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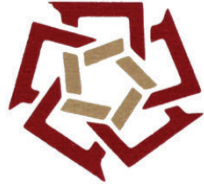
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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

THE TOURISM CRISIS IN POST JANUARY 25TH EGYPT

A Thesis Submitted to the Public Policy and Administration Department

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Public Policy and Administration

By

Mary Shoukry Hanna

December 2013

The American University in Cairo
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy
Department of Public Policy and Administration

THE TOURISM CRISIS IN POST JANUARY 25TH EGYPT

By Mary Shoukry Hanna

Supervised by Dr. Ghada Barsoum

Abstract

This research focuses on the impact of the Arab Spring on the tourism sector in post-revolutionary Egypt, particularly after January 25th, 2011. Political upheaval has resulted in serious downfalls in the tourism industry and hard implications on the living conditions of tourism business owners and workers. The study shows the international reaction towards Egypt as a tourist destination and its negative consequences on the tourism sector. It sheds light on the challenges that different tourism stakeholders have been facing post-revolution. The research also assesses the consequences of certain government policies that have negatively impacted the tourism sector during this period. It reveals the impact of the ensuing security lapse on the safety of tourists in Egypt. The study also identifies previously existing problems affecting tourism and the extent to which these problems have intensified post-revolution. At the end, it provides some recommendations based on the literature and tourism authorities to revive and enhance tourism in Egypt.

Acknowledgment

First of all, I would like to thank the Lord for granting me strength and ability to do this research amid the hardest conditions. Without His empowerment and guidance, this study would have never been accomplished.

I wish to express my gratitude to my advisor Dr. Ghada Barsoum for being the source of inspiration and encouragement. I am extremely grateful for her guidance and support throughout this study. I have learnt a lot from her advising and valuable instruction in the field of research.

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I take this opportunity to record my sincere gratitude to all who, directly or indirectly, have lent their helping hand in this venture. I would like to thank all my interviewees for their super willingness to help and their sincerity and trust in providing me useful information.

Last, but not least, I place my sense of thankfulness to my family for their unceasing tolerance, support and understanding. Special thanks to my precious gift, my daughter Emma, who has always been my source of relief and motivation. I dedicate this work to Emma and I want her to be proud of me as much as I am of her.

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I. Introduction

This thesis sheds light on the impact of the Arab Spring, in general, and the January 25, 2011 revolution, in particular, on travel and tourism in Egypt. As one of the main economic sectors in Egypt, the great drop in travel and tourism since 2011 has had a dramatic effect on visitor exports, GDP, and employment. This thesis focuses on stakeholders in the tourism industry, how they have been affected, what problems they have been facing, as well as their responses to these political events while trying to run their business.

The thesis first, points out the impact of the January 25, 2011 revolution on the tourism industry in Egypt. It shows the international response towards Egypt as a tourist destination, as well as the reaction of tourism business owners and workers towards this response. Second, it evaluates certain government policies that affect the tourism sector as well as the implications of these policies on the tourism stakeholders.

Third, the study reveals the impact of the political instability and the ensuing security lapse on tourism in Egypt during this period. It shows how the ongoing demonstrations and chaos lead to thuggery, thus, threatening the safety of tourists. Fourth, it identifies already existing issues affecting tourism in Egypt prior to the revolution and the extent to which these issues intensified after the revolution. Finally, the thesis offers some suggestions by tourism authorities as well as the author, based on literature, for reviving and enhancing tourism in Egypt.

Interviews were conducted with tourism sector stakeholders to identify the extent to which they have been affected, what problems they face, as well as ways of dealing with them. The interviewees include representatives from hotels, travel agencies, Nile cruises, as well as one of the prominent Egyptian tourism organizations representing the tourism private sector.

II. Research Question

Taking into consideration the vulnerable nature of tourism and the economic importance of this industry, in addition to the difficult political times Egypt has been witnessing, this thesis is meant to raise several questions: What are the challenges experienced by tourism business owners and workers post-revolution? What problems do they face in running the business? What are the related travel policies that have affected the tourism industry? How can the government support the tourism industry to promote this critical sector in the coming period? What are the suggested policies and recommendations to deal with this crisis?

The tourism industry in Egypt faces several security and economic related problems before and after the Arab Spring. Since the Egyptian revolution in January 25, 2011, the severity of these problems have intensified and others have emerged. This research will attempt to address the issues facing the tourism industry in Egypt and evaluate tourism policies as well as other government policies that directly or indirectly impact tourism.

III. Economic Importance of the Tourism Industry Worldwide

Tourism represents 10% of the world's economic activity and has a significant impact on economic development and international trade (UNEP & WTO, 2005). It is *“the main source of foreign exchange for one-third of developing countries and one-half of LDCs”* (UNEP, 2011). The total direct and indirect economic contribution of travel and tourism in 2012 represents 5% of total economy investment, 5% of world exports, 9% of total economy GDP, and 1 in every 11 jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2013).

Thus, tourism is internationally recognized as a main source of economy on three main levels: exports, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and employment. In regard to exports, tourism generates US\$ 1 trillion a year in exports and thereby ranking it as the fourth largest export sector in the world, after fuels, chemicals and automotive products (UNWTO, 2011). *“Tourism exports account for as much as 30% of the world's exports of commercial services and 6% of overall exports of goods and services”* (UNWTO, 2012).

Moreover, tourism affects GDP since it directly represents 5% of global GDP, and in some developing countries can account for over 25% of GDP (UNWTO, 2011). As for employment, tourism is one of the main employment generators as it creates over 235 million jobs worldwide (ibid). By offering job opportunities, tourism contributes in raising national income, improving the balance of payments and, thus, can play a major role in poverty reduction especially in developing countries (WEF, 2011).

Accordingly, tourism is used as a means to contribute in achieving one of the major UN Millennium Development Goals, which is eradicating world poverty (UNWTO,

2010). The development of travel and tourism can potentially alleviate poverty for three main reasons: first, *“it is one of the few sectors in which poor countries’ cultural and natural resources give them a comparative economic advantage”* (UNEP & WTO, 2005); second, three-quarters of the world’s poor reside in rural areas where tourism is considered as a source of revenue (ibid); third, it is a labor intensive activity with low entry barriers so it can encompass a large number of job seekers (ibid).

Tourism as an economic locomotive is seen as an employment generator and, thus, governments should work on providing decent job opportunities in this sector to encourage job-seekers to enter and maintain in this field (ILO & UNWTO, 2009). According to ILO/UNWTO statement on tourism and employment in 2009, *“employment in the tourism industry should include not only job creation but decent and productive work in sustainable enterprises”*.

IV. Significance and Richness of the Tourism Heritage in Egypt

In respect to Egypt, tourism is considered an indispensable pillar of economy due to its importance in employment and GDP, as well as generating foreign currency. The tourism sector is one of the most important economic driving forces in Egypt. It stands for 40% of Egypt’s total non-commodity exports, 12.6% of Egypt’s entire labor force, 11.3% of Egypt’s GDP, and 19.3% of Egypt’s foreign currency revenues (State Information Service, 2013).

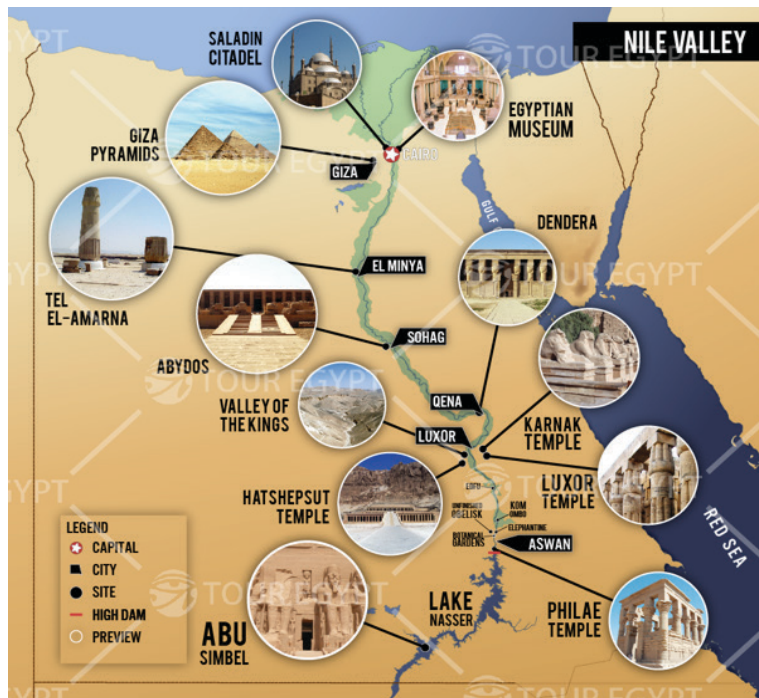
Egypt is privileged with its richness in cultural attributes and price competitiveness worldwide. It has seven World Heritage cultural sites, according to UNESCO, together

with the large number of international fairs and exhibitions taking place in the country (WEF, 2013). Moreover, Egypt has excellent price competitiveness, ranking the 4th country with generally low costs, according to Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2013. This entails low prices of air tickets, hotel accommodation, fuel costs, as well as country taxations compared to other countries (ibid).

Egypt is also very rich in catering diversified types of tourism including cultural, religious, sports, recreational, environmental, safari, conferences, and therapeutic (State Information Service, 2013). By this, it provides different types of tourism that can suit the various tastes of tourists.

Following are four maps presented in IBT Berlin conference 2012, depicting the major touristic spots across Egypt. These maps include the tours along the Nile valley, the while Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Western Desert. Each map shows the type of tourism offered in these areas.

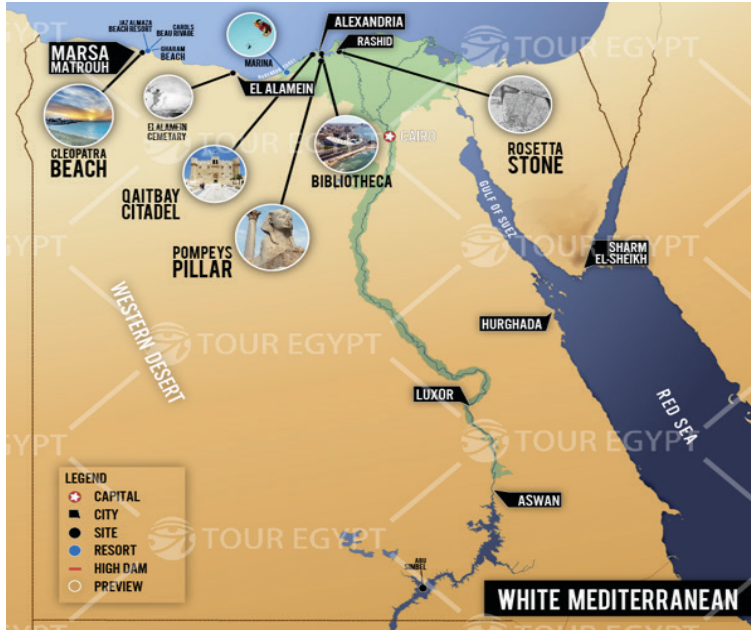
The Nile Valley map shows the major touristic spots along the Nile Valley. It includes cultural tourism of Pharaonic antiquities as well as religious tourism of Coptic and Islamic monuments. It starts from



Giza downward across Upper Egypt and ends in Aswan.

