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Trends and evolution of tourism in the Mediterranean Basin

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1. Abstract

This study analyzes the tourist developments that have taken the Mediterranean basin in recent years. This paper studies the internal differences, the intervention of political and social factors and key trends. Maintenance of tourism is checked despite the stagnation in tourist arrivals.

The Mediterranean basin is the main tourist area of the world, despite strong competition from other tourist areas.

The distribution of this tourism is very unbalanced, with most concentrated in the north shore, and especially in the western side (75.4% tourists and 78.9% bed places, 2012).

The southern and eastern Mediterranean shore has been affected by conflict which has caused a loss of tourist flows.

The Mediterranean basin is a mature tourist region that needs to reinvent itself to remain.

2. Introduction

Tourism mass that grew up on its shore very early has been seen by the Mediterranean Sea, and goes on the main tourist destination on the World, although new tourist regions challenger the first place.

A crowd of tourist flows converge toward the Mediterranean, especially European flows and lesser extent American and Asian. The distribution of this tourism is very unbalanced, with most concentrated in the north shore, and especially in the western side. This is explained by the closeness of these areas to large outbound tourism flows and the development of an important infrastructure accommodation and establishment of large tourism enterprises.

The Mediterranean has the secondary destination countries of the southern shore, which in recent years have been the focus of conflicts that have affected the intensity of flows and generated a reallocation of travelers in the Mediterranean basin. On the other hand, the Mediterranean basin is a mature tourist space that needs to reinvent itself tourism to continue growing.

In this paper are analyzed the statistics of international tourism in the different countries of the Mediterranean basin to help identify its development as an international tourist destination, as well as the development of the accommodation infrastructure and the role that the tourism revenues on the economy of each country. Also, trends recorded in recent years in the Mediterranean basin are assessed and during this period there have been significant political and economic changes. And the answer of the Mediterranean countries will be analyzed according to their level of tourism development and its political and economic characteristics.

We present two study hypothesis: (i) Loss of market share of the Mediterranean world and (ii) Impacts of socio-political conflict in the evolution of tourist flows in the Mediterranean basin.

Study results indicate that the Mediterranean as tourist region has decline in the global share of tourism but the number of tourists arriving in the Mediterranean basin is increasing. This fact is related to the strong tourism growth in other global regions. Diversification of the Mediterranean offer supply and conversion of mature destinations is explaining the growth of tourism demand in the Mediterranean.

The second result of the analysis indicates that political conflicts have led to some changes in the orientation of the demand. The loss of tourists from the countries of North Africa has been taken up by the countries of the northern shore of the Mediterranean. This situation is not the same for all the countries of northern Africa. In the medium term, if there is excessive volatility, tourism demand to retrieve.

These results invite us to open debates on models of tourism development in the Mediterranean basin.

Method

Statistics of international tourism in the Mediterranean countries are analyzed. Two hypotheses of the study are presented:

- (i) loss of market share of the Mediterranean world.
- (ii) the effects of socio-political conflict in the evolution of tourist flows in the Mediterranean basin.

Conclusions

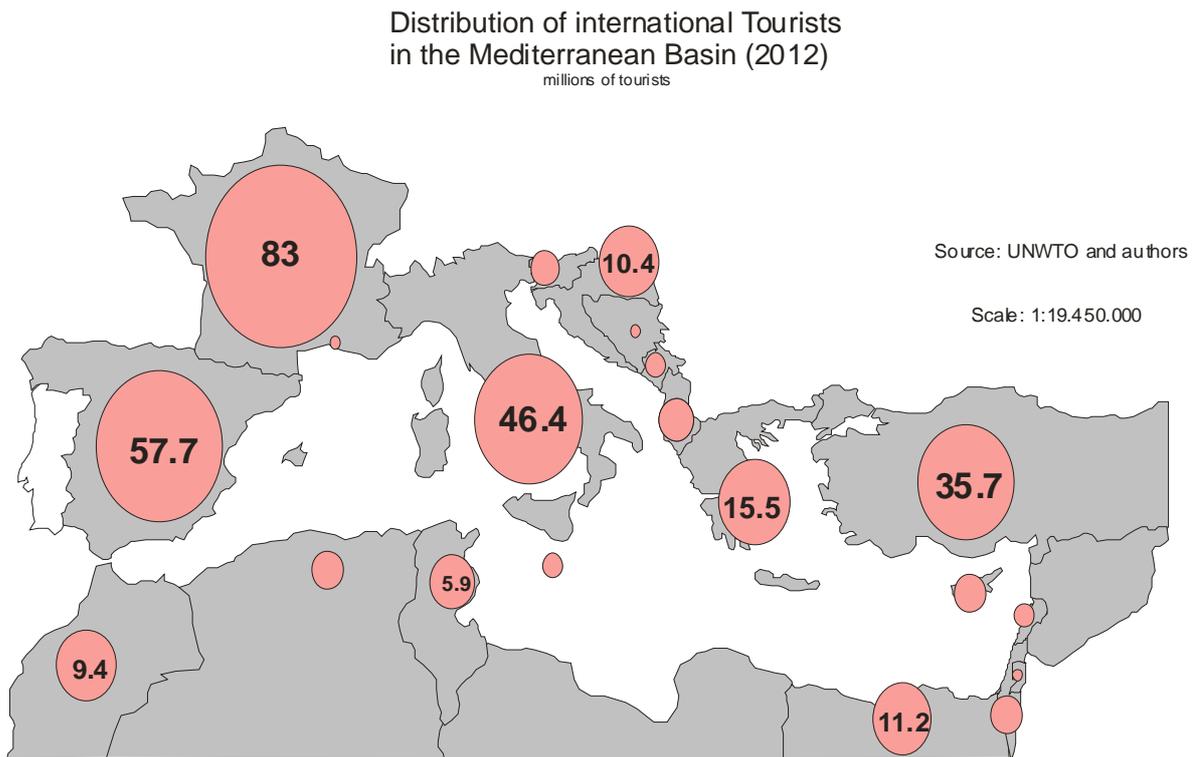
The results indicate that the Mediterranean continues to grow in absolute numbers but is losing market share worldwide.

