
**TOURISM IN CONFLICT
AND POST-CONFLICT SETTINGS:
LESSONS FROM CYPRUS, UKRAINE,
AND SRI LANKA**

Tusha Rafaela, Svietlichna Mariia, Wijesinghe Sachini
DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-646-1-13>

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important sector for the economic recovery when it comes to post-conflict regions and it contributes to job creation, new investments¹ and destination branding². The countries that will be analyzed in this study are Cyprus, Ukraine and Sri Lanka, which present post-conflict contexts.

Cyprus experienced political division after 1974, resulting in the de facto separation of the island into a southern and a northern part, which affected political governance and the destination image³. Before this division, the island had experienced rapid tourism growth, with international arrivals increasing from 25,700 in 1960 to approximately 264,000 in 1973 (Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre, 2002)⁴. Even though there was a recovery in the southern region of Cyprus, the northern part has remained constrained by the limited recognition of the infrastructure challenges, which highlight the long term impact of the division of tourism productivity⁵.

¹ Fernando S. The tourism-led development strategy in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Business and Technology*. 2017. Vol. 1, No. 1. P. 38–52. DOI: 10.4038/jbt.v1i1.81. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4038/jbt.v1i1.81>.

² Romanova A., McGinley S. Tourism as a tool of recovery of Ukrainian communities: economic and mental healing. *Socio-Cultural Management Journal*. 2025. Vol. 8, No. 1. P. 4–22. URL: <http://socio-cultural.knuim.edu.ua/article/view/336350>.

³ Jacobson D., Webster C., Shapiro K., Musyck B., Orphanides S. Cyprus settlement: a zero sum game for tourism? *European Journal of Tourism Research*. 2015. Vol. 11. P. 21–34. URL: <https://doras.dcu.ie/20910>.

⁴ Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre. *Tourism and sustainable development in the Mediterranean region: the case of Cyprus* [Електронний ресурс]. Sophia Antipolis : UNEP–Plan Bleu, 2002. URL: https://planbleu.org/sites/default/files/publications/livreblanc_cyp.pdf

⁵ Kliot N., Mansfield Y. The political landscape of partition: the case of Cyprus. *Political Geography*. 1997. Vol. 16, No. 6. P. 495–521. DOI: 10.1016/S0962-6298(96)00020-0.

Ukraine, on the other hand, is facing an ongoing war, which has disrupted the infrastructure and the international arrivals, but researchers still believe in the potential for tourism to help in the recovery of both financial and psychological⁶.

Sri Lanka recovered from a civil war that lasted for three decades (1983–2009) and later on the Easter attack in 2019 is using tourism as a reconstruction and community empowerment, even though the tourism productivity after the war has been facing challenges of militarisation and local exclusion⁷.

This study adopts a productive perspective and will try to examine how tourism contributes to economic recovery and business resilience in post-conflict settings. These three countries were chosen because each one shows a different kind of conflict and recovery or potential recovery. Cyprus has a long-lasting political divide, Ukraine is in the middle of an active war, and Sri Lanka has ended its civil war but is still facing new problems. Looking at all three helps us compare how tourism recovers at different stages and under different types of government.

The research question that will guide this work is: How do different conflict and post-conflict recovery processes shape tourism productivity, governance and business resilience in Cyprus, Ukraine and Sri Lanka? Therefore, the research objectives are to identify the main challenges of ongoing conflict and post-conflict, that are faced by tourism sectors in each of these countries⁸, later, to examine the Destination Management Organization (DMO) strategies and the tourism policies that support the recovery of the economy⁹, to explore the role of the local businesses in rebuilding tourism productivity and to compare the lessons between these countries for sustainable ongoing conflict and post-conflict tourism management¹⁰.

Even though post-conflict tourism has been studied in a single-study context, the comparative research has been limited across different conflict

⁶ But T. Identification of problems and post-war recovery of tourism in Ukraine. *Management Journal*. 2024. Vol. 3, No. 1. P. 32–43. DOI: 10.26661/2522-1566/2024-1/27-03.

⁷ Ratnayake R. M. S., Hapugoda M. D. Tourism under military: a critique on land utilisation and tourism in post-war Sri Lanka. *Sabaragamuwa University Journal*. 2016. Vol. 15, No. 1. P. 63–84. DOI: 10.4038/suslj.v15i1.7705. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4038/suslj.v15i1.7705>.

⁸ Jacobson D., Webster C., Shapiro K., Musyck B., Orphanides S. Cyprus settlement: a zero sum game for tourism? *European Journal of Tourism Research*. 2015. Vol. 11. P. 21–34. URL: https://doras.dcu.ie/20910_

⁹ Fernando S. The tourism-led development strategy in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Business and Technology*. 2017. Vol. 1, No. 1. P. 38–52. DOI: 10.4038/jbt.v1i1.81. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4038/jbt.v1i1.81>.

¹⁰ Levytska I., Kulyk L., Kovalenko L., Hrytsenko L. Tourist potential of Ukraine: challenges and prospects of the post-war time. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*. 2023. Vol. 14, No. 2(66). P. 299–305. DOI: 10.14505/jemt.v14.2(66).03. URL: <https://journals.aserspublishing.eu/jemt/article/view/7679>.

types. There is very little findings about how governance, business resilience and productivity differ across these settings. In this study this gap is addressed.

1. Tourism and post conflict recovery

Cyprus

Cyprus provides us with a unique pos-conflict case due to its long lasting division. The split between the Greek-Cypriot on the south and the Turkish-Cypriot on the north side, has disrupted the flow of tourism, the labor mobility and the inter-regional cooperation. This has led to the creation of fundamental obstacles for destination management¹¹.

After 1974, the recovery efforts had focused on building infrastructure and promoting the collaboration between the communities so that they would restore the island's image as a safe destination. The government agencies and the Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), implemented the marketing strategies and the tourism initiatives, aimed to advance the economic recovery and the social cohesion. The local businesses have contributed by opening hotels again, also in the development of cross-cultural programs and by participating in international tourism fairs. In this way, they demonstrate how the initiatives that are led by tourism, can support both economic and social recovery¹².

Tourism challenges

Despite the recovery, the political division still holds back tourism productivity. Most of the visitors that arrive are concentrated in the southern region of Cyprus while the northern region faces a limited recognition and market size. Guilty of this is the the divided governance, the uneven infrastructure and the restricted mobility, that limit the cooperation outside the country and leads to the decrease of the island's competitiveness. These challenges reflect on the broader post-conflict issues of tourism, which includes institutional fragmentation and an uneven economic recovery¹³.

Baseline tourism context

According to the Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, prior to the 1974 conflict, Cyprus had experienced a rapid tourism expansion. The international tourist arrivals managed to grow from 25,700 in 1960 to

¹¹ Jacobson D., Webster C., Shapiro K., Musyck B., Orphanides S. Cyprus settlement: a zero sum game for tourism? *European Journal of Tourism Research*. 2015. Vol. 11. P. 21–34. URL: <https://doras.dcu.ie/20910>

¹² Sönmez S. F., Apostolopoulos Y. Conflict resolution through tourism cooperation? The case of the partitioned island-state of Cyprus. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*. 2000. Vol. 9, No. 3. P. 35–48. URL: https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/S_Sonmez_Conflict_2000.pdf

¹³ Ratnayake I., Gnanapala W. K. A. C. Post-conflict tourism development in Sri Lanka: implications for building resilience. *Current Issues in Tourism*. 2016. Vol. 19, No. 4. P. 355–372. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2014.1002760 URL: <https://ideas.repec.org/a/taf/rcitxx/v19y2016i4p355-372.html>

approximately 264,066 in 1973., with annual growth rates close to 20%¹⁴. But the events of 1974 caused an immediate and sharp decline with later on recovering from 47,000 tourists in 1975 to approximately 2,434,285 by 1990. Even though it's a remarkable recovery, it still masks the divergence between the two parts of the island. Tourism in the northern part has still remained, structurally constrained by the limited recognition outside the island and also because of the political and legal barriers. On the other hand, southern Cyprus has recovered to a large extent and has expanded its position as a Mediterranean tourism destination¹⁵. These patterns show how the political division leads to an uneven tourism productivity and affects the business recovery.

Dark Tourism and Conflict Heritage

Beyond the economic recovery, the division of Cyprus has created opportunities for dark tourism, which involves visiting sites that are associated with conflict, disaster and death¹⁶. Varosha used to be a former leisure resort in Famagusta which perfectly exemplifies this phenomenon. Once used to be a thriving destination, Varosha became abandoned after 1974, slowly turning into a “ghost city”¹⁷.

