

Experiencing social civism and women freedom as tourists' motivation: Results from a netnographic study in the Moroccan context

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Abstract: In this research we attempt to better understand the deeper motivations underlying the preferred destinations of Moroccan tourists within a trilogic perspective englobing African, Arab and Muslim context. For this reason, a theoretical framework involving both classical and operational explanatory motivation models is elaborated. A netnographic method is adopted to shed light on the main reasons regarding traveling abroad as well as criteria determining the choice of a foreign destination. Members of Moroccan virtual travelers' community shared their viewpoints and experiences. Qualitative data is analyzed from an interpretative perspective using Qualitative Data Analysis Miner (QDA Miner) Software. Findings revealed two sets of factors namely "pull factors" and "push factors" related to a domestic poor civic minded environment. This, therefore, is considering being the main contribution of this study.

Key words: Tourists motivations – international tourism – tourism in developing countries - women tourism –domestic tourism -women's freedom

I. INTRODUCTION

The tourist flow, nowadays, is at a remarkable turning point. Countries formerly considered as strictly receivers become significantly senders. Even though it does not seem to have a considerable impact in the global tourism market as the case in China, Morocco, nevertheless, contributes to this trend at a regional level with Moroccan tourists departing for neighboring European countries (Spain, France, and Eastern Europe among others). The touristic potential of the Moroccan domestic market is opinions that is shared by Moroccan scholars and is no longer debatable. From an anthropological perspective, several studies carried out by Berriane (1989) largely confirm that tourism is part of Moroccan culture. Strategies have been implemented by the public departments to target the domestic tourist segment. These policies, referred to as *Kounouz Biladi* and *Plan Biladi*, failed to take advantage of the internal touristic potential. Domestic tourism is still not profitable enough as many Moroccans choose to spend their summer vacations abroad despite the internal climatic advantages and the disadvantages related to travelling abroad (higher price, visas, and currency exchange among others). This issue does not seem to have been deeply investigated. Therefore, the objective of this study is to find answers to the following question: What are the driving forces that make

citizens from a predominantly receiving country opt for northern destinations despite the climatic advantages?

II. THE COMPLEXITY OF THE NEED FOR TOURISM AND LEISURE

As a field of study, tourism is characterized by its multidisciplinary dimensions making it difficult for researchers to agree on a consensual definition. Indeed, studying tourism is a complex task as it involves several disciplines such as geography, sociology, ethnology, economics, and ecology, each of which views tourism differently. This plethora of disciplines does not seem to provide a unified common definition that would be accepted by the whole community of tourism, be they practitioners or researchers. Therefore, there is a need to put forward a clear and acceptable definition of the concept "tourism". The World Tourism Organization defines tourism as: "a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure."¹

Importantly, and in addition to understand the need for holidays, tourism and leisure; it is essential to be aware of the human behavior and the social movements that flow from it. Satisfying deep motivations is an integral part of human nature. This idea is already dealt with in the ancient philosophy particularly in Eudemonism. Ancient and contemporary philosophers (Aristotle, Platon, Bachelar, Ricoeur to name a few) indicates that the need is expressed by the unconscious brain in the form of an emotion which signals its presence and satisfaction or non-satisfaction. From this perspective, the needs, as major components for survival and fulfillment, turn into desires when specific objects are linked to them. Desires are only special or privileged means of

¹World Tourism Organization (2019), *UNWTO Tourism Definitions*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420858>

satisfying needs, unlike needs, in themselves, which are innate and intrinsic to human nature. Desires have the characteristic of being unlimited, varying in time and space, and differing from one individual to another. Hence, studying motivations within the framework of tourism and holidays is highly recommended. Based on this, the main concern is how to move that scheme into the tourism market. In the following sections, we will attempt to understand how tourism could be a need and what can be thought of as touristic desires.

