Tourism-Driven Economic Interactions: Evidence from a Transitional European Context

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A B S T R A C T

This paper investigates how inbound tourism influences globalisation dynamics in the Central and Eastern Europe region (CEE) considering digitalisation, trade openness, and economic growth. We applied panel data and regression analysis using indicators from World Bank, United Nations World Tourism Organization, and KOF Index for the period 1995-2023. Given the ongoing issues, particularly those stemming from digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth, we find it imperative to outline key factors influencing both present and future changes related to globalization under the inbound tourism effect. Results indicate that globalisation dynamics depends on inbound tourism without following a uniform pattern. Inbound tourism, trade openness and digitalisation contribute to the global market integration of the region, with statistically significant effects in five of nine countries. Digitalisation and economic expansion are key actors of globalisation. Although trade openness has an overall positive impact, export consolidation and urbanization process can steer the direction towards local market. Developing the incoming tourism provides an extra integration opportunity to the countries from the CEE region in global economy. Nevertheless, each country should work on maximizing their opportunities and enhancing their particular features since there is no such thing as a common regional model.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism serves as a catalyst for growth and development (Brelik, 2018; Tian et al., 2021; Sharpley, 2022; Song et al., 2017), representing a significant portion of the economy in numerous countries (Cîrstea, 2014), one of the fastest-growing sectors in recent decades (Hong, 2009; Paramati et al., 2016; Jonanocic and Ilic, 2016), occurring in destination areas (Jovicic, 2016), and having more pronounced effects in less

developed countries (Sun et al., 2025). Tourism has many advantages. It contributes to balancing the payment equilibrium (Brelik, 2018), because of foreign currency reserves accumulation. Tourism increases goods and services production, boosts income (Paramati et al., 2016) and prosperity, contributing to the improvement of quality-of-life.

The evolution was possible as a result of transportation infrastructure improvement, lifestyle changes, shifts in consumer values, leisure time,

migration, education, technological and communicational progress, digitalisation, marketing and promotion of tourist destinations (Jonanocic and Ilic, 2016; Navickas and Malakauskaite, 2021; Tang, 2023; Zaika and Avriata, 2024, Ogbuabor et al., 2024; Pehlivanoğlu et al., 2024; Dang, 2024) with its evolution primarily under the process of globalisation (Chiu et al., 2020). Tourism does not constitute a permanent source of income and employment; its impact varies greatly over time, but it now has the status of a global industry. This process is described by self-correlation and spatial agglomeration, generating a negative effect of propagation that diminishes along with the increase in the geographical threshold (Wu et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023).

Accordingly, the following research questions are advanced by the current research, in order to provide a wider perspective on these aspects:

a). How does inbound tourism influence globalisation dynamics in the CEE region?

b). Which roles do digitalisation, trade openness, and economic growth play in the integration of CEE countries into the global market?

c). Does tourism have a similar impact on the globalisation of the CEE states?

To further explore the impact of incoming tourism on globalisation dynamics in the CEE region it is vital to analyse how digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth contribute to the integration of these countries in the global market. Under the circumstances, it is necessary to identify a common pattern in the influence of tourism on globalisation across the region or point out the significant variations between the CEE states.

The concept of globalisation has not been extensively studied in correlation with tourism (Wijesinghe et al., 2019). During the internationalisation era, tourism has developed rapidly, stimulating growth worldwide (Navickas and Malakauskaite, 2021; Danish and Zhaohua, 2018). Mobility and liberty, given by transport infrastructure and, digitalisation (Renaud, 2020; Stalmirska, 2020; Jonanocic and Ilic, 2016; Milano and Koens, 2022; Nistor and Nicula, 2021; Nistor et al, 2020; Mimoza Zhubi et al., 2024) facilitate the integration of goods and markets. Global openness fosters the integration of markets and the exchange of goods, thereby accelerating the expansion of international tourism. This growth is fundamentally enabled by increased mobility and freedom, supported by advancements in transport infrastructure and digitalisation (Haini et al., 2023; Renaud, 2020; Stalmirska, 2020; Jonanocic & Ilic, 2016; Milano & Koens, 2022; Nistor & Nicula, 2021; Nistor et al., 2020; Zhubi et al., 2024). The economic, social and political dimensions of globalisation support the development of tourism (Javid and Katircioglu, 2017), highlighting the interdependence between these two phenomena.

Tourism transnationalisation is part of the overall globalisation process with a starting point in the early 19th century (Antonescu and Stock, 2014). Global connectivity correlates with the *touristification* of the world by forming a unique tourism model (Antonescu and Stock, 2014) by decreasing attachment to the place of origin, whether it is the living environment or local communities (Higgins-Desbiolles and Bigby, 2021).

The process of tourism globalisation, also known as *touristification*, results from a set of interconnected factors, such as digitalisation of information, development of transportation systems, liberalisation of international trade, global expansion of hotel chains, and diversification of demand for tourism products (Brelik, 2018). Tourism has become the largest industry globally, in both developed and developing countries alike (Danish and Zhaohua, 2018). This was possible as international linkages have reduced space, economic, social, cultural, and political barriers, reshaping the world to facilitate the expansion of international tourism (Niewiadomsky, 2020).

One of the most significant manifestations of globalisation is the popularisation of inbound tourism as a result of progress in transport, particularly air transport. Thus, the development of tourism as an industry seems unstoppable even under high-risk conditions such as war, terrorism, natural disasters, or economic crises (Nicula et al., 2024; Niewiadomsky, 2020). Against the backdrop of globalisation, tourism is considered to be among the sectors with high resilience and capacity to adapt and recover following the occurrence of catastrophic and unexpected events (Romagosa, 2020; Khan, 2020, Butler, 2020; Tang, 2023; Streimikiene et al., 2021), being also prone to inertia. The transformations in tourism entail the realisation of institutional innovations with repercussions on both demand and supply (Brouder, 2020). Globalisation influences all types of tourism since it adopts new practices and rituals, transforms local traditions, integrates the latest innovations and develops new business models (Liutikas and Raj, 2024) driven by digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth.

In a wide context, tourism is turning into a socio-cultural and economic phenomenon that fosters the connection between people and activities in a spatial framework correlated with international business and politics. Nevertheless, the volatility of tourism development is increasing in a complex and interconnected world (Seyfi and Hall, 2024). Accordingly, tourism has grown from an elitist activity into a transnational economic phenomenon, making a significant contribution to international growth and development and thus facilitating global cooperation. Digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth define today's globalized world and reinforce interdependence relations, having a significant impact on all aspects of economy and society.

2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Theoretical background

The extensive literature on tourism includes studies examining the effects of globalisation. However, analyses of inbound tourism effects on globalisation are insufficient, a fact which requires reviewing the impact of inbound tourism on the dynamics of globalisation in terms of digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth.