Source: IBT

Berlin Conference, 2012

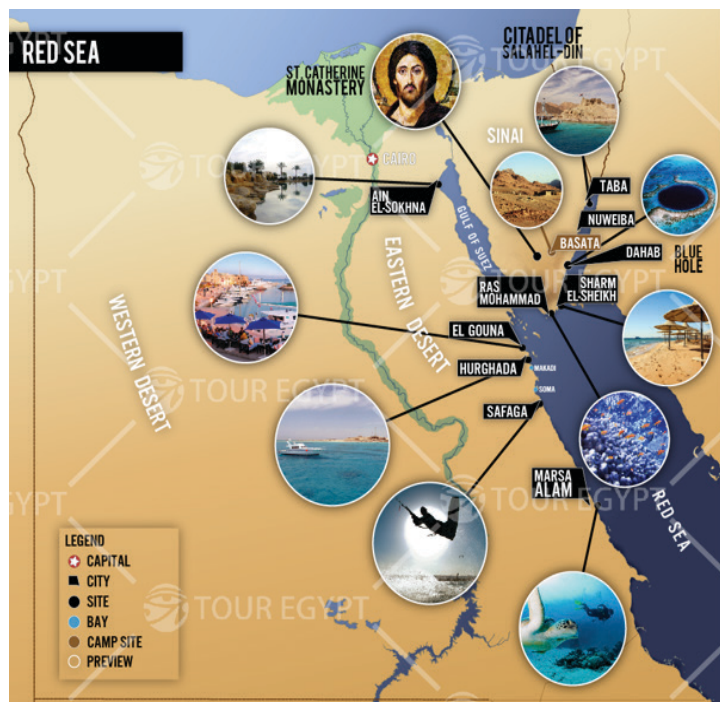


The White Mediterranean map shows the North Coast ranging from Alexandria to Marsa Matrouh. It includes cultural tourism of Greek and Roman historic antiquities as well as recreational tourism of beaches situated on the

Mediterranean.

Source: IBT Berlin Conference, 2012

Red Sea map includes Sinai with the beaches along the sea. It includes recreational tourism of sea, coral reefs, and mountains. In addition to safari, therapeutic, and sports tourism of diving and marine sports. Furthermore, it has religious



tourism in St. Catherine Monastery and environmental tourism in Ras Mohammed.

Source: IBT Berlin Conference, 2012



Western Desert map includes the five oases in Egypt together with Fayoum. It includes sports tourism of sand boarding and safari tourism of desert camping in the Black and White desert, as well as therapeutic tourism in the hot springs. It also includes environmental tourism in Wadi

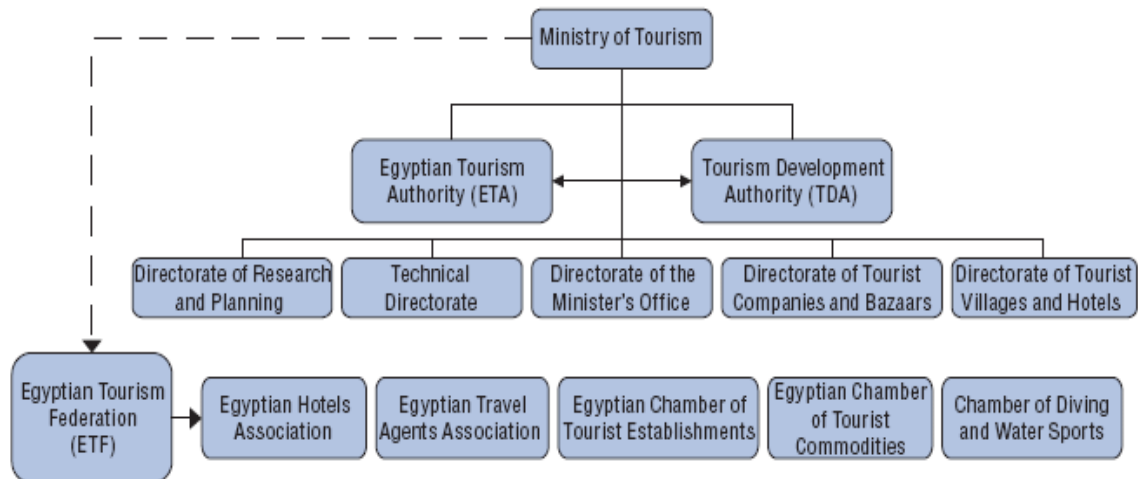
El Hitan.

Source: IBT Berlin Conference, 2012

V. The Structure of the Tourism Sector in Egypt

The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism acts as the national body responsible for tourism policy. It is mainly concerned with establishing a coherent legal and regulatory framework in the context of a sustainable tourism development strategy (OECD, 2012). The role of the ministry is viewed as a regulator and a facilitator of tourism activities as well as an advocate of “good governance” especially in publicly-owned tourism establishments (ibid).

The Ministry of Tourism works closely with the public and private sectors to regulate the tourism industry (OECD, 2012). The public sector bodies are represented by two main authorities and five directorates. The two bodies fall under the jurisdiction of the ministry and they are the Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA) and the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) (ibid). The TDA works primarily on setting and implementing regulations for tourism projects and investments (ibid). The following chart shows the main bodies of the public and private sectors and how the tourism organization operates in Egypt.



Organizational chart of tourism bodies

Source: OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2012, from the Ministry of Tourism, 2009

The five directorates also assist the ministry by working alongside the above mentioned authorities affiliated to the ministry (OECD, 2012). These directorates are: Directorate of Research and Planning, Technical Directorate, Directorate of the

Minister's Office, Directorate of Tourist Companies and Bazaars, as well as Directorate of Tourist Villages and Hotels (ibid).

The private sector is represented by the Egyptian Tourism Federation (ETF) which is a union of elected industry members representing five tourism industry business associations (OECD, 2012). These associations include Egyptian Hotels Association, Egyptian Travel Agents Association, Egyptian Chamber of Tourist Establishments, Egyptian Chamber of Tourist Commodities, and Chamber of Diving and Water Sports. ETF is responsible for establishing an appropriate climate for the sustainable growth of Egypt's tourism industry and enhances its workforce to the highest international standards (ibid).

The Egyptian Tourism Federation (ETF) works closely with the Ministry of Tourism in areas related to tourism planning and legislative measures (OECD, 2012). According to the law, ETF's views must be considered before any proposed measures for the industry's development are presented to the Egyptian Parliament for ratification (ibid). The successful collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism and the ETF represents a model of public-private partnership (ibid).

VI. Arab Spring Impact on Tourism in the Region and in Egypt

The year 2011 witnessed a socio-political instability in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) due to the Arab Spring. Tourism as an economic industry has subsequently been dramatically affected by the political upheaval and economic

instability in the whole region (WTTC, 2011). The international broadcasting of riots, demonstrations, as well as social unrest reduced the demand on travel to these regions.

The political transition in the region has affected the international tourist arrivals in MENA countries. This led to a drop of (-8%) in the Middle East and (-9%) in North Africa compared to 2010: “*Syria (-41%), Egypt (-32%), Lebanon (-24%), Palestine (-15%) and Jordan (-13%)*” (UNWTO, 2012). The ongoing political unrest in the region, besides the political developments and stability in the Gulf countries, redirected the flow of tourism from MENA to the Gulf countries. Thus, a great growth in tourist inflows was recorded “*in countries such as Qatar (+66%), Saudi Arabia (+61%) and United Arab Emirates (+9%)*” (UNWTO, 2012).

The following table shows the international tourist arrivals as well as the international tourism receipts. It presents the significant drop in 2011 in the Arab Spring countries in contrary to the growth in the other Gulf neighboring countries.

Destination s	International Tourists Arrivals					Share (%) 2011*	International Tourist Receipts			Share (%) 2011*
	-1000			Change (%)			(US\$ million)			
	2009	2010	2011*	10/09	11*/10		2009	2010	2011*	
Middle East	52,755	60,271	55,436	14.2	-8	100	42,184	51,658	45,874	100
Egypt	11,914	14,051	9,497	17.9	-32.4	17.1	10,755	12,528	8,707	19
Jordan	3,789	4,557	3,975	20.3	-12.8	7.2	2,911	3,585	3,000	6.5
Lebanon	1,844	2,166	1,655	17.6	-23.7	3	6,774	8,012	..	..
Oman	1,524	..	..	..	..	..	689	775	..	..
Palestine	396	522	446	31.9	-14.5	0.8	410	667	..	1
Qatar	1,659	1,866	..	12.5	..	..	179	584	1,170	2.5
Saudi Arabia	10,897	10,850	17,336	-0.4	59.8	31.3	5,995	6,712	8,459	18.4
Syria	6,092	8,546	5,070	40.3	-40.7	9.1	3,757	6,190	..	..
UAE	6,812	7,432	8,129	9.1	9.4	14.7	7,352	8,577	9,204	20.1

Tourism in the Middle East post-Arab spring

Source: UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2012 Edition

All types of travel, including leisure, business, as well as medical and healthcare tourism were negatively impacted by the regional political events. The largest drop off was mainly registered in Egypt together with Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Morocco. Subsequently, there was a relocation of passengers from these countries suffering from political unrest to alternative Gulf neighboring countries. Accordingly, through 2011, tourism rose in UAE, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia (UNWTO, 2012).

As for Egypt, data on tourists by country groups show that tourists to Egypt are mainly Europeans, Arabs, others, and Americans successively (CAPMAS, 2012). The following table shows the number of tourists in each group in 2010, before the revolution, and in 2011, after the revolution. Comparing the number of tourists in the two years indicates the significant decline in tourism post-revolution.

Tourists by country groups post-revolution

Tourists by Country Groups	2010	2011	Decline
Europeans	11,177,000	7,211,000	3,966,000
%	75.9	73.3	35.50%
Arabs	2,092,000	1,802,000	290,000
%	14.2	18.3	14%
Americans	563,000	287,000	276,000
%	3.8	2.9	49%
Others	899,000	545,000	354,000
%	6.1	5.5	39.40%
Total	14,731,000	9,845,000	4,886,000
%	100	100	

Source: CAPMAS, 2012

Post January 25, 2011 revolution, Egypt's economy has been greatly affected as a result of the drop in the tourism sector. It is noteworthy that the major decline is among the Americans with a drop of 49%, whereas the least decline is among the Arabs with a drop of 14%. Following the Americans, the number of other nationalities declines by 39.4%, while that of Europeans by 35.5%. The outcome is a great drop in the tourism flow resulting in the hard living conditions of tourism business owners and workers, who mainly rely on tourism in earning their living.

VII. Impact of Tourism Decline on Egypt's Economy

The tourism industry in Egypt is one of the few economic dynamics that contributes to GDP and employment (ILO, 2010). It is a significant economic industry for Egypt and has a direct impact on economic development and job creation. All economic activities practiced by travelers in the visited country contribute to the country's economy. This includes visitor exports, total contribution to GDP, as well as total contribution to employment (WTTC, 2013).

The following table shows the large decline in these factors by comparing their numbers before the revolution in 2010, after the revolution in 2011, as well as the revolution consequences in 2012 and 2013. Building on indicators set by the World Travel and Tourism Council, this section explains the importance of each economic factor and how it has been affected post-revolution.

Economic contribution of travel and tourism post-revolution

Economic Contribution in Egypt	2010	2011	2012	2013E
Visitor Exports (EGP bn)	90.8	65.8	67	70.3
%	6.9	-27.5	1.8	4.9
Total Contribution to GDP (EGP bn)	255.8	223.8	227.6	232.8
%	3.3	-12.5	1.7	2.3
Total Contribution to Employment (EGP bn)	3709.7	3120.6	3106.6	3135.2
%	1.8	-15.9	-0.4	0.9

Source: Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2013 – Egypt

A. Visitor Exports

The visitor exports indicator measures the spending of international tourists in the visited country for both business and leisure trips, but excluding international spending on education (WTTC, 2013). In 2010, before the revolution, visitor exports in Egypt increased by 6.9 % compared to 2009 (ibid). However, in 2011, after the revolution, visitor exports dropped by 27.5% in comparison with 2010, with a slight rise of 1.8% in 2012 compared to 2011 (ibid). Visitor exports are expected to rise by 4.9% in 2013 compared to 2012 (ibid).

B. Total Contribution to GDP

The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP indicator measures GDP generated directly by industries that deal with the travel and tourism industry plus its indirect and induced impacts (WTTC, 2013). The direct contribution to GDP includes economic activities generated directly by hotels, transportation services, travel agents, airlines, restaurants and other leisure industries for specific tourism use (ibid).

Regarding the indirect contribution, it includes capital investment spending by all sectors directly involved in the tourism industry as well as government general spending in support of tourism activity (WTTC, 2013). It also includes purchases of domestic goods and services by different sectors of the travel and tourism industry together with spending by those who are directly or indirectly employed by travel and tourism (ibid). As for the induced contribution, it includes spending by those who are directly or indirectly employed by travel and tourism (ibid).

