

# Nationalism, geopolitical tensions, cultural gaps, and economic crises are reshaping global tourism, study finds

*Travel restrictions, economic crises and the rise of nationalist sentiments and cultural chasm are the main factors behind a resurgence in deglobalized tourism.*

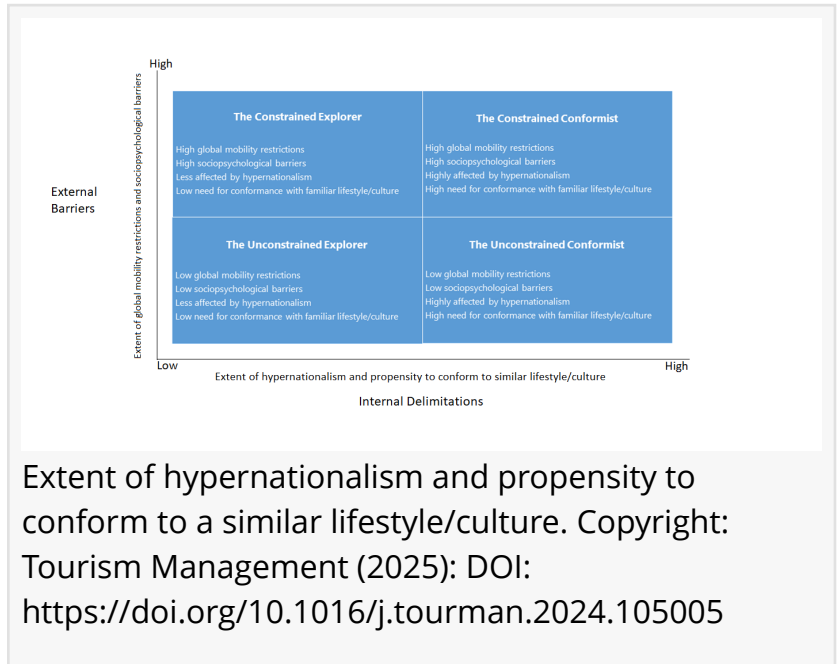
SHARJAH, EMIRATE OF SHARJAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, February 12, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- by University of Sharjah

Tourism, long seen as a bridge between cultures and economies, is undergoing dramatic transformations mainly due to the rise of deglobalization, a new study, authored by the University of Sharjah, finds.

Deglobalization is both a concept and a movement. It is the opposite of globalization. It refers to a world which is less connected, in which powerful nation states curtail cultural exchanges and impose strict border controls and trade tariffs.

The study, published in the journal *Tourism Management*, sees deglobalization as a phenomenon presenting “a paradox by emphasizing disconnection, reduced economic interdependence, and an increase in nationalist sentiments.” (Original source URL: [https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261517724001249?casa\\_token=udztjJFCu4MAAAA:h5rnzabUpWcCgT\\_v8YhewkgPEk40yb2xNVNG\\_vmdhjQiamSBURWAY\\_3y2Xfc2NlodCQi2xNm](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261517724001249?casa_token=udztjJFCu4MAAAA:h5rnzabUpWcCgT_v8YhewkgPEk40yb2xNVNG_vmdhjQiamSBURWAY_3y2Xfc2NlodCQi2xNm))

The study’s author, Dr. Salman Yousaf, Sharjah University’s Associate Professor of business administration, says more and more tourists are affected by a world in which deglobalization is emerging as a reality and where travel decisions are increasingly shaped by geopolitical tensions, national identity, and restricted mobility.



Global tourism is experiencing an unexpected reversal, he notes, adding that tourism, traditionally regarded as a key driver of globalization, is now witnessing a retreat toward more insular travel behaviors.

The conceptual study builds on seminal literature on deglobalization as a social phenomenon and a deliberate economic strategy which many countries, hitherto diehard advocates of globalization, are adopting to fend off what they see as economic collapse.

The US is mentioned as an example of a deglobalizing country where, in addition to stricter border controls and trade tariffs, there is a notable shift both discursively and in practice “towards protectionism, signaling a deeper systematic shift towards a more nationalist and isolationist stance in global politics.”

Dr. Yousaf identifies four distinct categories of deglobalized tourists: The Unconstrained Explorer, The Unconstrained Conformist, The Constrained Explorer, and The Constrained Conformist. These classifications, he maintains, help explain how external barriers such as visa restrictions and internal factors like hypernationalism are redefining travel choices.

For example, Dr. Yousaf refers to the diplomatic tensions between India and the Maldives and how they resulted in a significant decline in Indian tourists visiting the island nation.

He mentions that the diplomatic spat prompted Indian tourists to shun the Maldives and opt for domestic beach destinations like Lakshadweep, illustrating how nationalistic sentiments can directly influence travel decisions.

