

Visitor Safety and Security in Barbados: Stakeholder Perceptions

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Abstract

■ Is information about the nature, location and incidence of crimes against tourists/visitors sufficient to develop meaningful visitor safety and security policy? Are the views of key tourism stakeholder groups useful in informing and enhancing visitor safety and security policy? To answer these questions, this study analyzes 24 years of recorded crime data against visitors to Barbados and survey data of key tourism stakeholder groups and concludes: 1) that information about the nature, location and incidence of crimes against visitors is necessary but not sufficient to inform visitor safety and security policy; and 2) that the views and input of key stakeholders are essential if destinations are to become more effective in enhancing visitor safety and security.

Key words: stakeholder, safety, security, crime

Resumen

■ ¿Es suficiente la información sobre la naturaleza, la ubicación y la incidencia de delitos contra los turistas/visitantes para desarrollar una política significativa de seguridad de los visitantes? ¿Las opiniones de los principales grupos interesados (los stakeholders) en el turismo son de utilidad para mejorar la política de seguridad de los visitantes y la sensación de seguridad? Para responder a estas preguntas, este estudio analiza 24 años de datos de delitos registrados cometidos contra los visitantes de Barbados y los datos de investigación de grupos de actores clave del turismo, y concluye: 1) que la información sobre la naturaleza, localización y la incidencia de los delitos contra los visitantes es necesario pero no suficiente para influir la política de seguridad de los visitantes, y 2) que las opiniones y aportaciones de las principales partes interesadas son esenciales para que los destinos serán más eficaces en la mejora de seguridad de los visitantes.

Palabras clave: stakeholder, actores clave, seguridad, delincuencia

Introduction

■ Sapphire water, white-sand beaches, and an easy-going attitude are just a few of the Caribbean's attractions. And with so many destinations to choose from, you're sure to find the spot that's perfect for you!" Expedia.com's webpage, which carried this advertisement during January 2006, makes no mention of safety and security despite the conventional wisdom that 1) very few tourism destinations are immune to crime and other forms of victimization; and 2) traveler perceptions of safety and security at tourism destinations strongly influence traveler choice. This webpage also insinuates that lax rules conduce to excessive (binge) drinking (Sönmez, Apostolopoulos, Yu, Yang, Mattila, & Yu, 2006) and experimentation with marijuana and other

illicit substances.

Indeed, Caribbean destinations have come under international microscope in recent years following a number of incidents involving both stay over and cruise ship visitors. Extensive media coverage has been given to the 2005 disappearance of American teenager, Natalee Holloway, while on vacation in Aruba, which is considered one of the safest Caribbean destinations. And back on 27 May 2000, New York travel writer, Claudia Kirschhoch, disappeared without a trace while in Jamaica. From both a scholarly and a policy perspective, therefore, understanding this issue of visitor safety and security is important given the increasingly

prominent role that tourism plays as a development strategy for many tourism destinations, generally, and the Caribbean, in particular. It is also an important area of inquiry given the new reality that tourists/visitors not only expect safety and security but demand it.

Understanding the nature and incidence of tourist/visitor victimization in a way that helps to inform visitor safety and security programs and policies depends in large measure on the availability of reliable statistical data. However, because such data remain largely unavailable (Albuquerque & McElroy 2001; 1999), there have been few studies on visitor safety and security, in general, and crimes against tourists, in particular, that be can used for comparative purposes (Schiebler, Crotts, & Hollinger, 1996: 38). Moreover, getting key tourism stakeholders, including governments, tourism development and marketing professionals, and other tourism service providers to discuss the issue of visitor safety and security, remains extremely challenging.

These challenges, notwithstanding, the issue of visitor safety and security will remain a subject of scholarly enquiry given the potential for tourism destinations to become the focal points for political crimes as well as crimes of opportunity. The practical implications make this issue an important one for governments and tourism policy makers as well. Given these factors, two central questions are probed in this analysis: 1) is information about the nature, location and incidence of crimes against tourists/visitors sufficient to develop meaningful policy measures to improve the visitor safety and security quotient at a tourism destination? And 2) to what extent are the views of key stakeholders useful in informing and influencing visitor safety and security policy?

With regard to the first question, the argument is that recorded data on the nature, location and incidence of crimes against tourists/visitors are necessary for meaningful policy development. Policy makers can examine these data and allocate resources accordingly. However, these data are not in themselves necessary and sufficient for policy formulation. Moreover, the literature on crime consistently points out that all crime victims do not usually report that they have been victimized. Consequently, recorded data almost always understate crime rates. Furthermore, understanding the types of crime does not necessarily imply an understanding the reasons for or the perpetrators of these crimes.