In 2010, before the revolution, the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in Egypt increased by 3.3% compared to 2009 (WTTC, 2013). Nevertheless, it dropped by 12.5% in 2011, after the revolution, in comparison with 2010 (ibid). It slightly increased by 1.7% in 2012 compared to 2011 and is forecasted to rise by 2.3% in 2013 compared to 2012 (ibid). Thus, there is a significant decline after the revolution that has greatly affected the income of the sectors who directly or indirectly deal with the travel and tourism industry.

C. Total Contribution to Employment

The direct contribution of travel and tourism to employment indicator measures the number of jobs directly generated by this industry plus its indirect and induced impacts (WTTC, 2013). Tourism has a great impact on employment including jobs generated by hotels, transportation services, travel agents, airlines, restaurants and other leisure industries for specific tourism use. In regard to the indirect contribution, it constitutes spending by other industries on tourism assets (ibid). As for the induced contribution, it includes spending by those who are indirectly employed by travel and tourism (ibid).

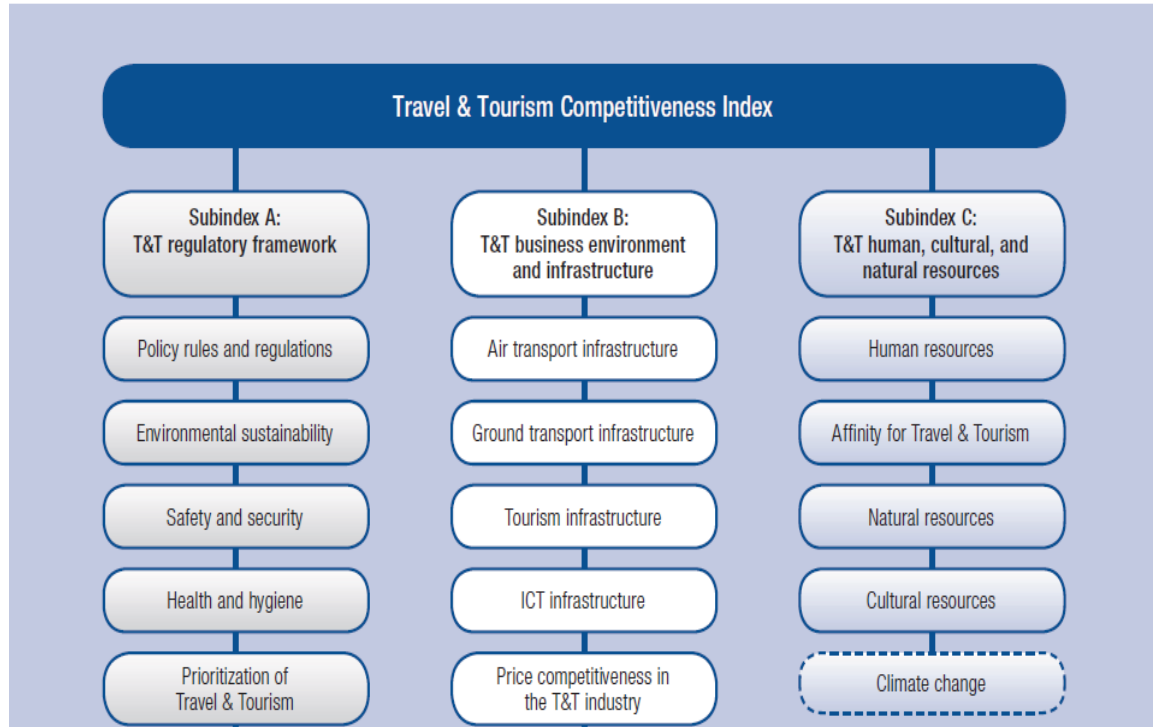
Before the revolution, in 2010, the total contribution of travel and tourism to employment increased by 1.8% compared to 2009 (WTTC, 2013). Post-revolution, it declined by 15.9% in 2011 compared to 2010 and in 2012 by 0.4% compared to 2011 (ibid). This is expected to rise by 0.9% in 2013 compared to 2012 (ibid).

VIII. Egypt's Tourism Competitiveness Index Post-Arab Spring

Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) has been developed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) with the aim of measuring the factors and policies for developing the travel and tourism sector. The TTCI is based on three broad categories of variables that facilitate or drive travel and tourism competitiveness (WEF, 2013). Each of the three categories is composed of a number of variables, summing up to 14 pillars.

The following graph illustrates the three broad categories: Travel and Tourism Regulatory Framework; Travel and Tourism Business Environment and Infrastructure; as well as Travel and Tourism Human, Cultural, and Natural Resources. It also shows the five indicators of each pillar that measure the tourism competitiveness of each country.

Figure 1: Composition of the three subindexes of the TTCI



Source: The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2013 (World Economic Forum)

According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2013, Egypt ranks the 85th overall out of 140 countries. Egypt has dropped 10 positions from being the 75th out of 139 countries since the advent of the revolution in 2011 (WEF, 2013). Comparing Egypt's position in 2011 to that in 2009, it also dropped 11 positions from being the 64th out of 133 countries (WEF, 2011). This means that Egypt has dropped 21 positions in four years.

Egypt is ranked the lowest position out of 140 countries (the 140th) in terms of the safety and security environment. Tourists were deterred from traveling to Egypt due to the country's political unrest with riots and demonstrations everywhere (WEF, 2013). On the other hand, Egypt is ranked the 76th out of 140 countries in regard to the policy rules

and regulations. The government's policies are less conducive to the development of the travel and tourism sector (ibid).

Egypt also ranks low in the indicator of ease in movement within the country, ranking the 96th country in the ground transport infrastructure. This is due to the low quality of the roads, railroads, and ports, together with the accessibility to the main business centers and tourist attractions (WEF, 2013). As for tourism infrastructure, Egypt is in the 90th position with poor accommodation infrastructure. This includes the number of hotel rooms, the presence of major car rental companies, as well as the availability of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) (ibid).

In addition, Egypt is ranked the 80th position in ICT infrastructure which measures the quality of online planning itineraries and purchasing of travel and accommodations (WEF, 2013). Regarding the quality of human resources base, Egypt is ranked the 105th position with a poor level of health, education, and training (ibid).

IX. Literature Review

Literature tackling the drop in tourism due to security problems focus mainly on three main issues: vulnerability and elasticity; ecotourism; and tourism crisis management. The three issues are related to tourism government policies, especially in the times of crisis. Post January 25, 2011 revolution, several tourism related policies have negatively affected the tourism industry in Egypt. This section sheds more light on these main areas of literature on tourism development.

A. Vulnerability and Elasticity of the Tourism Industry

Tourism as an industry is normally unsustainable and constantly faces many uncontrollable challenges (UNEP & WTO, 2005). In this sense, it is a very unstable source of income to those who work in this field or run tourism related business (ibid). This is mainly because of two reasons: the vulnerable nature of travel and tourism as well as the elasticity of tourism demand.

Tourism has always been connotated to the term “vulnerability” due to its sensitivity to any unpredicted risk caused, whether by nature, or by human beings (Laws, 2009). Thus, tourism is vulnerable to crises resulting from natural causes or human actions. Any economic, social, political, environmental, or climate contingency of the visited country has its immediate direct impact on tourism (ibid).

In this context, Coles (2004: 175) refers to the events that interrupt the tourism flow as:

“events unfold at a variety of spatial scales that impact on local tourism sectors and can cause temporal market disturbances of varying duration . . . Such events take a variety of forms from natural landscape disasters to episodes of famine, disease and pestilence to wars, terrorist atrocities and political instability”.

This vulnerability concept affects the poverty standard of the tourist countries, especially the developing ones. In a poor developing country, people may choose to rely on less income but stable job, rather than a more risky tourism related job, even with higher income (Shakya, 2009). From a development policy perspective, it is as essential to reduce vulnerability as to reduce poverty because vulnerability reduction would consequently lead to poverty reduction (ibid).

On the other hand, the concept of necessities versus luxuries is considered one of the determinants of price elasticity of demand (Mankiw, 2009). Any economic crisis affects the income as well as the prices, and consequently has an indirect impact on the tourism industry. Tourism is considered a luxury since the income elasticity of tourism demand is greater than one (Li, Song and Witt, 2005).

The luxury nature of tourism adds to its unsustainability in cases of security challenge as well. Tourists can easily substitute the unsafe destination since it is not a necessity. In this regard, another economic perspective considers tourism demand as presenting a higher elasticity index per level of perceived risk than any other industry (Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt, 1998).

B. Ecotourism

The vulnerability as well as the elasticity of demand of the tourism industry drew the international attention for “ecotourism” which entails the notion of “sustainability”. As defined by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1995, “ecotourism” is the *‘tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities’* (Cahill, 2012). Thus, to ensure the sustainability of the tourism industry, the economic, social, and environmental impacts should be taken into consideration in the process of planning and development.

The current socio-political unrest in Egypt has contributed to being more prone to economic crisis due to the great drop in travel and tourism. This drop had undeniable impacts on the country’s economy including GDP, employment, and foreign currency.

Those who work in the field of tourism are most affected by immediate loss of their jobs after crises. Thus, the urging need to secure the maximum sustainability to tourism as a vulnerable and elastic industry becomes pressing post-Arab spring. Limited research studies have been done on tourism crisis management considering effective government policies. In this regard, more clarification should be provided to what is mainly meant by crisis and crisis management, especially to what is related to tourism policies.

C. Tourism Crisis Management

Selbst (1978) considers “crisis” as any action or failure to act that affects a certain organization to attain its objectives or that has personal effect on its employees, clients, or constituents. It is also viewed as a serious event that disrupts the pre-existing state of affairs and is resulting from many causes including natural, political, financial, or technical. Whatever the cause is, appropriate steps should be taken to return situation to normality (Laws, 2007).

In this sense, the interruption of the normal flow of tourism can be considered as crisis which affects the sustainability of tourism. The cause of the tourism crisis is the socio-political situation in Egypt after the revolution. The drop in the tourism industry is a serious event that is caused by a political change and requires an action from tourism stakeholders. This event has affected the pre-existing state of tourism before the revolution and consequently requires certain action to restore and further improve it. Any failed governmental action or even failure of action directly affects those running this industry including tourism business owners and workers, tourists, as well as the business itself.

Thus, crisis is related to an event that caused a change in situation and most importantly requires a decision to be taken to improve the situation. This necessity for a decision is referred to through recognizing the origin of the word “crisis” which comes from the Greek work “krisis”; meaning judgment, choice, or decision (Paraskevas, 2006). It is also clear in the definition of crisis as: *“a low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly”* (Pearson & Clair, 1998: 60). As long as tourism is related to vulnerability, it is always related to crisis as indicated by Coles (2004: 178): *“when not in crisis, destinations are in an extended program of practically pre-event limbo, almost waiting for the important trigger event to take place”*.

Thus, because tourism is vulnerable, it is always subject to any sudden change “crisis” and thus requires a state of steadiness for this crisis. This entails having a pre-event framework to be able to face the crisis as well as having the capability of taking “swift” judgment of the situation and correct “decisions”. With all its implications on Egypt’s economy, government policies should include actions of crisis management, which is defined by Fink (1986) as *“the art of removing much of the risk and uncertainty to allow you to achieve more control over your destiny”*.

One of the key challenges affecting the sustainability of tourism is health, safety and security. When it comes to a tourism crisis related to security and safety issues, serious steps should be taken to formulate a strategic plan that should be implemented by well-developed managerial responses. This has been referred to by Gurtner (2005): *“given the sensitivity of the tourism industry and its strong reliance on perceptions of safety,*

security and stability”, the “prospective remuneration on effective crisis management has made it topical amongst relevant authorities and stakeholders”.

Crisis management does not only include the stage of coping with the crisis till it is resolved, but also entails an integrated process of crisis prevention, crisis coping, and crisis recovery as well (Peters & Pikkemaat, 2006). Throughout these stages, the interests of the stakeholders should be within the strategic action plan. In this sense, Santana (2004: 308) defines crisis management as

“An ongoing integrated and comprehensive effort that organizations effectively put into place in an attempt to first and foremost understand and prevent crisis, and to effectively manage those that occur, taking into account in each and every step of their planning and training activities, the interest of their stakeholders”.

The safety and security of tourists cause a significant fluctuation in the tourism flow in the risky destination. Although the effect of this challenge is short-termed, yet special measures and policies should be taken rapidly for a fast recovery (UNEP & WTO, 2005). The primary suggested step for a collective tourism crisis planning should involve a partnership between the government agencies together with private agencies, as well as civil societies (Hughey, 2013).

