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ABSTRACT BOOK

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AIR CONNECTIVITY IN PERIPHERAL ISLAND REGIONS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS TO THE AZORES AND MADEIRA (2024–2025)

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Air transport is essential for tourism, especially in island and peripheral destinations, where alternative means of access may be limited or even non-existent. This study analyses international air connectivity with the Portuguese autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira, focusing on its implications for tourist flows and seasonal accessibility. The research is based on a comprehensive collection of data on all domestic and international flights arriving at the main airports of both archipelagos during two seasonal periods: one week in the IATA winter period and one in the IATA summer season for the years 2024 and 2025. The study aims to 1) map international routes by city/airport and country of origin; 2) identify the airlines operating these routes; 3) compare patterns between the summer and winter seasons; and 4) assess the evolution of connectivity between the two years. Using a quantitative and comparative methodology, the study analyses the frequency, geographical diversity and type of airlines (low-cost vs. traditional, etc.) in international air traffic, providing insights into how these factors shape tourism dynamics in each region. Preliminary results suggest a more stable and diversified international air network throughout the year in Madeira, while the Azores show more substantial seasonal variation. Differences in airline strategies and tourism demand cycles seem to influence these trends. Understanding these patterns is essential for destination managers, tourism planners and regional policymakers to optimise accessibility, promote sustainable tourism and strengthen economic resilience in the island context.

Keywords: *Tourism mobility, air transport, island destinations, seasonality, peripheral regions*

References:

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