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Tourism in conflict zones: Animosity and risk perceptions

Abstract

Purpose - This study explores the topic of perceived terrorism risk and animosity as interrelated within the context of countries suffering from armed struggles and terror. The research investigates how these constructs influence the visitation decisions of millennials.

Design/methodology/approach - The investigation focuses on three countries in the Mediterranean basin with varied degrees of risk but who include a conflict area, for comparison purposes. The data was collected through an online questionnaire aimed at young millennial students.

Findings - The study confirms that animosity, for the millennial generation, is derived from conflicts and past historical events, or from political and social issues in the target country. In addition, the results show that animosity not only influences the perceived attractiveness of the destination, and through it the intention to visit the place, but also increases the perceptions of terror risk at the destination.

Research limitations/implications - The research corroborates the importance of investigating animosity and perceived risk together. It also empirically verifies the influence of animosity on visitation intentions via the mediating role of perceived attractiveness of the destination and perceived risk of terror.

Originality/value - The study investigates animosity in countries that suffer from armed political conflicts resulting in terror attacks, a context different from that of other already existing studies. The research also examines how animosity and perceived risk interact with each other to influence visitation decisions, a topic which is lacking in the literature.

Keywords Conflict, Terrorism, Animosity, Perceived risk, Destination, Millennials

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Even though terrorism is a global phenomenon, affecting different destinations worldwide, those countries that are suffering from ongoing political or military conflicts generally experience a larger share of terror-related deaths (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2017). These countries also usually suffer from perceptions of risk that may be magnified by continuous negative coverage in the media (Hall, 2002). Indeed, for risk to affect the individual's choices it needs to be perceived as real (Mizrachi and Fuchs, 2016). Therefore, for countries that suffer from conflicts within, perceptions of risk becomes an important issue that needs to be well managed.

While there is an extensive literature concerning the effect of perceived risk on destination choices (Asongu, Nnanna, Biekpe, and Acha-Anyi, 2019; Fuchs and Reichel, 2011; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998), and many studies that show a decline in visitations to the destination following terrorist attacks (Asongu *et al.*, 2019; Masinde and Buigut, 2018; Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009; Samitas, Asteriou, Polyzos and Kenourgios, 2018), there is still the need to better understand the factors that may lead to increased risk perceptions, ultimately impacting visitation decisions. For example, consumer animosity, or the general antipathy of consumers towards a particular country that influences purchase behaviour (Hoffmann, Mai and Smirnova, 2011), is an emerging area of research that has been shown to negatively affect destination choices (Campo and Alvarez, 2017; Sánchez, Campo and Alvarez, 2018; Stepchenkova, Dai, Kirilenko and Su, 2019; Stepchenkova, Shichkova, Kim and Rykhtik, 2018). However, animosity

and its effect on travel and tourism choices has not been yet studied within the context of countries that suffer from armed political conflicts and terror attacks derived from the dispute. Since the dislike for country leaders and their policies is a principal source of negative animosity (Sánchez *et al.*, 2018), it is important to consider animosity in the situation of conflicted countries, where these feelings may be exacerbated by the government's management of the dispute. Moreover, does consumer animosity have an influence on the perceived risk at the destination? To date there is no research on how perceptions of terror risk and animosity interact with each other in order to influence visitation decisions.

In addition, when considering countries that suffer from ongoing or historical conflicts, political opinions concerning the conflict may influence perceptions concerning risk at the destination (Fuchs, Uriely, Reichel and Maoz, 2013). Similarly, destination risk perceptions have been found to be related to religious affiliation (Fuchs and Reichel, 2004; Mansfeld, Jonas, and Cahaner, 2016). A better understanding of how factors such as religion or political views affect tourism through their influence on perceptions and feelings towards the destination is essential for destinations that are rooted in countries where conflicts are prevalent. Learning about the factors that affect travel is especially interesting in relation to the millennial generation, born between 1982 and 2002 (Femenia-Serra, Perles-Ribes and Ivars-Baidal, 2019). Millennials, who account for a total spend of over USD 400 billion, have become an increasingly attractive market (UNWTO and WYSE, 2019). They can also be distinguished from other generations by their travel choices and are considered as a particularly appealing target market for terror-stricken destinations (Bacon, and Buzinde, 2018). Thus, the views of millennials concerning destinations that suffer from terrorism or armed conflicts are particularly relevant.

Therefore, this paper explores the perceived terrorism risk and animosity of millennials, and their influence on visitation decisions, within the context of countries that suffer from armed political struggles involving acts of terror. The study focuses on three countries in the Mediterranean basin with varied degrees of risk, but who include a current or historical conflict area that has been the centre of conflict and terror activities. The countries and conflict regions analysed include Israel and its West Bank region, Turkey and its South-eastern region, and Spain and its Basque region. The research takes on an exploratory perspective, as it attempts to better understand how animosity and perceived risk interact to influence visitation decisions of millennials in this context. Other variables that might also play a role, such as knowledge of the conflict and sympathy towards one part in the dispute, or level of religious observance, are also investigated.