The partial reopening in the last years, has sparked ethical debates over tourism productivity, the commercialization of suffering and several political sensitivities. Visitors are experiencing Varosha with sadness and curiosity, which reflect the emotional and historical weight of conflict¹⁸. The local businesses see an economic potential in dark tourism but also are worried of any deeper divisions¹⁹.

Sri Lanka

Tourism Recovery and Post-Conflict Rebound. There is a significant resilience in the tourism industry of the Sri Lanka and has with stood long years

¹⁴ Sharpley R. Tourism in Cyprus: challenges and opportunities [Електронний ресурс]. *Tourism Geographies*. January 2001. 3(1):64-86. DOI:10.1080/14616680010008711. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237957589_Tourism_in_Cyprus_Challenges_and_opportunities

¹⁵ Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tourism in Cyprus: history and development. *Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Bucharest*. 2024. URL: <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/Pages/Cyprus-Tourism-policy.aspx>

¹⁶ Stone P. R. A dark tourism spectrum: towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions. *Tourism: An Interdisciplinary International Journal*. 2006. Vol. 54, No. 2. P. 145–160. URL: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/237990>

¹⁷ Holleran M., Holleran S. Resisting dark tourism: Northern Cyprus's ‘ghost city’ of Varosha. *City*. 2024. Vol. 28, No. 6. P. 1066–1078. DOI: 10.1080/13604813.2024.2356368. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13604813.2024.2356368>.

¹⁸ Pieri C. A netnographic examination of visitor perception of the ghost city of Varosha. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*. 2025. Advance online publication. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101872. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101872>

¹⁹ Panayidou C., Christou P., Saveriades A. Dark tourism development in a leisure destination: the perceptions of the local community in Cyprus. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*. 2024. P. 1–19. DOI: 10.1080/1743873X.2024.2328721.

of war²⁰. After the war have finished in 2009, international tourism arrivals started to rebound consistently²¹. Post-pandemic trends indicated a strong resurgence in arrivals, with 1,487,303 visitors recorded in 2023 generating USD 2.068 billion in revenue, and numbers rising further to reach 2,053,465 tourists by December 2024²².

Southern and western coastlines have recovered impressively, in addition to areas with well established cultural and nature based tourism resources, being a reminder of the importance of infrastructure and access to governance in process of post-conflict recovery²³.

Sri Lanka's tourism recovery requires flexible business approaches and strong collaboration between government and private companies²⁴. Tourism Management Organizations (DMOs), tourism boards and regional development projects have played a crucial role in promoting tourism in the country, creating new tourism products and improving facilities. For example, in the previously neglected northern and eastern regions, dark tourism activities, war-related site visits and homestays have increased income in these areas, contributed to the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of eco-friendly tourism businesses²⁵. However, problems in areas heavily affected by the conflict, compared to other parts of the country, include low investment, weak institutions and lack of facilities²⁶.

Dark tourism and conflict heritage

In Sri Lanka, the mainland's northern provinces (e.g. Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi) are home to an underground of war ruins, memorial structures, and wrecked military vehicles remnants of the civil war era known for their dark-tourism visits. These are juxtaposed with war-(sponsored) memorial

²⁰ Buultjens J. W., Ratnayake I., Gnanapala W. K. A. C. Post-conflict tourism development in Sri Lanka: implications for building resilience. *Current Issues in Tourism*. 2016. Vol. 19, No. 4. P. 355–372. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2014.1002760.

²¹ Fernando S., Bandara J. S., Smith C. Regaining missed opportunities: the role of tourism in post-war development in Sri Lanka. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*. 2013. Vol. 18, No. 7. P. 685–711. DOI: 10.1080/10941665.2012.695284.

²² SLTDA. *Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Annual Report 2024*. Colombo : SLTDA, 2024.

²³ Buultjens J. W., Ratnayake I., Gnanapala W. K. A. C. Post-conflict tourism development in Sri Lanka: implications for building resilience. *Current Issues in Tourism*. 2016. Vol. 19, No. 4. P. 355–372. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2014.1002760.

²⁴ Jayasinghe P. P., Fernando G. W. J. S., Surangi H. A. K. N. S. Post-crisis recovery management of tourism: lesson learned from the Easter Sunday attack in Sri Lanka. *Vidyodaya Journal of Management*. 2023. Vol. 9, No. 1. DOI: 10.31357/vjm.v9ii.6371.

²⁵ Boyd S., Reddy M. V., Kulshreshtha S., Nica M. Post-conflict tourism opportunity spectrum (POCTOS): a framework for destinations recovering from conflict. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 2023. Vol. 31, No. 1. P. 131–148. DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2021.1993866.

²⁶ Ward S. E. State in/security, ethnicity, and tourism: mapping tourist spaces and Sri Lankan identity politics. *Critical Studies on Security*. 2023. Vol. 11, No. 3. P. 194–214. DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2023.2239009.

complexes frequently underpinned by military-logics that serve to raise critical questions around power, memory and exclusion²⁷. By integrating dark tourism into the analysis, this research can interrogate more completely how memory sites contribute to post-conflict touristic productivity, governmentality and business resilience beyond economics as a means of understanding how societies remember, narrativise and govern the past.

Tourism and the Context of Conflict. Tourism has, for a long period of time, contributed to the economy of Sri Lanka in terms of a percentage of the GDP, hence contributing to improving livelihoods throughout the nation²⁸.

Despite its wealth in natural landscapes, heritage, and biodiversity, this industry has been consistently hampered by ethnic friction, political instability, and extremist violence. Dark tourism is understood as travel to places associated with suffering, conflict, or tragic events. Through cemeteries, battlefields, memorials, and other sites of past suffering, visitors from within and outside the country can learn about its complex history, while residents gain economic benefits from heritage tourism²⁹.

Conflicts and Their Impact on Tourism

A variety of conflicts has repeatedly disrupted tourism across Sri Lanka. The long civil war (1983–2009) resulted in major damage, fueled by ethnic tensions and the protracted conflict between state forces and LTTE rebels. Frequent bomb attacks, a pervasive military presence, and ongoing safety warnings discouraged international tourists and gradually undermined the country's image³⁰.

Politically driven mobilization along ethnic lines further destabilized the situation. In 2018, attacks in Digana against Muslim-owned businesses generated widespread panic and confusion; stringent governmental measures and limited news coverage only deepened perceptions of insecurity. The Easter Sunday bombings of 2019 targeted churches and high-end hotels in Colombo, left hundreds dead or injured, and led many governments to issue strict travel

²⁷ Debopriya Shome. The politics of dark tourism in Sri Lanka. *Tourism Geographies*. 2023. Vol. 26, No. 4. P. 655–676. DOI: 10.1080/14649373.2023.2242150. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14649373.2023.2242150>.

²⁸ Buultjens J. W., Ratnayake I., Gnanapala W. K. A. C. Post-conflict tourism development in Sri Lanka: implications for building resilience. *Current Issues in Tourism*. 2016. Vol. 19, No. 4. P. 355–372. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2014.1002760.

²⁹ Fernando I. S., Ranasinghe R. Creating opportunities in a challenging environment: Experiential crisis learning behaviour of tourism SMEs in Sri Lanka // *Cogent Business & Management*. 2024. Vol. 11, No. 1. Art. 2314803. DOI: 10.1080/23311975.2024.2314803. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311975.2024.2314803>

³⁰ Nishla M. N. F., Rinosa K. Safety and security in tourism: a strategic approach for tourism industry of Sri Lanka to recover from Easter Sunday attack. *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference of South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (IntSym 2019)*. 2019. URL: <https://www.seu.ac.lk>

warnings³¹. These events illustrate how longstanding grievances and new outbreaks of violence can directly undermine the development of the tourism sector.

Ukraine

Tourism during ongoing war

Ukraine's tourism economy, which had been mushrooming up to 13.5 million international visitations per year in pre-2014 times³², has been severely shattered due to Russia's fullblown invasion of February 2022³³. This section discusses the key challenges that the industry experiences during the war, recovery approach by DMOs and supporting policies, as well as a unique role local businesses play in becoming resilient.

