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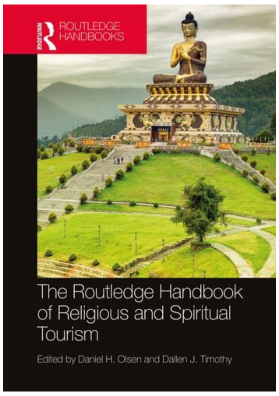

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The religious and spiritual dimensions of leisure travel

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4

THE RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF LEISURE TRAVEL

Paul Heintzman

Introduction

Twenty-two years ago, I (Heintzman 1998) reviewed one of the first books published on the intersections between religion and tourism, Boris Vukonić's (1996) *Tourism and Religion*. In the first chapter of his book, Vukonić discussed the relationships between spiritual life and leisure time and stated that the book's emphasis was on "those characteristics of free time and leisure time that determine or promote people's relationship toward their spiritual needs" (p. 5). Although alluding to Dumazedier's (1974) understanding of leisure as the activities in which a person participates, Pieper's (1968) classical understanding of leisure as contemplation, and Veblen's (1899/1953) work on leisure as a function of social class characterized by conspicuous consumption, Vukonić primarily focused on an understanding of leisure as free time, suggesting that "people will find spiritual fulfillment mostly in the time that is free from organized work…the effect of free time is to intensify the various forms of our spiritual life, and in a certain sense to encourage and develop it" (p. 4). Later, he explained that "spiritual life is being increasingly transferred to, and manifested, in free time. Free time has thus become a space for the contemplative and the creative, a unity of thought and action" (p. 8). Contextualizing this idea within the Christian spiritual tradition, he argued that

> …free time and leisure are a unique and unified time given to people by God, which should therefore be used to serve God. Leisure time, the part of free time in which people will express their most intimate inclinations and devote themselves only to that which satisfies them completely, is the ideal time for people to find the peace they need to give themselves to God and receive Him.
>
> *(p. 9)*

Thus, he concluded, "Leisure is also our way to God" (p. 10).

While Vukonić (1996) viewed leisure as free time, he also recognized that free time and leisure time are not synonymous. Rather, he viewed leisure as the positive use of free time:

> Although it is quite difficult to distinguish between the concepts of free time and leisure time, because these two concepts overlap and complement each other, their conceptual

> features are clear. This is not Veblen's idleness….This is leisure which should continually make more room for true human living. This undeniably includes everything that enriches people, first of all their spiritual life.
>
> *(p. 11)*

Vukonić then moved to connect free time and leisure to tourism

> …in its origins and duration. Numerous theorists tend to go so far as to claim that tourism is a classical product of free time or leisure. When free time became the property of the masses, modern (mass) tourism appeared as a form of using that time. That is why the analysis of tourism as a phenomenon is often approached from the aspect of free time and leisure time.
>
> *(p. 14)*

Vukonić later noted that both leisure and tourism are beneficial

> …we see tourism as a productive part of leisure time, as a phenomenon that will have a positive and productive effect on the total life of humankind. This is because tourism provides people with the conditions for a constant search for the spiritual enrichment of the individual and his or her constant self-improvement as a personality.
>
> *(p. 18)*

Since the publication of Vukonić's (1996) book, there has been a dramatic increase in scholarship on the intersections between leisure, tourism, religion, and spirituality. The purpose of this chapter is to examine this scholarship, first by discussing the prevalent concepts in the domain of leisure research and then connecting these concepts with religious and spiritual tourism. The chapter then provides a preliminary framework within which to organize empirical research that examines the spiritual and religious outcomes of leisure travel.

Concepts of leisure

Within the leisure studies field, the view of leisure as free time as promoted by Vukonić (1996) is only one of many conceptualizations of leisure. Other common understandings of leisure include classical leisure, leisure as activity, leisure as a function of social class, the psychological understanding of leisure as subjective experience, feminist perspectives of leisure, and holistic leisure (Heintzman 2013a). Each of these understandings of leisure, as well as the view of leisure as free time, is examined here in turn.

Classical leisure. Classical views of leisure that have their roots in ancient Greece emphasize "a spiritual and mental attitude, a state of inward calm, contemplation, serenity, and openness" (Kraus 1984: 42). This classical view, which focuses on a state of being as well as moral choices and conduct, has evolved through the centuries, from Aristotle to early Christian writers such as Augustine, and then to Thomas Aquinas and monasticism during the Middle Ages. More recently, this tradition has continued in the Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian Pieper (1968) who, in his book *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, defined leisure as "a mental and spiritual attitude…a condition of the soul…a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude" (pp. 40–41).