2. Literature review

Risk perception is a multidimensional concept that is composed of dimensions such as physical, performance, financial, time, psychological and social risk. Those dimensions represent consequences ranging from physical harm due to terror, crime, disease or natural disasters, to disappointment with the experience and waste of precious vacation time (Arana and Leon, 2008; Aschauer, 2010; Deng and Ritchie, 2018; Fuchs and Reichel ,2006; Hunter-Jones, Jeffs, and Smith, 2008; Jonas and Mansfeld, 2017; Larsen, Brun, Ogaard and Selstad, 2011; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005; Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009; Rohel and Fesenmaier, 1992; Williams and Balaz, 2015). Despite the multidimensional nature of the risk perception concept, studies in the field identify terrorism as one of the most important issues for tourists when planning a trip (Asongu *et al.*, 2019; Hapairai, Walters and Li, 2018; Hunter-Jones *et al.*, 2008).

Risk perceptions that are associated with a tourist destination affect its choice (Asongu, et al, 2019; Karl, 2018; Kozak, Crotts, and Law, 2007; Walters, Wallin and Hartley, 2019). While perceptions of risk affect destination choice, the risk that is not perceived by the tourist would not influence this selection, no matter how real and significant it may be and vice versa (Fuchs and Reichel, 2006). The impact of risk perceptions associated with one country might have a slipover effect on neighbouring countries, which creates a decline in demand (Asongu *et al.*, 2019; Bassil, Saleh, and Anwar, 2019; Lepp and Gibson, 2003; Liu, Schroeder, Pennington-Gray, and Farajat, 2016; Mansfeld, 1999; Mizrachi and Fuchs, 2016).

Research also suggests that there are crisis resilient tourists who will travel regardless of apparent risk (Hajibaba, Gretzel, Leisch and Dolnicar, 2015). However, for tourists who are not resilient to the risk of terrorism their level of risk perception is influenced by two sources: internal - tourist-related variables - and external - information sources. The tourist-related variables include: former experience with tourism (Sharifpour, Walters, Ritchie, and Winter, 2014; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998), past experience with the destination (Fuchs and Reichel, 2011), previous experience with terrorism (Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009), culture and nationality (Deng and Ritchie, 2018; Fuchs and Reichel, 2004; Isaac and Velden, 2018; Karamustafa, Fuchs and Reichel, 2013; Kozak *et al.*, 2007; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005, 2006), religion (He, Park and Roehl, 2012) and political orientation (Fuchs *et al.*, 2013), subjective knowledge about the destination country (Fourie, Rosselló-Nadal and Santana-Gallego, 2019; Sharifpour and Walters, 2014), personality traits (Fuchs, 2013 ; Hajibaba *et al.* 2015; Lepp and Gibson 2008; Morakabati, and Kapuściński, 2016; Pizam *et al.*, 2004; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005; Rohel and Fesenmaier, 1992), and sociodemographic variables such as age (Hajibaba *et al.* 2015; Karl, 2018; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2006), gender (Kozak *et al.*, 2007; Lepp and Gibson, 2003), and

education (Karl, 2018; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998). The external sources include mass media (Chew and Jahari, 2014; Kapuściński and Richards, 2018; Hapairai *et al.*, 2018; Walters, Mair and Lim, 2016) and government travel advisories (Fuchs *et al.*, 2013; Masinde and Buigut, 2018; Uriely, Maoz, and Reichel, 2007) that play an important role in influencing tourists concerns towards the threat of terrorism, shaping their risk perceptions (Chew and Jahari, 2014 ; Kapuściński and Richards, 2018; Karl, 2018; Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998).

While the knowledge and the exposure to external sources of information may shape tourists' risk perceptions and concerns towards a particular destination, it may also create certain negative feelings towards the place. In the context of countries as tourist destinations, the feelings of antipathy that individuals may have towards a country may influence their purchase decisions of products produced in the disliked countries, including tourism products. This negative feeling or dislike towards a particular country is named as consumer animosity by Klein, Ettenson and Morris (1998), who first introduced the construct to the international marketing literature. According to these authors, animosity shapes the decision making process of consumers, affecting the individual's decisions to purchase products originating from certain countries (Klein *et al*., 1998). The study of animosity's influence on purchase decisions is an emerging research topic within the travel and tourism field. Indeed, only recently have some studies determined that the animosity that an individual has towards a certain country also influences his or her decision to travel to a destination in this country (Alvarez and Campo, 2019; Campo and Alvarez, 2019; Sánchez *et al*., 2018; Stepchenkova *et al*., 2018; Stepchenkova *et al.*, 2019). Given the peculiar characteristics of the destination as a product that is strongly linked to its geographical origin

(Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008), a better understanding of animosity's effect on perceptions and purchase decisions within the context of tourist destinations is of paramount importance.

Animosity is believed to emerge from past or ongoing military or historical conflicts (Klein, *et al*. 1998), economic disputes (De Nisco, Mainolfi, Marino and Napolitano, 2016), political problems (Russel, 2004) and social concerns (Klein, 2002). In a more recent study, Sánchez *et al.* (2018) determine that political animosity, which includes perceptions concerning the human rights violations and the government and leaders of the country, has the strongest negative influence on travel purchase decisions. Alvarez and Campo (2019) also contend that while animosity that is based on political views of the target country is strongest, that which derives from the perceptions of the country as a threat and as being unsafe is also relevant. Thus, when considering the tourist destination and travel decisions, investigations that assess animosity in conjunction with perceived risk are needed.

