

## **Tourism and Globalization in the Arab World**

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### **Abstract**

*Living in a small village called the "world" where differences among nations are eroding is a reality that can not be denied or ignored. The 'Globalization' as a phenomenon has been seen in most aspects of our life; the tremendous economic integration witnessed worldwide, the revolution of technology, the extensive usage of means of communication and transportation, the increasing opportunities for communities and nations across the borders to interact with each others, and many other aspects are now transforming our world into a small village where cultural differences are eroding. This paper is discussing the relationship between globalization and tourism in regard to the impact caused by them, and more specifically in Arab countries (Middle East and North Africa regions). The main finding of this paper is that economic benefits of tourism supported by aspects of globalization, were basically the focus of Arab countries, less consideration was given to environmental and socio-cultural impacts caused by tourism due to the pace of development as well as low standard of living for locals in these countries; such finding initiates the need to conduct a more sustainable planning and development for tourism.*

**Keywords:** Arab Countries, Middle East, North Africa, Globalization, Tourism Impacts.

### **Introduction**

"Ideas of 'globalization' are so broad, so diverse and so changeable that it sometimes seems possible to pronounce virtually anything on the subject" (Scholte 1997: 427). Such statement reflects how it is difficult to find a definition that encounters all aspects related to globalization. Although of the widespread of this concept, even in the popular media, there are different definitions and conceptions that were put for this phenomenon (Cogburn 1998). Some of these definitions reflected a geographical aspect dealing with borders, Scholte (2000: 16) for example refers to 'Globalization' as 'a process of removing government-imposed restrictions on movements between countries in order to create an "open", "borderless" world economy'. In some other cases, there was a focus on the economic, cultural and social outspreads increasingly growing around the world.

David Held et al (1999: 16) defined globalization as a ' process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions - assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact - generating transcontinental or inter-regional flows and networks of activity'. The concept of 'Globalization' also can be referred to as the increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through trade and financial flows, the concept is reflecting as well the movement of people (labor) and knowledge (technology) across international borders (IMF 2000). 'It is the ever-tightening network of connections which cut across national boundaries, integrating communities in new "space-time combinations' (Hall 1992: 299). Moreover, these communities are all forming a world that is a single interconnected and interdependent whole, a homogeneous mass or a single social order, caused by the erosion of local differences (Allen & Massey 1995). More simply and directly, it is all about spreading various objects and experiences to people all over the world (Scholte 2000).

The previously mentioned definitions of globalization are all indicating the multidimensionality of such concept. Several interrelated aspects in our life are clearly seen in them; according to Scholte (1997), these aspects can be classified into six different groups; which are: The sphere of communications and media that allows a nearly immediate contact between individuals (e.g. such as air travel, telephony, computer networks, radio, and television); the spread and the expansion of business enterprises, civic associations and regulatory agencies, (i.e. organizations) that work within trans-border operations; the trade and movement of goods and services between countries, the spread of money via financial instruments (e.g. Eurobonds and many derivatives), and various monies (e.g. the US dollar and the Special Drawing Right), which electronically circulate across the world in short spans of time; another main aspect is the inclusion of global cases in the process, such as stratospheric ozone depletion and the decline in biological diversity as results of accelerating development, which is not constrained by distance or circumscribed by borders. And finally, the widely shared vision by people around the world that it is a single place more than a globe divided into borders, this can be clearly seen through affiliating themselves into communities based on ideological and cultural aspects (e.g. of religious faith, race, etc.)

Tourism (as a phenomenon) highly depends on the progress of communication and transportation, which are both reinforced by money movement and the distribution of companies (e.g. airlines and different transportation companies, hotel chains...etc); both exogenous and market factors have their significant role in shaping the development of tourism; for exogenous factors, demographic and social changes, economic and financial developments, transport infrastructure growth, technological development and development in trading, all have contributed to the growth in tourism as an industry. For market forces, the development seen in destination product, marketing, computer reservation systems, global destination databases, and operators' products, all led to the variation in tourism markets and options offered for them around the world (Gee 1997). It becomes logic then to consider tourism as a main component in the process of globalization. Moreover, the indicators of tourism industry growth characterized by receipts and flows of travelers stretching all over the globe, the increase of markets (tourists groups), the rapidity into which different destinations are drawn into tourism development, the increase in holiday destinations and distances between them; all are reflecting the progress witnessed in telecommunications, finance and transport, which are playing an instrumental role in the globalization of tourism (Mowforth & Munt 2003).

