



## SOME CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE DYNAMICS OF TOURISM IN NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES

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**Abstract** *In the Maghreb countries, the tertiary sector (eg services, transport, tourism) together with the primary sector are the most important branches of the economy. Between 2000 and 2010, the tertiary sector has greatly contributed to GDP growth, trade and employment growth. After 2005, telecommunications, transport, power supply services have become increasingly competitive, thus improving the medium-term prospects of the North African economy. The sub-components of the tertiary sector have a great influence both on the social component and on the development of the physical infrastructure in these states. Thus, physical infrastructure supports basic services such as natural gas, drinking water and electricity, and in the long run will contribute to the sustainable development of services.*  
*Taking into account that the Maghreb states are major producers and exporters of hydrocarbons, minerals, agricultural fertilizers, but also that their economies depend on fluctuations in the oil and commodity trade, governments are investing in other areas such as tourism and hospitality in order to diversify economic activities. In this respect, Morocco and Tunisia want to build a tourist market, Morocco aspires to become a top 20 tourist destination by 2020, while Tunisia invests in medical and cultural tourism areas and ecotourism offers a variety of experiences for various travels.*

**Key words:**

*Development  
tourism, economic  
growth, foreign  
tourists, terrorism*

**JEL Codes:**

**Z30  
Z32**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

North Africa differs from the other regions of Africa by having a direct access to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean, while at the same time being the main maritime route of illegal immigrants to Europe, a smuggling point, transnational organized crime and trafficking people. The capitals of these states and major cities are located in the seaside area, with several urban settlements that function as an industrial extraction area. These countries also have a touristic potential and in recent years efforts have been made to

capitalize on the development of the economy by attracting tourists and foreign investors.

Maghreb states have a common history as well as present concerns about instability in the region. The official language of these states is Arabic, the political system is different, as follows: Morocco is a constitutional monarchy, Egypt and Algeria are semi-presidential republics, and Libya and Tunisia are republics. Unlike other neighboring countries, starting in 2015, Morocco has a new administrative organization by applying the regionalization project announced in 2011.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The tourism industry annually attracts millions of tourists who want to discover new places, have fun and practice sports. The purpose of tourism is to meet the needs of tourists by offering them comfortable accommodation, high quality food and entertainment. At the global economy, tourism had a direct contribution of \$ 2.23 trillion in 2015 and \$ 71 billion (Statista, 2015) in North Africa, a high value when the contribution to the African continent was \$ 180 billion (World Trade and Tourism Council, 2015).

According to the Africa Tourism Monitor, over the years, countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia have recorded a large number of tourists followed by other African states such as Cameroon, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde, Seychelles. Most tourists visiting North African countries come from Europe, the US and China, and other Arab countries, but their numbers began to decline after the Arab Spring.

Also, according to the booking agency's Expedia.Inc, booking of tickets and tourist packages made by foreign tourists looked at three destinations in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt followed by South Africa, the city with the most reservations was Marrakech.

As far as the countries of origin and the purpose of travel to North African countries are concerned, the top three are the United States, the United Kingdom and France, whose citizens come to these countries for business. According to data of Statista, the number of UK business visits to Egypt was 15,000, Morocco 8,000, Tunisia 6,000,

and Algeria and Libya 3,000. While Chinese citizens visit Algeria and Egypt.

In the period 2001-2010, two states have gone through a similar situation, Egypt has seen a three-fold increase in the number of tourists to 14.7 million tourists, but after 2011 the number of tourists decreased by one third, Tunisia, which has risen by 2010 and then sharply declined due to the upheavals of dictatorial regimes. The opposite is Algeria, which is not as well developed as its neighbors, tourists' arrivals are related to visits to families.

## 3. RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

To highlight the dynamics of tourism in North African states, the World Trade and Tourism Council, World Data Atlas and Statist data for the period before the Arab Spring until 2017 were analyzed. After the Arab Spring, the tourism industry was affected by a series of factors such as terrorist attacks and internal political instability that led to slippages and foreign policy. In case of incidents, the terrorists target the tourist attractions as they have a great impact on tourism (DePuma, 2015) because the terrorists target the tourists, the places and institutions they visit, the resorts or places of residence of the political people, the business is also visited by a large number of international tourists.