For countries that are afflicted with conflicts and subject to terrorism activities, the perceived risk of the destination, especially the physical risk derived from the risk of terror, is an important issue that needs to be managed by the destination's managers. However, for these countries, negative feelings of animosity may be magnified as they are influenced by the dispute and the perceptions concerning the government's management of the conflict situation. Therefore, the study of animosity and its effects in countries that include a conflict and terror attacks is needed. This is an area that has not yet been examined within the field of travel and tourism. In addition, the question of how the perceived risk of terror and animosity interact in the context of these conflicted countries has not yet been investigated. The relationship between animosity and perceptions of terror risk, and their influence in visitation intentions should be analysed in

relation to the destination's priority target segments. For destinations that suffer from terror and armed conflicts, millennials may be an attractive market, and therefore their views concerning these issues should be investigated. Certainly, Wen and Huang (2019) find that for destinations that are conflicted or in political turmoil, such as Israel, a significant segment is that of adventure-driven tourists that are less concerned with risk. These authors (Wen and Huang, 2019) also remark that these more adventurous tourists also tend to be young, generally belonging to the millennial generation. In addition, millennial tourists are expected to strongly influence the travel and tourism industry in the medium term (Coca-Stefaniak and Morrisson, 2018) and consequently their specific views regarding countries that suffer from turbulences and armed political conflicts are highly relevant.

Therefore the study aims to answer the following questions as related to millennials: How does animosity operate in the context of destinations that suffer from internal conflicts and related terrorism? How do animosity and perceptions of risk interact for countries with conflict zones? Does animosity increase the perceived risk of terror at the destination? Are there other variables, such as religious observation or sympathy for one part in the conflict, relevant and do they need to be taken into account when researching the topic? Are there differences for diverse countries with varied levels of conflict and terror risk? These questions are explored in the study, as described in the sections below.

3. Methodology

This research focuses on 3 countries that are major tourism receiving countries in the Mediterranean basin: Israel, Turkey and Spain. While all three countries are affected by armed political conflicts that have resulted in terror attacks, each suffers from a varied degree of

territorial dispute and terrorism activity, presumably leading to different degrees of perceived risk. The Basque-Spanish conflict ended in 2011. According to the Council on Foreign Relations' global conflict tracker (CFRGCT 2018a; CFRGCT 2018b) the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is in an unchanging state while the status of the Kurdish–Turkish conflict is worsening. Therefore, these three countries were chosen due to their similarities in terms of geographical location in the Mediterranean basin, their longstanding experience as tourist destinations with attractive features and their having been affected by a territorial dispute leading to an armed political conflict. In addition, the choice of these countries was also driven by the opportunity to investigate animosity and perceived risk in relation to varied conflict situations. Further information on the three countries and their respective conflicts are provided below.

3.1. The countries and conflict zones

Israel, with more than 3.5 million international tourists in 2017 is an important destination known worldwide for cultural and religious tourism (Goisrael, 2018). However, the country suffers from the Israeli–Palestinian struggle, a continuing conflict opposing the Israelis and Palestinians. According to Durante and Zhuravskaya (2018), the conflict originated in the mid-20th century as a result of Jewish immigration to the area and the resulting sectarian disputes between Arabs and Jews in the Mandatory Palestine, and is still ongoing. Despite the wealth of cultural, historic and religious resources, tourism has been affected by the ongoing hostilities in the region, since the conflict is characterized by a high level of violence and a large number of casualties on both sides (Durante and Zhuravskaya, 2018). As a result of this ongoing conflict, the region is labelled as being highly risky (International SOS, 2017). According to the 2017 Global Terrorism Index (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2017), Israel is ranked 36 in terms of number of terror occurrences, which represents a medium terror risk.

Turkey received 32 million tourists in 2017 and increased by 28% from the previous year the number of international tourists visiting the country (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018). It is considered an appealing destination in foreign markets that promotes itself internationally via soap operas and other popular cultural products (Ozretic-Dosen, Previsic, Krupka, Skare, Komarac, 2018), despite suffering from internal conflicts in certain parts of the country. Most of the violence that Turkey has experienced since the mid-1980s is related to the Kurdish-Turkish armed conflict that has its roots on the demands of Kurdish groups for independence and takes place mainly in the Southeastern region in Turkey. The main insurgent group is the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK), which was branded a terrorist organization by the European Union and the USA in 2002 and 2004 respectively (Roth and Sever, 2007). The armed struggle in the region and the terror attacks from the PKK have left a toll of thousands of deaths (Bilgel and Karahasan, 2017). Periods of increased violence and terror attacks have also resulted in reductions in the number of foreign tourist arrivals to Turkey (Theocharous, Zopiatis, Lambertides, Savva and Mansfeld, 2018) and have negatively affected the destination's image (Alrawadieh, Dincer, Istanbullu Dincer and Mammadova, 2018). Indeed, Turkey is ranked very high in the 2017 Global Terrorism Index (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2017), appearing in 9th position for this particular year, while the Southeastern region of the country is also indicated in the Travel Risk Map as a high risk area (International SOS, 2017).