Leisure as activity. This view of leisure focuses on the activities that are undertaken during free time. Murphy (1974) defined leisure as "non-work activity in which people engage during their free time—apart from obligations of work, family and society" (p. 4). Historically, the activity view of leisure was usually utilitarian in nature—that is, activities engaged in during leisure time were done in order to achieve some sort of benefit or to meet targeted outcomes, such as becoming healthier or to improve social relationships. From this perspective, leisure has often been viewed as subservient to work-related activities and associated with a life rhythm of work and recreation. More recently, however, the leisure as activity concept has not necessarily been a utilitarian view. The French sociologist Joffre Dumazedier (1967), for example, has argued that "Leisure is activity—apart from the obligations of work, family and society—to which the individual turns at will, for relaxation, diversion, or broadening his knowledge and his spontaneous social participation, the free exercise of his creative capacity" (pp. 16–17). For Dumazedier, leisure had three main functions: relaxation, entertainment, and personality development. Based on the activity view of leisure, Stebbins (1999) developed the concepts of "serious leisure" and "casual leisure." Serious leisure is "the systematic pursuit of… an activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that…they launch themselves on a career centred on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (p. 69). In contrast, casual leisure is an "immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it" (Stebbins 1997: 18). This pleasure-oriented activity tends to be non-utilitarian.

Leisure as free time. This view of leisure, as introduced earlier in the discussion of Vukonić's (1996) work, is a quantitative understanding that defines leisure as "that portion of time which remains when time for work and basic requirements for existence have been satisfied" (Murphy 1974: 3). From this viewpoint, life is divided into existence (i.e., attending to biological needs such as eating and sleeping), subsistence (i.e., work), and leisure (i.e., non-obligated or discretionary time). This view assumes that the more free time one has, the more leisure time one has, reducing leisure to a unit of time with no focus on the quality of that period of time.

Leisure as a function of social class. This view of leisure can be defined as "a way of life for the rich elite" (Murphy 1974: 92). In his classic book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, the American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1899/1953) questioned the intrinsic character of leisure activities and hypothesized that leisure behavior was influenced by the desire to impress others and distinguish oneself from other people. Veblen therefore defined leisure as "non-productive consumption of time" (p. 46). From his perspective, "Time is consumed non-productively (1) from a sense of the unworthiness of productive work, and (2) as an evidence of pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness" (p. 46). Veblen coined the terms "conspicuous leisure" and "conspicuous consumption" to explain how the visible display of leisure and its consumption was more important than actually engaging in leisure activities for their own sake. Therefore, according to Veblen, leisure was symbolic, with wealthy classes of citizens throughout time being identified by both their use of available leisure and their possessions while lower classes of citizens tried to imitate or emulate the wealthy classes.

Leisure as a psychological, subjective experience. The study of leisure as subjective or psychological experience, also known as the state of mind view which gained prominence within leisure studies in the 1980s, focuses on the human "experience that results from recreation engagements" (Driver & Tocher 1970: 10). This view of leisure is founded upon psychological concepts such as William James' (1890) notion of "stream of consciousness," in which conscious states or mental experiences are perceived as continuous and ever-changing, and Abraham Maslow's (1968) idea of "peak experience," which refers to "moments of highest happiness and fulfillment" (p. 73). Another psychological concept frequently associated with this view of leisure is Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) concept of "flow," where participation in some activities leads to intensely absorbing experiences, in that the challenge of an activity matches the skill level of an individual so that the person loses track of both time and awareness of self. Leisure as psychological experience includes properties such as moods and emotions; levels of activation and arousal; cognitions such as images, ideas, thoughts, and beliefs; the perception of how quickly time is passing; levels of attention and concentration; self-awareness and self-consciousness; sense of competence and mastery; sense of autonomy and freedom; and sense of interpersonal relationships (Walker, Kleiber & Mannell 2019; cf. Graef et al. 1983; Mannell & Iso-Ahola 1987).

Feminist views of leisure. Feminist scholars have long been critical of the traditional views of leisure as free time or a set of activities that differ from work because these views are built on premises that do not always take into consideration the constraints on women's leisure time and leisure activities (Henderson 1991). Feminist research and theorizing on leisure have led to an enhanced understanding of leisure, not as time or activities, but as a meaningful experience characterized by enjoyment (Henderson et al. 1996). These meaningful experiences may be found in many aspects of life. Often, the meaningful experience is associated with time for one's self to relax and do nothing rather than participating which is often the case for males. Feminists have developed the concept of affiliative leisure that suggests relationships with other people such as friends and family are more important than the specific type of leisure they engage in (Henderson et al. 1996). Feminists emphasize agentic leisure characterized by autonomy where one can express oneself through self-determined (rather than determined by other people) activities and experiences (Freysinger & Flannery 1992; Henderson et al. 1996). Because the emphasis is on meaningful experience, the activity, social setting, or physical location is seen as a leisure container in which the experience of leisure may take place (Henderson et al. 1996; Freysinger & Kelly 2004). Feminists also speak of leisure enablers, the opposite of leisure constraints, that allow and facilitate leisure experiences. An example of a leisure enabler is a sense of entitlement to leisure (Henderson et al. 1996; Gibson, Ashton-Schaeffer, Green & Autry 2003).

