

Political Unrest Costs Egyptian Tourism Dearly: An Ethnographical Study

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Abstract

This study uses ethnographical research methodology to observe the negative impact of political unrest on the tourism industry and overall economy of Egypt during the nation's revolution. In the paper, a number of proactive strategies are suggested to insulate Egypt from future acts of violence. Emphasis on the implementation of a destination management system is also recommended to enhance overall knowledge and efficiency in the Egyptian tourism sector and to help alleviate negative turns in the market caused by regional unrest and political instability.

Keywords: tourism, Egypt, political unrest, revolution, ethnography

1. Introduction

For many countries, tourism is an important sector of their national economy. Many such countries are dependent on the survival and growth of this sector. The tourism sector is, however, fragile in nature (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008). Unlike other industries, tourism is greatly affected by political events. While tourists opt for relaxing and carefree holidays and expect to experience comfort, serenity, fun and leisure, these experiences are only available when the political conditions of the host country are stable (Hwa Hong et al., 1999). Moreover, for a tourist, the money spent on a hotel or resort is not able to be recouped; hence, the risk of incurring losses owing to threats in a host nation's stability is heightened.

Tourists are very sensitive to reports of violence and political unrest in potential holiday destinations (Neumayer, 2004) and the tourism sector is susceptible to shocks such as wars, outbreaks of disease, incidences of terrorism, economic fluctuations, biosecurity threats and natural disasters (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008). Although some tourists prefer adventure and are not deterred by incidents of conflict, war, riots and other violence, the number of tourists who want a safe trip considerably exceeds those who want a riskier adventure (Neumayer, 2004).

It is therefore important to define the terms 'political violence' and 'instability' for the purpose of this paper. The term 'violence' refers to the act of harming a victim or endangering his/her welfare by exerting physical force (Neumayer, 2004). In line with the definition of violence, 'political violence' refers to the exertion of such force by the government or an anti-government group. Thus, political motive is the key factor for political violence (Neumayer, 2004). 'Instability', as defined by Cook (1990, p.4), is "a situation where a government has been toppled, or is controlled by fractions following a coup, or where basic functional pre-requisites for social order control and maintenance are unstable and periodically disrupted." A country can be said to be stable if the political leaders stay in office, if there are limited incidences of violence and turmoil and if the regime is long-lasting. In general, political instability goes hand-in-hand with political violence (Neumayer, 2004).

Localized political violence, social unrest and wars have been identified as the major factors that pose a threat to tourism, not only tourism in the country in question, but also tourism in neighbouring countries and the entire region.

2. The Egyptian Revolution

A revolution erupted in Egypt on January 25, 2011. The outburst included acts of civil disobedience, strikes and a series of demonstrations and marches. Violent clashes took place between demonstrators, security forces and

supporters of President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo, Alexandria and in other cities in Egypt.

Many countries, including the US, UK and Japan, issued travel warnings and evacuated their citizens from Egypt. Even multinational corporations began evacuating their expatriate workers (CNN, 2011).

Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, in an official one-week evaluation dating from January 28, 2011 to February 5, 2011 revealed that the manufacturing, food, construction and tourist sectors had been significantly affected by the recent revolution in Egypt (Yousef, 2011). This evaluation reported that the manufacturing sector lost \$620 million, which is approximately 0.7 percent of Egypt's annual GDP. The greatest loss was incurred in the food industry, in which prices fell by 20 percent. The loss was estimated to be \$128 million in the construction sector (Yousef, 2011).

An important point to remember is that the Egyptian Revolution was politically rather than economically motivated. However, a consequence of the revolution could be the significant upturn in economic benefits for Egypt if the uprising leads to a middle-class oriented political system that is much more open and democratic. The financial markets in Egypt could flourish and more equitable and rapid development could follow (Roe, 2011).

An integral component of the desired level of economic recovery is Egypt's status in terms of Business Risk Analysis (BRA). BRA is an indicator of a country or region's chances of providing sound options for investors. In Business Monitor International, an established online information source informing of the latest economic and political risks around the world (Roe, 2011), a marked improvement was noted in the BRA rating for Egypt in August, 2011 compared to the rating for February, 2011, shortly after President Mubarak had resigned.

While some believe that the revolution has ended, the tourism industry, similarly for other sectors of the economy, is still facing major troubles. Because investors are not willing to invest and banks are refusing credit and loans, everyone is forced to wait for the economy to start moving before they resume their standard activities (Soueif, 2011).

