ChunCheon City and the Korean Society of Leisure and Culture Studies are pleased to welcome you to the 11th World Leisure Congress ChunCheon 2010 to be held in Kangwon National University from Aug. 28 to Sep. 2, 2010 around the theme of “Leisure and Identities.”

The Congress aims to bring together academics, educators, students, researchers, professionals, government officials, and representatives from non-governmental organizations in the field of leisure, recreation, tourism, and sports to discuss the academic, social, industrial, and political issues and concerns around the theme.
Around 15 focused themes, Work Life Harmonization, Leisure and Life Course, Cyber Leisure, Leisure and Globalization, Leisure Behavior, Leisure and Society, Leisure and Tourism, Leisure and Sports, Leisure and Culture, Leisure and Policy, Leisure and Gender, Leisure Consumption and the Leisure Industry, Leisure and Technology/Science, Leisure and Psychology, the congress will provide interdisciplinary sessions in the format of plenary sessions, workshops, symposium, roundtable discussions, student sessions, general sessions (oral presentations), poster presentations, field workshops, and social program where the participants will exchange knowledge and information and find the new areas and insights for the future research and academic collaboration.

The 11th World Leisure Congress ChunCheon 2010 held in conjunction with the 1st World Leisure Games and the World Leisure Trade Show is expected to contribute to the transformation of ChunCheon from a tranquil lake city into a dynamic leisure city full of exciting leisure and culture activities and interactive experiences.
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Does gender matter? – An exploration of gendered perceptions of fear on holiday.

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Submitted to the 11th World Leisure Congress
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Abstract

This paper explores gendered perceptions of fear on holiday. Gender has been regarded as one of the most important components influencing perceptions of fear (Pain, 1997; Valentine, 1990). Indeed, most studies highlight a difference between males and females with regard to the perception and expression of fear. Despite this, gendered differences and similarities in the perception and expression of fear have remained largely unexplored within the context of tourism. Perceptions of fear and gender in the home environment have been explored within the leisure literature. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether and how the data provided by the studies on fear and gender in the leisure environment can be applied to a tourism context. Indeed, the lack of agreement concerning whether and how the tourism and leisure environments are related emphasises the need for further research on gendered perceptions of fear in the tourism context.

In order to explore gender-based similarities and differences in the perception and expression of fear, in-depth interviews were conducted with 13 females and 12 males on holiday on the island of Ios, Greece. The results show that gender, despite having been traditionally constructed as a binary concept, did not play a major role in influencing tourists’ perceptions of fear on holiday. Rather, with the exception of women’s concerns of sexual violence, the findings reveal that more marked differences occurred in the perception and expression of fear among the various masculinities and femininities than between men and women. This implies that the investigation of gendered perceptions of fear needs to take into account the non-homogeneous nature of the two groups and rejects often-assumed stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity.

Keywords: Fear, gender, tourism

Introduction

The importance of investigating perceptions of fear has been recognized within a number of different disciplines, such as psychology (Rachman, 1977; Poulton & Menzies, 2002;
Schaefer, Watkins, & Burnham, 2003), criminology (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1992; Ferraro, 1995; Warr, 2000), urban studies (Johnston, 2001; Levi, 2001; Neill, 2001) and leisure studies (Mehta & Bondi, 1999; Day, 2001; Bairner & Shirlow, 2003). Indeed, the focus on fear has been regarded of value given that ‘fear features among our most basic emotional or dispositional states’ (Sparks, Girling, & Loader, 2001; p.885). In particular, fear is considered to be significant in terms of investigating the relationship between an individual and his/her environment, what is important and what is not important for an individual, and beliefs about the self and the world (Rachman, 1974; Lazarus 1991). Hovland, Janis, and Kelly (1953) and Witte (1992), for example, argue that a better understanding of fear can lead to a major comprehension of an individual’s patterns of behaviour given the link between fear and motivation.