Challenges in Ukraine's Tourism Sector During Ongoing War

The war has imposed complex challenges on Ukraine's tourism infrastructure, international arrivals, and overall productivity, further worsening some of the vulnerabilities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Infrastructure damage is a key constraint: UNESCO estimates the total cost of destruction to cultural and tourism assets at nearly \$3.5 billion as of 2024, with an additional \$9 billion required for recovery over the next decade³⁴. This includes widespread harm to heritage sites, hotels, and transport networks-particularly in eastern and southern regions³⁵. Southern coastal areas, once important for beach tourism, have seen total stops in operations due to security risks and environmental contamination³⁶.

International tourist arrivals have decreased significantly, with only 2.17 million visitors in 2022 and 2.4 million in 2023, bringing in just \$1.7 billion in revenue, well below pre-war peaks-such as, for example, around 14 million visitors in 2019. However, domestic tourism saw occupancy rates in the safer western regions decline by 50% in the summer of 2022; domestic tourism then

³¹ Jayasinghe P. P., Fernando G. W. J. S., Surangi H. A. K. N. S. Post-crisis recovery management of tourism: lesson learned from the Easter Sunday attack in Sri Lanka. *Vidyodaya Journal of Management*. 2023. Vol. 9, No. 1. DOI: 10.31357/vjm.v9i1.6371.

³² World Bank. International tourism, number of arrivals – Ukraine [Электронный ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL?locations=UA>

³³ Tomej K., Bilynets I., Koval O. Tourism business resilience in the time of war: The first three months following Russia's invasion of Ukraine // *Annals of Tourism Research*. 2023. Vol. 99. Art. 103547. DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2023.103547. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103547>

³⁴ UNESCO. Ukraine: UNESCO estimates the damage to culture and tourism after 2 years of war at \$3.5 billion [Электронный ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/ukraine-unesco-estimates-damage-culture-and-tourism-after-2-years-war-35-billion> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

³⁵ Korol V., Skutar N. Tourism during the war – how Russian, Ukrainian and European tourism changed [Электронный ресурс]. *Oeconomus*. 06.02.2023. URL: <https://www.oeconomus.hu/en/analyses/tourism-during-the-war-how-russian-ukrainian-and-european-tourism-changed>

³⁶ Hrytsenko O. With Ukraine at war, officials hope to bring tourism back to areas away from fighting [Электронный ресурс]. *NPR*. 01.10.2022. URL: <https://www.npr.org/2022/10/01/1125495184/ukraine-russia-war-economy-tourism>

picked up to 50% of the pre-pandemic level by 2023³⁷. However, But (2024) emphasizes the psychological influence of war on workers in this industry and communities, while Levytska et al. (2023) estimate post-war recovery needs \$486 billion in total, tourism comprising an important share of that amount.

Dark Tourism in Ukraine Amid the Ongoing War

Even with all these problems, a new kind of tourism called «dark tourism» has started to grow in dangerous (or not anymore) regions of Ukraine, where people visit places connected with tragedies of this war for cognitive and mnemonic purposes. This includes guided tours to sites like the destroyed bridge in Irpin, the mass grave areas in Bucha, and bombed-out spots in Kyiv's suburbs from early 2022 attacks³⁸. Companies such as War Tours and Capital Tours Kyiv run these trips, focusing on education about the invasion rather than just looking at ruins, they talk about the history, the resistance, and how locals are rebuilding³⁹. For example, Visit Ukraine⁴⁰ started offering tours in 2022 that mix regular sightseeing in cities like Kyiv and Lviv with war-related stops, and some even tie into Chernobyl visits that were already popular before the war⁴¹.

These tours bring in some money, Ukraine saw 4 million foreign visitors in 2023, double from 2022, with dark tourism helping draw thrill-seekers and supporters from the West⁴². But it's controversial: some say it's like a "shock therapy" to keep the world from forgetting the war and support the economy, according to Kyiv Independent, while others worry it's unethical, like turning suffering into a show for outsiders. Groups like NomadMania have run trips to occupied areas like Kharkiv and Izium since 2023, stressing responsibility and helping locals⁴³. All in all, dark tourism is evidence of how Ukraine adapts

³⁷ Levytska I., Kulyk L., Kovalenko L., Hrytsenko L. Tourist potential of Ukraine: challenges and prospects of the post-war time. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*. 2023. Vol. 14, No. 2(66). P. 299–305. DOI: 10.14505/jemt.v14.2(66).03. URL: <https://journals.aserspublishing.eu/jemt/article/view/7679>

³⁸ Travel And Tour World. Ukraine's dark tourism boom: visitors flock to war-torn Kyiv and Irpin, redefining new global travel trends [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/ukraines-dark-tourism-boom-visitors-flock-to-war-torn-kyiv-and-irpin-redefining-new-global-travel-trends>

³⁹ Kyiv Independent. 'Shock therapy': war tourism in Ukraine attracts foreigners to see scars of Russia's invasion [Електронний ресурс]. 2025. URL: <https://kyivindependent.com/war-tourism-in-ukraine-attracts-foreigners-to-see-scars-of-russia-invasion>

⁴⁰ Visit Ukraine започатковує dark tourism В Україні. *Visit Ukraine* [Електронний ресурс]. 2022. URL: <https://visitukraine.today/blog/715/visit-ukraine-launches-dark-tourism-in-ukraine>

⁴¹ Catalyst Planet. Ukraine war tourism: Educational or unethical? [Електронний ресурс]. 2025. URL: <https://www.catalystplanet.com/travel-and-social-action-stories/ukraine-war-tourism-educational-or-unethical>

⁴² Balkan Insight. War tourism in Ukraine: A controversial industry booms [Електронний ресурс]. 2025. URL: <https://balkaninsight.com/2025/03/19/war-tourism-in-ukraine-a-controversial-industry-booms>

⁴³ Mitsidis H. Beyond dark tourism: the first traveller group explores Ukraine's former occupied areas. *Українська правда*. [Електронний ресурс]. 06.11.2023. URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/columns/2023/11/6/7427495>

tourism to war, mixing awareness with recovery; however, it requires careful rules so as not to harm communities.

DMO Strategies and Tourism Policies Supporting Economic Recovery

Due to this reason, Ukraine's SATD has shifted its attention toward domestic promotion and international partnerships. The "Get Inspired by Ukraine" campaign launched in 2022 has demonstrated rather good domestic recovery through digital marketing during the SATD year of 2023, according to Romanova & McGinley, 2025. In the years of 2024-2025 years, SATD signed a memorandum with UNWTO and gained €800 million in EU investments for green and therapeutic tourism according to European Commission⁴⁴.

Policy frameworks within the Ukraine Recovery Conference earmark €2.3 billion for tourism as part of broader reconstruction plans. Romanova and McGinley⁴⁵ make the case for therapeutic and nature-based tourism, with veteran retreats in the Carpathians showing concrete, measurable mental-health benefits. Yet progress has been hindered by air-travel restrictions and insurance gaps.

2. Methodology. Research Approach

For our thesis, we are focusing on qualitative comparative case study with three countries: Cyprus, Ukraine and Sri Lanka, to explore the conflict and post-conflict effects on tourist productivity. We chose a qualitative method, in particular constructivist ontology and interpretivism in epistemology because only this way it shows the complexities of social, economic and political processes associated with tourism recovery in post-conflict settings. This method gives an important place to place the local and its stakeholders, policies and institutions rather than being based on numbers⁴⁶.

Data Collection

The data will be gathered from various sources to ensure triangulation and in-depth comprehension of the subject, according to Smith. Semi-structured interviews (telephone, text/email, individual, group, brief, in-depth), approximately 3-4 from each country, will be held with relevant stakeholders that have direct experience and/or influence to the restoration of tourism product development in resort destination, including government's tourism officials (both

⁴⁴ European Commission. Ukraine Investment Framework [Електронний ресурс]. 2025. URL: https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/ukraine/ukraine-investment-framework_en

⁴⁵ Romanova A., McGinley S. Tourism as a tool of recovery of Ukrainian communities: economic and mental healing. *Socio-Cultural Management Journal*. 2025. Vol. 8, No. 1. P. 4-22. URL: <http://socio-cultural.knuikim.edu.ua/article/view/336350>

⁴⁶ Smith S. L. J. *Practical Tourism Research*. 2nd ed. Wallingford: CABI, 2017. 268 p. URL: <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/book/10.1079/9781780648873.0000>

at a level of government ministry and DMOs), business holders (e.g., hoteliers, tour operators, local tourism investors) and community representatives. The interviews are intended to be first-hand accounts of the difficulties, tactics and triumphs related to tourism productivity and recovery in post-conflict contexts. The selection of the participants will be through the purposive sampling, since in this way it will ensure that the interviewed participants have direct experience from the post-conflict cases. Following Official reports, policy documents, UNWTO publications, government statistics, and academic literature will be reviewed. This helps contextualize interview data and ensures that findings are supported by documented evidence. Triangulation will be used to combine interviews, official documents and academic literature. This will strengthen the credibility and will ensure that the findings are supported by multiple sources, according to Smith.

