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CONTRAST REPORTS

09 RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

# TOURISM IN THE GEOPOLITICS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Ernest Cañada (ed.)

Prologue by Robert Fletcher

Antonio Aledo, Fernando Almeida, Asunción Blanco-Romero, Sarah Becklake, Macià Blàzquez-Salom, Samia Chahine, Jordi Gascón, Reme Gómez, José Mansilla, Claudio Milano, Enrique Navarro, Daniel Pardo, Llorenç Planagumà, David Ramos, Marta Salvador, Daniela Thiel, Cecilia Vergnano.





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## Tourism in the geopolitics of the Mediterranean

Ernest Cañada (ed.)

Alba Sud Editorial

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Prologue by Robert Fletcher

Translation by Sharon Farley, Marta Salvador, Núria Abellan and Melanie Keeling.

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# PROLOGUE

**Robert Fletcher**

Wageningen University & Research

I have long felt that tourism development represents capitalism at its most creative. Virtually anything, it seems, can be converted into a tourist attraction – even things like death, destruction and poverty that would appear, at first blush, to be what tourists in search of a pleasurable escape from life’s vicissitudes would try to avoid. On the other hand, in this very creativity tourism also displays its flip side in promoting various forms of (structural) violence and destruction that the creative impulse subsequently seeks to transform from obstacles to opportunities. If capitalism as a whole can be understood as a process of creative destruction, then both sides of this equation are exemplified by common dynamics of tourism development and expansion.

Such processes are aptly illustrated by the geopolitics of tourism development on the Mediterranean coastline explored in this book, wherein promotion of tourism expansion as means to jumpstart renewed accumulation has been particularly pronounced in the wake of the 2008 global capitalist crisis. As a consequence of this promotion, the region has become far and away *the* most popular destination of the massive global tourism industry, and hence an essential window into understanding dynamics of tourism expansion more generally. The book’s analysis highlights how effectively tourism development in one place can serve as a buffer for retraction elsewhere, evidencing processes of uneven development even within a particular geographical region, as when conflict in certain destinations (e.g. Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey) displace tourists to others (e.g., Portugal, Spain) offering similar amenities with less perceived risk.

While critical development research often emphasizes process of unequal exchange – both economic and ecological – between Global North and Global South, this book’s analysis points to a similar but far less emphasized North-South dynamic within the heart of the Global North, whereby large portions of Northern Europe move south each summer to exploit the key S’s (sun and sand) available there in greater abundance. Rather than exploitation of a proverbial “pleasure periphery”, consequently, we might describe this dynamic as cultivation of a “pleasure metropolis” within the core of the capitalist world-system itself.

In drawing attention to such dynamics, the volume resonates with recent work suggesting that the geographical coordinates of international development are morphing rapidly at present, with the venerable distinctions between First and Third Worlds, developed and underdeveloped societies, Global North and Global South, and similar dichotomies dissolving into a much more fluid spectrum wherein pockets of extreme wealth and abject poverty intermingle within every society so matter how rich or poor overall. This transformation, and its acknowledgement within academic

## PROLOGUE

Robert Fletcher

scholarship, challenges us to develop new categories and forms of analysis able to encompass these dynamics and address them in novel ways.

The volume also highlights the tourism industry's vital importance to larger economic and political processes. Those of us who study tourism for a living often spend considerable time making the case that this is not a frivolous subject but one deserving of serious attention. The volume demonstrates that this case should by now be obvious. Throughout the Mediterranean, as elsewhere, tourism constitutes a formative force in economic, political, social and environmental dimensions alike, shaping and reshaping physical and cultural landscapes in profound ways.

Finally, the book raises important questions concerning how to adequately respond to the dynamics it highlights, both within specific locations and with respect to the overarching processes and forces affecting these. At the heart of the dramatic increase in regional tourism documented in these pages lies a widespread interest to promote tourism growth as a form of economic development (and recovery in the face of persistent economic downturn) more generally. Yet it is precisely this promotion of incessant growth that is increasingly called into question by mounting resistance to its consequences under the controversial label "overtourism." Such resistance has generated calls for "detouristification" or even more general "degrowth" documented by contributors to this book. Questioning tourism expansion thus entails questioning this general model for (post-crisis) economic development and recovery as well.

And this, in turn, calls attention to an even more fundamental and widespread dynamic. The push for growth within tourism development, after all, is a direct reflection of the insatiable need for continual expansion at the heart of capitalism itself, in its perennial quest to overcome fundamental contradictions that would otherwise threaten its long-term survival. As one of the world's largest industries, tourism development is an essential aspect of this quest. Questioning tourism expansion, consequently, becomes tantamount to challenging the capitalist system as a whole. It is for this reason, most likely, that industry insiders tend to react so strongly, and with such hostility and scorn, to public voicing of what should by now be a universally accepted understanding: that continuous economic growth within a world of finite natural resources is impossible, notwithstanding invocation of fantasies of "green growth" and "decoupling" intended to disavow this realization.

In dispelling such fantasies and instead insisting on a sober reckoning with the deep-seated problems posed by an economic model predicated on infinite growth, this volume thus offers an important corrective to magical thinking of this sort. Let us hope that in so doing it will provoke vigorous discussion and debate, not only among academic researchers but also policymakers and civil society organizations concerned about the future of tourism and associated forms of development within this troubled region and beyond.

Amsterdam, the Netherlands  
October 2019

# KEYS TO THINKING ABOUT TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN<sup>1</sup>

**Ernest Cañada**

Alba Sud

**Claudio Milano**

Escuela Universitaria de Turismo Ostelea  
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The Mediterranean has become a space in which North-South tensions intersect dramatically in a global world.

The international financial crisis and the restructuring processes of the global economic system have turned the tourism industry into one of the mainstays of capitalism in its neoliberal stage. The commitment to the intensification of the tourism economy has rekindled social unrest due to massification and tourism pressure, as well as the socio-economic and ecological transformation of coastal territories, with progressive advances over the rest of the rural environment. In addition, in the Mediterranean other axes of tension are resolved that inevitably condition the terms under which tourism can develop: the global war for the control of key energy resources, such as oil or gas, and the dispute over the military and geopolitical control of some of its territories. Given this picture, the current political instability and situation of insecurity in the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean, the emergence of new security logic, and the humanitarian and migratory emergency have updated the debate on the role of tourism in the reconfiguration of the Mediterranean in a global context. All this is also produced against the backdrop of the increasingly noticeable effects of the climate crisis that directly impacts the organisation of tourism, whilst being one of the activities that contributes to the situation. The Mediterranean has become a space in which North-South tensions intersect dramatically in a global world. Tourism appears as a key factor in this scenario, either as an expression of saturation and exclusion, or as an opportunity for development.

Therefore, in this report, rather than fixing attention on specific territories, we address some of these debates from an expressly regional perspective. We also try to include tourism development on the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, despite the difficulties in achieving sufficient academic analysis. Without this broad territorial perspective, any analysis of tourism dynamics in the region, which is increasingly interconnected, would be unbalanced and partial. Also, in the light of the global balance that can be made of tourism expansion in the Mediterranean, and especially after the wave of tourism intensification over the last decade, the contributions in this report

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1 Translation by Sharon Farley.

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are inclined towards a critical assessment, which link to studies that warned about the implications of this development model as far back as the 1970s (Boissevain, 1977, 1979; Galán *et al.*, 1977; Gaviria, 1974; Jurdao, 1979).

## World's primary tourist destination

Globally, the exponential growth of tourism and the increase in all types of mobility meant a 5192% increase in international arrivals between 1950 and 2017 (Milano, Cheer and Novelli, 2019). In this global context, with 1,403 million international arrivals in 2018, the Mediterranean has become the world's primary tourist destination. Of this total figure, the Mediterranean countries of Southern Europe contribute 286.2 million arrivals, to which should be added the 23.9 million from North African countries and 63.6 million in the Middle East (UNWTO, 2019). Despite the difficulties in registering exactly what proportion of these tourists are actually present in Mediterranean destinations, the dimensions of the flow of visits to the region permits a growing awareness of their importance in world tourism. No other region accumulates similar figures.

The origin of this large-scale tourism development in Southern Europe must be set in the expansion of mass tourism from the 1950s, following World War II and the beginning of the golden years of Fordist capitalism. These years involved an enormous mobilisation of investment, labour flows, and the production of a leisure-oriented economy, comparable only to other key moments in the history of industrial capitalism (Manera and Morey, 2016). The model was based on a system of the standardised production of tourist packages, in which receiving countries provided accommodation, excursions and local transport. For their part, tour operators in Northern Europe controlled the main distribution channels and obliged their suppliers to maintain low costs to stay within the market (Bianchi, 2017). Thus, the Mediterranean region was considered an example of the construction of a "pleasure periphery" serving the leisure demands of Northern European populations with greater resources. International mass tourism came to subordinate developing economies within a tourist sector divided along international lines, which reproduced centre-periphery schemas (Turner & Ash, 1976). Tourism specialisation across a large part of the Mediterranean region, has manifested itself over time as a strong dependence on foreign investments, and a specific mode of development controlled by foreign interests over those of the region itself (Britton, 1996). Historically, dependency relationships have prevailed between tour operators in Northern Europe and accommodation companies in Mediterranean countries. For example, in the early 2000s, 70% of the tourist flow in Greece's mass tourism destinations were controlled by five British and three German tour operators (Bastakis, Buhalis and Butler, 2004). The strategic and operational weaknesses of Greek accommodation companies, in addition to strong competition between them, conferred enormous power to those who ran distribution channels. Thus, the vast majority of hotels in Greece were under the strategic control of tour operators from Northern Europe (Buhalis, 2000).



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Claudio MilanoThe development of  
mass tourism in the  
Mediterranean has had  
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in the formation and  
reconfiguration of the  
Mediterranean.

However, there are also those who have questioned this vision and have considered mass tourism in the Mediterranean to be the source of new opportunities for the region, granting it a new geopolitical and cultural centrality (Obrador, Crang and Travlou, 2009). On the other hand, tourism development in Southern Europe facilitated the combining of local businesses with international capital flows and corporate influence. Despite the huge dependence on international tour operators, in certain cases some of these companies acquired a greater dimension and managed to expand, including making a leap at the international level. In this sense, one of the paradigmatic experiences was that of the Balearic hotel chains (Blázquez, Murray and Artigues, 2011; Murray, 2015).

Other more recent causes, which ought to be taken into account so as to understand the extraordinary rise in Mediterranean tourism, are connected with the acceleration of mobility dynamics (Sheller and Urry, 2004; Hannam, Sheller and Urry, 2006; Schiller and Salazar, 2013), new ways of organising tourism services via platform economies, or the mislabelled “collaborative economy” (Bianchi, 2017; Stone, 2017), the economic democratisation of travel as a form of mass consumption, and with the expansion of international transport, both air and sea, and its infrastructure. The latter, despite the relatively little knowledge there is about it, has acquired a special relevance, which [David Ramos](#), professor at the University of Salamanca, reports in detail. In his text,

he explains how it is not always the infrastructures that are behind the growing demand, but that the business logic of international transport and its infrastructure also push towards an increase in displacements. One way or another, this rise in tourism in the Mediterranean could hardly have been conceived without taking into account the importance of tourist transport.

In short, the development of mass tourism in the Mediterranean has had a special relevance in the formation and reconfiguration of the Mediterranean, as much through the movement of tourists as with immigrant workers employed in the industry, facilitated by air transport, cruises and an increasing supply of accommodation and tourist services.

**“Touristification” and “Balearisation”, new concepts**

The weight and dependence of the Mediterranean economy on the tourism market led to the use of the concept of “touristification” in French academic literature to refer to territories whose socio-economic organisation revolved around tourism (Lanfant, 1994). For many social movements critical of tourism dynamics, this concept best describes the hegemony of tourism capital interests over more and more cities and territories, and is preferred to other recently popularised expressions, such as “overtourism” (Milano, Cheer and Novelli, 2019); that said, it experiences difficulties of conceptualisation (Koens, Postma and Papp, 2018), as it is considered too casual, and lacking in the ability to capture the action that causes such change (Cañada, 2018). However, it is necessary to evaluate the opportunity that this disclosure implies, or that



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The term was first used in the late 50s in a report published in *Paris-Match* magazine.

of “tourismphobia”, understanding that it is utilised to try to delegitimise critical social responses (Blanco-Romero *et al.*, 2018).

Another key concept that emerged from the early years of this experience of Mediterranean tourism development was that of “balearisation”. The term was first used in the late 50s in a report published in *Paris-Match* magazine, and from there it became popularised in the French press during the decade following the tourism boom. This term referred to an inappropriate transformation of the landscape for the benefit of tourism interests, which evidenced an imbalance due to an excessive dependence on foreign tourism and resulted in a high vulnerability to factors that escaped the control of local actors. In territorial terms, it also referred to an elevation in coastal construction without proper planning and urbanisation. Consequently, the term also referred to the degradation of the landscape and natural resources (Caldera, 1989). Later French geographers began using it to describe the systematic destruction of the coastline by excessive construction (Fiol, 1996). The term was also successfully adopted in Anglo-Saxon academic literature. Taking as reference the transformations experienced by the Balearic Islands in the 60s, as a result of the rapid implementation of tourism, the expression “balearisation” began to be used to explain coastal development processes that achieved fast, unplanned construction with strong social, environmental and political consequences (Selwyn, 2004). More recently, the term has also been used to describe the process of the international expansion of hotel chains started in the Balearic Islands and the creation of a new, highly vulnerable, tourism-dependent environment, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean (Blázquez, Cañada and Murray, 2011a, 2011b; Blázquez, Murray and Artigues, 2011; Murray, 2015). In a similar sense, the term “Atlantic jump” has been used to describe this movement of tourism and real estate capitals of Spanish origin (Dantas *et al.*, 2010; Aledo *et al.*, 2013).

## Expansion into the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

The advance of mass tourism in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean was later than that of Southern Europe. Its development further sharpened some of the structural problems that had already manifested on the opposite shore. Among them, the low diversity of the offer stood out, with great dependence on European tourism, based on coastal tourist complexes in the form of all-inclusive packages or in urban hotels equipped with multiple services; strong seasonality; the absence of differentiation and own products; an acute territorial imbalance, with offers that were highly concentrated and disconnected from the rest of the country (Perles-Ribes *et al.*, 2016).

An especially significant experience is that of the tourism and real estate project of Saïdia, in Morocco, explained in this report by [Samia Chahine](#), a researcher at the University of Malaga, which reproduces logic very similar to that of the last cycle of Spanish tourism-residential expansion. In this case, with the outbreak in 2008 of the international financial crisis, the Spanish companies responsible for the project went

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bankrupt or withdrew and the Moroccan State had to bear the costs, in addition to entering capital linked to the countries of the Persian Gulf (Chamine , 2010; Yrigoy, 2013).

[Macià Blázquez](#), professor at the University of the Balearic Islands, in his text in this report, proposes the need to understand this dynamic of permanent tourism expansion in light of the theory of unequal geographical development. In this way, tourism-related capitals would take advantage of the incorporation of new territories with cheaper production costs and greater capacity to obtain public support, to increase their profit rates. Blázquez himself analyses the case of Saïdia from the perspective of how Spanish hotel and real estate capitals tried to take advantage of this income differential to position themselves in the tourist expansion of the, until now, little explored area of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.

Spain, France and Italy would be the “pioneer” countries of tourism in the Mediterranean.

In fact, tourism development in the Mediterranean has not been homogeneous, but different degrees of development and consolidation of tourism economies can be identified. Manera and Morey (2016) classify the Mediterranean tourist destinations into three groups, according to their level of development. First, there would be the “pioneer” countries, Spain, France and Italy, with a market share that according to the moment can range between 75% and 95%. Second, there are those considered “laggards”, with a lower impulse, Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco. This group of countries had not been able to capture significant market shares, but in recent years, they have had considerable steady increases. Finally, they identify a third group, formed by the rest of the countries that would have started their tourism development much later or, according to these authors, have had erratic behaviour, motivated by different causes that hindered their consolidation (Manera and Morey, 2016).

### Political instability and security crisis in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

This development model has generated a profound transformation of the Mediterranean coast of Southern Europe since the 1960s, especially on some of its islands, such as Malta (Boissevain, 1979, 2004; Chapman & Speake, 2011; Oglethorpe, 1984), the Balearics (Blázquez and Murray, 2010; Pons and Rullan, 2014; Murray, Yrigoy and Blázquez-Salom, 2017) or on numerous Greek islands (Konsolas and Zacharatos, 1992). But also, from very important areas of the Spanish (Gaviria, 1976; Aledo, *et al.*, 2012) and Italian (Vespasiani, 2014) coasts. On the Southern shore, in some of the massive sun and beach tourism enclaves, as in the case of Tunisia, strong social and environmental impacts have also been identified, similar to those described on the Spanish Mediterranean coast (Cortes-Jiménez, Nowak and Sahli, 2011; Poirier, 1995). One of the main highlights in this development has been the territorial destruction and degradation of natural resources along the coast, which has led to important socio-ecological conflicts that sought to paralyse or limit the construction of infrastructure

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and building in different Mediterranean locations. Since the 1980s, the discomfort and outrage over the destruction of the coastline in different parts of Southern Europe resulted in the development of environmental movements in defence of the territory that, when they have been able, and from a huge multiplicity of visions and forms of organisation, have acted as a containment dam against expansive construction dynamics. Of all these movements to preserve the territory against tourism expansion, the case of Mallorca is probably the best known (Mayol, 2017). Other evidence of the fusion of environmental movements and tourism development has been documented in Greece, Spain and Portugal from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s (Kousis, 2000).

Since the 1990s, residential tourism has played a fundamental role in the process of expansion and transformation of the coastal territory in numerous areas of the Mediterranean, as explained in this report by [Antonio Aledo](#), professor at the University of Alicante. This penetration of residential tourism has given rise to enormous vulnerabilities in the areas in which it has been implemented, due to the predatory logic of the territory on which its business model is based, whose foundation is not so much the regular supply of tourism services as it is land transformation, the construction and sale of housing, or simple speculation.

This transformation of coastal-rural territories resulting from the increasing weight of tourism has also had effects on different activities linked to the primary sector. In his contribution in this report, [Jordi Gascón](#), professor at the University of Lleida, explains how, although some forms of tourism development can establish positive synergies with traditional activities in the rural world - such as some forms of gastronomic tourism - the Majority dynamics of tourism development on the Mediterranean coast have brought greater vulnerability. Agriculture and fishing were marginalised when faced with tourist and real estate activities, capable of generating greater concentrated short-term benefits.

With the emergence of platform capitalism, or the commercialisation of tourist accommodation on online platforms, the metamorphosis of rural territories has advanced beyond the coast. As recently denounced by Margalida Ramis, spokesman for the Mallorcan environmental group GOB, tourism implies a progressive change of uses of the territory that extends throughout the rural environment, beyond traditional tourist spaces<sup>2</sup>. Decentralisation strategies and the creation of new offers have led to the expansion of the tourist bubble towards urban peripheries and rural environments. In this way, rural terrains are outsourcing their activities, replacing their primary uses, and buildings, with variable intensities, gaining land, converting practically the entire territory into a peri-urban area. In recent years there has been a new wave of tourism intensification that, in the case of Mallorca, for example, and as Margalida Ramis herself states, "has caused the number of licenses for new homes on rustic land to be situated at the levels experienced prior to the financial crisis of 2008. There have also been increased cases of urban indiscipline for improvements made with the intention of

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2 Statements made to Alba Sud in the process of preparing this report on the geopolitics of tourism in the Mediterranean.

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commercialising farms for tourism, such as swimming pools, wells, gazebos, terraces, new rooms and the expansion of existing ones. The mosaic of diversity within the rural environment, which has characterised so many territories in the Mediterranean basin, and represented a diversified economic activity that fed small industries, trades and labour, has been standardised and is being engulfed by the tourism monoculture that colonises the fertile soil, key to autonomy in the management of these territories.”

The penetration of tourist accommodation into rural areas in this dispersed fashion implies greater water consumption than the traditional uses of the local population or even dense tourist centres (Rico-Amoros, Olcina-Cantos, and Sauri, 2009). For example, a study carried out in the Balearic Islands shows how this type of use favours the construction of private pools and with them a significant increase in water evaporation, which leads to a greater waste of these resources, thus increasing the environmental problems of this tourism intensification (Hof *et al.*, 2018).

The climate emergency has acquired a growing role, with ever more dramatic evidence.

However, environmental concerns in the Mediterranean, far from diminishing, are increasing. The climate emergency has acquired a growing role, with ever more dramatic evidence. In particular, the vulnerability of tourism to climate change is particularly serious for countries of the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean (Scott, Hall and Gössling, 2019). This heightened vulnerability accentuates the risks of an increase in displacement due to climatic causes and, subsequently, of refugees; an issue that has been transmitting warning signals for years (Buades, 2012).

In this report, this problem is analysed in two contributions, one by [Marta Salvador](#), researcher at Alba Sud, and another by [Llorenç Planagumà](#), coordinator of the Centre for Territorial Sustainability and collaborator at Alba Sud. In her text, Marta Salvador emphasises the double role of tourism in relation to climate change, as affected by the transformations it is causing, but also as a leading person in charge, especially for transport dynamics. Climate change in the Mediterranean will profoundly affect the way in which tourism develops, however, adaptation measures do not seem to solve a problem of the same unlimited growth model on which it is based. Meanwhile, Llorenç Planagumà analyses how climate change can accentuate geological risks in the Mediterranean, which in turn also affect the way tourism activity is organised. Based on these elements, he proposes the need to take urgent measures to transform the means of structuring and managing tourism in the region.

The environmental and territorial impacts of mass tourism expansion in the Mediterranean, coupled with the multiple resulting conflicts, has led to a growing interest in the implementation of sustainable tourism practices in terms of both public policies and private sector action. [Enrique Navarro](#), professor at the University of Malaga, and [Daniela Thiel](#), professor at the National University of San Martín, explain some of these initiatives in this report, which effect a diverse and contradictory balance. In this sense, they identify the incompatibility between the predominant tourism development model with the demands and proposals to include sustainable practices, which leads to the need to open the debate towards post-growth policies.

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From a similar standpoint, [Asunción Blanco](#), a professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, addresses in this report the characterisation of the growing demands for tourism decline that increasingly form social movements in Southern Europe. Her text provides an account of the theoretical deployment of the proposal, and seeks a way to be able to touch down in contexts with different levels of tourism and economic development, as occurs in multiple areas of the Mediterranean. The concept rose strongly after expressions of unrest in the face of mass tourism began to provoke reactions among sectors of the population in those territories in the 1990s (Boissevain, 1996; Boissevain and Selwyn, 2004). The idea of tourism decline has also served as the basis for a unique process of articulation among social organisations that act against touristification in different cities in Southern Europe, the SET Network. This experience is highlighted as a testimony of experiences in the annex to the present report by two members of the Assembly of Neighbourhoods for Sustainable Tourism (ABTS, in its Spanish acronym) of Barcelona, [Reme Gómez](#) and [Daniel Pardo](#).

On the other hand, [José Mansilla](#), a member of the Observatory of the Anthropology of Urban Conflict (OACU, in its Catalan acronym), delves into this dynamic of social resistance to the processes of gentrification and tourism in urban spaces. This must be understood from a class struggle perspective, in the manner that neoliberal capitalism has given a central role to cities in the processes of accumulation and circulation of capital. Although less known, Mansilla also highlights conflicts against the effects of tourism in countries on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean such as Egypt.

## Political instability and security crisis in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

In recent years, the dynamics of political instability, armed conflicts, terrorist activity and the refugee crisis, which have had their origin in the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, have had highly relevant and diverse effects on tourism dynamics in the region.

On December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old Tunisian young man, set himself on fire in front of the police prefecture in protest of the confiscation, without explanation, of his street vendor post. Thus, began a wave of popular protests against the autocracy, corruption and inequality that led to the fall of the Ben Ali government in Tunisia. In the face of shared unrest, demands for democratisation spread in 2011 to other countries in the region, such as Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen, leading to the popularised expression of the “Arab Spring.” In the words of Meritxell Bragulat, director of the Arab and Mediterranean Film Festival of Catalonia, this cycle of protests was the result of the deep malaise within very young societies, in some cases in countries where more than 40% of their population was under 25, and with youth unemployment rates that doubled the world average, whilst the highest educational levels in their history had been reached. Countries in which women had access to training and the labour market, and where profound transformations had taken place that caused their population to be more critical of traditional values, obedience and

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conservatism. But where the population, and especially its youth, felt suffocated by the lack of freedom of assembly and the expression of corrupt, authoritarian and clientelistic regimes, and experienced great frustration over the lack of perspectives enabling them to construct a horizon with a free and dignified life<sup>3</sup>. Countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Algeria or Tunisia are paradigmatic of this type of post-colonial evolution.