Fear also plays a fundamental role in marketing strategies. It has been found that consumer behaviour can be influenced by moderate fear appeals (Janis, 1967; Tanner, Hunt, & Eppright, 1991). Such practices are based on the recognition that consumer behaviour is influenced by an individual’s emotional states (Barsky & Nash, 2002). Furthermore, fear is valued for educational purposes. It has been found that fear can be used to educate the public about safer sex practices in order to decrease the risk of contracting AIDS (Kyes, 1995), and to inform people about the dangers of smoking cigarettes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Ewert (1989) emphasises the importance of the educational role of fear in an outdoor setting, where people learn about themselves and their limits through the experience of fear.

Despite its importance, fear has not received much attention in tourism studies. Moreover, gendered differences and similarities in the perception and expression of fear remain largely unexplored within the context of tourism. Gender has been regarded as one of the most important components influencing perceptions of fear (Pain, 1997). Indeed, most studies (e.g. Valentine, 1990; Ferraro, 1995; Koskela, 1997; Pain, 1997) highlight a difference between males and females with regard to the perception and expression of fear. Therefore, a study on tourists’ perceptions of fear cannot neglect the influential role of gender, given that tourism is a phenomenon constructed out of gendered societies (Kinnaird, Kothari & Hall, 1994). As Swain (1995) states, ‘[f]or social scientists engaged in tourism research, gender is thus a fundamental category useful in human resource studies, economic development projects, marketing strategies, site and infrastructure planning, and policy development’ (p. 248).
The studies conducted on tourists’ fear of crime on holiday (Brunt et al., 2000; Mawby et al., 2000; George, 2003) do not pay attention to gendered differences with regard to the perception and expression of fear. In their exploratory study on fear of crime among British holidaymakers, Brunt et al. (2000), for example, do not contemplate gender as a variable that influences tourists’ perceptions of fear on holiday. Similarly, Mawby et al. (2000) do not pay attention to the relationship between fear and gender. Although the authors found that women are most likely to register fear compared to men in a survey among English tourists, they do not provide any explanation for such a difference. Conversely, in his study of perceptions of fear of those visiting Cape Town, George (2003) found that gender was not a significant component affecting tourists’ perceptions of fear. However, the reasons of this finding are not explored by the author.

Nevertheless, exceptions to this situation do exist. Carr (2001), for example, explores perceptions of danger among young tourists on holiday in London. In contrast with previous studies on fear and gender within a tourism context (Westwood et al., 2000; Wilson & Little, 2008), he underlines that not only do differences but also similarities exist between male and female tourists with regard to perceptions of danger. Furthermore, the author suggests that men and women cannot be regarded as homogeneous categories. However, the nature of the data collection method utilized, namely a questionnaire survey, can be regarded as a limitation to gain in-depth insight into male and female tourists’ perceptions of fear. In addition, Carr (2001) focuses on perceptions of danger within a specific tourism context, namely the urban environment of London. The question arises as to whether gendered perceptions of fear among tourists vary if a different tourism setting, such as a non-urban environment, is referred to.

Perceptions of fear and gender in the home environment have been explored within the leisure literature (e.g. LaGrange & Ferraro, 1989; Mehta & Bondi, 1999). Nevertheless, the studies conducted within the home environment present a number of limitations. First, the influence of feminist theories on the development of gender studies has led to the proliferation of studies on the female perception of fear. While the exploration of women’s perceptions of fear is of value and provides a significant contribution to the understanding of fear, the focus on the female experience has caused a paucity of data with regard to men’s perceptions of fear. Since gender can be defined in broad terms as ‘a system of cultural identities and social relationships
between females and males’ (Swain, 1995; p. 247), a study on perceptions of fear needs to take into consideration both males’ and females’ emotional experiences.

Second, much of the literature on gender and fear (LaGrange & Ferraro, 1989; Valentine, 1989; Bialeschki & Hicks, 1998) has regarded males and females as two dichotomous and homogeneous categories. Such approaches to gender have neglected the existence of a variety of different masculinities and femininities (Connell, 1987, 1993; Segal, 1993; Paechter 2003a; Paechter 2003b). As a consequence, with the exception of few studies (e.g. Mehta & Bondi, 1999; Carr, 2001) the recognition that perceptions of fear vary among the multiple masculinities and femininities, rather than exclusively between males and females, has not been explored in depth.