III. THE CLASSIC EXPLANATORY THEORIES OF TOURISM MOTIVATIONS

In the typology of needs, two currents are usually identified namely Maslow (1943) and McClelland (1961). McClelland's concept is based on the theory of acquired needs. Motivation would be the result of three dominant needs notably the need for realization, the need for affiliation, and the need for power. Unlike Maslow's, McClelland's needs are not hierarchical, but each need is important in the lives of the individuals. Maslow's theory has several applications in the study of consumer attitudes and reactions. Pearce and Stringer (1991) draw a canvas showing different kinds of psychological studies and their contribution to the understanding of the tourist phenomenon. These studies deal with two major issues namely the impact of physiological reactions due to tourism on individuals' psychology (seasickness and effects of food change) and the impact of tourism on attitudes. According to Pearce and Stringer (1991), Maslow's model remains the best option from a long-term perspective. However, it is essential to point out that in the analysis of the sociology of tourism and vacations, the needs, desires, and motivations are closely linked mainly because participation in tourism activities is not the result of a single factor or cause (Lanquar, 1994). Indeed, Maslow argues that motivations and attitudes can be traced through human needs. It is these needs that create human motivation. Maslow distinguishes five main categories of needs: "physiological", "safety", "belonging and love", "social needs" or "esteem", and "self-actualization". Studying tourists' behavior from Maslow's approach is useful in that it enables to choose a strategic positioning for tourism facilities. Indeed, as Deroi (1982) and Brée (1994) make it clear, not all needs have the same intensity in Maslow's vision.

In his work on human conditioning, Henri Laborit (1982) shows that in time of hardship, man seeks to struggle or to flee. When none of these alternatives are possible, his action is inhibited and he gets sick. A third alternative would be to use certain alibis that foster imagination and creativity which are made impossible under mass media and automation (Laborit, 1982). According to Lanquar, tourism could be this alibi and serves as a refuge for certain frustrations or unfulfilled desires (Lanquar, *Op.Cit*).

The theoretical models described above (in particular Maslow theory) have been much criticized: Tocquer and Zins note that it would not be easy to find an accurate status of tourism in Maslow's hierarchy. Sometimes tourism could be considered

as an option that appears as a need that contributes to the relief of tension. It positions itself on the top of the pyramid as a need for fulfillment. This is why it is important to implement more specific models. The following paragraphs provide studies that examined the reasons that motivate individuals to take a vacation or to travel.

IV. OPERATIONAL TYPOLOGY OF TOURISM MOTIVATIONS

Wright (1996) conducted an American study in the ecotourism market and the results revealed that motivations are related to six aspects namely landscape, nature, new experiences, new places, and discovery of the fauna. This approach is however insufficient to explain motivations. Travelers themselves are often unaware of the underlying motives behind their decisions or are reluctant to manifest them. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the underlying needs that tourists want to fulfill in order for the professionals to design and market a proper tourism service.

Mountinho (1987) shows that all tourists' behavior is motivated and that the choices of tourists are directed by two factors namely the buyer's personality and the characteristics of the product. According to Mountinho (1987), the personality of the buyer is a key variable. It provides better understanding of the differences between the tourists' habits and the buying criteria. Also, the tourist's profile is determined by the touristic offer.

Dann (1977) states that the decision to travel and the choice of destination are based on two sets of factors namely push factors and pull factors. Incentives are considered internal factors related to the desire to travel. Incentives are designed to meet various psychological needs. Attraction factors are considered as external factors. They focus on the benefits of a particular destination and determine where, when, and how a tourist decides to spend his vacation. In the same way, Pearce (2005) shows that the destination choice results from internal factors (personal characteristics and motivations) and external factors (characteristics of the destination). Researches presented below examined the push and pull factors to gain insight into the complex issue regarding travel motivations.

Compton (1979) identifies seven socio psychological push patterns namely escape from everyday life, self-exploration, prestige, relaxation, regression (careless behavior) strengthening family ties, and social interaction. He also identifies two cultural motives which he considers as pull patterns including novelty and education. McIntosh and Goeldner (1984) suggest dividing tourism motivations into four categories namely physical motivators that tend to reduce tension (refreshment of body and mind, health purposes, and sport); cultural motivators which include discovering other lifestyles, cultures, and folklore, to name a few; interpersonal motivators that are related to new life experiences, meeting new people, visiting friends or relatives, and escaping routine constraints and status and prestige motivators that include pursuing studies and seeking personal development.

V. THE TYPOLOGY OF WTO

Lanquar(1994) reports on the classification of motivations and needs that has been established by the UNWTO in 1970. This latter classifies tourists' motivations into three categories. The first category deals with social motivations (need for social recognition and need for change). The second category is related to family and tribal motivations (need for close-knit family). The third one includes personal and selfish motivations (need for seduction and immature behavior). For Boissevain (1996), however, it is difficult to determine the motivations of the millions of tourists who travel each year. Given the complexity of tourism behavior, it is unlikely that only one motivation is involved.