While crisis has been part of Egypt for some time, it has recovered from past crises fairly well. For example, in 1997 when 58 tourists and four Egyptians were killed in Luxor temple, tourism temporarily declined but rose again within a few months (Florian, 2011). While many analysts are hopeful that the tourism industry will pick up its usual pace soon, there are those who fear a strong decline (Florian, 2011).

When former President Hosni Mubarak, the central figure of the civil unrest, resigned from his position as president on February 11, 2011, the pyramids in Giza as well as the temples in Luxor and Aswan were reopened for tourists (Bly, 2011). For the sake of security, many museums (including the Egyptian Museum) were closed, resulting in loss of income. It has been reported that looters stole precious items from museums during the unrest (Bly, 2011).

3. Assessing Political Risk and Instability

Political risk refers to the possibility that a politically motivated event may affect an investment in such a way that those who have supplied funds for projects would incur losses to their initial investment or would gain fewer profits compared with their initial expectations. Political risk can be seen from two perspectives. (Hwa Hong et al., 1999). The first definition refers to the case when a government imposes policies that interfere with matters concerning an investment. This can include such actions as the limitation of business transactions or implementation of price ceilings on certain commodities or services. The second definition refers to the case when certain politically motivated events in the state directly affect businesses.

Tourism in the 21st century is not affected by economics alone as it is also affected by the complicated realm of globalized politics. Tourism has become a commodity of capitalism that sells peace, tranquillity, fun and comfort. As a result, it has evolved into an investment with many complexities and travel risks include many political scenarios. Travelling no longer guarantees a carefree experience. A travel itinerary can now include the risk of encountering political turmoil and possible violence. Political risks can be best analyzed from the praxis ontology perspective, as this is practical, less confusing and can be clearly visualized. Quantifying the political risks involved in travelling is based on one's country of destination.

While tourism is highly vulnerable to wars and political instability it is most susceptible to terrorism (Alsarayreh, Jawabreh & Helalat, 2010). Political conflicts among nations may promote the oppression of one country over another. That is, if the conflict does not sufficiently deter tourists to travel to combating countries, a country's leader may impose travel bans on the warring country. This is a further potential factor influencing the reduction in the numbers of potential tourists and consequently a decrease in GDP.

According to Sonmez and Graefe (1998), tourism is a primary economic driver to a country's overall economy. However, with the threat of political instability in the form of terrorism, tourism has come face-to-face with its ultimate nemesis. Shifts in tourist activities in reaction to the threats of terrorism have seriously scarred the industry. In 1985, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) blamed terrorism as the major culprit in the loss of \$105 billion tourism receipts. Sonmez and Graefe (1998) deduced that tourism is encapsulated inside capitalism. Hence, terrorism often occurs in countries where there are many tourist destinations.

Terrorism has a very low probability of occurrence, but its risks are extremely high (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998). To some countries, tourism is a major earning industry and many country's GDPs are highly dependent on tourism. The WTO predicts that 1.5 billion tourists will visit foreign destinations by 2020, but with the threat of terrorism lurking, this favourable opportunity will be lost. While terrorism obviously has economic implications for any nation, it has four major effects from an economic perspective, one of which is the negative effect on the tourism industry (Abadie & Gardeazabal, 2008). The political risks resulting from terrorist activities have been summarized and analyzed by complicated and highly jargonized economics models. Abadie and Gardeazabal (2008) used the AK Endogenous Model to illustrate the effects of terrorism in a country by using it as a stochastic Poisson process that destroys a country's capital stock.

4. Methods and Data Collection

A triangulation case study was considered appropriate for this study for many reasons. A case study is a valuable methodological approach to research. Its distinctive characteristics make it appropriate for many types of investigations. Triangulation can be used with data, investigations, theories and even methodologies (Tellis, 1997). It comprises the protocols that can be used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations (Stake, 1995).

The need for triangulation arises from the ethical mandate to confirm the validity of the processes of data collection as it tests the consistency of findings obtained by using different instruments. In a case study, triangulation increases the chances to control, or at least assess, some of the threats or multiple causes influencing the results. Stake (1995) and Yin (1984) identified six sources of evidence in case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, physical artefacts and participant observations.