Third, the literature on gender and fear within leisure studies has tended to emphasise differences rather than similarities between males and females in the perception and expression of fear. Indeed, there are studies that do report similarities between males and females with regard to the experience of fear (e.g. Carr, 2001), however, often only a discussion of the differences is provided.

Finally, the extent to which the data provided by the studies of fear and gender in the leisure environment is of value in a tourism context is unknown. Indeed, the lack of agreement concerning whether and how the tourism and leisure environments are related (Moore et al., 1995; Ryan & Kinder, 1996; Hall & Page, 2006) emphasises the need for further research on gendered perceptions of fear in the tourism context. Therefore, this paper was developed with the specific aim of making a contribution to the study of fear from a gendered perspective given the paucity of data concerning gendered perceptions of fear on holiday. More specifically, this paper explores tourists’ perceptions of fear from a gendered perspective.

**Fear**

Fear is a topic that has been extensively researched (Gullone, 1996). However, one of the main issues in the investigation of fear is the complexity of the term ‘fear’ itself, given the lack of a universal definition of fear. Rountree and Land (1996), for example, claim that ‘there is an
ambiguity in defining and measuring fear’ (p. 1353). Similarly, Warr (2000) points out that ‘the concept of fear is routinely and profitably used in psychology and the life science, with considerably less dispute as to its meaning’ (p. 454). The lack of a universal definition of fear may be related to the fact that most of the studies focus on specific kinds of fear, such as fear of crime (Warr, 2000) or fear of spiders (De Jong, Andrea & Muris, 1997; Elbedour, Shulman & Kedem, 1997). Different kinds of fears are likely to follow different patterns of development among people. In an individual’s lifespan different fears may appear or disappear at different stages (Tuan, 1979). It has been found that certain types of fear, such as fear of crime, increase with age (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). In contrast, fear of spiders may decrease with age (De Jong et al., 1997). It needs to be emphasised that these studies are a significant contribution to the understanding of fear. However, the focus on different objects of fear has led to a failure by researchers in the analysis of fear as a unitary concept.

A number of authors (e.g. Ortony, Clore, & Collins 1988; Rachman, 1978; Thomson, 1979) define fear as an emotion. However, the inclusion of fear in the category of emotion does not help create a universal definition of fear. Emotions have been investigated from many different perspectives (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Strongman, 1973). The different approaches to the investigation of emotion have led to the generation of a large number of different, and often discordant, definitions of ‘emotion’ (P.R. Jr. Kleinginna & A.M. Kleinginna, 1981; Plutchik, 1980). In this respect, emotion has been regarded as one of the most challenging topics in psychology (Norman, 1981).

As a consequence, different approaches to the study of emotion have led to distinct conceptualisations of fear. Some authors (e.g. Buck, 1984; Darley, Glucksberg, & Kinchla, 1991; James, 1884) have focused on the physiology of fear, namely the mechanisms that occur in the nervous system and other organs of the body during an emotional experience. Others (e.g. Clynès, 1977; Ekman, 1977; Lazarus, 1975) have focused on the variations of an individual’s patterns of behaviour during the experience of fear. Mowrer (1939), for example, emphasises a relationship between fear and avoidance behaviour. Fear has also been investigated in regards to the cognitive processes occurring during an emotional experience (Frijda, 1993; Lazarus, 1991). Finally, attention has been paid to the influence of the physical (Borooah & Carcach, 1997;

It is important to remember that the various components described above are not necessarily always part of the emotional experience of fear (Plutchik, 1980). In some cases only some of the components are involved in the experience of fear (Rachman, 1978). However, all the traditional components of emotion need to be taken into account because they could all potentially play a role in the perception and expression of fear (Izard & Buechler, 1979; P.R. Jr. Kleinginna & A.M. Kleinginna, 1981). P.R. Jr. Kleinginna and A.M. Kleinginna (1981) claim that ‘a formal definition of emotion should be broad enough to include all traditionally significant aspects of emotion’ (p. 335). Rachman (1978) emphasises the importance of integrating different components in the definition of fear, such as the subjective experience, physiological changes and behavioural components. Therefore, in this paper fear is defined as the product of the complex and mutual interaction of various components, such as individual perceptions, individual characteristics, the physical, social and cultural environment, and physiological and behavioural responses (Figure 1).