Holistic views of leisure. From this perspective, leisure is seen as a total way of life—that there is very little that differentiates work and leisure. Leisure may be experienced within the various contexts of life such as family, education, religion, or work. Leisure is fused with satisfying work and is continuous instead of fragmented. Therefore, the holistic concept unites leisure as an end, as in the classical view, with leisure as a means, as in the activity view. It combines a focus on "being" with a focus on "doing" and therefore reflects a return to a more traditional way of life (Kaplan 1974).

According to Kraus (2001), an additional "way of conceptualizing leisure…[is] in terms of its contribution to spiritual expression or religious values" (p. 36). However, spirituality has been linked to many of the existing definitions of leisure (Heintzman 2002). For example, the classical leisure perspective, with its emphasis on contemplation, has had spiritual overtones for centuries. Defined as free time, leisure time can be used for spiritual growth. Defined as activity, spiritual activities can be included. Peak experience, optimal experience, and flow, which are associated with the state-of-mind view of leisure, also describe spiritual experiences. Holistic leisure integrates spirituality into all of life, including leisure.

Connecting leisure concepts with religious and spiritual tourism

Now that we have reviewed the main concepts of leisure, how might they be related to religious and spiritual tourism? In regard to *classical leisure*, Voigt, Brown and Howat (2011) found that spiritual retreat visitors, in contrast to lifestyle resort visitors and beauty spa visitors, placed more value on transcendent experiences that involved self-awareness at the spiritual level, a sense of spiritual renewal, experiencing peace and calmness, contemplating one's life, and meditative practices. Such a description has similarities with classical leisure. Likewise, in another study, reflection was an important part of spiritual retreatants' experience that deepened their relationship with God (Gill, Packer & Ballantyne 2018; see Chapter 14 this volume).

Regarding *leisure as activity* and its connection to spiritual and religious tourism, in his dissertation on spiritual tourism, Alex Norman (2004) defined tourism as "a leisure activity that can range from a convalescent-type "recharge" away from the normal working world to an existential search for meaning and truth, or a quest for the sacred that bears many of the marks of pilgrimage" (p. 12). Following Stebbins' (1999) idea of serious versus casual leisure, Haq and Jackson (2006) made a distinction between the purposeful spiritual tourist with deep intention, for whom "personal spiritual growth is the main reason for visiting" and the casual spiritual tourist, for whom "personal spiritual growth is a casual motivation for the visit" and who has a lower level of spiritual experience (p. 2). Moufakkir and Selmi (2018) suggested that participants in Sharpley and Jepson's (2011) study of tourists to England's Lake District should be categorized as casual spiritual tourists, as their travel was not purposefully to seek spiritual fulfillment, whereas Moufakkir and Selmi considered participants in their own study to be purposeful spiritual tourists because their motivation was "to intentionally seek spiritual fulfilment" (p. 109). Another example related to casual and serious leisure is Voigt, Howat, and Brown's (2010) study where they found that beauty spa tourists focused on hedonistic outcomes, whereas spiritual retreat visitors progressed through various stages of obtaining new skills, knowledge, and training in religious or philosophical teachings and meditation techniques, much in the same way that someone develops skills during a work career. These retreat visitors described their experiences which did not necessarily exclude negative emotions, as deeply fulfilling, which in some cases led to increased self-knowledge and self-identity. Yoga tourism has also been categorized by tourism researchers as a form of serious leisure (Patterson, Getz & Gubb 2016; Bowers & Cheer 2017; Dillette, Douglas & Andrzejewski 2019).

As noted above, Vukonić's (1996) work on tourism and religion used the *leisure as free time* perspective to discuss religious and spiritual travel during leisure time. Indeed, tourism, religion, and spirituality have many structural similarities, in addition to the fact that for the most part, they take place during people's leisure time. Thus, activities related to tourism, religion, and spirituality compete with each other as well as with other leisure activities from which people can choose to participate in during their free time. These activities may also complement each other if the religious and spiritual tourist combines them within their free time activities (Weidenfeld & Ron 2008).

