an important aspect of TOPPs. Site security ranges from anything such as care of a local icon or attraction to the physical protection of a hotel. Site security encompasses critical infrastructure such as roadways, bridges, museums, and airports. The tourism industry (and often the local population) is totally dependent on the welfare of its attractions and infrastructure. Thus, TOPPs security must care for such international icons as New York's Statue of Liberty, Paris' Eiffel Tower, Rome's Coliseum, Israel's holy places, and Sydney's Opera House. What these international icons have in common is that while they hold no military or security value, they are symbols of the nation and belong are part of the world's heritage.

#### *Issues of Major or Mega Events*

These are events that attract people from all over a nation, region or the world and receive a great deal of media attention. In an interconnected world, major events such as major sporting events, major entertainment events, and large religious gatherings such as Mecca's Hajj require special security. TOPPs officers and professional security agents must be keenly aware not only of security issues but also of transportation issues, health issues, and cultural diversity issues.

#### *Protection of City's Reputation*

TOPPs officers know that they must do a great deal more than merely serve and protect. The world of tourism often depends on a locale's reputation and it can cost millions of dollars, euros, or pounds to recover a reputation. Once a place is "branded" as being unsafe and unfriendly, the tourism industry and the locale will be forced to invest a great deal of resources into a recovery program. It is interesting to note that a tourism industry's reputation will recover sooner from a negative act of nature (for example a tsunami) than it will from an act of man (such as a terrorist attack or a crime wave). A general principle is that further a visitor is from the place where the tragedy has occurred, the worse that tragedy will seem and the longer it will stay in the potential visitor's memory.

*Protection of City's Tourism Industry (economy)*

As noted above tourism is a major player in economies around the world. Although there is no one measurement method to determine the exact amount that the tourism industry contributes to a locale's economy, we only need to see the downturn in the world's economy after September 11, 2001 to understand that there is a clear correlation between a prosperous tourism industry and a prosperous economy. This prosperity is especially noted in an ever more interrelated world in which economic contagion is an ever-present threat. As such, TOPPs professionals understand that they are not only protecting tangibles such as life and property but also the intangibles of reputation and economic prosperity.

Recognizing the above needs, a TOPPs unit must take certain sociological factors about visitors into account prior to developing a TOPPs strategy. Among these factors are:

- Tourists may have greater levels of anxiety when crimes occur due to feelings of vulnerability and lack of local support groups and/or local resources.
- Tourists are more vulnerable to acts of violence due to their ignorance of local language(s), signage, and/or customs.
- Tourists have a tendency to judge a locale by a particular experience within a specific locale.
- Tourists bring notions about law enforcement agencies from their home community to the place that they are visiting.
- Tourists who have travelled further may have a greater chance of misinterpreting voice tonality and/or body language than do tourists traveling close to their place of residence.
- Security agencies are often ignorant/frustrated by how to handle a foreign visitor who does not understand a local police officer's command or comments.

Although every tourism locale is different there are certain commonalities that cross both national and cultural lines. When developing a TOPPs policy then TOPPs agents need to take into consideration some if not all of the following sociological factors. Among these are:

*Issues of Common Sense*

Visitors often leave their common sense at home. There are good reasons for this phenomenon. Among them are, few people choose a place that they consider to be dangerous. Instead they assume that where they are going is simply safe or that someone else is looking out for them. Indeed the English word vacation is derived from the French word, *vacancies*, meaning a vacating of the mind. Tourists simply assume that they need not think in the same way as when they are home and following a regular routine.

*Issues of Anomie*

To travel is to explore new ideas and places, but it also means that we often place ourselves in situations in which common knowledge is unknown. Visitors may not speak the local language,

understand the local currency or know what customs demand. To add to this confusion, visitors often arrive tired and hungry, and when then must face hotels that do not permit check-in until 2:00 or 3:00 pm and then must leave by noon on the day of their departure. Under these circumstances, visitors are often “refugees with money!”

