

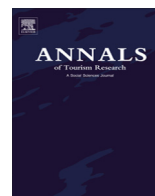


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# What's immigration got to do with it? Immigrant animosity and its effects on tourism

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### ABSTRACT

In a multicultural society where multiculturalism has been reported to have failed, it was posited that natives who have negative perceptions about a minority group resident in their country were less likely to visit the country of origin of that minority group for tourism. The paper used political party preference (far-right wing voters versus their leftist counterparts) as an independent variable to test this hypothesis. Many people vote in accordance with an image of a party as representing their economic interests, religion, values and ideologies. The paper presents immigrant animosity as yet another type of animosity and a new concept to explain tourism behaviour.

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### Introduction

*Imagine what effects the multicultural drama may have on the business of international tourism. Imagine what impacts the election of a far-right political party might have on tourism supply and demand. Imagine what would become of tourism if tourists become racist or xenophobic. Marine Le Pen, President of the French far-right party, tells her supporters that multicultural societies are multi-conflictual societies.*

Growth in migration and tourism are two of the most significant manifestations of globalization (Peter, 2008). Despite their relatedness and importance, there has been very little research into their relationship (UNWTO, 2009). According to UNWTO, "Migration makes important social and economic contributions to destination countries, culturally enriching their society, enhancing the tourism

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product and providing labour for the travel, tourism, hospitality and catering sectors” (p. vii). There are, however, also some observed negative aspects as a result of this relationship, which include “brain drain”, reduction in tax revenue in origin countries and wage deflation, and social tension in destination countries (Peter, 2008; UNWTO, 2009). It is the social tension aspects of this phenomenon that are the focus of this paper, in particular the effects of immigration on tourists’ perceptions and intention to visit.

MacCannell (1992) points out that “Tourism is not just an aggregate of merely commercial activities; it is also an ideological framing of history, nature and tradition; a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs” (p. 1). Among many others, Bianchi (2006), Burns and Novelli (2007), Hall (1994) explain how tourism is about power, ideology and citizenship. Buda, d’Hausterre, and Johnston (2014) supplement that tourism is entangled in the politics of emotion. Whether in relation to the industry or the tourist, tourism supply and demand does not exist in a vacuum.

The paper is primarily ingrained in the sociology of consumer behaviour, and uses the postulates of animosity (Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998) as its theoretical background to shed more light on the relationship between immigration issues in relation to tourism. Animosity, or the “emotional antagonism toward a specific party” (Jung et al., 2002, p. 525) is defined by Klein et al. (1998, p. 90) as “the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political, or economic events” that are perceived as “grievous and difficult to forgive”. Researchers have expanded the animosity concept and four dimensions have been identified thus far (Amine, 2008): “war animosity” and “economic animosity” (Jung et al., 2002; Nijssen & Douglas, 2004) and “religious” or “personal mentality” animosity (Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2007). For example, the country of origin where a product is made can have an effect on how the product is perceived by the consumers of another country. Amine (2008) finds French animosity towards the USA to affect French tourists travelling to the USA. Animosity can be “stable” or “situational”, “national” or “personal” (Amine, 2008, p. 408).

According to Nes, Yelkur, and Silkoset (2014, p. 775), animosity was recently applied in several contexts outside the consumer marketing domain, for example, in trade economics, organizational buying, international production shifts, role in economic recovery in emerging markets, and cross-border acquisition success. Despite its important role, animosity has not yet seriously been engaged in tourism scholarship. This paper introduces “immigrant animosity” as a conceptual framework to study the business of tourism in relation to tourists’ perceptions and intentions to visit. While the economic role of immigration can be positively perceived by the indigenous population, the immigrants themselves may be more of a concern owing to the cultural and religious differences between the two groups (El Aouni, Cascón-Pereira, & Hernández-Lara, 2013). Immigrant animosity refers, here, to animosity held by a mainstream group towards an ethnic minority immigrant group. Animosity can be directed towards a specific ethnic minority group, and Moufakkir (2011) submits that every country has its “evil” immigrant group. Situational events may change perceptions and actually trigger animosity (Jung et al., 2002). Moufakkir (2008) proposes that resentment towards an immigrant group stimulated by situational events may deter the mainstream group from tourism visits to the country of origin of the said group.

More than a decade ago MacCannell (1999) noted that the “rapid implosion of the Third World into the First constitutes a reversal and transformation of the structure of tourism, and in many ways it is more interesting than the first phase of the globalization of culture” (p. xxii). This implosion has affected public opinion about immigration and the perceptions the indigenous people have of immigrants of an Islamic background (EUMC 2006a, 2006b). Most recently, politicians have referred to the growing tensions between natives and immigrants as “the failure of multiculturalism”. For example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and UK Prime Minister David Cameron have all declared that multiculturalism has failed in their respective countries. Multiculturalism is positively defined as “favorable mentions of cultural diversity, communalism, cultural plurality and pillarization, preservation of autonomy of religious, linguistic heritages within the country including special educational provisions” (Alonso & da Fonseca, 2011, p. 871).

Regardless of the roots of the observed failure of multiculturalism, today’s circus of events—e.g. international and national terrorism, wars and aggression, Islamophobia, extremism, and the rise of fascism and ultra-nationalist sentiments—must certainly have new impacts on tourism destinations

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