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### **Divorce and Tourism - International Data for 2000-2003**

The rate of divorce associated with tourism development has been given little attention in the literature. This study explores the relationship between the rate of tourist arrivals and the rate of divorce while controlling for the rates of unemployment and gross domestic product per capita. Results from 48 European nations indicated a significant association between the rate of tourist arrivals and the rate of divorce. The contribution of this study is increase the importance of tourists as cultural change agents affecting the rate of divorce.

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## **Introduction**

The cultural and economic impact of tourism on the lives of local residents has been assessed for many years (Ap & Crompton, 1998; Inskeep, 1991). When tourists arrive at a country for visits, they generate revenues (Gee, Makens, & Choy, 1997). Therefore, hotel owners increase investments in new infrastructure (Inskeep, 1991). As a consequence of increasing revenues, gross domestic product per capita (GDP per capita) increases. In addition, when the rate of tourist arrivals increases, more job opportunities are offered, resulting in a decrease in the rate of unemployment (Sheldon & Var, 1984). Besides the positive impacts of tourism development, the behavior of tourists has been reported to affect communities and organizations (Ap & Crompton, 1998). In 1997, Gee and his colleagues reported that tourists have altered family structure so that rates of divorce increase. Kalmijn, De Graaf, & Poortman (2004), De Rose (1992), and Goode (1993) reported that rates of divorce increase when women who traditionally were homemakers in European nations shifted to liberal norms. Such a cultural determinant of divorce associated with the rate of tourist arrivals has been little reported in the literature. The purpose of this study is thus to determine if there is an association between the rate of tourist arrivals and the rate of divorce, controlling for the rates of unemployment by gender and GDP per capita.

Roche (1992) reported that when tourism generates more employment, these jobs are usually very simple and do not require advanced skills. Married women choose to apply for these jobs in order to increase their family income (Roche, 1992). In Yang and Lester's (1988) study, the employment rate of married women was associated with higher rates of divorce since a working married woman encounters a wider variety of men than a housewife which increases her chances of finding an alternate mate.

McCain (1990) proposed the model of 'impulse-filtering' that has implications for better understanding the relationship between the rate of divorce and the behavior of tourists.

An 'impulse' is a sudden strong need to do something without stopping to think about the results, whereas a 'filter' is a block to stop acting on an impulse. The basic assumption in McCain's (1990) model is that when an 'impulse' (e.g., divorce) is generated in the mind, a 'filter' (e.g., social and cultural values, customs, or traditions) will be selected with maximum power or ability to lessen the impact of this 'impulse' on the individual's behavior. From this perspective, foreign tourist arrivals in a country modify or change the local, regional, or national social and cultural values, traditions, and customs which weakens the population 'filters' necessary to confront and lessen the divorce 'impulse'. Therefore, certain 'filters' will predict some 'impulses'. McCain (1990) posited,

"The individual realizes that the decision between impossible values must be made, and the individual then chooses one value over the other - suppressing one filter so that impulses consistent with the other filter, but not with the one suppressed, are nevertheless acted upon" (p.128 ).

## **Methods**

Forty-eight European nations were chosen as the sample for the study because tourism in Europe has been developed for a long time and the nations of Europe are associated with considerable cultural diversity. Data for the 2000 to 2003 were collected from the United Nations Common Database (2007). The rate of tourist arrivals is total international tourist arrivals per 1000 resident population. The rate of divorce is total divorces per 1000 resident population. The rate of male unemployment is total male unemployments per 1000 male resident population. The rate of female unemployment is total female unemployments per 1000 female resident population. The GDP per capita is the mean value of the products and services produced per person within a given country in a year. Enhancing the forecast function of the model for the rate of divorce, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted,

in which all of the dependent variable and independent variables were transformed into z scores to deal with multicollinearity (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

## Results

The average rates of divorce over the four-year period from 2000 to 2003 in 48 European nations were significantly associated with their average rates of tourist arrivals ( $r = .32, p < .05$ ) controlling three standardized variables: the male and female average rates of unemployment and the average GDP per capita. In the first step of hierarchical multiple regression analyses, three predictors (rates of male unemployment, rates of female unemployment, and GDP per capita) were added. This model was not statistically significant,  $F(3, 44) = 2.21, p > .05$ , and  $R^2 \text{ change} = .13$ . Rates of tourist arrivals were entered in the second step. Addition of this predictor significantly increased the fit of the model to the data,  $F(1, 43) = 4.89, p < .05$ , and  $R^2 \text{ change} = .09$ . As shown in table 1, rates of tourist arrivals had significant effects on rates of divorce ( $\beta = .31, p < .05$ ). As a result, rates of tourist arrivals can predict rates of divorce.

## Discussion and Limitations

The prediction of rates of divorce based on rates of tourist arrivals is consistent with the reports of Gee, Makens, & Choy (1997). It could be argued when women who traditionally stayed at home secure employment in the tourism industry, that a significant cultural change has occurred which might be associated with rates of divorce in some important way (Kalmijn, De Graaf, & Poortman, 2004; White, 1990). The contribution of this study is increase the importance of tourists as cultural change agents affecting the rate of divorce. This finding is consistent with the research of Gee and his colleagues (1997) which also found tourism to be associated with rates of divorce. The present study has three major

limitations: 1) it is based on only four years of data, 2) it employs only European countries in the sample, and 3) it is based upon female employment as a cultural factor. Future research should expand cross-cultural comparisons between rates of tourist arrivals and women's education, ethnicity, religion, parental divorce, and presence of children among other countries in a longitudinal study.

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Table 1

Regression Analysis Investigating Hierarchy Effects: Divorce Rates as Dependent Variable.

Step and source	Cummulative		
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
1. Economic variables	.11	.11	
Male Unemployment			.32
Female Unemployment			-.59
GDP per capita			-.05
2. Tourist arrivals	.20*	.09*	.32*

\* $p < .05$