

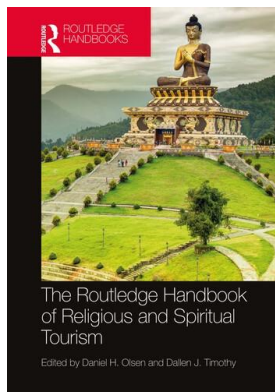
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SAFETY, FEAR, RISK, AND TERRORISM IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Maximiliano E. Korstanje and Babu George

Introduction

In what has been considered the bloodiest attack on American soil after Pearl Harbor, September 11, 2001, represented a turning point for security-related specialists and policy makers throughout the world (Dalby 2003; Hall, Timothy & Duval 2003). This event saw the division of the world into secure and insecure nations. Importantly, this event marked the first time that terrorists employed mass transportation as real weapons against civilian targets (Korstanje & Olsen 2011). Since this event, multiple studies have focused on the effects of terrorism on local economies as well as the global tourism and hospitality industry (Bonham, Edmonds & Mak 2006; Korstanje & Clayton 2012; Pappas 2010; Raine 2013; Saha & Yap 2014; Yan et al. 2016). Although the notion of risk perception underscores models that predict terrorist attacks in leisure hotspots (Floyd et al. 2004; Fuchs et al. 2013; Reisinger & Mavondo 2005), the post-9/11 security dilemma opened the doors to new, unanswered questions. As Bianchi (2006) notes, the excessive public attention on the struggles of tourist destinations to strengthen security has become problematic, as the fear of terrorism, together with more general global anxiety over violence, vulnerability, and uncertainty, has paved the way for a new security climate in which, despite the efforts and material resources to make destinations safer, reinforces the tenets of terrorism.

While religious tourism is lauded as a means of developing peripheral regions, or places which historically were exploited by imperial powers, certain radical discourses have played a crucial role in generating resentment against Western tourists. As a result, religious festivals and mega-events are often targeted in order to grab the attention of government officials. As such, it is particularly important not to lose sight of the fact that as ambassadors of their home countries, tourists count on being protected by the host country during their visits (Korstanje, Raj & Griffin 2018). Within this context, this is organized into four parts. The first section deals conceptually with the terms risk, security, and fear so that readers will have a better understanding of the broader context. The chapter then examines the extent to which religious events and religious tourism in general are fertile grounds for terrorism and local violence. Since religiosity does not disappear but rather adapts to specific contexts, the authors suggest that religious tourism not only revitalizes the psychological frustrations of citizens in their day-to-day life but also boosts social trust, which trust is necessary for a

society to function properly. As such, religious mega-events and tourism involve rituals that must be performed safely and carefully. Third, the chapter enumerates the most significant security considerations in planning religious tourism events. Finally, the last section examines the security challenges facing the religious tourism industry.

Fear, safety, and risk

In an older publication, Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) summarized 30 years of psychological research regarding travel examining the correlation between risk perception and travelers' demographic features. In their analysis of this literature, they highlighted three dimensions of risk according to consumers' demographic characteristics: physical-equipment risk, vacation risk, and destination risk. Each of these risk dimensions varied in intensity and longevity. They found that far from being static, risk perception is contextual, varying between different people and their travel and personality types. In this vein, Plog (1991) developed a theoretical model to explain why some personalities experience an extreme fear of flying while others do not. Plog concluded that motivations, fears, and phobias come from people's unique and individual life experiences. From a travel experience perspective, Plog believed there to be two types of travelers: those who grow up in a climate of respect and solidarity, and those who have been socialized in contexts of conflict and fear. The former travelers are more inclined to seek novelty and contact with others, whereas the latter travelers tend to be more afraid of strangers, experiences, and places that are outside their normal comfort zones. From this analysis, Plog developed the well-known model of tourist behavior with three types of tourists: allocentrics (who are open to new and un-ordinary experiences), psychocentrics (who are fearful or distrusting of the "Other" and seek well-established tourist destinations), and mid-centrics (who exhibit aspects of the other two types of tourists). Although widely criticized for its simplicity, Plog was a pioneer devoted to understanding the intersections of travel, pleasure, and fear (Korstanje 2009).