Government repression in response to popular protest sharpened some of these conflicts. Foreign military interventions were added to the political instability, especially in Libya and Syria, and the emergence of a form of terrorism commonly described as “jihadist”, which totally destabilised the area, converting it into a tableau of operations of multiple disputed interests. Subsequently, Turkey also experienced a sharp rise in terrorist attacks and political violence. Some terrorist episodes were explicitly directed towards tourism sites (for example, the attack on Luxor in 1998 or the shootings on the beaches of Tunisia in 2015). In these terrorist attacks against tourism interests visited by western populations there would be multiple aims: to punish countries that were supporting governments that wanted to defeat them, to obtain greater media attention (Alfonso-Rodríguez and Santana-Gallego, 2018), and to destabilise the economies of said countries (Perles-Ribes *et al.*, 2016).

This situation has caused a severe blow to the tourist economies of countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon or Morocco, with a sharp drop in the number of visitors. In those five countries, tourist arrivals decreased from 20 million in 2010 to 15 million in 2011. The largest decreases occurred in Egypt and Tunisia, at around 40% (Perles-Ribes *et al.*, 2016). Likewise, foreign investment in tourism also declined dramatically. The importance that tourism had acquired in some of these countries contributed to further weaken their economies.

Given the prolonged risk situation, tourists prefer safer destinations. In addition, it is common for the governments of countries of origin to advise their citizens not to visit countries in conflict, and for tour operators to eliminate these destinations due to the fall in demand and for fear of civil liability claims, redirecting their offer to other destinations (Alfonso-Rodríguez and Santana-Gallego, 2018).

This report looks in depth into this problem through the texts of [Fernando Almeida](#), a professor at the University of Malaga, and [Sarah Becklake](#), a researcher at the University of Lancaster. In the first case, the impact of terrorist actions in different tourist destinations of the Mediterranean is analysed in detail, which, despite journalistic coverage, has clearly affected the countries of the Southern and Eastern shores more. For her part, Becklake, problematizes the emergence of a new security discourse that has been built around tourism. Thus, among other elements, she highlights how the relationship between tourism and insecurity should not be seen in only one direction, the well-known impact on tourism of insecure situations, but also how tourism has

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3 Words delivered during her speech at the Workshop on Tourism Geopolitics in the Mediterranean, organised by Alba Sud at the Ostelea School of Tourism & Hospitality in Barcelona on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

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become a new factor of vulnerability and insecurity. Likewise, in the concern for safeguarding international tourism interests, more and more new security practices are introduced that pose increasingly greater threats in terms of democracy and respect for human rights.

Within the framework of this new geopolitical situation, the boundaries between locals and guests, migrants and tourists become more blurred, and a factor in new phenomena and social tensions. In order to shed light on these complex dynamics, [Cecilia Vergnano](#), a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Amsterdam, contributes to this report with an approach to the crisis of refugees and emigrants trying to flee armed conflicts, conditions of misery in sub-Saharan Africa and some of the Arab countries, and increasingly from the effects of the climate emergency. In this manner, the Mediterranean has become one of the most dangerous borders in the world. In her article, Vergnano pays special attention to the islands of Lesbos and Lampedusa, where tourists and refugees intersect, thus placing fundamental ethical debates on the table. The case of Lampedusa is, in addition, especially known for when its mayor, Giuseppina Nicolini, won the Félix Houphouët-Boigny UNESCO prize for the Promotion of Peace in 2017, in recognition for her humanitarian work (Melotti, Ruspini and Marra, 2018).

### **The urgency for a new political agenda for tourism in the Mediterranean**

The situation of instability and insecurity described has redistributed tourist flows to other European countries. The substitution effect between tourist destinations in contexts of political violence or terrorism has featured in academic literature (Perles-Ribes *et al.*, 2016). During the last decade, tourist destinations such as Spain, Portugal, Malta, Greece and emerging Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro have absorbed part of the tourist flows that international tour operators years ago directed towards the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean (Alfonso -Roddoba and Santana-Gallego, 2018; Almeida and Jiménez, 2018; Archondo and Ruiz, 2016). In the Spanish case, the situation of instability and insecurity of competing destinations in the South and Eastern Mediterranean has been attributed to a considerable portion of the 30% growth in international tourism between 2010 and 2015 (Archondo and Ruiz, 2016). In particular, it has been shown that international tour operators replaced their flows to Tunisia and Egypt with the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands (Perles-Ribes *et al.*, 2016). In addition to this direct substitution effect, both in Spain and Greece, this increase in tourist flows has been associated with a decrease in costs. Thus, Spain, with its labour reform of 2012, provided the hotel business with a significant reduction in labour costs thanks to outsourcing processes (Cañada, 2016). Also, in the case of Greece, the internal devaluation process dictated by the troika made the country much more competitive for the interests of tourism capital (Bantekas *et al.*, 2015).



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The restructuring of Mediterranean tourist flows demonstrates the fluidity in terms of spatial reorganisation of transnational tourism capital, as well as the substitution of Mediterranean tourist destinations. While some tourist destinations recorded an unprecedented crisis, others broke historical records. Likewise, despite the impacts suffered, there are authors who argue that tourism flows are, in fact, not as vulnerable as it seems, and that, despite everything, they find alternative market niches that allow them to maintain a certain demand for services (Perles-Ribes *et al.*, 2016). In turn, cases such as Turkey show the resilience of the tourism industry to remake itself after the successive crises of diverse orders that have been affecting it since the 1980s (Yarcan, 2007). In this fashion, it is foreseeable that the different areas of the Mediterranean region act as communicating vessels in changing the directions of an international tourism that has made this region the primary tourist destination on the planet. In fact, the latest available data on reservations in hotels in the Balearic Islands of 2019 show a fall in sales of about 30% compared to 2018, which hoteliers attribute to international tour operators moving part of their market back to Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco, where they can achieve cheaper prices and higher subsidies from the respective governments (Plaza, 2019).

In this context, the extraordinary global tourist growth that has positioned the Mediterranean as a strategic area in the development of this type of activity has left the region facing a series of contradictions and challenges, which force us to rethink the logic of its operation. Undeniably, tourism must be rethought in light of the dynamics of the inequality and exclusion it reproduces or contributes to the generation of. Faced

The complexity of the externalities generated, in particular those associated with serious climatic and territorial problems, demands a global rethinking of the organisation of this industry.

with these new challenges, whilst tourist successes have been measured for many years only in terms of international arrivals, investments and jobs, this renewed agenda of tourist mobility in the Mediterranean creates a duty to pay attention to other factors of this phenomenon. It implies a paradigm shift that reverses the way in which the success of the tourism industry itself can be measured. The complexity of the externalities generated, in particular those associated with serious climatic and territorial problems, demands a global rethinking of the organisation of this industry. The debate

cannot be approached without bringing to the fore an ethical dimension, based on the guarantee of human rights and the affirmation of a precautionary principle against risks and disorders caused by unlimited tourism growth. Current debates about gentrification, decline, the new culture of territory, the climate emergency, the humanitarian crises, and growing inequalities of all kinds, among others, inevitably intersect in the discussion about the future and nature of tourism, how it should be organised, and based on what interests.

This report aims to help address some of these debates from the perspective of an increasingly specialised and tourism-dependent region. Without a doubt, numerous issues and perspectives are not included here that we hope to include in new approaches to the political economy, political ecology and tourism geopolitics in the Mediterranean.

# UNEQUAL GEOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM<sup>4</sup>

**Macià Blàzquez-Salom**

Grup d'Investigació en Sostenibilitat i Territori (GIST)  
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Capitalism is based on unequal geographical development, just as it is based on the extraction of surplus value from labour. According to Karl Marx (1867, chapter 27, paragraph 15), this is one of the general laws of capitalism: to stimulate the simultaneous emergence of concentrations of wealth, for the capitalists, and of poverty and oppression for the workers.

In the search for higher profit rates, the geographical expansion of capitalism takes advantage of the incorporation of new territories to achieve a shorter period of return on investment; this is especially true if they are disadvantaged spaces, where inputs are cheaper and negotiation between the parties may be more favourable to capital. Accumulation by dispossession becomes a necessary condition for the survival of capitalism, as is the imperative of growth. Leon Trotsky (1931) raised this in terms of uneven and combined development, implying that one is not possible without the other. Thus, the internal dynamics of capitalism benefit from the maintenance of borders. In terms of GDP per capita, the physical barrier of the Mediterranean marks an income differential greater than that of the border between the United States of America and Mexico; the difference between Spain and Morocco is 9 times lower for Morocco, whereas in Mexico it is 6.6 times lower than that of the United States of America (see table).

**Table of comparative demographic and socioeconomic variables each side of two North-South inequality borders: between the US and Mexico, and between Spain and Morocco.**

Country	Population in thousands of people	GDP in millions of US dollars	GDP per capita in US dollars	North-South difference in GDP per capita
USA	329.559	21.344,667	64.767,442	
Spain	46.656	1.429,140	30.631,329	
Mexico	125.929	1.241,450	9.858,302	6,57
Morocco	35.587	131,350	3.409,948	8,98

Source: [International Monetary Fund](#), estimated for 2019 (accessed April 25, 2019).

4 Translation by Sharon Farley.

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Just as crises are inherent to capitalism, the creation of temporary cycles of expansion and recession, as well as spatial cycles of development in one pole and underdevelopment in the other, are also inherent (Smith, 1984). In relation to tourism, the social production of space through the development of a built environment, urbanisation and construction, fixes capital for a long period of time, giving rise to its over-accumulation, which is characteristic of the crisis. In spatial terms, inequality has been associated with theories of unequal exchange and forms of centre-periphery domination.

The expansion of the capitalist production mode has driven globalisation, characterised by the transformation in the spatial organisation of social networks and global exchanges. The development of transport and communications reduces the friction of space, reducing relative distances. Thus, globalisation implies a compression of the world, in which local decisions and events acquire global impact, and vice versa, as mobility and interconnection between people, capital and things intensify. Metaphorically, this reduction of time annihilates space (Harvey, 1982). The acceleration of global exchanges coincides with its spatial concentration and the acceleration of capital mobility reinforces its primacy; for example, relocating to the quest to maximise your profit rates.

One of the best examples of inequality is found in the international division of labour, through which capital takes advantage of unequal geographical development to lower its wage costs. The same applies to food products, energy and raw materials, which together with labour constitute the “Four Cheaps” that feed the accumulation of capital, by expanding the business frontier with the commercialisation of new spaces (Moore, 2015).

## Tourist capital

Tourism contributes to this process just like other activities, such as manufacturing. Thus it occurs that tourism capital is set by building new destinations where production costs are decreasing, whilst repatriation of its benefits may be increasing. For example, tourism capital will choose to place its “factories” in new pleasure peripheries that provide comparative location advantages: a cheap, disciplined workforce that does not require extensive training; low taxation (for example in export processing zones); cheap land; a state willing to finance transport infrastructure (airports, highways, ports, etc.), energy and water supply, sanitation, and police or military security forces; and a state that is also amenable to being flexible on labour and environmental legislation, to make it less demanding (Turner & Ash, 1991).

The necessary capital for all these developments tends to be concentrated in the hands of oligopolistic corporations (tour operators, hotel chains and airlines), with great bargaining power against the supposedly sovereign states. These corporations take advantage of their strong links of reciprocity with international finance

markets, real estate investment, the construction of infrastructure megaprojects, telecommunications, or energy resources.

### **Tourism in the Mediterranean as an example of unequal geographical development**

The Mediterranean border can again provide us with good examples of tourism development using the differential between its northern and southern shores for the benefit of capital. The Mediterranean has attracted tourism by being the cradle of Greco-Latin cultures and, later, by offering greater returns with countries less affluent than the central world-economy. Thus, according to the name of PIGS used during the crisis that began in 2008, all peripheral countries of the European Union are Mediterranean: Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain, which are prey to the devaluation of their “Four Cheaps”, to increase the profitability of capital. On the southern shore of the Mediterranean, the situation is even worse. While the tourist flows are N-S, multitudes of migrants try to cross daily from Africa in the direction of Europe.

#### Tourism as a “development passport” demonstrates serious inconsistencies.

In addition, tourism as a “development passport” demonstrates serious inconsistencies. The seaside resort of Saïdia, located on the north-eastern side of Morocco, serves as an example. It had to accommodate 30,000 guests, distributed almost half and half between hotel and residential situations, with a marina of 1,300 berths, a golf course and a new international airport in Oujda. The Balearic hotel chains Melià, Iberostar and Globalia (with their Oasis and Be Live brands) - and before that, Barceló - also manage those hotel complexes that have around a thousand places each, and are built a few dozen metres from the beach. Martinsa-Fadesa initiated the urban development project, but its bankruptcy in 2008 dragged under the banks that financed it: Caja Madrid, Caixa Galicia and, from the Balearics, Sa Nostra, whose remains were assumed by the Spanish state. The Moroccan state, which had already ceded a good part of the land and applied tax relief to foreign investments, as though it were a free zone, also assumed the bankruptcy of the real estate developer.

Tourism globalisation can be studied by analysing indicators of transnational mobility of capital, such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). These capital flows ensure their profitability by investing in large multinational corporations, which then promote real estate development, purchase and sale, and tourism management in peripheral countries, whilst also repatriating most of the benefits. Thus, the pattern of tourism globalisation does not differ in the basic sense from that which characterises the textile industry, plantations or mining for export.

The Spanish corporate domain of the hotel market are strengthened by their competitive advantages, primarily: their large size, allowing them to negotiate the treatment available to them from the states they want to invest in (in terms of tax savings, public endowment of land and infrastructure, favourable labour or

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environmental regulations, etc.); the integration processes within the built environment in which they participate via their real estate development, for example, via links to their tourist services (intermediation, travel, accommodation, etc.); their extensive capacity to create jobs and conduct intra-commercial business operations. Furthermore, the global commercial power of their brand image allows them to repatriate benefits (leakage), take advantage of legal protections in tax havens to reduce taxation payments, attract investments (through the sale of shares, franchises, temporary business agreements, etc.), or benefit from official development aid (Artigues-Bonet and Blázquez-Salom, 2019). The strengthening of Spanish tourism corporations attracts increasing investment in hotels from investment funds and Listed Real Estate Investment Companies (SOCIMIS, in their Spanish acronym), among other sources, with the majority (71% of the 4,810 million euros deposited in 2018 by Spanish tourism corporations) in existing hotels, real estate and land to develop new hotel projects outside of Spain (Ortega *et al.*, 2019).

Tourism globalisation thus demonstrates itself to be unequal and asymmetric, and dependent on the appropriation of resources and territories, income, connections, knowledge or power. It can be inclusive for the components of the dominant social

Tourism globalisation can be inclusive for the components of the dominant social classes and at the same time exclusive depending on origin, race or purchasing power.

classes and at the same time exclusive depending on origin, race or purchasing power. Indeed, international tourism itself is an activity that is not equally accessible to everyone. The international division of labour differentiates the transmitting spaces from the receiving spaces of tourists. Multinational companies maintain their headquarters in the central locations of the world economy, while their productive processes – as in the provision of tourism services – are conducted in peripheral places; this polarisation feeds geopolitical tensions, even wars and other expressions of tension and violence. Rather than promoting development, tourism is founded on its unequal geographical distribution. So much so that even the experience of poverty is commercialised as a one more voyeuristic tourist product (Büscher and Fletcher, 2017).

# AIR TRANSPORT, AIRPORTS AND PORT INFRASTRUCTURES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN<sup>5</sup>

**David Ramos Pérez**

Universidad de Salamanca

Transport has played a key role in the globalisation of tourism, facilitating its worldwide spatial diffusion. In this sense, the countries of the Mediterranean basin, one of the pioneer regions of mass tourism that emerged after the Second World War, constitute a privileged terrain for the analysis of the tourism-transport binomial. This chapter focuses on air transport and sea cruises, as well as their basic support infrastructures, ports and airports. Commencing with basic statistics and numerous examples, it is intended to offer an approximation of some recent trends in both modes in a mature tourism region inserted into a context of growing competition with other destinations.

## Air transport and airports

40% of the 404 airports open to civilian traffic in Mediterranean countries are less than one hundred kilometres from the coast. If we also consider the airports situated in the immediate vicinity of the Black Sea, the Red Sea and the nearby Atlantic, more than half of the airports in those countries are located close to the coast. Although the spatial distribution of the population of Mediterranean countries partly explains this pattern, the development experienced through tourism since the mid-1950s is another factor to consider. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to affirm that air transport has played a fundamental role in the growth of tourism observed in the Mediterranean basin, considered by the UNWTO as the world's primary region in terms of international tourist arrivals.

The endorsement in 1956 of the “Multilateral Agreement on the Commercial Rights of Non-Scheduled Air Services in Europe” (Weld, 1956), promoted by the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), was key for air transport to be able to channel part of the tourism mobility that broad social layers of Western Europe's most developed countries were beginning to access. The impact of this measure was such that, in 1971, non-regular or charter companies – which were required to sell airline tickets within a tourist package that also included accommodation as a minimum – already channelled 38.4% of the international traffic between the member countries of the ECAC (ICAO, 1973).

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5 Translation by Sharon Farley.

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At a time when regular flights were an expensive service, to which access was restricted to a minority of the population, and fares and routes were determined by bilateral agreements corresponding to the needs of mostly publicly owned *flag companies*, non-scheduled or charter flights chartered by tour operators opened the doors to cheaper air travel. In that context, a country like Spain, signatory of the 1956 Agreement, whose relative remoteness to the main European issuing markets had placed it in a situation of clear disadvantage compared to other destinations such as Italy, from that point on based its tourist development on the improvement of air accessibility; key to this was the momentum given to the construction of new airports near coastal destinations. This effect was repeated in Tunisia, where the tourism promotion strategy was based on facilitating the arrival of Europeans by air through the operation of national and foreign charter companies. As Miossec (1996) has pointed out, “in Tunisia, every tourist needed a bed and every bed needed an airplane seat”, so the country’s own airport network was designed so that no tourism area was located more than an hour’s journey by road (Chapoutot, 2011). The same happened to hotel capacities that increased according to the new needs of tour operators, which were derived from the appearance of airplane models with a greater number of seats that increased economies of scale. This dynamic, far from being exclusive to Tunisia,

Hotel capacities increased according to the new needs of tour operators, which were derived from the appearance of airplane models with a greater number of seats.

affected all Mediterranean tourism countries that opted for tourism development based on charter flights (Gay, 2006), hence the level of importance attained by air travel in the construction of tourism space.

That first liberalisation of air transport was spatially selective, since it mainly affected airports located in coastal Mediterranean tourism regions. The second wave of liberalisation was initiated by the European Union in 1992 and its scope was initially limited to the combined community territory. However, it has eventually spread throughout other Mediterranean countries not integrated into the EU, as one of the strategies of the European Neighbourhood Policy has been to promote the liberalisation of air transport beyond Community borders. Thus, the European Common Aviation Area (ECAA) made it possible to incorporate Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania into the single Community air transport market in 2006. At the same time, the Euro-Mediterranean Aviation Agreements (EMAA) have extended that single market to Morocco (2006), Jordan (2012) and Israel (2013), the agreement with Tunisia (2017) is pending ratification, while negotiations continue with Algeria and Turkey, though the latter country already reached a partial liberalisation agreement with the EU in 2010. All in all, practically the entirety of the Mediterranean basin currently constitutes a single air transport market, where it is no longer necessary to resort to charter operations or tourist packages to ensure air connectivity for particular destinations.

One of the main effects of this liberalisation has been the growth of demand, motivated in part by the lowering of fares on regular flights. This dynamic, already observed in the European Union as a whole, has been confirmed as this liberalisation has extended to third countries bordering the Mediterranean, in which the emergence of low-cost companies has also been one of the most palpable consequences of said process.



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In fact, between 1985 and 2012, air travel significantly increased its participation in international tourist arrivals to the countries of the Mediterranean basin, from 21% at the start of this period (TEC/Plan Bleu, 2010) to 55% at the end.

Morocco, Jordan (Casey, 2018) and Israel (Casey, 2017) are clear examples of this boost in demand associated with liberalisation, including the entry of low-cost companies. However, this growth in air traffic may have more limited effects in terms of the arrival of tourists from the EU. The research by Dobruszkes and Mondou (2013) shows how in the case of Morocco the large Moroccan community living in Europe would be just as relevant as European tourists in explaining the growth in observed air demand. Moroccans would have taken advantage of the reduction of fares and increased routes and frequencies, both to make greater use of the plane compared to other modes when travelling to their country of origin, and to travel there more frequently.

Beyond the ultimate motivation for liberalisation-induced air travel, this growth in demand has resulted in new expectations of the increase in the capacity of airport infrastructure, consolidating the feedback dynamics of both processes in a loop that doesn't seem to end. For example, in Greece, the German company Fraport, a concessionaire for forty years in fourteen regional airports, twelve of them located on tourism islands, has announced the expansion of capacity for all the terminals it operates (Fraport Greece, 2017). Thus, it intends to accommodate the expected traffic growth of the coming years, which in the last two years has been around 9%.

This dynamic of explosive growth also feeds the projects of new airports, though given the elevated number of airports already working within the basin, the possibilities of their effective conclusion are limited. Projects with the greatest possibilities of realisation are those that respond to an international tourism opening strategy along the last stretches of the Mediterranean coast, such as the new Vlora airport in Albania (Prifti and Zenelaj, 2013). However, in some established destinations, new airports have also been opened recently to civil traffic, such as Murcia International in Spain

The extension of liberalisation to the whole of the Mediterranean basin has been accompanied by a growing relevance of the economic incentives granted by tourist destinations and airports to airlines, especially low-cost ones.

and Ramon International in the vicinity of the Red Sea in Israel, inaugurated in January 2019. In both cases, the tourism spaces they serve were already accessible by air via military bases open to civil traffic, which has led to a social and political debate about the need for these infrastructures<sup>6</sup>. Similar discussions are also observed in Tunisia, where the proposal for a new airport in Bizerte (L'Economiste Maghrébin, 2017) is surprising given the remarkable capacity available at nearby airports such as Enfidha (Weigert, 2012).

In addition, the extension of liberalisation to the whole of the Mediterranean basin has been accompanied by a growing relevance

6 Eldiariomurcia (2019, January 16). Demands for the Regional Government to publish the costs of Corvera Airport ([Exigen que el Gobierno Regional publique los costes del aeropuerto de Corvera](#)). *eldiario.es*; Davidovich-Weisberg, G. (2018, July 18). [Eilat's New Airport: Future White Elephant?](#) *Haaretz*.

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of the economic incentives granted by tourist destinations and airports to airlines, especially low-cost ones. This phenomenon had already been observed at the European Union level, though largely confined to small and medium airports trying to improve their connectivity by covering part of the economic risks involved for an airline when opening a new route. Airports serving coastal tourist destinations had remained largely outside these incentives, as can be seen in the case of Spain (Ramos-Pérez, 2016); however, during the last decade, in the context of intensifying competition between destinations, they have begun to use them following the pioneering example of Faro, in the Portuguese Algarve (Brito, 2016). The main objective is to attract low-cost companies that can offer an economic alternative to those tourists who want to dispense with the tourist package and opt for independent travel. The different existing programmes – whether reductions in airport fees for the opening of new connections or route development programmes promoted by tourism authorities – establish a new competitive arena between destinations, which is skilfully used by airlines to demand increasing amounts of incentives. In practice, different implementations are observed: from the case of the Canary Islands, where both formulas are combined, backed by AENA, the airport manager, and the Regional Government Tourism Department (Ramos-Pérez, 2018); to that of Israel, where the Ministry of Tourism offers airlines €60 for each passenger arrival on a direct flight to airports near the Red Sea (Israel Ministry of Tourism, 2018).

Finally, taking into account the notable dependence on air transport presented by tourism in the Mediterranean basin, compliance with the Paris Agreement for the reduction of greenhouse gases would require, at a minimum, that a significant part of the demand be derived from other more sustainable modes, such as rail travel. The greater extent of the problem affects countries on the Northern shore of the Mediterranean, which concentrates 80% of those tourists arriving by plane to the whole of the region. According to the available estimates, this would make them responsible for 75% of gas emissions (TEC/Plan Bleu, 2010). Taking into account that the majority of tourists received by the Mediterranean basin via air travel come from European countries, the possibilities for modal substitution are significantly greater on the Northern side, given the existing territorial continuity, greater rail access facilities, and shorter average distances that origin-destination displacements imply: 2,080 km compared to 2,500 on the Southern coast (ibid). Obviously, this would involve recovering old tourism practices, such as charter trains; the Swedish tour operator Fritidsresor, part of the TUI Group, tried experimenting with this commercially for a short period between 2007 and 2012 (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010), offering tour packages that involved a journey of more than twenty hours between Malmö and Northern Italy. On the Southern coast, such modal substitution possibilities are more complex, but the possibility of combining rail and boat trips – given the broad offer of regular passenger ferries in the Mediterranean (Harbours Review, 2016), or the replacement of current turboprop jet airplanes widely used in regional aviation, whose fuel consumption per passenger becomes 1.7 times lower (TEC/Plan Bleu, 2010) – are feasible implementation options, which depend solely on effective changes in institutional structures in society (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010).