The possibility that tourism might be linked to the concept of *leisure as a function of social class* is alluded to in MacCannell's (1976/2013) classic book *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, where he argued that the expansion of modern society was "intimately linked in diverse ways to modern mass leisure, especially to international tourism and sightseeing" (p. 3). However, this view of leisure does not seem very relevant to religious and spiritual tourism, as according to this view, people often engage in leisure for extrinsic reasons—to impress others with their conspicuous leisure and their conspicuous consumption (Veblen 1899/1953). This leisure perspective is most likely to be reflected in Yiannakis and Gibson's (1992) "high-class tourists" and "jetsetters" tourist types, while those who engage in religious and spiritual tourism are more likely to be intrinsically motivated and aligned with Yiannakis and Gibson's "seeker" tourist type, who seek "spiritual and/or personal knowledge to better understand self and meaning of life (p. 291); and "who, through travel, seek to learn more about themselves, and ultimately, the meaning of existence. Seekers are clearly on some type of quest" (pp. 297–298).

A good example of the *leisure as psychological/subjective experience* perspective is Little and Schmidt's (2006) study of the spiritual dimensions of experiences people have during leisure travel. Lamenting that tourism research focuses more on defining and objectifying tourists and understanding supply and demand determinants for travel rather than the subjective tourist experience, Little and Schmidt argued that "understanding personal meanings, structural frameworks and the inner worlds of participating individuals, is core to further unpacking the experience itself" (p. 108). As such, the authors investigated the spiritual dimension of the tourist experience for ten independent leisure travelers. They found that leisure travel was a multifaceted experience that had spiritual effects and meaning for the participants—where participants obtained a greater awareness of self, others or God; experienced an enhanced sense of relationship with something greater than the self; and had an intensely spiritual leisure travel experience, that was characterized by release, fear, awe, and wonder.

Peak experiences and "flow," as discussed above, are important aspects of both subjective leisure experiences and tourist experiences. Cohen (2006), for example, suggested that experiences during pilgrimage travel reflect "a peak experience (a special moment in Time), where the sacred and profane meet" (p. 80). In a study of Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land, participants identified "peak moments" when they felt connected to their faith's history and to Jesus (Belhassen, Caton & Stewart 2008), in part because "the tour was steeped in moments in which toured objects, tourist performances, socialization, and faith merged to produce powerful spiritual experiences" (p. 682). Flow experiences have also been discussed in the context of heritage tourism where heritage resources and sites have the potential to create flow-like experiences characterized by reverence and transcendence (e.g., Powell et al. 2015). It is important to note, however, that spiritual experiences may become conflated with peak and flow experiences in which certain states of mind are achieved through engaging in certain travel experiences. Some empirical studies have documented this confusion. For example, Jepson and Sharpley (2015) argued that for many tourists, "the distinction between emotional and spiritual experiences was not always clear" (p. 1165). Likewise, Jarratt and Sharpley (2017) recognized that some of the experiences that seaside tourists have may fit better with wellness and psychological concepts rather than spirituality (see Chapter 11, this volume). However, as Esfahani, Musa, and Khoo (2014) argued, "spirituality is a more stable state of mind, achieved through perception and feedback from people and the environment" (p. 4).

As mentioned above, *feminists* have critiqued traditional concepts of leisure and have placed an emphasis on meaningful experience characterized by enjoyment. This focus on meaningful experience and enjoyment is seen in a number of tourism studies. Tourism memories have been found to be more psychologically important for women compared to men (Anderson & Littrell 1995). Likewise, the moderating effects of memorable tourist experiences upon subjective well-being have been discovered to be greater for women than men (Sthapit & Coudounaris 2017). Experience has been found to be very important to Goddess pilgrims, who were not mere sightseers, but rather intimately experienced the sacred landscape at a multisensory level that resulted in a strong embodied connection (Rountree 2002). In a study of contemporary women's travel narratives of Paris, experience was a significant theme with one of the over-arching themes being emotional experience of place: "Paris arouses extremely meaningful and emotional experiences for the women travel writers in this study….They are re-inventing themselves as women who confidently embrace the sensuous and emotional experiences of everyday life…" (McClinchey 2017: 7).

The feminist concept of affiliative leisure is also evident in tourism research. Both quantitative and qualitative research on the holiday travel of single women established that being together, sharing experiences, and bonding with friends during holiday travel was important to single women of all ages (Heimtun & Morgan 2012). Similarly, a study of Goddess pilgrims found that they experienced community and a high level of connection with other women with whom they shared their pilgrimage (Rountree 2002).