One of the limitations of Plog's theory was its inability to provide an adequate understanding of risk. This was rectified in part by German sociologist Ulrich Beck (1992), who argued that the 1986 Chernobyl accident was the touchstone for the rise of a new period in late capitalism, which period he dubbed "the risk society"—the beginnings of modern society's organization and reaction to risk. Paradoxically, the very technology employed to improve this world became the potential recipe for its demise. This paradox represented one of the dichotomies of late capitalism, which placed all classes of people into egalitarian conditions before risk (Beck 1992). Luhmann (2017), however, criticized Beck for excessive alarmism. As Luhmann argued, risks as described by Beck are different from threats, where the former are direct results of decision-making of people in positions of power while the latter corresponds with external events that cannot be avoided or controlled. Luhmann observed that people who generate risks rarely deal with the consequences of their decisions and actions. For example, passengers who end up in an airplane accident are not responsible for this event. Rather, responsibility rests on managers who chose to lower the costs of flying by cutting corners on maintenance and security. As such, while the passengers do not create risks, they are the ones who face potential external dangers (Luhmann 2017).

In the context of tourism, risk is understood as any danger, whether real or imagined, that jeopardizes the functioning of the tourism system (Sönmez & Graefe 1998). The notion of 'real or imagined' risks has been hotly debated around the academic literature regarding risk. For example, Larsen (2007) argued that since risk is rooted in people's life experiences and their access to information, and is therefore cognitive in nature, there are other, much deeper

sentiments that have been overlooked by rationalist psychologists. To further this argument, Larsen differentiates between “risks” and “worries”. While risks or potential dangers are recognized or ignored according to individual perceptions and choices, tourist worries are associated with the emotional disposition of an individual traveling or not traveling to a certain destination as related to concerns of potential future events that may have a negative outcome (Larsen 2007; Larsen, Brun & Øgaard 2009). Far from being rational agents, tourists are motivated by internal emotions, which emotions derive in large part from previous experiences. This explains, in part, why some travelers are risk-seekers while others are risk-avoiders (Wolff & Larsen 2014). As such, increasing fear by tourists of the unknown or potential future negative events forces policy makers to address their concerns over security at tourism destinations (Adams 2001; Bianchi 2006).

However, as Bianchi (2006) suggests, fear is paradoxical—as a reaction to unknown or potential negative events, it is difficult to engage in communication or marketing campaigns that will fully alleviate people’s fear. For example, several studies reveal that there are cultural differences regarding travel risk perceptions (Reisinger & Mavondo 2005; Sharifpour, Walters & Ritchie 2014). More specifically, tourists from English-speaking countries and Protestant Christians feel less secure while traveling abroad than tourists from other nationalities and faiths (Fuchs & Reichel 2004; He, Park & Roehl 2013; Lepp & Gibson 2003; Quintal, Lee & Soutar 2010), in part because citizens of states involved in the “War on Terror” tend to be more reluctant to visit Muslim countries than citizens from other nationalities (Korstanje 2009).

Fear may be defined as the rise of unpleasant emotions caused by external threats. Not only do these emotions jeopardize the ontological security of the person, but as a basic emotion, ensures human survival by orchestrating different responses with both an individual and a collective actions to preserve life. However, at times, risk can paralyze and individual or group, keeping them from making the best decisions in the moment (Bauman 2013). Although biological at their roots, fears have adapted to cultures and times (Douglas & Wildavsky 1983). Unfortunately, fear has not received adequate research attention commensurate with its importance within tourism studies. As Bianchi (2006) noted, discourses on security emphasize governance as tug-of-war that supports democracies in fighting terrorism. The neoliberalization of the world, which underpins globalization, has enhanced the human right of mobility among western tourists (Hall, Amore & Arvanitis 2019; Wearing et al., 2019). As such, the ideological essence of modern tourism is therefore intertwined with liberty and consumption. This process of democratization, which is supported and epitomized by globalization and tourism (Timothy 2019), however, flies in the face of totalitarian states, often known as “rogue states”. Nevertheless, the neoliberal discourse is trapped in a conceptual gridlock, where “The capacity-freedom presupposes liberty, but liberty does not presuppose capacity freedom” (Bianchi 2006: 67).