Secondly, because certain stakeholders interact more closely with tourists/visitors than most residents in a community, they are in a position to have greater access to information about tourist/visitor victimization than the police. For example, tourists/visitors often mention and stakeholders, including taxi drivers, tour operators, travel agents, hotel and guest house managers, often commiserate with these victims. Therefore, with regard to the second question, many key stakeholders are well

positioned to garner and provide policy makers with useful insights into the nature and levels of tourist/visitor victimization. Stakeholder perspectives are useful on another level as well. These individuals and groups operate at different junctures in the tourist/visitor experience and tend to have a narrow, self-interested perspective on the role and importance of each stakeholder group in the entire tourism enterprise. Self-interest may lead one group to criticize the behavior and attitude of other(s) especially if the one suspects that such attitude/behavior might be undermining its pecuniary interest in the sector.

Fieldwork conducted for this study reveals a high level of ignorance, misperception, mistrust and suspicion among all categories of stakeholders together. Such dissonance is due in part to the absence of a holistic knowledge of the relevance and importance of the industry to the community at large. These characteristics can lead to behaviors that prove injurious to the industry as a whole without the perpetrator group perceiving the broader impact and implication of its infraction. To mitigate this problem, policy makers must institute public education programs that promote comprehensive stakeholder group knowledge of the role that each plays in the tourism sector, and awareness that all form part of a network of actors responsible for developing, sustaining, and securing the sector.

What the foregoing suggests is that an assessment of the level of visitor safety and security in the Caribbean is useful to different publics, and to the industry as a whole, for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, the following: 1) the type of sales pitch that one finds on *Expedia.com*, among other advertisers and promoters of Caribbean tourism that contributes to the perceived homogeneity of the region in the minds of many travelers despite the wide range of destinations and products offered; and 2) the implied safety and security of tourists/visitors to the region that flies in the face of the vast amount of publicity given to the disappearance of Natalee Holloway as well as several other highly publicized disappearances of both stay over and cruise ship tourists/visitors to the Caribbean since 2000.

But destinations across the world, including the Caribbean, tend not to make statistics on tourist/visitor victimization available largely out of concern that publicizing such data can only create negative perceptions of the destination and, thereby, lead to reductions in tourist/visitor arrivals. Consequently, there is a paucity of reliable data on the region. Barbados, however, is one of the few countries in the world that collects and publishes tourist/visitor victimization data, and will be the focus of this analysis.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is threefold. First, to analyze the types and incidence of reported crimes against tourists/visitors to Barbados over the 24 years from 1980-2003; second, to analyze the survey data of tourism stakeholders to ascertain their perspectives on

the contribution that stakeholder groups wittingly or unwittingly make to the enhancement or undermining of visitor safety and security in Barbados; and third, to offer some policy recommendations for enhancing

visitor safety and security in Barbados. This analysis and its findings will have implications for other Caribbean countries due to their high degree of dependence on tourism.

The Safety and Security Context

■ The world has witnessed significant levels of increase in the volume of traffic and diversity of destinations that support travel, especially leisure travel, over the past 25 years. The Caribbean, which provides a wide range of tourism destinations “that are as interesting and as diverse as another region in the world, complemented by a favorable climate, areas of exceptional beauty, and diverse cultures” (Mather & Todd, 1997), accounts for a significant proportion of this volume of tourism traffic.

Of thirteen regions estimated by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the Caribbean ranks 13th globally in absolute size but first in relative contribution to regional economies (As defined in this analysis, the Caribbean comprises the following countries and territories: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines,

Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands and US Virgin Islands). Total travel and tourism demand for 2007 is projected at \$56.1 billion (0.8 per cent of global demand), which translates into 16.5 per cent of GDP and 2,447,000 jobs (14.8 per cent of total employment). Projected growth for 2007 is 3 per cent and 3.3 per cent in real terms from 2008-2017 (<http://www.wttc.org>),

Put differently, the Caribbean is regarded as the most tourism dependent region in the world where the sector accounts for approximately 25 per cent of all exports and services; contributes 31 per cent to the region’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP); is the region’s primary generator of foreign exchange; provides the largest number of jobs; and has the greatest growth potential (Nurse, 2002). In the case of Barbados, specifically, the industry generated \$494m in revenues or \$1,880.47 per capita in 1990. A decade later, tourism revenues had grown by 46.4 per cent to \$723m or \$2,633.90 per capita. And by 2003, revenues had grown to \$758m or \$2,733.50 per capita, representing an increase of 4.8 per cent over 2000 (see Table 1).