### ***Globalization and Tourism***

There are some driving forces of globalization that have their clear impact on tourism, travel and hospitality industries. The liberalization of air transport, liberalization of trade in services, and the spread of information and communication technologies, the extensive use of internet in sales and marketing of trips and tourism packages, all contribute to the continuous growth of tourism industry (ILO 2001). The global travel and tourism industries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are mainly depending on civil aviation, this can be clearly seen through the calling of national governments and international and regional industry organizations for improved co-ordination between air transport, airport infrastructure, tourism investment and tourism development policies. Such improvements will increase the contribution of the travel and tourism industry to national economies and regional development, developed and developing countries vitally depending on tourism as a main source of wealth and job opportunities, and which are looking for foreign investment to better exploit and manage their natural, scenic, historical or cultural resources for tourism purposes, are now in the front line pushing for air transport liberalization (IVC 2006). Moreover, electronic technology is also facilitating this growth by giving access to fare and hotel information and online reservation services, another form of improvement countries are exploiting worldwide (UNESCO 1999).

Tourism has grown in the past 10 years; about 880 million international arrivals were recorded in 2009, accounting for almost US\$852 billion of receipts (UNWTO 2010). Moreover, it is predicted that more growth will take place, not only for those destinations receiving the highest numbers of tourists, but also for other ones with small market shares. According to WTO (2004) forecasts of the year 2020 predict that Europe, the Americas, and East Asia and the Pacific will account for 80% of total arrivals, other destinations as Africa and South Asia will also witness an increase in their arrivals as well (5.5% and 6% per year respectively), compared with a world average of just over 4%.

In addition to being a vital source of income as seen from these indicators, it is also a major source of employment, according to a World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates for the year 2009, about 77.3 million jobs were directly offered by tourism around the world, and 219.8 million (7.6 % of the world total) if all the indirect jobs opportunities of the sector are taken into account. Tourism also has a significant contribution of 9.4% of the world total GDP. For capital investment, private and public sectors combined are expected to spend US\$ 1,220.1 billion worldwide (9.4%) of total investment. In 2009, the economic activity is expected to post US\$7,340 billions as a total demand; this total demand is expected to grow to US\$14,382 billions by 2019. Such growth indicators are giving uniqueness to tourism and travel industry as a development sector for many countries around the world.

What also makes the growth of tourism also unique is its fast recovery after decline stages; for example, since the 1960's till this century, tourism has been growing in term of both arrivals and receipts, although of having some decreases that took place because of some crises within some particular years from 2001-03, travel and tourism worldwide suffered four depressing scourges – economic downturns or recessions in some major tourism generating markets, widespread terrorist attacks (9/11, Djerba, Bali, Mombasa, etc), subsequent military conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the SARS epidemic. But 2004 recorded the best annual growth in tourism of the last 20 years, with international tourist arrivals up 10 per cent over 2003's level (IVC 2006). Tourism has proved to be quick to recover, which increases its potential to be a vital source of economy.

Another important factor that contributed to tourism growth is having substantial changes in tourist patterns and behavior were witnessed on international scale; these include the increased frequency of travel, but for shorter trips, in less expensive destinations closer to home, often involving lower categories of travel and accommodation; the high adoption of the new intra-regional routes offered by low-cost airlines (which have consolidated their position in Europe and are growing rapidly in Asia Pacific and the Middle East); the wide spread of new travel patterns as 'do it yourself' and last-minute booking, stimulated and facilitated by the internet; and the aggressive price competition which has led to an increasing need for all industry players to innovate and diversify in terms of product development and marketing (IVC 2006).

All of these indicators and changes are giving a strong evidence for the growing importance of tourism in the economy and development of countries around the world. A quick look at market shares of tourism among different regions (WTO statistics 2007) can give us a clear idea about this growth and about the relationship between globalization and tourism. Since the year 1995, the number of tourists' arrivals has been increasing till it reached the total of 842 million international tourists (about 36 million tourists more), with an average increase of 4.5% yearly (Fig.3).

This increase of the 36 millions tourists was distributed over tourism regions as follows: Europe (17 millions: 47%), Asia and Pacific (12 millions: 33%), Americas (3 millions: 8%), Africa (3 millions: 8%), and Middle East (1.5 million: 4%) (WTO 2007).