Since its genesis, the modern state has enthusiastically embraced people’s right to travel and the freedom of mobility as two related and mainstream cultural values as a means of shoring up their sovereign power. However, as noted above, the events of September 11, 2001 inaugurated a new period in which fear became a global commodity, creating or stimulating new consumer products and modes of surveillance (Bianchi 2006). However, although humanity is more secure today than preceding generations, the excess of freedom in today’s world in most societies engenders a climate of uncertainty, which is fertile ground for fomenting fears and anxieties (Bianchi 2006; Bianchi & Stephenson 2013). As such, the question must be asked: Will risk and fear transform tourism, and if so, in what ways?

Partly in answer to this question, Korstanje and Clayton (2012) suggest that tourism and terrorism share many common features, including the use of mass transportation and media

management, albeit for many different goals. Their premise is that western rationality introduces extortion as an economic and cultural relationship. Terrorism, or at least the threat of terrorism, leads to changes in both technological innovations (i.e., the logic of destructive creation) and the cost of consumer products related to travel and risk. In this case, security becomes a commodity that is exchanged in different economic circuits, with peripheral economies that cannot afford to make the appropriate changes falling behind more developed economies. As well this gap between peripheral and developed economies is created through their capacity (or lack of) to create economic value (Lash, Urry & Urry 1993). In a globalized economy, personal and media perception divides the world into safe and unsafe tourism destinations. As such, there has been a growth of a network of security and risk experts, which growth has occurred proportionally to the increasing perception of fear and risk as legitimated by modern science since 9/11 (Beck 1992; Luhmann 2017). Countries that have access to these experts are generally perceived as being safer. However, as Mansfeld and Pizam (2006) note, one of the limitations within the field of tourism security is the difficulty in demonstrating how theory and practice can be effectively combined. This in part because of the complexity of the tourism system, with its multiple stakeholders, all of whom pursue their own interests, making holistic planning attempts difficult at best.

Society and religious tourism

Emile Durkheim, one of the pioneers of modern sociology, stressed in his early essays the importance of religion in society. Based on his work with aboriginal tribes, Durkheim believed that the power and authority invested in individuals in a particular society emanated from a divine source he called a “totem”. This totem, whether based on animals, plants, or human-made icons, became an object around which social cohesion and a sense of social identity were developed. In the case of religion, Durkheim argued that religion would eventually disappear in industrial societies because industrialization would undermine the social ties of faith or the totem (Durkheim 2008). MacCannell (1973) argued the same but also suggested that the new “totem” in industrialized societies would be leisure and tourism. For MacCannell, tourism provided relief from the frustrations and daily grind of everyday life through the channels of leisure consumption and hedonism. While MacCannell hinted that the spheres of the “sacred” and the “profane” should be seen as separate entities in modern society, he believed that people’s need to experience some form of “reality” and novelty—something unfamiliar and far from the humdrum conditions of home—would lead to the acceptance of “staged authenticity”, which would fill the gap left by the decline of religion in daily life (MacCannell 1973, 1999, 2002).

However, Raj and Griffin (2015) and Olsen (2019) recognize that far from disappearing from the public sphere, religion remains alive within post-secular societies. Since many forms of tourism are motivated by maximizing pleasure, some scholars suggest that pilgrimage is somehow different from tourism (Collins-Kreiner 2010; see Cohen 1992). Indeed, pilgrims and tourists not only vary in their psychological motivations but also in the levels of anxieties and their religious attachment to the divinity (Collins-Kreiner 2010; Korstanje & Seraphin 2017), without mentioning the divorce between the “sacred” and the “profane” (Korstanje & George 2012). Ample evidence shows that some forms of pilgrimage and religious tourism are very much motivated by pleasure, enjoyment, and leisure, in addition to religious obligations, such as religious festivals and holy day celebrations (Olsen 2010). As such, this distinction between pilgrimage and tourism is blurry at best (Kaelber 2006), and precise borders cannot reliably be drawn between pilgrimage and tourism.