Data Analysis

The collected data will be analyzed using a qualitative method. The interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes in participants' perceptions of how recreational tourism can be achieved and what impacts of post conflict tourism they see in their countries⁴⁷. The study aim to show what measures to be taken are being taken to improve the touristic situation in post conflict regions of our cases.

Ethical Considerations

These interviews will be conducted in their local languages or in English, in these three countries (Cyprus, Ukraine, Sri Lanka) and in a highly respectful manner. Everyone will have a choice if they want to participate or not and will receive a brief explanation in advance of what the research is about, what they will have to do and how the answers will be used. Moreover, all submissions will remain confidential and names or contact information will not be published. The researcher will ensure that all the questions are understood and taken without offence. The center of this study is kindness, honesty and respect for all, according to Naderifar, Goli & Ghaljaie⁴⁸.

3. Background

Cyprus

The land of Cyprus was divided in two parts, in 1974, as a result of the political conflict between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. This led to

⁴⁷ Braun V., Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 2006. Vol. 3, No. 2. P. 77–101. DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

⁴⁸ Naderifar M., Goli H., Ghaljaie F. Snowball sampling: a purposeful method of sampling in qualitative research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*. 2017. Vol. 14, No. 3. e67670. DOI: 10.5812/sdme.67670. URL: <https://doi.org/10.5812/sdme.67670>

the displacement of the communities and the creation of two administrations and later the decline of tourism especially in the northern region. Tourism, which was once a sector with rapid expansion, has suffered crucially, due to this conflict, especially the northern part, where many hotels have closed. The visitors were significantly reduced and the stagnation of the economy also followed⁴⁹. This division, not only disrupted the tourism flows but also stopped the potential investments, a cross-border cooperation and the labour mobility, creating long-term challenges for the destination management and productivity structure.

Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts

After the division, what followed was the tourism stakeholders of Cyprus trying to make huge efforts to rebuild the image and the economy of the island. The government agencies and the Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), promoted the infrastructure productivity also tried to boost marketing strategies and introduce tourism initiatives that are oriented in peace, with the purpose to boost the collaboration between the north and south. The local businesses, were very active and participated in these recovery processes, by reopening hotels, developing tourism programs of cross-cultural nature and taking part in international fairs that would try to make Cyprus once again a safe destination for travelling. As Sönmez and Apostolopoulos (2000) highlight, a cooperation in tourism like this, between Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities, can work as a powerful mechanism to resolve this conflict and make a reunion. This aligns with more regional findings, where the productivity that is led by tourism and the collaboration of the stakeholders, can play crucial roles in restoring social cohesion and economic productivity after such a long conflict⁵⁰.

Tourism Challenges

To this day, tourism is still one of the most important and vital economic sectors of Cyprus, with a significant contribution in the national employment. The island of Cyprus still attracts millions of visitors yearly, mostly in the southern region (controlled by Republic of Cyprus), while the northern area (the largely unrecognised Turkish-controlled part of the island) maintains a smaller tourism market that is heavily dependent on visitors from Turkey and the surrounding region. Despite the general recovery, the political division still exists and continues to delay the productivity of Cyprus. This is similar to

⁴⁹ Jacobson D., Webster C., Shapiro K., Musyck B., Orphanides S. Cyprus settlement: a zero sum game for tourism? *European Journal of Tourism Research*. 2015. Vol. 11. P. 21–34. URL: <https://doras.dcu.ie/20910>

⁵⁰ Romanova A., McGinley S. Tourism as a tool of recovery of Ukrainian communities: economic and mental healing. *Socio-Cultural Management Journal*. 2025. Vol. 8, No. 1. P. 4–22. URL: <http://socio-cultural.knu.kim.edu.ua/article/view/336350>

post-war challenges that are seen in the nation of Ukraine and Sri Lanka, the uneven productivity and institutional fragmentation, still remain huge obstacles to achieving sustainable tourism growth.

Dark tourism and conflict heritage in Cyprus

The long-lasting division of Cyprus, has not only produced economic disruption and political fragmentation but has also shaped a remarkable conflict of the heritage landscape. Through this landscape, researchers have started recognizing the practices that can be understood through the perspective of dark tourism. It is admirable how intrigued tourists are, from attractions that are associated with conflict, war, death, abandonment and unresolved trauma⁵¹.

Dark tourism in general is a phenomenon defined as travelling to places that are linked to disaster and death and even though Cyprus was considered a leisure destination of sun and sea before the conflict and division, the history that shaped this land now, fits within the conceptual framework, according to Panayidou, Christou and Saveriades.

The most well known example is Varosha, a southern resort of Famagusta. Before the division in 1974, Varosha was one of the most important touristic centers of the island. A big characteristic of the island were the beachfront hotels and its vibrant coastal economy. But after the Turkish military intervention and the division, the area remained uninhabited for decades and gradually the area turned into what is called ‘ghost city’⁵². The last few years, some parts of Varosha have reopened only for visitors, under the control of Turkish-Cypriot authorities. This has caught international attention and has created ethical debates, whether this place should be consumed as a tourist attraction.

Holleran conceptualises Varosha as a problematic post-conflict site that raises serious ethical questions about dark tourism: “Is it ever appropriate to visit recent ruins? Can ruins and places where violence has occurred teach lessons about peace and cooperation, or is it merely war voyeurism?”

Other researchers give emphasis to how visitors themselves perceive and narrate Varosha. For example, Pieri⁵³ (2025), using a netnographic analysis, shows that many visitors frame their experience in terms of sadness, curiosity and fascination with abandonment which all contribute to the construction of

⁵¹ Panayidou C., Christou P., Saveriades A. Dark tourism development in a leisure destination: the perceptions of the local community in Cyprus. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*. 2024. P. 1–19. DOI: 10.1080/1743873X.2024.2328721.

⁵² Holleran M., Holleran S. Resisting dark tourism: Northern Cyprus’s ‘ghost city’ of Varosha. *City*. 2024. Vol. 28, No. 6. P. 1066–1078. DOI: 10.1080/13604813.2024.2356368. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13604813.2024.2356368>.

⁵³ Pieri C. A netnographic examination of visitor perception of the ghost city of Varosha. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*. 2025. Advance online publication. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101872. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101872>

Varosha's identity, as a dark tourism destination. At the same time, a research on the local communities reveals that the residents in general, do recognise the economic potential that dark tourism has but also express serious concerns regarding the commercialization of suffering and the possible boosting of political divisions. Panayidou, Christou and Saveriades (2024) find that, local communities are carefully supportive of the dark tourism development on the condition that it is managed sensitively and inclusively. Thus, the benefits should be distributed fairly and the heritage should be interpreted respectfully.

Varosha has also been analyzed as a 'traumatic landscape' where the physical remains of the hotels, streets and the seafront infrastructure, materialise the memories of the uprooting and loss⁵⁴. Studies in landscape and urban memory, highlight how a former leisure space, a militarized zone and now a visitor attraction, makes it a powerful but also challenged, symbol of the unresolved conflict of this island and the tourism-led modernity, where Varosha is analyzed as a traumatic urban heritage. According to Stone (2006) dark tourism spectrum, Varosha can be considered a 'dark site' because it is authentic, it is very closely linked in time to the events that have caused the abandonment of the area and it still remains a politically sensitive subject.

For the purpose of this thesis, dark tourism in Cyprus is not treated as a separate tourism sector. It is a dimension of the post conflict environment of tourism, in which the businesses and institutions operate. Decisions like how and by whom places like Varosha and similar in-conflict areas are opened, regulated and marketed, are closely linked to the governance arrangements and the community cooperations. These decisions not only affect the destination branding, whether Cyprus is considered a peaceful Mediterranean island for holidays or as a divided, haunted landscape but the decision also affects the distribution of the tourism productivity between the northern and southern parts of the island. In this way, dark tourism connects with the main themes of this thesis because it involves challenges in governance, business adaptation and the recovery of the economy while also showing the ethical and political difficulties when it comes to developing tourism in a divided society.