Tourism triggers globalisation and thus contributes to the expansion of tourism revenues, positively correlated with economic growth (Danish and Zhaohua, 2018). It is traditionally believed that globalisation encourages tourism and the development of the tourism industry, implicitly its growth. Ivanov and Webster (2013) contradict this postulate and state that the globalist process provides opportunities for tourism, yet the growth obtained as a result of it leads to the leak of goods import and services that are originally touristy-oriented, especially in very open countries. Additionally, a country's level of globalisation is not related to the contribution of tourism to economic well-being, and globalisation does not automatically, directly, and positively impact the tourism industry as stipulated by the traditional approach (Ivanov and Webster, 2013). Nevertheless, the traditional approach is ubiquitous in the relevant related literature as it has been proven by both the single causal link between tourism and long-term growth and by the bicausal link between tourism and short-term growth (Praveen, 2024; Lin, 2024). Tourist flows and tourism revenues are closely connected to energy consumption from conventional and unconventional sources, as well as human capital and education levels, particularly in developed countries (Ansari, 2024). The expansion of international tourism is shaped by a combination of interrelated factors. One key driver is the growth of medical tourism, which generates new patterns of cross-border mobility and diversifies tourism demand (Ağazade, 2024). Simultaneously, the development of air transport enhances both tourist flows and global economic growth by improving accessibility and regional connectivity (Franciscone et al., 2024). These trends intersect with the broader processes of globalisation and tourism innovation, which foster the adaptation of tourist offerings to international markets (Albaladejo et al., 2023). Additionally, digitalisation plays a crucial role in reshaping tourist experiences through smart platforms, automation, and instant access to information (Seetanah and Fauzel, 2023; Alonso Gallo et al., 2024; Yap et al., 2024; Xie-Carson et al., 2023). Moreover, trade openness reinforces the integration of global markets, facilitating the movement of goods and services, including those tied to the tourism sector (Kwakwa, 2024; Soylu et al., 2023).

Together, these dimensions contribute to the transformation of tourism into a dynamic global phenomenon, embedded in infrastructure, innovation, and economic policy.

The links between tourism and globalisation are bicausal and highlight the multiplier effect of tourism, which comprises the international commerce, international finance and human mobility. These are also particular features of globalisation. Hence, tourism is a vector of globalisation (Song et al., 2017) The multiplier effect of tourism is explained by the fact that tourist flows cause expenses that become revenue for the visited destinations (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard, 2007). Through redistribution, these resources generate positive indirect effects, especially in terms of reducing poverty and inequality (Sun et al; 2025, Albaladejo et al., 2023; Jelušić and Mikulić, 2023; Shi et al., 2019; Camacho and Ramos-Herrera, 2024), particularly in developing countries, since tourism behaves like any other export sector. Song et al. (2017) describe tourism as a field where globalisation is fuelled and consolidated. Brelik (2018) explained this original multiplier effect in Keynesian theory, namely that an inherent feature of tourism consists of transferring funds from the tourists' place of residence to the visited destinations. Tourists' expenditures become income for residents, which are subsequently redistributed and produce financial effects. Khan (2020) explained the multiplier effect of tourism through its connection, among others, with transport, accommodation, travel facilities, sightseeing, shopping, entertainment, agriculture, horticulture, production, floriculture, information, and technology. Crevoisier and Rime (2021) invalidate the multiplier effect of tourism, stating that the globalist process triggers the multiplier effect of tourism and explain that the same process induces changes that make export revenues to be rather directed towards foreign markets than to the local ones. Sastri et al. (2024) analysed the multiplier effect of tourism before and after the pandemic crisis and concluded that there are differences between effects, depending on the particular features of each period. The intensity of the multiplier effect of tourism decreases in vulnerable periods.

In recent decades, technological and communication progress, along with the more recent digital transformations, have produced changes in the conduct of tourism activities, providing opportunities and causing the globalisation of the tourism industry (Ilić and Nikolić, 2018). Digitalisation and trade openness turn local markets into global ones, differentiate them and favour the customization of tourism products rather than their homogenization, as trade is a main element of economic activity in the global landscape (Hurduzeu et al., 2024).

Tourism contributes to export since the accumulated foreign exchange earnings are reflected in

the balance of payments. Tourism stabilizes the balance of payments and thus growth (Zlatina, 2025). Globalisation improves the tourism trade balance of countries able to gain comparative advantages and specialise in tourism by stimulating competitiveness and removing market entry barriers, as noted by Tufail et al. (2023). For the states failing to establish themselves on the tourism market, globalisation disrupts the tourism trade balance. As a result of globalisation dynamics, tourism industry has become sensitive to economic, political and financial crises, and tourism development occurs unevenly among countries as international integration deepens (Simionescu and Nicula, 2024).

The most competitive tourist destinations in the world are heterogenous and not homogeneous as we would expect in the context of globalisation, mainly due to their large share in tourism sector in GDP and due to the economic, social, cultural, and environmental advantages (Cîrstea, 2014). There are conflicting opinions regarding the role of hotel infrastructure in relation to tourism and economic competitiveness. The relevant literature stresses that hotel infrastructure boosts the attractiveness of destinations for tourists and investors alike (Jonanocic and Ilic, 2016), yet the presence of hotel chains in a country does not influence globalisation (Ivanov and Ivanova, 2016). The difference between countries, in terms of tourism performance, is made by the level of endowment with basic resources, complementary conditions, globalisation, and prices (Hanafiah and Zulkifly, 2019). Different levels of globalisation have different impacts on inbound tourism. States that are more integrated into the global economy attract larger tourist inflows from abroad, but growth in the international tourism revenues and net tourism service exports are not guaranteed (Chiu et al., 2020). This result indicates that globalisation does not necessarily support the development of inbound tourism. Javid and Katircioglu (2017) also evaluated the impact of economic, social and political globalisation on tourism, noting that integration, across all three levels, constitutes a significant driving force behind tourism development. Fereidouni et al. (2014) focused on analysing the connection between globalisation indicators and tourist arrivals. Inbound tourism promotes globalisation, while global economic and social interactions increase tourist flows in the short and long term. Developing countries can adopt the model of the developed ones to implement appropriate economic policy measures and consequently grow a successful tourism activity. This is the recommendation made by Paramati et al. (2016) after concluding that inbound tourism generates positive effects on the economy through the opportunities created on the labour market, the income generated, the revenues collected through taxes, and the foreign currency reserves accumulated.

Globalisation is generally associated with homogeneity, which is not necessarily true, while also allowing the association of concepts such as spatiality and spatial empowerment with tourism, where different strategies of spatiality are applied to support models of local identity (González-Reverté, 2023). If we relate to tourism spatiality, globalisation, digitalisation and trade openness, we are highlighting cultural tourism as a form of activity that is compatible with all these processes. People wish to visit cities and institutions such as museums, which mainly play educational and tourist-attraction roles.