For example, Korstanje and George (2012: 162) note that the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) off the coast of Argentina are “a mythical archetype enrooted in nationalism, heroism, human rights, and political tolerance” despite its national “sacredness” for the Argentinian state and its citizens, most Argentinians do not visit the Islas Malvinas/Falkland Islands for religious or even for nationalistic pilgrimages. Indeed, tourism is not promoted to the islands in an effort to maintain the mythical and sacrosanct spaces of the Islands through excluding humans. This differs from MacCannell’s view that spaces become “sanctified” through mass tourism. Critiquing the sacred/profane dichotomy, Korstanje and George (2012) coined the terms “sacred-sacred” and “sacred-profane”, with the former term referring to sacredness regardless of a human presence or not, while the latter term connotes the human labeling and symbolization of the divine. It is not otiose to assume that tourism operates in the dimension of the “sacred-profane”, while the “sacred-sacred” is reserved for the domain of religion (Korstanje & George 2012). In this vein, Stausberg (2011) introduces the term “*homo turisticus religiosus*” to express the impossibility of fully dissociating tourism from religion and pilgrimage.

Religious events or festivals are key elements in enhancing social cohesion, narrowing the distance between gods and humankind. Because of this, the orchestration of rites and rituals not only should be carefully monitored by religious authorities to avoid conflict between multiple religious groups or within a religious group (Dayan & Katz 1994; Olsen & Timothy 2002), but policy makers should also devote considerable effort and material resources to avoiding conflict or any manifestation of violence in pilgrimage and religious festivals to prevent a broader climate of political instability (Henderson 2003). At the same time, because pilgrimages are conceived as liminal experiences for people who leave the comfort of home to travel to a spiritual center, faith communities develop their own ontological conceptions of security and risk (Collins-Kreiner, Kliot, Mansfeld & Sagi 2017; Nikjoo, Razavizadeh & Di Giovine 2020). In contrast with tourists, many pilgrims and religious leaders tolerate higher levels of uncertainty, discomfort, and risk in their pilgrimages since their journey aquires a redemptive value, particularly if death occurs during their travels (Belhassen, Caton & Stewart 2008).

Ultimately, as noted above, it is important to view limitations in the development of security systems beyond objective reality. As Sunstein (2005) puts it, people fear things that are sometimes imagined, and their emotional dispositions regarding those imagined things often distort external risks that are otherwise regulated by government experts in a “populist climate” of dissatisfaction. Regular citizens, due to media influences, for example, frequently exaggerate risks that are relatively minor while mysteriously ignoring larger, more eminent risks (Sunstein 2005). As Clarke (2018) notes, ideology plays an important role in determining why humans loathe some frightening objects but love others. This is, as also noted above, culturally contingent, as the collective memory of a society is formed through discourses, anxieties, myths, narratives, and texts that determine social and individual behavior. People’s misgivings about terrorism or other risks are engendered by previous experiences and by what they are socially conditioned to see as good or bad. All this suggests that the world of ideas (ideology) should be taken more seriously when developing security-related programs, particularly those related to pilgrimage and religious tourism.

Understanding religious tourism security

The effects of risk in public spectacles depend on at least three variables. The first variable is the threshold of control, or the degree of control society has over the security of an event. This involves surveillance and the ability to predict the time and place of a potential

terrorist attack. Hypothetically, for example, a bombing can be more easily and visually monitored than food contamination by microorganisms. This leads to increased surveillance and concern over potential attacks against iconic heritage or political sites or important urban destinations that resonate deeply in public opinion compared to attacks that take place in peripheral or less popular regions. This explains in part why international terrorism targets tourist destinations and attractions or popular urban areas.

The second variable is the probability that a negative event could be repeated in the short term. When specialists identify a risk as having the potential to occur again, resources should be mobilized to prevent it from happening again; or, if this is not possible, to lessen its effects. Meanwhile, once a threat is repeated (e.g., terrorism), a desensitization may occur, and a general sense fatalism among both the locals and potential tourists may build. As specialists become more familiar with terrorism, perpetrators must devise new innovative and crueler forms of violence to grab public attention.

The third variable involves the status of victims of any security crises. While any casualty that comes about from violent acts is unacceptable, society seems to esteem different population segments differently. For example, society feels more threatened and vulnerable when women and children become casualties of violent acts. Likewise, high-status individuals who are affected by attacks or other crises draw more public attention than when ordinary people are affected. This also goes for foreign tourists. When Western tourists are affected by dangerous situations and terrorist attacks, it is more newsworthy and shocking than when locals are impacted. Terrorists know this, and therefore frequently attack tourist targets for their widespread impact and notoriety.