Most literature study tourism and its economic significance as well as crisis management separately. Limited research studies have been tacking the field of tourism crisis management (Wang & Ritchie, 2012). This thesis is meant to fill the gap in this area between the tourism industry and government policies for crisis management. This study will attempt to set principles of tourism policies in Egypt for this crisis. These principles should involve tourism stakeholders including those who run the tourism

industry, those who work in the field of tourism or are affected by its drop, as well as relevant governmental institutions.

X. Methodology

This study is mainly based on qualitative analysis of primary data collected through interviews with different tourism stakeholders. The study also analyzes newspaper articles and websites related to the tourism industry post January, 2011 revolution. The interviews cover the main purposed samples that have been affected by the drop of travel and tourism. The interviewees include seven representatives from hotels, travel agencies, Nile cruises, as well as the Egyptian Tourism Federation.

The sample selection is purposive targeting representatives from different tourism sectors to get an overview of the problem. The sample is also selected with cross cultures, diverse backgrounds, and long experience in the field of tourism to guarantee different comparative views before and after the revolution.

The targeted sample in hotels are key staff members at two different hotels in Cairo. The first sample is a key marketing manager at one of the most endangered hotels in Cairo, close to Tahrir Square, amid the ongoing demonstrations. The other sample is a key hotel sales manager representing the conditions of hotels in Cairo as well as other hotel chains all over Egypt.

The sample also include a tourism manager in one of the most established and successful companies in the Nile cruise business. This manager has dual nationalities

other than the Egyptian one and has been working in the field of tourism in Egypt for more than 30 years. This cross-cultural background together with his experience in tourism are very useful.

Interviews also include representatives from two travel agencies that organize trips and deal with tourism-related activities. The first agency is a key travel agency that work with a large number of foreign tour operators. It has branches all over Egypt so it is a perfect example for depicting the impact on travel agencies. The agency also has its own Nile cruises and buses so it is also a useful sample for indicating the predicaments of Nile cruises and transportation suppliers.

Two have been interviewed from this travel agency, the first interviewee is a key contracting manager who is responsible for making contracts with hotels. This helps identifying the problems of hotels before and after the revolution. The second interviewee is a customer care and quality control manager to indicate the kind of complaints that tourists file as well as the quality of service before and after the revolution.

The second sample of travel agency is a global agency specialized in MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions). It conducts business travel management to international corporates, governmental institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations. The interview is held with the agency's country manager who is a non-Egyptian, so he provides valuable comparative views in the tourism field based on his experience.

An interview is also conducted with a tourism expert who holds a key position in the Egyptian Tourism Federation (ETF). He has also been chosen by The Union for Tourism Chambers (UTC) board of directors to represent the touristic sector in many events. His positions as well as his experience in the tourism industry are valuable input in this research.

Interview questions focused on the main issues these stakeholders face in respect to the tourism industry; what government policies have affected the tourism industry whether directly or indirectly; how the tourism stakeholders deal with these policies; how they have been affected by the tourism crisis; how severe the problem is; and how they react to the severity of this crisis. At the end, the research offers recommendations by the interviewed tourism authorities as well as the author.

XI. Data Analysis

A. Contributing Events to Worsening Tourism in Egypt

There are number of ill-fated events combined with failed government policies that contributed to worsening the situation of tourism in Egypt post January 25, 2011 revolution. This section sheds light on these events and policies and shows their impact on the tourism sector. The data in this sections are mainly collected from electronic newspapers and international news agencies websites.

1. Lack of Security

The continuous wave of violence and lack of security have greatly affected the tourism industry in most of the cities in Egypt. One of the key examples is the attack that took place on Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel off Tahir Square in downtown (Trew, 2013). Dozens of armed assailants broke into the five-start-hotel, shoot at employees and guests, set the back door on fire, and ransacked the lobby (ibid). The attack took place during the nationwide protests to commemorate the second anniversary of the January 25 revolution. Protesters marched in demonstrations against the Muslim Brotherhood and the president's rule marking also the second anniversary of the pivotal "Friday of Rage," on January 28, 2013 (ibid).

The attackers shot at employees and continued to destroy the building for approximately three hours before the security forces arrived. The staff called desperately for help via their official Twitter account, called the police, and also called the army (Trew, 2013). As the police and the army failed to come to their aid, a number of anti-government demonstrators responded to the pleas, securing the besieged hotel and helping guests to flee until they were safely in taxis to the airport. The protesters also helped the security forces in arresting twelve people who were attempting to loot the downtown Cairo hotel (ibid).

After the attack, more than 45 clients insisted on leaving despite the hotel's offer to relocate them to higher floors, away from the clashes. Moreover, guests at other neighboring hotels also followed suit (Egypt Independent, 2013). Semiramis hotel executive demanded compensation from the Ministry of Tourism for losses sustained by

hotels over the past few days, warning that the departing guests will return to their home countries with negative reports on the security situation in Egypt (ibid).

Lack of security has greatly affected the tourism industry in Egypt despite the fact that President Mohamed Morsi pledged at the beginning of his term to guarantee security for tourists. Moreover, one of the main pillars of his presidential program was to expand the tourism sector and attract tourists from around the world (Hafez & Farouk, 2013). However, amid this security lapse, tourism is deteriorating even more as quoted in a newspaper article by the head of Egypt's Federation of Tourism Chambers: *“I am very despondent about the situation in Egypt. It is impossible to attract tourists and touristic investment into the country with the security situation deteriorating to this extent”* (ibid).

In February 2013, Dr. Hisham Zaazou, Egypt's Minister of Tourism stated that Egypt's tourism sector incurred losses in expected income of around \$2.5 billion since the revolution started in January, 2011 (Ahram Online, 2013). In an effort to promote tourism in Egypt and after an agreement with the Ministry of Telecommunication, Dr. Zaazou prepared for a new campaign by live-streaming images of the country around the world. The idea was to allow tourists to ascertain the security situation in Egypt, and to promote the country as a safe tourist destination (ibid). However, this idea was never realized because of the continuous actions of violence as well as the poor infrastructure.

2. Luxor Hot Air Balloon Crash

In the morning of 26 February, 2013, a hot air balloon crashed near Luxor resulting in 19 deaths out of 21 passengers – 18 on-site and one in hospital hours later (Castillo, Abedine & Yan, 2013). This makes it the world's deadliest hot air balloon accident in at

least 20 years, surpassing the 1989 hot air balloon crash in Australia, when 13 people were killed as two hot air balloons collided (ibid). This added to the tenuous security following the January, 2011 revolution leading to another blow to the tourism industry in Egypt.

This tragic accident led the government to ban hot air balloon flights until further notice. The suspension of hot air balloon flights is expected to continue as Egypt's airline authority is conducting investigations into the crash. This resulted in an average daily loses of \$600,000 for hot balloon companies in the area (Daily news Egypt, 2013). On average, companies in Luxor organize about 30 trips per day with roughly 20 customers per trip, each lasting two to three hours. A two hour balloon trip costs approximately \$100, while prices for special trips lasting two hours or more can cost as much as \$500 (ibid). There are number of nine companies that employ a total of between 300 to 1000 people (ibid).

There have been political disputes after the January, 2011 revolution that toppled former president Hosni Mubarak and brought President Mohamed Morsi to power. The Civil Aviation Ministry was long dominated by military officers or former officers, some of whom have resented control by a civilian president, particularly one from the Muslim Brotherhood (Michael, 2013). One civil aviation ministry official said that standards have fallen since civilians were brought in to some middle-ranking positions. The official said inspections have become more lax, taking place once a month instead of weekly (ibid).

Since the January, 2011 revolution that toppled President Hosni Mubarak, the rule of law has largely been ignored in many aspects of the Egyptian life, so it has been difficult

for the Ministry of Tourism to impose its authority on sites like this (BBC, 2013). This prompted accusations that authorities have let safety standards decline amid the political turmoil, although civil aviation officials said the balloon had been inspected recently and that the pilot may have been to blame, jumping out rather than stopping the fire (Aljazeera, 2013).

3. Appointment of a Governor in Luxor with Connection to Militant Groups

There was a public outcry in Luxor when former president Mohammed Morsi appointed a former member of Al Gamaa al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group) to be Luxor governor, just a few weeks before his overthrow (Maher, 2013). This group is notorious for its violent past that includes a string of deadly attacks against government officials and civilians during the 1990s, as Islamist jihadists fought to destabilize the state (ibid). The deadliest attack claimed by the group was Luxor massacre that took place in November 97 at Hatshepsut Temple in Deir El-Bahari in Luxor and ended up killing 58 tourists and four Egyptians (Chick, 2013). Six gunmen from Al Gamaa al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group) attacked the tourists, trapped them inside the temple, and massacred them systematically for 45 minutes (ibid).

Adel El Khayat, the appointed Luxor governor, was a former member of Al Gamaa al-Islamiyya and is a member of the Construction and Development Party, the political arm of Al Gamaa al-Islamiya (Chick, 2013). The crowd protested against the appointment of an extremist who belongs to a group that calls the monuments “idolatrous statues”, questioning how he could mingle with tourists, when he does not accept much of their behavior, like drinking alcohol (ibid). Local people, including many working in

the tourism industry, gathered and staged a sit-in outside the office of the new appointed governor until Morsi overturned his controversial decision (Maher, 2013).

4. Lack of Tourism Aid to Luxor

The number of tourists coming to Egypt fell to 9.8 million in 2011 from 14.7 million the year before, and revenues plunged 30 percent to \$8.8 billion (Michael, 2013). This has been devastating for the local economy, with some government estimates saying that 75 percent of the labor force is connected to tourism (ibid). The year 2012 saw a slight rise, but most tourists go to the beach resorts of the Red Sea, staying away from Nile Valley sites like Luxor. Poverty swelled at the country's fastest rate in Luxor. In 2011, 39% of Luxor population lived on less than \$1 a day, compared with 18% in 2009, according to government figures (ibid).

Luxor is suffering the tourism slump more acutely than anywhere else in the country, as stated by the head of Luxor's Chamber of Tourism:

“Tourism here is dying. Hotels that were once full now stand virtually empty. Carriage owners stand in the summer heat with their horses, calling out to local people in the hope one will agree to take a ride. Down by the Nile, the fleet of floating hotels that used to ferry tourists from Luxor to Aswan is mostly idle. Dozens are rusting at their moorings. Tourism used to be one of life's certainties in Egypt. Political uncertainty has all but killed it” (Maher, 2013).

Amid declining tourist numbers in Luxor, Bazaar owners cut off the main road leading to the Valley of the Kings and the Hatshepsut Temple – both of which represent major tourist attractions – to demand exemptions from the rent they pay for their shops (Ahram Online, 2013). The bazaar owners' action brought the movement of tour buses to a halt, leading several tourist agencies to cancel scheduled trips to the two historical sites.

Shop rents range from LE400 to LE4500 per month so they can never be expected to pay this amount given the current drop in tourist arrivals (ibid). In response, the Ministry of Antiquities announced that it planned to tie shop rents to tourist inflows in each district in hopes of easing pressure on bazaar owners. However, shop owners refused to open the road stating that they are subject to go to jail because of their delay in paying the rentals and that they have received promises before, but these promises were never kept (ibid).

The president of the chamber of travel and tourism establishments stated that the Ministry of Tourism has decided to give aid to those affected by the deteriorating tourism situation (Aggour, 2013). However, the head of the Bazaar Owners' Association in Luxor has been quoted denying these reports, claiming that they were nothing more than media propaganda. He added that they have submitted a request for financial support since January, 2013 and they have not received anything since then (ibid). The request contained the names of those who were affected in Luxor by the deteriorating tourism conditions as well as the amount of aid requested. Bazaar owners were expected to receive EGP 150,000, with each owner receiving an EGP1000 deduction from the electricity bill. As for stagecoach owners, the expected budget to support them was EGP 97,000 (ibid). However, lack of governmental aid added to the deterioration of the living conditions of tourism workers in Luxor.

5. Diesel and Electricity Crises

Egypt suffered recurring shortage in diesel fuel supplies in several governorates since January 25, 2011 revolution, representing the government's continued failure to find a solution to the gas shortages (Elmasry, 2013). The diesel fuel crisis had a great impact on

the tourism sector adding to the deterioration of the country's economy. The transportation sector in the tourism industry has been affected as one of the consumers of diesel fuel. This recent crisis in Egypt has left the capital city paralyzed due to major strikes by transport drivers seeking diesel fuel for their vehicles (ibid).