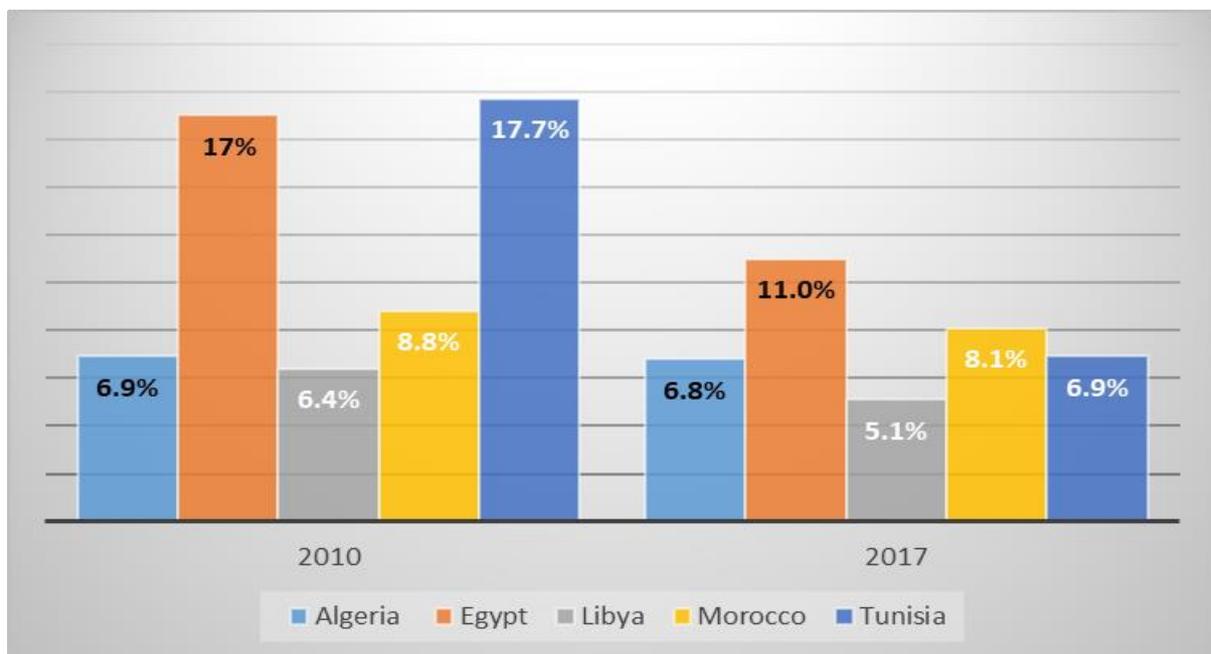
Terrorists' motivation for tourism objectives is that the image of terrorist organizations is growing (Stremtan & Susman, 2006), especially as tourism is the symbol of capitalism, and an assault or kidnapping of an adverse western country is a direct

blow to the enemy state. Also, attacking tourist attractions that represent the tourist symbols of a state directly leads to a decrease in the number of tourists who choose either to stay in the country or to choose a safe destination and indirectly leads to balance of payments instability and an environment of uncertain business.

Producing a terrorist attack in a country that has many deaths and injuries leads to a decline in tourism by lowering the purchase of tourist

packages for those destinations, correlated with the decrease in flight booking and ultimately leading to the postponement or cancellation of meetings, international conferences scheduled in these areas. As can be seen in Figure 1, North African countries were visited by a large number of tourists in the period before the Arab Spring, but the street riots followed by the intensification of the terrorist attacks made the number of tourists dropping significantly.

Figure 1. Contribution of tourism to GDP 2010-2017



Source: Own representation based on World Trade and Tourism Council

According to the Global Terrorism Database, Libya was also greatly affected by terrorist attacks, so only in 2015 there were more than 432 incidents that resulted in 454 deaths and 660 injured. Following the unstable security situation, the last foreign airline operating in Libya has suspended all flights. Turkish Airlines

suspended all flights to Misrata after having suspended flights to Tripoli, Benghazi and Sebha.

Even Libyan national company Afriqiyah Airways suffered after a 118-person aircraft on board was hijacked in December 2016 as it moved from Sebha to Tripoli and the pilot of the plane was forced to land in Malta. As a result of these

incidents, states are informing their citizens about alerts from foreign ministries on the dangers they may face if they travel to a country affected by terrorist attacks. Moreover, the British government has announced that it does not want to make substantial concessions on the release of British citizens in a situation where they would be kidnapped, considering that the redemption and the release of prisoners would increase the abduction of foreign citizens. At the level of the region, the Islamic State cluster acts as well as local groups. Having succeeded in penetrating Algerian space, speculating historical reminders that continually fragmented Al Qaeda in the Maghreb area and managed to turn some of its factions into its own cells, the Islamic State has won a series of victories over security forces that have strengthened the position of its Algerian branch, Wilayat Jaza'ir. It also anticipates the acceleration of the operational tempo.

The expansion of the Islamic state in northern Algeria is threatening the domination of the Al Qaeda group in the region, forcing it to organize credibility actions, such as March 2016, on a British Petroleum - Statoil facility. The operation, which reminded of hostage-taking in In Amenas (January 2013), was not aimed at operational purposes (otherwise it did not end up with victims), which would provoke retaliation by the security forces, but rather imagological. The claim mentioned the opposition to the exploitation of shale gas and the action took place at a climax of popular dissatisfaction with the exploitation of national resources by foreign companies.

In this competitive environment, it is expected that the Algerian security situation, especially in the north of the country, will be marked by seizures, each of the two terrorist entities being interested in taking the title of champion of jihadism, even if only through actions but with a constant frequency, which put pressure on the state institutions.

## CONCLUSIONS

The North African states have a geopolitical potential for the entire African continent, due to their geostrategic position on the continent and their natural resources. They are also a point of attraction for European and Asian tourists, but in the last four years their perception is influenced by the security situation. At present, most attacks in Egypt target security forces, installations, government buildings, tourists, and hijacking of planes. In Tunisia, two major incidents occurred on tourists in March 2015, after which members of the Jund al-Khilafah group attacked tourists at the Bardo National Museum in the capital, Tunis.

In addition to the terrorist events and political instability affecting tourism, oil price volatility can also lead to higher costs, with direct impact on transport costs and price competitiveness for long-distance destinations and for different modes of transport. A 40-50% drop in oil barrel could make transport by train or coach more attractive for tourists while the aeronautics industry will adopt more efficient engines and new types of fuel.

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