The digitalisation and digitisation of cultural facilities included in the tourist circuits are forms of adaptation to the current technological conditions. In the absence of digitalisation, these tourist attractions risk losing their appeal and relevance. When digitally enhanced, they not only attract a wider audience - including virtual visitors - but also fulfill an important educational role (Yap et al., 2024). Such a trend is possible as a result of the transport advancement that reduces distances and facilitates visitors' access to the tourist attractions (Domènech et al., 2022). In terms of social, economic and cultural phenomenon, tourism displays a wide range of manifestations fuelled by globalisation that finds support in transport development (Zlatina, 2025) and geographical contractions of spaces. Urban areas have been listed among the most important suppliers of tourists. Nevertheless, the past few decades they have undergone a series of changes triggered by trade openness - both physical and commercial, transport advancement, and digital technology that turned urban areas into tourist receptors. Thus, we are witnessing the expansion of urban tourism alongside the theorization of concepts such as overtourism, gentrification and urban sustainability (Nilsson, 2024). Globalisation expands urbanisation and, consequently, urban tourism furthers its addressability and accessibility. The urban environment provides the complete and necessary infrastructure for visitors (airport access, direct routes between destinations, local means of transportation, hotels and other forms of accommodation, restaurants, free internet services, which is a plus for younger generations), complemented by attractive tourist packages (cultural events, museum entry, shopping offers, trips, and other types of entertainment). The development and impact of tourism in the globalisation context leads to geographical changes, environmental problems, erosion of traditions and cultural values, as technology and mass media expose people to other cultures that sometimes replace the local ones or, in ideal situations, create a mixed culture that is easily accepted by both residents and tourists (Judijanto and Aslan, 2024).

The relevant related literature in the field of tourism and globalisation is substantial, but not

holistic. We have repeatedly come across different types of gaps, such as evidence gaps (because of some contradictory results), empirical gaps (some conclusions need empirical validation), regional gaps (the Central and Eastern region of Europe is less analysed as the main case), knowledge and theoretical gaps (as there are no studies focused on reviewing the impact of inbound tourism on the globalisation dynamics in terms of digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth). All these factors have led us to set the research objective with a view to the knowledge and theoretical gap, which is to be covered simultaneously by the other underlined gaps in the empirical analysis presented throughout these pages. The current paper adds to the already existing results several novelty features such as the direct analysis of the relation between inbound tourism and globalisation in the CEE region in the context of present-day challenges triggered by digital transformation, and access to markets as a result of trade openness and economic growth orientation. Our research also focuses on identifying the components of inbound tourism with impact on globalisation in the region under study, pointing out the vulnerabilities for each country in the region, a useful aspect for economic and tourism agents, as well as for decision-makers so that each country can succeed in developing inbound tourism tailored to the new realities to which we are all exposed.

2.2. Methods

The analysis of the literature framework highlights that, although globalisation is the subject of numerous studies on tourism activities, the emphasis has predominantly been on its effects on tourism. In this theoretical context, in order to address the gaps in the literature, we are reviewing the impact of inbound tourism on the globalisation dynamics of the CEE region in terms of digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth. The CEE states share not only proximity features, but also economic and political evolution features that are fairly common. In addition, there are emerging countries whose objective is to reduce the gaps compared to the developed European entities, with high economic, social and tourist potential.

Globalisation through tourism is analysed for nine EU member countries in the CEE region. Czech Republic and Slovakia were excluded from the target group because the available statistical data for these two countries regarding tourism arrivals do not cover the period from 1999 to 2023. Indicators were obtained from the websites of the World Bank, KOF Swiss Economic Institute (KOF), and United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), official databases that are the intelligence source of many statistical platforms. The Czech Republic did not report tourism arrivals for

the periods 1995-2002 and 2021-2023, and Slovakia also failed to report data for the periods 1999-2013 and 2021-2023. The share of tourism in GDP is missing for the entire period in the case of the Czech Republic. For this reason, the analysis is limited to nine countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Missing data were filled in by means of extrapolation, since, in most cases, there are no reports of tourism indicators and KOF Globalisation Index (KOF) for the period 2021-2023.

KOF represents the dependent variable of the analysis and measures the economic, social, and political dimensions of globalisation. Inbound tourism expenditure (ITE), tourism arrivals (ARR), hotel and similar accommodation facilities (HOG), internet individual users (IUI), exports (EXP), trade in services (TRE), tourism contribution in GDP (TOUR), level of urbanization (URB) and gross domestic product (GDP) represent the independent variables. The indicators provide information on globalisation or the degree of integration into the international market, tourism sector, digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth. Research graphical workflow systematizes the methodological analysis of the study (Fig. 1).
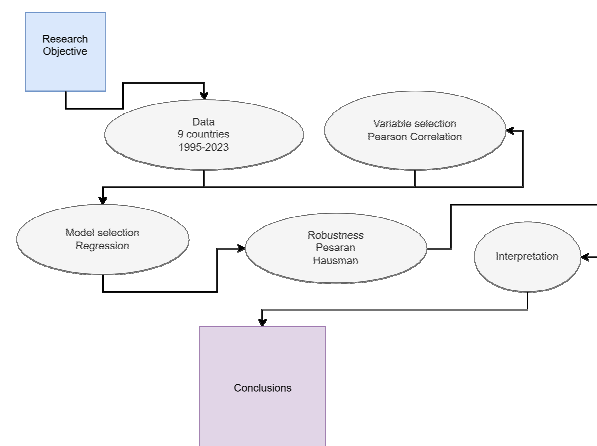

Fig. 1. Research graphical workflow.

We have reviewed the impact of inbound tourism on the dynamics of globalization of the CEE region, in terms of digitalization, trade openness and economic growth, by applying regression models. Based on Pearson correlations, we have selected the independent variables of the study. Subsequently, we applied regression models and robustness tests such as Pesaran or Hausman.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the beginning of the empirical analysis, we calculated, the average values for the period 1995-2023 for each variable, as to get a first picture of the differences between the CEE states. The most integrated states into the global economy from the CEE region, during the period 1995-2023, were Hungary and Estonia, while Romania and Latvia recorded rather

modest performances in their economic, social and political dimensions. Although the difference between the most integrated country and the least integrated one into the global economy (from the CEE region) is quite noticeable, the differences between the rest of the states in the region are not so visible due to their common evolution and set of features (Fig. 2).
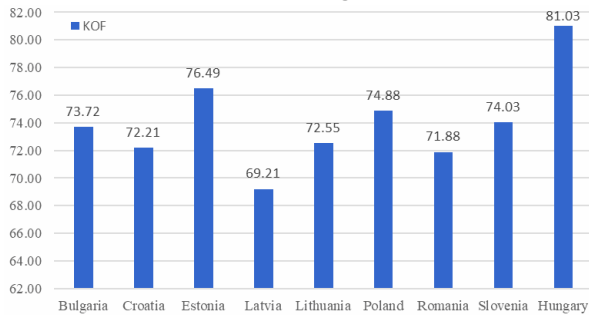

Fig. 2. KOF Index (average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations using KOF Swiss Economic Institute database).*