#### *Issues of Inhibitions*

When we travel we often leave our inhibitions at home. People who are away from home may indulge in activities that would not be considered acceptable in places where they lack anonymity. Thus, TOPPs agents may have to deal with higher levels of alcohol or drug use, sexual activity, rudeness and unbecoming behaviour. These issues may take place both in public and in the privacy of a bedroom.

#### *Issues of Stress*

Although vacations are meant to be stress relievers, they often are anything but fun. The author has written:

A secondary component of travel and disasters is the psychological one. Building on ideas first developed by Mestrovic, Tarlow has called vacations the ‘stressful search for fun’. In his book the *Coming Fin de Siècle*, Mestrovic (p.1991. p.250) has written: “Postmodernist vacations are usually stressful; there are few exotic places left in the world; and most vacation products promise to deliver the same product fun.” Nevertheless, the travel industry should not confuse ‘safe’ or ‘recreational’ stress (i.e., waiting for an airplane, yelling at children in rear seat of a car) with ‘endangering stress’ such as an act of deadly force, a flood, or a major fire. In the former case, although most vacationers will complain about it, it is fair to assume that the travelling public has come to factor recreational-stress into the cost of the trip. In the latter case, that of endangering-stress, such stress will result in the cancelation of the trip or its early termination.

#### *Issues of Time*

Perhaps nothing creates more problems for the TOPPs professional than issues of time. Time is the one resource that cannot be renewed or regained. Vacations are all about the spending of unrecoverable precious time. In tourism there is often a close connection between time management and anger management. TOPPs agents must be aware of the fact that visitors and tourists alike are extremely time-sensitive and that perhaps nothing causes greater anguish or anxiety than a guest’s excessive need to wait for service. Achieving these goals and integrating them into an overall TOPPs policy is no easy task.

### **ISSUE OF TOURISM SURETY**

Although many scholars and professionals in other fields may distinguish between issues of safety and security, in reality the two are intertwined when it comes to tourism. The reason for this intertwining is that a security mishap, a safety mishap or a mechanical mishap may all result in high levels of frustration and anger and have the potential on the macro level to ruin not only a vacation but on the macro-level harm a particular tourism industry. To get around this problem the word “tourism surety” is often used. Tourism surety is a term borrowed from the insurance industry and “works under the assumption that any negative act, be it one of safety or security

can ruin a vacation and destroy a location's reputation" (Tarlow, 2009, p. 469). Tourism surety then: "is the point where a safety, security, reputation, and economic viability meet" (Tarlow, 2009, p. 469). TOPPs professionals then must be aware that they work in at least four fields simultaneously. These being: safety, security, economic protection and a locations reputation.

The combining of these four fields into one field is not easy. There is no one formula for success, but there are a number of techniques that have proven successful around the world. The following is a listing of some of the initial ways that TOPPs oriented professionals have faced the challenges of an ever more dangerous world. Although every tourism destination has its own set of idiosyncrasies, there are common factors that unite TOPPs units in their pursuit of tourism safety and security. Some of the techniques and principles that TOPPs officers often employ are:

The understanding that TOPPs units must provide a visual presence within tourism zones and at city's festivals, and major events and in specific areas of critical importance such as transportation hubs. Such a visual presence is essential in the protection not only of people and property but also in the protection of a locale's reputation and economy. Prior to September 11, 2001 many tourism officials argued that too much of a police presence acted as a tourism-deterrent. In the post 9-11 world tourists often wonder where police officers are and seek out places with a visible tourism security presence. As in all cases TOPPs units will want to be able to measure their success with. This measurement can be done by such methods as:

- (1) Meeting with local store owners to determine their needs and if these needs are being met
- (2) Providing random surveys at airports
- (3) Working with local Convention and Visitor Bureaus or Tourism Offices to develop a sample of visitor security attitudes especially in major tourism zones

