

**A Multi-year Spatial Analysis of Domestic Tourism
in Ontario, Canada**

by

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**A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfilment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
Recreation and Leisure Studies**

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2003

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ABSTRACT

Tourism researchers have typically focused on the international market, neglecting the much more prevalent domestic market. The Canadian domestic market accounts for \$34.8 billion (69.5%) of the total Canadian tourism market and 79.4% (75.6 million) of all trips. Further, research has neglected the spatial aspects of tourism. Tourism is about the movement of people from one place to another, hence it is important to understand the dynamics associated with this movement.

This study utilised location quotients, a well-established spatial analytic technique typically used in economic geography. It examined travel originating in, and destined for, census divisions (n=49) in the Province of Ontario, Canada between 1996 and 2001. A tourism-potential ratio was used to assist in identifying annual trends of travel for census divisions.

The findings confirm the usefulness of spatial analysis, particularly location quotients, as a technique leading to a better understanding of tourist movement. Interestingly, census divisions with lower base populations both generated (i.e., origin) and received (i.e., destination) greater numbers of person-trips than might be expected. Many of these were rural. Generally, higher location quotient values were related to day-trips for origins and over-night trips for destinations. Demographic variables were not, but participation rates for activities (e.g., winter sports, attending fairs and festivals, water-based activities) were in explaining higher location quotient values.

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