## Cruises and Nautical Tourism in the Mediterranean

For more than two decades, various studies have warned about the high pollution affecting the Mediterranean Sea (EEA, 1999). Tourism is among the factors usually identified for its notable contribution to the loss of environmental quality, as the European Environment Agency has again emphasised recently (EEA, 2014). However, the activity developed by cruise ships and pleasure boats, the growth of which has been constant since the beginning of the century, has received little attention until recent times. Indeed, this has been the case despite the fact that there are worrying indications about the intensity of its impacts, especially with regard to the generation of waste and pollutant emissions in ports (Cari and Mackelworth, 2014) and, of course, those derived from the expansion of port infrastructure to accommodate growing traffic.

Although the 391 cruise ships registered in 2017 constitute only 0.7% of the world's merchant fleet<sup>7</sup>, they generated close to 27 million passengers worth of traffic (CLIA, 2018), thus confirming the trend of continuous growth observed since 1990, when less than 5 million cruise passengers were registered (MedCruise, 2018). The industry's spatial diffusion beyond the Caribbean partly explains this evolution; whilst this continues to be the dominant market, representing more than 35% of the supply expressed in beds per day in 2017, the share in the Mediterranean basin (including the Atlantic Iberian archipelagos and the Black Sea) that same year approached 16% (CLIA, 2018).

In 2017, the number of cruise ships boarded via one of 33 Mediterranean home ports integrated into the *MedCruise*<sup>8</sup> organisation exceeded 3.7 million; taking into account the different crossings that occur during a tour, as well as the final disembarking location, this resulted in about 26 million visits<sup>9</sup> registered in the more than 100 ports that constitute this association. These figures fall below the historical maximum of 4 million cruise passengers reached in 2011 and the 27.8 million visits recorded in 2013 (MedCruise, 2018). The analysis of the statistical series available since 2000 makes it possible to identify a clear stagnation in demand from the year 2011, in contrast with the worldwide expansionary trend. The increase in the number of European tourists opting for other regions further away for their cruise trips, and the effects of the

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7 The merchant fleet is considered to be that with a gross tonnage exceeding 300 tons (ISL, 2017).

8 The Association of Mediterranean and Adjoining Seas Cruise Ports (MedCruise) was created in Rome in 1996 with the aim of promoting the cruise industry in the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Red Sea and the Near Atlantic (mainland Portugal, the Iberian archipelagos and Morocco). The more than 100 ports that comprise it represent twenty-one countries bordering those seas. Although its figures slightly underestimate the volume of cruise passengers and visitors, as some Italian, Spanish, Greek, Turkish and Moroccan ports are not part of the association, it is the source that offers the most reliable statistical information for the whole of the Mediterranean basin and its nearby surroundings, including most of the North African and Middle East ports.

9 This distinction between cruise passengers and visitors is fundamental in statistical terms, given that when computing boarding, disembarking and crossings at the ports of the Mediterranean basin, passengers travelling on cruise ships are counted several times; thus, the number visits is much higher than the number of cruise passengers. It is evident that, for each port, a cruise passenger that boards, disembarks or is in transit counts as a passenger who has used its facilities, which is equally relevant when assessing its impacts. However, this figure can lead to overestimating the number of people that actually board on a cruise over the course of a year.

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economic and financial crisis in a powerful outbound market such as that of Spain, which reduced its size by 224,000 cruise passengers between 2011 and 2016, are some of the causes that explain this situation (CLIA, 2014 and 2016).

The Western Mediterranean, including the Iberian archipelagos and the Portuguese Atlantic facade, accounted for 76% of cruise ship visits in 2017, followed at a considerable distance by those in the Adriatic Sea (17.2%) and the Eastern Mediterranean (6.7%). In the Black Sea, cruise traffic has been reducing continuously since 2013, from having a market share of 7% to just 0.02% in 2017 as a result of the political and military tension generated by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Given its smaller surface area, the Adriatic Sea is the one that presents a higher density of cruise activity in relative terms (Marušić *et al.*, 2012). Having a well established tourist image, a rich diversity of natural and cultural resources (Carić and Mackelworth, 2014), the presence of two very powerful home ports, such as Venice and Dubrovnik, as well as the proximity between the Dalmatian coast, the South of Italy and Northern Greece – including the island of Corfu – increases the interest of cruise companies in this area, as the short distances separating this multitude of resources make the programming of itineraries cheaper (Stefanidaki and Lekakou, 2012).

With regard to seasonality, the high concentration of cruises between the months of May and October stands out. 73% of cruise ship visits to the ports of the basin take place during those six months, coinciding with the high season of tourism heading massively towards Mediterranean beaches. This leads to greater pressure on some destinations where the signs of tourist saturation are more than evident.

As we have pointed out, of the more than 100 ports that receive cruises in the Mediterranean basin, only 33 are home ports. Since home ports are the only ones at which cruise passengers embark and disembark, this distinction is highly relevant. Although conflicts deriving from the congestion of urban spaces experienced in these home ports are increasingly evident (Vianello, 2016) and the environmental impacts generated by the presence of cruise ships increasingly known (Giulietti *et al.*, 2018), it should not be forgotten that cruise passenger spending in these home ports is higher than in ports of call and the possible impact on the local economy is also greater. Conversely, in the ports of call, where the bulk of visits are concentrated, tourist

spending is lower and most excursions beyond the boat are organised by the cruise companies, to whom most of this expenditure reverts (Bourse, 2012).

There are doubts as to whether cruise passenger expenditure will compensate for the considerable investments that are sometimes required in becoming a centre of operations.

If in the case of home ports there are doubts as to whether cruise passenger expenditure

will compensate for the considerable investments that are sometimes required in becoming a centre of operations, in ports of call the economic return on investment is even more difficult to achieve, as some studies have already shown for the Caribbean (Chase and McKee, 2003). The tendency to use larger capacity ships observed in the sector only increases doubts in this regard, since it results in forcing

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destinations to cover costly interventions in ports, related to dredging, extension of docks or amplification of maritime stations, if they want to continue as cruise ship stopovers. In addition, in home port destinations, there is notable concern regarding the air connectivity of airports serving the arrival of cruise passengers, which encourages the existence of economic incentives for airlines to facilitate the acquisition of new routes and maintain their appeal among other competing ports.

With regard to nautical tourism, there are few studies that address in detail the reality of the sector, although the European Union has shown some interest in association with the opportunities that its boom offers to European industry (ECSIP, 2015), which has been significantly affected by the relocation of a large proportion of its naval activity. Although the United States in 2017 accounted for 48% of the world fleet of pleasure boats, consisting of 33 million ships, its market share tends to reduce compared to the boom observed in other regions, such as the Mediterranean basin. In the same year, European riparian countries and Turkey already housed more than 5% of the world fleet.

The area in which the European Union does stand out is the number of infrastructures specially designed to accommodate those vessels, whether ports or marinas. In 2017 there were a minimum of 10,000 such facilities, 40% of those identified worldwide. The majority of these are not in the Mediterranean, but in the Baltic and the North Sea (ICOMIA, 2017), which is logical if we consider that Sweden, Finland, Norway and the Netherlands have the highest boat values of recreation per capita in the European Union. In southern Europe about 1,500 ports and marinas were counted in 2017, while on the coast of North Africa and the Middle East, an inventory in 2010 indicated the presence of 97 marinas (Cappato, 2011).

Although these numbers may seem reduced given the ample range of the Mediterranean coast, it is worth noting the remarkable concentration of these facilities in the Western Mediterranean, and particularly in the Gulf of León, where they reach over 120 berths per kilometre of coastline (Giulietti *et al.*, 2018). In addition, although the pressure on the Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean is currently lower, the number of marinas has increased rapidly during the last decade, as shown in the case of Croatia (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, though the reduced size of these infrastructures might suggest lower environmental impacts than those of commercial ports, their capacity to modify coastal dynamics has already been demonstrated, generating significant changes in coastal morphology. If we add to that the maintenance of pleasure boats – especially the fast-growing segment of large yachts (Cappato, 2011), which can have serious impacts on water quality and ecosystems due to the type of products used (Giulietti *et al.*, 2018) – it seems clear that their diffusion will add new pressures to a region particularly affected by all types of maritime traffic.

# RESIDENTIAL TOURISM AND ITS EXPANSION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN<sup>10</sup>

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To understand the expansion of residential tourism in the Mediterranean and better understand its effects, it is necessary to establish a definition that demarcates this phenomenon. This task is always complex given its hybrid nature, as what we know as residential tourism is the result of the fusion of urbanistic, migratory and tourism processes. We can establish three types of definitions: short and medium-range, and a third that applies a higher conceptual scale. The definition of short range would understand residential tourism as a productive sector oriented towards the purchase of land, its transformation into urban territory, and the subsequent construction and sale of housing. The definition of mid-range would include the structuring not only of the residential product, but also the emergence of the residential tourism space, associating the necessary services and infrastructures. Finally, the definition of high range, which comprehends how residential tourism is the sector that satisfies the needs of leisure residence for post-industrial, advanced societies. Starting from the premise that tourism is a total social fact, it is possible to affirm that residential tourism generates processes of transformation in all the orders of life from the environmental to the cultural level. These three definitions will be used because they emphasize relevant aspects of the colonising phenomenon of residential tourism.

Since the 1980s, the residential tourism sector in the Mediterranean has experienced a rapid expansion, starting in its western sector and reaching as far as the coasts of Turkey (Balkır & Kırkulak, 2009). Only the political instability of countries in the Southern Mediterranean area has slowed its expansion through these territories. Undoubtedly, in Spain and Portugal (Oliveira & Costa, 2012), it has exceeded the number of accommodations within the hotel sector.

With the general objective of analysing the expansion of residential tourism in the Mediterranean, a series of research areas have been selected to investigate their causes, their consequences, as well as to understand the relationship that exists between the social changes experienced by postmodern societies and this geo-tourism phenomenon. The Social Sciences strive to emphasize that the different tourist formulas are not only expressions of leisure of a certain social stage, but that tourism

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10 Translation by Sharon Farley.

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- and even more so residential tourism, due to its capacity for immanence and territory production - has agency capacity. In other words, residential tourism shapes the communities on which it is based, promoting and favouring certain social processes, and hindering or impeding others. The areas of analysis that will allow us to delve into the matter are: the phagocyte nature of the sector, its geopolitical development, inseparably linked by centre-periphery relations to the socio-political territories of Western and Northern Europe; and, finally, the macro-social tendencies associated with the emergence of a disorganized capitalism, the emergence of neo-materialist values, and the hypermobility of postmodern society.

The coastal territories of Mediterranean countries provide land, climate and sea. In addition, starting in the 1980s, and as a consequence of tourism demand, they have developed transport infrastructures and other services required by the tourism industry. The residential tourism sector has taken advantage of these infrastructural elements and, based on this, has generated a huge offer of second residences oriented towards residential leisure. Combine these infrastructure conditions with a certain degree of exoticism and a cultural heritage that has been mythologised through cultural configurations and you have a South that is sufficiently different, but at the same time, so close that it has been practically assimilated by European demand.

### The phagocytosis of space

In terms of the natural environment within the sector, the phagocystization of space and the permanence of the built environment and its ability to influence social relationships and structures must be highlighted. With regard to the phagocytosis of space, this metonymy emphasizes that tourism-residential product companies feed on land. Referring to the short definition of residential tourism, the object of this sector is to buy land to build houses and sell houses. Once these operations are carried out, the survival of the sector passes through its transfer to another territory where this open and continuous cycle begins. Even more if we understand the dynamics of this sector since 2001 and its strong speculative nature, the continuous consumption of land is an intrinsic and unavoidable characteristic of this sector (García Andreu, 2014). It is not only sold, but also speculated on through the production of territories where new developments are projected. Without new territories in which to develop its economic cycle, the survival of the sector is not possible. This explains the incessant

Without new territories in which to develop its economic cycle, the survival of the sector is not possible.

territorial expansion of residential tourism and the colonisation of new agricultural spaces in turistified territories. Once the coastline is covered, the process expands into the rural hinterland and, at the same time, the exploration of new territories in other countries begins. Thus, in the Mediterranean we may observe two colonising movements of space, one coast-hinterland and the other more extensive west-east, eventually arriving at the Turkish coasts that enclose this sea. The environmental and territorial impacts of this process far exceed the effects on the landscape. Sea pollution is also related to the increase of residents



in high season and the artificialisation-urbanisation of the soil has profound effects on desertification and loss of biodiversity in the Mediterranean basin.

## The agency capacity of the built environment

A second characteristic of this sector is the permanence of the built environment. Associated with the construction of housing developments of second residences, an important complex of transport infrastructures is generated that facilitates users' access to their residences during their leisure time. All this entails a strong transformation of the space that facilitates the conversion from its rural and agricultural nature to tourism and urbanized territories. This change generates permanent effects in the territory due to the immanence of the built environment. These impacts become fixed in the territory, adhered to housing, developments, infrastructure, etc. This new landscape is not a passive actor, but it conditions and influences the morphology of the social relationships that take place there. The urban form posed by this New Residential Tourism (Aledo, 2008) favours processes of social exclusion, making it difficult for locals to access certain strategic resources, such as water or services, and alters local cultures by giving the landscape a new meaning which becomes a resource or economic good transacted within a global market. In the tourism territories of the Mediterranean, the construction companies and promoters of the large residential tourist condominiums have designed a new product that combines thousands of second residences around a golf course, high-end hotels and a whole series of services to meet customer needs. Residential tourism resorts have a closed structure, with strong security measures that prevent access to unwanted people. This new modality transfers the 'all inclusive' hotel formula to that of the second residence sector. This sector has invented a new tourism environment, exclusive, privatised and centripetal. In Mediterranean communities, this model not only shapes space and tourism, but also builds and structures society. It influences the present and will condition the social processes of the future, marking spaces of difference and inequality.

## Residential tourism and dependency dynamics

In this sense, the expansion of residential tourism in the Mediterranean cannot be separated from the dependency relationship that this region maintains with the more advanced countries of Northern and Western Europe. The helio-territories of the Mediterranean have become a leisure area for a significant number of citizens from these European countries (Bramwell, 2004). However, this relationship is marked by conditions of dependency and inequality. Thus Mediterranean tourism has acquired a geo-strategic design in which the countries of Southern Europe are deindustrialized to respond with maximum efficiency to the tourism and leisure needs of the citizens of Northern Europe. The idea that the countries of Mediterranean Europe become a kind of Florida for the retirees of the most advanced European nations is not only in the imagination of the tourist, but also in the design of the policies of the European Union.

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This territorial development option should be observed with caution, given that new assistance costs arise and exactly with whom lies the responsibility for assuming these it is not fully defined. Particular attention should be applied to the development strategy of residential tourism on the southern coast of the Mediterranean. The residential tourism companies of the northern countries of the Mediterranean basin perceive an abundance of virgin spaces in locations of a high landscape value as an extraordinary resource that continues to feed the machinery of the sector. However, the global crisis of 2007, the scant development of infrastructures and services, the political instability in the region and the exacerbation of cultural differences by the xenophobic discourses emerging in Europe and the Maghreb have paralyzed their expansion towards these territories. Undoubtedly, there have been processes of *land grabbing* that are awaiting more opportune moments for business. Strong expectations have been generated among the population in the region, guided by simplistic and hegemonic discourses. However, a more critical look at the phenomenon raises doubts about the correct distribution of economic benefits of the expansion of the sector in these enclaves, and should serve to condition residential tourism development towards new models that are more socially just and more environmentally sustainable.

### Neo-material and residential tourism

Without a doubt, the *New Residential Tourism* that has developed in the Mediterranean region since 2001 has responded to the needs and values of an increasingly neo-materialist European society, which unloads its desires onto the Mediterranean territory. The English sociologist Ronald Inglehart erred in predicting that advanced societies were moving towards a preponderance of post-materialist values that would prevail the last stages of the Maslowian pyramid. Since the 1990s, and with a definitive input in 2001, we have moved towards a predominance of neo-materialist values, where post-material needs are solved through material hyper-consumption, where risk has become the central axis of social development, and exclusion processes take precedence over those of integration. *New Residential Tourism* manages to make these neo-materialist and neo-authoritarian dreams come true by: 1) exporting space or time from the environmental externalities that it originates; 2) building high security and protection spaces; 3) facilitating its global access to a high standing clientele; 4) producing strongly segregated socio-spaces; 5) replacing the landscape with a “tourist scene”; 6) privatising the social space; and, 7) substituting the state as a supplier agent for the promoter company. The configuration of new residential tourism developments in the Mediterranean constructed since 2001 builds and organizes an exclusive, privatised, safe, segregated and artificial space that reproduces and reinforces the social dynamics of exclusion and inequality.

Undoubtedly, the option that many Mediterranean regions of residential tourism have taken as a model of development on which to establish their present and future structures, has generated important short-term benefits in terms of employment and income generation. However, these decisions are not free of pernicious effects. The dependence generated by the economic hyperspecialisation required by residential

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The territory has undergone a radical change of use that eliminates the possibility of a recovery of traditional agricultural activities.

tourism produces a series of vulnerabilities that are difficult to manage. In addition to the environmental impact experienced by most of the Mediterranean coasts (as a consequence of the implementation of urbanised territories with their infrastructures and related services) the territory has undergone a radical change of use that eliminates the possibility of a recovery of traditional agricultural activities. The demographic impact of the arrival of new residents and the working population is not always well managed, with a strong imbalance between the spaces for the new residents and the neglect of the natives. This phenomenon is greater the less developed the Welfare State is in these touristically colonised territories. There is little doubt the effects are not the same in the Mediterranean countries of the EU as in others, such as Turkey or Maghrebi countries. Residential tourism modifies the structures and social relations imposing the demands of a global citizen, who ends up constructing decontextualised social spaces. Thus, culture, understood as a set of meanings that give significance to reality, is radically altered. It is not a matter of discussing the inevitability of social change. On the contrary, the debate should focus on the loss of control over the change that moves towards foreign actors whose vital objective is imposed on that of the natives.

This dynamic worsens in the face of the shrinkage of the welfare state; European Mediterranean countries are experiencing the decline of the Welfare State. In sociology it has been conceptualised as the passage from an organised capitalism to a disorganised one, which demonstrates its expression in *New Residential Tourism*. Disorganised capitalism it is understood as a new phase where the State has lost the capacity to control and balance economies when these are definitively transformed into a global economy, with companies independently directing a large portion of the economic and social processes. The disorganisation of capitalism has increased the autonomy of the financial sector, changed class structures, influenced the crisis of the welfare state and promoted cultural fragmentation.

Continuing with the conquest of public spaces and services that were in the hands of the State during the previous stage of organised capitalism, in disorganised capitalism the tourism-real estate product provides privatised services for security, health, education and different leisure and consumer activities. Thus, *New Residential Tourism* provides services that previously were in the hands of the State or families. By controlling the social discourse of growth and the ideology of employment, these actions that benefit private capital are widely supported by public opinion. This model has expanded throughout the Mediterranean generating a feedback process between ideology (neoliberalism) -mode of production (disorganised capitalism) and tourism (*New Residential Tourism*). The directions of influence and causality are multiple and give territorial formulas that enlarge and reinforce the processes of exclusion and inequality typical of gated communities.

Disorganised capitalism also relates to cultural changes linked to hypermobility. The instability of what once seemed stable seems to have affected elements such as the idea of home and residence, in consumption and leisure habits, or in the extension

of the processes of social exclusion. Given these changes, the concept of a *second home* changes its meaning. Numerous individuals now have several main homes, experiencing a decontextualised multilocality of the cultural environment in which they spend their leisure and consumption time. We can find the same urban and architectural form in a condominium in Faro (Portugal), in Corfu (Grecia) or in Didim (Turkey). This hypermobility has been driven by the growth of low-cost airlines that have multiplied the connections between the pleasure periphery and the European centre. This ease of transport and mobility cannot make us forget that low-cost companies are expressions of the neo-Fordist production model that allows high levels of individualised consumption at the expense of the loss of rights and social-labour conditions of social groups. Thus, this hypermobility is now authorised in only one north-south direction. Movement in the opposite direction suffers increasing blockages and prohibitions.

### Cautionary note

To conclude, the residential tourism option should be carefully revised as a development model. The Spanish experience, the pioneer Mediterranean country in this tourism model, deeply questions the advantages of this model when compared with the vulnerabilities it produces. The situation of structural socioeconomic crisis in which Spanish municipalities that opted for this model have found themselves should be taken as a precautionary example for other territories. Once the developable land is consumed, the sector has no greater interest in those municipalities. If we also take into account the weakness of the Welfare State in the new residential tourism spaces of the eastern and southern Mediterranean, the risks generated by this model are difficult to assume.



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# TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ON THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN COAST: THE CASE OF SAÏDIA<sup>11</sup>

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Located in North Africa, at the gateway to Europe, the geographical position of Morocco plays in favour of the development of tourism activity. In part this is thanks to its proximity to a large tourism issuing market such as Europe, as well as to the variety of its natural resources (diversity of seas, landscapes, climates), and cultural features (monuments, gastronomy, cultures). Morocco has been described as a large open amphitheatre over the Atlantic and the Mediterranean (Mutin and Duran-Dastès, 1995. Cit. In Barrado and Calabuig, 2001), with a coastline full of excellent tourism potential associated with the sun and beach.

Since 2000, Morocco has been in a time of mutation and in the process of development, registering tremendous dynamism in the field of tourism policies. Tourism is gaining an important presence in the Moroccan economy. In 2018, Morocco received 12.3 million tourists, with 6.72 billion euros of revenue generated by international tourism. These figures respond to a strong growth that has been registered since the launch of the new “Vision 2010” and “Vision 2020” plans. All in all, over the last fifteen years, Morocco has undergone a significant change in its economic structure, and tourism has become one of the major factors of economic development.

In general, the presence of tourism activities throughout Morocco can be verified, though important territorial differences can be seen in the intensity of tourism use. In this sense there has been unequal distribution in the tourism offer and tourist arrivals on the Mediterranean coast, to the benefit of the central region (in historic cities like Fes and Rabat) and the south of the country. In fact, the Eastern Mediterranean coast has seen lesser and more recent tourism development, since sun and beach tourism has its maximum representation on the Atlantic side (with Agadir as a star spa space), and in the western side of the Mediterranean (Tangier, as a country entry point, and Tetouan, the cradle of national spa tourism for second home owners). Indeed, the Eastern Region is outside of the collection of Moroccan tourism spaces and was disconnected from national policies until the advent of King Mohammed VI to the throne.

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11 Translation by Sharon Farley.

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With the new national tourism strategy, other tourism poles were born. For example, in the already established province of Tetouan, to expand the old hotel offer in the area, the Tamuda Bay Resort was developed, with 3 luxury hotels (one from the Asian Banyan Tree chain, consisting of 92 villas with 276 beds; another from French chain Sofitel, Tamuda Bay Beach & Spa, with 208 beds; and the Ritz Carlton hotel, from the American chain, which is still under construction). As for the Eastern Mediterranean coast, new projects have also been launched, such as the “Saïdia Mediterranean” tourist resort; The resort “Cap de L'eau”, with an area of 17 ha and 2,750 beds, dedicated mainly to national tourists; The “Mar Chica” tourism project, an adaptation of a maritime domain of 20,000 ha to offer different tourism components located on the banks of the lagoon, with a planned global offer of 32,000 beds and an investment of 2,000 million euros.

This text analyses how globalised tourism impacts local development in a developing country. Specifically, in an emerging destination located in an isolated and depressed region that has suffered much economic and social marginalisation, due to being far from the main political and economic cities and production centres of Morocco. The

The State saw the opportunity in international tourism to bring Saïdia out of its lethargy.

State saw the opportunity in international tourism to bring Saïdia out of its lethargy. However, it appears that the objective of boosting its economy, achieving greater social progress, and being among the worldwide Mediterranean tourist destinations has not been achieved. Therefore, we have tried to clarify the specificities of the tourism development process of the “Saïdia Mediterranean” resort, analyse

the strategies and guidelines of its tourism development, and study the territorial-tourism reality of this new Mediterranean destination, promoted within the framework of the “Azur Plan” under the “Vision 2010” initiative.