The most attractive CEE countries for foreign tourists were Romania and Hungary. However, tourists spent more in Slovenia, while, in Lithuania and Bulgaria, they spent less (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4) compared to the rest of the CEE countries.
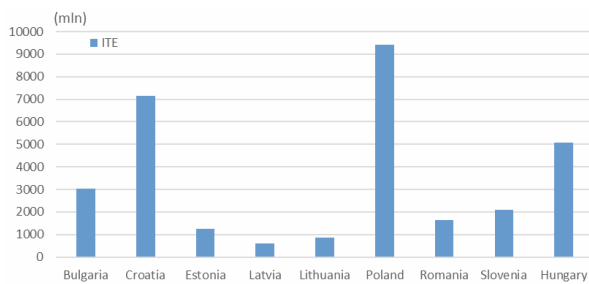

Fig. 3. Inbound tourism expenditure (USD dollars, average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations using UNWTO database).*
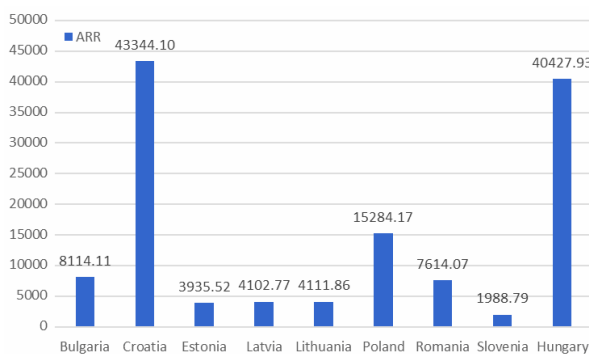

Fig. 4. International tourism (thousand number of arrivals, average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations using UNWTO database).*

Statistics do not confirm the link between number of tourists and their expenses which, in the destination country, translates into tourism revenue. The tourist expenditure depends on prices, tourist offer and financial possibilities of the tourists.

The tourist capacity of a country depends on the accommodation infrastructure, and this varies

between the CEE countries. Hungary recorded the most extensive tourism infrastructure, while Croatia and Poland reported the lowest number of hotels and other forms of accommodation (Fig. 5).
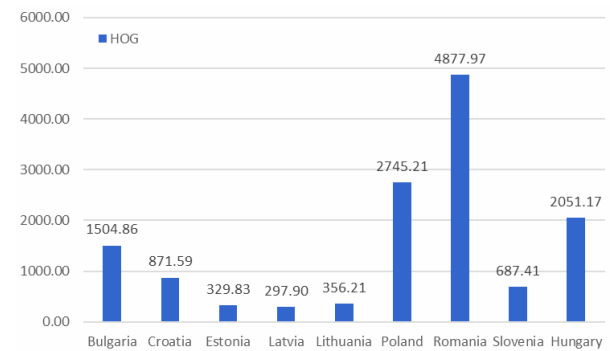

Fig. 5. Average values of tourism infrastructure (thousands, average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations using UNWTO database).*

Tourist infrastructure depends on investments in tourism and greatly influences the attractiveness of a destination as well as the performance of the tourist sector. Tourism performance depends on the policy adopted by each country, applied strategies and geographical potential, and can reflect or not the economic performance. For instance, Latvia stood out through its economic performance despite the fact that it is not the country with the highest share of tourism in GDP. Croatia and Lithuania recorded a high contribution of the tourism sector for GDP (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7).
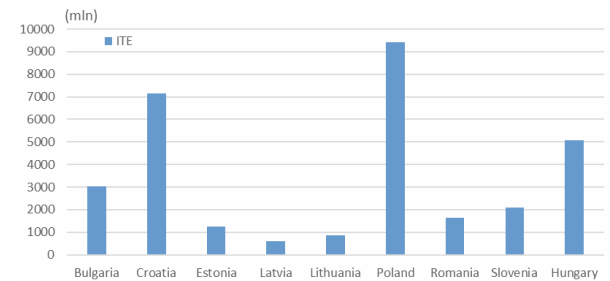

Fig. 6. Economic growth (current USD, average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations using World Bank).*
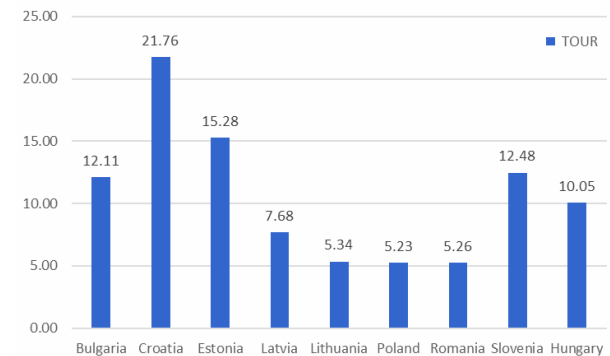

Fig. 7. Tourist performance (% GDP, average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations using UNWTO databases).*

Although it does not stand out in terms of accommodation capacity (Fig. 5), tourist expenditure or

tourist flow (Fig. 3), the tourism sector in Croatia contributed significantly to the country's economic growth between 1995 and 2023.

Compared to tourism, trade exchanges support the CEE countries' growth to a greater extent (Fig. 8). If Slovenia registers a small difference between the contribution of the two types of services, the rest of the states in the CEE region have recorded superior trade performances of tourism due to industrial diversity and superior export capacity (Fig. 8 and Fig. 9), on which depends the contribution of trade to the economic growth.
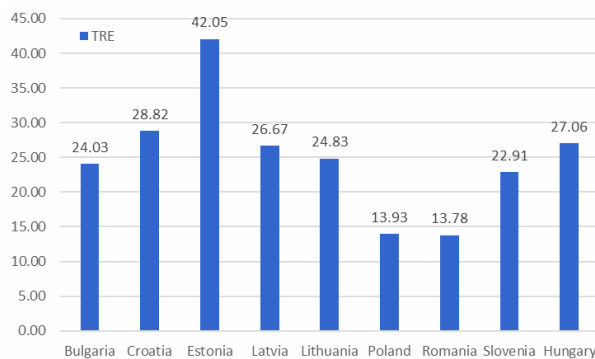

Fig. 8. Trade contribution to GDP (%, average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations using World Bank and UNWTO databases).*
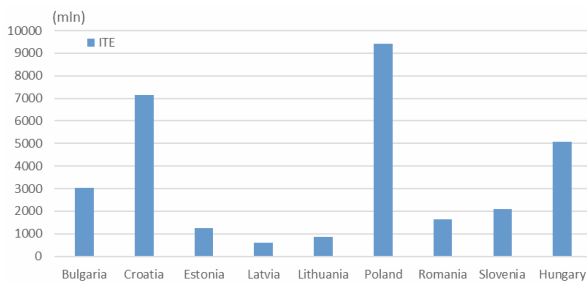

