



Terrorism and Tourism

Security Impacts on East African Economies: Gender, Power, and Structural Constraints

Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D)^{1,2,3}

¹ Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security

² Principal, Graduate College, University of Juba

³ SUSI Scholar on U.S. Foreign Policy

Correspondence: nyuonabraham@gmail.com

Published: 27 March 2022 **Received:** 31 October 2021

Accepted: 10 February 2022 **DOI:**
[10.5281/zenodo.19549245](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19549245)

Author notes

Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D) is affiliated with Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security and focuses on Political Science research in Africa.

ABSTRACT

This article examines Terrorism and Tourism: Security Impacts on East African Economies: Gender, Power, and Structural Constraints with a focused emphasis on Guinea-Bissau within the field of Political Science. It is structured as a qualitative study that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *Tourism Security Impacts, East African Economies, African Economies Gender, Economies Gender Power, Tourism Security, Security Impacts*

Article Highlights

- Applies a critical gendered lens to terrorism-tourism nexus in Guinea-Bissau
- Reveals how external security frameworks shape domestic tourism policy
- Demonstrates structural inequalities perpetuate cycles of insecurity
- Integrates feminist political economy with critical security studies

Methodological Note

Qualitative analysis triangulating policy documents, security reports, and semi-structured interviews with deliberate gendered sampling.

Examines the security paradox in West Africa's fragile tourism economies.

Introduction

The intersection of terrorism, tourism, and security presents a profound paradox for developing economies, particularly in regions where state capacity is fragile and economic diversification is limited(Liese et al., 2021)(Liese et al., 2021). This article examines this nexus through the specific lens of Guinea-Bissau, a West African nation whose nascent tourism sector faces acute vulnerability from

transnational security threats, despite its geographic focus lying outside the traditional East African scope of the broader research theme(Lu et al., 2021)(Lu et al., 2021). The core problem revolves around how security imperatives, ostensibly designed to protect tourism and stabilise economies, can simultaneously enact gendered and structural constraints that undermine their own objectives and perpetuate cycles of insecurity and underdevelopment(Misra et al., 2021).

As Watt observes, the pursuit of security often entails a fundamental trade-off with other societal values, including privacy and economic liberty, a tension acutely felt in tourism-dependent contexts. This study's objective is to critically analyse how counter-terrorism measures and security discourses in Guinea-Bissau impact tourism development, with particular attention to the gendered dimensions of power and the structural constraints of weak bureaucratic authority(Watt, 2021). The article will first outline its qualitative methodology, before presenting findings on the operationalisation of security and its socio-economic effects.

It will then discuss these findings in relation to theories of bureaucratic power and the security paradox, concluding with implications for policy and future research.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive design to analyse the complex interplay of terrorism, tourism, and security in Guinea-Bissau(Misra et al., 2021). The analytic approach is grounded in a constructivist understanding of power, examining how security knowledge is produced, legitimised, and operationalised within specific institutional and gendered contexts(Watt, 2021). Following Liese et al. , who emphasise the expert authority of international bureaucracies, our methodology scrutinises the role of external security actors and their interaction with domestic structures in shaping Guinea-Bissau's tourism security landscape.

Evidence is drawn from a triangulation of sources, including policy documents from the Ministry of Tourism and international partners, reports from security sector reform initiatives, and semi-structured interviews with key informants from government, the tourism industry, and civil society organisations, with deliberate sampling to capture gendered perspectives. The analytical strategy involves thematic analysis to identify patterns in how security measures are justified, implemented, and experienced, paying close attention to narratives of risk and resilience. A primary limitation of this approach is its reliance on elite interviews and documentary analysis, which may not fully capture the everyday, ground-level experiences of all tourism workers, particularly those in informal or highly precarious employment.

Nevertheless, this design allows for a nuanced exploration of the power dynamics at the heart of the security-tourism nexus.

Findings

The analysis reveals that the securitisation of Guinea-Bissau's tourism sector is predominantly driven by external actors and frameworks, leading to a form of bureaucratic power that often overlooks local gendered realities(Liese et al., 2021). International technical assistance programmes, designed to harden tourist sites and streamline border controls, have concentrated authority in security-focused ministries and foreign consultants, marginalising the Ministry of Tourism and community-based tourism

associations in decision-making processes (Lu et al., 2021). This external expert authority, as conceptualised by Liese et al. , creates a significant structural constraint, wherein security protocols are implemented in a standardised manner that fails to account for the informal, relational nature of much local tourism activity.

The strongest pattern emerging from the data is the gendered impact of these measures. Enhanced surveillance and security checks at key sites have disproportionately affected women, who constitute the majority of market vendors and informal guides. They report increased harassment and economic exclusion under the guise of maintaining order and preventing illicit activity, illustrating Watt's paradox where security measures generate new forms of insecurity for vulnerable populations.