## State intervention in tourism planning

The governments of developing countries consider tourism a dynamic element of the economy and an instrument for social impetus and territorial development. Currently, no public body neglects tourism when a growth strategy is proposed. Morocco is inserted within this framework, which gambles on international tourism and views it as an excellent vehicle for penetration into globalisation. The State transformed the tourism industry into a priority of state policy, integrating it strongly into the country's development strategy, with the aim of combating its economic deficit, generating jobs, energising the social fabric and creating new tourism spaces to cushion regional inequalities

In fact, Morocco, even with smaller tourist flows compared to other destinations, is an emerging tourism focus that is undergoing geographical touristification and a conversion of the country into a globalised tourism setting. It is also the focus of many transnational tourism companies that seek to expand into new tourist havens. The Moroccan State opted for a new orientation in tourism, launching a new policy to boost tourism throughout the territory, thus replacing the old economic policy in which the



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country's growth initiative was predominantly aimed at primary sectors (Chahine, S., 2010).

Following independence, during the 60s and 70s, the State intervened as a planner, investor, promoter and builder to boost national tourism activity. In the 80s and 90s there was a reduction in tourism investment and the privatisation of accommodation. With the new century, the State rejuvenated the role of tourism as an economic revitaliser and gave it an important role in the political agenda. Following the coronation of Mohammed VI, in 1999, there was a change of course in Morocco's tourism policy (Araque and Crespo, 2010). Tourism became one of the main axes of the country's economic development, and public authorities focused tourism development in a classical manner: creation of a series of strategic tourist plans; attraction of international investment; liberalisation of airspace; economic incentives; and facilities for the creation of large tourism real estate resorts, destined mainly for the European market (Chahine, 2010; Almeida, 2011). The launch of "Vision 2010" in 2001 marked a new era of Moroccan tourism policy. This vision wanted to make tourism a national economic priority, with the primary objective of reaching a high number of tourists and increasing the capacity of tourist accommodation to make Morocco a competitive tourist destination. On analysing this vision, it can be deduced that it is a purely quantitative strategy that did not take sustainability and durability aspects into account.

In continuity with the primary vision, the State has explored a new policy under the "Vision 2020" framework. This programme aims to "make Morocco one of the 20 largest world destinations and insert itself as a reference in terms of sustainable development in the Mediterranean basin." The development of this plan is marked by the identification of 8 tourism territories, formulating a positioning and ambition for each of those territories. The realisation of this vision goes through the preparation of 6 programmes (Azur 2020 - extension of the Azur Plan 2010; Eco-development; Cultural heritage; Leisure and Sports; Business, Health and Well-being; Internal tourism: The Biladi Plan), materialised by a portfolio of large tourism projects. This vision continues to favour the typical tourist models characterised by megaprojects, dense urbanism, coastalisation, and mass tourism. In addition, the projects carried out within the Azur Plan have followed the tourism management models applied in other Caribbean or Mediterranean countries from decades ago, developing massive construction in coastal spaces, and strategically linking tourism projects to real estate. On the other hand, in "Vision 2010" international capital was linked to Europeans and Americans, while in "Vision 2020" international funds are dominated by the countries of the Persian Gulf.

The overall evaluation of the last two plans highlights the principal role of the State; it has become an investment agent dedicated to attracting international capital and serve as a guarantor for the construction of large resorts. Furthermore, the government undertook an important task of deregulation in economic sectors linked to tourism, especially the air sector, and has invested high expenditure on infrastructure for the tourism sector (new highways, high-speed rail links, ports, airports and sanitation plants). In short, tourism has been conceived as a development strategy for



participation in globalisation processes that has implied huge economic costs for the host State. In addition, it is appropriate to underline that the Azur Plan has been greatly affected by the global economic crisis of 2008, which has been more intense in Europe, the zone of origin for many of the investment companies in this plan (Gil de Arriba, 2011). Of the six large resorts that were to occupy more than 2,500 hectares, only three have opened their doors: Saïdia, Mazagan and Taghazout (with much delay).

## The process of tourism activity development in Saïdia

Emerging tourist destinations are born mainly in exotic developing countries and arise through the need to attract foreign capital and international brands from countries that emit tourist flows. In this manner, the new destination benefits from know-how and large-scale projects, and at the same time is positioned within international tourism circuits. This is precisely the case of the development of the new “Saïdia Mediterranean” resort that was conceived via a state initiative under the processes of globalisation and in close relation with the real estate business (García and Tacias, 2007).

Saïdia is a coastal town located in the northeast of Morocco, and bounded by the Algerian border to the east. Known by the moniker of the “Blue Pearl” of the Mediterranean, Saïdia has more than 14 km of fine sandy beaches, from the mouth of the Moulouya River to that of the River Kiss.

“Saïdia Mediterranean” began in 2003 after the Moroccan Government awarded 713 ha to the Spanish construction company Fadesa – this also occurred with the commission of another Azur Plan resort, “Plage Blanche-Guelmin”, that was never developed. This megaproject, which far exceeds that of Marina D’Or in Spain, is the first and largest of the six Azur Plan resorts. It initially planned the construction of 9 hotels with a capacity of 17,000 tourist places and 13,000 residential accommodation places, in addition to a wide complementary offer. Fadesa raised an initial investment of some 2,000 million euros. Meanwhile, the State provided the land at a very low price, in addition to investing in road construction, the expansion of Oujda Airport, development of the Mediterranean Ring Road, and a high promotion budget.

It should be remembered that no tourism policy, neither national nor regional, governed the former summer resort of Saïdia. The tourist activity, unregulated, local and on a small scale, depended solely on demand conditions and other exogenous factors, such as the political relationship with Algeria, and facilities offered for the entry of Moroccan Residents Abroad (MRA), among others. The new territorial management and planning of tourism activity in Saïdia has resulted in processes of transformation and configuration of the space that have made it possible to convert natural resources into attractive products so that they are enticing to international tourist use.

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In 2009, the first hotel in the resort, Barceló Saïdia, 5-star, opened its doors with 1,200 beds and, after two seasons, closed to re-operate under the name of Oriental Bay Beach; it currently remains closed. Today, “Saïdia Mediterranean” has 4 hotels: Be Live Saïdia, 5 stars, with 488 rooms; Iberostar, 5 stars and 484 rooms; Mélia Saïdia Beach, 4 stars and 397 rooms; and Mélia Saïdia Garden, 5 stars and 150 rooms. In addition, it has tourist residences (one under the management of Meliá with 192 rooms), Golf homes (174 units), second residences, a marina, two golf courses, shops and leisure equipment, and a water park (opened in 2018). In reality, the resort still has no attractions of such magnitude to attract a variety of tour operators and be part of international tourist circuits. Thus, the resort’s hotels have an average occupancy of 49%, opening between 250 and 150 days a year. Even Aguaparc is functional only 120 days (SDS Report, 2019). The tourist complex receives international tourists, but mostly attracts national tourists and MRA.

### Recovery of the resort by national actors

Although the “Saïdia Mediterranean” resort is relatively young, its tourist-urban development has experienced several stages. Moving from an implementation model characterised by globalisation guidelines, to a recovery of the resort by national companies. The economic crisis in Europe and the bursting of the real estate bubble in Spain severely affected Fadesa, forcing a proportion of its shares to be sold to the Moroccan company Addoha<sup>12</sup> in 2009. With the new state optic for the rescue of the project, the Moroccan Government has committed to carrying out the investment planned by Fadesa (€ 2,190 million). After Fadesa’s total bankruptcy in 2015, its colossal debt has been transferred to national actors. These have been obliged to inject large capital sums to save the resort. Thus, the current shareholder distribution of the tourist complex is as follows: 66% held by a CDG<sup>13</sup> managed by its subsidiary Madaëf, and 34% by Ithmar Almawarid<sup>14</sup>. In 2011, even the 5-star Barceló hotel was sold to Atlas Hospitality Morocco<sup>15</sup> (Chahine, S., 2012). It can be said that this tourist resort has become a public complex and its general balance presents a dubious economic profitability for the State. In fact, due to the bad image it gained in the previous years, in 2012, the “Saïdia Mediterranean” resort changed its name and currently operates under the name of “Saïdia-Med”.

The challenge is to definitively correct the failure of the development model, since it has demonstrated its limits.

In a relatively short period of 10 years, the resort went through several investors, developers and even operators. The international economic crisis and the bankruptcy situation of the Spanish group showed the vulnerability of the tourism model implemented in this resort. Today, the project is not yet in full swing due to the various inherited deficiencies, the poor projections of its prime movers, and the type of development

12 One of the largest real estate groups in Morocco.

13 Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion : “CDG” public company.

14 Former Moroccan Tourism Development Fund: state investment fund.

15 Subsidiary of the airline “Royal Air Maroc”.

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model adopted in its entirety. Indeed, “Saïda Mediterranean” faces problems of change of management and operators of the resort, difficulties of “survival” for hoteliers and tourist service companies (victims of high seasonality), the presence of abandoned plots, paralysed works, challenges of repositioning and quality improvement, etc. The challenge is to definitively correct the failure of the development model, since it has demonstrated its limits. Even for future projects, the impacts derived from this type of globalised tourism development should be taken into account, given the magnitude of the projects, and not underestimate the economic, social and environmental costs for the host destination.

### The territorial implantation tourism model of the Saïdia destination

The phenomenon of tourism, leisure and real estate business that has achieved some notoriety in Spain through large projects seems to have been exported to Morocco (Aguer, 2004). The territorial implantation tourism model of the “Saïda Mediterranean” complex imitates the same tourism implantation operations on the European Mediterranean coast and in the Caribbean. They are very similar examples of tourism organisation (public participation, planned development, land availability, creation *ex nihilo*, special regimes to facilitate the creation and management processes, specialised enclaves, foreign capitals, mass development, etc.).

The role played by transnational companies, especially Spanish companies such as Barceló, Iberostar, Oasis and Riu (Buades, 2006; Yrigoy, 2013), should be highlighted. These groups have accompanied the tourism and real estate activity and have functioned as pioneering elements underpinning the Saïdia project, but their commitment has not been very permanent.

In summary, the tourism implantation model of “Saïda Mediterranean” follows a planned tourism development, characterised by the involvement of the State that offered huge lots of publicly owned land to a foreign developer at a low price. This resort has a new and artificial origin, rejecting the pre-existing urban structure of the former summer resort. It is a specialised, closed tourism space, specifically focused on the international tourist who barely participates in the local economy. This complex, which integrates all the necessary elements for the tourist experience, functions as an enclave that controls the entry and exit of customers. This is a fairly tried and tested model by numerous hotel chains and holiday clubs with an “all-inclusive” format (Blázquez *et al.*, 2011) that isolates tourists from the local environment in order to increase their own benefits and exclude the local population. Ultimately, the urban-geographical model of the resort follows a linear spatial development based on the coast (Chahine, S., 2010), which is representative of a homogeneous sun and beach product to the conventional model with a standardised tourist offer, adapted to the new space structures and post-fordist consumption patterns.

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COAST: THE CASE  
OF SAÏDIA

Samia Chahine

Authors such as De Kadt (1979), Jenkins (1980), Britton (1982) and Lea (1988) pointed out that the forms of development based on the tourism model offered to developing countries were characterised by a strong consumption of natural resources, minor technological innovation, low salaries, broad incentives to foreign companies, and high state investment. These elements end up generating a strong economic dependence. This situation could be repeated in Saïdia, being a replica of the deficient models of massive tourism development, with speculative interests of the construction sector. In short, the economic costs assumed by the Moroccan government, together with social and environmental externalities, cast doubt on the overall profitability of the model promoted by Morocco's tourism policy.

This case could possibly be extrapolated to the remaining tourism complexes promoted by the Moroccan government, along with situations already questioned since the 70s and 80s for developing countries (Holden, 2013).

In conclusion, it can be affirmed that development under globalisation processes has proved to be unsustainable since it is essentially promoting the tourism expansion interests of transnational corporations, without achieving significant economic and social development at the local level. In fact, foreign chains are guided by a prudent investment policy of promoting lease management and entering the country with local partners. We might speak of an opportunistic exploitation by transnational groups that enjoy support from the Moroccan government and a certain legal vacuum, as well as the host's inexperience in the development of large tourism projects. The key to capitalism is to always seek maximum profit for the investor to the detriment of the welfare of the recipient population and social equity. However, it should be noted that tourism should not necessarily be negative for the natural and human environment, but that it can also be an effective tool for development. In reality, problems derive from deficits in planning and territorial insertion (Vera, 1997). Public agents should promote appropriate modalities of territorial tourism order and planning strategies, from the beginning of the implementation of tourism activity (Chahine, 2010) and devise a rational exploitation of tourism potentials, which will allow for a responsible growth model.

# TOURISM AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF RURAL SPACE<sup>16</sup>

**Jordi Gascón**

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## When tourism acts as Dr. Jekyll

There are tourism modalities capable of establishing a symbiotic relationship with traditional economic sectors in the rural world; gastronomic tourism, in vogue in the European-Mediterranean area, is an example. It is a post-Fordist tourism proposal that values the specificity of the food experience, and this specificity is based on local agricultural varieties and the artisan production of local specialities (Medina & Leal, 2018). That is to say, in distinctive products rooted in the territory, which involve limited elaboration. Therefore, they elude cosmopolitan gastronomic uses and the homogenising production effect that modern, mechanical agriculture implies. Gastronomic tourism seeks its place within the local productive structure, thus revaluing the peasant agriculture from which it obtains its raw materials, and that it ultimately converts into heritage (Ribas & Mulet, 2018). In addition, the model of agrarian peasant production offers an essential input for tourism: the landscape that attracts visitors seeking this type of experience.

In La Garrotxa, a region of pre-Pyrenean Catalonia, we find a paradigmatic case. Its landscape is unique due to having been an area of strong volcanic activity since the Neogene Period. Although all volcanic activity disappeared thousands of years ago, by utilising this geological phenomenon and the probability that the volcanism of yesteryear formed fertile and rich soils, in the 1990s a group of restaurants and chefs in the region promoted what has come to be known as Volcanic Cuisine. The *Volcanic Cuina* recreates local gastronomic uses and recovers food exclusively produced in the area by artisanal methods or by peasant producers, such as *fajol* (buckwheat), *fesols* (beans) from Santa Pau or the *farró* (corn flour) from the Bianya Valley. From these products a cuisine has been created with a recognised gastronomic personality that forms part of the tourist attractions of La Garrotxa, along with its natural spaces and villages of medieval origin; hence, this aids the recovery of agrarian peasant methods that have tended to disappear under the standardised, mechanised production

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16 Translation by Sharon Farley.

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processes that homogenise landscapes and expel populations because they require little manpower.

In the region of Priorat - also Catalan - another variety of gastronomic tourism has been developed: wine tourism. Its vineyard is relatively small (about 7,000 hectares) and unproductive, but thanks to its slate soil, it generates wines that are very characteristic and appreciated by the international market. This was not the case a few decades ago, when wine from Priorat was quite undervalued. An intense effort increased the quality of the product. Furthermore, Priorat was one of the most depressed areas of Catalonia. The qualitative improvement of the wine, and the development of tourist activities revolving around its production, have changed this scenario. From being the archetype of rural migration in Catalonia (it lost two thirds of its population in the century between the 1880s and the 1980s), the winemaking activity, combined with tourism, maintains the new generations of today in the territory: its population has remained stable for 30 years.

One of the most well-known processed agricultural products in Italy is its olive oil. Olive oil not only offers a gastronomic experience, but also a history of more than three millennia that is reflected in archaeological sites, agricultural and production infrastructures. Producers' cooperatives, regulatory boards for the denomination of product origins, and municipal institutions throughout the peninsula take advantage of these circumstances to offer coordinated tourist activities ranging from opening the doors of oil mills and wineries certain days of the year, to organising food festivals and other types of events that centre on olive oil as the main attraction. The objective is not only to increase revenues with direct sales to visitors. These oleotourism proposals allow the consolidation of the product in the market and confront competition from other food oils by offering the consumer not only a quality product, with increasingly recognised nutritional properties, but also a history and artisan or semi-artisan elaboration.

## When tourism acts as Mr. Hyde

Cases such as those explained above of the "win-win" type are meritorious. However, despite being widely advertised by a leisure industry eager to show its best profile, they represent a minuscule percentage of tourism activity. Across most of the planet, tourism has acted as a transforming vector of the rural world, and increased its vulnerability.

### *Economic transformation*

The development of tourism requires resources (natural, energy, labour, public and private capital, etc.) that are used by pre-existing economic sectors or by the ecosystem. The emergence of tourism restructures the allocation of these resources. Sometimes this reassignment may be done in a balanced fashion, but a second

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alternative predominates; tourist activity absorbs resources that others need to ensure their viability (Gascón & Cañada, 2017). When tourism appears in the rural world, agriculture and fishing tend to decrease, drowned out by the monopoly that the former imposes on land, water, investment priorities, labour, or government development plans (Gascón & Ojeda, 2014). We turn now to some examples.

The first is found on the Catalan coast, where artisanal fishing had always given life to its people and generated thousands of jobs. In the mid-twentieth century this economy went into crisis, just when sun and beach tourism was expanding. It was not a coincidence: the development of the latter damaged the former. The construction of marinas in coastal towns, and other tourist and road infrastructures, have affected the natural cycles of coastal sand replacement. As a result, Catalan beaches disappear after the torrential autumn showers that characterise its climate. The need to recover the beaches before the following summer to start the tourist season requires the pumping of sand from the seabed, which destroys its ecosystem. Although the increasingly scarce fishing sector and environmental movements denounce this

In the rural areas of the Mediterranean coast it is very difficult to dissociate tourist activity from real estate activity.

practice, the interests of tourism prevail, which has become an essential economic sector for the Catalan economy. The entire responsibility of the fishing crisis cannot be charged to tourism development alone, other factors have participated in the process, and possibly in a more incisive way; but it is undeniable that tourism has played an important role in the perfect storm that explains the sinking of artisanal fishing.

In the rural areas of the Mediterranean coast it is very difficult to dissociate tourist activity from real estate activity. The development of both is so symbiotic that treating them as distinct manifestations is methodologically impossible; they are the same phenomenon (Cañada & Gascón, 2016). The so-called “Spanish Levante” is paradigmatic. Residential tourism (whether in the form of second residences for the middle classes or more or less permanent residence for retirees from northern European countries) led to the emergence of urban mega-projects involving thousands of homes and numerous leisure services (such as golf courses) that claimed space, water and energy. This tourism-real estate model was the germ of a bubble that would explode at the end of the decade of 2010 in the form of a crisis. However, what we are now interested in evidencing is that, due to changes in the use of rural space, materialised in the speculative increase in land prices, the land ceased to be an agrarian resource and instead became “desired urban or urbanisable land”, to use terms coined by Antonio Aledo (2018), one of the primary analysts of this phenomenon.

A third example is offered by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), an instrument of the European Union that manages agricultural subsidies. The CAP states, “European farmers play a fundamental role in our economy and society (...). In addition, they are expected to protect the environment and guarantee the vitality of our rural areas.” For this reason, the objective of the CAP is “to help them offer these goods and services that we all benefit from” (Extract from the official CAP website). At a particular



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point, the CAP identifies that the rural world is not just agriculture and livestock, and promoted the development of other activities, one of which is tourism. Taking into account CAP's stated objectives, the logical conclusion is that this program was aimed at promoting agrotourism proposals; that is, tourism initiatives carried out in the field of agricultural exploitation. However, it was decided that this line of aid could access any tourism proposal carried out in a rural area. Currently, most aid to rural tourism offered by the CAP is destined towards proposals that are separated from any agricultural activity (Hernández Ramírez, 2011). In other words, public funds destined towards the agrarian sector are diverted to investments in the tourism sector.

The cases presented above show how and under what conditions tourism develops by competing with the primary sector. In the first, tourism damages the ecosystem, and therefore, the economic activities that are based on it, favouring conditions that lead to tourism becoming the predominant sector. The second associates tourism with real estate development, triggering the price of land to levels that agriculture cannot support. The third tourism example subtracts budgetary efforts originally destined to the primary sector. In summary, tourism has the capacity to concentrate natural resources, labour and capital to the detriment of the agrarian economy.

But why? Why is it that the primary sector is weak and has so few options to confront tourism in an open capitalist economy? The answer lies in the ability of tourism to promote a speculative economy. The primary sector can ensure cumulative long-term benefits, season after season, but relatively few in the short term. On the other hand, tourism, normally accompanied and promoted by real estate developments and the construction of infrastructures, is capable of rapidly increasing the price of land and other resources. First, by supply and demand, but in quick succession, because the rapid increase in price makes it a perfect reservoir of financial capital and, thus, triggers a speculative market; now the benefits are in maintaining the rate of increase in the price of land, not in its use.

Agriculture or fishing ensures profits harvest after harvest, haul after haul, but it is too slow to maintain this exciting inflation. Ultimately, it becomes marginalised. Capitals and short-term political interests jump on the bandwagon and favour a fast-growing speculative economy, even at the cost of marginalising other economic sectors and even irreversibly damaging ecosystems. Also, labour migrates to the expanding sector from those who have been left behind and impoverished.

### *Geographic transformation*

Tourism and the real estate sector that usually accompanies it are not only capable of transforming the economic model, but also the ecosystem and the organisation of rural space. The necessary transport infrastructures that ensure the displacement of the population quotas that it mobilises, (tourists, but also workers) and the transport of goods that they require, deform distances. Territories appearing far away on the map are now close through being linked by fast roads. In addition, others that are relatively close remain outside the new road system, so move away and become impoverished.

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These transport infrastructures can crack the space, acting as walls that separate neighbouring areas. Terrains that are valuable within an agrarian economy are lost, whilst those that had a marginal role increase in value. Even the population nuclei move.

The Costa Daurada, in the south of Catalonia, occupies more than 80 kilometers of coastline. Up until the second half of the twentieth century, the coastal strip was formed by a continuum of marshes and dunes. The population nuclei were located in the interior, at a specific distance from the sea, facing the agricultural fields that were the economically fundamental space, and evading the insalubrity that characterised the marshy beaches. The coastal strip had a relative economic value, as an area dedicated to small game and grazing land for cattle and horses. The tourist-residential boom initiated in the 1960s generated a strong revaluation of that space. In a short time, the price of the land/soil was no longer established by its agro-productive capacity, but its proximity to the beach. Seafront property reached exorbitant prices. The dunes disappeared and the marshes dried up. This process increased with the boom of mortgage loans for housing. Within a few decades the entire coast became built up. Most of the houses in that territory were concentrated near the sea, and historic centres were pushed into the background. The value of the agricultural land was reduced, or was at least below that of the seafront areas. Above all, and as occurs in a substantial part of the Mediterranean coast, the price of space is no longer established by its productive capacity, but the option of becoming urbanisable land thanks to some reordering of municipal territorial planning. A substantial proportion of the new buildings are second homes, making the Costa Daurada more urbanised than

Tourism has the capacity to radically change, in a short time, the cartography and photography of rural space.

populated. The mobility necessary to maintain human traffic has forced the construction of important road infrastructures. Highways have multiplied, becoming borders that cross the territory from north to south and from the coast to the interior.

Neither the geography of the Costa Daurada, nor the territorial organisation, the distances, the settlement, or the landscape of today bears any relation to that of six decades ago. The Costa Daurada is an example of how tourism has the capacity to radically change, in a short time, the cartography and photography of rural space. Alongside this, in Harveyan terms, it promotes accumulation by dispossession (Blázquez, Cañada & Murray, 2011).

# SUSTAINABILITY TO DEBATE IN THE TOURIST DESTINATIONS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN<sup>17</sup>

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Sustainability is one of the main challenges that territories have to face, as it is one of the paradigms with more interest among scientists, political agendas and civil society. However, the widespread conception of sustainability or sustainable development (Brundtland Report) is too open, complex and ambiguous, accommodating a diverse number of political strategies, even opposed with each other, because each agent interprets it in their way. It is very frequent to use sustainability as a “magic theoretical formula” without effective strategies in tourist destinations and the tourism sector. Some authors (Riechmann, 1995; Naredo, 1997; Velayos, 2008; Visbech Andersen *et al.*, 2018) report that under the scope of sustainable development, purely economic actions have taken place, using the environment and society as a pretext.

