

Tourism and Competitiveness of the European Regions: an Economic, Social and Cultural Perspective

In a context of high growth and rising tourism flows at a global level, the pursuit of new experience-oriented services and symbolic values has led to new demand segmentation. The touristic sector is characterized by the ability to activate important virtuous circles, from the point of view of territorial competitiveness. This work aims to analyze the role of tourism in socio-economic development of territorial systems. First, it describes the main theoretical methodological approaches to the study of tourism demand and the impact of the sector on local development to reach to some descriptors of the touristic demand and territorial competitiveness. Then the conceptual framework is applied to the case of European regions and a map of tourism demand in 248 European regions is presented at NUTS 2 level. The last part analyses the relationship between the performance of touristic sector and territorial development, adopting a holistic point of view. Two outcome variables are used: per capita GDP, representing the economic dimension of territorial development, and an indicator of life satisfaction of individuals at local level, representing wellbeing. Using data from Eurostat, OECD, Quality of Governance Institute, OLS models are applied.

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