TOPPs units must also find ways to decrease event crimes. Events can range from a street festival to an international sporting event at which hundreds of thousands of people descend upon a locale. TOPPs units recognize that these events are open to a number of different types of crimes. These crimes may be committed both by event attendees against the event (such as: pilferage, shoplifting, and public disorders) and against the event itself. Once again the TOPPs unit will want to have some form of measurement instrument to demonstrate its effectiveness. Among the ways that a TOPPs unit can measure its success in this area by:

- (1) Careful maintenance of reported crime statistics
- (2) Using exit interviews with attendees
- (3) Employing post event analysis with the event's organizers

TOPPs specialists are more than mere police officers or security specialists. Because they must work with fellow security specialists, it is the TOPPs professional's task to provide training and a sense of security to tourism frontline workers. To accomplish this goal, a TOPPs unit should hold annual security reviews for hoteliers and their staffs. To avoid a Mumbai-like problem where police did not know the layout of principle hotels and attraction police officers should also take FAM (familiarization tours) of all tourism sites, from hotels to local attractions. Measurements can be accomplished through examination to determine if police officers know the site layout, and to determine their level of risk readiness

Tourism is often a more complicated security challenge than many laypersons understand. One example of this high level of interweaving of complications is in the protection of university students. On some level, university students who live on campuses are similar to the local population, but on other levels the student populations behave in manners that are more similar to visitors than to that of local citizens. This mixture of students as long-term visitors means that TOPPs units must be involved in the protection of what we may call “Long-term transient populations such as university students. Often the permanent population has a love-hate relationship with on-campus university students. What makes the policing and protection of university students especially difficult is the fact that TOPPs officials must also develop cooperative efforts with university officials and find ways to share data with institutions that often have specific privacy issues. Furthermore, university students not only need to be protected, often against themselves, but at times may cause disturbances for the local business and residential population. There are a number of cases where university students have rioted, causing a great deal of property damage but also long-term reputational damage to the host city’s reputation. The 1989 Student riots in Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA serve as an example of student riots that impacted a local tourism industry.

Protecting a city’s reputation is perhaps the hardest goal to measure and yet it may be one of the most important TOPPs goals. In order to accomplish this goal a TOPPs unit must have a close working relationship with what is called in the United States a “Convention and Visitor Bureau” or in most nations a “Tourism Office”. TOPPs officers can be involved in helping to attract conventions, the development of brochures indicating that their locale provides an extra measure of safety for visitors from around the world or being part of their community’s delegation in the pursuit of new economic opportunities. These units can measure their success by using: selected surveys of visitors, selected survey of hoteliers, selected surveys of travel magazine editors and media coverage.

One of the most critical and often overlooked areas for tourism policing and protection is transportation nodules. Visitors are vulnerable to being crime victims at these locales, but often, members of the tourism industry take advantage of arriving visitors. Visitors often arrive at their destination tired and unaware of local currencies, prices, or customs. A TOPPs unit, combined with a good information desk, can assure arriving passengers that they will not be taken advantage of. The problem of port visitor security is especially acute at sea ports, where cruise ships dock for a short period of time and both criminals and unethical business entrepreneurs realize that the visitor may have departed before s/he realizes that a crime or swindle has occurred. Cruise ship passengers are not only potential victims of crimes of distraction such as pick-pocketing and purse snatching, but terrorism is a potential threat to cruise ships both at sea and in port. Because tourism is both a component industry and has a highly undefined population a TOPPs unit must use a variety of methods. Table 1 below defines the various population types that need to be protected.

