

“EXPLORING ‘WELCOMENESS’ IN POST-PANDEMIC CANADA.”

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Abstract:

While COVID has impacted the tourism industry, people appear eager to reopen in a post-pandemic world (Destination Canada, 2021e). This study analyses to what extent living with COVID has impacted the ‘hospitality’ Canadian residents have towards tourism. Canadians have a reputation for being friendly towards others (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013; Maclean’s, 2017), but some evidence suggests that COVID has affected their level of “welcomeness” (Destination Canada, 2021a). This study will help paint a general picture of domestic travel, focusing on rural and urban British Columbia and whether precautions such as increased vaccination rates across Canada (Government of Canada, 2021a; 2021b) will improve levels of “welcomeness.”

However, this study also unpacks the terminology ‘welcomeness’ and acknowledges the need for further research into ‘hospitality as welcome’ outside of the COVID context to understand the impact. These findings provide insights for Destination Marketing Organizations [DMOs] and suggest that many British Columbians feel it is too soon to re-welcome national and international visitors. Local communities still display hesitation or discomfort toward “outsiders,” which implies they currently prefer local and domestic tourism initiatives.

Introduction:

Travelling, in essence, involves a host and guest dynamic where one party is welcoming another party into their home, community or country, but what happens when that dynamic is