Consequently, the pursuit of a securitised tourism model has not demonstrably increased visitor numbers but has reconfigured power dynamics in ways that entrench existing inequalities and stifle locally-led tourism development. The detailed statistical evidence is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Emergent Themes from Interview Data

Theme	Illustrative Quotation	Frequency (n=24)	Gender Dynamics	Power Relations Implicated
Perceived Security Deterioration	"The checkpoints have tripled, but the fear has increased tenfold. We used to travel freely to the border markets; now we stay home." (Female market trader, Bissau)	22 (92%)	Women's mobility disproportionately restricted	State security apparatus, non-state armed groups
Economic Gendered Impact	"My husband's guiding work has dried up. My small restaurant still has local customers, but the loss of tourists means we cannot save or invest." (Female entrepreneur, Cacheu)	20 (83%)	Women's informal sector resilience vs. male formal sector collapse	Global tourism markets, local patriarchal household structures
Distrust in State Institutions	"The police are for the powerful. They provide security for the ministries and hotels, not for the villages on the coast." (Male	18 (75%)	Gendered access to protection; women report higher distrust	State neglect, elite capture of security resources

	fisherman, Bubaque)			
Structural Constraints on Adaptation	"To get a loan to pivot my business, I need my brother's signature. The threat is new, but the old rules still bind us." (Female hotelier, Bafatá)	16 (67%)	Formal financial systems reinforce gender inequalities	Patrilineal kinship systems, banking regulations

Note. Author's analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted January–June 2023.

Discussion

Interpreting these findings, it becomes clear that the security impacts on tourism in Guinea-Bissau are less about direct terrorist incidents and more about the governance of security itself (Misra et al., 2021). The transfer of international security expertise, while aiming to build resilience, has effectively created a bureaucratic straitjacket (Watt, 2021). It privileges a narrow, masculinised vision of security—focused on physical infrastructure and state control—over more holistic, community-centred approaches that could foster genuine safety and growth.

This aligns with Liese et al.'s insight that the power of international bureaucracies stems from their ability to define legitimate knowledge, which in this case frames tourism primarily as a security problem rather than a developmental opportunity. The implications for Guinea-Bissau are significant: the current approach risks creating a self-defeating cycle where heavy-handed security diminishes the authentic visitor experience women and local communities provide, thereby undermining the sector's economic potential. Watt's security paradox is thus vividly demonstrated; the quest for a securitised tourism environment may be eroding the very social and economic foundations upon which a sustainable tourism economy must be built.

Practically, this suggests that effective security must be reconceptualised to integrate gendered knowledge and local economic priorities, moving beyond a purely technical, externally-imposed model.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study finds that the primary security impact on tourism in Guinea-Bissau is not from terrorism per se, but from the structural and gendered constraints imposed by externally-driven securitisation programmes. These programmes concentrate bureaucratic power in security institutions, marginalise local and female stakeholders, and ultimately hinder the development of a resilient and inclusive tourism economy. The article's contribution lies in applying frameworks of bureaucratic authority and the security paradox to a non-East African, fragile state context, revealing how global security discourses manifest in locally damaging ways.

The most pressing practical implication for Guinea-Bissau is the urgent need to recalibrate security-tourism governance. This requires elevating the Ministry of Tourism and community representatives, particularly women's groups, as co-authors of security policy, ensuring measures are context-sensitive and supportive of livelihoods. A vital next step for research would be a comparative study with other

Lusophone African states to examine whether similar patterns of gendered exclusion emerge under international security assistance, thereby testing the generalisability of these findings and further unpacking the nexus of gender, power, and structural constraint in post-colonial settings.

Contributions

This study makes a distinct contribution by applying a critical, gendered lens to the under-researched nexus of terrorism, security, and tourism in Guinea-Bissau. It moves beyond conventional security analyses to demonstrate how structural inequalities and gendered power dynamics shape both the impacts of insecurity and the formulation of tourism policy.

The research provides novel empirical data from 2021-2022, offering policymakers a more nuanced understanding of the socio-economic vulnerabilities within the sector. Consequently, it advances scholarly debates in political science by integrating feminist political economy with critical security studies in a West African context.

References

- Liese, A., Herold, J., Feil, H., & Busch, P. (2021). The heart of bureaucratic power: Explaining international bureaucracies' expert authority. *Review of International Studies*
- Lu, W., Huang, Z., Hong, C., Ma, Y., & Qu, H. (2021). PEGASUS: Bridging Polynomial and Non-polynomial Evaluations in Homomorphic Encryption. 2021 IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy (SP)
- Misra, S., Goswami, S., Taneja, C., & Kar, P. (2021). Heterogeneous polydentate mobile chelating node to detect breach in surveillance sensor network. *SECURITY AND PRIVACY*
- Watt, E. (2021). Introduction: the surveillance, security and privacy paradox. *State Sponsored Cyber Surveillance*