Table I: Barbados Tourists/Visitors and Tourism Revenues

Year	Tourists/Visitors (000)	Population (000)	Tourism Revenues (US\$m)	Tourism Revenues Per Capita
1990	794.7	262.7	494.0	1,880.47
1995	926.8	255.8	622.0	2,431.59
2000	1,077.0	274.5	723.0	2,633.90
2001	1,034.7	275.3	658.0	2,390.11
2002	1,027.2	276.6	648.0	2,342.73
2003	1,090.3	277.3	758.0	2,733.50

* Includes Cruise Tourists. Average length of visit per stay over visitor: 6.6-7.6 days.

* Source: Barbados Ministry of Tourism Annual Tourism Statistical Digest.

But as the number of destinations and the volume of traffic have grown worldwide, so have the number of incidents of crime and other forms of victimization of tourists at these destinations. The disappearance of Natalee Holloway and the subsequent international media coverage not only underscored that concern but brought to public attention the long-known fact among tourism scholars—that everyday someone is victimized at a tourism destination somewhere in the world (Pizam & Mansfield, 1996).

In a number of Caribbean tourism destination, such as the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and

Tobago, for example, some of this crime takes place against a backdrop of rising crime rates against locals. Growing unemployment, coupled with other economic woes, contributed to a number of muggings and drug-related violence to some formerly calm destinations in the region. To complicate matters, victims frequently complain that local police are slow to respond and/or do not thoroughly investigate the crimes. The insinuation is that a large percentage of criminal cases are left unresolved, including the Holloway case and that of the travel writer who went missing in Jamaica. But, according to the Miami Herald, of the millions of Americans who traveled abroad in 2004, the US State

Department listed some 2,000 as missing (Miami Herald.com 25 July 2005). However, when crimes against tourists/visitors receive the types of media coverage as the Holloway case, governments and other key stakeholders in the travel and hospitality industry are forced to allocate scarce resources to convince tourists/

visitors that the destinations in which the victimization occurred are indeed safe. But as Crystal (1993) argues, such sensational reporting has the tendency to take a relatively few crime incidents against tourists and create the impression that a particular destination holds a high level of risk for travelers.

Understanding Visitor Safety and Security

■ A significant body investigating the relationship between tourism and crime has emerged over the past 25 years. This body of work can be grouped into six broad areas: 1) tourist areas as areas of high crime; 2) tourists as victims; 3) tourists as offenders; 4) tourism generating higher levels of deviant or illegal activity; 5) terrorism and tourism; and 6) policy responses to tourism and crime (Brunt, Mawby, & Hambly, 2000: 417-424).

This variety of themes notwithstanding, a major criticism holds that research into this phenomenon of tourism and crime “has not been undertaken in a particularly systematic manner and individual studies vary in their focus, the extent to which they can be replicated, and the sagacity of research methods” (Brunt et al.). To address these criticisms George (2003), for example, investigated tourists’ perceptions of safety and security while visiting Cape Town, South Africa; Brunt et al. (2000a) analyzed tourist victimization and the fear of crime on holiday; and Brunt et al. (2000b) investigated the extent to which British holidaymakers were fearful of crime. With regard to the Caribbean, which will be the focus of this enquiry, Albuquerque and McElroy (1999) speak to the failure of previous research on tourism and crime in the Caribbean to discriminate between crimes against tourists/visitors and crimes against residents.

Collectively, these studies underscore a number of challenges inherent in conducting research into tourist/visitor safety and security, including: being able to generate representative samples; the timing factor—whether the respondents were just beginning their vacation, were in the middle of it, or had already completed it; whether the respondent was the actual victim or another family member; the respondent’s prior experience with crime; the destination’s image as portrayed in the news media about the level of crime;

perceptions about police effectiveness at the destination; and the individual tourist’s risk fear/portfolio.

While the tourist/visitor perspective on safety and security is important to informing policy, the perspective of key stakeholders is equally important due to the vested interest that these publics necessarily have in the viability of the tourism industry. A number of studies have investigated the attitudes and perspectives of hosts to the social and economic impacts of tourism. King, Pizam, and Milman (1993), for example, analyzed the perceptions of the residents of Nadi, Fiji, on the social impacts of tourism and concluded that residents were able to differentiate between the social and economic costs of tourism expansion. From their analysis of households on the Greek island of Samos, Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) concluded that despite a number of the industry’s negatives, including crime, vandalism, drug addiction and sexual harassment, respondents who were economically dependent on tourism evinced more positive attitudes towards the industry than those who were not dependent on it. Lindberg and Johnson (1997) argued that the strength of the value that a community places on economic gain is a stronger predictor of attitudes toward tourism than do values regarding disruption in that community. Economic and congestion impacts affect attitudes more strongly than the perceived impacts of crime and aesthetics.