Such distribution of increase in tourists' numbers was to continue, the distribution of tourists' arrivals in 2009 is reflecting the significant differences among world regions' shares in term of both arrivals and receipts (Fig. 1 & 2).

Such distribution of tourists' arrivals among different world regions is indicating a very serious issue; some of these regions are considerably higher than others in terms of the market share they hold. First World countries are receiving the bulk of international tourists, consequently are receiving most of the revenues from them; that is in addition to the fact that they can generate more income per international tourist than third World countries, therefore, a reality of globalization is to be seen here characterized by the uneven and unequal development, simply justified by the level of tourism development and facilities provided in their destinations (Mowforth & Munt 2003).

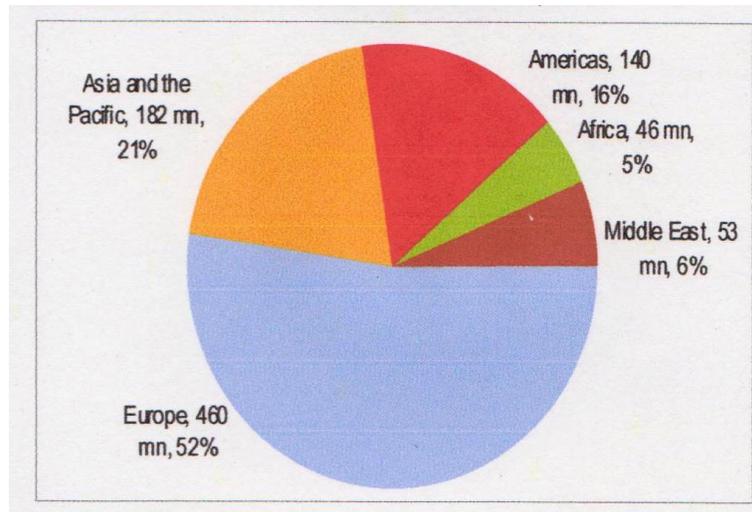


Fig.1: World Inbound Tourism: International Tourists Arrivals for the Year 2009 (UNWTO 2010)

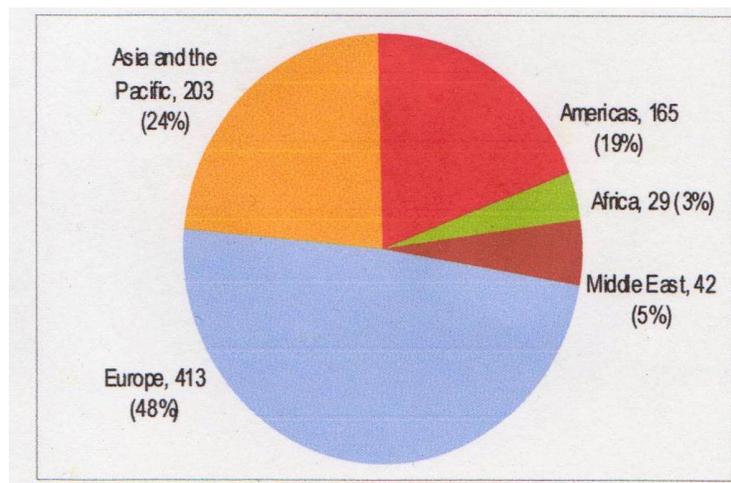


Fig.2: World Inbound Tourism: International Tourists Receipts (US \$ Billion) for the Year 2009 (UNWTO 2010)

Some countries are becoming integrated into the global economy more quickly than others, leaving other countries with declined economies, poverty increased in them and high inflation became their norm (IMF 2000). Considering the great role of tourism in supporting economies, it is not unusual then to be perceived by cash-starved Third World countries as a shortcut to rapid development. Many of these countries found the Structural Adjustment Program (SAPs) offered by International Monetary Fund (IMF) to be the solution to their deteriorating economic situations since it offers financial assistance.

The SAPs, which are preconditions for the approval of financial assistance, require the indebted country to be integrated into the global economy; deregulate and liberalize its economy; shift from an agriculture-based to a manufacturing and service industry-based economy; and liberalize its financial sector. The strategy of SAP is based on involving countries' economies in foreign investments and multinational corporations, while eliminating subsidies and protection to local industries. With the great power of tourism as income and employment generator, the Third World governments tried to fulfill these conditions through establishing infrastructure projects such as roads, hotels and tourist-promotion programs, also increasing the opportunities for more international investments to take place in their lands.