On the other hand, many governorates in Egypt have been experiencing a continuous electricity cuts throughout the day. While the reasons remain unclear, President Mohamed Morsi urged citizens to cut down on their use of electricity until the crisis is resolved (Farouk, 2012). Owners of hotels and resorts in the Red Sea suffered from the fuel shortage because they depend on diesel fuel to produce electricity through privately owned generators (ibid). The Association for Tourism Investors became concerned about the negative effects on tourism with electricity blackouts. With the increasing crisis they became much concerned about the growth of the black market, where diesel fuel is sold at inflated prices (ibid).

The country's tourism sector is mostly affected by the different crises affecting the country, such as lapses in security as well as fuel and electricity shortages, as stated by the President of the Tourist Department at the Egyptian National Competitiveness Council (Daily News Egypt, 2013). He added that foreign travel agencies would not encourage their customers to travel to a country that suffered from a shortage of basic amenities.

The President of the Tourist Department at the Egyptian National Competitiveness Council also said that repeated cuts in electricity would damage hotel facilities, forcing them to resort to costly fuel generators (Daily News Egypt, 2013). In this scenario, he

said, hotels would be forced to bear the burden of increased prices (ibid). They would be unable to pass them on to consumers, considering that many holiday packages are sold as fixed price agreements under contracts with foreign travel agencies (ibid).

6. Threats of Assault on Foreign Ownership

Early in 2013, media in Egypt announced a controversial law that a six-month grace period would be allowed to dual nationals to sell all their property in the region. Although the law never passed, yet the media focus on the issue was an ominous sign of a clear deterrent to foreign ownership and to investors who would consider investing in tourism in Egypt (The Telegraph, 2013).

Post January, 2011 revolution, Egypt witnessed a continuous state of chaos and insecurity. This resulted in ongoing demonstrations and acts of violence that greatly affected the safety of the tourists. Besides, Luxor, as a tourist-reliant city has been greatly affected because most of its residents mainly rely on tourism for living. This includes hot air balloon crash, the appointment of a Luxor governor with connection to militant groups, as well as the lack of tourism aid. Moreover, the diesel fuel and electricity crises discouraged tourists from visiting a dark city with streets blockage. Media also added to the already unstable situation by announcing the governmental intention to assault on foreign ownership, deterring any opportunity of investment in Egypt.

B. Consequences of the Revolution on Tourism

This section shows the consequences of the January, 2011 revolution and its impact on the tourism industry in Egypt. It gives an overview of the international reaction

towards Egypt as a tourist destination post-Arab spring. It also shows how far these consequences have affected the tourism industry as well as the reaction of tourism stakeholders including tourism business owners and workers. This section is based on interview data collected from tourism stakeholders as a part of this study.

1. International Reaction towards Egypt

Soon after the revolution advent and by the beginning of February 2011, there were international evacuations and warnings to foreigners in Egypt. The governments evacuated their nationals and advised against traveling to Egypt. Even months afterwards, the international tour operators could not offer Egypt as a product. In this regards, a key tourism expert says:

“After the revolution, the foreign tour operator was reluctant to show the client the factsheet and catalogue of Egypt as a product. This is due to the very high risks as advised by the travel advisory and insurance companies” (Interview, July 2013).

The informant explains that, based on the travel advisory, the insurance companies increased the rates of travel insurance to Egypt because the risks are higher. They were even kind of avoiding providing insurances to Egypt as an unstable country because the life and safety of the passengers were more liable to risks. This did not only apply to tourists, but also business travel (MICE), as no one could take a decision of inviting hundreds of guests to a risky country.

Post January 2011 events, governments in different countries issued travel warnings that varied in intensity by country. Some countries did not use absolute warning against traveling to Egypt. Referring to citizens of these countries and others who did not find it that dangerous to visit Egypt, this key tourism expert states:

“For individuals who decide to risk and visit Egypt, media was enough to draw them back. Seeing in the media all the violent practices taking place in Magles El Wozara, Mohamed Mahmoud, Maspiro, Rabaa Al Adaweya Square, and Tahrir Square, etc., they can never think of visiting Egypt” (Interview, July 2013).

Mass media, including newspapers, internet, satellite channels, as well as social media were depicting a continuous state of upheaval in the country. Such images of instability were terrifying even the nationals living in Egypt, so for a tourist who has the option not to come, will never do.

Amid the ongoing demonstrations, sit-ins, protests, violence, and overall unrest, there has always been an absolute sense of unpredictability as no one could expect what would happen next, where, or when. As a travel agency country manager narrates:

“My boss was planning to visit our head office in Egypt and I had no real concern but from tourism point of view that is serious. We don’t know from one day to the next what is going to happen or which bridge is going to be closed. I mentioned this to my boss that she can come with no issues but what happens if there is a big issue in Cairo and the airport gets closed” (Interview, July 2013).

No one knew whether things would get better or worse and accordingly, no one was capable of taking any decision regarding coming or encouraging anyone to come to Egypt. This also affected investment in Egypt, so whether visitors or investors, both could not take the decision of including Egypt in the forthcoming plan.

If the reality on the ground is not necessarily as terrifying as people could perceive, yet perception sticks in people’s mind. Referring to the role of media on people’s perception, the travel agency country manager establishes a kind of analogy between Egypt and South Africa saying:

“In South Africa, it took years and years to get rid of the negative perception by the world. For Egypt, it is even more intense because of the impact of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, etc.” (Interview, July 2013).

He elaborates that South Africa had a very difficult political times which is in some way parallel to Egypt. The dictatorship of both Mubarak regime in Egypt and the apartheid government regime were pretty much the same. Moreover, the military in South Africa, as well as in Egypt, is very strong. Despite all of those parallels, yet the problem in South Africa was that they had security issues and the country was put on the sanctions.

This is the reason why this country manager believes that the global media killed tourism in South Africa because whatever the media broadcasted stuck in people's minds and lasted for so long. It took years to get that perception from people's mind and to revive tourism. In the same regard, he expresses his concern for Egypt and the global perception Egypt might suffer in the coming years. The only means to get past this international perception about the country is a collective involvement of many elements including media, social media, television, governments, foreign affairs advisors, airlines, etc. to have an aligned plan for managing this crisis.

2. Cancellation of Current and Future Bookings

International evacuation of foreigners in Egypt, the prevailing sense of unpredictability, together with the media, resulted in the cancellation of current and future bookings. A Nile cruise tourism manager explains that before January 25, 2011, the occupancy in their six classical five star cruises used to range between 75% and 100%, with an average of 75% on all the cruises throughout the month. The work flow in tourism went perfectly smooth throughout the year of 2010 till the revolution outbreak in January 2011, as he elaborates:

“Before the end of January 2011, the sales volume from the individual booking through our website only was around one million Egyptian Pounds. After January 25, 2011, it was exactly like a balloon that burst. Everything stopped and all the current and future bookings were cancelled, even the bookings paid in advance were refunded. I can say that winter 2011 was the worst ever and anything afterwards would definitely be considered better” (Interview, June 2013).

Prior to January revolution, he notes, six cruises used to have daily departures except Thursdays and Sundays. Post-revolution, however, the sailing of the cruises fluctuates between one to three cruises only. Adding to the same point, a hotel sales manager says:

“Before the revolution, we had from 80% to 90% definite bookings till the end of June 2011. All reservations were guaranteed by credit card or down payment on the system. After having definite bookings for months in advance, now we cannot even guarantee the bookings of the next two days” (Interview, August 2013).

The problem is not just with the period of the revolution or even the following few months. The real issue is with the ongoing state of instability in the country that has tremendously affected tourism and has had great implications on those who work in this field, as a travel agency contracting manager describes:

“After more than three years now, things are even getting worse as we continue to suffer from a great loss and misfortune” (Interview, June 2013).

Not only have the cultural and recreational tourism been affected by the revolution, but also the MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions). Travel agencies handling MICE tourism have been affected by the revolution but in a different form, as a travel agency country manager clarifies:

“Business travel has been less unaffected, because private international corporates, governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations continue to hold events. However, this kind of MICE travel is directed outbound such as Istanbul, Dubai, Beirut, Paris, and Barcelona, rather than Luxor, Aswan, Sharm El Sheikh, Hurghada, or El Gouna” (Interview, July 2013).

However, hotels as well as travel agents handling other types of tourism, such as MICE, have been greatly affected, as a hotel marketing manager says:

“Most of the hotels in Cairo, Giza and Alexandria rely to a great extent on business groups. After the revolution, foreign experts doing projects in Egypt in multinational companies left. Similarly, business hubs in Egypt closed and alternatively opened in neighboring countries. That being the case, Egypt is no longer on the map for MICE tourism in the coming year” (Interview, September 2013).

After the revolution, Egypt has become a risky destination so event organizers for fear holding events in an unstable destination. This implies that the political instability affects MICE tourism in the unstable country, but does not greatly affect the travel agencies specialized in MICE business. On the other hand, it promotes the MICE tourism of the neighboring countries hosting these events.

3. Rate Reduction

Economically speaking, the tourism demand decreased while tourism supply remained unchanged, thus a surplus occurred, leading to a change in equilibrium price in the same direction, so price also decreased. The difficult conditions of the country and the decline in tourist arrivals to Egypt have left tourism business owners the only option of reducing their rates to attract tourists. Even if reducing the rates would not be profitable, yet they had to keep the business running. As a travel agency contracting manager mentions:

“To attract tourists in this current unrest, we have no other choice than making promotions with almost zero profit and selling optional tours through which we can make some kind of profit. As a travel agency, we pay for salaries, electricity, and water, so at this point we are not looking for profit, but all what we need is to cover our expenses to keep the business running till things get better” (Interview, June 2013).

Reducing the rates, however, is not an easy decision to take because certain hotels should keep their standard and the level of their clientele, as a hotel sales manager says:

“USD150 is the lowest we can offer after the crisis, yet clients still bargain to get cheaper rates based on the perception that no one travels in this crisis” (Interview, August 2013).

Although they couldn't reduce their rates any more, yet those who reserve exert another pressure on hotels to reduce the rates furthermore, knowing that the workflow is at its worst.

4. Deterioration of the Levels of Service and Clientele

Reducing the rates resulted in another problem which is the deterioration of the service provided. To compensate the loss and to keep the business running, most of the hotels and cruises have ended up deteriorating the service level, but each has a different form as a travel agency quality control manager elaborates:

“The three main protein items are fish, chicken, and meat and the three should be provided at lunch and dinner, but now, you can rarely find two of them. The salads are offered as tomato, cucumber, tomato with cucumber, tomato with cucumber and carrot dressed with mayonnaise. At the end, you can find 20 items made of cheap ingredients of tomato, cucumber and carrot with inconsiderable cost. Additionally, the hotel can provide very cheap small back view rooms so that the client pays a supplement for a spacious better view room” (Interview, June 2013).

Interviews show that international chain hotels, which are few in Egypt, have reduced their rates slightly because they have to keep their standard as they deal with certain clientele level. However, to make for the loss, they have limited the variety of the offered food and beverage to maintain the quality.

Interviews also show that the rest of the hotels, the majority of which are not from international chains, have reduced the quality of the food and beverage by providing

cheaper brands or increasing the variety with cheap ingredients. Other hotels provide very cheap rated rooms to attract the clients, then offer better ones with extra costs. At the end, the decrease in demand and increase in supply have led to the decrease in prices which ended up with the deterioration of the level of service provided.

After rate reduction, still not all clients were ready to visit a risky destination and only a certain clientele level was willing to risk, as a travel agency contracting manager advised:

“The clients who visit Egypt now are kind of saving because they pay around 20 Euros per night for full accommodation in a four star hotel. This is less than what they would have paid in their cold countries just for the gas to warm up” (Interview, June 2013).

Unfortunately, rate reduction has backfired because when the rates were reduced, the kind of clientele degraded. Normally, tourists spend money on different aspects in the visited country, not just the hotel they stay in. Rich tourists make extra visits, eat in restaurants, use cabs, buy from the markets, and get souvenirs from bazaars. The tourists who have been visiting Egypt during this period were not primarily from this group, who would spend on optional supplements. They mainly target the resorts providing the “all inclusive” package which includes accommodation with breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks, without having to pay for extras.