The Mediterranean remains the world's leading tourist region, although with moderate growth.

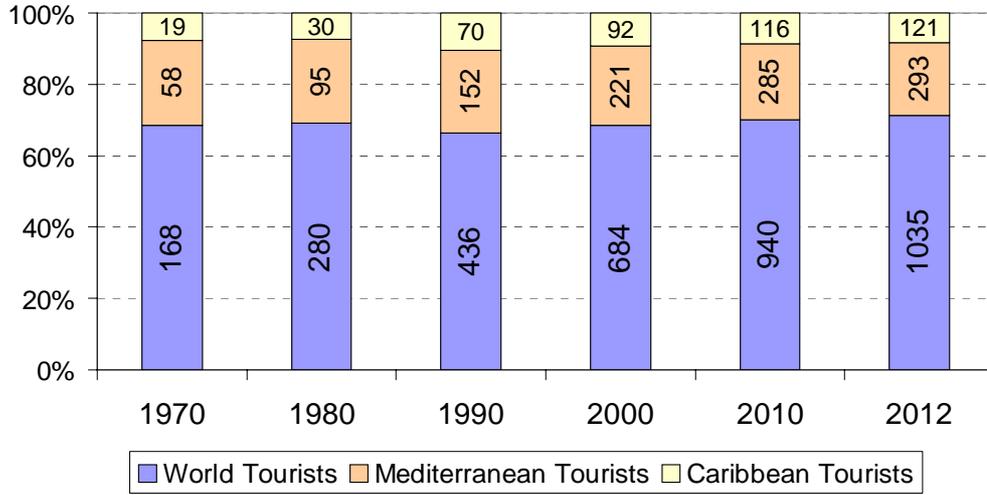
Second, political conflicts have caused the loss of tourism in the countries of the southern shore.

Acknowledgments

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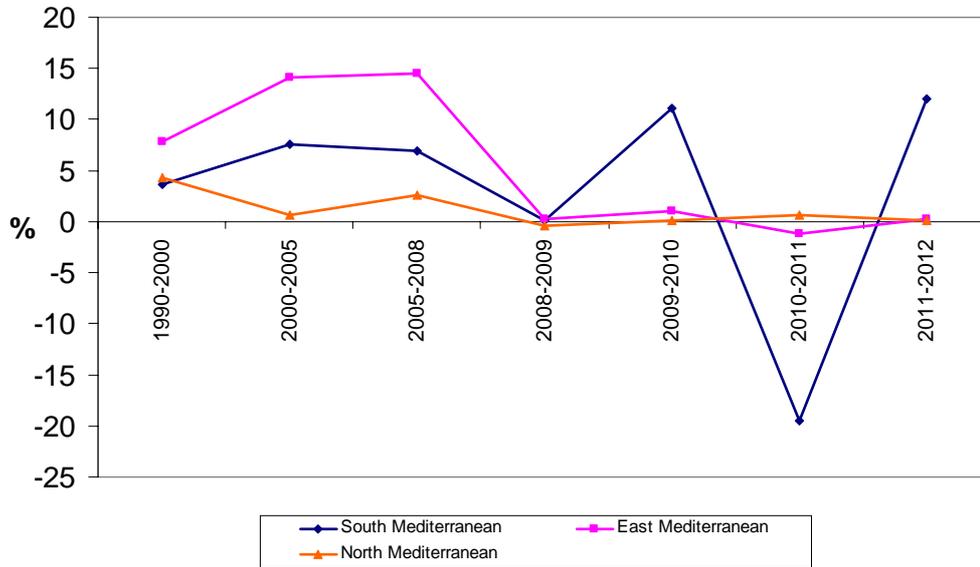


Comparative evolution of tourism regions (millions of tourists)



Note: Figures for all Mediterranean and Caribbean riparian countries
Source: UNWTO

Annual growth rate of international tourists by Mediterranean regions



Source: UNWTO

Evolution of tourism in the Mediterranean compared to world tourism

