

## **Summary of the doctoral dissertation**

### **The impact of terrorist attacks on tourist demand and selected tourist behaviour – the example of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia**

The subject of the dissertation is the impact of terrorist attacks on the tourism demand of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, as well as selected behaviour of European tourists (Polish and British) traveling to these destinations. Three main research objectives were set:

1. determination of changes in tourism demand and revenues from tourism to the budgets of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia following the terrorist attacks in 1999-2019
2. identifying the impact of terrorist attacks on selected tourist behaviours
3. development of the terrorist threat level perception index in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

The second main objective from the list above, concerning the behaviour of tourists, needs to be clarified: 1) determining the impact of terrorist attacks on decisions to travel to Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia (within 12 months of the incident); 2) recognition of the willingness to purchase optional trips in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in relation to the perception of the threat of terrorism.

The work has a methodical and cognitive character. Cognitive objectives are related to determining changes in tourist demand, recognizing the impact of acts of terrorism on decisions regarding travel to a given destination and the purchase of optional trips (additional trips) within it. The methodological goal is an attempt to adapt one of the statistical methods related to the measure of the distribution location, i.e. the arithmetic mean for estimating the level of terrorist threat in the perception of tourists.

In practical terms, the results obtained may be helpful for entities dealing with tourism marketing, both official agencies and tour operators offering trips to the surveyed countries. They can be a hint on how to construct a marketing image so that the tourist is convinced not only about the attractiveness of these destinations, but also about their safety. Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) can use the findings of this paper to improve the image of destinations.

The time range of the work covered secondary data from 1999-2019. It should be emphasized that the conducted research does not include the years 2020-2022 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of this factor, there has been a complete reorientation in travel

patterns. At that time, mainly domestic travel prevailed, many people refrained from leaving, and tourists who decided to go abroad were forced to choose a destination whose borders were open. The author assumed that this would distort the results of the research.

The work consists of eight chapters. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the dissertation. This included, among others, an analysis of statistical data from the World Tourism Organization and the World Bank on the number of tourist arrivals to the examined destinations and the receipts from tourism to the state budget in order to identify changes in tourist traffic and income from tourism. The content of information portals and descriptive data of the Global Terrorism Database regarding individual terrorist incidents were also analysed in order to identify the impact of specific acts of terrorism on tourism demand through case studies.

Survey research was conducted using the CAWI diagnostic survey method among Polish and British citizens on the research panel of the ABR Sesta agency. The surveys were made available in May and June 2023. A total of 802 responses were collected, which provided information about the level of terrorist threat in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia as perceived by tourists and the willingness of tourists to travel to and within these countries. The perception of the level of terrorism threat was calculated using the arithmetic mean with standard deviation.

Semi-structured, individual in-depth interviews were also conducted with representatives of the national tourist offices of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia and travel agencies. The interviews were pilot studies. The interviews were supplemented by active observation. The research results were presented in the form of a descriptive analysis.

In the light of the results obtained, it was found that the terrorist attacks had a very negative impact on the tourist demand in Egypt and Tunisia. As a result of the attacks, there was a significant decrease in the number of tourist arrivals and inflows from tourism to the GDP of these countries. In turn, in Morocco, a decrease in the growth curve of tourist arrivals and a decrease in revenues from tourism were observed. The tourism industry (air carriers, hoteliers) was forced to significantly reduce prices to attract tourists despite the threat. In Egypt, revenues from the tourism sector declined only in years when tourism collapsed. In the case of Morocco and Tunisia, the income from tourism decreased not only in the years when the number of arrivals decreased. This was related, among others, to with the financial crisis. The prices of tourist services were also lowered after the terrorist attacks to attract more tourists despite the bad reputation of the destination. Such a reduction, however, results in

lower revenues from tourism to the country's budget and has a negative impact on the entire economy.

The extent of the effects of terrorism on the tourism industry depends on many factors, e.g. on the scale of the attacks, the number of victims and injured, the targets of the attacks, media coverage, or decisions made by the authorities of a given country. It has been observed that organized tourism is much more susceptible to terrorist events than individual tourism. In Egypt and Tunisia, where mass organized tourism dominates, the negative effects took place on a very large scale, which was related to the withdrawal of Tunisia from the offers of many tour operators (including Poland and Great Britain) and the suspension of flights from Russia to Egypt. This resulted in the loss of important source markets. Following the terrorist attacks in Tunisia since 2015, Europeans have ceased to be the leading recipients of local tourism services for Africans. This change had a negative impact on tourism revenues in the country.

An analysis of changes in tourism by destination in Egypt found that business travelers are more affected by terrorist attacks than leisure travelers.

In turn, the results of the survey showed that tourists from both Poland and Great Britain would not travel to Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in the event of a terrorist attack (within 12 months of the event). At the same time, people with more tourist experience abroad expressed a greater willingness to go to these countries. The respondents' answers also showed that the perceived level of terrorism threat in these countries meant that they would not take advantage of the opportunity to purchase optional trips. From the perspective of the economy of the three analyzed destinations, not using optional trips or not leaving additional funds outside the hotel means a potential financial loss.

The survey results also showed that potential tourists assess the level of terrorist threat in Morocco as similar to Egypt and Tunisia, although the intensity of terrorist incidents in Morocco is low, which is confirmed by the so-called *spillover effect*.

The terrorist threat indicator in the perception of tourists from Poland placed Egypt in first place (5.341), followed by Morocco (5.047) and Tunisia (4.766) in order from the highest threat to the lowest. In the case of the British, the order was slightly different - Egypt (5.335) came first, followed by Tunisia (4.825) and Morocco (4.538) last. Research has confirmed that different cultures perceive risk/hazard differently and that tourists make decisions based on perceptions rather than on actual facts.

Citizens of Great Britain assessed the threat of terrorism in Tunisia more critically than Poles, which could be related to the fact that many Brits were victims of terrorist attacks in Tunisia, highly media-covered. Thus, if a certain nationality is the victim of an attack, there is

a higher chance that that nationality will express a higher sense of threat to the country in which the attack took place.

**Keywords:** tourism, terrorism, terrorist attacks, tourist demand, tourism revenues, tourist behaviour, tourist decisions, perception of the terrorist threat