Figure 1. A Conceptual Model of Fear
Data collection and analysis

There is a dearth of qualitative studies that explore tourists’ perceptions of fear on holiday. This lack of qualitative studies should be regarded as a limitation in the understanding of tourists’ perceptions of fear given that quantitative methods are not flexible, and thus, they are not suited for studying naturally occurring real-life situations (Punch, 2005). Conversely, a qualitative research design is particularly appropriate for the investigation of emotion. Patton (1990), for example, emphasises the importance of qualitative enquiry for ‘revealing respondents’ depth of emotion […]’ (p. 24). Similarly, Strauss and Corbin (1990) claim that qualitative techniques are particularly useful in the exploration of perceptions and emotional experiences. Consequently, this study employs a qualitative data collection method, namely semi-structured interviews. The choice of conducting semi-structured interviews was based on the recognition of this technique as ‘the most efficient means of learning about an individual’s experiences’ (Gullone, 2000; p. 433).

The data was collected during a three month period (May-August 2007) on the island of Ios, Greece. Twenty-five in-depth interviews were conducted among the tourists on the island. In
order to explore gender-based similarities and differences in the perception and expression of fear, the interviews were conducted with 13 females and 12 males. The interviews lasted 30-45 minutes on average with each interview varying in length from 20 to 70 minutes. All the interviews were digitally audio-recorded.

The researcher personally approached the potential respondents to ask consent for participation. The respondents were randomly selected on the street. Before asking consent for participation, the researcher introduced himself. An Information Sheet with a description of the aims of the study was provided. The researcher also provided any additional explanations requested by the participants. Every respondent read and signed an Informed Consent Form. Moreover, the researcher emphasised the possibility to withdraw from the study any time and without any disadvantage as well as the guarantee that the data collected would have been treated confidentially in order to preserve participants’ anonymity.

Besides in-depth interviews, observations were systematically carried out during the fieldwork. The researcher kept a diary in which personal observations were noted. In particular, the observational notes consisted of descriptions of the context in which interviews were carried out, notes on the participants’ patterns of behaviour on Ios, description of events and circumstances that the researcher regarded as relevant for the study, and accounts of personal feelings and emotions during the fieldwork.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and pseudonyms were assigned to the various interviewees in order to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality. Similarly, the observational notes taken during the fieldwork were first read and examined in order to identify names and particulars that would have potentially compromised the anonymity of the participants. Following transcription, the transcripts and observational notes were read several times in order to identify themes and significant facts (Patton, 1990).

As Mason (2002) suggests, data was read ‘literally, interpretively and reflexively’ (p. 148). Data was first read literally in order to assess whether there were particular words and expressions that the respondents tended to use during the interviews and observations. This also allowed the researcher to become familiar with the information collected, although it needs to be remembered that a provisional identification of emergent themes had already occurred during the
fieldwork. As Lofland and Lofland (1984) point out, ‘analysis and data collection run concurrently’ (p. 131). Data was then read ‘interpretatively’ in order to provide possible explanations ‘through or beyond the data’ (Mason, 2002; p. 149 emphasis in the original). The interpretation of data was based on both the existing literature on fear and the researcher’s fieldwork experience. In particular, the researcher tried to understand and explore his role in the data collection process. Therefore, the interpretative and reflexive reading of the data occurred concurrently.

