The remote effects on tourists' notions of risk and safety

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Background

» The scale of human mobility is growing

» Tourism has become vulnerable and a target for terrorism

» Tourists who relate place to risk are influenced in their behavior.

» The understanding of risk in tourism research is fragmented. One could argue that the concept of risk is inherent in the concept of travelling.

Purpose of the study

» Tourists' argumentations about risk and safety

» How do tourists consider risk and safety in relation to journeys?

» How does terrorism influence tourists' travels?

» Research literature exhibits uncertainty about

    a) Interpretation of terms

    b) Managerial actions on the spot

Methodology

» Qualitative approach to understand people's reasoning

» Semi-structured interviews with travellers (8, living in Sweden)

» Questions to find shared and basic assumptions behind people's travel habits

» Not questioning results from previous, quantitative research, but:
Qualitative interviews can contribute to explaining such results.

Results

» The feelings of risk and safety are narrowly related in people's everyday life

» Fellow travellers are important for de-/ increasing the feeling of risk and safety

» People omit risky situations because of friends/family at home - not for their own life in the first place

» Age and the birth of one's children consitute turning points

Results (cont.)

» Views on sites and countries differ. Close relation to:

   a) Cultural attitudes towards women

   b) Segration or democratic traditions

Results (cont.)

» Main reasons for not visiting a place immediately after a terrorist attack

    a)   Respect for local people

    b)   Inconvenience due to supposed delays

    c)   The trip will not be as planned

Conclusions

» Terrorism is not in people's minds when considering their own safety

» Interviewees do not even consider travelling to places related to terrorism, war or political instability.

» Risk and safety are strongly interrelated

» Terrorism is related to matters of inconvenience and respect, not to risk.

Research implications and limitations

» This study contributes with its emphasis on complexity

» Geographical focus on Swedish participants

» Further case studies from other parts of the world are called for

» Future research would benefit from amplifying the relationships between:

    A) Risk and safety

    B) Risk and place

    C) Assumptions before and during travel