Despite these interested interpretations, five indisputable maxims in sustainability exist: (1) the recognition of the existence of limits, even in the economic growth; (2) the obligation of rethinking strategies for the turn of a short temporal framework into a long term; (3) the multidimensional and holistic vision of the new strategies, in addition to the economic, the social and environmental have to be included at the same time; (4) the necessity of understanding it as a process of consensual change through participation, which implies a political and social construction; (5) the importance of measuring sustainability for decision making to be based on knowledge (United Nations, 1987; Saarinen, 2006).

It is impossible to conceive tourism as a sustainable or unsustainable activity, since it depends on its implementation (temporal and spatial), its development and its beneficiaries. What would be of primary importance is to increase the resilience of the models, due to the fact that exclusive tourist policies are not needed, but territorial in all its aspects (housing, environment, infrastructures...). In order to face negative consequences of socio-environmental degradation -in consolidated destinations- and/

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17 Translation by Marta Salvador and Núria Abellan.

or of the impacts derived from climate change that are reaching other destinations, policies and their financial inversion are required.

## Tourism in the Mediterranean, multiplicity of experiences

The Mediterranean is the world's best-known tourist region and so a referent that tends to be copied in other countries. The myth of the Mediterranean is composed of countries, for instance, Italy, Spain, Egypt or Turkey, and geomarks (French Riviera, Costa del Sol, ...). In this region, different typologies of spaces and diverse products live together, from the classic sun and beach tourism in Saïdia, Morocco; rural tourism in Malta; cultural visits in urban spaces in Rome; ecotourism in the Biosphere Reserve of Shouf in Lebanon; to cruise tourism in the Greek islands.

In the urbanized space hotels and areas with accommodations for tourists and residents are mixed, leading to urban growth, questioned because of its environmental impacts.

From the origins of mass tourism, the second residence has always been the main player in the Mediterranean coast of France and Italy, but Spain is where the growth has been more extensive in space and intensive in time. In the urbanized space (in cities or urbanizations isolated from their surroundings) hotels and areas with accommodations for tourists and residents are mixed, leading to urban growth, questioned because of its environmental impacts. In the last few years, it has also been doubted for its own socioeconomic sustainability (Rullan, 2014).

The "resorts" model is different, as they are generally all included hotels complex. Since the nineties, Tunes or Turkey, or more recently Morocco and other regions in the north of Africa, have taken steps towards the implementation of this modality that completely isolates tourists from the local population. It is argued that they are more insecure countries and less equipped with infrastructures, but they respond to high profitability in the short term for investors, who are generally multinational companies (Chahine, 2016).

The negative environmental impacts in these models are shown, not only because of the notable reduction of the natural habitat, the decrease in biodiversity, the artificialisation of the territory, the pollution or the high-energy consumption rates. Moreover, because of the low adaptation and mitigation of climate change, it is one of the most desertified zones of the world (Nicholls, 2006; Perry, 2006).

Another element to take into account is the growth process, which has not changed its essence since the beginning of mass tourism, as incomes are not the same in the demand (outbound countries) and inbound areas. A recent case is the islands of Croatia, such as Brac: important natural values, rural society and depressed economy are the basic characteristics. The beginning of tourism benefits the local population since it creates workplaces and complementary wages (with house renting, transformation of hostels into small hotels, restaurant services...). Once the destination is already known, the airport is expanded; big companies arrive (Waterman Svpertvs

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huge hotel complex), the legislation is adapted to the needs of the companies without benefits for the local population; so the new legislation allows these enterprises to manage the beach and charge for its access, making it impossible for the local population to access their own beach and blocking local companies to install small kiosks (Dérens and Geslin, 2018). This evolution has no development pattern; its own strategy is the constant increase in the number of tourists and overnight stays, reaching the ratio of seven tourists per each resident in 2018. The reaction of civil society and resistance movements have managed to stop the Croatian enterprise *Sport B*, in the Zlatni Rat beach. These social resistances are already organized in other European Mediterranean cities, such as Barcelona or Málaga, due to the growth of tourism in them.

Urban tourism, a mix of cultural products, meetings and events, gastronomy or city breaks during the weekend (increasing the number of low-cost flights), is also creating an important tourist pressure in a short period of time. The consequences are being studied as processes of gentrification, which affect the residents' daily life (Vives-Miro and Rullan, 2017) and also spreading the idea of tourismphobia (Murray, 2014; Huete and Mantecón, 2018).

## Transformation attempts

Every aspect commented is suggesting the necessity of a tourism transformation that aims to reach higher sustainability levels (Cañada *et al.*, 2017) and, however, very partial signs of progress have been spotted in this direction until now. The islands have been pioneers in implementing limitation measures. It is the case of the Island of Sardinia, which, in 2004, established a Regional Landscape Plan and adopted the Save the Coastline law, banning all constructions 2 km from the coastline. This law is considered the best environmental protection measure in Italy, as in the village of Orosei, where higher measures to protect and preserve the tourist activity in heritage spaces are introduced (Latiesa Rodríguez *et al.*, 2009). Even though in times of crisis many of these limitations are eased, several local communities start taking measures, either individually or in organized groups, to establish protected areas that allow for the prioritization of sustainable tourism as the backbone of their economies. Another recent case of limitation takes place in the Island of Formentera, which has established a pioneer law in Spain on March 2019. This regulation enables the government to manage the entrance and daily circulation of visitors' motor vehicles according to environmental criteria, with the aim of reducing the impact of tourism and the levels of pollution.

On the other hand, other destinations, mainly cities, are starting to limit the typologies of accommodations: tourist apartments and platforms of holiday renting in order to diminish the tourist pressure on the residences. It is the case of Barcelona, that regulates the concession of flats and tourist accommodations licenses in the city, through the Special Tourist Accommodation Plan (PEUAT) since 2017. This measure is

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added to others created in 2015: the suspension of license grants and other municipal authorizations needed to open, install or expand any kind of tourist accommodation. Similarly, the municipality of Palma has approved a regulation of the tourist rent which bans the leasing of flats to tourists in the entire city, and only authorizes this method in single-family homes in determined areas.

Other partial policies are the certifications that promote sustainability (GSTC, Green Destinations, Earth Check) encouraging destinations to plan and implement strategies that differentiate them for these policies, as it is the case of Skyros (Greece)<sup>18</sup> or Gozo (Malta)<sup>19</sup>, that have developed an Eco island vision towards 2020.

In a European level, in the framework of the Interreg Programme, some projects have also been developed with the aim of creating innovative means and actions that allow for the improvement of sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean<sup>20</sup>. Among them, there is the *Alter Eco Project*, which promotes actions in different municipalities. In the city of Dubrovnik, technology to monitor and learn about citizens' habits and tourists' flows has been implemented in order to reduce pressure in overexploited cultural heritage by redirecting the crowded flows. In the south region of the Aegean Sea, the project plans to formalize hiking routes already existing in the centre of the island. Nowadays this area is not that popular, so these routes attempt to reduce the pressure in the main tourist attractions, adding technology to measure the impacts.

Nevertheless, the European Union proposes contradictory strategies. On the one hand, the EU finances some local projects to improve sustainability. On the other hand, it encourages programs such as the Blue Growth Strategy, which stresses a further exploitation of the sea and its coastline through their tourist intensification, seabed mining, ocean energy, aquaculture and biotechnology.

To summarize, reaching sustainability in a Mediterranean tourist destination in particular, and at a general level, requires a holistic vision, which achieves to integrate the tourist activity in territorial projects. In order to obtain the integration, it is fundamental to work in collaboration with local actors, encouraging the participation and the mechanisms that allow for effective diagnoses, the monitoring of sustainability progresses, measuring the results and economic, social and environmental impacts generated.

Reaching sustainability in a Mediterranean tourist destination requires a holistic vision, which achieves to integrate the tourist activity in territorial projects.

At the same time, the only environmentally sustainable model nowadays continues to be incompatible with the current economic system. Thereupon, the alternatives to constant growth are starting to be formulated as post-growth policies (Schulz and Bailey, 2014). These ideas of "prosperity without growth" (Jackson, 2009) are based on the limitation of natural resources and the

18 <http://collection.greendestinations.org/dest/skyros-sporades/>

19 <http://www.ecogozo.com/>

20 <https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu/about-us/our-community/>



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increase of social polarization in many territories. They are formulated as a transition to sustainable lifestyles, economic sustainable systems or a distributive justice of growth and wealth. In this sense, post-growth is applied in tourist destinations in the reduction of the size of infrastructures, decrease of consumption and private property, predominance of local instead of global or redistribution of resources (Romero *et al.*, 2017).



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# TOURISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

**Marta Salvador Almela**

Alba Sud

The climate change phenomenon is nowadays one of the challenges that can produce big changes in the tourist industry in the Mediterranean as it is known today. This article exposes these problems, dealing with a global phenomenon in a big tourist destination as the Mediterranean region is. Firstly, the paper contextualizes the climatology of this destination, where temperatures are one of the motivation factors for tourists. Secondly, climate change and its possible consequences in the Mediterranean is analysed. The changes produced by the effect of this phenomenon will require a major planning and managing from all the tourist industry stakeholders. Thirdly, the article mentions how tourism contributes to climate change and which actions are being carried out in order to mitigate the negative impacts. Finally, a series of reflexions that must be taken into account in future academic studies about climate change and its effects upon tourism, and also for the sustainable management of destinations are exposed.

## The importance of climate in the Mediterranean region

Climate factors, such as temperatures, sunshine and raining hours determine a huge part of the international tourism flows in Europe (Amelung & Viner, 2006). The popularity of the Mediterranean region is highly linked to the climate and temperatures, which are one of the most important resources of a tourist destination. Moreover, as Nicholls (2006) affirms, the motivation of tourists when choosing their travel destination is mostly associated with these factors.

The warm Mediterranean weather makes this place one of the best locations for sea and Sun tourism during the summer period, especially in the north of the Mediterranean. It happens the same on the coasts of Morocco and Algeria, as a consequence of the cooling effect of the altitude of the Atlas Mountains, but not on the rest of North Africa, where temperatures are better in spring and autumn (Amelung & Viner, 2006).

In general, countries from the Mediterranean region have cold winters with moderate raining and warm and dry summers, although the lack of precipitations can be

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problematic regarding water supply and fire risks (Nicholls, 2006). The climatic preferences for beach holidays in the Mediterranean are defined by ideal temperatures between 27° and 32°C. On the other hand, climatic preferences for vacations in urban regions of the Mediterranean vary between 20° and 26°C (Rutti & Scott, 2010).

Due to these great differences between the seasons of the year, seasonality becomes a key issue in the profitability of tourism in the Mediterranean region (Amelung & Viner, 2006). This seasonality has social, economic and environmental consequences, due to the fact that impacts assumed by the destination in a touristic level present large differences throughout the year. Some examples would be the construction of infrastructures which are only amortized during a period of the year, the creation of unstable jobs, the increase in the consumption of resources and the production of waste, among others.

## The climate change phenomenon

Nowadays, climate change is a global worrying issue which recently has had a greater mediatic impact articulated in movements such as Fridays for Future, mostly headed by young people. It is already recognized as a scientific certainty and that is why the exploration of its possible impacts in the human and natural environment is becoming increasingly urgent (Nicholls, 2006).

### Tourism is the economic activity with the maximum level of exposition on climate change effects.

Tourism is the economic activity with the maximum level of exposition on climate change effects. That makes it more vulnerable depending on the geographic area where it is developed (Olcina & Vera, 2016). All leisure activities carried out outdoors or natural tourist attractions may be affected in the future, modifying the offer of a place and, consequently, altering its demand. Thus, the main challenge that the Mediterranean faces in the future is climate change (Obrador *et al.*, 2009; Drius, 2018).

There are evidences that the weather is changing due to the emissions of greenhouse gases and it is estimated that the medium global temperature will increase from 1,5° to 5,8°C during the 21st century (Amelung & Viner, 2006; Nicholls, 2006; Rutti & Scott, 2010). The reasons of concern are a change in the market share in the regions of the world where an increase in temperatures can occur and where models of supply and demand highly linked to the climatology of the destination take place (Amelung & Viner, 2006).

## The consequences of climate change in the Mediterranean

Climate change suggests a Mediterranean region with high temperatures in summer, making destinations be too hot for its visit (Nicholls, 2006; Rutti & Scott, 2010). However, the region would be able to become a more pleasant destination during

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spring and autumn. On the other hand, the north of Europe will have a more attracting weather in summer. As a result, it is probable that countries from the north of Europe could be benefited during this touristic season, as receivers of the increment of national and international tourist arrivals, at the expense of popular destinations in the south of Europe (Amelung & Viner, 2006; Nicholls, 2006; Obrador *et al.*, 2009).

Although the Mediterranean Region can experiment a decrease of tourists during the current high season, it is probable that these drop-offs are likely to be offset by a growth of visitors in the spring and autumn months (Nicholls, 2006; Obrador *et al.*, 2009; Ruddy & Scott, 2010). There is also a potential for a much longer hot tourist season. Therefore, the demand could not decrease as a consequence of the climate change, but rather contribute to a change in the time in which tourists will visit the region in the middle and end of the century. Definitely, these changes will depend on the strength of several factors, including seasonality and the ability of the destination to adapt or take advantage of the improved weather of the spring and autumn seasons (Rutti & Scott, 2010).

Regarding the climatic comfort in tourist areas of the Mediterranean coast, an increase in the number of hot days, hot nights and the duration of heat waves is predicted. These are variables that, together with elevated humidity values of the atmosphere, are related to the origin of sensations of discomfort that can affect the demand of tourists in this destination. For this reason, as Olcina and Vera (2016) state, it is essential to know the true effects of global warming with the greatest possible degree of accuracy, understand how this can affect the tourist areas and decide what measures can be implemented to mitigate its consequences and adapt to them.

One possibility associated with the global climate change is the increase in the appearance of extreme weather events. In the Mediterranean, heat waves, winter rainfalls and gales are more probable to be intensified and frequented. Drought risk in summer will also increase due to a reduction of precipitations and the volume of water available. Moreover, an increase of the global level of sea is expected (Amelung & Viner, 2006; Nicholls, 2006; Olcina & Vera, 2016).

Climate change can also affect the distribution and composition of natural resources such as flora and fauna. Moreover, the existence of endemic plants, marine biodiversity and healthy marine ecosystem can be put at risk. Such as Amelung and Viner confirm (2006), it is difficult to evaluate tourist impacts on the biodiversity, although it is important to study them in order to guarantee the diversity of terrestrial and aquatic resources. In this way, changes in the wildlife and vegetation can be the cause of indirect impacts upon tourism and outdoor leisure activities, since participants alter their activities according to changes in the natural environment (Nicholls, 2006).

It is probable that the raise of temperatures causes a higher thermal stress and a decrease of air quality in urban areas of the Mediterranean. These changes have implications for tourism and can provoke problems for the organization of outdoor

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events such as festivals, concerts and sport competitions, as well as for the daily enjoyment of urban population in services, such as public parks and cafés. However, there are different adaptation strategies like increasing the implementation of air conditioner technologies, carrying out events in colder months and days or moving them indoors (Nicholls, 2006).

Adding to the consequences previously exposed, the area of North Africa can endure other effects due to its extensive desert areas. One of them is more desertification, provoking changes in the landscape and degrading the ecosystem. Extreme drought can also have effects on communities, such as the reduction of crops, the increase of fire hazard, the rise of livestock mortality and the decrease of available water. Since a great part of the economy depends on agriculture and stockbreeding, some population may be forced to migrate to other regions (Price, 2017).

In some countries of North Africa, for instance Egypt and Tunis, tourism plays an important role in the economy. For this reason, they can be specially affected by the effects of climate change, adding difficulties to an activity which is already vulnerable due to the geopolitical context of the last decades. Tourism in these countries is concentrated in coastal areas, which will receive a broader economic, social and environmental impact. Beach or leisure tourism, dominant market segment, will be vulnerable to sea level rise and extreme meteorological events exposed before. On the other hand, diving activities will be threatened by marine biodiversity losses (Shaaban & Ramzi, 2010) implying a change, both in the touristic offer and demand.

These spatial and temporal changes provoked by climate change can have impacts on the sustainability of the tourist development. On the one hand, they can be harmful from an economic and social point of view due to the loss of tourism incomes and its value associated chain. On the other hand, they might be favourable from a resources and biodiversity management perspective, as pressures on environment and ecosystems will decrease in summer in the Mediterranean (Amelung & Viner, 2006). Nicholls (2006) affirms that changes in the visit patrons will have a direct involvement upon contracts practices, supply chain, cash flows and marketing campaigns development.

## Tourist planning in front of climate change

Tourists have a huge capacity to adapt to climate change impacts, avoiding undesirable conditions, modifying the moment of their travel or moving to another destination. Therefore, it is essential to understand what climatic conditions tourists consider inappropriate for a holiday or which would reduce the quality of the experience (Rutti & Scott, 2010).

Environmental impacts mentioned before have serious implications for the future planning and development of touristic attractions in the Mediterranean region. It is also probable that water supply could become a controversial question, especially among

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residents and touristic attractions suppliers such as golf courts and swimming pools (Nicholls, 2006). For this reason, the tourist industry, tourist investigators and political leaders must pay more attention to climate trends and their possible impacts.

Despite this, as Olcina and Vera (2016) state, climate change and its risks have not been integrated in the regional and local planning. Actions in the design of programs still need to be included, integrating policies at different levels and scales. Concretely, actions in structural measures applicable to touristic areas; fiscal measures with environmental finalities (ecotaxes); the planning of hydric resources taking into account predictions in climate models; the planning of sanitary services in coastal touristic areas in a scenario conditioned by the emergence of extreme temperatures; and the design of education and communication programmes tackling the consequences of climate change and meteorological conditions still need to be included.

For the purpose of planning and adaptation of touristic areas of the Mediterranean coast in order to deal with climate change, data on the future projection of the values of the temperature can be classified in four challenges. Firstly, the possibility of modifying the calendar of high season (from June to September, both included) and consider the months of May and October as very suitable for tourist stays. It is necessary to take into account that levels of massification, which would double the current temporality, can have negative consequences on the local population. Secondly, the necessity of adapting tourist accommodations and residential properties to a weather with high temperatures and humidity. Thirdly, the obligation to ensure the well designation of water supply systems in an area with a natural shortage of resources. It should also be considered that the volumes of surface water will be reduced due to a decrease in rainfall, an increase of its irregularity and an increase in the evaporation of reservoirs. Finally, the requirement of modifying civil protection and public health protocols in a local scale, since risk calendars will change (storms and heavy rains due to the presence of hot water for a longer period), as well as the frequency and intensity of the appearance of the climatic extremes (Olcina & Vera, 2016).

Lo what is sought is to diversify the tourism product and support sustainability, instead of specific measures to adapt to climate change.

Such as these authors continue affirming, for the adaptation of the touristic activity, actions linked to the promotion of sustainable destinations, incentives for energy and water savings in hotels, training actions for staff and information on sustainability issues for clients are being considered. In general, what is sought is to diversify the tourism product and support sustainability, instead of specific measures to adapt to climate change.

## The contribution of tourism to climate change

Although there is no mention of how tourism contributes to climate change, the increase of this sector's popularity is associated with a spread of transport, exploitation of natural resources, etc. Concretely, the touristic activity contributes to the problem of

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climate change due to its dependence in the consume of fossil fuels (Nicholls, 2006). Moreover, it also contributes to global warming because of greenhouse gas emissions. As mentioned by Gössling (2002) cited by Nicholls (2006), approximately the 3,2% of global energy used is due to activities related with leisure (including transport to the destination, accommodations and activities), while the 5,3% of all carbon dioxide emissions can be attributed to leisure.

Some studies have proven how an increase in mobility levels in Europe and the growth of low-cost airlines, which will continue in the future, clearly contribute to climate change (Nicholls, 2006).

Nowadays, much attention is paid to the ways in which the tourism industry can help mitigate its negative impacts, through the reduction of the use of energy and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the adoption of cleaner products and efficient technologies. This is the case of some organizations which offer tourists the opportunity to compensate their carbon dioxide emissions through the purchase of carbon offsets. The result of these systems is used to fund projects that try to reduce origin emissions, either by investing in renewable energy sources or improving the efficiency of current sources, or by increasing carbon dioxide retention rates (Nicholls, 2006).

### **Awareness of the tourism and climate change duality**

The tourist industry must be increasingly aware of its impacts and apply measures to reduce them as much as possible. However, the linkage between tourism and climate change needs a deeper analysis and more visibility. Moreover, studies on the contribution of the tourist industry to the acceleration of the phenomenon must be broadened. This way, it will be easy to manage the effects produced by climate change and adapt to the necessities of both destinations and tourists.

It should be considered that tourism is an element that contributes to the phenomenon of climate change and, therefore, the industry has to take responsibility for the role it plays. At the same time, as mentioned above, the tourism sector is highly affected by the effects of climate change and this should be a major warning for the entire industry.

Future predictions show a continuous increase in the number of tourists and displacements in the Mediterranean region. Furthermore, predictions of climate change effects confirm that most of these arrivals will be during the spring and autumn periods, which allows for a discourse based on the enlargement of the high tourist season almost throughout the year. This very positive vision of climate change leaves behind the consequences that the destination and inhabitants may suffer, especially at an environmental level, focusing just on the economic opportunity that is presented.



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On the other hand, most of the studies are only centered on changes related with temperatures and the climate, putting aside social effects, both positive and negative, that could appear in tourist destinations.

These future projections force us to reflect on the viability of the current model and rethink current policies and strategies. One of the strategies proposed mainly consists on tourist decrease, in such a way that special emphasis is placed on the planning of tourist activity. This planning can focus on the limitation of tourist arrivals, the limitation of available beds in a destination, the regulation of arrivals of cruises in the main ports of the Mediterranean or the impulse of other economic activities in areas where tourism predominates, among others.



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# CLIMATE CHANGE AND GEOLOGICAL RISKS: THE EFFECT OF TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN<sup>21</sup>

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Geological risks affect tourism because destinations oriented to these activities are usually located in regions with high susceptibility of geological dangers (Kumpulainen, 2006), and climate change will aggravate these risks. One of the proofs is that in the last few years considerable economic loss and deceases have already taken place due to these changes. Some important examples are the passing of nine people when they were canyoning because of a sudden overflow in the river Milicia in Sicily; floodings in San Lorenzo de Cardassar in Mallorca; the ones that happened in Istanbul with dozens of deaths; the eight thousand Lebanese refugees due to floodings, deaths because of landslides in the Alps or the Pyrenees while trekking; snow avalanches that affect shelters and hostels; the systematic destruction of seafronts like in Blanes, Catalonia. All these natural events have in common the exacerbation of the geological risks provoked by global warming affecting the planet. Climate change causes an increase of the geological danger in the Mediterranean (Sánchez *et al.*, 2004) due to the periods of drought that it can produce, alternated with a higher intensity of rain in punctual moments, as well as for the increase of the sea level.

The geological risk is the danger, the probability of the geological process happening, due to vulnerability and other damages it can cause. Damages depend on many factors: the typology of constructions, infrastructures, social factors, etc. Climate change causes fluctuations in the hazard level as floods, landslides and sea-level increase and, therefore, the vulnerability raises as far as it affects areas that were not prepared for these processes. Tourism is not alienated to these risks since it happens in sensitive areas such as the seafront, close to the rivers or in high mountain. Moreover, hundreds of cultural tourist destinations can be affected, even those declared World Heritage by UNESCO (Reimann *et al.*, 2018).

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21 Translation by Núria Abellan and Marta Salvador.

## The effects on high mountain territories

Close to the Mediterranean, there are mountain ranges which can reach two or three thousand meters of altitude, where in the last few years nature and mountain tourism have exponentially increased, provoking more frequentation and occupation of the mountains. This tourism is based on more traditional models such as sky stations or alpinism and others more recent like trekking, running or nature tourism. All these activities turned into a business opportunity (especially for clothing, accessories and construction) with new dynamics for the reproduction of capital, causing that more people are accessing the mountain searching for freedom, personal overcoming and adrenaline, since these emotions have also been commodified. This business opportunity creates workplaces in new territories where it is easy to build campings, hotels, shelters or urbanizations in the valleys, those being not always safe. This increase in the occupation of the mountain, either in winter or in summer, causes more risks because of the higher accessibility, but also for the changes in weather conditions that mountains are suffering, which also provoke more flooding, snowing, worst snow conditions and landslides.

The vulnerability of geological risk is increasing without taking into account changes happening in sensitive regions to climate change. Snowfall is becoming more irregular, with strong snowfalls during Spring which can cause serious floodings. Snow melts fast and affects the constructions in the valleys, such as campings and urbanizations. Moreover, the risk of avalanches increments, affecting shelters, sky stations and alpinists. Similarly, snow conditions worsen when thawing increases, provoking more unstable slopes for the practice of mountain sports.