A thematic analysis was used in order to identify emergent themes (Patton, 1990), which were explored and discussed in relation to the existing literature on fear and the aims of the study. Thematic analysis was chosen due to the fact that ‘it offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006; p. 77). In particular, the themes were identified based on six phases of analysis, which are summarised in Table 5.2. The themes were partly identified in an inductive manner. As Patton (1990) points out, an inductive analysis is a data-driven process, namely a process that identifies themes without referring to pre-existing theoretical assumptions. Despite this, it needs to be emphasised that ‘researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006; p. 84). Therefore, the themes identified by the researcher were a result of both inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven) reasoning. More specifically, the analysis was conducted to find answers to the specific research questions, yet emergent themes which initially had not been considered central to the research questions were also explored.

Table 1. Phases of Thematic Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Familiarizing yourself with your data</td>
<td>Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generating initial codes</td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Setting up the data set</td>
<td>Collating data relevant to each code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collecting data relevant to each code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Searching for themes</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reviewing themes</td>
<td>Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Defining and naming themes</td>
<td>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Producing the report</td>
<td>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.</td>
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Source: Braun and Clarke, 2006; p. 87.

**Results**

**Female holidaymakers’ perceptions of fear**

The responses obtained from the interviews and observations show that the fear of being sexually assaulted was a major concern for female holidaymakers.

…if you are a girl you have to think about fear, you always have to think about fear! You know, the fear of getting raped is always there…even if you try not to think about that!
Surely women are more scared of being raped compared to men…men sure are not scared of being raped (Marta 25, Greece)

This finding supports previous studies on gender and fear, such as Warr (1995) and Day (2001), who point out that fear of being sexually assaulted is a central fear among women. Furthermore, according to Marta (25, Greece) women are more scared of being raped than men. She thus agreed with Gordon and Riger (1991), who remark that women fear sexual violence more than men.

However, some women seemed to challenge stereotypical images of females as fearful victims.

Sometimes I am scared, you know, you don’t know anything about these people… you meet them at night, they ask you to follow them somewhere, maybe a remote part of the island…I go but I am scared…and if something happens? If this guy gets crazy? But I like that feeling, it’s like a pump of adrenaline, I take the risk, I would say that the fear I experience in that moment is not a bad feeling…it’s thrilling (Demetra 24, Greece)

Demetra (24, Greece) discussed her perceptions of fear in relation to her sexual behaviour in Ios. She particularly enjoyed Ios during the summer ‘because you go out at night, have a couple of drinks, or even more, and then you spend the night with someone’ (Demetra 24, Greece). Demetra was aware that her sexual practices placed her at risk for sexually transmitted diseases, considering that more then once she had unprotected sex with unknown partners. Furthermore, she perceived her sexual behaviour as risky due to the possibility of being physically attacked. In particular, Demetra seemed to support Madriz (1997) that socially constructed images of offenders may influence women’s perceptions of fear. Indeed, she portrayed a potential offender as the stereotypical image of the ‘male stranger who may get suddenly mad’. Moreover, she also referred to Valentine’s (1989) mental maps of dangerous places and times in discussing the possibility of being attacked in a remote area of the island at nighttime. Nonetheless, gender-based stereotypical images of offenders as well as dangerous spaces and time did not stop her to
indulge in activities perceived as risky. Perhaps this may be due to the existence of a variety of different femininities that may challenge gender-based stereotypical images of fearful women in public spaces at night. As Mehta and Bondi (1999) point out ‘women both resist, and comply with, what feminist geographers researching women’s fear of violence have called “patriarchal social control”’ (p. 67-68).

Male holidaymakers’ perceptions of fear

Male holidaymakers on Ios seemed not to be concerned about the possibility of being sexually assaulted. However, most of them did not deny their concerns regarding the possibility of being physically attacked. More specifically, a number of respondents discussed their fears of physical violence on Ios in relation to the possibility of getting into a fight.