Finally, Spain is currently the second tourist power worldwide, with more than 82 million tourists in 2017 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2018). It has also suffered for many years from an internal separatist conflict in the Basque region. The armed Basque separatist conflict started in 1959, with the foundation of ETA (Basque Fatherland and Liberty), recognized as a terrorist

organization by many governments (Harmon, 2012). This group sought the creation of an independent state in the Basque territories and was active until its dissolution in 2011 (Ormazabal and Aizpeolea, 2018). Thus, Spain and the Basque country may be considered as currently having a lower level of risk. In addition, Spain is ranked quite low (85th) in the 2017 Global Terrorism Index (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2017).

3.2. Sampling Methodology

The study aimed to investigate animosity and perceived risk in countries suffering from armed conflicts resulting in terror attacks. The research focuses on millennials, in order to understand animosity and risk from the perspective of a segment of travellers that is more prone to want to travel to countries with zones of conflict, as opposed to older generations (Bacon and Buzide, 2018; Wen and Huang, 2019). The data was collected through an online questionnaire aimed at university students from three of the main public universities in the analysed countries. While millennials include both students and non-students, students comprise a significant part of this tourism segment (Bicikova, 2014). The student travel market generates significant profits and constitutes a large market segment inside the entire travel system (Kim, 2008). The student travellers are more prepared to take risks and seek thrills (Pizam *et al.,* 2004). However, studies indicate that students from different countries perceive risk differently (Deng and Ritchie, 2018). The use of students was also considered suitable for comparison purposes since it allows access to a sample that is more homogeneous in terms of age and education (Campo and Alvarez, 2010). A total of 267 students over the age of 18 participated in the study. Each student evaluated the two countries different from their own. In addition, the research ensured that none of the students had visited the concerned destination before. Therefore, homogeneity of the sample concerning certain demographic characteristics (age, level of studies) as well as previous experience with the

destinations was achieved. The sample includes slightly more men (55.7%) than women (44.3%), with an average age of 23.9.

3.3. Measurement and scales

The questionnaire measured for each country analysed the level of animosity, perceived risk of terror, perceived attractiveness and intention to visit the place. In addition, other control variables related to the knowledge of the conflict and sympathy towards the struggle, as well as other personal variables like risk- taking tendencies when traveling and self-rating in terms of religious observance, are incorporated. The items included were measured via a 7-point Likert scale, except for the religious observance variable which was assessed using a 7-point semantic differential scale.

The animosity measure used in this study is adapted from Campo and Alvarez's (2017; 2019) scale. These authors created a measure of animosity by generating items from the literature (Ang *et al*., 2004; Cai, Fang, Yang and Son, 2012; Klein *et al.*, 1998; Nes, Yelkur and Silkoset, 2012; Nijssen and Douglas, 2004; Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2007; Russel, 2004; Shimp, Dunn and Klein, 2004) and from initial structured interviews, which shed information on additional causes of animosity towards a particular country. Accordingly, 10 items that cover the underlying causes of animosity towards a country from the economic, people, political, religious, human rights, historical and military perspective, and 1 item to measure overall animosity are included. The perceived risk of terror was developed from the works of Fuchs and Reichel (2006) and Fuchs *et al.* (2013) and incorporates 6 items that describe different indicators of risk perception (personal perception, social perception, interpretation of governments warnings, assessment of state security, views concerning the media's coverage of the risk and perception of risk as compared to

the area of origin). The perceived attractiveness and the intention to visit were adapted from Campo and Alvarez (2010) and included two items. Single items were also used to assess the control variables (the degree of risk aversion of the respondents and their self-rated level of religious observance). The items included in all these measures are assessed using a 7-point Likert scale, except for the religious observance, which is measured using a 7-point semantic differential scale. The measures can be seen in more detail in Table 1.

Table 1 also includes mean and standard deviation data for the three destinations analysed. The average data shows that the animosity is high for Israel and Turkey and much lower for Spain. The perception of risk is higher in Turkey, followed by Israel and finally Spain, which received much lower scores on this item. Regarding the attractiveness of the destination and the intention to visit, Spain gets high mean values, while Israel and Turkey obtain much lower values. In addition, the respondents claim to have a low level of sympathy towards the conflict, and they claim a very low level of knowledge, except for the knowledge about the conflict in Israel that is on average higher (4.32). The descriptive data also reveal that the sample is relatively risk adverse (5.31) and that, in general, respondents see themselves as maintaining a low level of religious observance (2.73).

Table 1 near here

4. Findings

4.1. Consumer animosity construct

Exploratory factor analysis using the principal components method and the Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was used (refer to Table 2). This analysis yielded a two-factor solution that explains 73.4% of the variation in the construct. According to these results, the animosity of the

sample towards the three countries in conflict analysed can be summarized in two different dimensions. The first refers to internal aspects of a political, social, economic and religious nature, which are highly correlated to each other and on which consumers do not seem to discriminate. This dimension of animosity is therefore more general and is not based on the conflict situation in the country or on other external historical or current military clashes. In contrast, the second factor includes historical and military conflicts, which embody the classic concept of animosity that is described in the literature as being derived from conflicts between two countries that persist and are difficult to forget. It also encompasses the animosity that is derived from the internal armed conflict in the country and the government's management of this territorial dispute. Both factors have a high internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha values close to or higher than 0.90).

