

Joy K. Adams, Department of Geography, Texas State University-San Marcos, San Marcos, TX 78666. E-mail: joy.adams@mail.utexas.edu. Mixed messages? Place image and demographic change in German Texas.

Critics have raised concerns that ethnic-themed heritage tourism promotion necessarily excludes minority groups and tends to rely on static images of people and places in order to be appealing and understandable to visitors. In this paper, I test these arguments by analyzing how German-themed tourism host communities in Central Texas are addressing significant demographic changes in their promotional materials. The northward expansion of the state's Hispanic settlement region into areas traditionally associated with German heritage and settlement has resulted in significant alterations to the landscapes and cultures of places that have long marketed "Old-World ambience" as a tourist attraction. Using three host communities as case studies, I explore how the images and messages used in tourism marketing materials have (or have not) changed over the past 40 years to accommodate increasing ethnic diversity. In my analysis, I attempt to understand how host communities negotiate between visitor expectations and demographic realities in constructing and communicating touristic place images.

Keywords: Ethnic tourism, place image, German-Americans.