5. Hard Conditions of Tourism Business Owners and Workers

Informants states that prior to the revolution, travel agencies used to reserve a large number of high rated rooms at hotels. To promote the business, hotels normally provide travel agencies with complementary rooms based on the number of rooms reserved. Travel agencies sell these free rooms to the foreign tour operator and by the money they

get, they make up for the complaints they receive by providing a free or an upgraded room to the complaining clients. Now, however, a travel agency customer care manager says:

“With the reduced number of reserved rooms, reduced rates, and reduced profits, we bear more money to compensate for complaints as the hotels can no longer afford providing complimentary rooms” (Interview, June 2013).

After the revolution, the hotel occupancy is very low and the rooms are sold at a very low rate. Accordingly, travel agencies can never negotiate about deductions or complimentary rooms with the hotels and have to bear extra costs for covering the complaints they get.

Nile cruises have also been dramatically affected as a Nile cruise tourism manager explains that the cruise license should be renewed every three years, and already three years have passed since the revolution in 2011. To renew the license, the boat should pass through maintenance together with lots of procedures and fees from many governmental bodies such as civil defense, Nile protection, moorings, etc. This requires a lot of expenditures and no money is available in the status quo. He continues:

“We were planning to renovate one of our cruises, but after what happened, we ended up having five cruises instead of six. We went into the process of boat disposal by breaking this boat up for scrap recycling. As for the head offices, we operate only three days a week to cut the cost and to keep the business” (Interview, June 2013).

Travel agencies and hotels have been similarly affected regarding the payments commitment and lack of money. For getting a travel agency license, the agency should have a letter of guarantee of one Million Egyptian Pounds at the bank that can never be touched. This letter is a kind of guarantee from the bank that supports the travel agency in

any transaction. However, post-revolution, travel agencies and hotels have been passing through hard times, as a hotel sales manager describes:

“Several travel agencies have withdrawn the letter of guarantee to cover their loss. As for hotels, they pay taxes per room per year whether the room is occupied or vacant. This is an incredible load over the hotel managers to pay taxes, salaries, and electricity, with no incoming money. Many agents, hotels, and cruises have gone broke and closed as they could not stand the loss” (Interview, August 2013).

Tourism business owners including Nile cruises, travel agencies, and hotels strive to keep the business running. They spend a lot of money on monthly commitments so some of them are barely covering their expenses while others failed and closed.

The difficult financial conditions of tourism business owners have been consequently affecting tourism workers. The Nile cruise tourism manager indicates that despite their efforts to keep their employees as much as possible, yet the continuing instability failed all attempts. They ended up laying off around 65 staff members in each cruise and around 25% from Cairo head office. Those who have not been laid off are not financially better off, as he explains:

“The salaries of the remaining staff were reduced by 50% with no bonuses or incentives. 70% of our staff have to work another job at night to survive. The revolution led people to work 16 hours a day to be able to live, while others, who lost their job and can’t find alternative, changed their careers or left the country, especially the tour guides” (Interview, June 2013).

This Nile cruise tourism manager narrates that one of those who were laid off has two sons, one at school and one at university, so he calls them every while asking if anyone knows any vacancy. He is willing to do any job to cover his expenditures and on this, the Nile cruise tourism manager comments:

“These are examples of respectable employees with 20 years of experience in one of the most respectable cruises, so what shall other employees do?” (Interview, June 2013).

He elaborates that one of the office boys work at the office till 4pm then from 11pm till 7am as a cashier in a supermarket. Another one works as an elevator operator in one of the hospitals from 11pm till 8am. On the other hand, one of the accountants works from 10am till 3pm at the head office, then from 4pm till 12am at the store of one of the floating boats in Cairo. Another accountant works in a Cyber from 4pm till 11pm after finishing his work at 3pm. Although the salary they take from the other jobs are not high, yet they need it to make up their salary reduction.

Hotels staff members have also suffered from salaries decrease especially after rate reduction, as the hotel sales manager points out:

“Rate reduction affects our salaries greatly because hotel employees get 12% profit share which represents 40% of our total income” (Interview, August 2013).

Tourism employees who are blessed to keep their jobs suffer financially and psychologically, as a travel agency contracting manager expresses:

“We are so down both financially and psychologically but we have no other choice than coping. With reduced salaries and limited opportunities for career change, we do nothing now but reducing rates, tailoring promotions, and almost begging the clients to come” (Interview, June 2013).

Financially speaking, the salaries have been greatly affected and after several years in the field, it is uneasy to change career at this point. On the other hand, others who are only five or six year experience cannot work any other job, simply because no job opportunities are available during this critical period. Psychologically, they are working under pressure in a very depressing atmosphere.

To conclude, the media depiction of the continuous state of chaos and lack of security post January 2011 resulted in the negative international perception of Egypt. Governments evacuated and warned their people from visiting Egypt, tourists cancelled their current and future trips to Egypt, foreign investors would never invest their money in an unstable country, and even MICE tourism were directed abroad to neighboring countries. Accordingly, tourism business owners were left no other choice than reducing rates, decreasing salaries, and laying off employees just to keep the business running. The rate reduction resulted in profit reduction and consequently led to the degradation in the level of clientele and the decline in the level of service provided. This also worsened the living conditions of the tourism owners and workers so salaries were decreased and employees were laid off.

C. Implications of Government Policies on Tourism

Directly and indirectly related tourism policies can endanger, mitigate or resolve the crisis. Tourism business owners and workers have suffered from failed government policies that added to the business deterioration. These policies are mainly exemplified in the appointment of Luxor governor as well as the diesel fuel deficiency. This section highlights the impact of these policies on the tourism sector in Egypt post-Arab spring.

1. Appointment of Luxor Governor

Regarding the governmental decision of appointing Luxor governor, who has a former connection with militant groups, a travel agency country manager expresses his concerns saying:

“I normally encourage everyone to visit Egypt when they call me asking whether it is safe to come to Egypt in the current situation. The first time to tell somebody not to come was after the appointment of Luxor governor which did absolutely incredible damage. People contacted me and had struggles in their minds wondering how the government can appoint such a person who is an extremist and has a clear link to 1997 killing” (Interview, July 2013).

Stressing on the same point, a Nile cruise tourism manager says:

“I’ve received a call from an Italian friend wondering how the Egyptian government can appoint a person accused of Luxor Massacre to be Luxor governor. He wondered: what kind of message is your government delivering to the world?” (Interview, June 2013).

Although not personally involved in the attacks, yet Adel El Khayat’s appointment as Luxor governor is considered another blow to the tourism in Egypt. His membership in the same radical group declaring its responsibility in Luxor Massacre affected tourism in Luxor and scared off foreign visitors. Luxor is one of Egypt’s main tourism destinations and is considered a tourist-reliant city. Accordingly, the government should have considered this political decision that delivered a negative message to the world. It gave the impression that the Egyptian government is not interested in promoting foreign tourism or preserving Egypt’s ancient heritage. Thus, the deterrence of tourists from visiting Luxor have impacted the living conditions of Luxor residents.

2. Diesel Fuel Crisis

The transportation related tours have been affected by the diesel fuel deficiency for more than two years. The minibuses, coasters, and buses used for transporting tourists operate by diesel fuel. The problem is not just with the lack of fuel, but also with the implications related to this issue, as a travel agency quality control manager explains:

“With the lack of fuel, some gas stations started to sell the diesel fuel in black markets so the driver pays more to avoid waiting in queues. In addition, we are obliged to bear the cost of operating two vehicles and two drivers with a very little margin profit that

is not worth all of this hassle. However, we do it on the hope that selling under-cost tours can be included in a package that might bring some kind of profit” (Interview, June 2013).

The informant mentions that after twelve or thirteen hours of driving, the driver should deliver the vehicle full-tanked for the following driver. The driver keeps searching for available diesel fuel at gas stations and waiting for hours till the tank is full. On the other hand, the tank of the big bus is full at 500 litres, and since transportation companies fail to get all these litres, they have to use minibuses and coasters rather than big buses. Accordingly, the transfer cost was multiplied because instead of using one big bus, they used two coasters with two drivers.

The increase in demand and the decrease in supply led to the rise in price so gas stations started to sell the diesel fuel in black markets. The interviewee points out that the official cost per litre is one Egyptian Pound and ten Piasters but after the black market, drivers actually pay two Egyptian Pounds and 25 Piasters. In addition, they pay a tip of EGP 50 whenever they fill the tank which adds to the total cost. This applies everywhere but escalates in distant areas such as Marsa Alam, where there are only two or three gas stations with an extension of 400 KM along the coast.

The travel agency quality control manager explains the problem of a distant day trip saying:

“For a day trip from Marsa Alam to Luxor and back, for example, the vehicle should move from Marsa Alam very early in the morning and return by the end of the day, taking around four hours and half per way. Before, we used to put three or four jerrycans of diesel fuel above the vehicle, so that the driver can fill the diesel fuel once it runs out. However, this solution proved to be a failure in terms of safety, service, and cost. We end up bearing extra cost by operating another vehicle from Luxor to Marsa Alam or supplying the vehicle with an additional tank” (Interview, June 2013).

The informant elaborates that the tank capacity together with the tight time are never enough for a day trip in distant destinations. For instance, it is too hard to get the needed diesel fuel for moving from Marsa Alam to Luxor in the morning and back to Marsa Allam by night. Transportation companies tried several solutions but all of them are adding to the cost they bear and are never satisfactory. The problem with the jerkins is that it is totally unsafe for a vehicle to move placing the diesel fuel above. Besides, the jerkin capacity is 20 litres which is too heavy to carry and fill so the driver definitely drops some of the diesel fuel on his clothes and becomes unbearably smelled. The other solutions of operating two vehicles instead of one, or supplying the operating vehicle with an extra tank add to the overall cost and definitely decrease the profit.

Adding to the complication of the problem, the travel agency quality control manager adds:

“The case is not only with the deficiency, but also the content of the already scarce diesel fuel. The diesel fuel is mixed with water which leads to the breakdown of the vehicle while transporting tourists” (Interview, June 2013).

The diesel fuel deficiency leads to several problems that add to the complications that tourism workers have been already suffering. They are inflicted with the inflated cost as a result of the black market, the extra vehicle they have to supply, as well as the extra tank they have to add to the operating vehicle. Doing their best to deliver the best service for the tourists, they still suffer from the gas stations cheating in the content of the diesel fuel by adding water which results in an overall poor service to the tourists.

This section shows how failed government policies can negatively affect the already deteriorating tourism sector. Although Luxor governor appointment and the diesel fuel

problem are not directly related to tourism, yet they had serious impact on it. The governor's appointment deterred tourists from visiting Luxor and, thus, affected the living conditions of Luxor residents. The diesel fuel problem also affected the tourists' transportation to and from their tours. Consequently, it had serious implication on the profit of the tourism business owners. Thus, government policies should be well studied prior to implementation, especially in the times of crisis.

D. Ensuing Security Lapse Post-Revolution

Since the January 25, 2011 uprising, Egypt has witnessed a security lapse everywhere which has been greatly reflected on tourism and tourist spots. Lack of safety and security, the absence of the police, together with the hard financial conditions of tourism workers have led to the change in norms. People have had the guts to do many previously un-allowed practices such as thuggery with tourists because there is no fear of getting arrested. This is in addition to the ongoing demonstrations that endanger tourists' safety. This section shows how these practices have had serious implications on different aspects related to tourism involving tourism stakeholders. The data provided in this section are based on interview data to show the impact of security lapse on tourism.

1. Thuggery of the Carriage Drivers in Luxor and Aswan

Interviews clarify that part of the Nile cruise program is to visit the Temple of Horus in Edfu which lies between Esna and Aswan. Nile cruises normally provide buses to take the passengers from the mooring to the temple in five minutes and back to the boat to move to the next destination. Other cruises provide carriages instead, because they are cheaper. This is normally the case with small travel agencies who cannot afford

sending buses for this tour. It is noteworthy that the carriages are normally old and the drivers beat the horses hardly to have time to go back and take other tourists.