While the perspective of households is clearly useful in informing tourism policy, especially visitor safety and security programs, the perspective of stakeholders as a category of enquiry is likely to provide even greater insights into the issue of crime against tourists/visitors, specifically, and visitor safety and security, generally. However, this perspective is missing from the literature. It is the goal of this project, therefore, to attempt to fill this gap.

Key Stakeholders

■ Tourism stakeholders consist of a variety of public, private and nongovernmental groups, who possess a vested (including pecuniary) interest in ensuring that the “right image” of the destination is cultivated and

maintained. Key stakeholders are also the individuals who interact very closely with tourists/visitors and, consequently, are strategically positioned within the industry to have an impact on the experience of the

tourist/visitor in terms of what they do or don't do; say or don't say; and the way they behave or misbehave. An understanding of the Barbados' tourism organizational structure provides insights into who the key stakeholders are and the role they play in the industry.

Barbados' tourism industry is managed by a combination of public, private and non-governmental organizations. The Barbados Ministry of Tourism (BMOT) is the principal public sector agency and is responsible for policy formulation and plan development, conducting research and facilitating and monitoring of product development activities. There is also the Barbados Tourism Authority (BTA), a parastatal, which falls under the BMOT, is responsible for tourism marketing; the Barbados Tourism Advisory Council (BTAC), an advisory body comprising public, private, nongovernmental organizations and individuals, who advises the Minister on any tourism or related matter which it deems fit as well as undertakes specific assignments given by the Minister; and the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTI), a limited liability company with the Government as its sole shareholder, which is responsible for tourism investment promotion and development in Barbados. Additionally, the following entities complement the management of the industry in Barbados: the Needhams Point Development Inc.; the Barbados Conference Services Ltd (BCSL); the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), a trade organization representing the interests of the industry; and the Barbados Tourism Development Corporation (BTDA), a non-profit organization funded entirely by private sector companies and sponsors; the Barbados National Trust; and the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. These frontline individuals are among the most important stewards of the industry. Consequently, their perspectives can be informative to our understanding of security challenges confronting the industry and the policies that might be implemented to maintain destination appeal.

Research Design and Methodology

■ Like other Caribbean countries, the BMOT, which develops and implements tourism policy, works closely with two private sector organizations—the BTIC and the BTA—whose membership includes, among other service entities, travel agents, tour operators, tour guide associations, and taxi associations. Because of the strongly supportive and interrelated role that the BMOT plays, BTA and BTIC members are registered with the BMOT, including making themselves accessible by email. Registering with the BMOT has its rewards because these entities are able to have a voice in tourism policy as well as are regularly invited to participate in various tourism development/enhancement programs, workshops, and seminars. The BMOT, therefore, played a central role in facilitating the data collection.

This study identified the following personnel/groupings as also among the key stakeholders in the tourism industry uniquely positioned to interact with and impact upon the tourist/visitor experience in Barbados (and at other Caribbean destinations). Included are: airline personnel, customs and immigration officers, sky caps, taxi, shuttle and limousine drivers, hotel desk clerks, concierges and bell hops and porters, travel agents, tour operators, tour guides, bartenders and wait staff at hotels, restaurants and bars, police and private security personnel, hair braiders, craft sellers and other service personnel, representatives of tourism organizations, government personnel, and the general public.

The importance of key stakeholder perspective is essential given that while all stakeholders agree on the pecuniary benefits of tourism, these different publics differ on the level of impact it should have on the locality. For example, while environmentalists, archaeologists and ecologists welcome tourism, they oppose the impact of the waste—human, product and oil—generated and discharged by the huge luxury liners, too many feet and bodies that often degrade and destroy archaeological sites and artifacts; and environmentalists remain concerned about the impact on the ecology at eco-tourism sites. Immigration and customs officers, sky caps, taxi drivers, tour guides, craft sellers, police officers, private security guards, and numerous other service providers often have a narrow and limited understanding of the importance of tourism to the economy, and often misunderstand the role that each plays. The absence of a holistic perspective on the importance and impact of the tourism industry has led to combative and conflictive rather than cooperative, collaborative, and coordinated relationships between and among these stakeholders. These differential attitudes play a critical role in the perception of safety and security at tourism destinations.

A survey instrument was developed and the BMOT was asked and agreed to send an electronic copy to each member organization. Usually, the message was sent to the president of the service provider organization. The statistical department of the BMOT administered this survey between July 13th 2003 and August 15th 2003. Although delivered electronically, the survey instrument was a self-administered, two-part questionnaire. The first part sought to ascertain the respondent group's opinion on the nature and extent of crime in the country and the nature and extent of crime against tourists in the country, while the second part sought to ascertain similar responses regarding the issue of harassment of tourists/visitors to the country. The respondent group was asked to identify its service area so that its perspective on offenders could be clearly determined.

