



TOURISM SECURITY-SAFETY AND  
POST CONFLICT DESTINATIONS

# BATTLEFIELD TOURISM

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# **Battlefield Tourism**

# TOURISM SECURITY-SAFETY AND POST CONFLICT DESTINATIONS

**Series editors: Maximiliano E. Korstanje and Hugues Seraphin**

Since the turn of the century, the international rules surrounding security and safety have significantly changed, specifically within the tourism industry. In the age of globalization, terrorism and conflict have moved beyond individual high-profile targets; instead, tourists, travelers, and journalists are at risk. In response to this shift, the series invites authors and scholars to contribute to the conversation surrounding tourism security and postconflict destinations.

The series features monographs and edited collections to create a critical platform which not only explores the dichotomies of tourism from the theory of mobilities but also provides an insightful guide for policymakers, specialists, and social scientists interested in the future of tourism in a society where uncertainty, anxiety, and fear prevail.

*Tourism Security-Safety and Post Conflict Destinations* explores research approaches and perspectives from a wide range of ideological backgrounds to discuss topics such as:

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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## Section 1

# Special Interest Tourism

### Introduction

The concept of special interest in tourism (SIT) operations has been frequently observed in the tourism literature after the social and environmental deteriorations created by mass tourism applications because mass tourism applications generally result in huge number of visitors. As a consequence of these massive tourist mobilities, the concept of visitor management revealed. In order to manage the destinations in a sustainable manner, some precautions are utilized such as carrying capacity, destination lifecycle, and environmental impact assessment. Moreover, destinations needed the product diversification through creating new sorts of tourism which is conceptualized as alternative tourism.

Most of the alternative tourism types have a fundamental of special interest such as battlefield tourism, adventure tourism, dark tourism, etc. For this reason, before examining the battlefield tourism as the topic of the book, editors decided to launch into the peculiar features of the special interest tourism. In this respect, this section is dedicated to shed light on the conceptualization of special interest tourism, some related definitions, similarities, and distinctions with alternative tourism. Sustainability is also the crucial issue for the evolution and development of special interest tourism.

SIT can reflect postmodern production philosophies such as consumer-oriented production, tailor-made products, and sustainability in the tourism sector (Uluçeçen, 2011). However, two essential elements are needed to define a leisure activity as SIT. One is that individuals devote a specific time to realize their interests. The other is that providing efficient and satisfactory supply for such events gains a commercial dimension (Trauer, 2006). Thus, what is essential for SIT is the availability and decisiveness of the interest that leads the person to travel (Tanrısevdi, 2009).

The following chapters in this section discuss the theory-based SIT, the benefits and limitations of SIT, and identification of the gap in the literature respectively.

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## Chapter 1

# Theory-Based Special Interest Tourism

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### Abstract

Special interest tourism (SIT) is a specialized type of tourism. People aim to visit destinations with a specific theme through this type of tourism. During SIT consumption, they create or develop peculiar interests and participate individually or in groups. In this respect, SIT is a concept that reflects some trends. These trends developed toward satisfying different interests rather than those developed around mass tourism. In other words, SIT emerges as an alternative movement to mass tourism based on general interests. Soon after mass tourism gained extensive dimension, alternative tourism, ecotourism, and SIT concepts emerged. These concepts altered the style of tourism operations. Diversified tourism operations have transformed conventional tourism into experience-based tourism activities. Presentations of these types of experiences are frequently in the form of special interests. The content of this chapter encompasses the fundamental concepts forming the SIT. An overview of the terminology – such as alternative tourism, sustainable development, and sustainable tourism – is the scope of this chapter. Moreover, criticisms and some trends in SIT are the leading subtopics. Some examples of academic research about SIT in Turkey are listed in the current study. This list was compiled from the information gathered from the Council of Higher Education National Thesis Center Database records.