Insert Table 2 near here

4.2. Relationship model

To analyse the influence of animosity and perceived risk on the attractiveness of the destination and the intention to visit, a structural equation model was derived from the data. AMOS 24 was used for the estimation. The two factors included in the model show a high internal consistency, with high reliability (CR and Cronbach's Alpha greater or equal to 0.87) and AVE higher than 0.60 (see Table 3).

Insert Table 3 near here

The results of the relational model are shown in Figure 1. The findings support the exploratory factor analysis and indicate that animosity is formed by two dimensions, whose weight differs. The first dimension, political/social/religious animosity, has a strong weight on the overall

animosity (0.64, p <0.001); whereas the animosity derived from historical /military conflicts exerts a smaller but significant weight (0.21, p <0.001). Thus, while the weight of the animosity that is related to the internal conflict and other historical or military events is significant, that which is based on the political situation and social aspects of the country seems to be stronger.

Secondly, animosity has a strong, significant and negative influence on the attractiveness of the destination (-0.71, p <0.001), which in turn affects the intention to visit (0.93; p <0.001). The results also indicate that as animosity increases the terror risk perception of the country rises (0.32, p <0.001), which in turn also negatively influences the intention to visit (-0.12, p <0.001). Therefore, the research determines that, for countries with armed conflicts resulting in terror attacks, animosity is an important variable that significantly influences perceptions of terror risk. In addition, the study establishes that, in this particular context of conflicted countries, animosity does not have a significant direct effect on the intention to visit the place. However, it does decrease the attractiveness of the destination and increase the perception of terror risk thus indirectly decreasing the intention to visit. If we had a barometer of animosity, we could say in this case that a point of increase in animosity leads to 0.70 points decrease in the intention to visit the destination (-0.71 * 0.93 + 0.32 * -0.12) due to animosity's effect on perceived attractiveness and terror risk perceptions.

Insert Figure 1 near here

4.3. Model by country

In order to analyse the influence of the variables of interest on the attractiveness of the destination and the intention to visit, a stepwise regression model is proposed for each country analysed (Israel, Turkey and Spain). The dependent variables are the intention to visit the country

t (Intentiont) and the attractiveness of the destination t (Attractivenesst), while the independent variables include the two dimensions of animosity (PSRAnimosity; HMCAnimosity), the perceived risk (Risk) and a series of control variables that include the knowledge that the individual has about the conflict of the country (Knowledge), the degree of sympathy that the respondent shares for one part in the conflict (Sympathy,) and demographic variables such as age (Age) and religious observance (Religious). The constructs included in the regression model (PRS Animosity, HMC Animosity and Risk) are summarized through the average of the items that reflect it. The model is estimated as follows:

$$Intentiont = const + a1\ Attractiveness + a2\ PSR\ Animosity + a3\ HMC\ Animosity + a4\ Risk + a5\ Knowledge + a6\ Sympathy + a7\ Age + a8\ Religious + error$$

$$Attractivenesst = const + b1\ PSR\ Animosity + b2\ HMC\ Animosity + b3\ Risk + b4\ Knowledge + b5\ Sympathy + b6\ Age + b7\ Religious + error$$

Table 4 shows the results of the estimated stepwise regression model for each of the countries analysed. Only standardized coefficients that significantly affect the dependent variable are included. The first rows include estimates about the intention to visit, while the second part of the table shows the effects on the attractiveness of the destination. The adjustment of the regression model, measured through the R^2, is good for Israel and for Turkey, especially when estimating the intention to visit. However, in the case of Spain, the adjustment is poor and does not exceed 10% of the estimate of the dependent variable.

The attractiveness of the destination is the variable that has a greater weight of estimation for the intention to visit. Those who consider that the destination is attractive have a greater intention of visiting the place. In the case of Spain, the effect, although significant, is lesser, and the rest of the variables in the model do not have a significant effect on the intention to visit Spain. This

result points to the conclusion that, for Spain, the perception of animosity and risk is low and that there are other variables that exercise power over the intention to visit.

In contrast, in the case of Turkey, there is a significant and negative effect (-0.16) of the historical and military animosity on the intention to visit, and a positive and significant effect of the destination's attractiveness (0.56) and of the sympathy towards the conflict (0.71). Therefore, respondents who perceive Turkey as an attractive destination have greater intention to visit it, but individuals who feel animosity towards Turkey derived from conflicts and past events have a lower intention of visiting. Those respondents who feel a greater sympathy towards the separatist movement in the conflict also have a greater intention to visit, which may be due to the likelihood that these individuals may represent a type of tourist less averse to the risk or less concerned about the conflict situation in the country. The intention to visit Turkey also increases in younger individuals. Thus, in the case of Turkey as a conflicted country, animosity that results from the current territorial dispute and from the country's participation in prior wars and conflicts is specifically relevant as it influences visitation decisions.