The idea of *holistic leisure* and its connection to religious and spiritual tourism, clearly visible in the title of Smith's (2003) paper, "Holistic holidays: Tourism and the reconciliation of body, mind and spirit," is to some extent, tied to the understanding of tourism as a form of modern pilgrimage (MacCannell 1973; Cohen 2006). Through travel, people who find their lives as fragmented or who search for meaning may experience a more holistic and authentic way of life in which the fragmented parts of their lives are brought together. Such travel may involve a search for personal authenticity through an inner journey of significant self-transformation. Cohen (2006; see Kelner 2012) gives the example of Jewish youth who travel to Israel, with the purpose of bringing together in a holistic way their fractured identities by experiencing different dimensions of Jewish life (social, political, religious, and spiritual) and to engage in significant actions that express national and ethnic identity. Cohen (2006) noted that these Jewish youth may experience transformations that are behavioral (i.e., participation in the local Jewish community, engaging in religious rituals), affective (i.e., greater feelings of commitment and attachment), and/or cognitive (i.e., attitudinal adjustment, growth in knowledge) in nature. For retreat tourism participants, retreat centers offer a holistic retreat experience of a home away from home, healthy foods, spiritual practices, and transformational learning (Bone 2013). Another example is that of health holidays or holistic tourism (Smith 2003; Smith & Kelly 2006; Voigt, Brown & Howat 2011; Bowers & Cheer 2017). Many people travel to accomplish goals related to holistic living and self-transformation. In contrast to mass tourism that tends to focus on escaping one's everyday setting, holistic tourism helps people to engage their inner being and resolve internal conflict through spiritual and deeply personal activities. This type of tourism, often focused on healing and fitness, is based on the holistic premise that each dimension of health (e.g., spiritual and physical) is interrelated with all the others.

Spiritual and religious outcomes of leisure travel: a framework for synthesizing empirical research

In recent decades, there has been a dramatic increase in empirical research on the spiritual outcomes of leisure travel and tourism; however, there are few frameworks or models that synthesize this empirical research. Some researchers (Bond, Packer & Ballantyne 2015; Gill, Packer & Ballantyne 2018) have applied Beeho and Prentice's (1997) Activity, Setting, Experience, Benefits (ASEB) framework to their research on the spiritual outcomes of tourism. More recently, Cheer, Belhassen, and Kujawa (2017) developed a conceptual framework for spiritual tourism, whereas Chhabra (2020) created a conceptual model of slow spiritual tourism. However, none of these frameworks are based on an extensive synthesis of empirical research. In this paper, I provide a framework to organize empirical research that has examined the spiritual outcomes of leisure travel and tourism. This framework is based on a slight modification to an existing framework of outdoor activities and spirituality that includes antecedent conditions, setting, and recreation components, which together lead to short- and long-term spiritual outcomes (Heintzman 2016a; cf. Heintzman 2012, 2013c, 2016b). In the tourism context, the recreation component will be renamed the tourism activity component.

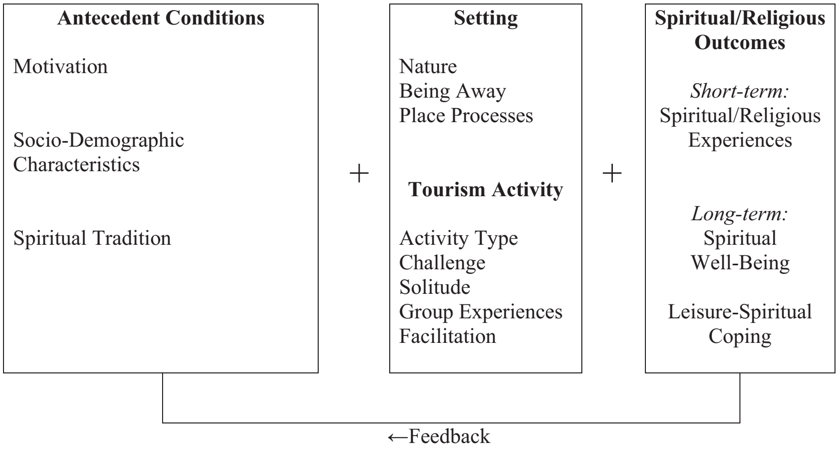
Antecedent Conditions
Motivation
Socio-Demographic Characteristics
Spiritual Tradition
+
Setting
Nature
Being Away
Place Processes
Tourism Activity
Activity Type
Challenge
Solitude
Group Experiences
Facilitation
+
Spiritual/Religious Outcomes
Short-term:
Spiritual/Religious Experiences
Long-term:
Spiritual Well-Being
Leisure-Spiritual Coping
←Feedback

Figure 4.1 Spiritual/religious outcomes of leisure travel.

The following preliminary but not exhaustive review of empirical studies on the spiritual dimensions of leisure travel and tourism reveals that most of the elements of this framework are present (Figure 4.1).

