



Anthropology & Aging

Journal of the Association for Anthropology & Gerontology

Book Review

Review of Vania Vigolo. Older Tourist Behavior and Marketing Tools. Springer: 2017. pp. 176. Price \$129.

Robert Boroch
University of Warsaw, Poland

Anthropology & Aging, Vol 39, No 1 (2018), pp. 119-120

ISSN 2374-2267 (online) DOI 10.5195/aa.2018.196



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 United States License.

This journal is published by the [University Library System](#) of the [University of Pittsburgh](#) as part of its [D-Scribe Digital Publishing Program](#), and is cosponsored by the [University of Pittsburgh Press](#).

Book Review

Review of Vania Vigolo. Older Tourist Behavior and Marketing Tools. Springer: 2017. pp. 176. Price \$129.

Robert Boroch
University of Warsaw, Poland

The issues Vigolo raises in his monograph concerning the tourist activities of seniors are part of one of the most important trends of basic research in the social sciences. The issue of tourist activity of seniors – particularly in an economic context, in terms of market potential – has not been extensively discussed in the literature on the subject. Vigolo's work partly fills this gap. The monograph consists of three parts: (I) Defining the Older Tourist Market; (II) Older Tourist Behavior: The Demand-Side Perspective; (III) Marketing to Older Tourists: The Supply-Side Perspective. In the first part, the researcher focuses on epistemological considerations regarding the definition of the concept of an elderly person, presenting the abundant literature on the subject and refuting the stereotypes inherent in common business opinions concerning the 'market behaviour and expectations' of seniors. The researcher points out that, in fact, seniors constitute a significant percentage of the tourism industry's customers. In the second part, the decision-making processes regarding travel planning by/for seniors are discussed. The researcher draws attention to factors motivating seniors to travel which play an important role in these processes: personal motivation (nostalgia, self-confidence, desire to learn new things) and motivation deriving from the social environment (acceptance). In the third part, the researcher discusses so-called case studies illustrating various strategies adopted in the tourism industry, on the basis of specific examples.

The subject of the analysis comprised three tourism firms: (I) Viaggi Floreali (Slovenia), specialising in tourism for small groups of seniors; (II) ElderTreks (Canada), specialising in tourism for individual seniors; (III) Algarve Senior Living (Great Britain), specialising in the rental of tourist facilities. The qualitative research carried out by Vigolo is based on the following methodology: (1) determination of how the company began to target older people; (2) description of the target and its characteristics; (3) description of the company's distinctive elements; (4) description of the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion strategies); (5) analysis of the market context, with a focus on active aging and on challenges for the tourism industry (Vigolo 2017, 129). Analysis of qualitative data enabled the context to be expanded so as to: '(a) [...] provide an original perspective of older tourists' characteristics from a supply-side point of view; (b) [...] offer useful insights into companies' marketing strategies and practices regarding older tourists; (c) [...] widen the field of analysis from single case studies to the broader market context [...]' (Vigolo 2017, 154). Undoubtedly, Vigolo's study will meet with the interest of social anthropologists, cultural animators, and social psychologists, for whom it may become basic research material in the practical as well as the theoretical realm, especially the first part. Furthermore, the material presented in the monograph will increase awareness of the epistemic complexity of research problems concerning social structures involving seniors, especially those operating in different cultural traditions (e.g. outside the English-speaking world), inclining its readers to deep reflection and persuading them that that research in the field of tourism for seniors should be conducted with regard to historical and cultural differences to which Vigolo did not call attention. Thus, the inherent differences between cultural areas, e.g. between

Western and Central/Eastern Europe, preclude universality in research results. However, this creates other epistemic opportunities – e.g. for developing interdisciplinary comparative projects, which might aim at attempting to show social stratifications and the potential for eliminating them.

In this aspect as well, the work in question is an invaluable resource for researchers dealing with the problem of geriatrics in both practical (applied anthropology) and ethical (applied ethics) aspects. No one needs to be convinced that research in this area will help in great measure to stimulate sociological awareness of societies with divergent historical and cultural backgrounds and to contribute to the expansion of cultural integration diverging from the principle that youth is a collective phenomenon, whereas old age is an individual phenomenon which, basically, will never affect us.