TOURIST SEASON IN THE SPANISH PROVINCES: MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS

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Seasonality is one of the major imbalances in the destinations and tourist regions. Its harmful consequences emerge more sharply in developed destinations and reflected in labor, environmental and economic efficiency terms. It implies, in fact, one of the essential parameters to promote sustainable development of tourism in the territory and is typically object, for example, for the territorial strategic tourist planning One of the most accepted definitions of what is understood by seasonality is owed to Butler (2001, p.5), known author who looks at the concept as the appearance of a temporary imbalance in tourism destinations, demand or supply. In this sense, and consistent with this notion of "imbalance", the phenomenon of seasonality should be quantitatively measured by inequality indexes, as it is commonly referred. In fact, before seasonality we should speak more accurately, concentration or temporary tourist inequality Given the importance attributed, it is logical that there appeared convenience to investigate, from a scientific approach, different aspects related to knowledge of this phenomenon. In this sense, Koenig-Lewis and Bischoff (2005) briefly establish six major areas of research, with significant gaps in almost all of them: the definition of seasonality, causes, impacts, policy implications, knowledge of the tourist and measurement issues. In this sense, this work focuses essentially on the latter aspect.

In particular, it is somewhat surprisingly the little attention that has been devoted in the literature precisely to the latter aspect, the measurement of seasonality and its implications in terms of the actions and possibilities (Koenig-Lewis and Bischoff, 2005; López y López, 2005; Martin et al, 2014). In the Spanish case, in any case, we have for example the work of Fernandez-Morales (2003), Lopez and Lopez (2006), Capó et al. (2007), Duro (2008), Fernandez-Morales and Cruz-Mayorga (2008) and Martin et al. (2014), which basically used the coefficient Gni to measure seasonality for destinations like the Balearic Islands, Costa del Sol or the Spanish regions.

Basically, the point of interest is that the measures used may give different results depending on the data in each case. In particular, in this paper the properties of some of the main measures of temporary inequality that can be used are reviewed, emphasizing, among

other things, their different sensitivity to changes in the timing. Secondly, the paper makes an empirical application to the Spanish provinces over the period 1999-2012. The proxy data used come from overnight stays. As is well known, these stays are only part of the demand. In any case, involving most of the regulated nights every year in all provinces, a lack of rigorous and comprehensive enough demand data in the format of residential accommodation. The focus of the work is general and therefore will not explore patterns and situations from different provinces in detail. Additionally, tentatively some reviews the significance of variables in relation to seasonal compared through several preliminary correlative analyzes.

The paper, therefore, is structured as follows. In the second section we review the main methodological aspects of measuring tourism seasonality, when it is conceived in terms of the imbalance each year in the timing of the activity. In the third section a calculation of temporary concentration of tourism activity in all Spanish provinces over the period 1999-2012 is made. The fourth section some correlative analysis in order to establish a preliminary assessment of factors that may be associated with levels and temporal differences in concentration are synthesized. Finally, a section houses the main conclusions of the work.

At this point, from a methodological view, the paper recommends the use of different satisfactory measures simultaneously Thus, the paper discuss the obsession to us the Gini coefficient and, in this case, it emphasizes the convenience of using other synthetic measures like the Theil index or the coefficient of variation.

The empirical section analysis shows different points of interest:

First, temporary concentration levels are varied along provincial geography. In any case, the results indicathe that the most concentrated provinces unanimously are Balearics and the Catalan coast, except in the case of Barcelona. At the opposite pole, we find the very low seasonality in the Canary provinces or Madrid. Moreover, we can note that it appears that the provinces leading the ranking are typically coastal, or if you will, specializing mainly in sun and beach, but not only. However, it doesn't seem that this feature is unanimously determinant of a greater concentration of activity, as the cases of Cadiz, Malaga, Murcia, Alicante and, above all, Canarias demonstrate. So there would be something more than the product that may help explain the specific seasonality, and territorial differences, as might be the case temperature (in the Canary Islands not only the annual average but their reduced monthly dispersion, for example), markets or even politics. It also appears that the interior provinces have fewer problems in this regard. The average lower ranking, and is starring in fact massively for this type of provinces, typically with a smaller hotel demand. In fact, none of them is located on the top ranking.

Secondly, and regarding to the evolution, the global (national) rise of the concentration in the period, has been for 5.7% according to the coefficient of variation is distributed very differently over territory. Provinces of high concentration as Baleares and the Andalusian coast (except Granada, presumably for its powerful heritage product) have even recorded increases greater than the national average in the period. In contrast, other regions of high concentration as Tarragona and Girona, Galician and Cantabrian have shown a positive trend in this direction.

Third, carefully observing the results based on the different concentration measurements used reflect some discrepancies, but as a whole are not particularly significant.

Fourth, the realization of the above computations on a quarterly basis instead of monthly, gives results globally similars.

Finally, we have examined, as a starting point for models above explanations, the degree of correlation between a number of potentially explanatory factors and provincial variations in the temporal concentration of tourist demand. In particular, have been tested variables related to the extent of demand, the qualitative type of product, the climatic area and weight of the domestic market. In sum, the initial results illustrated, for example, typically the amount of global demand, be coastal province, specialization in sun and beach or part of the Mediterranean climatic region are traits associated with greater temporal concentration of tourist activity. On the contrary, be inland province, belonging to the climate zone Sur, being from Canary Islands or the weight or province domestic market are traits that might tend to reduce this imbalance.