Antecedent conditions

The presence and type of spiritual outcomes that result from tourism activities may be influenced by antecedent conditions, which refer to people's characteristics prior to traveling, such as their motivations, social demographic characteristics, and religious and/or spiritual traditions. There is some evidence that *tourist motivations* may be related to spiritual outcomes. For example, Bond, Packer, and Ballantyne (2015) discovered that not only do Christian pilgrimage festivals and pilgrimage shrines appeal to those with a focus on spiritual interests, while grand cathedrals attract those with an interest in cultural heritage and religious history, but that shrine and festival visitors rated spiritual growth as the second highest of five tourist benefits whereas cathedral visitors had the lowest spiritual growth levels. Some research has found that there is not necessarily a clear relationship between tourist motivations and spiritual outcomes. In a study of visitors to Chichester Cathedral, even visitors who did not consider spiritual outcomes as their main motivation for visiting the cathedral tended to obtain some degree of spiritual blessing from their cathedral visit (Gutic, Caie & Clegg 2010: 757). Research by Sharpley and Sundaram (2005) on the motivations and experiences of western tourists to an Ashram in India discovered that although there were a diversity of motivations ranging from purposeful spiritual need satisfaction to secular knowledge-driven curiosity, different degrees of spiritual outcomes were experienced even if it was unintentional. Significantly, they found that spiritual benefits resulted from a desire to learn and a curiosity rather than spiritual motivations, a discovery that is consistent with the finding that intellectual motivations, along with stimulus-avoidance motivations, were correlated with spiritual well-being in a study of leisure, including travel and tourism activities, and spiritual well-being (Heintzman 1999).

In terms of *social demographic characteristics*, spirituality has been recognized as a determining factor in the travel motivations of senior tourists (Moal-Ulvoas 2014), and the resulting travel produces spiritual benefits for them (Moal-Ulvoas & Taylor 2014). In a study of visitors to English cathedrals, both the spiritual feelings evoked by the visit and the religious significance of the cathedral visit were dramatically higher for the oldest age group compared to the youngest age group (Jackson & Hudman 1995). Furthermore, more females (30%) than males (20%) noted that religious feelings accompanied their cathedral visit. These findings are consistent with studies of leisure and spirituality, which suggest that spiritual outcomes are more likely with older populations and with women in comparison to men (Heintzman 2016a, 2016b).

Spiritual tradition also influences religious and spiritual motivations and subsequently religious and spiritual outcomes. Andriotis (2009), for example, found that many of the visitors to Mount Athos were motivated by a strong commitment to their Orthodox Christian faith, and identified spiritual reasons for visiting Mount Athos more so than other types of visitors to the site. These "proskinites," as they are referred to, stated that their inner journey was more important than their outdoor journey, and that the pull motives for their journey included "to pray," "to venerate," "to meditate," "to get closer to God," "to be in a sacred shrine," "to strengthen their belief," and "to improve their religious faith." They also tended to not be as interested in secular or touristic activities and elements of the site as other visitors. A similar study of visitors to Mount Athos and Meterora in Greece found that these Orthodox "proskinites" found spiritual experiences through participation in religious rituals, while non-Orthodox and non-religious visitors experienced a different type of spiritual experience through stillness and aesthetic contemplation (della Dora 2012). In another study, Williams et al. (2007) discovered that tourists who attended weekly church gatherings tended to report higher rates of experiencing the presence of God during cathedral visits than tourists who only rarely or occasionally attended church gatherings.

Setting

Factors related to tourist settings, such as *being in nature*, may influence spiritual outcomes. Whether it be hills and lakes (Sharpley & Jepson 2011; Jepson & Sharpley 2015), mountains (Andriotis 2009; Huang et al. 2020), the seaside (Jarratt & Sharpley 2017), the ocean (Jirásek & Hurych 2019), a rainforest (Bidder 2018), or the desert (Moufakkir & Selmi 2018), *being in nature* has been found to be conducive to spiritual outcomes. For example, as one participant in Andriotis' (2009) study explained, "Sitting on the wall overlooking the forest and the sea beyond, gazing at distant peaks and trekking to the summit, offer me a glimpse of the sacred. I feel as though I'm connecting with God" (p. 77; see also Chapter 11 this volume).

Being away from home and being immersed in a different environment or place is also conducive to spiritual outcomes. For example, leaving urban areas and travelling to other locations may allow people to escape into a simpler way of living, which can produce or trigger spiritual experiences (Jepson & Sharpley 2015). For outdoor adventure tourists, the isolated and remote location of a Field Centre in Borneo, along with the absence of telephones and internet, contributed to the participants being present in the moment and thus encountering the timeless dimension of spiritual experiences (Bidder 2018). Jarratt and Sharpley (2017) discovered that seaside visitors felt as if they were a part of something bigger than what they experienced in their everyday life. At Mount Athos, pilgrims escaped the distractions, cares, and pace of their everyday lives in order to receive spiritual sustenance (Andriotis 2009), and pilgrimage trips from a Greek community in California to a Greek Orthodox monastery in Arizona helped participants to leave behind their everyday concerns and focus on doing spiritual work (Klimova 2011). Similarly, for retreat tourism participants in New Zealand, the retreat centers offered a place to be away from the city, work, and home as well as distractions such as technology, in order to participate in a new way of life that included spiritual practices and transformational learning (Bone 2013).