With respect to Israel, the variable that has a significant, positive and strong weight is the perceived attractiveness (0.72), while the perception of risk negatively affects the intention to visit (-0.18). As in the case of Turkey, in Israel age also significantly and negatively influences visitation intentions (-0.17). Therefore, in the case of Israel, the conflict situation seems to influence visitation intentions through the perceptions of terror risk rather than through feelings of animosity.

Regarding the attractiveness of the destination, the variable that exerts a greater negative influence in the three countries is political, social and religious animosity, especially in the case of Israel, whose weight is -0.56. There is no significant influence of historical and military animosity on the perceived attractiveness of the destination. Thus, the animosity that is not specifically tied to a particular conflict but that which is more generally derived from social and political issues in the country seems to be more relevant in shaping the destination's attractiveness. In addition, in the case of Spain, knowledge about the conflict significantly reduces the attractiveness of the destination (-0.20) and in the case of Turkey, individuals who consider themselves religious perceive Turkey as a less attractive tourist destination. However, the adjustment of the model (R^2) for Turkey and Spain is low.

Insert Table 4 near here

5. Conclusions

The study offers evidence concerning the essential role that animosity plays in creating perceptions of the destination for the millennial segment. The results clearly identify two aspects of animosity in the context of countries with armed political struggles: one related to conflicts and military events, and the other based on more general views concerning the political, social and religious aspects of the country. The animosity that is grounded on more general views of the country's political, social and religious environment has a bigger weight on the formation of the overall animosity and a greater influence on the perceived attractiveness of the destination. However, in the case of Turkey, the animosity towards this country seems to be more specifically tied to historical and current conflicts, significantly influencing the intention to visit this country. Thus, the study supports the contention that animosity as a construct that influences travel and tourism decisions may operate differently in varied contexts. Future research should take into

consideration that different types of animosity based on varied root causes may have diverse effects on perceptions concerning the destination and on visitation decisions. Especially in the context of countries that suffer from conflict and turmoil, understanding the varied causes of animosity and its particular effects is essential.

The model obtained in the research confirms that the animosity that millennials may feel towards a particular country influences the perceived attractiveness of the destination, and through it the intention to visit the place. In addition, these animosity feelings also increase the perceived risk of being subject to terror attacks at the destination. Therefore, according to this investigation, animosity may feed perceptions of terror risk, in particular for those destinations that include a history of conflict and terrorism tied to the dispute. It is clear that animosity should be considered when studying risk perceptions in tourism. In particular, the animosity that derives from views concerning the political system in the country or its human rights violations seem to be most important for all three countries analysed. Thus, this study contributes to the tourism literature by providing an understanding about how animosity and perceived risk interact with each other in conflicted countries. It is important that future studies are carried out on these variables to better comprehend their effect in varied tourism contexts.

The overall findings indicate that animosity and perceptions of terror risk have a great weight on the millennials' intention to visit those countries that include a conflict zone. Nevertheless, in the case of animosity, the effect is not direct but strong and indirect through the attractiveness of the destination. In addition, since we are dealing with three attractive tourist destinations with varied levels of internal conflict and terror activities within the country, the results for each of the countries, when analysed individually, are dissimilar. The perceived risk affects the intention to

visit only in the case of Israel, and not in that of Turkey. Furthermore, a direct effect of the perceived risk of terror on the attractiveness of the destination is not observed. This finding seems to indicate that the destination being perceived as risky does not necessarily per se reduce its attractiveness. The result is in line with Aschauer's (2010) study who states that the perception of insecurity does not necessarily result in a negative evaluation of the destination. In order for the risk to influence the attractiveness of the destination, it may have to be tied to other negative information that affects the feelings of potential tourists towards the place. This result corroborates the importance of investigating animosity and risk together in the context of countries that include terrorism and conflict within in order to better understand these variables and their effect on tourism perceptions and choices. Also, from a managerial point of view, this result determines that rather than focusing on decreasing the perceptions of risk, the destination should aim at reducing the level of animosity that may be felt towards the country, and at increasing its perceived attractiveness.

The results, in line with the findings of Hajibaba *et al.* (2015), also seem to indicate that the younger tourists that are analysed in this study are less concerned with risk and have a greater intention to visit those destinations with internal conflicts. This information may be of use for segmentation and targeting purposes. For example, both Israel and Turkey could focus on making their offering more attractive to older individuals. Moreover, in the case of Turkey, young people who are in favour of the separatist cause can be considered a segment of potential tourists. In addition, those individuals who consider themselves religious (non-Muslim) see Turkey as a less attractive place to visit. These tourists seem to evaluate the destinations from a religious point of view, and they may find countries where Islam is the main confession as less interesting to visit. This information is also important to determine the specific elements of the destination that

should be promoted. For example, in the case of Turkey, underplaying its religious attributes may have a positive effect on visitation of more religiously-minded individuals.

5.1. Limitations and further research

This work is an ongoing investigation that requires extension in other different tourist segments. Therefore, future research may use this exploratory study as a starting point to investigate the topic in a comprehensive manner, taking into consideration the context and conflict situation in the country at the time of the research. Further studies may also consider how to counteract the negative effects of animosity through targeted communication strategies. The use of specific tools to manage the perceptions of the destination and to reduce the existing animosity may only occur after a thorough understanding of the topic has been achieved.