The carriage drivers, post-revolution, react violently, as a Nile cruise tourism manager states:

“Nile cruise passengers became endangered by the carriage drivers, who threaten the cruises to take the carriages instead of the buses or they can practice violence” (Interview, June 2013).

Adding to the same point, a travel agency customer care manager says:

“They can beat the driver, throw stones on the buses destroying the glass while tourists are inside, or beat the tour guide by their slots, threatening the safety of the tourists and the cruise employees” (Interview, June 2013).

After the revolution, small travel agencies and small cruises are no longer operating. Accordingly, the carriage drivers in Edfu, amid the hard living conditions, started to practice thuggery to drive the tourists to the temple by their carriages instead of the buses. Due to the absence of police, the carriage drivers use violence threatening the lives and safety of the tourists as well as tourism workers. Accordingly, Nile cruises stopped Edfu trip and provided alternative tours, but the travel agency customer care manager mentions:

“The problem didn’t stop by cancelling Edfu trip from the program as they stand on the bridges and throw Molotov on the boats passing underneath” (Interview, June 2013).

Travel agencies and cruises tried to overcome the thuggery of the carriage drivers by cancelling Edfu trip and offering alternative tours. However, this only added to the problem as the carriage drivers started throwing Molotov on the sailing cruises. With the

absence of police, no limits can be set to this thuggery and any attempt by the guides to stop these practices would only endanger their safety as well as that of the tourists.

They suffer from the same problem in Aswan, as the Nile cruise tourism manager elaborates:

“We face the same problem in Aswan as the carriage drivers in front of the moorings insist on taking the clients to the Nubian village by their carriages. We therefore stopped providing the Nubian village as a separate trip and we do it on our way back from Phialae Temple to avoid passing by them” (Interview, June 2013).

Due to the hard financial conditions of the carriage drivers, they practice thuggery in Aswan as well to keep surviving and to be able to feed their horses and their children.

Raising another point, a travel agency quality control manager says:

“There is no time for the carriages to gain so they literally rob the tourists by taking more than the fair amount, so they can take 20 Euros instead of 20 Egyptian Pounds. Accordingly, the client complains, but if the guide tries to talk to them, he can be beaten” (Interview, June 2013).

Unfortunately, tourism is deteriorating because of the lack of security from one side and the deteriorating conditions of the people whose income totally relies on tourism from the other side. Both lead to destroying what is remaining from tourism because the small number of tourists who visit Egypt and face this kind of bullying would never encourage anyone to come to Egypt.

2. Demonstrations Affecting the Tourists' Safety

Informants points out that the main bulk of charter flights operate Thursdays and Sundays which is much related to foreigners' weekend. Thereby, the airport workers made a strike on a Thursday with that bulk of passengers as a kind of pressure on the Kuwaiti Al Khorafy, who has the license of operating the airport. The planes landed, but

they were not provided with ladders to get the passengers out of the planes or cars for their luggage. As a travel agency customer care manager narrates:

“Yesterday, the airport workers went on strike at Marsa Alam airport preventing anyone from getting into or out of the airport, including the employees. We had two planes carrying 240 Germans who could not travel back to Germany in addition to around another 100 Germans who arrived and could not get out of the planes” (Interview, June 2013).

The lack of security and the outspreading attitudes of strikes and demonstrations affect the already deteriorating tourism. Tourists know nothing other than being faced by the fact that they were locked inside the plane and could not return to their country on the fixed date. Demonstration problems resulting in the closure of airports can be named as a kidnapping incident, as the travel agency customer care manager describes, which adds to the bad reputation of Egypt as a tourist country suffering from lack of security.

A hotel sales manager raises the same idea about one of the hotels in Salah Salem just in front of the Supreme Committee for Elections. In this regard, he narrates:

“During the presidential elections, the supporters of Hazem Salah Abu Ismail were protesting in front of the the Supreme Committee for Elections. They destroyed the garden in front of the hotel where they were completely residing. They were gathering in front of the hotel and yelling “Allahu Abkar” loudly that the hotel guests feared them and had to leave the hotel. They were performing their ablutions at “on the Run” in Mobil station in Salah Salem Street leading to the closure of the whole station at that time” (Interview, August 2013).

Demonstrations as well as sit-ins affect tourism to a great extent because tourists who see what was going on, will spread the word through the word of mouth. In addition, images are aired internationally so potential tourists can never think of visiting Egypt.

To put it in a nutshell, the security lapse highly affect tourism and might lead to serious consequences. The hard living conditions of the tourism workers together with the absence of the police encouraged them to practice thuggery and go for sit-ins

threatening the safety of tourists. There should have been some governmental solutions to improve the conditions of the tourism workers and to secure the safety of tourists.

E. Problems before and after the Revolution

Despite the richness and the economic significance of the tourism in Egypt, yet it has always been facing many issues that hinder its enhancement. There are already existing problems prior to the January 25, 2011 revolution that cannot be totally attributed to the impacts of the revolution. However, these problems have intensified after the revolution due to the general chaos and unrest spreading everywhere. This section is based on data collected from interviewees to highlight these issues and show how they affect tourism stakeholders in Egypt.

1. Sexual Harassment

Although year 2013 was the first year that the Ministry of Tourism applies penalties not only on the harasser, but also on the hotel where a sexual harassment case occurs, yet this have not solved the problem. About sexual harassment, a travel agency customer care manager clarifies:

“Egypt has always been suffering from the phenomenon of sexual harassment. We used to hear about maximum three cases in a year in one of the hotels in a resort. After the revolution, however, several cases recur on weekly basis” (Interview, June 2013).

The travel agency customer care manager narrates that he received a call from one of the Nile cruises they deal with last week advising about a harassment case. While two female tourists were staying in a double cabin, they were attacked through the cabin window and were harassed by one of the room service staff. The harasser was caught, yet

in similar situations, the tourists should be provided with full explanation to what exactly should take place to decide what action should be taken.

Accordingly, the tourists were told that they would go to the Egyptian tourist police to file a police record. In the record, their convictions, that of the harasser, as well as that of the witnesses -if there were any- would be recorded to assess their truthfulness. If there were no witnesses, the harasser would be put in jail and beaten for two or three days then he would be let out. If there were witnesses, however, a case would be filed and the harasser would be sentenced to jail from three to seven years. The harassed tourists refused to go to the Egyptian tourist police because they did not want to waste time of their trip in police stations. This ended up getting a very bad complaint from the foreign tour operator which affects Egypt's reputation as a tourist country.

Few days later, the travel agency customer care manager received another call from the same cruise hosting the same group advising about another case of harassment. A lady was in the lounge and went to the toilet in the bar floor, where she was harassed by a security staff member. The security staff member was supposed to have witnessed what happened to the room service staff member, yet he was caught doing the same act.

These are recurrent sexual harassment cases by the same cruise staff with the same group and in the same week. This is due to the lack of security because before, the harassers were used to fear going to jail and being hardly beaten. When this used to happen before, they never think of doing it again, eventually others also fear of even thinking about it.

2. Cheating in Bazaars

Since tourists are strangers in the country they visit, they are much more prone to cheating. This refers to buying a certain souvenir at a higher price than it normally costs. According to informants, cheating has always existed in Egypt before the revolution, like anywhere, as a Nile cruise tourism manager points out:

“Wherever there are tourists, cheating exists, even in the top touristic European countries. However, cheating in Egypt now is different, it is not about higher prices, but about selling something as being something else” (Interview, June 2013).

Interviews show that cheating post-revolution has become in selling something with a low quality as being something with a higher quality. For example, selling a piece of jewelry that is silver coated with gold as if it is pure gold. In the same regard, a travel agency customer care manager adds:

“If the tourists find that they were cheated on by a bazaar owner, who sells them fake souvenirs, they complain to the tour guide. On the other hand, the guide cannot do anything for them because he can be beaten if he tries to talk to the bazaar owner” (Interview, June 2013).

The informant draws the attention to the fact that although bazaar owners are not used to giving invoices to the customers even prior to the revolution, yet there was a kind of fear and they never reached the point of involving the police. In addition, it was better for them to be honest with one tourist to get them more clients. Post-revolution, however, there are no clients and they need money, so whoever comes get robbed. Moreover, bazaar owners used to fear travel agencies who can file a police record against them. Now, with the absence of the police and the security lapse, they have nothing to fear.

3. Unlicensed Agents Offering Fictitious Tours

As noted from the interviews, the unlicensed agents have always been experts in providing the same tours of the licensed ones with cheaper rates even prior to the revolution. However, the impact of this practice has intensified post-revolution, as a travel agency contracting manager explains:

“If we have tourists visiting Luxor, we try to offer them a tour to Abu Simbel including the flights, the guide, and lunch with a certain amount of money. During the time the clients take to think about it, they find someone standing with an umbrella in the street offering the same package with a cheaper price. Not knowing the difference in the quality of the offered service, they go for the cheaper. This kind of robbers normally send a friend of theirs who is a taxi driver to accompany the tourists in the tour and that is it” (Interview, June 2013).

The licensed travel agencies take the risk of bringing the client amid the current unrest by providing promotions with the least rates. They already sell the package with almost zero profit relying on the optional tours that the tourist might be interested in. This should compensate their loss and make some kind of profit that would enable them to keep the business running.

However, the tourists normally go with the cheaper offer, without knowing that this unlicensed agent is a kind of robbing them, having no license, no guide and no language. By this, travel agencies lose and if they can withstand the loss today, they will not survive long, considering the fact that many travel agencies have already closed. Besides, this encourages chaos and affects the reputation of Egypt when the client complains of getting an unprofessional service.

4. Lack of Governmental Inspection

The inspection that the Ministry of Tourism performs on hotels and cruises does not guarantee that they are perfectly cleared, as a travel agency quality control manager states:

“Inspection from the Ministry of Tourism is never accurate because theoretically, there are certain regulations and norms to be fulfilled, but practically, the bureaucratic system can always be corrupted. To overcome this, hotels and cruises are normally contracted with one of the main auditing companies in Egypt” (Interview, June 2013).

To be inspected, hotels and cruises have to pay the auditing company per “tour check” after which they are given a summary report including a certain percentage on the food, the bars, and the swimming pool. Whatever the hotel or the cruise need to include in the contract, can be added with a separate cost, so the contracts are normally for food and beverage as well as the swimming pool.

Hotels and cruises have always been suffering from the hygiene problem which entails sickness from food. However, the travel agency quality control manager points out:

“The hygiene problem escalated post-revolution because tourism business owners do not have enough money to pay for the auditing companies” (Interview, June 2013).

The informant clarifies that starting from 65% in the report, the hotel or the cruise is given a certificate assuring that the hotel or the cruise is in the “green zone”. This certificate guarantees that it has no risks and is a kind of backing up in case of any complaint. The problem with these certificates is that if the cruise or the hotel is dealing with a certain auditing company for a year, it is given what is called “certificate of achievement”. These certificates are a kind of fake because the hotel or the cruise can get

this certificate even with a percentage of 65% throughout the whole year. This problem intensified post-revolution mainly because of the lack of money, so many hotels do not make these contracts and rely on their own inspection.

On the other hand, the auditing companies are private profitable ones, as the travel agency quality control manager adds:

“The auditing companies should come once per month and the visit date should remain unknown. As the auditing companies also want to increase their profit and the number of hotels they are auditing, they advise the hotel about the visit date on friendly basis to be ready for the inspection” (Interview, June 2013).

Relying on the auditing companies can never be enough because after all, they are private companies and they need to increase their profit. Accordingly, they advise the hotels and cruises with the date of inspection on friendly basis so that they can take the necessary measures before the auditing company comes to get a high score in the certificate of achievement. After obtaining the certificate, the hotels and cruises proceed as before, because there is no periodic inspection to keep them committed to keep the standard.

In conclusion, the security lapse together with the lack of governmental inspection on tourism providers have intensified the already existing issues prior to the revolution. There should be serious procedures against violations including sexual harassment, cheating in bazaars, as well as the unlicensed travel agencies. Moreover, lack of periodic inspection by the Ministry of tourism, on one hand, and the financial crisis of tourism business owners seriously, on the other hand, have affected tourism quality. Tourism business owners cannot afford paying for a private auditing companies, and even if they can, the certificate of achievement they get always back them against any complaint.

Accordingly, the overall quality of tourism in Egypt has been highly affected and tourism stakeholders have been impacted.