Fig. 9. Exports (BoP, current USD, average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations using World Bank database).*
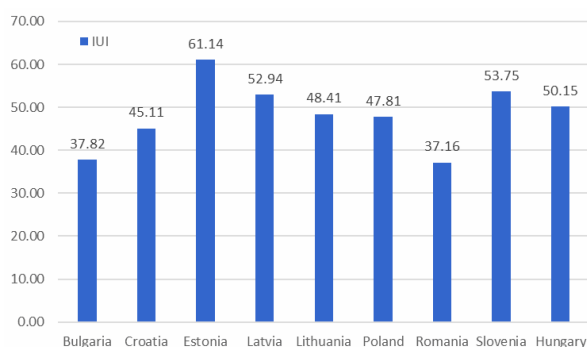

Fig. 10. Digitalisation (individuals using the Internet - % of population, average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations).*

Over 61% of the population of Latvia and 53% of that of Slovenia demonstrated digital skills in the period 1995-2023, while Poland and Estonia were at the opposite pole (Fig. 9). In general, the use of technology

is associated with skills attributed to the urban population. A high share of the urban population is found in Poland and Latvia, a fact which intuitively associates digitalization with urbanization (Fig. 10 and Fig. 11). However, this deduction may lead to erroneous results. The empirical analysis of the indicators corrects this inconvenience.
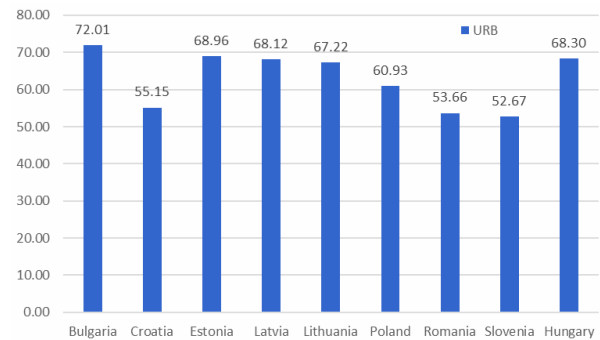

Fig. 11. Urbanization (% of total population, average values 1995-2023) *(source: own calculations).*

The empirically evaluated variables relate the globalisation index, which measures a country's capacity to integrate into the global market, with indicators describing the tourism sector, the environment, trade openness, and economic growth.

Differences accentuated among the CEE countries are observed in the case of foreign visitors, exports, and economic growth (Table 1).

Table 1. Variables description.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
KOF	74	8.09	47.89	85.13
ITE	3.46e+09	3.46e+09	350e+07	1.64e+10
ARR	14324.81	16128.41	732	61397
HOG	1524.68	1652.449	135	8342
IUI	48.25	30.87	0	4.513
GDP	9.91e+10	1.39e+11	4.50e+09	8.09e+11
EXP	5.16e+10	7.28e+10	2.09e+09	4.96e+11
TRE	24.90	9.31	7.60	54.57
TOUR	10.58	5.66	2.29	28.8
URB	63	7.25	50.62	76.7

Source: own calculations.

The highest degree of homogenisation is found in the level of integration into the global market, urbanisation, digitalisation, and the share of trade and tourism. Major differences primarily stem from the economic growth evolution, export capacity, and some tourism features like tourism expenditures, visitor flows, and tourism infrastructure. These disparities indicate that, despite a relatively similar path in terms of globalisation, proximity, and EU membership, the CEE countries show particularities in their economic growth, development of tourism sector, trade and digitisation.

Globalisation is strongly correlated with digitalisation and barely correlated with TOUR (p-value

= 0.1245), for which reason we have chosen not to include this variable in our analysis. The relations between variables and globalisation are overall positive (Table 2).

Table 2. Pairwise correlations.

Variables	KOF	ITE	ARR	HOG	IUI	EXP	GDP	TRE	TOUR	URB
KOF	1.000									
ITE	0.405	1.000								
ARR	0.295	0.629	1.000							
HOG	0.276	0.328	0.116	1.000						
IUI	0.848	0.292	0.094	0.157	1.000					
EXP	0.419	0.709	0.194	0.546	0.394	1.000				
GDP	0.319	0.708	0.128	0.634	0.274	0.948	1.000			
TRE	0.380	-0.101	0.109	-0.420	0.453	-0.197	-0.356	1.000		
TOUR	0.095	0.201	0.442	-0.362	0.037	-0.353	-0.389	0.520	1.000	
URB	0.188	-0.147	-0.076	-0.305	0.166	-0.048	-0.166	0.421	-0.124	1.000

Source: own calculations.

Describing the variables is not sufficient to explain the relationship between tourism and globalisation. The empirical analysis used standardized data. Analysing globalisation through tourism involves applying panel data methodology, which is feasible through several stages. Initially, the Levin-Lin-Chu unit-root test was applied to the KOF index. The test results (Table 3) indicate that the KOF index does not have a unit root and is stationary.

Table 3. The Levin-Lin-Chu Unit Root Test.

	Statistics	P-value
Unadjusted t	-9.9842	
Adjusted t*	-7.7743	0.000

Source: own calculations

The lack of unit roots and the stationarity allow the continuation of the methodological approach. Panel Data involves determining the most appropriate model between Fixed Effects and Random Effects. Hausman Test was applied to choose between the two models (Table 4).

Table 4. The Hausman Test.

Haussman Test	
Chi 2(6)	33.97
Prob>chi2	0.0000

Source: own calculations

According to Hausman test results, Fixed Effects proves to be the appropriate model (Table 5).

Table 5. Fixed Effects model.

KOF	Coefficients	t	P>/t/	[95% Confidence Intervals]	
ITE	0.196	3.13	0.002	0.073	0.320
ARR	0.159	2.01	0.046	0.003	0.316
HOG	-0.138	-2.15	0.033	-0.266	-0.011
IUI	0.933	27.01	0.000	0.865	1.001
EXP	-0.879	-7.74	0.000	-1.103	-0.655
GDP	0.846	5.13	0.000	0.521	1.171
TRE	0.165	3.46	0.001	0.071	0.259
URB	-0.489	-4.22	0.000	-0.718	-0.261
_cons	2.78e-09	0.00	1.000	-0.036	0.036

Source: own calculations.

Some components of the tourism sector facilitate globalisation dynamics, while others do not. The inbound tourism contributes to the globalisation dynamics in the CEE region. The increase in inbound tourism expenditures, tourist flows, digitalisation, economic growth and trade support globalisation dynamics. Digitisation facilitates communication, reduces distance, and helps tourist destinations to market themselves favourably, attract tourists, and generate growth through tourism, while stimulating economic activity in general. Tourism channels cultures, values, people, finances and thus promotes the integration of a destination in the global market. The visitors' expenditure represents revenue for the destination country and thus increases the dependence on tourist activity and global market. The ability to attract tourists, complemented by the mobility of people, interconnect countries and fuel globalisation, especially since access to technology allows almost instant communication over large geographical distances and easy trading, including tourism products.

These benefits support a country in actively participating in the global market, in establishing

itself as an important player in the global economy, in participating in trade exchanges determined by growth and the degree of integration into the regional and global market. However, under the constant pressure of expanding tourism infrastructure, exports, and urbanization, globalisation tones down.