VI. THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: ELEMENTS OF MOROCCAN TOURISTS AND DOMESTIC TOURISM

Berriane (1989) claims that it is no longer relevant to restrict developing countries into receivers (Berriane, 1989) where people are considered merely benevolent hosts (Evrard, 2006). Berriane (1989) puts forward two fundamental ideas. He states that it would be a conceptual mistake to reduce tourism in developing countries to exogenous practices of tourism and only to touristic resorts journeys. To him, tourism is not merely a foreign component, nor is domestic tourism activity a particular behavior of the wealthy group of the population (Berriane, 1989). Berriane (1989) identifies a range of behaviors that could be described as "touristic" and that are forms of the mobility that are part of Moroccan heritage, particularly "moussems"² and "spa treatments". Berriane (1989) predicts that the rising of the domestic demand in southern countries will be one of the major changes in the tourism sector. In emerging countries, domestic tourism has always been viewed as an indicator of the dynamic activity of the tourism sector, especially, within a disadvantageous international context.

In Morocco, travelling involves mainly young urban people (60% are under 40 years of age.) belonging to small households (2-4 persons) with a preference for the seaside destinations (Berriane, *Op. Cit.*) In her study conducted on Moroccans' touristic behavior, El Hassouni (2013) identified three distinct profiles namely the *Apathetics-frugal* tourists, the *Western model self-centered* tourists and the *traditional good-living* tourists.

The evaluation of the different governmental policies aiming at promoting internal tourism remains ambiguous. The ambiguity is embodied in the exclusive use of such promotional tools as *Kounouz Biladi* campaigns which have revealed to be not enough good tools to increase domestic demand. It remains difficult, however, to get Moroccans to travel inside their own country. This is due to the absence of a tailored touristic offer that takes into consideration Moroccan

²An annual regional festival that combines a customary celebration, which can sometimes be religious (often to honor a saint) with festive and commercial activities

families specific needs and incomes. The development of *Biladi plan* (construction of 8 resorts highly appreciated by Moroccan tourists as part of the 2020 vision) was supposed to solve the problem. Statistics show an increase of 111% in nights spent by Moroccan residents between January 2010 and January 2018 indicating the high potential of this market³. At the same time, Moroccans' overseas trips cost 19 billion in currency⁴(quarter of the country's tourism receipts) which worsens chronic trade deficit problem. Indeed, 91.7% of these trips are not business trips. According to the Morocco Huffpost, 300,000 Moroccans travelled to the south of Spain during the summer of 2016⁵.

VII. METHODOLOGY: NETNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

To understand what motivates Moroccan tourists to travel to foreign destination, we have chosen an interpretative approach based on netnography. It is a method inspired by ethnographic research applied to online communities (Kozinet, 2002). The word netnography is a neologism created by the combination of the terms «Internet» and «Ethnography». This new qualitative approach is an Internet-based source of data that studies virtual consumers' communities (Bernard, 2004; Nelson and Otne, 2005). Netnography is suitable for research that involves emerging cultures and communities. In marketing, netnography uses available online public information to identify and understand needs and decisions related to the online consumer groups.

The corpus of data was collected on Facebook travelers' group called the "Moroccan Travelers' Forum"⁶ "which gathers 95,435 members (at the time of the survey, February 2019). To stimulate Facebook members' interest, a discussion was held. This discussion involves providing a particular data revealing the number of Moroccans (300.000) who spent their holidays in the south of Spain in 2016. Then, four questions were asked to trigger Facebook group members' interest. These questions were as follows:

Tell us about your last holidays spent abroad?

Do you prefer to travel in Morocco or abroad?

What does a trip abroad do for you and what are the gains?

What do you think of the touristic offerings in Morocco?

The collected data included the tourists' experiences, the degree of satisfaction generated from their journey, and reactions of other community members to the experiences reported. Data collection stopped when saturation was achieved, that is, when any other data collected brought no more meaningful results to the survey (Miles, al. 2013).