4.1 Systematic Review

The systematic review method, which is a tool for conducting a robust review of the secondary literature, was used in this study. A secondary literature review is an essential methodological step in establishing the researcher's knowledge from existing social, economic and political research (World Bank, 2007). The secondary data used to draft the context of this study was derived from multiple sources including document reviews, archival records and direct observations. After compiling a list of topics to be investigated, we reviewed the existing literature – including journal publications, newspaper articles, documents, websites, statistical reports and archival records (blogs, diaries, charts and personal records) – in order to collect the relevant information. Documents were selected based on their relevance to the issues under investigation and a process of ongoing reading was then pursued to summarize the information and provide answers required to give meaning to the study. This followed Yin's (2003) recommendation to develop a list of topics to be investigated within the study, which in turn provides a holistic account of the subject under investigation.

4.2 Ethnographical Research

Ethnography is an in-depth research methodological approach (Gummesson, 2003). It originates from the fields of anthropology and sociology (Genzuek, 2003). According to Fielding (1993), ethnographical research entails the study of behaviour in its natural setting (real life). This involves field work, observation and note taking. This research used direct observation as a research method.

Observation is a method of gathering data, documenting and analysing through observing people, physical objects, events, processes, behaviours, actions and interactions that actually occur (World Bank, 2007). Observation could be as simple as casual data collection activities to measure and record behaviours. This technique is useful for providing additional information about the topic being studied (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Direct observations were used to validate the collected secondary data and were valuable tools applied to natural settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) recommended that researchers need to be as unobtrusive as wallpaper. In line with this, the researcher participated in the study as a "participant observer," providing a viewpoint from within the case. Three field visits to Egypt, one of which was to Tahrir Square, were conducted during the case study. These visits helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the events occurring and provided evidence of many of the issues raised.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Secondary Research Data: Political Unrest and Instability

Economic theory predicts that tourists consume multiple goods and services at the country of their destination. In times of political violence, tourists almost universally choose another destination, even if the chances of being affected or physically hurt are minimal (Lancaster, 1971). For this reason, the travel and tourism sector of Egypt was expected to be affected by the revolution that began in January 2011.

Foreign nationals were immediately evacuated and airports became overcrowded. This left Egyptian authorities with the responsibility of arranging tents outside airports and providing stranded travellers with food and accommodation at no cost (eTurboNews, 2011). While most countries were discouraging their citizens from travelling to Egypt, the UK only cautioned its citizens to avoid large cities.

Historically, the tourism industry is one of the largest sources of foreign revenue for Egypt and its tourism sector earned \$12 billion in 2010 (Yousef, 2011). Approximately 12 percent of Egypt's workforce is employed in the tourism sector (Dziadosz, 2009). Recent statistics suggest that more than 11 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is earned by the tourism sector, while the sector employs 2.5 million workers (eTurboNews, 2011). In the 1980s, Egypt hosted one million tourists and generated revenue of more than \$300 million. By 2000, the number of tourists had risen to 5.5 million with receipts topping \$4.5 billion (Weeks & Hetherington, 2006). It has also been estimated that more than 12.8 million tourists visited Egypt in 2008 and the estimated revenue was \$11 billion. A more recent report suggests that Egypt had 15 million tourists and earned estimated revenue of \$12 billion in 2010 (Florian, 2011). These high numbers, however, dropped radically when the revolution was launched in late January, 2011.

The WTO estimated that 14.1 million international tourists travelled to Egypt in 2010, contributing \$12.5 billion (WTO, 2011). However, this dropped by 45.3 percent in the first three months of 2011 because of the local unrest (Bly, 2011). The Egyptian Tourist Authority in New York reported that by the end of March 2011, US trips cancelled to Egypt could amount to a loss of \$50 million (Bly, 2011).

The revolution has also had a deep impact on Egypt's overall economy. Shahin and Zreik (2011) estimated that the travel and leisure industry faced a 54 percent decline in terms of revenue, a 100 percent effect on its operations and a 23 percent reduction in its prices.

The revolution caused reductions and cancellations in travel, hotel and cruise bookings (eTurboNews, 2011), resulting in an estimated loss of \$1 billion with an estimated one million tourists leaving the country for safety (eTurboNews, 2011). Another report suggested that in the last week of January, approximately 210 million tourists left Egypt, leading to a \$178 million reduction in tourist spending (Yousef, 2011).

In an official evaluation it was suggested that most tourists planning to travel to Egypt cancelled their February bookings (Yousef, 2011). Reports have suggested that the national economy has lost more than \$3.1 billion from tourism because of the revolution (Florian, 2011). The tourism sector incurred an estimated loss of \$825 million because of booking cancellations alone in February (Yousef, 2011).