Worldwide, public and private investments have reached \$800 billion annually, accounting for 12% of total worldwide investments (Chavez 1999). Such revolution in the economy of these countries and development of tourism, all resulted in the increase of tourism destinations numbers; consequently, the tourism market became and is still becoming increasingly segmented into different kinds of tourism markets and preferences instead of mass tourism (Mowforth & Munt 2003). Such markets included ecotourism in destinations as parks, nature reserves, and natural settings; cultural and heritage tourism in different historic and cultural sites and experiencing customs and lifestyles, as well as folklore of different communities; adventure tourism as in mountain climbing, scuba-diving and walking along park trails; health tourism in natural hot springs, sport tourism as World Cup football and Olympic events; and cruise ships sailing from different ports around the world (Hawkins & Lamoureux 2001).

By noticing that many of the destinations (in which some of these forms of tourism are taking place) are in developing countries; and considering that tourism in these countries has been increasing annually by 6% as compared to 3.5% in developed countries, and the fact that they include a big number of undisturbed environments and the majority of the distinct indigenous cultures; all these issues make them become a target of globalized economies and crowds of tourists (Chavez 1999); mainly from First World (developed countries). Despite all these facts, these Third World countries still can not receive the same amounts of profits First World countries make out of tourism (Mowforth & Munt 2003). The increase of tourism in Third World countries might have resulted in an economic benefit through the numbers of arrivals and profits, but it had also its negative impact on their environments and communities, of which Arab countries located in the two regions of Middle East and North Africa, are forming a significant part.

#### ***Why is Tourism Important to Arab Countries?***

Tourism is considered as a major source of foreign exchange, being then important to Arab countries' economy for balance-of-trade purposes and the development of infrastructure (e.g. in Jordan, tourism is considered as the main source of foreign exchange earning after the remittances from overseas Jordanian workers). Tourism also is a crucial generator of employment to many of these countries (e.g. according to the Egyptian Tourism Authority, 10% of the Egyptian population is depending on tourism for earning their living, of which a significant proportion is of semi-skilled and unskilled employees; in Bahrain, 17-18% of Jobs are in tourism, either directly or indirectly; in Oman, hotels are required by law to have 50% of its employees from local national employees). Tourism also helps in reducing the dependence on other sources of economy (e.g. Gulf countries are giving a very good example here, these countries have started to recognize the importance of tourism to decrease their reliance on oil revenues in the long term, e.g. Dubai in UAE, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain); though, some other countries with big oil reserves are slow toward tourism development, that is due to the lack of need to diversify their economies (as Abu Dhabi in UAE, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia) (WTO 2003).

According to the reports of World Travel and Tourism Council, the economic activities are indicating a more promising contribution of tourism and travel industry to Arab countries economies. In 2009, travel & tourism is expected to post US\$241.9 billions of economic activity (as a total demand), growing to US\$529.8 billions by 2019 in the Middle East region (WTTC 2009a). This also can be seen to what regards the contribution to world GDP, the travel and tourism industry is expected to post a GDP contribution of 3.9% in 2009 (WTTC 2009 a & b). Middle East travel and tourism employment is expected to generate 5,130,000 jobs in 2009, 9.0% of total employment, or 1 in every 11.1 jobs. By 2019, this total is predicted to become 6,876,000 jobs, 9.5% of total employment or 1 in every 10.5 jobs (WTTC 2009a).

In North Africa, travel & tourism is expected to post US\$78.8 billions of economic activity (as a total demand), growing to US\$158.7 billions by 2019 (WTTC 2009b). North Africa travel and tourism employment is estimated to become 5,440,000 jobs in 2009, 11.2% of total employment, or 1 in every 8.9 jobs. By 2019, this number of jobs is expected to end with 6,914,000 jobs, 11.3% of total employment or 1 in every 8.8 jobs (WTTC 2009b).

