Chapter 4

On the Use of Qualitative Comparative Analysis to Identify the Bright Spots in Dark Tourism

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ABSTRACT

As Haiti lacks visitor attractions, the development of an authentic event programme is going to be an essential part of the on-going tourism strategy. Culturally rich events are part of the appeal of a destination and can be cost efficient to organise. Furthermore it is well documented that planned events have the ability to improve national pride in small developing countries. From our findings we have highlighted the fact that Voodoo has helped the Haitian people to maintain its true nature and culture and now offer economic development options to the destination. The development of voodoo events will enhance Haiti's tourism and provide opportunities for locals to embrace their cultural heritage and come to terms with their past. That said, unless the 'blind spots' of the destination are removed, there is no empirical evidence to confirm that tourism will bring prosperity to Haiti nor that voodoo can play a significant role in the country's tourism sector.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'dark tourism' was first coined by Lennon and Foley (2000) to define the relationship between dark tourism attractions and a specific interest in death, the macabre and the paranormal. Other academics such as Seaton (1996) have referred to this activity as 'thanatourism', 'morbid tourism' and 'black spots'. These terms have been used to describe a fascination for travelling to places where death or tragedy has occurred. As for Dalton (2015), he outlines how dark tourism sites are typically places of genocide and mass murders, locations where terrorist's acts have been executed or places where basic human rights have been violated. Based on the above interpretations of dark tourism, it becomes difficult to imagine that something positive can be worked out from this activity, and hence our research question: What are the bright spots of dark tourism? With this as background, the objective of this book chapter is to provide evidence that when an activity, product or service, as a key component of the daily life of locals, is used for tourism purpose, the activity, product or service is likely to be sustainable. The findings of this paper can be helpful for DMOs as they can influence destination marketing strategies in terms of products to be developed. Also, the findings of this book chapter helps to develop an understanding on the tourism industry which has often been blamed for the commodification of heritage sold to tourists as products and services (Park, 2014). To some extent, we are going to challenge Park (2014) statement. This book chapter covers both end of research spectrum: 'There are two types of research that can be considered. At one end of the spectrum is pure research, which is undertaken only to gain a better understanding of an issue with no other purpose than intellectual curiosity. At the other end of the spectrum is applied research. This research is undertaken specifically to offer a solution to a practical issue' (Fox, Gouthro, Morakabati & Brackstone, 2014: 9). In order to achieve our objectives, a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) will be adopted. This approach is mainly used to study four issues: Internal organisational process; organisational external environment; overlap within and between organisational environments and finally promoting a methodological alternative (Kan, Adegbite, El Omari & Abdellatif, 2016). This book chapter falls into all four categories. Still regarding the methodology, Haiti, a post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destination (Séraphin, Butcher & Korstanje, 2016) which also a well is known destination for Voodoo (Séraphin & Nolan, 2014), will be utilised as a case study. From a structural point of view, the chapter is going to be largely but not exclusively inspired by Kan, Adegbite, El Omari & Abdellatif (2016), a methodological paper that focuses on Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA).

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