Fleets were discontinued, while a severe reduction was seen in the number of Nile cruise ship bookings and foreign embassies scrambled to evacuate their nationalized citizens (eTurboNews, 2011). Occupancy rates declined considerably in hotels, especially along the Red Sea where, according to the Egyptian Hotel Association, occupancy rates dropped from 75 percent to 11 percent during the first days of the revolution.

New packages are still not being offered, while packages booked before the revolution have been postponed or cancelled (Florian, 2011). The chairman and CEO of Online Media Egypt said that in order to attract customers, hotels have dramatically reduced their prices (eTurboNews, 2011). Owing to the unrest, hotel construction projects in the Red Sea were halted temporarily due to supply and worker shortages.

5.2 Primary Research: Results from Direct Observation and Field Visits

The Egyptian Revolution has played a significant role in the steep decline in the nation's tourism industry. Several factors related to the unsettling political unrest, alarming increase in violent crimes and dramatic decrease in police presence has led to an unstable economy and has left tourists wondering if a visit to the nation's great attractions is worth the risk to their own personal safety. As a result, formerly popular tourist destinations have seen a devastating drop in the number of visitors and several tourist shops and restaurants have been forced out of business. Airlines and lodging cancellations, as well as the lack of new business in these areas, have made hospitality employees redundant and even forced the closure of many travel agencies. International media hype regarding protests and crime have proven to further intensify the fears felt by those

considering travel to Egypt, thus exacerbating the decline in tourism. The initial impact of cancellations and closings now combined with the safety concerns that have been heightened by the mass media deterring new visitors, has led to a dramatic and devastating decline in Egypt's tourism.

Tourist attractions deserted; No tourists in sight

In a nation rich with historical sites and wonders of the world, the lack of tourist activity resulting from the revolution is impossible to overlook. Popular attractions formerly crowded with tourists from around the world are essentially deserted and the millions of people depending on the income from these tourists felt the impact almost immediately. Souvenir shop owners and vendors along the base of the Great Pyramid and near King Tut's tomb who had once seen hundreds of tourists a day now only see a few tourists patronizing their shops. Unfortunately, these few customers have not been sufficient to keep these shop owners and vendors in business and many have been forced to close. While most of the attractions themselves have remained open for business, their attendance numbers have reduced by millions from previous years.

Flights and lodging reservations cancelled; Travel agencies struggled to survive

Consumed with fears surrounding the political unrest associated with the revolution, most tourists have cancelled their plans to visit Egypt. Countless international airlines have cancelled flights to Egypt and a significant number of travellers have cancelled their lodging reservations. Cancelled business and the lack of new business have forced travel agencies in the nation to suffer extreme financial hardships and most have been forced to close. Downsizing and closings in the industry have left thousands of Egyptians unemployed in businesses that were thriving prior to the revolution.

Restaurants and financial institutions closed

The steep decline in tourist activity in the nation has also impacted the business of several other related sectors. Restaurants that previously relied on the business of travellers have been forced to shut their doors as the rising food costs in the nation and steadily declining stream of customers has left restaurant owners with no other choice.

Banks in Egypt have also been forced to close, but for a significantly different reason. With the withdrawal of police forces from the streets of the nation and an increase in crime, bank owners no longer feel safe operating their businesses. As a result, most financial institutions have shut their doors. Over time, several banks have reopened, but only after the initial fear that stemmed from the unrest of the revolution had subsided.

Public outrage and acts of violence increased as police presence decreased

Many day-long mass demonstrations protesting against military rule and other injustices in the revolution have added to the fears of potential tourists. The political unrest and protests have led to several acts of violence, criminal activities and attacks on public and private properties. During the revolution, the numbers of police officers patrolling the streets have decreased by tens of thousands after their failed attempts to disperse peaceful protesters with tear gas and guns. Shortly after these attempts, several police stations were set on fire by protesters. Security across the nation quickly collapsed at this point and citizens began to illegally acquire firearms in order to protect themselves. Some police returned to work in the latter days of this traumatic uprising, but they have not been able to put an end to the security issues that plague the citizens and provoke fear in potential tourists. Security in the nation has continued to deteriorate while the streets show a steady increase in the amount of unlicensed guns for sale and in the manifestation of mob behaviour. With the reduced numbers of police, many of Egypt's citizens have been forced to resort to self-defence. With an unorganized, understaffed police force and a strongly armed, angry public sector, the current state of affairs in Egypt has continued to invoke fear in potential tourists who are opting to stay clear of the unrest to avoid these safety risks and concerns.