Considering the vital role of travel and tourism as a major exporter, since inbound visitors inject foreign exchange directly into the economy; of total Middle East exports, travel and tourism is expected to generate 13.4% (US\$100.1 billions) in 2009, increasing to US\$226.8 billions (12.4% of total) in 2019. The Middle East's travel and tourism industry is expected to contribute 2.7% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2009 (US\$44.4 billions), rising to US\$100.8 billions (2.7% of total) by 2019. Middle East travel and tourism capital investment is estimated at US\$47.0 billions or 11.9% of total investment in year 2009. By 2019, this estimate is expected to reach US\$82.9 billions or 10.2% of total (WTTC 2009a).

In North Africa, total exports of travel and tourism is expected to generate 18.1% (US\$35.1 billions) in 2009, increasing to US\$70.8 billions (15.4% of total), in 2019. North Africa's travel and tourism industry is expected to contribute 5.3% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2009 (US\$29.6 billions), rising to become US\$55.5 billions (5.2% of total) by 2019. In North Africa, travel and tourism capital investment is estimated to be US\$14.2 billions or 10.7% of total investment in year 2009, this estimate is predicted to reach US\$27.7billions or 10.8% of total by 2019 (WTTC 2009b).

### ***Growth of Tourism in Arab World***

There are several potentials that make the growth of tourism in the Arab countries promising; for international tourism: being close enough to the inclusive tour markets of north-west Europe (the main generator of tourists), which have tourism based mainly on sun, sea and sand; extensive tourism infrastructure as good roads and airports of an international standards; that is in addition to the considerable hotel development in major cities and coastal resorts; being in the crossroads between Europe, Africa and Asia, consequently forming good staging points for businesses on the long routes between Western Europe and the East Asia Pacific regions; the richness in cultural attractions (archaeological, historical and religious sites) since the region occupied the earliest civilizations and the three major world religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam); the favorable climate for beach tourism and the increase in resorts, the opportunities for some winter sports in some mountain ranges (Binoface & Cooper 2001).

For intraregional tourism (tourism from Arab countries) an increase is expected due to: the close similarity in customs and traditions as well as a common language, the limited need for require heavy outlay on infrastructure as hotels since the majority of Arab tourists travel with their families and prefer accommodation in family housing and furnished flats; being enforced with the fact that family connections and intermarriage between nationals of different Arab countries create 'intraregional extended families'; the ease in dealing with airports, hotels and shops because of the common language; variety in history, civilization, climate and temperature; the growth of new tourism trends as 'medical tourism' between Arab countries (as in the case of Jordan, which hosts a number of visitors from Iraq, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen), also educational tourism (the big numbers of Arab students studying at Arab universities especially after 11 September 2001) (ESCWA 2007). The Middle East for example is considered to be one of the fastest growing global destinations; a considerable growth in terms of tourism facilities is witnessed (e.g. Intercontinental Hotels has announced it will open 20 Holiday Inns, Easy Group has confirmed it will bring 38 hotels to the region by 2011) (APN 2007).

Till the last few decades, the availability of oil in some countries as in the case of Gulf States eliminated the need to diversify their economies because of such prosperity. Later, these countries became aware that such source will be soon exhausted, and so they started to attract tourism development to diversify their economic base (as in the case of Dubai Commerce and Tourism Promotion Board, which is using its oil wealth to create golf courses in the desert to become a cruise destination) (Boniface & Cooper 2001). Despite this strong need for tourism, there are some obstacles facing its development, especially on the intraregional scale; these are: weak Arab cooperation in tourism, lack of regular flights, the inadequate provision of tourism products (although of their diversity), moreover, the disability to provide tourism services in an adequate manner (ESCWA 2007).

Not less important to the previous factors is the unstable political situation in the region (i.e. Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Gulf War 1990-1 ...etc), the lack of management and capacity to receive visitors at some sites, the lack of awareness in some segments of Arab societies about the importance of tourism and its benefits, causing then a negative perception and reaction toward tourism (particularly from a socio-cultural point of view), a situation that generates a number of calamities in some regions (i.e. kidnapping of western tourists by tribesmen in the interior highlands of Yemen, terrorism attacks on tourists during 1990s in Egypt) (Boniface & Cooper 2001). This case was to continue after a number of international crises which affected the growth of tourism worldwide and in Arab countries as well (e.g. Iraq War started in 2003, and the spread of some diseases as SARS) (WTO 2004b).