## Tourism close to the coast

In almost all the Mediterranean coast, since the fifties, camping sites, hotels and urbanisations dedicated to tourism have proliferated, as well as tourist products based on sun and beach. In the case of Spain, the percentage of urbanizations is 34% (Méndez, 2004) and in certain coasts of Turkey is 64% (Burak, Doğan and Gazioğlu, 2004). This fact provokes the rise of the sea level, predicted to be of one or even two meters, varies the forcing danger (Pascual, 2006), which can cause flooding and erosions in areas that were safe until now. This will cause damages and irreparable loss in urbanizations, beaches and places of historical and cultural interest turned into tourist attraction sites (Reimann *et al.*, 2018). Urbanizations as the ones that can be found in the Albufera of Valencia in Mar Menor (Spain) and the Dalmatian coast (Croatia), historical places of interest such as the archaeological center in Sabratha (Libya), Medina of Tunis and many others located next to the sea and at just one meter of altitude, are vulnerable to storms that may take place.

Other vulnerabilities are the loss of beaches and the affectation of railway infrastructures. Although in the case of beaches there is no great loss of edifications or

infrastructures, the socio-economical impact can be relevant due to a huge part of the tourist GDP in the Mediterranean coast is because of sun and beach tourism.

## **Prairies, agricultural areas and medium mountains**

In many areas where rural tourism, visits to historical centers or hiking take place, the greatest dangers related to climate change will be heat waves (Sánchez *et al.*, 2004). Regarding geological risks, it will depend on local factors such as the typology of mountainous relief, location or local geology (rocks, faults, volcanoes...). From this, climate change will generate variations, that can provoke, for instance, a higher intensity of rains which can lead to river overflows. These will have consequences on campings and urbanizations poorly located due to a loose urban plan. Occasionally, intense snowfalls can take place in areas that are not prepared to hold this phenomenon.

## **Risks due to earthquakes and volcanoes**

The Mediterranean is one of the regions of the planet with more seismic and volcanic instability because of its location, where the Eurasian Plate and the African Plate collide. These risks have no significant variations due to climate change, but they are not completely unrelated.

The collision between the Eurasian and the African plate causes important geological faults that consequently end up in earthquakes. The Oriental Mediterranean is where the intensity of the collisions is higher, which leads to a more intense seismic instability. Greece is the country with more seismic risk in the Mediterranean basin, followed by Italy and Turkey. Moreover, there are areas with a high or moderate seismic risk, especially the east of the Alps (Slovenia), Romania, the north of Algeria and the south and southeast of Spain. Although the majority of earthquakes can affect tourist areas due to their destructive capacity, they are not related to climate change and, therefore, prevention policies such as changing the constructive typology, the alarm for tsunami, etc. can be approved to reduce its vulnerability. It also needs to be taken into account that in some occasions the human activity can provoke an earthquake such as the case of Lorca (González *et al.*, 2012). This was caused by the overexploitation of an aquifer where the water reduction led to a change in the stresses that made the geologic fault of Lorca move. For this reason, aquifer overexploitation, which is produced due to dryness provoked by climate change, and can be susceptible to causing an earthquake, has to be taken into account.

Different fractures or subduction zones of a plate under another generate the rise of magma and volcanoes in different zones of the Mediterranean. The greatest risk takes place in the central area (Italy) and the oriental one (Greece and Turkey), but there are also volcanoes in the Spanish and French Mediterranean coast and in Orient (Syria, Israel, Jordan) although the last ones have a low or moderate risk. Some of these

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eruptions may affect commercial flies and tourist destinations. The volcanoes in central and oriental Mediterranean can occasionally produce tsunamis, as has happened in historical eras. For the moment there is no scientific evidence that relates the effects of climate change with more or fewer eruptions. However, it cannot be excluded that in the future some may be found, due to global and physical causes provoked by climate change, even in the earth crust, such as less ice and, therefore, the rise of the field or the overexploitation of aquifers in hydrothermal volcanic systems.

## Conclusions

Climate change will provoke variations in the geological risks and all the Mediterranean basin. In a greater or lesser extent, those will affect both coastal areas and mountains and, therefore, there is a need to prepare and anticipate in order to be able to reduce the vulnerability that may come from this phenomenon. Nowadays there are different models of forecasts that can be taken into account (Frihy and El-Sayed, 2013) to carry out a territorial planning that might reduce these types of risks.

Another kind of urbanism has to be generated in more exposed maritime promenades; to ban constructions in floodable zones, even if it is for periods of dozens of years;

Tourist planification needs to consider the geological risks as well as the charge capacity or the natural resources like the amount of water available in the area, etc.

to warn about the snow conditions; to regulate the access to high mountains; to prevent landslides and to move shelters and hostels to safer areas. In conclusion, tourist planification needs to consider the geological risks as well as the charge capacity or the natural resources like the amount of water available in the area, etc. Likewise, the case of cancelling a music festival in a valley of the Pyrenees because of risk of flooding needs to set an example of a good practice (Rovira, 2019).

# GENTRIFICATION, TOURISTIFICATION AND SOCIAL CLASS IN MEDITERRANEAN CITIES<sup>22</sup>

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This year, 2019, marks 55 years since the appearance of the concept of gentrification. It was the sociologist Ruth Glass who, on seeing the transformation of the social fabric taking place in the London Borough of Islington, baptised a dynamic that, years later, has been generalised globally, albeit with specific characteristics.

The popularisation of the concept, which has given rise to alternative terminological proposals in Spanish, such as *elitization* (García, 2001), contains a strong class component; it was not in vain that Glass always recognised the influence of Marxism in her thinking. Thus, the *gentry* root refers to a specific type of social class, the English high-born and wealthy landowning nobility, which, in today's urban sphere, would possibly *translate* as the petty bourgeoisie and upper-middle classes.

Gentrification is the process by which certain working class areas and neighbourhoods in cities are transformed into residential, recreational or other uses for the middle and upper-middle classes, with the consequent substitution of one social group for the other.

In one of his main theories, Neil Smith defined gentrification as the process by which certain working class areas and neighbourhoods in cities are transformed into residential, recreational or other uses for the middle and upper-middle classes, with the consequent substitution of one social group for the other (Smith, 1987). The phenomenon, however, has evolved greatly since its creation. It is clear that the London of the 1960s

that Ruth Glass described has little to do with the global city that is today the capital of the United Kingdom (Sassen, 1999). The over-accumulation crisis of capitalism experienced by the West in the latter third of the last century, and its exit via neoliberal restructuring, has given cities a prominent role in the new accumulation processes (Harvey, 1989; Brenner, Peck, and Theodore, 2015). Thus, though gentrification was linked only to local real estate markets and residential rehabilitation processes at first, Smith himself later said that it was something else: a deep social, economic and spatial restructuring of cities (Smith and Williams, 1986), a fact that led authors such

22 Translation by Sharon Farley.

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as Tom Slater (2011) to warn about the depoliticisation that the term could experience when these dynamics were qualified as revitalisation or regeneration, forgetting their profound class character.

Other approaches, such as that implemented by David Ley (1980), emphasize how certain changes in consumption patterns, linked to skilled workers and the aforementioned middle classes, have led to outcomes that determine production patterns as a form of stimulation for the real estate market. However, this approach would completely forgo the role of capital when looking for new and beneficial ways to reproduce itself, as well as the dynamics that have turned cities into authentic commodities (Lefebvre, 1972); that is, the fact that capital is directed where the rate of return is higher (Smith, 2012).

For its part, the *rent gap* theory would explain gentrification based on the difference between the level of potential income and that of the current capitalised urban land rent under its present use. The greater this difference, the more likely it is that there will be a capital reinvestment (Smith, *op. cit.*). But this income differential does not have to be determined by the deterioration or lack of investments in the land under its current condition, as was proposed in the classical approximations, but also, as in the case of tourism, for the enormous expectations generated by the level of potential income. Furthermore, in the case of the tourism-gentrification binomial, each would feed back into the other since, as the researcher Agustín Cocola-Gant (2018) points out, the transformation of a neighbourhood into an area of and for the middle classes would provide the features and necessary consumer services, in addition to a sense of place, to attract more potential space consumers.

Both processes, therefore, end up becoming indistinguishable (García, Smith and Vera, 2007), and whilst tourist areas replace the stable population with a temporary one, the social groups being displaced belong to the social classes with less capacity to adapt. In addition, it should be remembered that gentrification, as a capitalist dynamic, is not limited to the urban land market, but constitutes a *totality project* that is intimately related to phenomena such as *Disneyfication*, that is, the creation of standardised appearances and experiences in cities (Zukin, 1991), and thematisation, *aterritorial* landscapes with a strong real estate component (Muñoz, 2003), the latter being particularly relevant in Mediterranean tourist cities.

## Dynamics in the Mediterranean

For the first case, *Disneyfication*, we could cite the examples of Venice or Dubrovnik, cities that have eventually become authentic *Amusement Parks*, expelling much of their original population in the process. The case of Venice is paradigmatic; in the last seventy years, the city has lost more than 100,000 inhabitants, mainly due to a productive fabric that has specialised in satisfying the needs of tourists, and buildings that are being acquired by companies and individuals for exclusively commercial

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purposes, adapting them to new uses linked to visitors (Mancuso, 2009). For its part, the thematisation of a large proportion of the Mediterranean tourism zone has undoubtedly caused homogeneous landscapes, absent from all singularity, based on the iconographic mythification of that which, for undeniable economic reasons, has been understood and projected as the authentic *Mediterranean flavour*. Construction occupies a clearly vacational spatialisation, with a profusion of identical real estate developments, made up of individual units consisting of dwelling, garden and pool; also, as a finishing touch, they give the impression of a traditional villa or somewhat isolated small town, hence making the presence of large transport infrastructures necessary, and the use of private transport almost unavoidable (Muñoz, op. cit.). Clear examples of this type of practice would be the set of urbanisations populating the Balearic Islands, part of Catalonia, and the Eastern Spanish coast. In addition, there are cases which show these dynamics are not exclusive to the urban sphere but, as noted by the sociologist Antonio Aledo (2016), among others, that also appear in rural environments causing changes in productive, landscape, social and environmental elements.

Nor must we forget the particular impact this type of dynamic has on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Economies such as those of Morocco, Tunisia or Egypt, to name three of the most important and significant, maintain a strong dependence on the tourism sector. However, their levels of participation and democratic quality are, at very least, debatable; a fact that manifests itself, among other contentious issues, in the frequent violent repression of conflicts caused by the development of tourism projects (Al-Youm, 2019)<sup>23</sup>. As an example, Egyptian academic institutions linked to tourism seem to have been more dedicated to assessing, analysing and confronting the negative impact this type of movement has on the economy of the country, than to determining its structural causes. An illustration of this is the research carried out by Professor Mohamed Ahmed Nassar (2012) of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels of the University of Alexandria, who, in an article following the shock caused by the *Arab Spring*, prescribed a series of recommendations to reduce the costs that political and social instability could cause in the income generated by this productive sector. Within these, it was possible to find calls for the need to establish a permanent working group for the management of tourism crises; a strengthening relationships with those officials charged with enforcing the law; the drafting of a concrete plan for the management of the crisis generated by the *Arab Spring*; and the elaboration of a guide for the management of future crises.

Finally, but by no means of least importance, the phenomenon of short-term rentals that flood everything. After the popularisation of platforms such as Airbnb or HomeAway, the wrongly named *collaborative economy* has managed to implant itself within public opinion as a true lifeline in times of crisis. The concept rests on the fact that the battered condition of many domestic economies, given the withdrawal of a public sector that has abandoned its traditional role as a guarantor of public goods

23 During May, 2019, the city of Luxor watched as its local Governor sent the police to remove part of a settlement that was located on the Kebash road, which links the Temples of Luxor and Karnak. Despite the fact that the media did not pick up on the actions of the law enforcers, several accounts on the social network, Twitter, showed their performance. For more information see <https://bit.ly/2HSRuA3> and <https://bit.ly/316E8rq>



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and services for collective consumption, can remain afloat thanks to the sharing of those inputs of your property that are not being used. However, the data show that, behind this benevolent curtain, there is the possibility of capitalising on huge income differentials. This has led, perhaps unavoidably, to a huge concentration in the management of large housing parks transformed into tourist apartments. Thus, as the study published by Arias-Sans and Quagliari (2016) focusing on Barcelona and the year 2014 shows, around 55% of the apartments proffered on the Airbnb portal were offered by profiles that managed more than one accommodation, a fact which dismantled the main argument of this company based on a supposed aid to families in distress. In addition, most of these offers focused on the District of Ciutat Vella, which, in turn, is the area of the city where today there is a great demand for protected housing and, therefore, with greater risks of socio-spatial displacement.

In summary, the relationship between gentrification and tourism rests, primarily, on the new role bestowed upon cities under neoliberal capitalism. On being considered the space par excellence for social reproduction, they have become key elements in the processes of accumulation and circulation of capital. In this sense, tourism and gentrification appear as two sides of the same coin: one phenomenon and the other cannot be considered separately because tourism areas have previously had to

Cities have become key elements in the processes of accumulation and circulation of capital.

suffer the necessary processes of sanitation and deconflictivisation, on a large number of occasions, fomented by the gentrifying dynamics necessary for its consumption. These specific areas of cities eventually generate phenomena such as

*disneyfication* and thematisation, making what most closely resembles the centre of any city in the Mediterranean just like any other city in the Mediterranean, and where those most affected, displaced and culturally impoverished are the popular classes.

# TOURISM DEGROWTH<sup>24</sup>

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According to Serge Latouche degrowth is “a need, not a principle, an ideal, neither the unique objective of the post-development society”.

The debate around degrowth and its different perspectives is not a new field of study, neither an underdeveloped concept, even if the sectors against its implementation argue so. At the beginning of the 2000s, Serge Latouche published his contributions to the degrowth theory, defining it as “a need, not a principle, an ideal, neither the unique

objective of the post-development society...” (Latouche, 2003: 3-4), that he expressed in 2006 in his work *Le Pari de la décroissance*.

His thesis took root in the idea of achieving progress, prosperity and social development without the disadvantages of the so-called infinite growth. Thanks to a “serene” consideration about the concept (Latouche, 2007), he aimed to unravel the contradictions of the unlimited capitalist accumulation processes defining precisely what degrowth is not.

In this sense, he refuted the alleged criticism and confusions about it, arguing that degrowth does not mean condemning poverty of the impoverished countries, nor zero growth, nor a step back in time, nor a patriarchal community order incompatible with democracy. His approach of a cultural revolution was based on the virtuous circle of the 8 R: 1) reevaluate by replacing individualism, consumerism and the rivalry for the collectively, simplicity and cooperation; 2) reconceptualise richness and poverty by considering the progress in qualitative terms, instead of defining them only in economic terms; 3) restructure the productive apparatus and social relationships according to a new scale of values to face the ecologic crisis; 4) redistribute richness and access to natural heritage among the North and South, social classes and different generations; 5) relocate the economy and decentralize the decision-making; 6) reduce the impact on the biosphere through a change in the production and consumption; 7) reuse and 8) recycle to extend the products’ cycle of life (Latouche, 2007).

As eco-Marxist John Bellamy Foster (2011) holds, degrowth in a capitalist economic system is an “impossible theorem”, since it requires a continuous growth in order to survive. Contrary, the key is to defy the fundamental principles of this capitalistic economy and vote for alternative systems, a more local, traditional and cooperative economy, outside the productivist basic principles and creating a shocking challenge, “the frugal abundance”, the possibility of “prosperity without growth”. This supposed oxymoron, suggests prosperity focused on getting over productivism and consumption in the dominant economic system (where the overconsumption of a few provokes the

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24 Translation by Núria Abellan and Marta Salvador.

shortage of many others), developing the notion of “dimensioning of rights and the creation of stable state economy”.

Therefore, a “desired” degrowth is found through a voluntarily decided austerity to improve the well-being in front of hyperconsumism, the accumulation of capital, the waste and the blind faith in technological solutions (“technolatry”); far from the current “forced” degrowth imposed by the austerity of the capitalist cyclic crisis. “Voluntary” degrowth proposes a global focus taking into account both the ecologic crisis and social inequality. In order to reach it, it suggests to penalize consumerism, waste, luxurious uses and segregation by a social class, as happens with gentrification. Similarly to the fight against climate change, it advises the contraction and convergence of natural resources consumption, willing to reach more social equity.

In this sense, following Foster’s postulates, the importance of the tourist industry for degrowth has an undeniable additional dimension. As one of the biggest industries in the world, it is presented as one of the ways of most powerful accumulation of capital and, therefore, own of the main mechanisms to maintain the expansion and the extended reproduction of the capitalist system.

## **Tourism in the Mediterranean, an unequal development**

Through the history of tourism, the Mediterranean region has been the neuralgic center of its development and expansion. Since its consideration by outbound center-European markets as one of the main pleasure peripheries (Turner and Ash, 1991), its destinations have expanded in all the countries which have a coastal temperate or tropical water façade, with sociopolitical structures easily subjectable to the capital interests. This tourist and economic development is based on the lack of homogeneity and socio-territorial balance.

In a socioeconomic level, the tourist activity is an almost exclusive phenomenon of the global consumer class, mainly in the northern countries (Meana, 2016), which excludes more than 75% of the world population (Gardner *et al.*, 2004). On the other side, on a territorial level, tourist development has shown elements of great polarization from its beginning, which are nowadays present, despite its expansion moments (OMT, 2018a). In this sense, countries and concrete spots of coastal zones in the northern Mediterranean, named “mature destinations” with serious symptoms of tourist saturation (Spanish, French, Italian or Greek Mediterranean); against areas in the South of the Mediterranean, eternal “emergent destinations”, (Tunisian, Moroccan, Algerian, Libyan, Syrian, Lebanese coastal zones or even the consolidated Egyptian coastline) where despite the inversions made in the tourist sector (mainly foreign investment funds) have not reached an equal development, nor consolidated what would be a competitive tourist destination from the point of view of the neoliberal capitalist model.

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Both Mediterranean shores are a good sample of inequality among close territories, for the profit of tourism. The North, not only geographically speaking, but also in terms of social classes; accumulates, wastes and saturates; as happens in cities such as Venice, Barcelona or Palma, assaulted by the tourist function and joined in the Network SET of Cities and Regions in the South of Europe facing Touristification (Pardo, 2018). This institution suggests tourism degrowth coming from social movements and public institutions. Contrarily, the geographic South, either in the meridional shore or the emptied Spain, and social South, in terms of impoverished social classes, is located on the other side of the unequal geographic development. This development needs to be able to grow and be in accord in order to improve its living conditions and sustainable prosperity.

This unequal development in a growing sector as the tourism one has promoted unequal reactions, both in a social and institutional level. Among them, the discussion of the need for a tourist degrowth in areas where tourist saturation (overtourism) is a reality with severe consequences has arisen. The scale of discomfort in these Northern Mediterranean regions has captured the attention of some powerful actors in the tourism industry, including the World Tourism Organization of United Nations (with its report "Overtourism? Understanding and managing urban tourism growth beyond perceptions", 2018b) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (Mckindsey and Company, 2017) although their position is ambiguous. Likewise, pro-tourist lobbies blame unhappy residents for the tourismophobia phenomenon (Blanco-Romero et al., 2018), while they accept the possibility of some destinations experiencing what is called "excess of tourism" or the so-called "dying of one's success". Despite all of it, UNWTO argues that "growth is not the enemy, the key is how to manage it". Social movements have started to explicitly use the idea of tourism degrowth and systematically connecting the global discussion about degrowth with tourism; through their criticism on the negative consequences of tourism development (Kallis, 2011; Kallis and March, 2015).

**Tourism contribution to the expansion and maintenance of capitalism exceed its own dimensions.**

The huge connection of tourism with many other auxiliary industries, activities and processes that affect it, and its repercussion through the praise but depraved multiplier effect, makes its contribution to the expansion and maintenance of capitalism exceed its own dimensions, creating a net that is expanded around the world with an infinite number of shapes. The extractivist behaviour of the tourist activity (Garcés, 2018), as well as its necessary "destructive creation" as the fundament accumulation cycles for dispossession (Harvey, 2006) and value generation, through self-destructive process and forms of structural violence (Büscher and Fletcher, 2017), necessarily place the tourist industry in the focus of the degrowth debate. In this sense, if the objective is to achieve degrowth on a global scale, it is also necessary to suggest a deep transformation of tourism. A different tourism that moves away from the growth command, as a part of a new "post-capitalist" practice, with the potential to drastically transform this global network. However, as has been pointed out in different occasions, is tourist degrowth a possible theorem? (Fletcher, et al., 2018).

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Social movements that report tourist saturation consider the proposal completely viable. Likewise, tourist degrowth is based on the real diagnostic of congestion and intensification of the socioeconomic metabolism (material and energy consume flows) and its ecologic footprint (translation to the biophysical capacity of the territory), aspects such as the decrease in the number of tourists, the travel lengths and its frequency, its consumption of natural resources, its contribution to inequality and social segregation, must be priority acting elements. At a local level, it is suggested as essential to aim for the increase of tourism social return, to reduce the investment of public budget in the tourist activity, to use tourism fiscality to contain it, to prevent some forms of undercovered subsidy that tourism benefits from, to use urban regulation for degrowth or to modify the management models of the tourist territories are elements that administrations of different Mediterranean destinations have available. At a global level, tourism degrowth is suggested to contain unequal geographical development, reducing consumption because of the extreme accumulation of wealth, luxury and waste. Focusing on fighting the dispossession of local population from their daily spaces and access to housing, as well as mitigating climate change, the fossil resource depletion, the loss of biodiversity or the overcoming of threshold of biophysical resilience.

## Post-capitalist destourification

The defence of tourism degrowth is not the destruction of tourism or antitourism. The point is to search for destourification formulas in which leisure activities are organized and practiced in different ways and scale, maximizing the benefits for local communities and the ecosystems. As suggested by different authors in 2018 (Fletcher *et al.*, 2018), at that moment a great variety of initiatives on development

The defence of tourism degrowth is not the destruction of tourism or antitourism.

with huge potential already existed, such as slow tourism, the promotion of “staycation” (vacations at home), and even efforts for an ecologic tourist structure, implying air transport and the production of electricity. The contention of growth, different from degrowth, has been partially assumed by some public institutions through regulation policies on tourist accommodation, implementing

moratoriums on the growth and ordination plans; special taxes in accommodation or tourist movements, for instance, depending on the length of the flight; limitation of the capacity of transport structures (airports, seaports, highways, tunnels, bridges...) or sport facilities (golf camps, ski slopes or sport seaports). These limitations imply the rise of the price of the offer, which becomes elitist; favouring the risk of using degrowth in favour of the richest population. It is necessary to prevent the exclusion of the humblest social classes and the segregation according to the spending capacity, fiscally charging the excess, accumulation and waste of resources (Blázquez, 2016). In conclusion, the issue of how to combine and develop a coherent proposal of post-capitalist destourification, applied to saturation and waste, has just been introduced into the public debate.

# SECURITY, TERRORISM AND TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN<sup>25</sup>

**Fernando Almeida**

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The Mediterranean is a region that hosts many conflicts rooted in political, economic and religious issues. In locations surrounding this sea are some of the world's most acute confrontations (Palestinian-Israeli conflict), thus explaining the military presence of the global superpowers, a fact which justifies that all military powers maintain a presence in the Mediterranean. The United States of America has 19 military bases in the Mediterranean (Spain, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Israel, Syria, Tunisia and Egypt), which demonstrates the importance of the area (Base Structure Report, 2015). Other military powers also have bases in the Mediterranean: United Kingdom (3, Cyprus and Gibraltar), France (1 in Lebanon), Greece (Cyprus), Turkey (Cyprus), Russia (Syria) and China (France). The profusion of disputes and the strategic connections with the Atlantic, Black Sea and Red Sea explain the interest of these military powers in this sea.

On the other hand, the strong economic imbalance between the north and south shore, combined with the social and political problems arising from migration, is another variable that occupies the political agenda of many Mediterranean governments. The more than two million immigrants who have arrived in Europe has been a challenge for this aging continent, sometimes leading to xenophobic and demagogic responses (D'Angelo, 2018). The Mediterranean continues to be understood as a space of economic, political and religious frontiers, between countries and continents, which intensifies such antagonisms.

Among all these problems, terrorism is one that has most accentuated these conflicts and which has been used to increase security-based solutions. Similarly, terrorism is one of the destabilising factors that has most affected tourism.

Throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, terrorism was more political in nature, underpinned by different ideologies and objectives (Laqueur, 2003). Since the latter third of the 20th century and throughout the 21st century, the relationship of terrorist groups and the media has become increasingly close. This situation has been especially relevant in Western countries where media groups have a fundamental role in democratic societies (Veres, 2004). In these countries, ideological-

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25 Translation by Sharon Farley.

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political terrorism fell sharply after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and was replaced by a religion-based terrorism, at least from the media's point of view. The event that particularly contributed to this situation was the attack of September 11, 2001, in the United States, the greatest media centre on a global scale (Calduch, 2001, Bossong, 2012). In the case of Muslim countries on the south and east shores, the political gap caused by the failure of the Arab Spring after 2010 seems to have been filled by terrorist activity in many of the countries surrounding the Mediterranean basin. This fact is observed via the intensification of terrorist activity as of 2010 (see Graph 2).

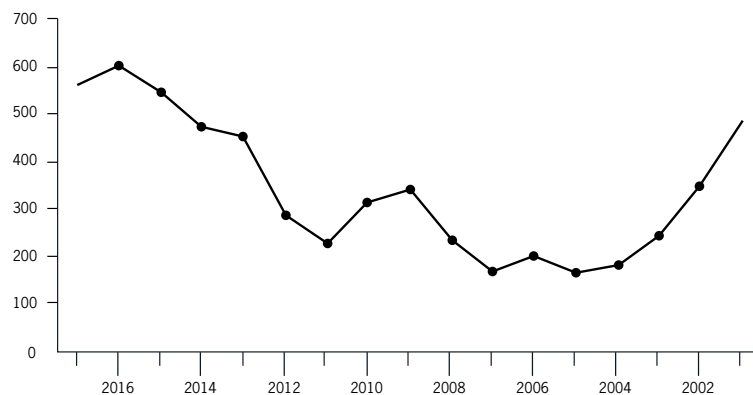
The most conservative religious currents of Islam consider the solution to the problems suffered by various Muslim countries to be a more rigorous interpretation of the religion. In addition, these currents identify Western countries as one of the causes of the evils afflicting Muslim countries. Islamic terrorist groups aim to fight the enemies of Islam, and with it the Western countries. Fundamentalist religious groups intend to overthrow any government that has no affinity with their beliefs, and this includes the local governments themselves that do not aim to declare an Islamic state. Terrorism mainly affects Islamic countries, and from 2000 to 2017 more than 85% of attacks perpetrated by Islamist terrorist organizations took place in countries with a predominantly Muslim population (Global Terrorism Database, 2018).

The Mediterranean basin is one of the primary tourist regions of the world, where tourist activity has continued to increase since mass tourism began in the 1950s. One of the indispensable requirements of the tourism industry is the control of security, so as to generate a space of absolute tranquillity in the tourist destination. This occurs because tourists and tour operators are extraordinarily sensitive to any aspect related to security. Thus, in the case of the Mediterranean, a large tourism demand coincides in the same space as a considerable number of incidents that affect the safety of tourism. Hence, protection and risk limitation have a special importance in tourism management in the Mediterranean. It is indeed likely that, with regards to the Mediterranean security agenda, terrorist activity against tourism interests is the main element of concern, especially as such incidents against tourism have been numerous in some Mediterranean countries, particularly Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia, and have negatively affected economic activity.

One of the indispensable requirements of the tourism industry is the control of security, so as to generate a space of absolute tranquillity in the tourist destination.



**Graph 1. Incidents related to terrorism in Western Europe.**

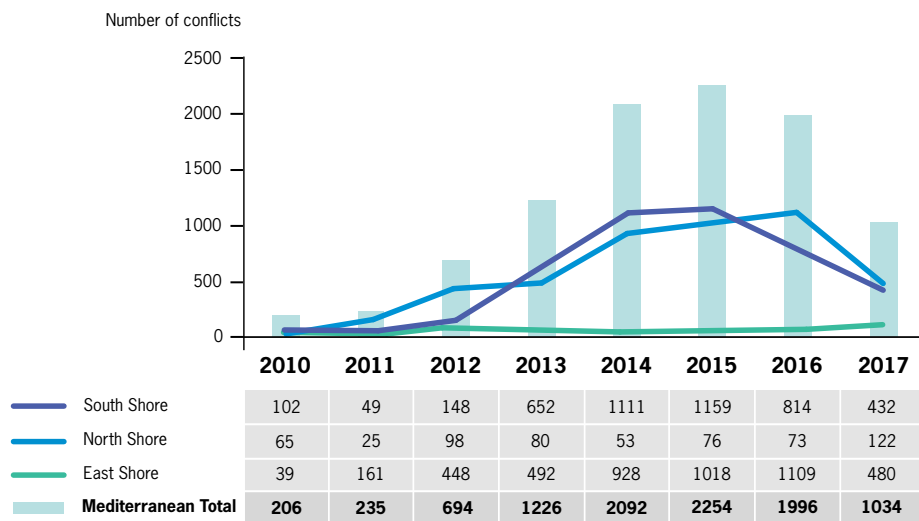


Source: Global Terrorism Database, 2018

Although the perception of public opinion in Western Europe is that terrorist attacks against tourists and tourism activities are numerous, the available information shows that both Europe and the Mediterranean only account for a small proportion of the total number of incidents, standing at 0.16% between 2010 and 2017 (Global Terrorism Database, 2018). In the international context, between 1990 and 2017 there were 378 attacks with a clearly tourism focused objective, located mainly in tourist countries. Europe suffered 15.9% of the attacks of this type, while 38.6% were located in Mediterranean countries (Global Terrorism Database, 2018). The countries with the most attacks with tourism focused purposes registered between 1990 and 2017 fall in this order: Egypt, Yemen, India, Turkey, and among European countries notably Spain, France and Italy. The two Mediterranean countries that have suffered the most incidents against tourists between 1990 and 2017 are Egypt (31) with the explosion of the Russian airplane in 2015 that left 224 tourists dead and Turkey (24). The attacks with the most victims in the tourism sector have occurred in Egypt, with the Russian plane attack being especially significant. The repetition of terrorist attacks in recent years in Egypt, Turkey, Tunisia and France has affected the tourism sector. Among the European countries with the highest number of incidents are Spain (16), Greece (14) and France (12). Only in the case of France, has the profusion of attacks in 2015 (Charlie Hebdo Newspaper, Sala Bataclan and Bar la Belle Epoque) produced a reduction in tourism flows in the country (see Graph 3).

In the Mediterranean basin, between 2010 and 2017 there were a total of 9,737 incidents related to terrorism, most of which were located in countries suffering serious internal instability or wars such as Libya (22.9%), Syria (21.1%) and Egypt (19.5%). Other countries that register a considerable number of events connected with terrorism are Turkey (15.8%), Israel (6.2%) Lebanon (4.8%) and Greece (2.7%) (Global Terrorism Database, 2010 -2017).

**Graph 2. Incidents related to terrorism in the Mediterranean basin.**



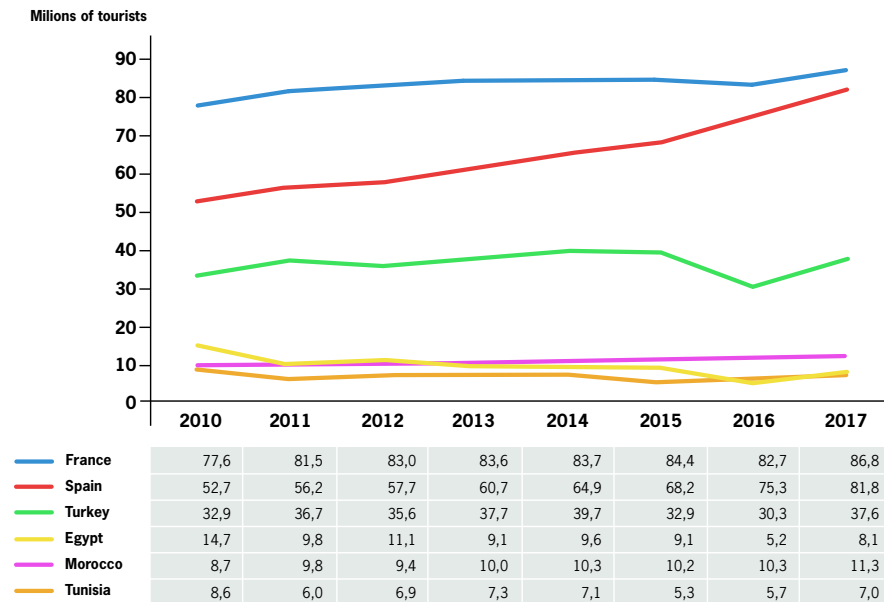
Source: Global Terrorism Database, 2018

Egypt is the country that has suffered the most attacks in tourism zones, which has led to a significant reduction in international tourist flows (see Graph 3). It is also one of the countries that has suffered the most economic losses as a result of terrorist attacks (La Vanguardia, 2014). In 2011, the Arab Spring led to a decrease in visitors, but this reduction intensified between 2015 and 2016 due to terrorism (Cairo, January 8, 2016) and a lack of air security, caused by the two terrorist attacks and the attempted hijacking of an EgyptAir flight (ABC, 2016). Russia and the United Kingdom even banned any air connection with the destination (Europa Press, 2016). Political instability has been linked to terrorist attacks, which has led to a sharp decline in tourist revenues and their impact on GDP (from 11.3% before the riots and terrorist acts to 3.5%) (OMT, 2010-2017). Egypt, which in 2010 was the primary recipient of tourism in Africa, received fewer tourists in 2016 than Tunisia.

Indeed, Tunisia itself is another example, considered the driving force of the Arab Spring and defender of democratic procedure. Terrorism aims to dismantle its evolution towards a Western democracy, and has used attacks as a political and economic tool. Thus, Tunisia has been the victim of serious attacks that have severely damaged their tourism image as well as the country's economy. On March 18, 2015 there was an attack on the National Museum of Bardo, in the city of Tunisia, which caused 24 deaths, of which 19 were tourists. At the beginning of the summer, on June 26, 2015, another attack took place in a coastal hotel in Susa (in front of the Riu Imperial Marhaba hotel), where 39 people died. As can be seen in figure 3, the Arab Spring of 2010 marked a serious decline in Tunisia's tourism quota, a situation further aggravated by the attacks of 2015. The scant diversification of Tunisia's economy, which is based on tourism, is compounded by a political instability that clearly compromises any improvement in the country's economy. Almost 50% of the country's income comes from international tourism; poor economic outcomes have caused the closure of many tourism

businesses, such as restaurants, shops and hotels. Those tourists who continue to visit the country stay within the system of all-inclusive resorts in search of greater security, thus generating a reduced economic impact outside these complexes.

**Graph 3. Evolution of international tourism in some Mediterranean destinations..**



Source: OMT, 2010-2017

In terms of its tourism receipt, Turkey was not affected by the Arab Spring. The arrival of tourists has grown in recent years, but the terrorist attacks of 2016, the internal political instability (attempted coup in July 2016), and the proximity of the war in Syria have all negatively affected tourism (see Graph 3). Across the Mediterranean basin, Turkey is the country that lost most tourism in absolute terms in 2016 - almost 9 million tourists - although there was a notable recovery in 2017. During 2016 there were three terrorist attacks: Istanbul (January 12, 2016 and June 28, 2016) and Ankara (March 13, 2016). These took place in two symbolic and strategic zones for tourism, one near the busy Blue Mosque and the other at the Atatürk international airport. They affected tourists of 13 different nationalities (51 civilians died and 260 were injured). In its capital, Ankara, 37 people died and 122 were injured due to the explosion of a car bomb. The situation of political instability in previous years culminated in a widespread coup d'état that caused 241 deaths and 2000 injuries (July 2016).

In the case of France, terrorist attacks have impacted international tourism numbers, its most potent tourism source. Those that proved particularly serious were the attacks in 2015 and 2016. At the beginning of 2015 there was an attack on the newspaper 'Charlie Hebdo' that left 20 dead, serving as a clear warning to possible criticisms from the press, and in November of the same year, 7 attacks occurred on the same night that left more than 140 dead, the most serious being at the Bataclan nightclub. A year later there was an attack directly against tourism on a promenade in the city of

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Nimes, which left 186 dead and 303 injured. These three attacks combined with a large number of incidents related to terrorism (129 between 2015-2017) (Global Terrorism Database, 2018), caused the 2016 decline in demand of some two million visitors, approximately (see Graph 3).

Although tourism has acted with great intensity in the countries of the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean, there is no neutral treatment of news related to terrorism. In the face of similar events, the media selects the news according to its objectives. The different treatment of news items by the media obeys the communication strategies identified by Chomsky (2010) or Ribas (2002), such as geographic or cultural proximity, sharing economic or political interests, belonging to a group of developed countries and headquarters of information organisations, etc.

Conflicts in non-European countries are presented within a context of constant political instability.

Conflicts in non-European countries are presented within a context of constant political instability, in many cases these countries are classified under the term “failed state”, while in Europe they are one-off events that “bring out the best in society”, through the demonstration of solidarity and examples of activities in daily life. The attacks on the north shore show images that reinforce the political systems, while in the south and east they demonstrate the situation of decomposition of governments.



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# ‘TOURISTIC SECURITY’: INTERROGATING AN EMERGING SECURITY PRACTICE

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In 2015 the United Nations published *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)* and, along with it, seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs) (United Nations 2015). The 2030 Agenda envisions a world characterised by good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, justice, dignity, well-being, inclusivity, equality, tolerance, environmental protection, and peace for *all*. Such a world, the *2030 Agenda* suggests, would be economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable (United Nations 2015). Many global organisations present tourism as the darling of global sustainable development. Indeed, the *2030 Agenda* states that the UN is ‘determined to promote sustainable tourism’ (United Nations 2015: point 33); the UN General Assembly named 2017 the *International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development*; the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) argues that sustainable tourism development can contribute to *all* seventeen SDGs (UNWTO 2018); and, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) claims that tourism can help create peaceful relations at the international and interpersonal levels (WTTC 2016).

Within this global development policy context, making tourism more sustainable has taken on ever greater pertinence. The UN defines sustainable tourism as: that which ‘takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities’ (UNEP and UNWTO 2005: 12). While the importance of sustainable tourism development is increasingly being stressed, the sustainability of tourism has also increasingly been called into question, especially due to rising insecurity which can reduce and/or redirect flows of tourists (Hall, Timothy and Duval 2003, Mansfeld and Pizam 2006, Pizam and Mansfeld 1996, Tarlow 2014). Following many organisations and scholars are stressing the need for “touristic security”, defined here as the practice of securing tourists to sustain tourism. Proponents of touristic security claim it to be a “win-win” human security practice fundamental to the achievement of global sustainable development (see, e.g.: UNWTO 2018). But is this really the case? I argue that constructing a world safe for tourists/tourism will not lead to a world made better and safer for all.

## How did touristic security emerge as an increasingly important practice?

Tourism has become a “valued-vulnerable” security object. While the economic value of tourism is most evident (Crotti and Misrahi 2017, UNWTO 2018), it has also become politically, culturally, socially, and personally valuable (Urry and Larsen 2011, Sheller and Urry 2004). With the value of tourism often uncontested, concerns are raised about “touristic threats”, defined as anything/anyone with the power to threaten flows of tourists. There is no tourism without tourists, and tourists tend to be risk adverse (ABTA 2016, Bianchi 2007). As many tourism scholars have shown, anything from risk imaginaries to terrorism, violence, crime, natural disasters, epidemics, and social unrest can affect flows of tourists and, thus, produce “tourism disasters” (Brunt, Mawby and Hambly 2000, Carter 1998, Hall, Timothy and Duval 2004, Hall et al. 2003, Lepp and Gibson 2003, Mansfeld and Pizam 2006, Pizam and Mansfeld 2006, Ryan 2012, Santana 2005, Sönmez and Graefe 1998, Sönmez 1998, Tarlow 2014, Tarlow 2009). With much riding on tourism, and many touristic threats lurking, the world is increasingly being made safe for tourists/tourism. It is here where one finds the emergence of touristic security. But how did this happen? How did tourism become so valuable and vulnerable?

While terrorism is certainly an important part of the emergence of touristic security (Sönmez and Graefe 1998, Sönmez 1998), the relationship between tourism and security should not be reduced to discussing terrorism. Likewise, I turn my attention to the neoliberal political economy of tourism and insecurity to try to better understand the dual processes of touristic valorisation and vulnerabilisation.

The value of tourism has risen with neoliberal capitalism (Harvey 2005). There are at least three reasons why this has happened. First, in order for a “free market” to function, there must also be free movement of capital, goods, services, and people as business personnel and consumers (Bauman 1998, Elliott and Urry 2010). Tourism presents the fundamental architecture facilitating neoliberal human spatial mobilities, and, thus, is central to the functioning of global neoliberal capitalism. Second, neoliberalism has reconceptualised development as successful participation in the global economy (McMichael 2004) and tourism is often presented as one of the most viable export-oriented tools of development in the Global South (Telfer and Sharpley 2008, Mowforth and Munt 2009 [1998]). This has led to growth in the tourism industry, greater economic dependency on tourism, and intense global tourism competition (Mowforth and Munt 2009 [1998], Telfer and Sharpley 2008, Urry and Larsen 2011). And, third, tourism produces new avenues for the accumulation of capital and, thus, helps to maintain and spread neoliberal global capitalism (Fletcher 2011).

Tourism produces new avenues for the accumulation of capital and, thus, helps to maintain and spread neoliberal global capitalism.

Neoliberal global capitalism can also be linked to a rise in ‘human insecurities’ (UNHSU 2009). Neoliberalisation has brought vastly unequal countries, businesses, and



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individuals into direct competition, benefiting those with strong starting positions (Harvey 2005, Kiely 2007), while at the same time supported policies which roll back the welfare state and social services, meaning that the “losers” of competition – otherwise known as the poor – no longer have the same protection (Wacquant 2009). As a result, while immense private wealth has been generated, so too has inequality, poverty, and precarity (Wacquant 2009, Walby 2009). As scholars have empirically shown, higher levels of inequality are linked to greater levels of violence (Walby 2009). While neoliberal global capitalism has produced greater human insecurity, instead of seeing it as part of the problem, it has been positioned as the solution. Indeed, rising insecurities have created demand for security, which is increasingly being met through competitive security markets (Abrahamsen and Williams 2011).

There are at least three ways in which this situation is linked to tourism. First, if one considers tourism to be a key part of neoliberal global capitalism, then, by extension, it can be argued to be part of the construction of greater human insecurity; indeed, scholars have shown how tourism creates diverse human insecurities around the world (Büscher and Fletcher 2017, Devine and Ojeda 2017). Second, in their ability to reduce/redirect global flows of tourists, human insecurities become “touristic threats”. Likewise, tourism in part creates its own problems. Finally, third, through tourism some human insecurities have been turned into commodified attractions and experiences, as especially seen in the case of poverty and slum tourism (Frenzel, Koens and Steinbrink 2012, Freire-Medeiros 2013, Mostafanezhad 2014). Likewise, while all tourists demand personal security, some consume the human insecurities of “Others” as touristic experiences. Instead of tackling the root causes of much touristic insecurity (social inequalities and human insecurities), calls are made for greater touristic security.

## ¿Cómo se practica la seguridad turística?

Neoliberal global capitalism has played an important role in converting tourism into a “valued-vulnerable” security object giving rise to touristic security. How is touristic security practiced? Touristic security is a highly complex security practice. It is enacted by a plethora of different actors at different scales, from global organisations to people living and working in tourism destinations. These actors use a vast array of formal and informal security strategies across a range of registers, from the legal to the affective (Becklake forthcoming-b, Becklake forthcoming-a). Consequently, one can easily find contradictions and contestations within this practice. Touristic security is carried out through both cooperative and competitive relationships. On the one hand, it is possible to find diverse actors cooperating in the aim of making “the world” safe for tourists/ tourism, and, on the other hand, touristic security is enacted as part of global tourism competition, whereby places and businesses compete to attract/satisfy tourists in part via their ability to provide them with higher levels of personal security (Santana 2005).

It is possible to identify four key sites of touristic security, each with their own internal logics. The site of the *tourist imaginary* aims to create safe destination images, shifting



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potential and actual tourists' risk perceptions to make them feel safe enough to travel. The sites of the *tourist bubble* and the tourist body aim to protect tourists as they visit destinations, keeping them from *actual bodily harm*. While the site of the tourist bubble achieves this by securing tourists within "safe" spaces/places, the site of the tourist body aims to secure tourists as they move through "risky" spaces/places. Finally, the site of the *touristic world* aims to protect tourists as they move between spaces/places at a distance. When touristic security fails, and "bad things" happen to tourists, "tourism disasters" can result. Therefore, touristic security not only aims to stop bad things from happening, but also seeks to minimize their negative effects when they do happen.

As international tourism is akin to international trade, and thus seen to be highly valuable in regards to the circulation of capital.

Touristic security takes tourists as proxy security objects for the global tourism system. While it aims to protect all tourists, not all tourists are considered equally valuable or vulnerable. As international tourism is akin to international trade, and thus seen to be highly valuable in regards to the circulation of capital, wealth production, and the ability to signal to investors that a place is safe for investment, international tourists tend to be deemed the most valuable. The high value put on international tourism is clearly evident in the construction of the World Economic Forum's *Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index* (Crotti and Misrahi 2017). Yet international tourists are also widely assumed to be particularly vulnerable to harm (Brunt et al. 2000, Lepp and Gibson 2003, Mansfeld and Pizam 2006). While the hyper-vulnerability of international tourists is contestable, as potential victims they are highly symbolically powerful, for when bad things happen to them it becomes global news with repercussions for destination images and the ability to attract future foreign investment/tourists (Sönmez 1998). Touristic security is, thus, based on a hierarchy of victims and protection.

Consequently, touristic security is fundamentally informed by inequalities which structure who can become an international tourist and, furthermore, by how these tourists imagine risks in the world, and this is highly informed by neocolonial relations and discourses. Not everyone can be a tourist, let alone an international tourist. Due to colonization, imperialism, development, and neoliberalism, international tourists have tended to originate in the Global North, but today also China (Enloe 2014). Through their long-standing ability to be international tourists, Westerners have had considerable "touristic power". In fact, it is *their* desires and *their* fears which have long defined places' touristic competitive advantages and disadvantages and, following, informed global tourism competition strategies (Becklake forthcoming-b, Becklake forthcoming-a). While Western tourists often fear travelling to the Global South (Carter 1998), the Global South also tends to depend on international tourism (Mowforth and Munt 2009 [1998]). Consequently, although touristic security is relevant for all tourism destinations, it emerges as particularly pertinent in the Global South.

## What are the consequences of touristic security?

Within each of the four sites of touristic security it is possible to find examples of how touristic security strategies are reproducing inequalities and creating new human insecurities, especially for local people (Becker and Müller 2013, Büscher and Fletcher 2017, Cornelissen 2011, Devine and Ojeda 2017, Devine 2014, Devine 2017, Lisle 2013, Ojeda 2013, Little 2014, Wynne-Hughes 2012, Becklake forthcoming-b, Becklake forthcoming-a). Beyond this, touristic security is part of: the construction of a global surveillance system, the transformation of the state security governance, and flexible citizenship for the privileged few.

Following Abrahamsen and Williams (2009, 2011), around the world one can find complex “global security assemblages” providing security to the actors and activities deemed essential for global neoliberal capitalism and export-oriented economic development. This is also seen in the case of tourism; indeed, touristic security is indicative of the emergence of a global touristic security assemblage. This type of security depends on surveillance. As Haggerty and Ericson explain (2000), neoliberal security governance has seen the creation of a “surveillant assemblage” composed of new information and communications technologies, which collects data and records, monitors, observes, and commodifies *all*. In other words, moving “freely” around the world increasingly comes at the cost of personal data and privacy (Morgan and Pritchard 2005). As many scholars working on the topic of surveillance suggest, this has the capacity to produce new human insecurities for *all* (Bigo 2014, Lyon 2002, Wright et al. 2010).

Touristic security is also transforming state forms of security governance. For example, one finds the use of the military to pacify place and people for tourism, the construction of special tourism police forces to protect tourists, and the speeding up of justice for international tourists (Becklake forthcoming-b, Becklake forthcoming-a, Cornelissen 2011, Devine 2014, Ojeda 2013). The “need” to provide touristic security may also be used as a rationale for the normalisation of states of exception, whereby the state suspends democratic forms of security governance and laws in order to secure their territories for tourism (Wynne-Hughes 2012). Here one finds how touristic security can be directly linked to the suspension of citizens’ freedoms and rights. Through global tourism security assemblages, touristic security is also challenging traditional practices of sovereignty. For example through the practice of sharing sovereignty over touristic spaces during mega-events with sporting associations (Cornelissen 2011) or allowing police forces from other countries to enter and protect/police their citizens while abroad (e.g. Chinese police in Europe).

