

Chapter 1 Tourism and Demography An Overview

From Tourism and Demography

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Tourism and Demography

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Tourism and Demography: An Overview

Ian Yeoman and Stephanie Butterfield

Objectives

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- ◆ Provide an overview of the key demography trends across the world using United Nations population projections;
- ◆ Illustrate how demography patterns will shape tourism demand, whether it is singleton households and feminisation of travel or new family structures and the rise of grandtravellers;
- ◆ Demonstrate how demography patterns will change the supply provision of tourism, whether it is taxation policy or labour supply.

Introduction

When many futurists argue about an uncertain world, whether it is oil prices, technology, the economic performance of China and climate change – the only certain prediction is birth and death. This chapter sets out to explain how this certainty will be the most important trend that shapes the future of tourism, whether it is the Baby Boomer generation retiring with wealth and desire to travel or the looming pensions crisis and the consequential collapse of outbound travel from developed nations such as Italy, Germany and Japan. This chapter describes the key demography trends and provides a range of examples of how demography will change the future of tourism. Material for this chapter is mainly drawn from reports by the United Nations, OECD and World Economic Forum. The authors acknowledge the importance of these sources.

World Demography Trends

Demography is the study of population characteristics. Birth, death, migration and ageing are key topics incorporated within demography. According to the United Nations, in 2050 there will be 9.1 billion people in the world compared to 2.5 billion in 1950 (see Table 1.1). From housing to water supply, this population increase will have major implications for everything and everyone. In response to the fiscal burden of an ageing population, many political leaders, including those of Japan and Italy, have tried to encourage people to have more babies, occasionally even offering monetary incentives.

World population grew from 600 million in 1700 to 6.8 billion in 2009 (United Nations, 2009). According to Cohen (2003), it took until 1927 to put 2 billion on the earth, less than 50 years to add another 2 billion; and just 25 years to add the next 2 billion. Thus, global population has doubled in 40 years. From 1750 to 1950, Europe and the new world experienced the most rapid population growth of any region, while populations of Asia and Africa grew very slowly. Since 1950, rapid population growth shifted from Western countries to Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

Between 1800 and 1900 the number of people living in urban centres increased from 2% to 12%. This rose to 47% in 2000 with 10% of the world population living in cities with over 10 million residents. In 1950, New York became the first city to have over 10 million people. However, by 2000 19 other cities did too. Of those cities, Tokyo, Osaka, New York and Los Angeles were the only ones in developed countries (Cohen, 2003).