### ***Globalization Effect on Arab Countries through Tourism***

In addition to the strengths mentioned above, some other factors influencing the growth of tourism worldwide (economically and technologically wise) under the name of 'Globalization' are supporting this industry in Arab countries; these include the improvement of access to these countries by the development of transportation and its infrastructure; the increase in investment incentives; improvement and diversification of tourism products; the enhancement of marketing activities (by quality and quantity); the institutional development; the public-private partnership taking place now in many countries; the improvement of electronic technology (for getting the information and buying the trip); the emerge of new meanings in the experience of tourism (the 3 E's: Entertainment, Excitement, and Education) among wide segments of societies (particularly Arab societies) and witnessing the destination as a fashion accessory (WTO 2004a). In a report published by Wells (2004), it was mentioned that many destinations in the Middle East region were having an increase in tourism arrivals for the years 2003 and 2004; which is resulting from development of the intra-regional market; moreover, the tourists from western and southern Europe.

Egypt witnessed a significant increase in the number of visitors that reached 49% up to August 2003, while receipts increased by 52% in the first half of the same year. Some countries had some considerable risings in their arrival numbers; according to WTO, about 42% more tourists from the Arab market up to July 2004 were recorded in Lebanon, while the total number grew by an estimate of 30%. About 60% increase in total arrivals, with a 70% rise in inter-Arab trade was observed in Syria. Other destinations such as Dubai (+9%), Bahrain (+19%) and Jordan (+18%) also benefited from the strong world demand. The ascending numbers of international arrivals to the North African destinations was noticed as well, an increase of 19% in Tunisia and 17% in Morocco were recorded for the year 2004, tourism receipts were also growing (+3% in Morocco and +15% in Tunisia up to June 2004).

According to the information of WTO (2000-2003), some of the Arab countries were having a big share from the total number of tourists coming to the Middle East and North African countries; this was noticed in countries like Saudi Arabia depending on pilgrimage seasons (7,511 million tourists for 2002), Egypt with the great number of ancient Egyptian sites, coastal resorts and Nile tours (5,745 million tourists for 2003), Morocco with its richness of historical sites and coastal resorts (4,552 million tourists for 2003), UAE because of its huge investments and shopping events (5,445 million tourists for 2002), Tunisia with its main attractions of coastal resorts and historical sites (5,153 million tourists for 2003), Bahrain attracting tourists for its heritage houses and shopping (3,167 million tourists for 2002), and Syria with its historical sites and different resorts (2,809 million tourists for 2002). These countries then are followed by other countries that occupy a variety of attractions in their small areas as Jordan (1,573 million tourists for 2003) and Lebanon (1,016 million tourists for 2003). Some other countries though were slow toward tourism development and promotion, either because of diversification in their economy (as in the case of Kuwait, Oman and Qatar), or mainly because of lack in development and promotion of their tourism sites, as well as unstable political or social situations (as in the case of Yemen and Iraq) (Fig. 3) (WTO 2003). This growth though was not to continue, the statistics given by WTO (2007) about the increase percentages within the years (2005/4 & 2006/5) shows a general decrease that took place in most of world regions; such decrease though was noticed to be slight in regions as Africa, Asia Pacific and Europe; while at regions as the Americas and Middle east, such decrease was higher by comparison (Fig.4).

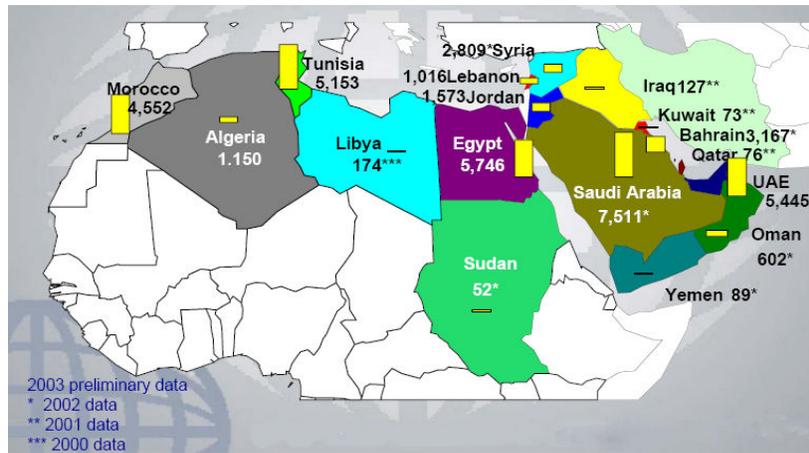


Fig. 3: The Numbers of Tourists' Arrivals within (2000-2003) Among Arab Countries (WTO 2004a)

