

EDITORIAL

*Cristina Bernini*¹ and *Maria Francesca Cracolici*²

This issue on 'Advances in Tourism Analysis' springs from a special session on 'Advances in Tourism Analysis. Theory and Practice' organized by the Editors as part of the 53rd Congress of the European Regional Science Association held at the University of Palermo on 27–31 August 2013. After carefully examining the wealth of contributions available, we decided to publish selected papers offering advanced insight in the analysis of tourism and its relationship to regional development. From different perspectives and approaches, the papers included in this volume analyse different issues on the role of tourism in supporting the economic growth of a region, such as the presence of low cost carriers, the relevance of promotion in tourism and tourist expectations, tourism industry specialisation, the role of tourism during the recent economic crisis and the sustainability of tourism development.

The first paper by Valter Di Giacinto and Andrea Migliardi (Bank of Italy, Italy) investigates the impact of the expansion of Low cost carriers (LCC) on foreign tourism trends in Italy. The paper is innovative in focus and method. The topic is relevant because low cost carriers (LCCs) have opened new routes to regional destinations, affecting foreign tourism demand. To investigate the role of LCC on tourism demand, the Authors make use of a novel data set on the seats on LCC flights from foreign destinations to Italian airports. Using cointegrated vector autoregressive models, both Italy as a whole and its main geographical areas were analysed. The Authors show that the level of LCC travel supply is significantly linked to the dynamics of the global business cycle, of relative consumer prices and of foreign tourist expenditure. Using structural impulse response analysis, the study provides evidence that a positive shock to LCC travel supply has caused an increase in Italy both in foreign tourist expenditure and in the number of arrivals, but that this effect varies across the Italian macro areas. The authors conclude that focusing on arrivals may provide only a partial view of policy outcomes, since effects of low cost supply shocks on per capita foreign tourist expenditure have been found, enhancing or depressing the direct effect on arrivals.

The second paper by Neuts (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium) Romão (University of Algarve, Portugal), Nijkamp (VU University Amsterdam, Netherlands) and Shikida (Hokkaido University, Japan), uses a simultaneous

¹ E-mail address: cristina.bernini@unibo.it

² E-mail address: mariafrancesca.cracolici@unipa.it

equations model to explore the effect of different information sources on booking a cruise in the Shiretoko Peninsula. The rationale of the study is that in a globalized world a marketing strategy will be effective if the diversity of the market is taken into account. From this point of view, the authors investigate if a (mis)matching between the information provided about the destination and the expectation of the tourist is important in any marketing strategy. By carefully analyzing questionnaire data, the Authors argued that a mismatch between what tourists expect based on the information provided about their destination and what they actually experience during their stay can have a strong negative effect on their satisfaction, making it less likely that they will recommend it to others.

The third paper is by Diana Pérez-Dacal (University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain), Yolanda Pena-Boquete (University of Vigo, Spain) and Melchor Fernández (University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain) and deals with the measurement of tourism specialisation at the provincial level. The Authors have chosen this topic because although Spain is among the world's most popular tourist destinations, there are huge differences in terms of international tourist arrivals, domestic tourists, number of hotels, etc. among the different Spanish provinces. Following suggestions from the European Commission, the Authors set out to identify the characteristics of Spanish tourism specializations at regional level so as to analyze current and potential effects on the economy. To measure tourism specialization from a broad perspective, the Authors consider both demand and supply side variables and they have also included amenities which influence both demand and supply side. Next, synthetic indicators of specialisation were constructed by means of the principal component analysis (PCA) for the different provinces. The analysis shows that the rankings obtained for specialization are stable over the temporal sample and that coastal regions are the most tourism specialized. The Authors also highlight that international visitors are concentrated in just a few regions whereas domestic visitors spread out into coastal provinces and regions surrounding Madrid.

The fourth paper by Dorel Nicolae Manitiu (University of Bologna, Italy) discusses the role of tourism in the Italian economy during the crisis. The Author shows how tourism has contributed to the global economy over the last 20 years, being the fastest growing sector in terms of external revenue and jobs created. The crisis that has affected the world economy since 2008, has led to a decrease in the flow of tourists, but it seems that the tourism sector has been rescued by new tourists from emerging countries. The trend in Italy, however, is slightly negative with a decrease in the number of tourists. This paper sets out to list the main effects of the crisis on tourism and to analyse key trends in tourism development and how the consumption of tourism services has

mutated in Italy. The Author makes several recommendations on policies that need to be implemented and highlights the importance of innovation.

A final contribution in the analysis of tourism and regional development is provided by the theoretical paper of Zigern-Korn (Saint-Petersburg State University, Russia) which analyzes the complex issue of the assessment of tourism function in regional development. In a detailed and well-argued analysis, the study sets out to answer the following research questions: *a)* Is the tourist and recreational function a peculiarity of every region? *b)* Is tourism always a key factor for the economic growth of a territorial area or is its success related to the territory's level of development? In answering these questions, the Author defines a methodology to assess tourism impact on regional development which may help policy makers to take decisions in tourism planning which lead to sustainable growth.