Media hype intensified the revolution's impact on tourism

Local and international mass media outlets have significantly contributed to the issues faced by Egypt's tourism industry by exaggerating the circumstances surrounding the revolution and the current state of affairs in the nation. The news about the region has primarily focused on the unstable political situation, mass demonstrations, acts of violence and lack of sufficient police protection. Understandably, this information has only served to increase fears and elevate safety concerns for those considering travel to the nation.

6. Proactive Steps to Boost the Tourism Industry in Egypt

As previously identified, Egypt experienced a dramatic decrease in tourist activity and tourism revenue immediately before and after the early days of the nation's 2011 revolution. Neumayer (2004) stated that tourist

arrivals are negatively impacted whenever politically motivated violent events, human rights violations, or other conflicts occur. He also added that, as a whole, fewer tourists travel to autocratic nations than democratic regimes, regardless of current political scenarios in the country. Among the various reasons tourists choose one destination above all others is the motivation to avoid travel anxiety caused by sociocultural risks and the fear of terrorism. Decisions to travel internationally are determined by travel anxiety levels and the level of perceived safety (Reisinger & Mavando, 2005).

However, a holistic approach to crisis management and proactive pre-crisis planning could not only restore new levels of safety to an area of potential violence, but could also protect and rebuild the image of safety by re-establishing the area's business functionality and attractiveness, aiding in the restoration of local travel and assisting those in the tourism industry in their economic recovery (Sonmez et al., 1999). Although only the Egyptian government has the information required to develop the specific action items for the recommendations presented here, it is evident that these issues must be addressed immediately in order to restore the tourism industry and stabilize the nation's economy.

Jarvis (2008) proposed a pragmatic model of "praxis-driven ontology" to analyze political risks. The model suggests that the establishment of a tourism venture, along with its business strategic plan, can be carefully drafted. For instance, in-depth knowledge of the country's political stability and civil unrest, which are classified as major risk drivers, can provide an idea of the risks in store for any tourism investment (Jarvis, 2008).

In addition to establishing a tourism crisis management task force and partnering with law enforcement officials, the government should draft a current crisis management plan and develop a crisis management guidebook (Sonmez et al., 1999). Only high-ranking officials in Egyptian tourism agencies are qualified to make these important decisions; however, there is a plethora of samples online, including several articles and academic research, from which they may gather relevant information and establish a foundation for their own plan and guidebook.

Economies that depend heavily on the tourism sector are always concerned with the impact of crises and disasters and therefore must develop strategies that can successfully protect the industry (Madininos & Vassiliadis, 2008). The early recovery of the tourism sector is not only necessary for the tourism sector itself, but is also necessary for the state of the entire economy. The longer it takes for tourism to recover, the longer it will take for the economy to recover in terms of foreign currency, GDP, inflation and employment.

A full recovery plan comprised of a partnership between the public and private sectors needs to be developed. Tourism sector analysts and experts could be invited to share their views on the steps that should be taken to restore Egyptian tourism to its original state. Policymakers would also be useful assets in the development of recovery strategies.

The Egyptian government could convince foreign embassies in Egypt that the political situation is gradually improving and offer extra protection to foreigners. Once this is established, tourists will likely return to Egypt and thus enable the tourism sector to experience early recovery.

Tourism companies could increase their promotion of diversified tourism packages both at home and abroad. They could also offer new and attractive packages at relatively lower prices to entice additional tourists. One of the major tourism attractions in Egypt is its historical and archaeological sites, the popularity of which has grown steadily in the past and is likely to continue to grow in the future. For example, the Nile cruise is an attractive and popular tourism attraction. Tourism along the Nile River and marine tourism, including diving activities along the coast of the Red Sea, symbolise the attractiveness of Egyptian tourism to foreigners (Rady, 2002). One of the major advantages that Egypt has is that its historical tourist attractions are not only unique, but are also located a significant distance from other similar sights elsewhere (Rady, 2002). Even though many tour operators have ceased their activities, tourism should not stop (Soueif, 2011). Hotels and airlines remain active and it is a simple task to book a ticket or search for hotels online. In addition, airlines and hotels are offering attractive deals to travellers (Soueif, 2011).

In this era of virtual communication, it is easy to share information from one place to another. With the aid of the internet and other digital applications, the government and private organizations could try to promote tourism online. Articles, reviews, or opinions from recent tourists could be published in online social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter.

A new form of tourism could be initiated that would not require the use of tour operators. Tourists could be encouraged to experience more independent travel adventures where they would make their own choices

regarding restaurants, taxis, shops and other attractions. Meanwhile, Egyptian locals could still provide any goods or services tourists require during their visit (Soueif, 2011).

