"The effect of tourism on crime in Italy: a dynamic panel approach"

ANSWER TO Anonymous 2 (March 06, 2012)

Question 1
"Introduction
In my opinion the paper's contribution lies in the attempt to identify whether the positive relationship between tourism and crime is to be attributable to the fact that tourists are more likely to be victimized (i.e. they are an easier target) or to the fact that tourism leads to a higher population density in certain urban spots thereby creating an environment that facilitates certain crime activities. This is potentially important to the extent that appropriate policies to contain or reduce crime in tourist destination might well depend on the nature of the relationship between tourism and crime. If my interpretation is correct, then the introduction should reflect this punchline more clearly and effectively."

Answer
The reason why in the paper results on equivalent population are not so emphasized depends on the fact that should be further investigated. By using “equivalent population” we are not able to answer exactly to this question (i.e. whether the positive relationship between tourism and crime is attributable to victimization rate of tourist or to urban density). As other readers highlight (see for instance question 3 of the referee 2) since we don’t know the propensity to be victimized and to reports to the police of tourists and residents respectively (data are not available), at the moment we cannot indicate any policy implication. What we undoubtedly find is that tourism affects crime both in the short and in the long run, and that effect of the presence of residents on crime is higher than the effect of the presence of tourists (the difference of the two coefficients is significantly different from zero).

Question 2
"As far as the set of explanatory variables include it would be useful to have an explanation of why both the growth rate, the level of income and unemployment are included. After all one would tend to think that these variable are simultaneously determined."

Answer
The economic variables of the model are “standard” in the empirical crime literature (Buonanno & Montolio, 2008). In any case, we did not find any multicollinearity problem.


Question 3
"About data on crime, I wonder whether data on types of crime are available. For instance, if data on pickpocketing or other forms of crime that become easier when the density increases, then introducing some measure of the intensity of such types of crime and interacting it with the density variable could provide further evidence in support of the underlying hypothesis."

Answer
Data on types of crime are recorded by ISTAT but at the moment we do not have these data.

Question 4
"about the estimation approach I wonder whether a more structural approach where for instance the equation for the propensity to be victimized is estimated simultaneously with the crime equation could give more insights into the nature of the relationship between crime and tourism. After all one could well think that the crime equation lacks one variable, namely the propensity to be victimized of individuals in a given region (whether tourists or residents)."

Answer
We agree with the reader, unfortunately, data on the propensity to be victimized for tourists and residents are not available.