Business Adaptation

The Cyprus case demonstrates that the government strategies, the cooperation between communities and the business adaptation are important to restore the productivity of tourism in divided or post-conflict cases. The tourism recovery on the island emphasizes the importance of institutional collaboration and policy frameworks, in reducing political barriers to productivity. Lessons from

⁵⁴ Gültekin P. Assessment of traumatic landscapes in the context of urban memory and dark tourism: a case study of Northern Cyprus Varosha. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*. 2024. Vol. 8, No. 14. Article 10197. DOI: 10.24294/jipd10197.

Cyprus, particularly the peace-oriented tourism and DMO-led coordination, provide a valuable foundation which is comparative, for understanding how post-conflict recovery of tourism can promote economic resilience and social reunion in other contexts such as Ukraine and Sri Lanka.

Ukraine

Since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine has suffered extensive damage to its infrastructure, cultural sites and anything connected with tourism. The direct physical impact on culture and tourism is estimated by UNESCO at approximately \$3.5 billion, coupled with nearly \$19.6 billion in revenue losses⁵⁵.

With living cultural sites and tourist amenities caught in the crossfire, reconstruction isn't simply about bricks and mortar, but there are also massive psychological barriers and fears of safety that are discouraging visitors from visiting Ukraine. Tomej and Bilynets note what happened to the entire tourism setup: travel routes changed overnight, services closed down or escaped. Millions of people were uprooted from their homes, and war zones became environmentally devastated⁵⁶. From an immediate post-war tourism perspective, Ukraine is a good case of dealing with both the initial damage (both physical and economic) and those long-term plans such as restoring country's image, demonstrating its safety, repairing roads and hotels or aiding to the communities' healing⁵⁷.

Tourism challenges

As a result of the war, the Ukraine's tourism industry is thus dealing with an extensive configuration of challenges, including destruction of essential tourist infrastructure and cultural offerings, which in turn have scarcely affected its hosting capacities (UNESCO, 2024; Zarichniak, 2024). The war has caused a collapse in both international and domestic visitation as safety concerns, risk perceptions and insurance barriers deter travellers even from regions not all the time affected by fighting (Bobek, 2023). This reputation lowering time is also used to enhance perceived barriers by potential tourists since they do not differentiate between Ukraine's regions and treat it as one single high risk destination (Bobek, 2023). On the supply side, many tourism enterprises have to contend with

⁵⁵ UNESCO. Ukraine: UNESCO estimates the damage to culture and tourism after 2 years of war at \$3.5 billion [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/ukraine-unesco-estimates-damage-culture-and-tourism-after-2-years-war-35-billion> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

⁵⁶ Tomej K., Bilynets I. Tourism business resilience in the time of war: the first three months following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 2023. Vol. 99. Article 103556. DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2023.103556.

⁵⁷ Зарічняк А. П. Відновлення туристично-рекреаційного потенціалу України в умовах кризових явищ : дис. ... канд. екон. наук : 08.00.03 – економіка та управління національним господарством. Луцьк : Волин. нац. ун-т ім. Лесі Українки, 2024. 260 с. URL: <https://ontu.edu.ua/download/dissertation/disser/2024/diser-Zarechniak.pdf>

damaged facilities, a reduced workforce and economic hardship whereas there is overwhelming demand for post disaster reconstruction which outstrips capacity, by UNESCO. Recent studies fulfill the necessity of area-specific recovery strategies focusing on sustainable, community-based and regionally-oriented productivity which are expected to be driven by voluntary domestic tourism and other types of tourism (e.g. green or heritage-focused tourism) in the early stage⁵⁸ Yet, governance barriers also remain, including disintegrated institutional coordination, low investment potential and necessity of re-establishing the attractiveness and international credibility of destinations. Overall, these factors demonstrate the multifaceted nature of rebuilding systems of tourism and the need for recovery plans that are multidimensional and long-term.

Business Adaptation in Ukraine During the Ongoing War

Ukrainian businesses have had to rapidly adjust to constant uncertainty, security threats, and disrupted logistics due to ongoing everyday bombing of all regions. Many companies have relocated to safer regions, diversified products and services, and expanded digital operations to maintain continuity⁵⁹. Strengthened cooperation with local authorities, volunteer networks, and international partners has also supported stability. These adaptive strategies have enabled firms to remain operational despite wartime pressures and have formed the basis for future recovery and rebuilding by UNDP, 2024.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island that is full of such beauty and culture, it has been dubbed "The Pearl of the Indian Ocean". From its golden beaches and thick jungles to extraordinary temples and friendly locals, there is an intoxicating charm that emanates from the place. The absolutely unique combination of nature, history and hospitality has such a deep impact on anyone lucky enough to have visited. Having faced a 30-year civil war with the Sri Lankan state and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 1983 to 2009, the country has dedicated succeeding years silently rebuilding and recovering.

The war, which was fought along ethnic lines that reflected centuries-old animosities, caused massive social and economic destruction as well as the destruction of the country's infrastructure. Tourism was made a key priority sector after the War by the government in order to help rebuild the country's economy, give international confidence, and heal post-war division among communities. That meant a fleet of high-speed expressways and

⁵⁸ Domyshe-Medyanyk A. The impact of war on Ukraine's tourism sector: global challenges and implications. *International Journal of Contemporary Economics and Administrative Sciences*. 2025. Vol. 15, No. 1. P. 274–295. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.16464488.

⁵⁹ Deloitte Central & Eastern Europe. Lessons from Ukraine on building business resilience during wartime [Електронний ресурс]. 2023. URL: <https://www.deloitte.com/ce/en/services/risk-advisory/perspectives/lessons-from-ukraine-on-building-business-resilience-during-wartime.html>

brand-new express trains to carry visitors with ease to ritzy resorts or secluded ashrams, avoiding the kind of overcrowded old beach towns typical in far too many other parts of the tourist world.

Following the end of the civil war in 2009, Sri Lanka's tourism industry experienced rapid expansion, attracting over USD 1.4 billion in investments through enhanced security measures, infrastructure development, and marketing campaigns that repositioned the country from a 'passive consumer food destination' to a peaceful holiday paradise. This post-conflict boom, which saw international arrivals rise from 447,890 in 2009 to 1.27 million in 2013, underscored tourism's role in economic recovery and resilience. However, these gains were disrupted by the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks on 21 April 2019, targeting churches and hotels and resulting in over 250 deaths, including foreign tourists, which caused a sharp decline in arrivals and highlighted the sector's vulnerability to crises. In response, government and private sector initiatives strengthened security protocols and recovery strategies, demonstrating how tourism can foster resilience even in post-crisis contexts.

Post-war Economic Recovery and Tourism productivity

The tourism industry became one of the fastest growing industries in the post-war years and has since been making substantial contributions to foreign exchange earnings as well as employment. This productivity led to macroeconomic stability and invited domestic as well foreign investments in the region. But studies suggest these gains were not without disparity. Economic benefits were confined to the well developed coastal and urban based Colombo, Galle, Kandy areas rather than most of the North and East: where the war had its greatest impact by Socio-Economic Challenges of Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Sri Lanka.

This uneven progress highlights the inherent challenges of linking post-conflict recovery with inclusive growth in Sri Lanka. While tourism was expected to drive reconciliation and community empowerment, limited local input and capacity have constrained its broader social impact (by Ranasinghe). Moreover, destination branding has carried political significance, sometimes promoting a unified national image for international audiences while glossing over persistent local and ethnic divisions⁶⁰.

Dark Tourism in Sri Lanka

Dark tourism is one of the tangible means through which Sri Lanka publicly engages with its violent past, according to Buultjens, Ratnayake and Gnanapala and Jayasinghe et al. Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullivaikkal and Elephant

⁶⁰ Ward S. E. State in/security, ethnicity, and tourism: mapping tourist spaces and Sri Lankan identity politics. *Critical Studies on Security*. 2023. Vol. 11, No. 3. P. 194–214. DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2023.2239009.

Pass are among the places that continuously evoke memories of the atrocities experienced during the civil war, according to Madhuwanthi and Dassanayake. The country's wartime legacy is also visible in other sites, including the Chemmani mass graves, war-hero cenotaphs and bullet-riddled buildings along the A9 highway, according to Ratnayake and Hapugoda. Local economies are supported by these sites through guided tours, memorial programmes and community-based projects that attract tourists with an interest in history, education and contemplative engagement, according to Perera and Ranasinghe.

