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REINFORCING SOCIAL COHESION IN A POST-WAR DESTINATION VIA TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Multicultural societies within nation-states framework have encountered sectarian divides, ethnic conflicts, civil wars and often face the complex challenge of upholding and strengthening social cohesion. The notion of social cohesion is complex, multidimensional and needs to be fostered and maintained through good governance and community involvement. Social cohesion in a post-war or post conflict country is very fragile depending on the extent of the period of war and destruction. In order to encourage social cohesion in post-war country, there is a need for a catalyst that can kick start the process of social cohesion. Post war countries use tourism in a reconstruction stage, as tourism is also a contemporary form of acculturation and specifically specialised forms of tourism has been recommended by many researchers as well. However, tourism impacts may be positive or negative. Hence the possibility of tourism to act as a catalyst in a post-war context still needs to be verified. The aim of this conceptual paper is to analyse the relevance of tourism as a catalyst for social cohesion in the context of a post-war scenario. It provides an understanding of the notion of social cohesion; questions the prospect of tourism to act as a catalyst in a post war scenario and talks about the assessing of social cohesion via tourism. The methodology uses content analysis based on literature and policies in relation with tourism and social cohesion. Findings support the validity of tourism as a catalyst and propose a framework for assessing social cohesion via tourism.

Keywords: *social cohesion, multiculturalism, tourism, post-war, governance, community involvement, social exclusion, representations*