Inbound tourism, through the foreign currency revenues it generates, constitutes a form of export, and the monetary dimension of exports indicates a high economic potential, openness to foreign markets, and the capacity to maintain balance of payments stability. Export is negatively associated with globalisation since it involves selling domestic production surpluses abroad. A country is less dependent on foreign trade if it can produce above domestic demand and strengthen its export sector. The dependence on export can favour key industries, excessive specialization, diminish economic diversity, but can also produce vulnerability and switch orientation from global to domestic market.

When exports are dominated by low-added value products, a country's foreign relations become asymmetric, given that development requires balance. In the context of imbalances, economic, social or political factors can turn from favourable to unfavourable. The predilection for tourism may lead to a reorientation of demand towards local consumption, especially as overtourism has become a challenge for some destinations where residents ask for discouraging international tourism and, consequently, local authorities adopt measures to discourage it. The development of international tourism requires the increase of accommodation capacity. Hotel infrastructure requires concentrated and fragmented spatial development that fuels regional inequalities, socio-economic tensions and orientation towards the domestic market and less towards the global one, especially in the case of a growing external demand for urban tourism. Urbanization is a feature of both growth and progress. When the expansion of urbanization produces congestion, pollution, inequality, and puts pressure on resources, the attention turns to the home market.

The Modified Wald Test (F = 276.81, prob>F = 0.000) indicates that the model has a significant value. The model explains clearly the time variations of globalisation within each country (R-squared within = 0.9008), though it barely caters for the differences between countries (R-squared between = 0.0029). Nonetheless, the overall explanatory power is valid (R-squared overall = 0.4928).

As mentioned before, since the model hardly explains the differences between countries, we have applied the regression model for each country. What holds true for the entire CEE region is not necessarily valid for each country individually (Table 6).

Table 6. The effects of variables on globalisation for each CEE country.

Country		ITE	ARR	HOG	IUI	EXP	GDP	TRE	URB
CEE	β	0.196	0.159	-0.138	0.933	-0.879	0.846	0.165	-0.489
	p-value	0.002	0.046	0.033	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000
Bulgaria	β	0.564	-0.318	-0.017	1.231	0.177	-0.747	0.071	0.063
	p-value	0.000	0.000	0.939	0.038	0.478	0.016	0.118	0.864
Croatia	β	-0.510	0.304	0.117	0.024	-0.811	1.118	0.278	0.618
	p-value	0.103	0.024	0.223	0.948	0.007	0.000	0.086	0.178
Estonia	β	-0.209	0.240	0.158	0.522	-0.740	0.848	0.267	-0.171
	p-value	0.038	0.011	0.239	0.000	0.002	0.003	0.000	0.006
Latvia	β	0.005	0.166	-0.225	0.761	0.182	-0.014	0.090	-0.247
	p-value	0.970	0.030	0.001	0.000	0.288	0.921	0.086	0.001
Lithuania	β	-0.023	0.043	0.166	0.767	-0.786	0.607	0.548	-0.391
	p-value	0.821	0.374	0.322	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.003	0.011
Poland	β	-0.145	0.106	0.338	1.352	-0.441	0.360	0.121	0.653
	p-value	0.142	0.182	0.222	0.000	0.209	0.256	0.594	0.006
Romania	β	-0.873	0.402	-0.832	1.338	-0.078	0.984	0.324	-0.375
	p-value	0.007	0.000	0.180	0.201	0.878	0.001	0.076	0.000
Slovenia	β	-0.054	0.216	-0.022	1.341	0.558	-0.196	-0.552	-0.342
	p-value	0.834	0.047	0.871	0.000	0.153	0.523	0.248	0.574
Hungary	β	-0.056	0.071	0.166	2.341	0.028	-0.010	0.038	-1.690
	p-value	0.683	0.455	0.005	0.000	0.943	0.977	0.793	0.000

Source: own calculations.

In order to assess the impact of variables on globalisation dynamics by country, we applied multiple regression. Multiple linear regression serves as a robust method in the study, allowing for parallelism between each country and the entire region. There is a good fit of the model with the data, and the independent variables significantly influence the dependent one (Table 7).

Table 7. Good fit of the model.

Country	F(7, 15)	Prob>F	R-Squared
Bulgaria	168.51	0.0000	0.9854
Croatia	110.71	0.0000	0.9779
Estonia	235.85	0.0000	0.9895
Latvia	132.55	0.0000	0.9815
Lithuania	151.29	0.0000	0.9837
Poland	124.66	0.0000	0.9803
Romania	74.54	0.0000	0.9684
Slovenia	62.65	0.0000	0.9616
Hungary	111.63	0.0000	0.9781

Source: own calculations.

Inbound tourism expenditure is a globalisation factor in the CEE region. However, there are differences among countries. In Bulgaria inbound tourism expenditures contribute to the expansion of globalisation, which does not happen in Estonia or Romania.

The increase in tourist arrivals boosts globalisation in the CEE region, in Estonia, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia, whilst the opposite is true for Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, and Slovenia. Tourist infrastructure does not generate globalisation in the region, Latvia included; yet, the expansion of the accommodation capacity supports the integration of Hungary in the global market. Digitalisation sustains globalisation in the entire region, and each of the analysed countries except for Romania, in which case the result is not statistically significant. Trade openness is strongly associated with globalisation, accelerating it in the CEE region and Lithuania, while the development of export has the opposite effect in Croatia, Estonia and Lithuania. Economic growth in the region is a factor of globalisation, a trend followed also in the particular case of Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania and Romania, but not in that of Bulgaria. Poland is the only country where urbanization supports globalization. Urbanization opposes globalisation in the CEE, Latvia, Romania and Hungary. The results show differences between the inbound tourism action, in terms of digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth at regional level and at each country's level, as well. The regional model does not overlap the reality of each country (see Appendix 1).

Inbound tourism imprints dynamics to globalisation in the CEE region. We have not identified a unique model for the entire region and each corresponding country. In the case of the CEE region, tourist expenditure, tourist flows, and hotel infrastructure are favourable to globalisation in terms of digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth, while the development of the export sector and urbanisation are prone to head towards home markets. At country level, we have found antagonisms that show

their particularities and interregional heterogeneity and indicate that each driver of globalisation manifests in a different way under different circumstances. In the case of Bulgaria, tourist expenditure favours globalisation, but does not support the increase in tourist flow, in terms of digital development. By contrast, in Estonia, globalisation is supported by the ability to attract tourists. Trade openness and economic growth are advocates of globalisation, yet the consolidation of the export sector and urbanization do not favour it. Tourist flows are not a driver for Croatia's globalisation, unlike economic growth. Tourist attractiveness favours Latvia's globalisation, but not the expansion of tourist infrastructure and urbanization. In the case of Lithuania, digitalisation and trade openness are globalisation factors but the consolidation of the export sector heads towards an internal market. In Poland, the results show the positive contribution of digitalisation and urbanization. Romania's globalisation reacts favourably to the increase in tourist flows and economic growth but not urbanization. Also, tourist flows help Slovenia integrate globally in terms of digitalisation, while the expansion of tourist infrastructure and urbanization do not favour Hungary's globalisation, which, in turn, takes advantage of digitalisation benefits. Globalisation dynamics through inbound tourism is supported by the expansion of digitalisation, trade openness and the economic growth of the region.

