

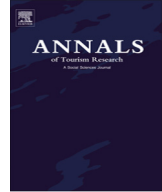


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Migration and outbound tourism: Evidence from Italy



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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the impact of migration on Italian outbound tourism trips disaggregated by purpose of visit. A dynamic panel data analysis is carried out on a sample of 65 countries over the period 2005–2011. To disentangle pushing and pulling effects, the migration variables are defined at both the origin and the destination of tourism flows. We also control for the Italian real GDP per capita, relative prices and distance. The results show that the stock of Italians residing abroad has a positive impact on outbound tourism for all purposes. Conversely, the stock of foreign-born citizens residing in Italy appears to push Italian outbound tourism for business purposes, for visiting friends and relatives, but not for holiday trips.

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Introduction

Over recent decades, the literature on trade and factor mobility has shown an increased interest on the relationship between migration and tourism. The works of Jackson (1990), King (1994), Williams and Hall (2002) and Boyne, Carswell, and Hall (2002) were some of the first attempts to provide a theory of the positive nexus between the two phenomena. In particular, Williams and Hall (2002) state that the link between tourism and migration can respond to three different mechanisms: the first is a causal relationship running from tourism to migration for both labor and consumption, known as

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the tourism-led-migration hypothesis; the second mechanism inverts this causation and, therefore, implies that migration leads tourism (MLT) by stimulating trips to visit friends and relatives (VFR), the third is a reinforcing mechanism that accounts for a bi-directional causal link between the two phenomena. From this framework, therefore, migration turns out to be one of the main prerequisites for VFR trips, both inbound and outbound. Not only do migrants travel back to their home country, but they also trigger VFR visits that otherwise would not have occurred.

In the footsteps of this initial works, recent studies have advocated an extensive interpretation of the MLT hypothesis where the connection between tourism and migration goes beyond the VFR channel. Accordingly, immigrants can increase a destination’s attractiveness for the general class of tourists beyond friends and relatives, simply because they enrich a destination’s cultural life by providing a wider array of consumption possibilities. They also motivate compatriots’ visits for ethnic reunion and/or they retain business links with their country of origin, so stimulating business trips (Cf., inter al., Seetaram, 2012a; Massidda and Piras, 2014). Similarly, immigrants can influence outbound tourism flows for the general class of tourists by encouraging departures of others residing in their host countries. Thus, from the perspective of the host country, immigrants act as a pulling factor for tourist arrivals (inbound), and as a pushing factor for tourist departures (outbound), whether or not VFR is the main motivating force.

A direct implication of this scenario is that, for countries characterized by bilateral migration flows, the influence of migration on both inbound and outbound tourist flows is two-fold. Fig. 1 helps to elucidate this point by taking the perspective of a generic country A, which receives immigrants from *n* countries and sends emigrants to each of these countries. Therefore, with respect to A, outbound tourism flows (Fig. 1a) are pushed from foreign-born people residing in A and pulled from the A-born population living in the *n* countries. Conversely, inbound tourism flows (Fig. 1b) are pulled from foreign-born people residing in A and pushed from A-born population living in the *n* countries.

The concepts outlined above have only partially been confirmed by the existing empirical literature. In particular, three aspects are worthy of further investigation. First, while there has been increasing evidence of a general link between migration and tourism, there are few studies which have looked at NON-VFR tourism and have demonstrated the plausibility of the extended interpretation of the MLT hypothesis. Second, when analyzing the tourism-migration nexus with respect to a specific

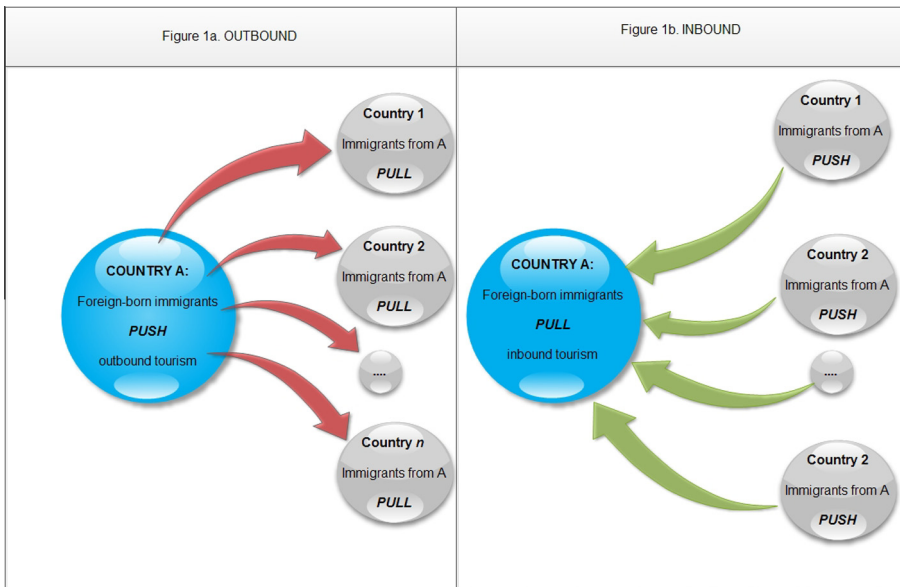


Fig. 1. Conceptual map for the tourism-migration nexus.

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