Furthermore, it seems that there is a need for an effective destination management system in Egypt. As tourism is a core component of the Egyptian economy, the country should invest in further establishing this sector. Promoting tourism in any country is always a key strategy for increasing the influx of tourists. There is no doubt that a destination management system is required to better manage the tourist experience in Egypt.

Several steps are involved in establishing a destination management system for the tourism industry. Ritchie and Ritchie (2002) designed a detailed framework for a destination management system in the Alberta province in Canada that provides a comprehensive method for establishing the relationship between different phases of tourism marketing development. The framework they provided includes the following three key steps:

- *Information Needs Assessment* – Research and data gathering tools are developed and implemented to review, assess, prioritize and define the needs of the tourism industry.
- *Inventory of Information Sources* – Relevant data and information related to different tourism destinations is compiled.
- *Specification of Key Research Tasks* – Current situation is tracked, travel motivators are measured, competitive marketing intelligence is gathered, new opportunities are recognized, industry satisfaction is monitored and return on investment is measured.

Another important component for a destination management system is its scope for development; however, this is not possible if other crucial aspects are not considered. Cooper (2006) identified “Knowledge Management” as an important indicator of successful destination management systems. Knowledge management refers to the update of information in stages two and three of the model provided by Ritchie and Ritchie (2002). The management of the most relevant and up-to-date information can then provide the grounds for updating the destination management system according to the current needs (Rimmington & Kozak, 1999).

Although the Egyptian government faces many challenges in overcoming the problems posed by the revolution, with careful and thoughtful implementation of the recommendations presented here, there is also an undeniable potential to reinvigorate the tourism industry and the economy as a whole. The government must first gather the relevant information, perform a thorough analysis and establish a tourism crisis management team to evaluate the data and implement a recovery plan. By making significant efforts to solidify the nation’s image as a safe destination and market new promotions to entice visitors with savings and incentives, Egypt can begin to experience a boost in tourism. After taking the time to develop an effective destination management system, Egypt could be well on its way to economic recovery. Only the nation’s officials have the intimate knowledge required to develop the specific details of these recovery plans, but it is certain that swift, effective implementation of these recommendations is needed in order to ensure that Egypt’s tourism industry can once again be profitable.

7. Conclusion

The negative impact of the Egyptian Revolution on the tourism industry and overall economy of the nation is overwhelmingly clear. The effects have extended significantly beyond the original airline and lodging cancellations that transpired around the time of the initial uprising. Tourists have been avoiding Egypt due to their fears regarding the instability, heightened crime rates and lack of adequate police protection as broadcasted by most of the major international media services. In a nation that has relied on a steady, significant income from a tourism industry that once flourished, the revolution has been devastating to the nation’s economy. The impact on the economy has been felt by all of the citizens in the country, many of whom have found themselves unemployed. There is no denying that the Egyptian Revolution has played a significant role in the nation’s faltering tourism industry. In order for the country to recover from the tragic results, must strive to strengthen and increase police protection and reduce the crime and unstable environment that has prevented international tourists from considering Egypt as a safe destination for their travels.

Although political instability and unrest in Egypt currently has a strong, negative impact on the nation’s tourism industry, this situation does not need to persist. Egypt’s tourist attractions are so interwoven with history and archaeological significance, it is unlikely that foreign visitors will continue to resist them, provided they will eventually be able to visit Egypt and experience a safe environment.

While Egypt’s tourism sector critically relies on tourists, it also plays a considerable role in national and international politics. If Egypt can provide a safe environment for visitors, increasingly more foreigners will want to visit the country. This would not only strengthen the relationship between the tourists’ home countries

and Egypt, but could financially enhance businesses in Egypt that will be the recipients of money spent by tourists.

Political stability and peace are key components for both local and international tourism. Tourism plays an important role in international relations because it involves the flow of foreigners from one country to another. Agreements between nations can lead to promotion and activation of tourism.

However, the most important factors are the promotion of safety for tourists and convincing those tourists that they will be travelling in an area free of all anxiety. While this may not be an easy task, it is achievable.

In this paper, suggestions have been made of many ways in which the Egyptian government could be proactive and help defray political unrest in the future. This is the ideal time to collect critical data to make informed choices about the best avenues to follow in protecting tourists and the Egyptian people. The major recommendations can be summarised as: 1) establishing a tourism crisis management task force; 2) partnering with law enforcement officials; 3) drafting a current crisis management plan; and 4) developing a crisis management guidebook.

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