The survey consisted generally of questions concerning the identity of the respondent group; questions regarding the respondent group’s perspective on whether or not the stakeholder group perceived the country to have a crime problem as well as a problem with harassment of tourists/visitors; questions regarding the level of seriousness of the problems of crime and harassment; questions regarding whether or not tourists/visitors had reported that they had been victims of crime and/or harassment over the past five years and, if so, the number of reports they received; questions regarding the types of crime and the types of harassment reported; the name of the offending group—tour guide, taxi driver, hair braider, craft seller, etc.; questions regarding any action that the responding group took;

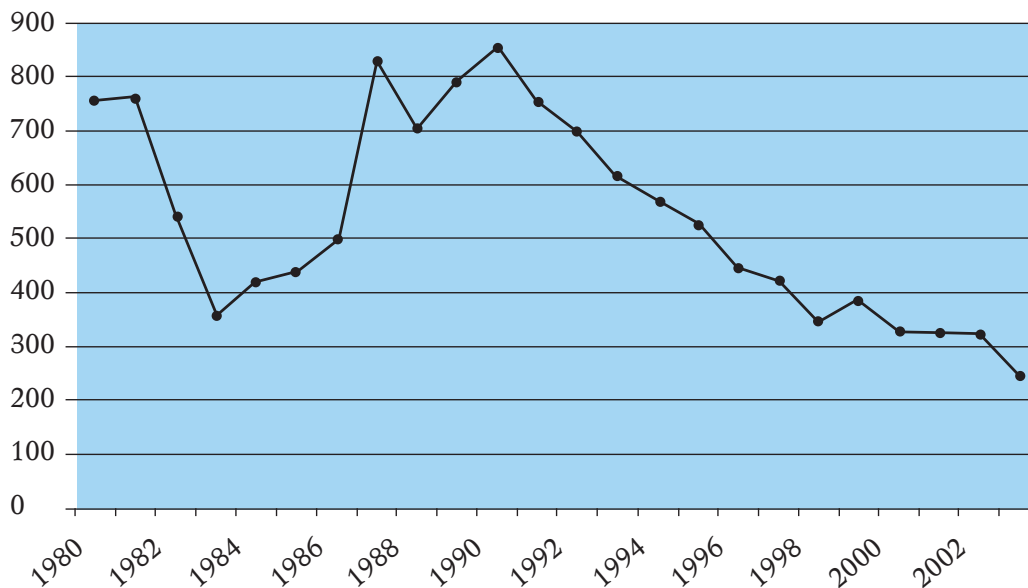
questions regarding responding group’s awareness of any legislation regarding crime and harassment of tourists/visitors; questions regarding responding group’s perception of the effectiveness of such legislation; 10-point scale questions regarding responding group’s perception of level of concern exhibited by public officials about crime and harassment in the country; 10-point scale questions regarding responding group’s perception of level of concern exhibited by the general public officials about crime and harassment in the country; and questions regarding responding group’s recommendation of action that is likely to reduce the incidence of crime and harassment in the country.

Analysis of Crimes Against Tourists/Visitors To Barbados

■ The incidence of crime against tourists/visitors to Barbados over the 24 years from 1980-2003 as displayed in Chart I reflects a triple-peaked distribution involving the years 1980-1981; 1987 and 1990. While the number of reported crimes between 1980-81 registered an increase of approximately 1 per cent from 751-758 incidents, they declined by approximately 32 per cent from 758 incidents to 352 incidents between 1981 and 1983. The number of recorded incidents then jumped 15.3 per cent to 416 in 1984, and continued to increase at an average annual rate of 25 per cent through 1987

when a total of 821 crimes were reported. The numbers of incidents dropped by 120 (15 per cent) between 1987 and 1988 only to increase to 787 in 1989 and finally peaking at 849 in 1990, thereby reflecting an annual rate of increase of 10.1 per cent during this period. From a peak recording of 821 incidents in 1990, the annual number of recorded incidents declined at an average rate of 7.3 per cent between 1990 and 2003. Except for two brief reversals in 1998-99 and 2000-01, the number of recorded incidents of crimes against tourists/visitors reflected a monotonic decline.