I think that the biggest concern for men is the possibility of getting involved in a fight…Here in Ios it is not so difficult…It’s not that I am dead scared of getting into a fight but anyway I’m a little bit concerned…you never know what may happen to you if you get into a fight with other people (Matt 21, Ireland)

Most respondents contradicted what argued by Valentine (1989) and Pain (1997), namely that physical violence is mainly a women’s problem. In contrast, men’s fear of violence on Ios seems to agree with Day et al. (2003), who found that physical confrontation in public is a major concern for young men. Furthermore, the interviews and the observations conducted in the fieldwork reveal a complex scenario with regard to men’s perception and expression of fear. Although traditional images of masculinity and femininity were acknowledged by most of the respondents, some male holidaymakers on Ios did not conform to traditional gendered roles that portray men as fearless and women as fearful.

With the exception of the fear of being raped, I don’t think that females fear violence as much as males…because they are females they would never have a problem…what kind
of person is able to beat up a girl? And then I know some women here in Ios that would be able to stand for themselves and fight back…personally I’m a man but I don’t like the idea of fighting…it’s dangerous… it would be scary (John 31, USA)

Men are more at risk than women, considering that in most cases men have higher chances to be involved in a fight than women. Think about what happens in the island… I mean… not all the men may fight…some men fight…men who don’t fight may not be perceived by society as real men…personally I don’t know if I want to be that kind of man…that’s childish and not clever (Mark 19, Italy)

John (31, USA) claimed that women may be physically weaker than some men, yet he did not portray female holidaymakers in Ios as fearful. Rather, he also acknowledged the existence of ‘women that know how to stand for themselves and fight back’. Furthermore, he explicitly admitted to be scared about the possibility of getting involved in a fight. Similarly, Mark’s (19, Italy) distinction between ‘real men’ and ‘men that may not be perceived as real by society’ acknowledges the existence of a ‘hegemonic’ ideal of masculinity, as argued by Connell (1995). However, although he was aware of this image of masculinity, he did not like the idea of conforming to that type of masculinity. Indeed, he perceived patterns of behaviour expressing hegemonic masculinity, such as being aggressive, as ‘childish and not clever’. Most male respondents did not want to conform to the ideal image of the fearless man. This was also supported by the fact that a number of respondents did openly express their fears.

I have never been worried of showing or expressing my fear! Actually when I’m scared I usually tell people! Why shouldn’t I? I know, they always told me that as man I shouldn’t be scared of anything and I shouldn’t let the others know that I’m scared but personally I want to feel free to express all my emotions, so when I’m scared of something I express my fear! (Johnny 25, Canada)

I don’t care about what the others think about me, my father always said that I don’t have to be scared, but that’s impossible, how can I avoid fear? It’s part of our life…and I
don’t understand why I shouldn’t express my fears, I think it’s normal to do it! (Steve 19, Australia)

Johnny (25, Canada) and Steve (19, Australia) seemed to reject traditional gender roles concerning men’s expression of fear. As Rachman (1974) points out, societal rules may discourage men to express their fears. The fact that boys did freely express their fears is in contrast with much literature on fear and gender (Shields, 2002) that claims that many societies discourage certain categories, such as young boys, to express their fears. Indeed, the interviews reveal that several respondents were aware of the existence of societal rules with regard to the expression of fear. Furthermore, it can be noticed that a number of respondents were aware that these cultural imperatives may be gender-coded. Nevertheless, it was asserted that ‘it is important to express all the fears freely, without accepting what your parents or friends told you, I know there are rules but I like to challenge them’ (David, 19 Italy).

Conclusion

This paper makes a significant contribution to the study of fear in the field of tourism studies. In particular, the findings of this study are of value because they contribute to shed more light on the relationship between fear and the tourism experience. In addition, the exploration of gendered perceptions of fear on holiday is important to bridge literatures on fear, gender and tourism. In this respect, this paper fills a gap in knowledge with regard to men’s and women’s perceptions of fear on holiday.