³ Statistiques sur le tourisme au Maroc pour le mois d'octobre 2016, l'observatoire du tourisme, www.observatoiredu tourisme.gov.ma

⁴ « Les voyages des Marocains à l'étranger en 2018 ont coûté près de 19 milliards de DH en devises »
Media 24 -Le 25 janvier 2019

⁵ Destinations, dépenses... Quelles sont les tendances de voyage des Marocains? Anaïs Lefebure HuffPost Maroc03/06/2016

⁶ Translation of « Forum des voyageurs marocains »

Globally, thirty four members (n= 34) shared their views online. Discussions were held in French, thus, interpretations and results had to be translated into English.

VIII. CONTENT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

From a hermeneutic perspective, the identification of the Moroccan tourists' motivation to choose overseas destinations is put forward as the purpose of this study. To achieve this objective, a Phenomenological Interpretive Analysis (API), as recommended by Smith and Osborn (2003), is used. Through the analysis, specific dimensions and variables are identified. For convenience and precision purposes, QDA Miner qualitative analysis assistance software is used. The hierarchical analysis grid generated from data encoding process reveals three main categories, each of which involves three sub-categories including a total of 24 codes.

The first category consists of barriers to internal tourism. It comprises two aspects that could be considered as the main sets of motivations identified by the analysis. The first aspect is quite predictable; it consists of traditional motivation variables that exist in the literature. The second feature is more unexpected and brings together a set of motivation variables never identified explaining or conditioning tourists' behavior which is related to experiencing a high civic-mindedness environment. The analysis highlights that the barriers to domestic tourism are, therefore, twofold namely the touristic offer with 11.6% and the external environmental conditions with 6.3% of the codes.

Respondents are particularly critical towards the current domestic supply as reflected in the following comments:

« Take the example of Turkey and name one single city in Morocco with a reasonable price and same value for money ! » ;

« A Rabat Madrid flight costs less than a Rabat Ouarzazate. Accommodations and activities there are cheaper and better » ; « Two days in Dakhla costs a lot more than a weekend in any European city ! ».

But what tourists deplore the most is the poor quality of service:

« The quality of the service should be highly improved » ;

« In Morocco, the notion of service is almost nonexistent ! ».

Some of them even mentioned that they are discriminated against as Moroccan citizens feeling to be considered by professionals as *persona non grata*. They criticize *« the little effort made for Moroccans »* and claim that *« Moroccans are given a chilly reception because they are not blond ! »*. Most of the respondents also choose to travel abroad because of the diversity of attractions available that are sorely lacking in Morocco: *« Unfortunately in Morocco, there are few monuments and attractions »*.

In addition to the touristic offer, the barriers to domestic tourism also emanate from the touristic offer environment.

Criticism is mainly centered on problems that extend the boundaries of the sector namely lack of civism and, to a less extend, the lack of infrastructure. Comments shed light on two aspects of civism deficiency. The first one is at an institutional level, the role authorities play in ensuring certain fundamental rights, including freedom and security. The second one is at an individual level, the respect every tourist should enjoy from his fellow citizens. This double-sided civism deficiency is what we call the new « push factors » and which constitutes surprising findings in tourists' motivations that are going to be developed below.

Now that we identified the major hindrances to domestic tourism, we can understand what Moroccan tourists are looking for in foreign destinations. In fact, in our case, motivations are inversely correlated with the barriers described above. Indeed, it seems natural that tourists seek elsewhere what is missing in their own country. Therefore, we were able to identify two categories of factors. The first category consists of fairly common variables representing 45.3% of the total references. The second motivation category is the main contribution of this search and consists of 37,1% of scores. Both are explained below with details.

The first category is built around motivations that are related to the intrinsic perceived value of foreign destinations. At that stage, the touristic offer is evaluated emotionally and rationally. From an emotional point of view, it consists of a set of motivations already identified in the literature and which brings together the discovery of new cultures, new attractions, total escape as expressed in the following verbatims:

« Abroad there are museums, green spaces, children's entertainment not found in Morocco » ;

« It is this thirst to discover other cultures, cuisine, mentality, other smiles ! ».

Alongside these classic motivations, there are more rational motivations based upon the idea that foreign destinations are better deals. It includes better prices, more satisfying quality, and bargain opportunities. Indeed, a lot of tourists are very enthusiastic to *« enjoy the sales in outlets during holidays »*.