Terrorist attacks and other events can have an immediate effect on tourist arrivals. This is especially true in less-developed countries, where there is a stronger dependency between tourism and economic development. However, it is important to note that not all risks follow the same dynamic because they are caused by different phenomena. As noted earlier, while people's perceptions influence their travel behavior and views of a destination, under some conditions these perceptions obscure more than they clarify—with people focusing on either past momentous events or the potential of future events (even if they are of a low probability) while at the same time trivializing other major risks, whether they be viruses and pandemics, food insecurity, terror attacks, airplane and road accidents, natural disasters, dangerous climatic or topographical conditions, crimes against tourists, and political instability (Sunstein 2005).

Out of these risks, each of which generates different reactions in the minds of tourists, terrorism is widely esteemed as a global risk, including in the context of pilgrimage and religious tourism. The risk cannot be understood without a social imaginary that constitutes the existence of risk. In this vein, tourists choose travel opportunities according to their level of risk awareness, which is usually developed by their own experiences and outside sources of information. This means that while some risks (e.g., terrorism) are deeply feared and avoided, others (e.g., local crime) are often overlooked, possibly because these types of risks are widely accepted as a common possibility (e.g. car accidents and pickpocketing).

In support of the above, Achcar (2015) contends that not all victims have the same social value. Western tourists are often a much sought-after tourist market segment, even more than domestic tourists or international tourists from non-Western countries because of their higher expenditures. Because of the global political power of the countries from which these Western tourists come from, terrorist organizations seem to prioritize tourists from the Global North over tourists from the Global South in terms of targeting. When people from developing societies support and sympathize with victims from the developed world, they

feel a part of a “global empire” in a mega-structure that systematically rejects them as lower-order dwellers in a globalized world. However, since many terrorist networks originate in countries with underdeveloped economies, they cannot compete with global powers and remain largely outside the economic structure of the world (Korstanje 2016; Tzanelli 2016).

Much of the motivations of terrorists are related to religion, whether based on apocalyptic prophesy, the establishment of theocratic political spaces, or creating a pure religious state (Chowdhury et al. 2017). In this context, pilgrimage and religious tourism sites are prime targets for attacks that aim to create political instability, as disturbing sacred rituals and mega-events and damaging religious sites is an efficient way of undermining the authority of the state and religious leaders. For example, in their examination of pilgrimage to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in India, Khajuria and Khanna (2014) found that while safety and security lead to a decline in tourists. The religious diversity associated to ethnic disputes can engender potential tension between pilgrimages and locals. This is aggravated by the fact many religious destinations are situated in isolated areas, with roads that do not allow a rapid intervention of security forces. For that reason, pilgrimages’ perception of risk is vital to understand in what ways destinations are valorized as safe or unsafe. While Khajuria and Khanna also found that safety and security issues were not concerns among the majority of pilgrims, there were some differences in risk perception among different ages of pilgrims. Still further, leisure tourists and pilgrims develop different expectancies respecting to risk. For example, accidents and risk of unhygienic food were pondered as major threats. Unlike classic tourists who are very demanding, pilgrims compensate for the bad experiences derived from the lack of infrastructure with their faith.

Religious principles for crisis leadership

Religion is one way in which people organize themselves and create leadership structures. Founding leaders of religions develop both the leadership structure based on their personal leadership ideas (Worden 2005) as well as the eternal rewards that come to the faithful (Frunza 2017). Yet the question is often asked: Why are people attracted to religion? Religious adherence is often a response to a sense of loss or the lack of meaning or purpose that all humans go through at some point in their lives. Religion provides answers to some of life’s biggest questions and establishes a framework for better living. However, the success of a religion depends upon its ability to provide solutions to the human condition. Meaning and purpose are time-transcendent promises, and many religions require people to delay personal gratification and sacrifice present pleasures for greater eternal rewards in the life to come. This same reasoning, however, may also lead to the development of terrorist activities, especially when otherworldly rewards are combined with violent acts in the here and now.

This caveat aside, religion teaches positive values that may help individuals rise above the challenges of crises and become leaders at different scales. Religious leadership comes in many forms, including “leader as teacher” and “leader as seer”. As well, religious leaders may encourage adherents to incorporate religious virtues in their daily and work leadership, as well as take on a servant-leadership role in their dealings with other people. These views of leadership, however, can differ between different religions. For instance, some strands of Hinduism and Buddhism highlight that the individual is their own leader. In the Advaita tradition of Hinduism, this idea is articulated as *Tat Tvam Asi* (“Thou Art That”). Abrahamic religions, on the other hand, clearly distinguish leaders from followers, although in Christianity, there is much emphasis on emulating Christ and his attributes among both leaders and followers.

