

Exploring the Intersection Between Perceptions of Imperialism, Empowerment, and Support for Sustainable Tourism on the Island of Sal, Cape Verde

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Keywords | Resident empowerment, Imperialism, Support for sustainable tourism development, Cape Verde

Objectives | This study aims to investigate the effects of residents' perception of political, economic, and cultural imperialism on residents' perceptions of economic, environmental, psychological, social, and political empowerment and to what extent these perceptions influence their support for sustainable tourism development.

Methodology | Data was collected during the months of July, August, and October of 2022 on the *Island of Sal, Cape Verde*. Using a door-to-door questionnaire, the study surveyed a representative sample 341 residents. Extended empowerment scale (Boley & McGehee, 2014), imperialism scale, (Sinclair-Maragh & Gursay, 2015) and support for sustainable tourism development scale (Man Cheng et al., 2021), were measured through a 5-point Likert scale. Using a blend of Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality and Institutional Theory, the study tested a conceptual model using the IBM Amos v28 Software and applying the maximum likelihood estimation (ML) method (Hair et al., 2010). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed.

Main Results and Contributions | Firstly, the set of hypotheses measuring perceptions of political imperialism and empowerment demonstrate that under conditions where foreign investors dominate tourism policies, benefit from the imported tax, and pressure local governments to implement policies to facilitate tourism operations, residents illustrated that such conditions do not empower them economically, environmentally, psychologically, socially or politically. Secondly, findings show that when developments are precariously deficient and investment incentives are put in place by regulatory institutions, which in turn contributes to repatriation of profits, economic leakage, and wage disparity, local population sentiments of economic, psychological, social, and political empowerment are overshadowed by the effects of economic imperialism. Thirdly, findings

revealed that the imposition of foreign customs and traditions and the commodification of local culture implemented through cultural imperialism, tourism did not contribute to equal economic distribution, conservation of natural resources, community pride, and collective efforts, depriving residents of becoming economically, environmentally, psychologically, socially and politically empowered through tourism. Fourthly, findings show that residents' perceptions of economic, environmental, and psychological empowerment established a significant relationship with support for sustainable tourism development. However, the effects of perceptions of social and political empowerment on support for tourism were insignificant.

Limitations | First, data was collected before the return of high season since the COVID-19 pandemic. This is mentioned because, during the pandemic, many residents suffered unjustified layoffs from multinational brands, and had no means of income. As livelihoods were threatened, respondents' perceptions (imperialism and empowerment) might have been influenced by the importance of tourism activity on the island of Sal. Such perceptions might have been viewed cautiously during questionnaire fill-out influencing variables in the model. Data collection during high season, when employment rates are normalized and residents have economic means, could yield different results.

Another limitation present in this study is that data collection was limited to one island. Insight from a diverse geographical perspective, national and international, could further confirm local population perceptions and attitudes within this domain. In addition, bearing in mind that tourism is developed through multinational corporations in most small island destinations, studies that investigate residents' perception of imperialism and its effect on residents' perception of all-inclusive resort and trust in local government would also further contribute to the tourism attitude literature.

Conclusions | This study aimed to address concerns pertaining to the balance of power, the ongoingness of imperialism, and core and peripheral nation relations within a vulnerable tourism destination (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022; Nash, 1989; Sinclair-Maragh & Gursoy, 2015). In an attempt to advance our knowledge surrounding such concerns, the study intended to better understand how actions that are often justified by economic and political agenda and policies that are fueled by the urgency to actuate national consumption and congregate standard of living ambitious in the Global North, continue to hamper growth in the Global South. Moreover, empowerment is important for destinations seeking to achieve support for sustainable tourism development. However, under the conditions of imperialism, residents' empowerment sentiments are absent. These underpinnings offer a greater understanding of the terms and conditions of tourism development as well as the relationships between residents, governments, and foreigners. Further,

effects of perceptions of empowerment on residents' support for sustainable tourism development, provide critical insight of residents' attitude toward tourism.

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