*Keywords:* Special interest tourism; alternative tourism; sustainability; sustainable development; sustainable tourism; theory-based

### Introduction

Leisure-based trips *en masse* might date back as early as the industrial revolution. Increasing disposable income of the visitors and more leisure time contributed to developing individual and group movements. Moreover, with the help of social

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factors like international cultural interactions, convenience, and conformity in transportation technology, various facilities were created and built for tourists. As a result, tourism spread rapidly worldwide, especially after World War II. This massive human mobility has primarily targeted certain mass tourism destinations. Afterward, the adverse effects of large masses on destinations in the tourism development process, such as environmental and visitor management issues, were widely observed. In addition, rapid changes and transformations have begun in the consumer demand for tourism products. In this direction, alternative tourism types have started to appear in the tourism market as a new option instead of mass tourism.

Some academic sources synonymously use alternative and special interest tourism (SIT) types. In others, scholars tried to define these two concepts separately, with some minor differences in accessibility in daily life or offering extraordinary experiences. On the other hand, some scholars generally regarded SIT as distinct in the leisure travel categories because the activity of such an interest is dominant and determinant when selecting the destination. There are many divergences and enlargements within the scope of defining the concept of SIT. Nonetheless, the significant and fundamental motive to participate in SIT remains the activity of interest (MacKay, 2016).

Recently, a wide variety of SIT vacations have been disposable worldwide. The SIT product might be a tour of ghettos of World War II, some mountaineering activities, or visits to some contemporary postconflict areas. This diversity has been generated owing to the growing alternatives in leisure, culture, and other interests. Such interests consequently unveil a considerable number of niche products. Tourists, therefore, would sooner live their niche and visual experiences. The consumption models and the development of interest indicate the diversification in leisure choices through late modernity (Douglas et al., 2001).

The international tourism market shows some changes in the needs and motivations of tourists. There has been a specialization in travelers' preferences and habits of consumption. Such travelers are searching for living cultures, natural landscapes, and authenticity with a growing awareness of the responsible use of cultural and natural resources. Therefore, the international tourism market trends are oriented toward the search for thematic products. These trends emphasize the enjoyment of natural areas and local culture. Subsequently, the current situation is favorable for the creation/promotion of alternative and responsible tourism products. In this sense, the configuration of a specialized, competitive, and qualified offer is especially relevant for the sustainable development of tourist activity.

When dealing with SIT and its development, it is crucial to start with sustainability. Sustainability has a wide range of applications. Moreover, it is a new perception and sensitivity with deeper meanings and interpretations (Uluçeçen, 2011). Nevertheless, as the current book's topic is tourism, the author(s) restricted the framework to sustainable tourism and ecotourism. Sustainable development and ecotourism are distinct concepts. The concept of ecotourism refers to a segment within the tourism sector. However, overall sustainability principles are valid in tourism activity, management, company, and project, whether conventional,

alternative, or specialized. In order to shed light on SIT, summarized definitions of some concepts will be in focus in the Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism, and Alternative Tourism Versus SIT section.

## **Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism, and Alternative Tourism Versus SIT**

Many of the tourism authorities in the world agree on the risks caused by mass tourism. Some tourism operations endanger the future of natural resources. Therefore, policymakers suggested environment-friendly and sustainable tourism development. The fundamental objective of such a development is to overcome the destruction of resources. Sustainable tourism development requires an environmental movement consisting of inspection, monitoring, implementation, and control in this context (Akođlan Kozak & Bahçe, 2009).

Sustainability might reduce the environmental effects of economically irregular and unbalanced resource use. This movement includes all relations between tourism operations and the environment, such as inputs, outputs, and effects of production activities on soil, ecology, and society. Those resources that serve as tourist attractions should be inherited appropriately by future generations. It is one of the mere qualifications of sustainable tourism. This fact is the fundamental reason for the emergence of alternative and sustainable tourism types. New-generation consumers have focused on less harmful tourism products to the environment and nature. The preferences of differentiated and transformed consumers have forced tourism professionals to reconsider the products that harm the environment and culture. Hence, reproduction and reshaping of the processes would be required.