A central idea that resonates with most religions is the servant-leadership theory, in which leaders should serve those they lead. There is no better situation to put this into practice in times of crisis. While Christianity claims this philosophy as its own, the idea of servant-leadership is evident in Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, as well as other faiths (Shirin 2014). In the Abrahamic religions, ancient leaders such as Moses and Abraham are revered as examples of transformational servant-leaders. In Buddhism, Buddha is seen as the ultimate example of servant-leader. Hinduism exhorts individuals to transform into servant-leaders, although it also teaches that people are already transformed beings but do not realize it due to *Maya* (i.e., illusion or magic), and can only come to a realization of such through interactions with strong servant-leaders such as gurus.

Charismatic leadership theory is another common thread among the world's religions, where the founders of charismatic faiths gained a considerable following as a result of their charisma, whether through healing or sheer personal character (Barnes 1978). Charismatic leaders can play a fundamental role during crises, when people look for guidance and instruction. Religious leaders can also play an important role in developing people's attitudes towards a range of things in the secular realm (Emerson & McKinney 2010), including avoiding or engaging in risky situations, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, where some religious leaders encouraged adherents to follow government and health official's guidelines while other religious leaders wanted adherents to leave things in the hands of God (Olsen and Timothy, 2020).

Conclusion

One of the conceptual problems when studying perceptions of risks is that scholars over-emphasize what tourists perceive of as risk factors as based on questionnaires and interviews. Methodologically, this is somewhat risky, as study participants may either lie to protect their own interests or simply refrain from expressing their innermost feelings. In many cultures, men are culturally conditioned to reject fear as a real emotion since it can diminish their masculinity. As such, many studies often do not provide deeper insight into the difference between risks and threats (Korstanje 2009). Therefore, more studies are needed to interrogate the intersection of language in the formation of risk. The best anecdote to illustrate the functioning of risk derives from an ethnography done in an aboriginal community living alongside an active volcano in southern Argentina, while the first author was a student. Many volcanologists and other scientists were asked by government officials to evacuate the aboriginal community. They were deeply surprised when the locals not only rejected evacuation attempts but also pointed out that the worrisome eruptions were a direct result of God's rage. In fact, the technology introduced to predict the volcanic activity in the region was considered by the local population to be the main reason for the disaster. This illustrates the power of spiritual beliefs and religious perceptions in people's ontological construction of security (Korstanje & Baker 2018).

Religion is like fire—it can soothe or boost aggression in individuals and groups. During religious travel, people go through a liminal transition from one psychological state to another. To ensure this transition is more meaningful, purposeful, and impactful, spiritual leadership is needed. In the event of terrorism during a religious gathering, religious leaders should act as crisis managers, with crisis leadership being based upon religious principles. As Korstanje and George (2020) note, religious tourism has economic potential in some peripheral regions, but run the risk of creating radicalized discourses which direct a much deeper sentiment of resentment against foreigner tourists, particularly in the COVID-19 era where

pilgrims are spreaders of the virus (Korstanje 2020; Olsen & Timothy, 2020). As ambassadors of their respective nations, religious tourists are easy targets. This chapter stresses the importance of managing crimes in religious tourism and how leadership principles from the teachings of religions themselves can help improve management practices within the context of risks. The promotion of security-related programs should include the voice and opinion of religious leaders who placate the historical discontent or the dormant inter-ethnic conflicts of some groups. Religious leaders not only guide pilgrims in interpreting the sacred text in the correct way, but they also manage human emotions. Hate and resentment are powerful emotions, which, unless they are successfully regulated by religious leaders, may lead very well to a process of radicalization (Korstanje & George 2012). Unfortunately, there is not much literature on this topic. However, societies should continue to provide avenues for spiritual emancipation, with religious tourism being an important part of this. Therefore, it is somewhat ironic that events that are held to uplift individuals and societies are often targeted for terrorist attacks or other major crimes. Likewise, religiously motivated crimes sometimes target festivities that are considered profane by those perpetrating the attacks.

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