Chart 1. Barbados Tourism Crime 1980-2003



When the data are examined by category, they reveal that burglaries account for almost one-half (48 per cent) of all crimes committed against tourists/visitors. However, rather striking is the fact that 99 per cent of all burglaries occurred against guests in hotels and/or guest houses. The pattern of burglaries against tourists/visitors is almost a mirror image of the overall pattern of

crime against tourists/visitors over the 24-year period. The data also indicate that thefts account for 35 per cent of all crimes against tourists/visitors over the period 1980-2003. The distribution of this type of crime reflected 28 per cent against the person; 28 per cent theft from beaches; while miscellaneous theft account for the rest. Eleven per cent of all crimes were robberies

and assault with intent to rob, with 95.8 per cent being robberies. Less than 1 per cent of all crimes against tourists/visitors from 1980-2003 were sex assaults. Nonetheless, these are crimes of a very violent and personal nature that can cause long-term trauma, and that are highly unlikely to engender positive memories

about the country. This means that no matter how few sexual assaults were recorded, they still are too many. Finally, approximately 2 per cent of all crimes against tourists/visitors were considered major crimes, including murder and wounding (major and minor).

Chart 2: Distribution of Tourist / Visitor Crime 1980-2003

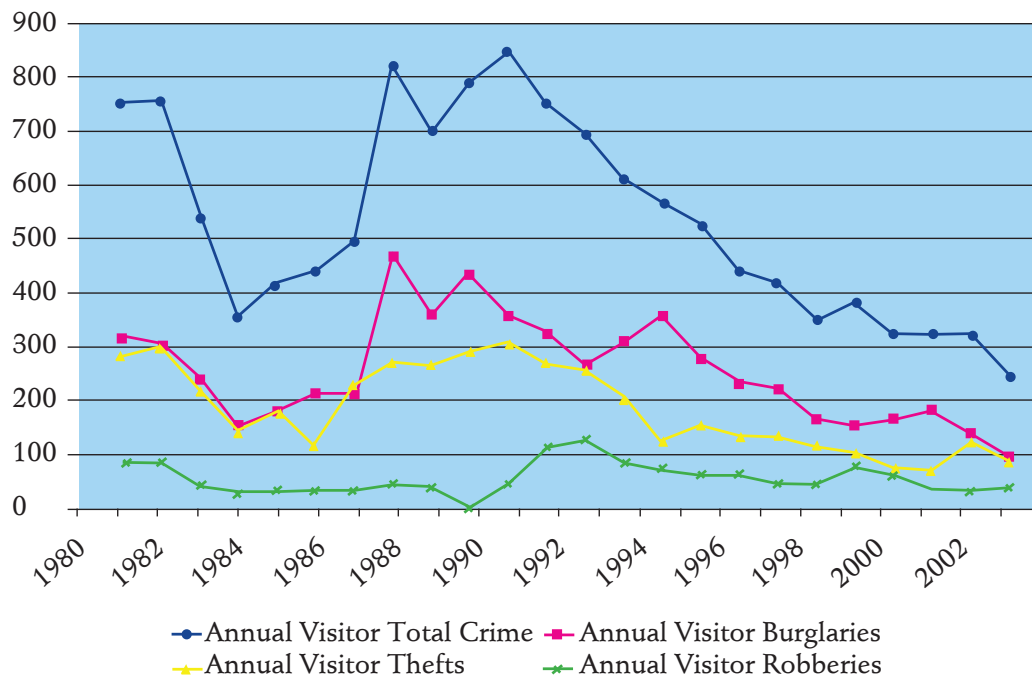
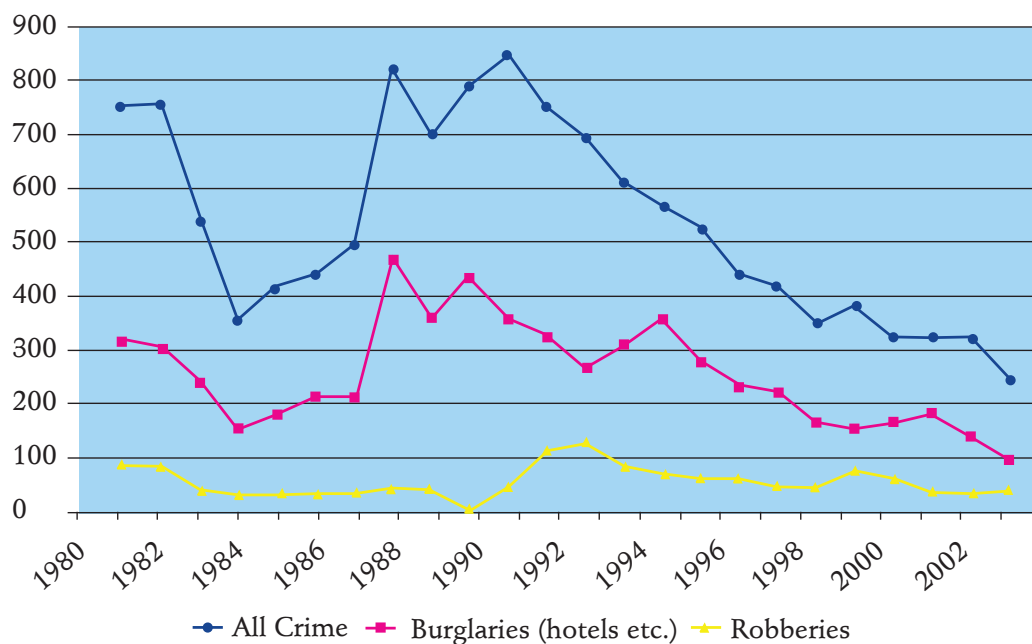


