

## **Inbound tourism and economic and social risks: Amidst the pandemic and regional conflicts**

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**Objectives** | Between December 2019 and October 2023, three events of exceptional impact and scope occurred almost sequentially: the COVID-19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and the war between Israel and Hamas (Glantz, 2023; Mehvar, 2023; Onyeaka et al., 2021).

If, in the beginning, all of them were limited to certain regions, their direct and indirect effects quickly became global (OECD, 2023; WEF, 2023; World Bank, 2023). Rarely has the world been hit, almost simultaneously, by such damaging circumstances, in such an intense way and incisive effects, particularly in the economic and social dimensions (Arce et al., 2023; IMF, 2023; Pasimeni, 2022; UN, 2022).

Tourism activity, because it contemplates the perception of risk, which has a significant increase in the behavioural variables of tourists, is also very exposed and sensitive to events of this nature (Behsudi, 2020; Seabra & Korstanje, 2023; UNWTO, 2023b; Vaz Serra & Seabra, 2023).

We aim to carry out an analysis of the registered movements which, whether stable, positive, or negative, allow us to conclude about similarities and differences between countries; the space each one has as an inbound tourism country; and the reading of their populations in the face of atypical years. We also intend to conclude on the dependence that each country has on tourist activity and how much this corresponds to an increased vulnerability to events of unusual occurrence and dimension.

**Methodology** | We propose a study, based on the 7 main inbound tourism markets worldwide (UNWTO, 2023a) – France, Spain, the United States, Turkey, Italy, Mexico, and the United Kingdom – surveys and analyses for some of their main socio-economic indicators, such as population, GDP per capita, inflation rate, unemployment rate, savings rate, with the inbound flows and inbound tourism revenue. Chronologically, five years will be considered, between 2019 and 2023, to allow a dynamic and more precise analysis of the effects of the pandemic, considered extinct, and the ongoing conflicts. Using panel data methodology, data will be obtained through official and

secondary sources from IMF (2023), OECD (2023), UN (2022), UNWTO (2023a, 2023 b), WEF (2023), and the World Bank (2023).

**Main Results and Contributions** | The evaluation of the indicators mentioned above and over the years in question will allow us to establish, using panel data and time series, because they originate from different realities, recommending double readings, common and specific.

Given the broad scope of the analysis, contributions are expected for science, management, as well as public decision-makers, considering, respectively (i) the absence of studies with a methodology that uses a series of indicators that are complementary and recent; (ii) a comparative analysis of the results, demonstrating realities with common and distinctive features; (iii) the support that central, regional and local authorities can provide, given these facts and circumstances.

Among these, a better knowledge of the behavioural variables of tourists is expected, when faced with adverse, endogenous, and exogenous factors, of significant use to stakeholders, as it allows better planning and anticipation of current and future scenarios.

For government entities, as well as international organisations and multilateral bodies, useful contributions are also expected, as they are based on an analysis of realities with different origins, but capable of revealing common traits of action and reaction on the part of travellers, with an impact on tourist activity.

**Limitations** | This work is an integral part of a set of three ongoing papers by the same authors and with an identical approach methodology: this one, which covers the main inbound tourism markets; another, which focuses on the main outbound tourism markets; and, finally, a third, where a comparative analysis of the results obtained is carried out. Therefore, a partial approach to a topic that will gain consistency when seen from a global perspective, that is, with the conclusion of the three ongoing works.

On the other hand, there are other factors, apart from the consequences of the pandemic and the conflicts in question, which can influence the economic and social indicators of countries and their populations. In addition, inbound tourism can be influenced by factors other than those mentioned. Therefore, this is an approach that adapts to the time and circumstances but does not exhaust the alternative scenarios.

**Conclusions** | An investigation based on some of the main inbound tourism countries seeks to find a relationship between economic and social indicators and the behaviour of inbound tourist flows over the last 5 years appears pertinent. We have not found a study with identical characteristics in existing literature.

As the work has not yet been completed, it is not possible to present specific conclusions beyond the perspective of the relevant contributions already mentioned.

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