Visitors' motivations are often framed by curiosity, empathy and the pursuit of historical understanding, according to Madhuwanthi and Dassanayake. Community-based programmes, household-level initiatives and heritage-preservation projects create more inclusive economic opportunities, especially in conflict-affected areas, according to Bultjens, Ratnayake and Gnanapala. At the same time, dark tourism remains ethically contentious: there is a persistent risk of reifying trauma or romanticising violence, which underscores the need for careful debate on appropriate heritage management, interpretative strategies and stakeholder participation, as argued by Boyd et al. Cemeteries and war leaders are central features of dark tourism in Sri Lanka; cenotaphs, graveyards of war heroes and battlefield sites such as Elephant Pass materialise human loss by preserving the physical evidence of mass death, according to Ratnayake and Hapugoda. More than sites of remembrance, these spaces can provide opportunities for reconciliation, critical reflection and educational encounters, while also opening up avenues for local economic development, according to Perera and Ranasinghe. The thoughtful integration of such sites into the tourism sector can illustrate how heritage tourism may honour victims, preserve contested memories and contribute to post-conflict recovery, in line with the post-conflict tourism opportunity spectrum proposed by Boyd et al⁶¹. More than sites of remembrance, such spaces offer opportunities for reconciliation and educational encounters; open doors to local economic development. The thoughtful integration of these sites into the tourism industry is an example how heritage tourism may pay respect to victims, preserve.

Resilience and business adaption

The role of the private sector, in particular SMTEs, was critical to rehabilitation in post-crisis Sri Lanka. A number of companies demonstrated resilience by expanding into new markets, promoting domestic tourism and involving the local community⁶². The 2019 Easter Sunday attacks caused

⁶¹ Boyd S., Reddy M. V., Kulshreshtha S., Nica M. Post-conflict tourism opportunity spectrum (POCTOS): a framework for destinations recovering from conflict. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 2023. Vol. 31, No. 1. P. 131–148. DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2021.1993866.

⁶² Bultjens J. W., Ratnayake I., Gnanapala W. K. A. C. Post-conflict tourism development in Sri Lanka: implications for building resilience. *Current Issues in Tourism*. 2016. Vol. 19, No. 4. P. 355–372. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2014.1002760.

significant damage to the sector, which shows how vulnerable the sector is from the security perspective. Industry entrepreneurs restructured operations, enhancing safety measures and focusing on domestic visitors afterward from then on. Recovery was uneven, with firms having stronger networks and more resilient financial resources bouncing back sooner, suggesting the importance of institutions doing more and better public–private coordination.

Policy Response and Institutional Frameworks

In the post-civil war period, government policy promoted tourism as an engine of growth via national productivity plans and rebranding exercises that attracted visitors and investments. However, weak implementations have resulted in poor local involvement and unequal distribution of benefits at the local level. Crisis management, in terms of the war, Easter attacks, and COVID-19, has been very reactive. Crisis management within institutions and cooperation between national and sub-national levels are advised in order to achieve a sustainable recovery of tourism and for the benefit of all.

Toward Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery

In community-based tourism initiatives in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, locally embedded tourism has demonstrated significant potential to foster reconciliation and support livelihood rehabilitation through cultural interaction and the empowerment of vulnerable groups, according to Perera and Ranasinghe. Recovering from the present crisis is going to have to find a new equilibrium, between growth and social sustainability. The long-term resilience will hinge on diversifying the market, making safety nets strong and enabling real community participation in policy processes. In general terms, the Sri Lankan case suggests that the viability of postconflict tourism hinges upon governance arrangements that are inclusive, policies that are coherent, and enterprises capable of adaptation at local level.

CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that tourism in post-conflict regions is not an automatic driver of recovery; its effects are conditioned by the type of conflict, the quality of governance, and the extent of meaningful community participation. The comparison of Cyprus, Sri Lanka, and Ukraine indicates that rapid tourism growth without inclusive policies tends to reproduce territorial and social inequalities, whereas a deliberate combination of economic, infrastructural, and social measures can strengthen destination resilience.

The analysis demonstrates that frozen conflicts, as in Cyprus, entrench structural asymmetries in tourism, including the spatial concentration of tourist flows, fragmented governance, and unequal access to investment. In the context of an ongoing full-scale war, as in Ukraine, the focus shifts

toward domestic tourism, local initiatives, and niche formats, including dark tourism. Sri Lanka's post-conflict trajectory illustrates the risks of "rapid growth without redistribution", where benefits are concentrated in a limited number of coastal and urban resorts, while former conflict-affected regions remain marginalised.

A further contribution of this study is the conceptualisation of dark tourism as an ambivalent resource for post-conflict territories. On the one hand, it creates additional opportunities for economic activation and for engaging with collective memory; on the other, it generates ethical, political, and social risks that require clear regulatory frameworks and the active involvement of local communities. Taken together, these findings deepen theoretical understanding of how different conflict types (protracted, ongoing, and settled) and governance models shape tourism recovery pathways in post-conflict destinations.

SUMMARY

This article presents a comparative analysis of tourism organization and governance in conflict and post-conflict contexts, using Cyprus, Ukraine, and Sri Lanka as case studies. The topic of tourism development in post-conflict regions remains insufficiently addressed in the academic literature, and this study helps to close that research gap. The findings indicate that tourism can serve as a catalyst for economic recovery and destination rebranding; however, its effectiveness is determined by the level of political stability, the quality of tourism governance, and the degree of inclusiveness in business and community participation.

The analysis demonstrates that frozen conflicts, as exemplified by Cyprus, produce structural imbalances in the tourism sector, characterized by uneven tourist flows, fragmented institutional governance, and disparities in investment. The southern part of Cyprus, an EU member state, is integrated into global tourism markets and EU programs, while the northern, Turkish-controlled part remains marginalised, dependent on the Turkish market, and subject to legal uncertainty and restricted access to international capital. These factors hinder the development of formal hotel networks and real-estate markets, while facilitating the emergence of informal activities such as certain forms of dark tourism and gambling.

Ukraine's experience reveals the specificities of tourism under conditions of ongoing war, including a sharp decline in international arrivals, a reorientation toward the domestic market, the development of niche formats (such as dark tourism), and an increased role of local businesses in sustaining regional economies. In Sri Lanka, post-conflict tourism expansion has resulted in spatially uneven benefit distribution, with infrastructure concentrated in coastal

and urban resorts and the former conflict-affected northern and eastern regions remaining economically marginalised.

Special attention is devoted to dark tourism as a dynamic yet ambiguous component of post-conflict tourism landscapes. Case studies of Varosha in Cyprus, war-affected regions of northern Sri Lanka, and selected locations in Ukraine suggest that dark tourism offers new economic opportunities and supports the formation of collective memory, but also raises ethical challenges related to the commercialization of trauma and the politicization of historical narratives.

From a practical perspective, the study outlines evidence-based recommendations for tourism recovery in post-conflict contexts. These include integrating tourism planning into broader reconstruction strategies, coupling infrastructure development with targeted support for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, and reinforcing partnerships between government, business, and local communities. Additional priorities involve diversifying tourism products (including domestic, nature-based, restorative, and cultural segments) and establishing clear ethical standards for dark tourism, thereby promoting resilience and long-term sector sustainability.

Bibliography

1. Allianz Global Assistance. *Coverage alerts* [Электронный ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.allianztravelinsurance.com/coverage-alerts> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

2. Alluri R. The role of tourism in post-conflict peacebuilding in Rwanda : working paper. Basel : Swiss Peace Foundation, 2009. 54 p. URL: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/111583/wp2_2009.pdf (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

3. Balkan Insight. War tourism in Ukraine: A controversial industry booms [Электронний ресурс]. 2025. URL: <https://balkaninsight.com/2025/03/19/war-tourism-in-ukraine-a-controversial-industry-booms> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

4. Bobek V., Gotal G., Horvat T. Impacts of the 2022 war in Ukraine on the travel habits of Ukrainian tourists. *Naše gospodarstvo / Our Economy*. 2023. Vol. 69, No. 3. P. 55–67. DOI: 10.2478/ngoe-2023-0018. URL: <https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/290549> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

5. Boyd S., Reddy M. V., Kulshreshtha S., Nica M. Post-conflict tourism opportunity spectrum (POCTOS): a framework for destinations recovering from conflict. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 2023. Vol. 31, No. 1. P. 131–148. DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2021.1993866.