**Table 1:** Tourism Populations by Sociological Transience

| Population type              | Populations consistency  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Visitors                     | Highly changeable and therefore transient                      |
| Frontline workers in tourism | Less changeable, but open to high levels of employee turn-over |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Local businesses serving tourism industry | Higher levels of stability, low owner turn over  |
| Festival attendees                        | Highly transient (by the hour)   |
| Festival workers                          | Present only for festival duration   |
| University Students                       | Actions similar to transient populations but physically present for stable (semester) periods of time  |
| Cruise lines                              | Cruise line passengers are short term visitors, however cruise ships also need special protection and become an integral part of port security |

### **COMMON TOPPS PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

Law enforcement agencies in various parts of the world indicate certain common problems. Among the major problems are:

#### *Lack of finances*

Law enforcement agencies state that despite the importance of tourism to their local economy, city, state, provincial, or national governments do not provide their agencies with the proper level of funding. There is a common perception that governments want tourists to receive extraordinary services within the confines of ordinary budgets. Often law enforcement agents suffer from low morale, due in part, to low pay and lack of resources.

#### *Manpower shortages*

Police departments and security professionals know that increasing manpower is a major way to prevent crime. However, due to budget constraints, public service contracts and at lack of support, TOPPs units often are expected to accomplish miracles on a shoestring budget.

#### *Lack of cooperation within the media*

Law enforcement agencies and security professionals state that the media find stories about crime a good way to sell newspapers or increase ratings. The media is frequently insensitive to the damage done to a community and to an agency's morale when only negative news items are reported. Inaccurate reporting destroys media credibility with both tourism professionals and the tourism industry.

#### *Need for greater community cooperation.*

Law enforcement agencies cannot completely end crime. Instead, they must depend on the local population, and the tourism industry in particular, to help them prevent crime. Law enforcement agencies see prevention as their best tool.

#### *Poor statistics and a lack of standardization*

Currently there is no international standardization or definition of what is a crime against a visitor, who a visitor is, or how records are to be kept. Law enforcement agencies are well aware that the industry does not always report crimes and that often the statistics lack credibility. As noted each tourism area has its own unique set of idiosyncrasies, but despite their differences, tourism security specialists have found certain common needs around the world, these include:

*High police visibility*

No matter what the tourism security situation, be the industry located at a beach resort, mountains, urban or rural, TOPPs units push for accessible police officers. The traveling public is better protected and feels more comfortable when protected by police officers on foot, on horseback, or on a bicycle rather than in a car.

*Extroverted police officers and security officers*

The classical strong-silent police officer is not the right person for a TOPPs assignment. Tourism areas need extroverted officers who understand that part of their job is to interact with their community's guests. These informal conversations not only permit the police to have a better idea about what is on the person's mind, but also create the perception that the community is safe enough for the police officer to have the time to talk with an out-of-towner.

*Pro-active participation on tourism boards*

By working with local hotel/motel associations, CVBs, and Chambers-of-Commerce, law enforcement agencies can develop joint programs to stop crime before it begins. It is essential for TOPPs professionals to have tourism industry allies. It is also essential to develop mutual understanding between tourism professionals and TOPPs security specialist. Two-way communication is an essential part of tourism security.

*The need for personnel background checks*

It is essential that people who work with tourists have sterling backgrounds. These are people who have legal access to someone else's room and property. It is essential that tourism provide people with the highest level of integrity possible.

**TOURISM SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCES AROUND THE WORLD**

During the 1980s, even major tourism centres such as Las Vegas (Nevada) or Honolulu (Hawaii) had done little to study the problem of tourism security. In fact a review of the early literature about tourism security assumed even overtly or covertly that to some degree visitors were at least partially responsible for their being victims of crime. In the early 1990s, Las Vegas decided to develop what was then called a tourism safety seminar. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police's Curtis Williams, then a sergeant, was the primary mover to establish some form of formalized training to protect visitors to Las Vegas. Dr. Peter Tarlow and Don Ahl, head of security for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitor's bureau at the time soon joined then Sgt. Williams in developing the seminar-workshop into a tourism conference. The conference has grown throughout the years and is now in its twentieth year. This tourism safety conference attracts a worldwide audience allowing experts from around the world to exchange ideas about tourism safety and security. The International Las Vegas Tourism Safety and Security conference has spawned other conferences around the world. A few years later then Sgt. Chris Peña of Anaheim (California, USA) police department along with Dr. Peter Tarlow began a tourism conference aimed at protecting California's tourism industry.