Spiritual outcomes may be more readily found in *places* that are labeled or considered as being sacred or set apart from the mundane world. Indeed, descriptions of tourist's experiences in England's Lake District suggest an interrelationship between place attachment and spiritual experiences that are dependent upon or enhanced by a sense of place (Jepson & Sharpley 2015). Elsewhere, Preston (1992) found that Mount Athos exhibits a "spiritual magnetism" that draws visitors to it. Nearly half of the participants in a study of visitors at Apostle Islands National Seashore identified sacred sites as spiritual places (Salk, Schneider & McAvoy 2010). Likewise, tourists driving ATVs in the Australian desert stated that they discovered a spiritual dimension to their activities due to the journey through desert-like areas being perceived as a pilgrimage to a sacred space (Narayanan & Macbeth 2009).

Tourism activity factors

Spiritual outcomes derive from *diverse tourism activities* which range from the more traditional—pilgrimages to the Holy Land (Belhassen et al. 2008), visits to Greek Orthodox monasteries (Andriotis 2009; Klimova 2011) and spiritual retreat centers (Voigt et al. 2010, 2011; Schedneck Chapter 14 this volume)—to the novel—independent leisure travels (Little & Schmidt 2006), rural tourism activities (Sharpley & Jepson 2011; Jepson & Sharpley 2015); seaside tourism (Jarratt & Sharpley 2017); tourism at desert camps (Moufakkir & Selmi 2017), four-wheel drive tourism in the desert (Narayanan & Macbeth 2011), sailing tourism (Jirásek & Hurych 2019), outdoor adventure tourism (Bidder 2018), and dark tourism (Zheng, Zhang, Qui, Guo & Zhang 2020). Thus, religious and spiritual outcomes are not limited to one type of religious or spiritually oriented tourism activity.

Tourism activities with *challenge* can facilitate spiritual outcomes (Sharpley & Jepson 2011). The physical effort of climbing mountains combined with the scenic view from the mountain-top made the tourist experience explicitly spiritual for some rural tourism participants (Jepson & Sharpley 2015). Although there were variations among participants in this study, the challenge of physical activity and physical achievement led to spiritual fulfillment and spiritual feelings. For outdoor adventure, tourism participants in Borneo, overcoming physical, emotional, and mental challenges, including long and difficult treks during hot and humid weather conditions, was one dimension of their spiritual experience (Bidder 2018).

For many tourists, spiritual outcomes can stem from tourism activities that encourage *silence and quietness*, as these aesthetic attributes can lead to introspection and therefore spiritual experiences (della Dora 2012). This silence and quietness has been found to be helpful not only for visitors to monasteries (della Dora) and retreat centers (Bone 2013) but also in natural settings especially combined with physical activity (Jepson & Sharpley 2015).

In some cases, a balance of both solitude and interactive group *experiences* was helpful to spirituality (Sharpley & Jepson 2011). The importance of others and inspiration from others were also spiritual themes in a study of travelers to Buddhist mountain destinations (Huang et al. 2020). Community was an important theme in research on New Zealand retreat tourism. Community included friendship, group safety, a sense of "being at home," a sense of belonging, caring for others, spiritual companionship, unity of goal and camaraderie, which all together were viewed as fostering the spiritual dimension of interconnectedness (Bone 2013).

While *facilitation* may play an important role in spiritual outcomes for outdoor activities that occur in a group or as part of a program (Heintzman 2016a), there is less research on the facilitation of spiritual outcomes within the tourism context. Parsons, Houge Mackenzie and

Filep (2019) discovered that spiritual tourism guides in addition to facilitating in ways common to all tourism such as providing access to sites, encounters in and outside of the travel group, understanding, empathy and self-development, also facilitated a five-stage chronological process more directly related to self-development and spiritual outcomes: preparation, enclave development, mentoring, reflection, and integration of the spiritual lessons learned. This process began before the travel and continued after the travel.

Spiritual outcomes

One spiritual outcome of tourism documented by many studies, is *spiritual/religious experience* which is characterized by affective dimensions, cognitive processes, feelings of transcendence, and a high level of emotional intensity (e.g., Little & Schmidt 2006; Belhassen et al. 2008; Narayanan & Macbeth 2009; Andriotis 2009; Klimova 2011; Sharpley & Jepson 2011; della Dora 2012; Jepson & Sharpley 2015; Jarratt & Sharpley 2017; Bidder 2018; Moufakkir & Selmi 2018). For example, the spiritual experience outcomes of independent leisure travelers (Little & Schmidt 2006) and Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land (Belhassen et al. 2008) were described earlier in this chapter when leisure as psychological/subjective experience was connected to tourism. Another example is provided by Bidder (2018) who found that outdoor adventure tourism settings contributed significantly to spiritual experiences of a new sense of meaning, timelessness, overcoming challenges, connectedness, and ineffability. Haluza-Delay (2000) criticized these types of studies that focus on pleasant emotional states and urged investigation of whether these experiences lead to life transformation.