6. Braun V., Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 2006. Vol. 3, No. 2. P. 77–101. DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

7. Bryhilevych H. M. *Strategic management of entrepreneurial activity in international tourism* : PhD dissertation. Lviv : Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, 2024.
8. But O. The war and tourism: security issues and business opportunities in shadow of Russian war against Ukraine [Електронний ресурс]. *ResearchGate*. 2024. URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374700935> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
9. But T. Identification of problems and post-war recovery of tourism in Ukraine. *Management Journal*. 2024. Vol. 3, No. 1. P. 32–43. DOI: 10.26661/2522-1566/2024-1/27-03.
10. Buultjens J. W., Ratnayake I., Gnanapala W. K. A. C. Post-conflict tourism development in Sri Lanka: implications for building resilience. *Current Issues in Tourism*. 2016. Vol. 19, No. 4. P. 355–372. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2014.1002760.
11. Catalyst Planet. Ukraine war tourism: Educational or unethical? [Електронний ресурс]. 2025. URL: <https://www.catalystplanet.com/travel-and-social-action-stories/ukraine-war-tourism-educational-or-unethical> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
12. CEIC Data. Ukraine – Visitor Arrivals, 1995–2024 [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/ukraine/visitor-arrivals> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
13. Dark Tourism. Ukraine [Електронний ресурс]. 2022. URL: <https://www.dark-tourism.com/index.php/ukraine> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
14. Deloitte Central & Eastern Europe. Lessons from Ukraine on building business resilience during wartime [Електронний ресурс]. 2023. URL: <https://www.deloitte.com/ce/en/services/risk-advisory/perspectives/lessons-from-ukraine-on-building-business-resilience-during-wartime.html> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
15. Domyshche-Medyanyk A. The impact of war on Ukraine's tourism sector: global challenges and implications. *International Journal of Contemporary Economics and Administrative Sciences*. 2025. Vol. 15, No. 1. P. 274–295. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.16464488.
16. Visit Ukraine. Visit Ukraine launches a new project – Donate tours to Ukraine [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://visitukraine.today/blog/2652/visit-ukraine-launches-a-new-project-donate-tours-to-ukraine> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
17. European Commission. Ukraine Investment Framework [Електронний ресурс]. 2025. URL: https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/ukraine/ukraine-investment-framework_en (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

18. Fernando S. The tourism-led development strategy in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Business and Technology*. 2017. Vol. 1, No. 1. P. 38–52. DOI: 10.4038/jbt.v1i1.81. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4038/jbt.v1i1.81>.
19. Fernando S., Bandara J. S., Smith C. Regaining missed opportunities: the role of tourism in post-war development in Sri Lanka. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*. 2013. Vol. 18, No. 7. P. 685–711. DOI: 10.1080/10941665.2012.695284.
20. France 24. Ukraine sees influx of Western war tourists [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20241127-ukraine-sees-influx-of-western-war-tourists> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
21. Gültekin P. Assessment of traumatic landscapes in the context of urban memory and dark tourism: a case study of Northern Cyprus Varosha. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*. 2024. Vol. 8, No. 14. Article 10197. DOI: 10.24294/jipd10197.
22. Holleran M., Holleran S. Resisting dark tourism: Northern Cyprus's 'ghost city' of Varosha. *City*. 2024. Vol. 28, No. 6. P. 1066–1078. DOI: 10.1080/13604813.2024.2356368. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13604813.2024.2356368>.
23. Hrytsenko O. With Ukraine at war, officials hope to bring tourism back to areas away from fighting [Електронний ресурс]. *NPR*. 01.10.2022. URL: <https://www.npr.org/2022/10/01/1125495184/ukraine-russia-war-economy-tourism> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
24. IATA. Latest travel restrictions and guidance [Електронний ресурс]. 2025. URL: <https://www.iata.org/en/publications/newsletters/iata-knowledge-hub/latest-travel-restrictions-and-guidance> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
25. IOM Ukraine. Ukraine Crisis Response Plan 2025 [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://crisisresponse.iom.int/response/ukraine-crisis-response-plan-2025> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
26. Dawit Habtemariam Ukraine's tourism chief reflects on resilience after a year of war [Електронний ресурс]. *Skift*. 10.03.2023. URL: <https://skift.com/2023/03/09/ukraines-tourism-chief-reflects-on-resilience-after-a-year-of-war> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
27. Jacobson D., Webster C., Shapiro K., Musyck B., Orphanides S. Cyprus settlement: a zero sum game for tourism? *European Journal of Tourism Research*. 2015. Vol. 11. P. 21–34. URL: <https://doras.dcu.ie/20910> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
28. Jayasinghe P. P., Fernando G. W. J. S., Surangi H. A. K. N. S. Post-crisis recovery management of tourism: lesson learned from the Easter Sunday attack in Sri Lanka. *Vidyodaya Journal of Management*. 2023. Vol. 9, No. 1. DOI: 10.31357/vjm.v9ii.6371.

29. Jayawickreme N., Jayawickreme E., McCaffrey A. Z., Thiruvarangan M. Mental health futures in post-war Sri Lanka: resilience, relational pluralism, and implementation pathways. *SSM – Mental Health*. 2025. Vol. 7. Article 100465. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssmmh.2025.100465.
30. Kliot N., Mansfield Y. The political landscape of partition: the case of Cyprus. *Political Geography*. 1997. Vol. 16, No. 6. P. 495–521. DOI: 10.1016/S0962-6298(96)00020-0. URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629896000200> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
31. Kristof Tomej, Iana Bilynets Large-scale tourism transformations through regeneration: a living systems perspective on tourism developments in Ukraine during the war. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 2024. Vol. 109, November 2024, 103856. DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2024.103856. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2024.103856>
32. Korol V., Skutar N. Tourism during the war – how Russian, Ukrainian and European tourism changed [Електронний ресурс]. *Oeconomus*. 06.02.2023. URL: <https://www.oconomus.hu/en/analyses/tourism-during-the-war-how-russian-ukrainian-and-european-tourism-changed> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
33. Kyiv Independent. ‘Shock therapy’: war tourism in Ukraine attracts foreigners to see scars of Russia's invasion [Електронний ресурс]. 2025. URL: <https://kyivindependent.com/war-tourism-in-ukraine-attracts-foreigners-to-see-scars-of-russia-invasion> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
34. Lanka Statistics. Tourist arrivals and revenue statistics [Електронний ресурс]. *Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka*. 2024. URL: <http://www.statistics.gov.lk> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
35. Levytska I., Kulyk L., Kovalenko L., Hrytsenko L. Tourist potential of Ukraine: challenges and prospects of the post-war time. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*. 2023. Vol. 14, No. 2(66). P. 299–305. DOI: 10.14505/jemt.v14.2(66).03. URL: <https://journals.aserspublishing.eu/jemt/article/view/7679> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
36. Madhuwanthi M. K. S., Dassanayake D. M. C. Echoes of the past: understanding domestic desires in Sri Lanka's dark tourism landscape. *TRIVALENT: Journal of Archaeology, Tourism & Anthropology*. 2022. Vol. 3, No. 2. P. 46–72. URL: <https://account.trivalent.sjloj.info/index.php/sljo-j-trivalentjat/article/view/78> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
37. Naumenko N. N., Rozhko O. R. International and national tourism in the period of global recession and the Russian-Ukrainian war: prospects of post-war recovery. *Economic Journal of Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University*. 2024. Vol. 4(36). P. 12–25. DOI: 10.29038/2786-4618-2023-04-12-25. URL: <https://ejournal-lute.lutsk.ua/index.php/ej/article/view/164> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