Touristic security is a powerful part of what Anthropologist Aihwa Ong calls ‘flexible citizenship’ (Ong 1999). The notion of flexible citizenship describes how people are able to access rights and entitlements in very de-territorialised and disarticulated ways, and how this process is highly informed by global inequalities. Whereas modern citizenship has long been understood as official membership to a state, which includes rights and entitlements alongside duties and responsibilities, the concept of flexible

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citizenship emphasises how the privileged few are able to travel the world and, *de facto* or *de jure*, gain rights and entitlements practically anywhere, and, at the same time, skirt many duties and responsibilities. Through touristic security, tourists are offered a premium security service; in countries of high levels of violence or crime, they may receive better protection than average (non-elite) citizens (see, e.g.: Little 2014). All this, of course, stands in direct contrast to the majority of the world's people who are still struggling for substantive citizenship in their own states. Touristic security often exacerbates this struggle.

## Final Considerations

Proponents of touristic security argue that it is a “win-win” human security practice supportive of global sustainable development. But touristic security is not a human security practice. In fact, its logics contravene the basic principle of human security, which conceptualizes *all* people as having the equal right to security. Touristic security finds value in tourists as consumers, not as human beings. Instead of being a form of human security, it provides a mobile form of consumer protection. While touristic security can certainly help to sustain tourism economies and tourism as a privileged form of travel, it is also (re)producing inequalities, creating new human insecurities, and transforming institutions. We have to seriously ask ourselves what type of development touristic security produces and whether this will support the global goal of sustainable development as outlined in the *2030 Agenda*. If not, then we have to think critically about the rise of touristic security and consider alternatives. I end with two potential alternatives: a reformist and a revolutionary one.

A reformist approach would require moving beyond the partial reading of the relationship between tourism and security, which positions tourism as a tool of human security and world peace, to look at the complex ways in which tourism is informed by and informing of human (in)securities, and to challenge touristic security policies/strategies which undermine human security. Following, the goal would be to manage tourism in a way which makes sure it contributes to everyone's human security, especially citizen security. This would require room to limit or say “no” to tourism. Conversely, a revolutionary approach would not try to make touristic security “better”, but rather to do away with the conditions which have helped give rise to it in the first place. This would require challenging the inequalities which produce tourism as a privileged form of travel and which propagate human insecurities. Doing so would necessitate creating a political-economic system which prioritises social justice and human security over individual wealth accumulation and commodified security. With this second alternative we could find hope for a more sustainable and secure world for all.

This would require challenging the inequalities which produce tourism as a privileged form of travel and which propagate human insecurities.

# REFUGEES AND TOURISTS: THE TWO FACES OF MEDITERRANEAN GEOPOLITICS<sup>26</sup>

**Cecilia Vergnano**<sup>27</sup>

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With its dual characteristics of being the southernmost border of the European Union and, at the same time, a highly attractive tourist destination, the Mediterranean is at the centre of a particularly complex scenario within which different mobilities of people and capitals overlap: on the one hand, tourists in search of spaces for leisure, relaxation and disconnection; on the other, refugees fleeing from wars or simply looking for better opportunities for themselves and their families<sup>28</sup>.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the Mediterranean has gained increasing visibility within a geopolitical context marked by the increase in forced displacement from the global South. As a consequence of increasingly restrictive European migration policies, it has become the deadliest border in the world (Fargues 2017). According to UNHCR, since 2014 approximately two million people have travelled the routes of the western, central and eastern Mediterranean, landing on the coasts of Spain, Italy and Greece (more than one million in 2015 alone).<sup>29</sup> In the same period of time, on the same routes, 17,821 have been recorded as dead or disappeared<sup>30</sup>.

To understand the contemporary geopolitical framework of mobility in the Mediterranean in its complexity (whether that of tourists or refugees), many factors must be taken into account. To enumerate them in their totality would exceed the limits of this section, however, it is important to mention the different implications and consequences of the

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26 Translation by Sharon Farley.

27 This article is written within the framework of the "Rejection Regimes: An Ethnographic Study of the Social Life of Intra-EU Border Regimes" (REJREG) project, under the Horizon 2020 programme - Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (grant number 792793).

28 In an attempt to escape from the institutional category "refugees"/"economic migrants", I will use the name "refugees" with reference to all persons in a subaltern position in the visa system (and, therefore, with limited possibilities of mobility under conditions of legality and colourlessness), obliged to move to countries considered safer in order to protect their lives or simply to seek better life opportunities for themselves and their families.

29 As a result of the agreements between Spain and Morocco in the mid-1990s, the most traversed routes are those of the central Mediterranean (between Libya and Italy) and the eastern side (between Turkey and Greece). Compared with all trans-Mediterranean displacements, arrivals in Spain constitute only 4.9%; though, since 2017, the trend is on the rise.

30 In the central Mediterranean route (between Italy and Libya), in particular, migration contrast policies translate into the recent increase in the mortality rate, despite decreases in arrivals from 2017.

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commonly named “Arab Spring” of 2011: NATO’s military intervention in Libya, also in 2011, which led to the execution of its dictator, Ghaddafi, producing a situation of political and military instability in the country; the war in Syria; European migration policies and, especially, the Dublin Treaty; the so-called “Southern European issue”, that is, the debt crisis in the countries of southern Europe (depreciatively defined under the acronym PIGS: Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain) and the concomitant application of austerity policies.

It is significant to note that, if on the one hand the geopolitical instability affecting countries that are traditional tourist destinations (Egypt, Tunisia) favours its competitors in the Mediterranean region (Greece and Spain have registered exceptional income linked to tourism in recent years), on the other hand, *this same instability* is the cause of a good part of forced displacements across the Mediterranean. Libya’s political instability, in particular, has favoured both the systematic violations of migrants’ human rights (in a country where the demand for labour has been significant until recently, with the consequent presence of workers from much of the African continent), and, simultaneously, the creation of an industry of clandestine passages to Europe, in dinghies and other precarious vessels.

On the other hand, the European regulation of competition over asylum claims (Dublin Treaty), which establishes that this responsibility falls on the European country of first arrival (and, therefore, mostly on the “frontline” countries of the southern border: Spain, Greece and Italy), it causes an overload on the reception and social security systems of

countries already severely tested by the economic crisis and austerity policies applied to deal with public debts. Some elements of the so-called “Southern European issue” are high unemployment rates, poverty, increased emigration (including skilled workers and young people with high levels of education), cuts in public spending<sup>31</sup>, increased fiscal pressure, and the drastic reduction of wages.

The expansion of the tourism sector acquires an essential role in the national economy, and conflicts with the so-called “migration crisis” affecting some of the most attractive tourist paradises in the Mediterranean.

In this context, the expansion of the tourism sector acquires an essential role in the national economy, and conflicts with the so-called “migration crisis” affecting some of the most attractive tourist paradises in the Mediterranean<sup>32</sup>.

## Lampedusa and Lesbos at the crossroads

Especially paradigmatic are the cases of the islands of Lampedusa (halfway between Tunisia and Italy) and Lesbos (only six miles from the Turkish coast). According to the Italian Ministry of the Interior, 162,957 refugees landed in Lampedusa from 2007 to

31 In the case of Greece, the health cuts have been reflected in an increase in mortality (Kouvelakis 2018).

32 Simultaneously, in these social contexts the competitiveness among the most vulnerable population sectors has increased, and new political entities have capitalised on the arrivals of refugees in terms of the creation of a xenophobic consensus.

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2017. In 2015, Lesbos alone received more than half a million refugees (UNHCR data), approximately 58% of those who travelled through Greece in the same year, en route to northern Europe. When searching for images of these islands on the web, the contrast between the images of them as tourist resorts, with spectacular beaches and crystal clear waters on the one hand, and images of the human tragedy of refugees (men, women and children in overcrowded boats, shipwrecks, people rescued in desperate conditions, corpses) on the other, is particularly shocking. The perception of these islands as places of emergency and humanitarian crisis, characterised by danger and death, is a remarkable problem for communities largely dependent on tourism. In this context, the “welcome culture”<sup>33</sup>, although very much alive, is put firmly to the test.

The tension between tourism and humanitarian emergency has been managed mostly through a marked separation of space on these islands, between those areas dedicated to the leisure of tourists and those reserved for migrants.

The tension between tourism and humanitarian emergency has been managed mostly through a marked separation of space on these islands, between those areas dedicated to the leisure of tourists and those reserved for migrants (Hannam 2017; Melotti, Ruspini and Marra 2018). The latter have been made invisible through the construction of reception centres and the protocolisation of reception itself (Mazzara 2015), and a parallel “war of numbers” (with a tendency on the part of inhabitants to minimize the quantities of arrivals, especially in the toughest years of the economic and financial crisis) (Franck 2018; Melotti et al. 2018). Although there are numerous attempts to blame refugees and NGOs for the negative

impacts on tourism (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou 2018), the causal relationship between the so-called migration “crisis” and the crisis in the tourism sector in islands such as Lesbos or Lampedusa is not clear.

Alongside the strategies of invisibilisation of the migratory “crisis”, set in motion for the preservation of the tourist economy, in Lampedusa and Lesbos an authentic “border spectacle” has been effectuated (Cuttitta 2012; Genova 2013), exposed more or less frequently by the media, which has contributed to the arrival, especially in Lesbos, of thousands of international workers and volunteers (Guribye and Stalsberg Mydland 2018; Papataxiarchis 2016): lifeguards, humanitarian industry professionals, doctors, nurses, chefs, artists, photographers, researchers, teachers, priests, lawyers, journalists, summer university students, unemployed volunteers, retirees or students, with positive repercussions on the island economies. In fact, it is possible to identify such a phenomenon in the broader framework of *voluntourism* (tourism of volunteers and activists) that characterises the contemporary economy of disasters (Holmes and Smith 2009; Whittaker, McLennan and Handmer 2015).

This new form of volunteering includes people who act spontaneously and episodically, with a growing industry combining travel, pleasure and activism, as well as citizen and private development initiatives (often derived from previous experiences of trips

33 The Mayor of Lampedusa, Giusi Nicolini, has received the UNESCO Peace Prize in 2017, “for her humanity and constant efforts in managing the humanitarian crisis” (<https://es.unesco.org/news/giuseppina-nicolini-alcalde-sa-lampedusa-y-ong-sos-mediterranee-ganan-premio-felix-houphouet>)

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to the South), and the influx of small grassroots organisations. What these new forms of volunteering have in common is the tendency to move away from structured NGOs and state agencies, instead channelling individual initiatives in a more flexible and less structured fashion (Schulpen and Huyse 2017)<sup>34</sup>. The strong presence of international volunteers in Lesbos in 2015 and in subsequent years has to be analysed in the light of these global trends. Thousands of volunteers of all genders, ages, geographical origin and social class have gathered massively on the beaches of the island, staying at local hotels, with a lasting average of one week (Guribye and Stalsberg Mydland 2018). Many restaurants (for example, *The Captain's Table*, in the port of Molyvos) have become meeting places for international volunteers. At the same time, disused tourist establishments, such as old abandoned hotels, have been converted into temporary shelters for hundreds of refugees (Lisley and Johnson 2018).

However, in contrast to the management of disasters and humanitarian emergencies in other parts of the world, in Lesbos there has been no commercial initiative aimed at *voluntourism* (with the offer of travel packages + accommodation), despite the potential demand (Guribey, Stalsberg and Mydland 2018). This probably reflects the desire of many tour operators to move away completely from any aspect related to the refugee “crisis”, with the hope that traditional tourists would finally return. During the winter of 2017, with prohibitive climatic conditions due to snowfall on the island, the Lesbos Hotel Association positioned itself against offering rooms to refugees and volunteers (however, some establishments have rejected this ban)<sup>35</sup>.

With the recent decline in migratory movements, the protocolisation of reception, and the increasing criminalisation of rescue missions by NGO vessels, South European governments are moving towards a “return to normal” direction in the Mediterranean, to the detriment of the fundamental human rights of thousands of people in search of international protection. Despite the strong turn towards increased security in the management of the Mediterranean border leading to an increasingly high invisibilisation of shipwrecks (and human rights violations in Libya), the dispossession and expulsion processes (Sassen 2014), combined with political instability, migrant crossings persist in many countries of the global South. Hence, at no time can the investment in the downward trend of migratory movements across the Mediterranean be excluded.

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34 Initiatives of this type have been observed, for example, in Southeast Asia after the 2004 tsunami, and in Japan after the Fukushima nuclear catastrophe (Samuels 2013).

35 In the Greek islands, the attitude of local governments towards the conversion of the islands themselves into ‘hotspots’ (with the construction of migrant identification and classification centres, and the presence of European authorities) has been uneven. For example, in Lesbos and Samos, local governments have long consented to the transformation of these islands into hotspots and welcomed a large number of humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR, the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders. On the other hand, local governments of other potential Greek hotspots, such as the islands of Kos and Agathonisi, have consistently rejected the implementation of camps according to the hotspot model and the installation of NGOs, claiming the “magnet” effect for the arrival of new refugees and the possible damage to local tourism-dependent economies (New Keywords Collective 2016).



# ANNEX: EXPERIENCES SOUTHERN EUROPE AS AN ANTI-TOURISM POLITICAL SPACE<sup>36</sup>

**Reme Gómez y Daniel Pardo**

Assemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible (ABTS)

In 2018, the SET Network of Southern European Territories against Tourism was established. It is currently made up of a score of nodes in Portugal, Italy, Malta and Spain: Venice, Valencia, Seville, Rome, Porto, Palma, Pamplona/Iruña, Napoles, Malta, Malaga, Madrid, Lisbon, Girona, Florence, Ibiza/Pitiusas, San Sebastián/Donostia, Córdoba, Canary Islands, Bergamo and Barcelona. Throughout the world, hyper-mobility and the tourist boom as a prime leisure activity for those who can afford it are leading to processes with serious social and environmental consequences. The fad of urban tourism, built upon through years of promotion and public financing, has created similar types of conflicts in many cities that previously occurred only in rural or natural environments. The population density that characterizes the urban environment causes a great number of affected dwellers, facilitating the expansion of their critical and resistance reactions. Meanwhile the media focus on cities, rather than natural environments allows for a more immediate amplification of its message.

In Southern Europe, essentially the Mediterranean, we are witnessing a specialization of the region in tourist exploitation of all kinds of surroundings, in especial urban areas, with a series of social, professional, environmental and quality of life impacts, which city dwellers are rejecting. These experiences have begun to reproduce with such intensity that citizen self-organization has been the response that this off-kilter situation demands.

## **Diversity of local realities, roads and coordinated resistance**

The majority of groups that have participated in the setting up of the SET Network have previous experience in self-organisation: groups that had been working for rights to the city or housing, or against touristification of their territories. Establishing the network has taken place almost spontaneously through a succession of meetings and mutual

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36 Translation by Melanie Keeling.

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visits since 2016. That year in Barcelona the First Neighborhood Forum on Tourism<sup>37</sup>, a space born with the spirit of sharing experiences, was held. Wishing to analyze the processes suffered, we studied how to deal with them and seek joint alternatives, as well as show that they were not just a local problem, and there were common patterns of action made use of by both the private and public sectors. Organizations from Palma, Camp de Tarragona, Malaga and Venice, whose common backgrounds called us, were invited. It was then that we realized how much we had in common, both in relation to the problems and conflicts faced and criticisms and proposals made. In the following months, there were similar meetings in Palma, Donostia and Lisbon. The idea of building this network developed naturally. From the beginning, the objectives of this *glocal* action strategy, which include knowledge exchange and network learning, was to go further and openly point to the inception of a social movement against touristification on a European or South European scale.

After months of coordinated work amongst the first nodes of the network, the proposal was moved to different cities during the spring of 2018, where several local presentations were made at the end of April. Shortly afterwards, coinciding with the 2nd Neighborhood Forum on Tourism in Barcelona, the official presentation of the SET Network took place, at that time having 12 nodes, along with its first meeting<sup>38</sup>.

In April 2019, the second meeting of the network took place in Seville, during the celebration of the ESTAR, a counter-summit organized by the collective CACTUS (Collective Assembly Against the Touristification of Sevilla<sup>39</sup>) parallel to and in opposition to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) summit, the world's leading tourist lobby.

## The need to coordinate local responses to global problems. Geo-political areas and limits

Synthesizing this first stage, we can say that the SET network is a young and growing initiative, which marks a new perspective of heterogeneous resistance groups under the premise of working collectively, preserving the autonomy and respecting local contexts. It also faces the novel nature of resistance to tourism processes, the lack of public and academic information, and the lies made official truths through repetition *ad infinitum* of mantras like “tourism is good for everyone because it brings wealth and jobs”, or “tourism values local heritage and encourages diverse culture exchange”, etc.

The creation of the network and its novelty determine the challenges of its internal functioning, assumed almost naturally, as a result of the experience of the groups that comprise it. The network is open to the incorporation of any node through any

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37 <https://assembleabarris.wordpress.com/forumveinalturisme/>

38 <https://assembleabarris.wordpress.com/2018/05/08/programa-del-2n-forum-veinal-sobre-turisme-18-i-19-de-maig/>

39 <https://cactusevilla.wordpress.com/>

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collective or entity that assumes its manifesto, objectives and ways of functioning. Once the objectives are clear, the challenges have much more to do with the forms of coordination according to geographical distance and harmonization of calendars based on groups involved in strictly local struggles and/or other related issues.

Many of the network's groups also work specifically in the struggle for rights to housing or actively collaborate with it, having to do with both the proximity and intersectionality between this struggle and resistance against touristification, as these groups often come from that struggle and have been reformulated by the harshness of the processes brought about by tourism. Social movements are transversal to our territories and our struggles intersect. But diversity also affects organisational structure. We were happily surprised to see how the first Italian nodes, Venice and Florence, have positively influenced groups from other cities with whom they collaborate on issues about common assets. The most surprising thing is that these new additions have immediately identified themselves as SET nodes to the point that names such as SET Napoli have been implemented, working with their own collective logic, based on previous understanding and shared language. These nodes are rapidly absorbing and projecting previous experience against touristification on their territories, in the same way that they share their own experiences on the sale of patrimony and management of common assets. The diversity of contexts and realities, which may initially seem to be an obstacle for the network, can end up encouraging and contributing to it

The nodes have agreed to meet up once a year, keeping in contact between meetings, to maintain communication, outline organizational needs and coordinate at least one common action to coincide with World Tourism Day, September 27, when the tourism sector is traditionally celebrated. Since the beginning we had it clear that within the SET network, the geographical area of Southern Europe had a role inherited from the global tourism process. We assume that tourism processes respond to global economic-financial patterns, but we have understood that this geographical framework carries political significance. Southern Europe inherently suggests concepts such as crisis, austerity, PIGS, etc., and this conceptual landscape corresponds to a shared intuition of a post-crisis panorama in which weakened countries seek recovery through a specialization in tourism that projects Southern Europe as a first world holiday playground. This geo-political concept of the network can lead to questions as to whether it would make sense to incorporate Paris, Amsterdam or Reykjavik, to give examples of European cities where there is also tourist resistance. Or, how we could establish a relationship on the southern shore of the Mediterranean; territories that do not formally belong to Europe. but clearly enter into tourist circuits, as well as in the political-economic sense of the imaginary of Southern Europe. These are issues that have yet to be debated within the fledgling network.

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There is a long way to go until European institutions are aware of social, environmental and people's rights, and how the currently unbounded, voracious tourism sector is accordingly legislated and regulated.

## Coordination, complicity and self-organization

Some objectives of this initiative are easy to imagine, others perhaps somewhat less. There is a need to take the fight against touristification to a higher level, on the scale of the dynamics of the tourist industry and the public institutions that should govern it, but often regrettably collaborate, legitimise, promote and/or directly finance it. The ABTS was born in 2015 due to the need to coordinate and bring Barcelona's neighborhood struggle to a city scale. The SET Network aims to generate a discourse against the touristification of Southern Europe, within a dynamic of mutual support and as a resonance box of different voices. The goal is to form a chorus that questions something as obvious and as distant as European Union institutions. There is a long way to go until European institutions are aware of social, environmental and people's rights, and how the currently unbounded, voracious tourism sector is accordingly

legislated and regulated. A long road and little time, if we take into account factors as urgent as climate emergency or accelerated vital precariousness in the touristic cities. A *glocal* function has a clear role in all of this.

Part of the work has to do directly with re-scaling the struggle: construction of a critical narrative, de-legitimization of false discourse and perverse policies, unmasking lobbies, etc. However, we cannot claim to denounce the prevailing triumphalist discourse of harmless tourism that generates wealth and convey criticism to the population of our territories without being aware of social and economic

realities. Without this knowledge, we cannot influence mass media or our neighbors. The SET Network can help broaden the social base of different groups, both by transmission and by the fact that in many of our cities innovative proposals or criticism is not taken seriously when it comes from within and is better received when it comes from outside. Thus, the resonance amongst the various nodes generate synergies and mutual support. Another of the network's facets is the consideration and discussion of touristified contexts amongst like-minded individuals who communicate on a regular basis. Despite part of the discourse against touristification quickly entering collective thinking, the number of people mobilized in this regard remains relatively discreet. Communicating and coordinating with like-thinking peers from different areas, but in non-identical contexts, opens unexpected paths. An example of practical collaboration amongst network nodes concerns the complaint against locating a franchise of the Hermitage Museum within the new mouth of the Port of Barcelona, next to Hotel W. A large real estate operators' speculative project, which sought rapid private benefits through a genuine marketable catering endeavour with an artistic alibi, would have an immediate impact on mobility and tourism in Barceloneta. When several entities in Barcelona began to investigate this ploy, we recalled that collaborators in *Ecologistas en Acción-Málaga*, active node in the SET network, had told us about the Russian Museum there, also commercially linked to the Hermitage of St. Petersburg. They sent us information concerning its need for public funding from the beginning, as this type of project is not profitable in and of itself. Curiously, the same day our investigation

denouncing the project was presented, we received news from Malaga that their city council was using the disastrous figure of Hotel W, an urban, political and landscape disgrace, as an example to follow.

The diversity of local realities, as well as the intervention of the tourist industry in its attempts to exploit each territory, mean that the answers to an essentially shared problem may be very different. We share both points of view and criticism, but local proposals are not necessarily valid for all places. In Barcelona, we want and need touristic de-growth, but elsewhere it is much more appropriate to simply think about how to stop or reorganise the situation. When we say touristic de-growth, we mean economic diversification, taxation as a means of control and containment, analysis of social and environmental impacts, etc. But control of lobbies and public institutions as well, as they are often entities at the service of large economic powers, establishing public policies perceived as touristic, aimed at this function and affecting our daily lives by changing the profile of our societies without taking into account the people that make them up.

### **The complexity and challenges of a transversal problem**

In one year, we have gone from 12 initial nodes to the current 21, moving in a complex and almost classical balance established between the desire of incorporating more nodes and groups, on the one hand, and the need to focus on consolidating the collective dynamics of those already participating on the other. We have understood the additional difficulty of communication and coordination when distances are great and face-to-face meetings, which multiply the evident effectiveness, occur only once a year. After more than four years' experience, we have become the Neighbourhood Assembly for Sustainable Tourism (ABTS) with all the previous baggage of neighborhood and theme groups involved. We have it clear that the challenge is to continue to fight against official policy, which at the social/political level legitimizes the criticism and proposals we make and that allows us to open new avenues. Social movements and critical academics responded well to the first -and failed- reaction of the tourism industry to the wave of critical organizing against touristification of multiple spaces. The invention of tourismophobia as an attempt to blame the victims for their own grievances was quickly discredited and came to pose a threat to their own interests.

Once this panorama had been overcome, the industry returned to clearer answers in the line of seasonally adjusted and de-concentrated tourism, poor smoke screens that fail to cover their social and environmental shame, nor hide their essence of infinite growth. However, in the media it sells very well. Lately, there is talk of the need to limit grow, but without mentioning any measures to do so. Relying on tourism management is nothing more than an excuse to continue growing, and speaking of the need to achieve higher quality tourism is clearly classist, as well as hardly feasible. The challenge for the short-term future is to refute once again this doublespeak which the conjurers of the tourism industry try to keep diverting our attention, while continuing

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to reach into the pocket of public funds, damaging territory, the environment, and exploiting and destabilising workers. Without ever, ever forgetting that climate emergency is no longer a risk, but the most dangerous of certainties we have hanging over us, and the very governments that commit to working to minimize its scope and consequences continue to work with and for the tourism industry.



Ayvalik, Balıkesir\_Panegyrics of Granovetter. Creative Commons license.







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