How minority residents perceive their community as a viable minority tourist destination: A case study of African American residents in Columbia, South Carolina

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Tourism can serve as a unifying force in modern societies, bringing people together to define collectively the places, events, and symbols that are deemed important and somehow meaningful. However, many questions remain in terms of why and under what conditions local residents may choose to, or may be driven to, become involved in tourism. An examination as to why local residents wish to highlight or downplay specific sites would help to redefine who they are and what their identity should be. This project aims at investigating the minority residents’ perceptions and attitudes to explain the interracial factors affecting acceptance and personal comfort of a place. Research documenting the minority resident perception and attitude of their community will hopefully explore the dynamic nature of the social, cultural, and historical sites that minorities deem viable for attracting minority tourists. Expanding the minority tourism market will help to capitalize on the rich heritage, culture, and nostalgia of cities and towns throughout the United States thus creating a tool to educate not only residents of the historical and cultural elements present but also help in fostering a sense of pride for minority communities.