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Table 1. Measures used in the research and descriptive statistics

CONSTRUCTS	ITEMS*	Israel: Mean (SD)	Spain: Mean (SD)	Turkey: Mean (SD)	Total Mean (SD)
Animosity	Country's economic influence in other countries (An1)	5.13 (1.47)	3.52 (0.98)	4.55 (1.24)	4.22 (1.35)
	The mentality of the people in the country (An2)	5.04 (1.38)	2.79 (1.11)	4.57 (1.29)	3.89 (1.57)
	The governmental leaders in the country (An3)	5.75 (1.13)	3.64 (0.93)	5.71 (1.22)	4.83 (1.50)
	The political system in the country (An4)	5.41 (1.22)	3.71 (0.92)	5.59 (1.24)	4.75 (1.43)
	The way in which human rights are addressed in the country (An5)	5.46 (1.47)	3.22 (1.01)	5.49 (1.27)	4.51 (1.65)
	The religious system in the country (An6)	5.12 (1.35)	3.52 (1.01)	5.23 (1.38)	4.48 (1.48)
	Country 's role in past historical events (An7)	5.25 (1.30)	3.52 (1.47)	4.53 (1.34)	4.24 (1.54)
	Country's military threat (An8)	5.20 (1.52)	3.81 (0.99)	4.61 (1.27)	4.37 (1.32)
	Country's involvement in wars and conflicts (An9)	5.69 (1.28)	3.95 (1.14)	5.08 (1.34)	4.71 (1.42)
	Country's handling of the conflict in the conflict zone (An10)	5.88 (1.21)	4.00 (1.17)	5.20 (1.31)	4.81 (1.44)
Perceived risk of terror at the destination	The probability of being injured in a terrorist attack in the country is high (R1)	4.85 (1.62)	3.35 (1.40)	5.31 (1.45)	4.37 (1.72)
	My family and friends at home will worry about my safety during my stay in the country (R2)	5.46 (1.41)	3.13 (1.50)	5.77 (1.37)	4.56 (1.91)
	My government has issued travel warnings for the country due to the risk of terrorist attacks (R3)	3.98 (1.65)	2.91 (1.42)	5.47 (1.39)	4.07 (1.85)
	The security and emergency forces in the country are ineffective in dealing with any terrorist attack (emergency response, evacuation, medical treatment, etc.) (R4)	3.82 (1.65)	3.89 (1.37)	4.87 (1.34)	4.24 (1.50)
	The international media reports a high level of terror risk in the country (R5)	4.54 (1.66)	3.08 (1.31)	5.29 (1.30)	4.18 (1.71)
	The country is more dangerous in terms of terror risk than the area I live in (R6)	4.51 (2.06)	2.30 (1.48)	5.02 (1.71)	3.74 (2.11)
Intention to visit	I would like to visit this country in the near future (I)	3.72 (2.02)	6.26 (1.04)	3.54 (1.91)	4.71 (2.09)
Perceived attractiveness of the destination	I consider the country as an attractive tourist destination (At)	3.79 (1.78)	6.29 (0.83)	4.22 (1.80)	5.00 (1.84)
Knowledge about the conflict	I am highly knowledgeable about the internal conflict (Know)	4.32 (1.41)	2.51 (1.57)	2.96 (1.76)	3.03 (1.75)
Sympathy for one party in the conflict	I am sympathetic towards the cause in the conflict (Sym) (sympathetic towards Palestinian, Basque and Kurd activists)	1.58 (0.17)	1.38 (0.10)	1.57 (0.13)	3.75 (1.54)
Risk-taking tendencies when traveling	I usually avoid traveling to risky or dangerous destinations (Av) (1 = High risk-taking; 7 = Low Risk-taking)				5.31 (1.50)
Religious observance	How do you rate yourself in terms of religious observance? Not at all religious --- Very religious (RE) (1 = Low religious observance; 7 = High religious observance)				2.73 (1.84)

* 7 Likert or semantic differential scale (1 = Minimum; 7 = Maximum); SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2. Principal components analysis of the animosity construct

		F1	F2
Cronbach's Alpha		0.93	0.87
Factor 1: Political/Social/ Religious Animosity	Country's economic influence in other countries (An1)	0.64	
	The mentality of the people on the country (An2)	0.71	
	The governmental leaders in the country (An3)	0.85	
	The political system in the country (An4)	0.84	
	The way in which human rights are addressed in the country (An5)	0.85	
	The religious system in the country (An6)	0.83	
Factor 2: Historical/Military/ Conflict Animosity	Country 's role in past historical events (An7)		0.76
	Country's military threat (An8)		0.85
	Country's involvement in wars and conflicts (An9)		0.79
	Country's handling of the conflict in the conflict zone (An10)		0.64

Rotation: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; Percentage of Variance Extracted: 73.35%