XII. Recommendations

This section provides a list of views on ways to improve the status of tourism in Egypt. It integrates suggestions by tourism authorities based on their experience together with the author's recommendations based on literature. This section is divided into two parts: short term plan and long term plan.

The short term plan is a crisis management step to pass this critical period and save the tourism industry. It mainly concentrates on restoring security and elevating the conditions of tourism business owners and tourism workers. As for the long term plan, it includes a list of suggestions to try to sustain the tourism industry in Egypt. It targets promoting and developing the tourism industry in Egypt.

A. Short Term Plan

1. Rule of Law to Restore Security

Restoring security in Egypt is the basic step to revive tourism, otherwise any other effort will be in vain. According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2013, Egypt is ranked the 140th position out of 140 countries in safety and security. Considering the security challenge together with the high elasticity of tourism demand as a luxury product, Egypt has been easily substituted by other neighboring safe destinations. Tourists

can never risk visiting Egypt amid the political upheaval with continuous riots and demonstrations everywhere.

Security can only be restored by imposing the state sovereignty through the rule and enforcement of law with serious penalties against any violation including bullying, cheating, harassment, etc. This requires the Ministry of Interior Affairs to restore the police everywhere to ensure security and law enforcement. Retaining security and stability can be achieved if the police comes back to the ground and the rule of law dominates.

Security should be sensed especially by tourists who are already foreigners in the visiting country. This has definitely to do with the overall security of the country and, thus, should take the highest priority in the governmental agenda. No matter how much the government tries to do to make tourists feel safe, the bigger picture of the country should be a genuine safe one.

2. Financial Aid to Tourism Business Owners and Workers

The Egyptian government should work on helping tourism business owners and workers to preserve their business. Otherwise, on the long run, there would be a deficiency in expertise who might quit the career if the conditions remain declining from worse to worst. Moreover, those who might be interested in joining a tourism career would never take the decision.

Most of tourism business owners are broke with three years of expenditures without revenues, some have closed and others have sold their furniture. To run their cruises, hotels, agencies, vehicles, etc., they pay monthly commitments including salaries, electricity, maintenance, taxes, over-cost fuel, etc. On the other hand, their rates are

greatly reduced just to keep running the business so they almost get zero profit and don't cover their expenses.

Therefore, a key tourism expert recommends that the government should postpone taxes and social insurance as well as other commitments normally requested of tourism business owners for six or seven years. The tourism employees can pay their shares but business owners can never afford it at this point. He also suggests finding them a means for financing by making a kind of fund through which partners can buy shares for five years. However, tourism business owners should have the option of buying back their shares or keeping the new partners after the five years. Social accountability can also play a role such as opening a fund in the bank to assist inflicted tourism business owners and workers.

3. Partnership between the Ministry of Tourism and other Ministries

The tourism industry should be viewed as the locomotive of economics that once promoted, would cause most of the other sectors in Egypt to be promoted as well. This is due to its great economic significance in terms of elevation of poverty and generation of foreign currency as well as the total contribution to GDP and employment.

Considering its economic significance, a key tourism expert suggests following the examples of Francisco Franco, the dictator of Spain, as well as Joseph Broz Tito, the benevolent dictator of Yugoslavia. They were able to reach an advanced level in the tourism industry when it was at its infancy only and when they had a political will of dedicating their countries' resources to promote tourism. Whatever the Ministry of Tourism required, was directly implemented by other ministries. The Egyptian

government should have this type of serious political will and should start to work on promoting tourism as a crucial economic asset.

In regard to the policy rules and regulations, Egypt is ranked the 76th out of 140 countries according to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2013. This is because the policies of the Egyptian government are far from being promotive of the tourism industry. Many government policies have significantly worsened the conditions of the tourism industry in Egypt. This is due to the unaligned policies between the Ministry of Tourism and other ministries affecting tourism. Thus, there should be a lobbying political system that is based on cooperation and partnerships between the Ministry of Tourism and the other ministries affecting tourism.

Based on the same concept, the key tourism expert suggests having a Supreme Council of Tourism that includes the Ministry of Tourism as well as other ministries affecting the tourism sector, whether directly or indirectly. The ministries in this council should have periodical meetings with a defined strategy and deadlines to take collective decisions that can support tourism. This kind of partnership between ministries would ensure having aligned policies that do not endanger the tourism industry whether directly or indirectly. It would consider the welfare of tourism stakeholders: tourism business owners and tourism workers as well as tourists. It would also entail considering new policies that can promote the tourism industry in Egypt.

Accordingly, the Ministry of State for Local Development would have initially considered proposing the decision of appointing a militant governor in Luxor to the council to evaluate its consequences on tourism on this touristic city. Furthermore, before

the Ministry of Petroleum raised the diesel fuel price, the council should have assessed the implications of this policy on the tourism sector. Similarly, the Ministry of Electricity would have considered the tourism sector before frequently cutting electricity during this critical period.

4. Effectiveness of Egyptian Travel Federation (ETF)

ETF is a key stakeholder as the representative of the tourism private sector in Egypt. A key travel agency country manager stated that the federation should have been more effective to help tourism business owners and workers. For instance, they could have presented a case to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in Geneva to support travel agencies who missed paying the Bank Settlement Plan (BSP) for the issued air tickets.

On the other hand, the key ETF member clarified that the Egyptian Travel Federation is not empowered to present the travel agents' rights and needs and to speak to the government in case of any governmental policy affecting the tourism industry. For legislating new laws related to tourism, the minister of tourism takes recommendations from ETF to present to the Parliament. The minister and the Parliament are not obliged to act upon their recommendations. This is incomparable to top powerful international travel associations such as the American Society for Travel Agents (ASTA), the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), or the German Travel Association (DRV).

It is important to note that at times of hardship in the industry, the Egyptian Travel Federation (ETF) is not in a position to provide compensation to laid off workers or suffering businesses. Thus, it should be more effective in supporting tourism stakeholders

during their hard times. It should also be empowered to truly represent the travel agents and have significant impact on the travel industry in Egypt. They should be enabled to defend their members' interest vis-à-vis political stakeholders and to support their members to increase their profits.

B. Long Term Plan

1. Integration of Tourism in Egypt's Strategic Plan for Ground Transportation

Egypt's strategic plan should integrate the improvement of the downfalls from which the tourism sector suffers. Egypt has a serious problem in the ground transportation due to the high traffic as well as the unease in movement within the country. Therefore, Egypt is ranked 96th out of 140 countries for ground transport infrastructure. This includes the low quality of the roads, railroads and ports, as well as the accessibility to the main tourist attractions.

Regarding the roads, special attention should be given to the improvement of ground transportation especially to the main tourist attractions and downtown. This also entails providing daily transportation to and from Ein El Sokhna as one of the beautiful resorts in Egypt that has no public transportation. This hinders several tourists from visiting Ein El Sokhna and eventually prevents any potential investment in this area. In addition, the government should improve railways and roads to guarantee safety and security of passengers.

As for the accessibility to tourist attractions, downtown is one of the areas subject to severe traffic that annoys tourists and hinders their free movements. However, it should

be considered a tourist area, being the center of Cairo where most of the major hotels are located around the River Nile and consequently, most of the tourists are staying. Accordingly, the hotel marketing manager suggests that downtown should be only for pedestrians, and should be freed from street vendors and ridden of herded animals. It should be a quiet and clean spot for the tourists to move freely and enjoy their stay. The government should also consider beautifying this area to be a comfortable and representable location for the tourists to stay in.

2. Investment and Fundraising to Enhance the Tourism Sector

Investment helps in promoting tourism indirectly because building visiting spots such as grand malls or investing in resorts opens the door for more tourists to visit these spots. Accordingly, the government should work on facilitating investments for Egyptian as well as foreign investors to enhance tourism.

There are some areas in Egypt that are not well invested and require special governmental attention. These areas include the North Coast and Ein El Sokhna where a few number of hotels are available because they are mainly based on privately owned apartments or villas. The government should work on facilitating the procedures for investment to attract national and foreign investors to build new resorts in these coasts. This can be done by selling some areas with low rates to be paid on installments for a certain number of years. This is on the condition that the investor would be responsible for desalinating water, bringing generators, and providing sewage system.

Cultural projects that are mainly aiming to promote the main touristic spots and sightseeing can be fundraised by different means. Sponsors of international companies

can financially support building cultural projects to advertise about their products. This requires the cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Investment.

3. Governmental Inspection and Quality Control

Although accidents happen everywhere, Egypt generally suffers from lack of maintenance and quality control. Several disastrous accidents occurred in Egypt as a result of poor maintenance and negligence. They include but are not limited to the sinking of El Salam Maritime Transport in February, 2006 as a result of a fire in the engine rooms. A Flash Airline flight that crashed in Sharm el Sheikh in January, 2004 as a result of mechanical issues and a Badrashain Railway accident in January, 2013 was a result of a technical problem.

These accidents had serious impacts on the safety and lives of Egyptians as well as foreigners. Similarly, the horrible accident of the hot air balloon is another disaster added to Luxor especially that four of the passengers were Japanese. A key tourism expert points out that Japan is well known for having very well disciplined people and if the travel advisor tells them “be careful from visiting Egypt” it means for them “do not go”. It is noteworthy that Japan was the last travel advisor who re-allowed visiting Egypt post-revolution, yet it disallowed it again after the accident of the hot air balloon.

This accident has dramatically affected tourism in general, and the Japanese tourism in particular, during this critical period. No tourist would ever risk to visit a country that has a serious problem with maintaining its devices and assuring the safety of its visitors. Therefore, special attention should be given to the maintenance of whatever can endanger

the life and safety of people. This requires serious quality control inspection and effective penalties for violation or negligence.

4. Utilizing Media to Promote Tourism

Media has recently played a great role in encouraging tourism to certain destinations through television series, movies or even programs. A perfect example of the effect of media on tourism is Turkey as the tours in Turkey now include visiting the castle of 'Mohannad', the hero of the famous Turkish series 'Nour'. It should come as no surprise that the success of the series as well as the wonderful scenes depicted in this series raised the tourists' curiosity and interest to visit the country.

Unfortunately, most of the scenes of the Egyptian series are shot in other countries and unconsciously promote tourism in these countries rather than Egypt. Promoting the quality of the Egyptian series and movies can help in enhancing the tourism industry. This is in addition to involving the main touristic spots or beautiful Egyptian spots in the movie, series or song to raise the spectators' interest to visit these places. This requires a kind of cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Media to spotlight on Egypt's beautiful places.

5. Promoting Tourism by Public Relation Campaigns

Tourism in Egypt should be promoted differently, shifting to public relation campaigns rather than advertising campaigns. It is useless to pay millions of dollars just to tell the tourists to visit Egypt when the tourism sector is losing billions. A Nile cruise tourism manager suggests holding exhibitions of Egyptian antiquities in European countries led by Egyptologists with good international connections. Such an initiative

will not endanger the antiquities which have been perfectly reserved by the Europeans throughout the previous years. On the other hand, the antiquities will still belong to Egypt and the Ministry of Tourism can use the money brought from this initiative to support tourism stakeholders.

In the same regard, a key tourism expert recommends dealing differently with each country based on its interest. Countries such as France and England are fond of the Egyptian culture, and several French and British Egyptologists have been contributing to the excavation and conservation of Egyptian antiquities. In France, for instance, a reception can be held under the pyramids at the Louvre Museum where people can be lectured by a French Egyptologist. The reception program can also include a choir that sings a song mixing the rituals of church and mosque, together with a whirling dervish.

Afterwards, the French Minister of Culture can be invited to visit Egypt together with a number of French journalists, stars, travel agencies, and tour operators. They can be taken on a tour in Luxor and Aswan to witness the recognition of a prominent French Egyptologist in a big ceremony. These events, when reflected in the media, would be much appreciated by the world and would encourage the revival of the Egyptian cultural tourism. The same can be done in England and other European countries which are rich with several prominent Egyptologists who have been playing a great role in discovering the Egyptian antiquities.

As for Arab countries, the key tourism expert believes that Arabs yearn to visit Egypt but they are waiting till security is restored. Thus, he suggests having a very big event in Tahrir Square with a huge stage and allowing volunteer Egyptian and Arab singers to

sing for Egypt. Arab journalists and media would be invited to broadcast this event which would be a great sign of restoring security.

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