Chart 3: Recorded Burglaries of Tourists/Visitors Barbados 1980-2003



In sum, over the period under survey:

- Burglaries from hotels account for about 48 per cent of all crime against tourists/visitors;
- Burglaries from hotels account for approximately 99 per cent of all burglaries against tourists/visitors;
- Theft account for 34.7 per cent of all crimes against tourists/visitors;
- Theft from the person account for 28 per cent of all thefts against tourists/visitors;
- Thefts from beaches account for 28 per cent of all thefts against tourists/visitors;
- Miscellaneous thefts account for 41 per cent of all thefts against tourists/visitors;
- Approximately 2 per cent of all crimes against tourists/visitors were major crimes, including murder and wounding (major and minor);
- Less than 1 per cent of all crimes (0.8 per cent) were sex-related crimes.

The data in Table II put the tourist/visitor victimization picture in greater perspective. They indicate that the

number of recorded crimes per 100,000 tourists/visitors has been declining from a high of 106.8 in 1990 to 22.4 in 2003, with some small reversals in 2001 and 2002. The data also suggest that the likelihood of a tourist/visitor to Barbados will become a victim of crime on a given day is very low, with the probabilities decreasing significantly since 1990. This indicator was determined by calculating the number of tourist/visitor days spent in the country per year. Cruise ship visitors spent one day per visitor, while the length of time spent by stay over visitors ranged from two days to 182 days reflecting an average length of stay that ranged from 6.6 days to 7.6 days between 1990 and 2003 (See Table 2).

But since recorded data typically understate the incidence of crime against tourists/visitors, and since recorded data do not necessarily provide information about the perpetrators of these crimes, policy responses may be less than effective given that policy decisions may be made based on less than complete information. Therefore, the perspectives of key stakeholders may lead to more informed policy decisions.

Table 2: Incidence and Likelihood of Tourist/Visitor Victimization in Barbados

Year	Tourists/Visitors Days* (000)	Crimes Against Tourist/Visitors	Crimes/100,000 Tourists/Visitors	Prob. of Being Crime Victim
1990	3,552.6	849	106.8	0.00024
1995	3,791.6	379	48.9	0.00010
2000	4,509.6	323	29.9	0.00007
2001	4,178.7	324	31.3	0.00008
2002	3,859.2	321	31.3	0.00008
2003	4,398.2	244	22.4	0.00006

* Includes Cruise Tourists. Average length of visit per stay over visitor: 6.6-7.6 days. Source: Barbados Ministry of Tourism and the Caribbean Tourism Organization.

Discussion and Findings of Stakeholder Survey

■ The membership database of the Barbados Ministry of Tourism was used to generate a random and representative sample of population of 90 to whom surveys were sent electronically with a cover letter discussing the purposes of the survey. Survey instruments were sent to 30 hotels, 10 travel agencies, 10 tour operators, 10 taxicab companies, 5 government representatives, 3 private security services, and 22 “other service” providers, including, among others, restaurants, pubs, museums, parks, duty free and shops. A total of 78 responses were returned reflecting a response rate of 87 per cent. This is an unsurprising response rate given that Barbados operates on the principle that “Barbados is Tourism” and given that the Ministry of Tourism

regularly conducts seminars, workshops and other types of training sessions for the stakeholders, who regularly participate.

When asked if they thought that crime against tourists/visitors to Barbados is a problem 74.4 per cent (58) of respondents indicated that crime against tourists/visitors to Barbados is a problem while 24.4 per cent (16) disagreed; and the remaining 1.2 per cent (1) gave no response to this question. As shown in Table 3, the following percentages of stakeholders indicate that they think that crime against tourists/visitors to Barbados is a problem: hoteliers (76.2 per cent); security service personnel (75 per cent); travel agency

representatives (100 per cent); tour operators (100 per cent); government representatives (100 per cent); miscellaneous other service providers (70.4 per cent); and various unidentified respondents (88.9 per cent).