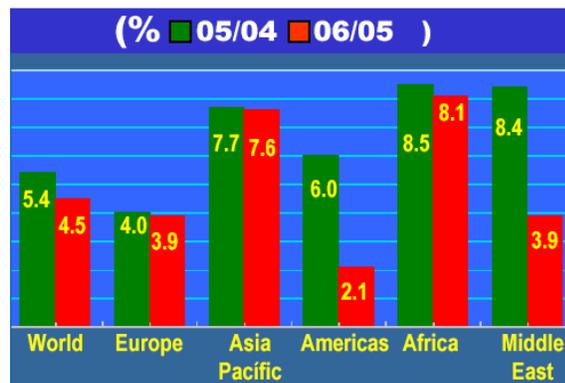


Fig. 4: The Percentage of Increase in the Number of Tourists within (2005-2006) Among Tourism Regions (WTO 2007)

For Arab countries, the statistics show that Middle East had only an increase of (3.9% for 2006/5) compared to (8.4% for 2005/4); the same applies to North Africa, where an increase of only (5.8% for 2006/5) compared to (8.9% for 2005/4) is recorded. Such numbers are somehow reflecting the reality of a situation, which is about the continuous unequal benefits among world regions due to the case of uneven development and stability, an issue that is related to globalization, since it reflects the economic, political and technological dominance that is constrained only to some developed countries and powers, this is to seen also by looking at WTO statistics for the years 2008 and 2009 (Fig. 5) (Vogeler 2010).

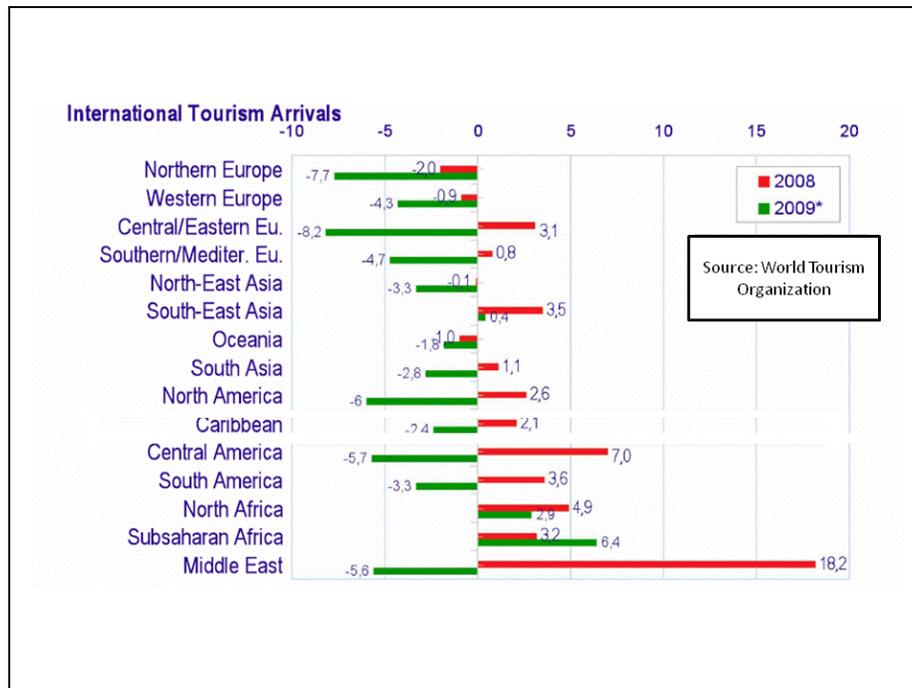


Fig. 5: The Percentage of Increase in the Number of Tourists within (2008-2009) Among Tourism Regions (Vogeler 2010)

The impacts of tourism that are perceived by and affecting residents of any destination take many forms. The economic impacts of tourism are seen through enhancing income and living standards (Pizam 1978), providing jobs opportunities (Liu & Var 1986; Milman & Pizam 1988), increasing investment, increasing tax revenues, and improving the infrastructure (Milman & Pizam 1988), though, tourism contributes to the increase of prices of lands and properties as well as the prices of goods and services (Liu & Var 1986; Pizam 1978). Environment wise, tourism supports the protection of natural areas as well as the preservation of historic heritage and buildings (Liu & Var 1987, Sethna & Richmond 1978), on the other hand, tourism can increase congestion and crowding, besides contributing to different types of pollution (Pizam 1978).