The findings of this study reveal that a difference exists between men and women with regard to perceptions of fear on Ios. In contrast with George (2003), who found gender as not being a significant factor affecting perceptions of safety among holidaymakers, the results of this study highlight a significant gendered difference concerning tourists’ perception and expression of fear. That is different perceptions concerning the fear of sexual violence. Although physical violence seemed to be a major concern for many tourists irrespective of gender, men and women significantly differed with regard to the kind of physical violence they referred to. Indeed, while
men referred to physical violence as the possibility of getting into a fight, most female holidaymakers discussed violence in relation to the fear of being sexually attacked. This result supports Valentine (1989) and Pain (1997), who refer to men’s violence as a significant fear for women.

However, with the exception of women’s higher concerns of sexual violence, the responses obtained in the fieldwork do not seem to support the existence of significant differences in the perception and expression of fear between men and women. By comparing men and women’s responses regarding their perceptions of fear, it may be argued that more similarities than differences occurred between the two cohorts. Women and men both referred to physical violence as a major fear on Ios. This result conflicts with much literature on gender (Valentine, 1989; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Pain, 1997) that regards physical violence exclusively as a women’s problem. Rather, the findings of this study confirm what argued by Stanko and Hobdell (1993) and Day et al. (2003), namely that men may fear the possibility of being physically attacked in public spaces.

Furthermore, men and women both perceived fear not only as a negative emotion but as an actively sought positive emotion too. Indeed, this study conflicts with the assumption that men may have more favourable attitudes toward risk-taking and thrill-seeking behaviour (Zuckerman, 1979; Arnett, 1994). In particular, the findings of this study contradict Poppen (1995) and Mattila et al. (2001) that within the beach-oriented tourism environment male holidaymakers may engage in risky behaviour, such as drinking and casual sex, more than women do. Rather, the results of this study agree with Pruitt and LaFont (1995) that women too may indulge in activities perceived as risky, such as casual sex. This finding may also be related to Carr (1999), who suggests that men and women are becoming indistinguishable in terms of patterns of behaviour on beach-oriented vacations.

The results of this study show that more marked differences in the perception and expression of fear occurred among the various masculinities and femininities rather than between men and women. This may be due to the multiplicity of gendered identities that constitute the general groups ‘men’ and ‘women’. If men’s responses are referred to, the findings of this study reveal the existence of a variety of masculinities and, subsequently, different ways of experiencing and expressing fear. Within the context of men’s risk-taking and thrill-seeking, a
number of respondents claimed to deliberately seek risk in order to experience levels of fear perceived as pleasant. However, some participants also described risk-aversive and thrill-avoiding patterns of behaviour. A similar scenario exists with regard to men’s fear of being physically attacked. Indeed, while some male holidaymakers did openly express their fear of being physically attacked, others did deny or minimize their concerns about physical violence on Ios. While some men conformed to scripts of hegemonic masculinity, which portray men as fearless individuals, others refused or at least challenged these socially constructed schemata concerning the perception and the expression of fear. A similar pattern can be described if women’s perceptions of fear are referred to. Indeed, while some female respondents seemed to conform to traditional roles of subordinate femininity, which portray women as fearful and thrill-aversive individuals, others seemed to challenge these stereotypical social scripts and tended to deliberately seek pleasant levels of fear and thrilling experiences.

The fact that men did express their fears implies that males’ perceptions of fear on holiday should no longer be ignored. Indeed, men’s fear on holiday needs to be recognized and problematised by tourism scholars. Overall, the data collected in the fieldwork question traditional images of fearful and vulnerable women and fearless and aggressive men. Rather, they emphasise the existence of a multiplicity of masculinities and femininities that perceive and express fear differently. This implies that the investigation of gendered perceptions of fear needs to take into account the non-homogeneous nature of the two groups and rejects often-assumed stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity.

More research is needed to verify the results obtained. Future studies should explore in more detail the positive role of fear for women on holiday. Furthermore, more research on men’s fear of physical violence in the tourism context needs to be carried out. The findings reveal that differences concerning the perception and expression of fear are more prominent between the various femininities and masculinities than between men and women. In this regard, further research needs to explore how other components, such as social class and race, influence the construction of different masculinities and femininities, and subsequent perceptions of fear on holiday.

References