In the post 9/11 world tourism security conferences, besides those in Anaheim and Las Vegas, were held in or are being held in: Charleston, USA; Detroit, Michigan, USA; Honolulu, Hawaii, USA; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Panama City, Panama; Quito, Ecuador; Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic.

### TOURISM SECURITY NETWORKS AROUND THE WORLD

Tourism security networks are still in their infancy. These “networks” are composed either international tourism organizations or of security professionals such as TOPPs officers. In the case of the former, we may describe these as policy entities. In the latter case, they are conduits for security professionals to exchange ideas. Below is a listing of some of these organizations and if they fall into the former or latter category.

(1) *The UN World Tourism Organization* has worked at the development of a world standard for tourism safety and security. It was hoped that this professional network would create inter-institutional relations with experts in collaborating to develop a safer and more secure industry.

(2) *The Caribbean Tourism Organization*. This association has developed a number of standards of care. It is a political organization that works to create safety and security across the region. The organization is voluntary and has its headquarters in Barbados. The CTO works closely with Association of Caribbean Chiefs of Police.

(3) *Las Vegas: International Association of Tourism Professionals*. This new network is not a policy network but rather a professional network. Its function is to permit the free flow of practical and specific ideas on how to solve tourism security and safety issues as they arise. The network was established in 2012 and now has breakfast networking meetings held each year at the International Las Vegas Tourism Safety and Security Conference. The network’s goals are to allow for: the interchange of ideas dealing with tourism safety and security issues, demonstrating to academics what practitioners’ needs are, developing of a job exchange and updating members with the newest issues or challenges facing their profession.

(4) The Santo Domingo Platform. Tourism security professionals from various countries around the Americas, representatives from various Western Hemisphere tourism organizations and from the World Tourism Organization developed this policy platform. These representatives agreed to the following principles:

- Promote tourism security in each person’s home country with the goal of making the Western Hemisphere nations tourism secure.
- The securing of funding for tourism security projects
- The development throughout the region of tourism security programs
- An attempt to coordinate strategies on a regional basis
- The interchange of ideas dealing with everything from illegal sexual exploitation in tourism and crimes against minors to crimes of violence and commercial crimes.
- Increase the level of professionalism especially within police departments

(5) An offshoot of the Dominican Conference and Platform is the Panama conference. This conference hopes to have representatives from some 35 nations, principally from the Western Hemisphere. One of the conference’s goals is to advance many of the suggestions listed in the Santo Domingo Platform.



One of the problems with these many networks is that they have been strong on policy and pronouncements but much less successful on policy implementation. Often the wording is repetitive and more problems are presented than practical solutions offered. The reasons for this disconnect may be in part due to: governments and decision makers rarely attend these conferences, often tourism leadership comes from the world of marketing and may have the mistaken belief that any problem can be solved by marketing strategies, many of those who attend have never actually worked in front line tourism security and safety situations and it is hard to garner funding for preventative programs. Denial mechanisms are present not only within the individual tourist but also within the tourism industry. Often industry leaders do not understand a tourism security issue until the issue has become a crisis, tourism security does not have a successful lobbying program within governmental and NGO agencies, tourism security officials will need to find ways to convince both government and tourism offices that preventative maintenance, although hard to quantify saves not only reputations and lives, but also adds to a locale's economic success.

#### SUMMARY

Despite the many years of work in the field of tourism security, the discipline is still in its infancy. Yet this sleeping child is the protector of much of the world's largest industry. May this child grow to make the world a better place and help to allow tourism to aid the people of the world to take a step towards peace and mutual friendship.

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