

## Session C1

### **High Tides, High Stakes: The Dual Role of Mose Barriers in Safeguarding Venice - Francesco Angelini, Paolo Figini and Veronica Leoni**

Climate change and the increased frequency of extreme weather events pose significant challenges for economies reliant on tourism. Among various natural disasters, our focus is on Acqua Alta, the high tide phenomenon that characterizes Venice and its lagoon. The primary goal of our study is to assess the protective role of the MoSE system—an arrangement of mobile barriers designed to shield the city from rising tides exceeding 110cm. Implemented in October 2020, this system acts as a crucial defence, preventing city flooding and mitigating the adverse effects on the local population.

Recent studies indicate that Acqua Alta adversely affects tourism prices. During weather alerts (issued 48 hours before expected events), all else being equal, the hotels tend to reduce room prices. Leveraging the introduction of the protection policy in a quasi-experimental setting, our study aims to evaluate its effectiveness in safeguarding the local economy. We work on a comprehensive dataset of daily room prices of Venetian hotels listed on Booking.com platform, covering the period between 2019 and 2023. By analyzing both pre-MoSE and post-MoSE periods, we employ causal inference methods to evaluate the effect of MoSE protection in ensuring price stability. Furthermore, our empirical setting takes into account different degrees of exposure to high tide occurrences. Differentiating between low-lying and high-lying hotels using a continuous exposure metric, we uncover heterogeneity in price fluctuations.

The findings of this study carry substantial implications for local governance by showing the dual functionality of MoSE barriers. These structures not only act as shields for physical protection but also play a relevant role in safeguarding the local economy. Our evaluation of the policy's effectiveness in averting price drops contributes significantly to conducting essential cost-benefit analyses for climate change adaptation measures.

## **From Heritage Tourism to Sun and Beach Destinations: The Explanatory Role of Environmental Factors on The Average Daily Rate - Juan Pedro Aznar Alarcón**

The average daily rate (ADR) is a key performance indicator in the hospitality industry. Academic literature has explored the role of hotel's individual factors, including location, quality of the service or the hotel size, among others, in explaining hotels' prices. However, external factors may influence hotel revenues per room. External factors can be associated and differ depending on the destination type. The share of foreign tourism over total tourism demand, the level of seasonality or the length of stay can influence hotels' ability to set certain prices. Although the role of seasonality, length of stay or the role of foreign demand have been analyzed in the past, most papers focus on one particular destination but do not compare if external factors associated with each market have different influences depending on the destination type. Sun and beach destinations, urban tourism or heritage tourism, differ in what they offer, in the characteristics of the hospitality supply and consumers' behaviour. It may be expected that the role of seasonality as an explanatory variable for Average Daily Rate (ADR) is different depending on the destination type. This paper is a first attempt to analyze how concrete factors influence Average Daily Rate (ADR) considering different destination types. Gathering monthly data from January 2021 to June 2023 related to 106 tourist sites defined by the Spanish Statistics Office(INE), we have conducted regression analyses to measure how international tourism, the length of stay and the level of seasonality influence Average Daily Rate (ADR) at destination level. According to our findings, length of stay is more relevant in the case of heritage destinations than in the case of urban tourism. The share of international tourism is particularly relevant as an explanatory factor for the ADR of sun and beach destinations, but even more for urban tourism, particularly in cities that are popular as tourism destinations and with transport infrastructures connecting with tourists from neighbouring countries. Understanding how external factors influence hotels' prices is not only relevant for hotel managers, it may be relevant for efficient destination management at the local or regional government level.

## **Environmental Attitudes of Mountain Tourists in South Africa – Implications for Economic Prosperity and Sustainability - Andrea Saayman**

Mountains have always attracted humans for various recreational reasons, including hiking, skiing, mountain climbing and trekking, and mountain biking. In countries such as Switzerland, Austria, Chile and Nepal, mountain tourism is an important part of the country's tourism offering. South Africa may be less well known as a mountain destination, although the country offers a variety of mountain-based tourism activities. One of the best-known mountain destinations in South Africa is the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park. Situated in the rural areas of the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa, the Park is a World Heritage Site that offers not only breathtaking views but ample hiking opportunities ranging from short hikes to multi-day trails. While the Park offers the benefit of conserving natural heritage, the benefit to local communities is not that evident; bringing the sustainability of the Park as a tourism destination into question.

The concept of sustainable tourism emphasises a balanced approach to obtain economic, social and environmental sustainability. More recently, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 calls for responsible consumption and production, since it is acknowledged that inappropriate activities by humans can facilitate environmental crisis (Hosseinnezhad, 2017). In addition, SDG 8 promotes sustained and inclusive economic growth, and decent work for all (UN, 2015). In the context of rural mountain destinations, finding a balance between these two goals becomes challenging. On the one hand, increasing tourist numbers and consumption would certainly bring more economic benefits to impoverished communities, but this may not be reconcilable with responsible consumption of environmental resources.

Research by Hosseinnezhad (2017), Wynveen, Connely and Cyle (2013) and Albayrak, Caber and Aksoy (2010) argue that inappropriate environmental consequences can be linked to people's attitude towards the environment. According to Bamberg (2003), a person's attitude towards the environment subsequently influences consumer and travel behaviour. In terms of tourist spending behaviour, Brida and Scuderi (2013) assert that the influence of attitudes and opinions remains an area that is under-explored. The aim of this research is to determine the environmental attitudes of tourists to the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park and its influence on travel and spending behaviour.

The research uses survey data collected from 428 visitors to the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park over the period 2019-2022. Environmental attitudes were measured using the New Environmental Paradigm Scale, while the questionnaire also assessed visitor demographics, travel and spending behaviour. Using multivariate statistics and regression analysis, this research shed light on the balance between responsible consumption and economic benefits in environmentally sensitive areas in developing countries.