Environment-friendly and ecotourism applications in tourism have become fashionable among tourism consumers. In some cases, many new-generation consumers regarded these sorts of tourism as a requirement. Since these consumers check the certifications of such environmental protection and preservation, from this perspective, they look for alternative options for mass tourism. Furthermore, they pursue their interests by fulfilling their leisure time through new style tourism products. Therefore, more tailor-made, personalized, and flexible tourism products are necessary for the tourism market (Uluçeçen, 2011).

The terminology of alternative tourism provides a generic conception for researchers in the tourism industry. In order to qualify a tourism type as an alternative, one should state its antagonism to the conventional package tours led by massive movements of people. Furthermore, economic, sociocultural, and environmental concerns are in focus in alternative tourism projects. Here, the objective of the tourism type is not to have negative impacts or to create positive impacts on the resources used and the places visited.

Consumers' travel experiences have become more sophisticated than ever. Subsequently, their decision-making process regarding which tourism activity to select among diversified alternative tourism types has become more complex. For this very reason, great alternatives presented by SIT are available in the world

tourism market. Conventional tourism trips share the previously dominant position in the tourism business with SIT trips. However, relatively lower pax characterizes SIT trips. SIT diminishes the harm provoked by the massive mobility of traditional tourism operations. Hence, SIT possesses a specific position in the alternative tourism market from this viewpoint.

SIT was previously accepted as the synonym of alternative tourism and included in these classifications. However, SIT has started to take its place, especially in niche markets, as a type of tourism in this area, where different services are on the stage. Within the scope of diverse participant motives comprised, contribution to the specialization of alternative tourism, and the role in forming a new tourist profile, SIT is worth being classified as a different terminology of alternative tourism. As if that were not enough, one cannot claim that all the alternative tourism types possess or encompass a unique or special interest. Some alternative tourism products exist due to general interest in tourism purposes (Uluçeçen, 2011).

SIT refers to the customization of goods and services in the tourism industry. These offerings and presentations meet the fashionable demands of individuals and smaller groups. By doing so, tourism is to accomplish the requirements of the new demand's specific needs. SIT presents rewarding, enriching, adventuresome, and informative experiences. This vast spectrum varies from tea and coffee tours to specific battlefield visits or favela tourism operations such as visits to slums.

## **Special Interest Tourism (SIT)**

The concept of SIT can reflect postmodern production philosophies such as consumer-oriented production, tailor-made products, and sustainability in the tourism sector (Uluçeçen, 2011). However, two essential elements are needed to define a leisure activity as SIT. One is that individuals devote a specific time to realize their interests. The other is that providing efficient and satisfactory supply for such events gains a commercial dimension (Trauer, 2006). Thus, what is essential for SIT is the availability and decisiveness of the interest that leads the person to travel (Tanrısevdi, 2009).

Mass tourism products cannot satisfy the development of environmental and social awareness. They cannot ensure individualization, escape from crowds, and personal development. For this reason, SIT is growing gradually due to new trends, such as changing tourist expectations (Yıldız, 2009). SIT is a concept identified by the desire to partake in tourism chiefly through a particular interest (Weiler & Hall, 1992). Such tourism also requires the supply of personalized tourism outputs stimulated by the specific interests of persons and groups (Douglas et al., 2001).

SIT is a growing trend in the travel industry. Unlike traditional tourism, SIT focuses on a theme or interest, allowing travelers to delve deeper into their passions and hobbies. This type of travel can be tailored to almost any interest, including history, food, art, wildlife, sports, and more. There are numerous types

of SIT, including adventure tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, culinary tourism, and more.

SIT caters to its demand through occasional contact with people having similar lifestyles, pleasures, or common viewpoints. For instance, a specific gastronomy tour might coincide with the region's famous chefs, farm and market visitation, and tasting local cuisine. Similarly, a battlefield tour may present access to warfare sites, ensuring more information about the battles and conflicts.

Another advantage of SIT is that it can be customized to meet individual preferences and requirements. Consumers can form their tour routes according to interests, programs, and purchasing power. Tour levels might alter according to diverse tastes and choices, such as exploring organic wines, biodynamic wines, or rare vintages. SIT may make some contribution to regional development and local economy. It can create employment opportunities, support local businesses, and increase cultural exchange. Additionally, SIT may help preserve and protect cultural and natural resources as it often highlights sustainability and responsible tourism practices.