Table 3. Results of relational model

			Standardized Regression Weights	p				Standardized Regression Weights	p
Perceived Attractiveness	←	Overall Animosity	-0.71	***	An6	←	Political/Social/ Religious Animosity	0.79	---
Perceived Risk of Terror	←	Overall Animosity	0.32	***	An7	←	Historical/Military/ Conflict Animosity	0.73	***
Intention to Visit	←	Perceived Attractiveness	0.93	***	An8	←	Historical/Military/ Conflict Animosity	0.77	***
Intention to Visit	←	Perceived Risk of Terror	-0.12	***	An9	←	Historical/Military/ Conflict Animosity	0.86	***
Overall Animosity	←	Political/Social/ Religious Animosity	0.64	***	An10	←	Historical/Military/ Conflict Animosity	0.79	---
Overall Animosity	←	Historical/Military/ Conflict Animosity	0.21	***	R1	←	Perceived Risk of Terror	0.84	***
An1	←	Political/Social/ Religious Animosity	0.71	***	R2	←	Perceived Risk of Terror	0.86	***
An2	←	Political/Social/ Religious Animosity	0.81	***	R3	←	Perceived Risk of terror	0.80	***
An3	←	Political/Social/ Religious Animosity	0.93	***	R4	←	Perceived Risk of Terror	0.52	***
An4	←	Political/Social/ Religious Animosity	0.92	***	R5	←	Perceived Risk of Terror	0.83	***
An5	←	Political/Social/ Religious Animosity	0.87	***	R6	←	Perceived Risk of Terror	0.77	---

*** $p<0.001$; Chi-square = 303.17; Degrees of freedom = 138; Probability level = 0.00

GFI = 0.93; AGFI = 0.91; CFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.05

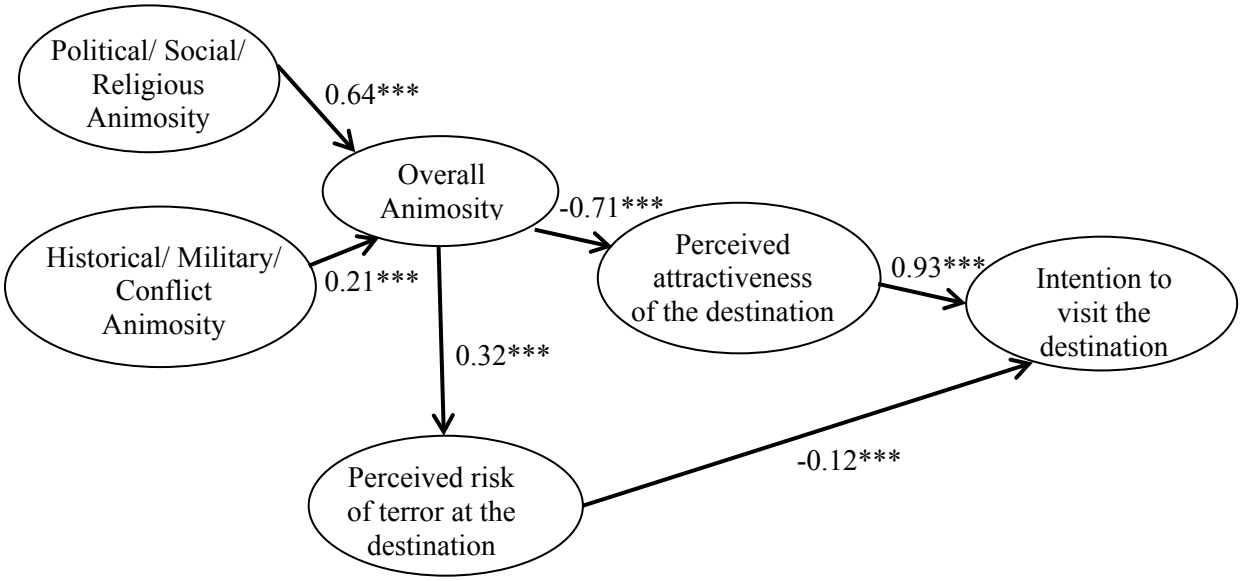
	CR[a]	AVE[b]	Cronbach´s Alpha
Political/Social/Religious Animosity	0.94	0.71	0.93
Historical/Military/Conflict Animosity	0.87	0.62	0.87
Perceived Risk of Terror	0.90	0.61	0.91

[a] Composite Reliability; [b] Average Variance Extracted

Table 4. Results of the stepwise linear regression analysis by countries

		Israel			Turkey			Spain		
Dependent variable: Intention		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**sig.**	**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**sig.**	**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**sig.**
Independent variables	Attractiveness	0.72	9.81	0.00	0.56	7.75	0.00	0.27	3.62	0.00
	HMC Animosity				-0.16	-2.27	0.02			
	Risk	-0.18	-2.35	0.02						
	Sympathy				0.17	2.41	0.01			
	Age	-0.17	-2.32	0.02	-0.15	-2.17	0.03			
	R^2	0.62			0.40			0.07		
Dependent variable: Attractiveness		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**sig.**	**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**sig.**	**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**sig.**
Independent variables	PSR Animosity	-0.56	-5.76	0.00	-0.22	-2.72	0.00	-0.16	-2.14	0.03
	Knowledge							-0.21	-2.77	0.00
	Religious				-0.19	-2.33	0.01			
	R^2	0.31			0.08			0.06		

Figure 1: Relationship model



*** $p < 0.001$
Chi-square = 303.17; degrees of freedom = 138;
CFI= 0.98; AGFI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.05