

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

### OFFENCES AGAINST TOURISTS. THE CASE OF THE CITY OF MÁLAGA

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourists and visitors have always been victims of crime (violent and non-violent), a fact that occurs daily around the world. According to several works carried out, tourists are more likely to suffer a crime than the local population, since they are more vulnerable when being in an environment that may be unfamiliar. They become an easier and more desirable target for criminals by gathering a series of characteristics: they are carrying valuables with them (cash, cards, cameras, etc.), they are less likely to report the crime, take more risks, lower their guard or can be found at public places that facilitate the escape of the offenders. Indeed, authors like Harper suggests that crime against tourists is a rational rather than a spontaneous process.

It is also known in the literature on the topic that the risk perceived in the destination depends significantly on the risks of crime. It also means that the destinations significantly moderate the relationship between risk in crime and risk perception, having greater effects on risk perception in Latin America than in Europe. Hence, security incidents are considered by media as news generators, so they care to offer explicit and vivid information that can affect potential tourists, who consciously or unconsciously establish a high image risk of the affected destinations. In turn, the risks associated with security can generate a negative image that affects the destination. This fact is relevant because tourism is an activity with a large intangible and information-intensive component, highly dependent on tourist confidence. Likewise, Internet and online user-generated content (UGC) become a fundamental source of information for destinations and tourism companies due to the influence they exert on other travelers when making decisions. For all these reasons, tourism

marketing professionals no longer control one hundred per cent of the reputation of their destinations and companies and cannot ignore the role of social networks in the distribution of travel-related information, since any act negative, whether security, criminal, sanitary or related to nature, could destroy the reputation of a place. Consequently, in order for tourism to continue to play the socio-economic role it has played so far, all stakeholders should pay special attention to the safety of tourists by assessing their safety and security needs and continuously monitoring the security conditions offered by the tourism industry.

## **2. OBJECTIVE**

This study focuses on the case of the city of Malaga, for which tourism is one of the main economic activities, so it is of undoubted interest to know the situation of travellers about the crime against them. The main objective of this research is to measure the criminal acts reported by tourists compared to residents. In this way, it is intended to assess whether there are criminal behaviours that focus on specific profiles of tourists, which would help to design preventive strategies focused on those groups. In the long term, a more specific view of the criminal dynamics toward tourists in Malaga should help to design not only more effective reactive measures, but better preventive policies. The authors approach the research in a wider mode than current actuarial criminology, focusing on the calculation and management of risk, and exploring the psychosocial causes of delinquency. Quite differently, this study works under the assumption that the locational logic of crime can only be understood from a holistic and complex approach that addresses the causes of crime, conflicts and the perception of security, delving into the study of the links between public space and crime.

## **3. METHOD**

To achieve this objective, the crimes registered by the National Police Service in the city of Malaga from January 2018 to September 2019 are analysed based on data provided by the Homeland Ministry. From the first dataset of 46.580 cases, the research used 31.799 police reports, after discarding those which were not entail an offence (suicides or ID misplacements, for instance). Using various analysis techniques (Pearson and Spearman correlation, crosstab analysis and ANOVA), significant differences and associations between variables or groups (residents and tourists) are examined. Subsequently, it investigates aspects such as where and when the crimes suffered by tourists occur, for knowing the spatial and temporal concentration of these incidents according to their type, and aspects and display them in thematic maps, using ArcGIS Pro. Finally, the results are interpreted and put in context with the theoretical framework and with the findings of other studies.

## **4. RESULTS**

The results of the study have shown that, within the municipality of Malaga, complaints for crimes committed against tourists focus on certain prominent profiles, in addition to presenting a high spatial and temporal concentration, when compared to the usual

complaints from residents. The results of the test of correlations by intervals (Pearson) and ordinal (Spearman), indicated several significant relationships, indicative of differences in terms of the crimes suffered, or their outcome, depending on whether the complainant is a resident or a tourists.

Apparently, tourists and residents have different reporting patterns throughout the different months of the year, and even the different tourist seasons. In addition, there are significant differences regarding the resolution of the complaints filed by each group. If the composition of these variables is analysed, discriminating against their complainants based on whether they belong to the group of tourists or residents, it is observed that complaints by residents remain significantly more stable throughout the year than those of tourist, that acquire a much more seasonal behaviour.

These results, which confirm the initial conjectures of the research, were corroborated in a second instance by the chi-square test, which revealed that there are several parameters associated with the tourist-resident variable. In this sense, weekends are the most propitious days for a growth in tourist complaints to be experienced. On the contrary, the complaints of the residents keep stable throughout the whole week. In addition, there is an age group among residents that is much more likely to file complaints, between the two central ranges (between 26 and 57 years).

On the geographical analysis, the highest spatial concentration of crimes against tourists is the centre of the municipality of Malaga, the historic centre of the capital. It coincides with the usual tourist flows, for a large part of the tourist attractions of the municipality are concentrated in a reduced geographical space. The next area with the highest concentration of crime is the Churriana district, where the Malaga International Airport is located. Other areas are the train station, bus station, urban beaches or the port facilities. On the bilateral analysis, the most frequent places for a tourist to be robbed are the beach and open spaces, accommodation and restaurants, followed by museums and transportation facilities. On the contrary, urban public roads and food and commercial establishments, as well as domestic areas such as garages and apartments, or educational or sports centers are the places that significantly concentrate thefts towards residents.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on empirical evidence and theories about the location of the crime, this work tries to increase the existing knowledge about crime and tourism in the city of Malaga, which may have relevant practical implications for the management of a smart tourist destination. Tourist destinations, especially urban, are spaces where residents and tourists coexist, each group with its motivations, expectations and interests, generating a complex socio-economic activity. The strategies and preventive actions to cope with crimes against tourists draw resources from other areas, and must be coordinated in comprehensive planning of the destination that, in addition, must be consistent with other non-tourism strategies. The destination management entities must be integrated into this type of planning and, in the line as evidenced by the literature, they must participate with the rest of the agents in balanced long-term planning that also considers safety (and its perception), as an important part of tourism. Hence, the future research agenda should prioritize the creation

of crime prevention models for tourism within the framework of smart destinations. For example, there is a lack of research evaluating the effects of social networks on tourists' perceptions of crime risk, despite the role they play through e-WOM and the fact that there are tools available for the massive analysis of CGU. It is a fact that, at present, data is not automatically recorded and shared, so it is hardly available for use in decision-making in institutions outside of those who record it. A transparent model for defining tourism problems in destinations, based on reliable and efficiently modelled data, could provide a new and more precise view of the criminal acts that tourists may suffer at the destination, so that the response better organised.