SIT, on the other hand, brings about some obstacles. One of the primary concerns is a possible case of overtourism. Excessive consumers might accumulate in a particular SIT destination. Hence, the potential negative consequences are overcrowding, environmental degradation, and cultural homogenization. Many SIT practices now address not well-known destinations, maintain sustainable practices, and prioritize local cultural exchange.

As SIT operations meet essential or average health and cleanliness standards, there is almost no need for luxury facilities and services. Therefore, SIT generally finds application in less developed regions. It is a type of tourism shaped by natural and cultural resources offering specialized products that give manufacturers and intermediaries a significant competitive advantage. It is a type of tourism product that can reach tourism consumers and niche markets with a tendency to individualize and change expectations. Mass tourism products often have substitutions; however, in SIT products, there is no or limited substitution (Yıldız, 2009).

## **Management of SIT**

In the past tourism development phases, tourists were homogeneous. Therefore, researchers might anticipate their behaviors more quickly. Such participants of tourism mobility of that time enjoyed having trips with the pax of tens or hundreds of people. These visits were organized in a detailed schedule hour by hour. The consumer paid the price of the package in advance. This type of consumption was merely fashionable. Nonetheless, contemporary tourists are more impulsive and raging.

SIT and niche tourism highlight and focus on individual preferences. Visitors of such types generally perceive that they are out of the mundane of the mass and ordinary tourism experiences. In other words, they feel they are in a specific and tailor-made environmental bubble (Urry & Larsen, 2011) of their interests and

choices. Moreover, some isolated communities' cultures and traditions are becoming a part of staged authenticity. One might observe the superficial formation of even never-existing traditions for consumption in new-age tourism demand.

SIT is associated with various forms that fit into a new tourism perspective. This sort of tourism practice links supply and demand in a language. Such a language invites us to consider a different reading on tourist travel motivations. SIT demand requests new proposals for tourist services capable of giving an account of the cultural and environmental identity of the chosen destination. Such a demand not only values a punctual service but puts a note on an entire territorial environment, in other words, a landscape that shows its history (such as the passage of time, customs, and changes), human geography, social activity, and economy. SIT is a macro category. Thus, it encompasses specific typologies. SIT encompasses wildlife safaris, yoga retreats, culinary tours, art and architecture tours, and cultural immersion experiences. Fashionable examples are cultural heritage, battlefield tourism, and faith tourism. Sport, health, event, business, cruise, nature-based, educational, scientific, cultural trips, adventure, urban, rural, cultural, ethnographic, heritage tourism, and ecotourism may be on the long SIT list. SIT requires careful organization, accurate-detailed information service, and expert guides.

SIT combines various elements of equipment and specific infrastructure facilities. In addition, resources and local heritage, such as crafts and gastronomy, are also part of the product. Incorporating efficient measures consistent with the sustainable development proposal is fundamental for its realization. At the same time, respecting the rural communities and creating benefits for them are the other objectives.

Since it is a broad category, SIT encompasses multiple aspects that require adequate training and preparation of human resources, a detained supply and territory planning, a holistic quality approach, and optimal intersectoral coordination. A series of specificities particular to each tourism type is also needed. In this sense, specialized marketing and commercialization aspects are fundamental to achieving the objectives of each type of SIT.

SIT contributes to improving the resources with high development potential, the diversification of destinations, and their service offerings. Moreover, the seasonal adjustment and continuous innovation of tourism products are also the benefits of SIT. A large part of the SIT consists of nature tourists who demand products related to the natural environment. These parts encompass tourists visiting a destination to experience and enjoy nature.

One may also find tourists with interests dedicated to studying or observing species of flora or fauna. Nature-based tourism has rapidly developed since the early 1990s by appearing in many documentaries, clubs, and specialized publications. In addition, magazines, books, and tourist guides are frequent incentives for such travels, particularly in the United States, Canada, and European markets.

Visitors come to a tourism destination from different regions of the world. Destinations are to attract the interest of increasingly sophisticated travelers. The visitors