The surprise is that fewer taxi services/operators/drivers think that crime against tourists/visitors is a problem (44.4 per cent) than those who do not think that it is a problem (55.6 per cent).

Table 3: Perceptions of Crime Problem Against Tourists/Visitors

Stakeholder Groups	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Response (%)
Hotels	76.2	23.8	0.0
Security Service	75.0	25.0	0.0
Travel Agency	100.0	0.0	0.0
Tour Operator	100.0	0.0	0.0
Government Representative	100.0	0.0	0.0
Taxi	44.4	55.6	0.0
Other Service	70.4	25.9	3.7
Unidentified Respondent	88.9	11.1	0.0

Regarding the level of seriousness of crime against tourists/visitors to Barbados, different perceptions exist among stakeholders regarding the level of seriousness of the issue of crime against tourists/visitors despite the overwhelming percentage who think that crime against tourists/visitors is a problem. Whereas only 21 per cent of respondents think that the problem is not serious,

approximately 75 per cent of respondents expressed, to varying degrees, that crime against tourists/visitors is a problem. Specifically, 15 per cent think that it is very serious; 33 per cent think that it is serious; while 26.9 per cent think that it is somewhat serious. The remaining 2.6 per cent gave no response to this question (See Table 4).

Table 4: Perceptions of Seriousness of Crime Against Tourists/Visitors

Perceptions of Crime	Percentage
Very Serious	15.0
Serious	33.0
Somewhat Serious	26.9
Not Serious	21.0
No Response	2.6

The disaggregated data indicate that the views of most stakeholders fall between the “very serious” and “not serious” range. Approximately 67 per cent of hoteliers, 100 per cent of private security service providers; 100

per cent of travel agency operators; 100 per cent of tour operators; and approximately 63 per cent of “other service providers” think that the problem is either somewhat serious or serious (See Table 5).

Table 5: Perceptions of Seriousness of Crime Against Tourists/Visitors

	Very Serious %	Serious %	Somewhat Serious	Not Serious	No Response
Hotels	14.3	52.4	14.3	19.0	0.0
Security Service	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
Travel Agency	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
Tour Operator	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
Government Rep	100.00	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Taxi	22.2	11.1	11.1	55.6	0.0
Other Service	11.1	37.0	25.9	18.5	7.4
Unidentified Respondent	22.2	0.0	44.5	22.2	11.1

As mentioned above, 14.3 per cent of hoteliers think that it is a very serious problem while 52.8 per cent think that it is a serious problem, 14.3 per cent think that it is somewhat serious, and 19 per cent do not think that it is a problem at all. However, when these views are considered in light of the fact that burglaries constitute approximately one-half of all recorded crimes against tourists/visitors from 1980-2003, and that burglaries in hotels and guest houses account 99 per cent of all burglaries against tourists/visitors, it would appear that only about 20 per cent of hotel/guest houses provide their guests with a very high degree of security.

Stakeholders also indicated in their responses that tourists/visitors to Barbados are most frequently

victims of the following types of crime: theft of jewelry (33 per cent); theft of money (29.5 per cent); armed assault (10 per cent); armed robbery 3.9 per cent; and miscellaneous other types of crime (10.3). And regarding the general level of concern of public officials about crime against tourists/visitors to Barbados, 57.7 per cent of stakeholders think that they are quite concerned as opposed to 37.2 who think otherwise. The perceptions are similar regarding the general public's concern about the level of crime in the country: 56.4 per cent think that the public is quite concerned while 35.9 per cent think otherwise.

Conclusion

■ Rather than focus on the perceptions of tourists/visitors to assess the level of visitor safety and security at a tourism destination, this analysis examined visitor safety and security from the perspective of the stakeholders, who provide the tourism product and who, necessarily, have a vested interest in the sustainability of the sector. To what extent are stakeholder attitudes, behaviors and roles contributing to the enhancement or erosion of visitor safety and security? This stakeholder-specific study has determined that there is wide variability in the perceptions among tourism stakeholders of level of seriousness of crimes against tourists/visitors to Barbados, specifically, and the level of visitor safety and security, generally. This variability in perceptions is due in part to the absence of a holistic understanding of

the role, structure and function of the tourism industry. Consequently, rather than seeing themselves as integral parts of a network that come together to create the tourism product, each stakeholder group tends to focus rather narrowly on its own service provision area. In so doing, rather than cooperate to ensure that a sustainable product is developed, each not only competes with the other but also tends to view the other with suspicion borne largely by ignorance of the complex functioning of the sector. As a result, some of the activities of particular groups hurt rather than aid in product development. What is called for, therefore, is greater public education, especially among key stakeholders to ensure that a more holistic and interdependent understanding and approach to tourism development is pursued.

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