38. Naderifar M., Goli H., Ghaljaie F. Snowball sampling: a purposeful method of sampling in qualitative research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*. 2017. Vol. 14, No. 3. e67670. DOI: 10.5812/sdme.67670. URL: <https://doi.org/10.5812/sdme.67670>
39. Nishla M. N. F., Rinosa K. Safety and security in tourism: a strategic approach for tourism industry of Sri Lanka to recover from Easter Sunday attack. *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference of South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (IntSym 2019)*. 2019. URL: <https://www.seu.ac.lk>
40. OECD. *Tourism Trends and Policies 2022*. Paris : OECD Publishing, 2022. 260 p. DOI: 10.1787/a8dd3019-en. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1787/a8dd3019-en>
41. Owen-Edmunds L. *The development of tourism in post-conflict destinations: an academic literature review* [Электронний ресурс]. 2011. URL: <https://adlibconsulting.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/literature-review-the-development-of-tourism-in-post-conflict-destinations.pdf> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
42. Panayidou C., Christou P., Saveriades A. Dark tourism development in a leisure destination: the perceptions of the local community in Cyprus. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*. 2024. P. 1–19. DOI: 10.1080/1743873X.2024.2328721.
43. Pieri C. A netnographic examination of visitor perception of the ghost city of Varosha. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*. 2025. Advance online publication. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101872. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101872>
44. Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre. *Tourism and sustainable development in the Mediterranean region: the case of Cyprus* [Электронний ресурс]. Sophia Antipolis : UNEP–Plan Bleu, 2002. URL: https://planbleu.org/sites/default/files/publications/livreblanc_cyp.pdf (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).
45. Ratnayake I., Gnanapala W. K. A. C. Post-conflict tourism development in Sri Lanka: implications for building resilience. *Current Issues in Tourism*. 2016. Vol. 19, No. 4. P. 355–372. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2014.1002760. URL: <https://ideas.repec.org/a/taf/rcitxx/v19y2016i4p355-372.html>
46. Ratnayake R. M. S., Hapugoda M. D. Tourism under military: a critique on land utilisation and tourism in post-war Sri Lanka. *Sabaragamuwa University Journal*. 2016. Vol. 15, No. 1. P. 63–84. DOI: 10.4038/suslj.v15i1.7705. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4038/suslj.v15i1.7705>
47. Reddit. ‘Dark tourism’ on the rise in Ukraine: is war tourism educational or unethical? [Электронний ресурс]. *r/ukraine*. 2024. URL: https://www.reddit.com/r/ukraine/comments/1h400oe/dark_tourism_on_the_rise_in_ukraine_is_war (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

48. Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tourism in Cyprus: history and development. *Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Bucharest*. 2024. URL: <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/Pages/Cyprus-Tourism-policy.aspx>

49. Romanova A., McGinley S. Tourism as a tool of recovery of Ukrainian communities: economic and mental healing. *Socio-Cultural Management Journal*. 2025. Vol. 8, No. 1. P. 4–22. URL: <http://socio-cultural.knukim.edu.ua/article/view/336350> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

50. SATD. SATD and Airbnb have signed a memorandum of support for the post-war recovery of Ukraine's tourism industry [Електронний ресурс]. *State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine*. 2023. URL: <https://www.tourism.gov.ua/en/eng-blogs/dart-and-airbnb-have-signed-a-memorandum-of-support-for-the-post-war-recovery-of-ukraines-tourism-industry> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

51. Sharpley R. Tourism in Cyprus: challenges and opportunities [Електронний ресурс]. *Tourism Geographies*. January 2001. 3(1):64-86. DOI:10.1080/14616680010008711. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237957589_Tourism_in_Cyprus_Challenges_and_opportunities (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

52. Debopriya Shome. The politics of dark tourism in Sri Lanka. *Tourism Geographies*. 2023. Vol. 26, No. 4. P. 655–676. DOI: 10.1080/14649373.2023.2242150. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14649373.2023.2242150/>

53. SLTDA. *Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Annual Report 2024*. Colombo : SLTDA, 2024.

54. SLTDA. *Sri Lanka Tourism Trends Report 2025*. Colombo : SLTDA, 2025.

55. Smith S. L. J. *Practical Tourism Research*. 2nd ed. Wallingford: CABI, 2017. 268 p. URL: <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/book/10.1079/9781780648873.0000>

56. Sönmez S. F., Apostolopoulos Y. Conflict resolution through tourism cooperation? The case of the partitioned island-state of Cyprus. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*. 2000. Vol. 9, No. 3. P. 35–48. URL: https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/S_Sonmez_Conflict_2000.pdf (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

57. South China Morning Post. Dark tourism is growing in Ukraine, nearly 3 years into Russia war [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/travel-leisure/article/3288925/ukraine-war-sites-draw-thrill-seekers-dark-tourism-industry-grows> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

58. State Statistics Service of Ukraine. How many foreigners entered Ukraine in 2023 and from which countries did they come most often? [Електронний

ресурс]. *Visit Ukraine*. 2024. URL: <https://visitukraine.today/blog/3270/how-many-foreigners-entered-ukraine-in-2023-and-from-which-countries-did-they-come-most-often> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

59. Stone P. R. A dark tourism spectrum: towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions. *Tourism: An Interdisciplinary International Journal*. 2006. Vol. 54, No. 2. P. 145–160. URL: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/237990> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

60. Tan J., Cheng M. Tourism, war, and media: the Russia-Ukraine war narrative. *Journal of Travel Research*. 2025. DOI: 10.1177/00472875241245047.

61. Tomej K., Bilynets I. Tourism business resilience in the time of war: the first three months following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 2023. Vol. 99. Article 103556. DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2023.103556.

62. Tomej K., Bilynets I., Koval O. Tourism business resilience in the time of war: The first three months following Russia's invasion of Ukraine [Стійкість туристичного бізнесу в часи війни: перші три місяці після вторгнення Росії в Україну] // *Annals of Tourism Research*. 2023. Vol. 99. Art. 103547. DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2023.103547. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103547>

63. Travel And Tour World. Ukraine's dark tourism boom: visitors flock to war-torn Kyiv and Irpin, redefining new global travel trends [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/ukraines-dark-tourism-boom-visitors-flock-to-war-torn-kyiv-and-irpin-redefining-new-global-travel-trends> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

64. Ukraine Recovery Conference 2023 outcomes [Електронний ресурс]. *Ukraine Recovery Conference 2023*. 2023. URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/ukraine-recovery-conference-2023> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

65. UNESCO. Ukraine: UNESCO estimates the damage to culture and tourism after 2 years of war at \$3.5 billion [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/ukraine-unesco-estimates-damage-culture-and-tourism-after-2-years-war-35-billion> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

66. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Assessment of the Impact of War on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Ukraine* [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-02/undp-ua-assessment-war-impact-enterprises-ukraine-outline.pdf> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

67. UNWTO. Impact of the Russian offensive in Ukraine on international tourism [Електронний ресурс]. 2023. URL: <https://www.unwto.org/impact-russian-offensive-in-ukraine-on-tourism> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

68. UNWTO. Tourism on track for full recovery as new data shows strong start to 2023 [Електронний ресурс]. 2023. URL: <https://www.unwto.org>

org/news/tourism-on-track-for-full-recovery-as-new-data-shows-strong-start-to-2023 (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

69. Ukrainska Pravda. Beyond dark tourism: the first traveller group explores Ukraine's former occupied areas [Електронний ресурс]. 06.11.2023. URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/columns/2023/11/6/7427495> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

70. Visit Ukraine започатковує dark tourism В Україні. *Visit Ukraine* [Електронний ресурс]. 2022. URL: <https://visitukraine.today/blog/715/visit-ukraine-launches-dark-tourism-in-ukraine> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

71. Туризм в умовах війни: які регіони України демонструють зростання. *Visit Ukraine* [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://visitukraine.today/blog/5333/tourism-in-times-of-war-which-regions-of-ukraine-are-showing-growth> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

72. Ward S. E. State in/security, ethnicity, and tourism: mapping tourist spaces and Sri Lankan identity politics. *Critical Studies on Security*. 2023. Vol. 11, No. 3. P. 194–214. DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2023.2239009.

73. Williams N. L., Wassler P., Fedeli G. Social representations of war tourism: a case of Ukraine. *Journal of Travel Research*. 2023. DOI: 10.1177/00472875221146797.

74. Wohlmuther C., Wintersteiner W. (eds.). *International handbook on tourism and peace*. Klagenfurt/Celovec : Drava Verlag/Založba Drava, 2014. 388 p. ISBN 978-3-85435-713-1. URL: <https://www.aau.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/International-Handbook-on-Tourism-and-Peace.pdf> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

75. World Bank. International tourism, number of arrivals – Ukraine [Електронний ресурс]. 2024. URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL?locations=UA> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

76. Зарічняк А. П. Відновлення туристично-рекреаційного потенціалу України в умовах кризових явищ : дис. ... канд. екон. наук : 08.00.03 – економіка та управління національним господарством. Луцьк : Волин. нац. ун-т ім. Лесі Українки, 2024. 260 с. URL: <https://ontu.edu.ua/download/dissertation/disser/2024/diser-Zarechniak.pdf> (дата звернення: 29.11.2025).

Information about the authors:

Tusha Rafaela,

Student of higher education

The Linnaeus University

Linnéuniversitetet, Kalmar, 391 82, Kingdom of Sweden

Svietlichna Mariia,
Student of higher education
The Linnaeus University
Linnéuniversitetet, Kalmar, 391 82, Kingdom of Sweden

Wijesinghe Sachini,
Student of higher education
The Linnaeus University
Linnéuniversitetet, Kalmar, 391 82, Kingdom of Sweden