While religious and spiritual tourism can lead to the transformation of the quality of life of people (Reisinger 2013; Dillette, Douglas & Andrzejewski 2019), there has been little research in terms of whether these experiences lead to life-long transformation and *spiritual well-being*, which can be defined as

> A high level of faith, hope, and commitment in relation to a well-defined worldview or belief system that provides a sense of meaning and purpose to existence in general, and that offers an ethical path to personal fulfillment which includes connectedness with self, others, and a higher power or larger reality.
>
> *(Hawks 1994: 6)*

Although little has been researched in terms of tourism and the concept of spiritual well-being, one study of note is Reis' (2007) analysis of Brazilian pilgrims on the Way of St. James of Compostela. In this study, Reis discovered that pilgrims exhibited four key dimensions of spiritual well-being: transcendence, a life of significance, a community of shared values and support, and intrinsic values (Reis 2007). Sailing tourism has been found to be associated with five factors of spiritual health: relationship to oneself, relationship with others, relationship with nature, meaning in life, and transcendence (Jirásek & Hurych 2019). A study of New Zealand retreat tourism noted that participating in a retreat contributed to the participant's spiritual well-being (Bone 2013). Heintzman (1999, 2013b; Heintzman & Mannell 1999) investigated the relationships between several leisure activities, including travel and tourism activities, and spiritual well-being. Heintzman found that while participating in most travel and tourism activities, such as travelling within foreign countries, going on boat cruises, or visiting resorts, did not increase behavioral or subjective spiritual well-being, traveling to religious and spiritual retreats did increase these types of well-bring. Interestingly, participation in adventure trekking had a significant negative correlation with both behavioral and subjective well-being possibly because (1) adventure trekking is significantly correlated with competence-mastery leisure motivations, which makes it difficult to focus on spirituality (Heintzman 2013b); (2) adventure recreationists tend to view nature as something to be conquered rather that something in which to be immersed and seek a relationship with (Morgan, 1994); and (3) adventure trekkers seem to be akin to an "explorer tourist" who "prefers adventure travel, exploring out of the way places and enjoys challenges involved in getting there" (Yiannakis & Gibson 1992: 291). As such, they seek adventure, newness, and challenge, whereas a "seeker tourist," who engages in more passive types of recreational activities in nature, is "a seeker of spiritual and/or personal knowledge to better understand self and meaning in life" (Yiannakis & Gibson 1992: 291).

Another spiritual outcome is *leisure-spiritual coping*, which refers to the ways in which people seek out and receive help in the context of their leisure from spiritual resources (e.g., higher power, spiritual practices, and faith community) during periods of life stress (Heintzman 2008). For example, many people travel to religious, spiritual, New Age, or secular retreat centers to deal with and overcome negative life events, such as death of a loved one, a divorce, or a serious illness (Voigt et al. 2010). Another example is desire for personal transformation by visitors to Mount Athos. This desire was the case with one middle-aged man who stated "…my main objective is to strengthen my faith in a way that will enable me to continue my life back home with new energy and a feeling of purpose" (as quoted in Andriotis 2009: 74).

Conclusion

Over 20 years ago, Vukonić made preliminary connections between leisure as free time, spirituality, religion, and tourism. This chapter has documented some of the complexity of these relationships both in terms of the ways that leisure is conceptualized beyond the notion of free time and the various factors that link leisure travel with religious and spiritual outcomes. Many factors such as antecedent conditions, setting factors, and tourism activity components influence whether there are spiritual or religious outcomes of leisure travel and whether these outcomes are short-term or long-term. The components of this framework have some overlap with the activity, setting, experience, and benefit components of the ASEB framework of visitor experience (Beeho & Prentice 1997); however, unlike other frameworks (Beeho & Prentice 1997; Cheer, Belhassen & Kujawa 2017; Chhabra 2020), the one presented in this paper is based upon a synthesis of empirical research. Future research on the spiritual and religious outcomes of leisure travel and tourism may serve to strengthen and modify this framework so that we have a better understanding of the processes that link leisure travel with spiritual outcomes. While much research exists on the spiritual outcome of spiritual experience, further research is needed on how leisure travel may bring about spiritual well-being as well as assist with leisure-spiritual coping.

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