A regional pattern was not identified, because the country-level analysis reveals highly diverse situations (Table 6). In seven of the nine countries analysed in this paper, inbound tourism supports integration into the global market. In five of the states in the CEE region, tourism does not support globalisation, namely Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, and Slovenia. In Bulgaria only, tourist expenditure supports global market integration. In the other four countries, tourist attractiveness is important. Digitalisation opens opportunities for growth, development, communication, and global market integration in all CEE countries. Trade openness gives advantages to Estonia and Lithuania, while export consolidation

supports the domestic market in the cases of Croatia, Estonia and Lithuania. Growth is a factor of progress, noticeable for the globalization of Croatia, Estonia and Romania, but not for in that of Bulgaria. Urbanization, associated with economic progress, supports the integration into the global market only in Poland, while in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Hungary the expansion of urbanization shifts the interest in the home market. This result helps design strategies for inbound tourism development and integration into the regional and global market. Each economy reacts differently to the same stimuli, and the regional model does not fit the national one. The globalisation dynamics of the CEE region and member countries depends on the ability to adapt to digitalisation and on how digital technology is used (Nicula et al., 2020).

The results confirm the positive nexus between inbound tourism, digitisation, trade openness and growth on the one hand, and globalisation dynamics, on the other. Globalisation through inbound tourism does not follow a uniform pattern in CEE. Inbound tourism competes for integration in the regional and global market, but not decisively in all its aspects.

Inbound tourism influence globalisation dynamics in CEE region (H1) under the evolution of digitalisation, trade openness and growth (H2) even if tourism does not have a similar impact in each of CEE countries (H3).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Inbound tourism and globalisation are phenomena of interest, analysed in literature especially from the perspective of the influence of globalisation on tourism and very little from the reverse perspective. Literature shows that globalisation, especially correlated with the development of transport infrastructure, created more than favourable conditions for inbound tourism development. But globalisation and transport are not the only catalysts for inbound tourism. Many determinants from different spheres shape the tourism sector, as it has been easily highlighted in literature. There is a lack of studies on the effects of inbound tourism on globalisation, which is why we aimed to cover this gap by reviewing the impact of inbound tourism on the dynamics of globalisation in the CEE region, in terms of digitalisation, trade openness and economic growth. To achieve this goal, we applied two methods, Fixed Effects Panel Data and Multiple Regression analysis, as a robustness method necessary to capture the individual situations of each country. Our results show that inbound tourism has a positive impact on globalisation dynamics in the CEE region. Tourist expenditure, tourist flows, and tourist infrastructure support the integration of the CEE region into the global market, yet these factors have a different reaction in each country (in some of them, there are

favourable effects towards globalisation, while in other, there are not). Digitalisation facilitates the interactions between countries and people, reduce geographical distances, and associates positively with globalisation. Trade openness, assuming commercial exchanges between different states, generates globalisation, yet the consolidation of the export sector shows an orientation switch towards the national market. Growth is a common goal of the economic politics, the very basis of progress in all domains and sectors. However, the results show that urbanization, a consequence of constant growth on long term, would rather lean towards a national approach of economy than towards a global one. While no universal model was identified for each CEE countries, the findings indicate a positive relationship between inbound tourism and globalisation. The conclusion that inbound tourism supports globalisation dynamics is also confirmed by the results obtained by, Fereidouni et al. (2014), Song et al. (2017), and Ilić and Nikolić (2018), but contradicts those obtained by Ivanov and Ivanova (2016) and Danish and Zhaohua (2018). These results cover part of the gaps in the scientific literature and consolidate tourism development policies in the context of globalisation for the CEE region and for each country individually. Inbound tourism, economic growth, trade openness and digitisation sometimes have dissonant effects among countries, so economic policy measures and tourism development strategies must be tailored according to the effects exerted by globalisation determinants. The results highlight the assets available to support the globalisation dynamics through inbound tourism, digitisation, trade opening, and growth in the CEE region, and can inspire economic policy-makers in setting global market integration strategies.

A good integration policy of the CEE region can be based on inbound tourism, especially on the income (inbound tourism expenditures), on the efficient use of digital technologies, on trade opening and on the reversal of growth effects on the globalisation dynamics. Economic policy measures should support determinants positively influencing globalisation. The lack of statistical significance in certain results limits the ability to draw definitive conclusions. The study has limitations that derive from the statistical insignificance of the results. This shortcoming is remedied with the access to full data for an appropriate period of time, which completes the group of states, extends the period and modifies the methodology. Changing the analysis context can lead to different results with varying implications in practice. There is the risk that excluding two countries from this analysis (due to the lack of data) may generate a distortion of the results, to some extent. Limitations were minimized by correlation with similar studies, validation of the empirical models applied and the use of extrapolation techniques to extend the analysed

period to 2022-2023, which simultaneously may affect the results because the real indicators may differ from those obtained through extrapolation. Despite these limitations, the study completes the literature through a less common analysis of the inbound tourism effects and other determinants on the globalisation dynamics, through the group of states studied, the conclusions drawn and recommendations. This analysis opens future perspectives for research on the topic by relating it to other regions, variables, analysis methods or periods since different approaches of a subject shape a holistic image of the results, leading to better-grounded conclusions that can be approached in a decisive manner and with efficiency.