“The ... India-Maldives tourism dispute serves as a pertinent case, illustrating the impact of nationalistic and political narratives on tourism discourses,” according to the study. “On January 4, 2024, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Lakshadweep islands highlighted India's domestic beauty, sparking debate on social media about the need for Indian tourists to visit the Maldives, a major outbound travel destination.”

Similarly, Dr. Yousaf finds UK's Brexit decision a catalyst behind the notable drop in European tourist arrivals, disrupting traditionally almost non-restricted cross-border travel. “Britain's decision to leave the European Union was based on a widespread public sentiment that the country should regain greater control over its borders, immigration, and job opportunities for its citizens.

“The impact of deglobalization on tourism is profound. We are seeing a significant shift towards domestic and culturally familiar travel, with tourists preferring destinations that align with their political and social values,” the study notes.

Dr. Yousaf cites consumer ethnocentrism – the tendency for individuals to favor domestic

products over foreign alternatives – as one of the key forces behind the emergence of deglobalized tourism. In tourism, he says, the concept extends to travel choices, where travelers opt for destinations that reflect their national identity and values. This shift has major implications for the global travel industry, as destinations reliant on international tourists may need to adapt their strategies, Dr. Yousaf points out.

The study finds that sociopsychological factors also play a growing role. They show that discrimination, cultural unfamiliarity, and safety concerns to be factors pushing many travelers toward destinations where they feel more accepted.

The study dwells on what it calls “the socio-cultural dynamics” Western tourists encounter when visiting Muslim-majority countries where they “may feel compelled to conform to specific dress codes ..., a measure taken to mitigate the discomfort associated with the scrutinizing gaze of the host community.

“Similarly, Muslim travelers, while visiting non-Muslim majority countries, often exhibit preferences for tourism experiences that are congruent with Islamic teachings in terms of halal tourism and halal leisure, which may result in circumscribed travel experiences.”

Halal, Arabic for lawful, is an Islamic tenet referring to leisure, food, and drink which Islam allows followers to have. For Muslims, anything outside the realm of what is halal is considered haram or forbidden.

The study sheds light on what it dubs as “rationalized touristic experiences” of travelers belonging to “stereotyped ethnic or religious groups.” Islamophobia is mentioned in the study as an illustration of cultural deglobalization and its negative repercussions on Muslim tourists.

Additionally, the study touches upon the experiences of Moroccan tourists in the Netherlands, a country with a sizeable Moroccan migrant population. Leaning on previous literature, the study reveals “how stigma associated with Moroccan immigrants constructs a devalued social identity for Arab and Muslim tourists visiting the Netherlands for leisure and recreation. This stigma by association leads to meta-stereotypes affecting all members of the community.

“These insights highlight the complex nature of deglobalization, showing it is driven not only by physical barriers but also by social and psychological factors,” the study shows.

The study reports that government-issued travel advisories play a significant role in shaping tourism trends. Often used as a form of political leverage, these advisories, it adds, influence public perception of safety and desirability, reinforcing the patterns identified in the study.

Dr. Yousaf’s classification of ‘deglobalized tourists’ into four distinct categories is based on external travel and personal preferences. “Understanding deglobalized tourist segments allows businesses to tailor their offerings, ensuring inclusivity while adapting to changing consumer

behaviors."

The segmentation provides insights into how political and cultural identity shape travel decisions. In India and numerous other countries, particularly those with nationalist policies and propensity towards border controls and travel restrictions, nationalist rhetoric has influenced even domestic tourism, leading to boycotts of destinations perceived as politically misaligned with national interests, the study shows.

The study, according to Dr. Yousaf, carries considerable implications for tourism and presents challenges and opportunities for the travel industry. Countries dependent on international visitors are called upon to rethink their marketing strategies, emphasizing safety, cultural familiarity, and political neutrality.

Meanwhile, the study shows that with the trend to deglobalize surging along with the rise in nationalism and nation states, the growth of domestic tourism could at the same time offer new economic opportunities for regions investing in local travel infrastructure.

It is essential to study "the potential for domestic travel to bolster local economies and support sustainable development, along with the socio-economic impacts of shifting tourist preferences towards localized experiences," if one is to understand the effects of deglobalization on local tourism, the study reveals.

Until the tourism industry adapts to these shifts, the future of global travel remains uncertain, warns Dr. Yousaf, emphasizing that while some trends may be temporary responses to recent crises, others suggest a longer-term transformation.

Whether this shift represents a momentary retreat or a permanent reconfiguration, one thing is clear: the motivations behind travel are evolving, and the industry must be prepared to navigate a rapidly changing landscape, he goes on.

The study by Dr. Yousaf highlights the critical role of diversity and inclusivity in shaping a thriving tourism industry. By analyzing successful multicultural and multiethnic destinations, the research suggests that embracing inclusivity can boost tourism performance and foster a more connected global society.

LEON BARKHO  
University Of Sharjah  
+971 50 165 4376  
[email us here](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/785236781>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something

we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.