Sociocultural impacts of tourism are characterized by the improvement of life quality (Pizam 1978), contribution to cultural exchange and understanding among different committees and their meeting together; moreover, it helps in preserving the cultural identity of host culture. In some cases, tourism contributed to the spread of some negative values as prostitution, smuggling, alcoholism (Liu & Var 1987). Tourism influence on locals' way of life and on their control of and access to their resources has become very obvious with the globalization of world economy. It is already seen in many regions worldwide that tourism had brought long-term damaging effects on some local communities, even prior to globalization. Even with the case of local communities, which are still unaffected by traditional tourism activities, they have now been targeted for tourism ventures, more particularly, ecotourism and other kinds of new tourism (Chavez 1999). This is simply due to the pace of tourism development, increase in the number of tourists and the competition of tourism with other economic sectors. As Hazbun (1997) states, getting the economic benefits of tourism by Arab countries requires some tradeoffs, which include foregoing investments in other sectors, environmental degradation, social segregation and privatization of public space.

All of the mentioned above impacts initiate the need to have a very carefully managed and planned tourism, which aims mainly at the economic, social and environmental sustainability in any region. Although of the positive aspects of tourism in Arab countries; negative impacts were not discussed in many studies, reflecting then a lack of awareness about future threats to locals and environments, as well as a lack in implementing measures and indicators to monitor the condition of resources and sites exposed to tourism development.

The problems of tourism in Arab countries were mentioned in few studies; of which some were dealing with environmental degradation as air pollution, inappropriate disposal of solid waste, the untreated wastewater discharged to the sea and so contaminating ground water, using great amounts of detergents and chemicals by hotels, the damage of coral reefs by tourists to keep them as souvenirs, and the disturbance of wildlife in the Red Sea area in Egypt (Shalan 2005); the conflict between tourists and pilgrims because of contradiction in beliefs (the case of Baha'i Gardens in Haifa (Gatrell & Kreiner 2006); the social and environmental deterioration and the clash between Islamic and European values in Tunisia (Poirier 1995); the cross border competition in gambling tourism between Israel and Egypt and its negative impact on societies (Felsenstein & Freeman 2001); the result of development pressure by tourism, which is characterized by the over exploitation of the natural resource base of the fragile region (as in the case of Mount Sinai and the Monastery of Saint Katherine in Egypt) (Grainger 2003); the harassment of tourists by false guides, dropping of schools by students to work in tourism, excluding locals from some areas as beaches, and pollution of coasts and sea water in Tunisia, terrorism against tourists in Egypt (Hazbun 1997). All of these studies and some others are indicating warning signs against the deterioration of environments and segregation of communities, which are caused by the growth of tourism supported by globalization aspects.

### **Conclusion**

It becomes clear that globalization and tourism are generating a considerable benefit to many communities and countries through their relationship. The significant increase seen in the number of tourists' arrivals and revenues is with no doubt a main target for any tourism development; but issues as the quality of environmental resources, biodiversity, and the respect of local communities should be also considered. The economic benefits are always focused on and evaluated with different kinds of variables and measures. The problem is that such concern is not equally given to the environmental and social issues, initiating then the need to have more sustainable approach in tourism development planning by formal authorities and other stakeholders. More coordination between Arab tourism authorities would support the expansion of tourist numbers, though it should be combined with improvement of tourist services besides controlling their performance to avoid any deterioration in the authenticity of cultures or environmental resources.

According to WTO & UNEP (2005), some policy areas if taken into account would be the approach to achieve sustainability in tourism; these include: ensuring the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises by understanding what potential consumers are looking for; and adapt to trends and changes in source market conditions, as well as travel patterns and tastes, this requires an effective and ongoing market research; maximizing the contribution of tourism to the economic prosperity of the host destination by supporting locally owned businesses, and ensuring employment of local labor; ensuring a widespread and fair distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor; engaging the local community in the development of tourism policies and plans; in addition to respecting and enhancing the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities, maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment.

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