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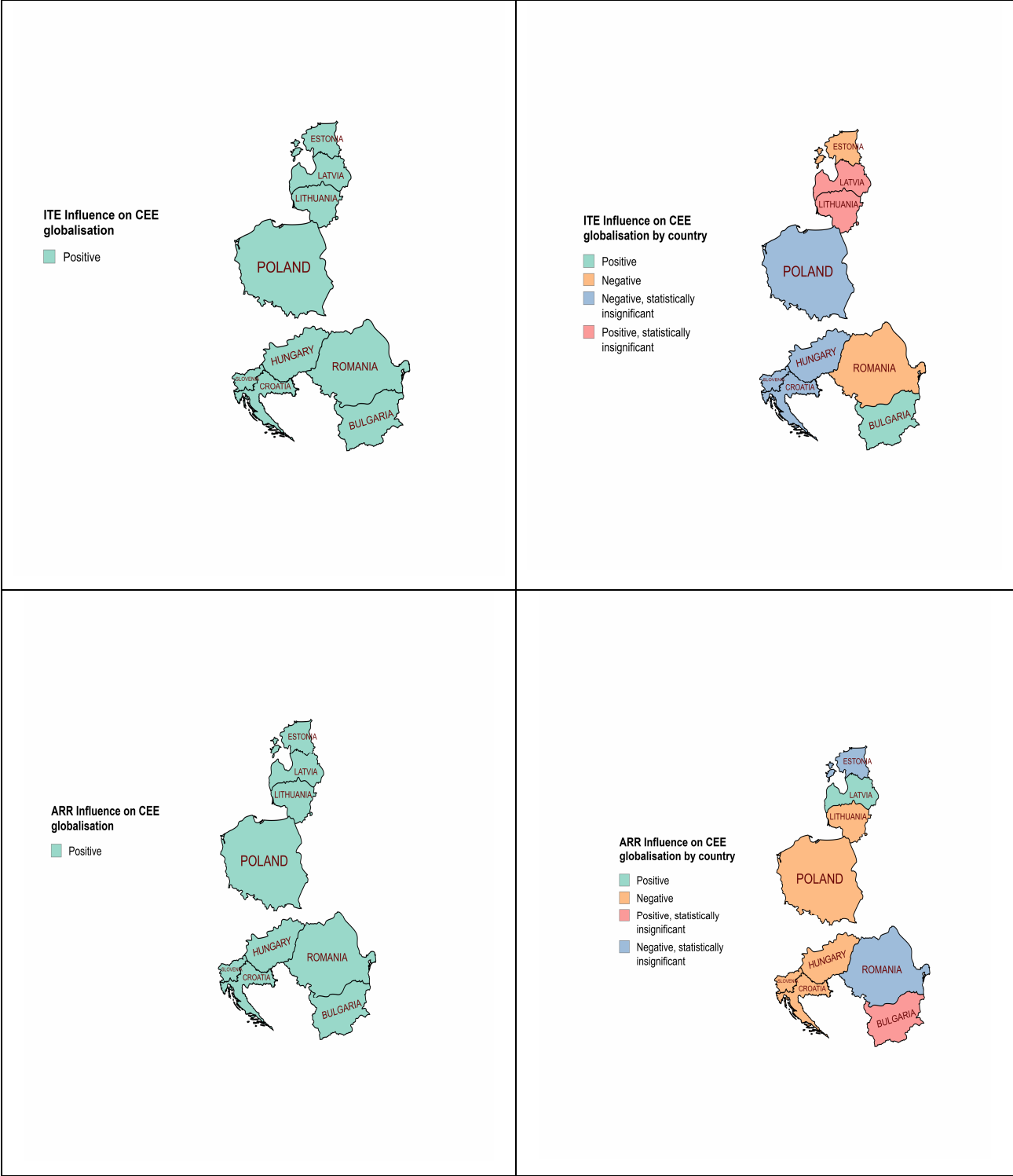
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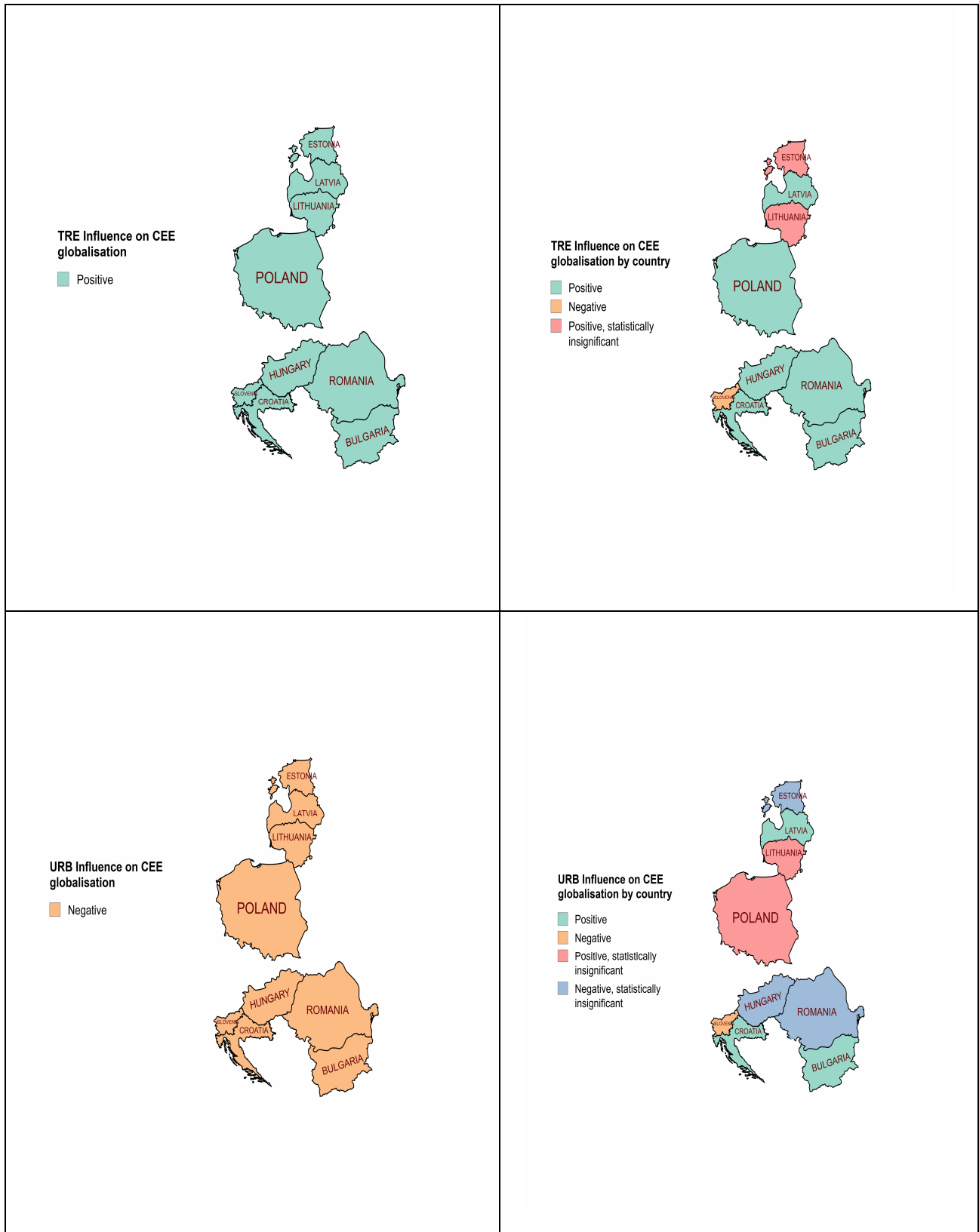**Zhubi M., Zhubi D., Kovaçi I., Tahiri, A.** (2024), Tourism as a tool for improving global education and international cooperation. Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology, 8(4), 1639–1645. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v8i4.1535

APPENDIX 1. Influence of variables on CEE globalisation

HOG Influence on CEE globalisation

- Negative

HOG Influence on CEE globalisation

- Positive
- Negative
- Positive, statistically insignificant
- Negative, statitically insignificant

IUI Influence on CEE globalisation

- Positive

IUI Influence on CEE globalisation by country

- Positive
- Positive, statistically insignificant

Source: own elaboration.