We will, at this juncture, be highlighting the second category of motivations, the very motivations that will be seen as unexpected, and at the same time we will be illustrating the surprising findings related to civic items group. As explained in the section on the barriers to domestic tourism, Moroccan tourists are deeply concerned with the civic mindedness issues. The latter is a key factor determining the abroad option decision. The lack of civic mindedness attitude in the social environment and therefore in the touristic environment is a « push factor » that leads tourists to seek for a more peaceful touristic experience abroad where social standards are available. Tourists pursue a more respectful environment in which they enjoy freedom of action that does not undermine their security and their dignity. Women emphasize this point

and are deeply concerned with it. The term « freedom » and its “derivatives » (free, freely) were cited 11 times in the corpus; Women quote

« *the freedom of movement* », « *the freedom to swim with a bikini* », « *The freedom to dress* ».

We can deduce, that tourism is for women a means to feel free. Women link freedom to respect, dignity, and peace.

« *Wearing bikini and swimming in a beautiful beach without being harassed, this is freedom* » ; « *Any destination where women are treated respectfully is a good one* ».

These aspirations are stronger than the financial constraints and procedures of traveling abroad.

Besides freedom that is a typical feminine motivation, both men and women are willing to enjoy urban cleanliness, well organized public transport infrastructure, and security.

« *I enjoy using real sidewalks that do not exist here* » ; « *I would like to go for a walk safely* ».

What is taken for granted and seen as a daily routine (walking on the street) by Western tourists is a real touristic experience that is worthwhile according to our respondents.

Indeed, the motivations mentioned above are related to basic rights any citizen is entitled to expect from a public service. As a result, it is striking that tourism represents for many Moroccans a way to experience the higher quality living standards of developed countries. These factors have many similarities of the explanatory motivations beyond migration movements.

IX. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

































In this study, we tried to understand the deep motivations behind the decision to choose a foreign destination despite the advantages of domestic option and its climatic and geographical resources. In particular, the study identified unexpected factors related to new experiential motivations. In fact, alongside traditional motivations listed in the literature which we refer to as « pull factors », the study revealed the existence of other set of motivations that are specific to the Moroccan context, as a developing Arab country. These new « push factors » involve the need to experience a high level of civility. Tourism proves to be a means by which women experience emancipation. Tourism enables Moroccans to experience social values and citizenship outside their country. Therefore, touristic advantages of Morocco can no longer ensure national demand. The success of the touristic offer depends on the environment in which it is deployed. Policies must provide a well-defined context that would meet tourists' new requirements and should aim at cultivating civic

mindedness issues at both individual and institutional levels. This inevitably involves structural measures that focus on educational and human capital investment. The pragmatic validity of the results, the main limitation of this research, will have to be tested in other similar contexts.

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APPENDICES: ANALYTIC GRID

	Count	% Codes	Cases	% Cases
 Social values and citizenship experience				
 modern and secured environment				
 Organisation and infrastructure	8	4,3%	1	50,0%
 Security	11	6,0%	1	50,0%
 Urban cleanliness	7	3,8%	1	50,0%
 freedom				
 Freedom to dress up	6	3,3%	1	50,0%
 Freedom to moove	7	3,8%	1	50,0%
 Freedom to swim	6	3,3%	1	50,0%
 public civilized attitudes				
 No biases or prejudices	5	2,7%	1	50,0%
 Peace	11	6,0%	1	50,0%
 Respect	9	4,9%	1	50,0%
 offer/ facilities based motivations				
 Better deals				
 better price/quality ratio	14	7,6%	1	50,0%
 Better service quality	9	4,9%	1	50,0%
 Outlet sales and bargains	5	2,7%	1	50,0%
 classis tourism motivations				
 discovery of new cultures	18	9,8%	1	50,0%
 Total escape	8	4,3%	1	50,0%
 Diversity of attractions and experience	23	12,5%	1	50,0%
 Shopping	5	2,7%	1	50,0%
 barriers and aversions				
 tourism environnement				
 lack of civisim	12	6,5%	1	50,0%
 lack of infrastructure	2	1,1%	1	50,0%
 offer and quality deficit based barriers				
 discrimination against Moroccan	3	1,6%	1	50,0%
 Service quality deficit	7	3,8%	1	50,0%
 Expensiveness	6	3,3%	1	50,0%
 poor attractions	2	1,1%	1	50,0%