

Tourism and rail transport in Italy in the interwar years

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to study the evolution of relations between the tourism industry and railway transport in Italy during the interwar years. The research is based on original data on tourist flows and passenger movements on the Italian State Railway (*Ferrovie dello Stato* – FS), between the end of the 1920's and the early 1930's.

We consider the Italian locations that had obtained the status of Health, Residence, and Tourism Resorts (*Stazioni di cura, soggiorno e turismo* – hereafter SCST) under a 1926 Act, in that they had an Autonomous Agency of Health, Residence and Tourism (*Azienda autonoma di cura, soggiorno e turismo*).

The data on tourism movements for each SCSTs – whose number varies up to a maximum of about 200 – were published in analytical form for the years 1929-1934; they refer to the arrivals and length of stay of tourists, making the distinction between Italians and foreigners. The SCSTs, of course, do not represent a comprehensive overview of Italian tourist resorts, however they can be considered a representative cross section by type and size of resort.

Using the data on flows of passengers departing from each railway stations run by the State Railway, it is possible to select the SCSTs which had a railway station; these amounted to approximately one hundred.

The data collected on tourist flows, railway passengers and resident population were analyzed in order to assess the link between these variables and their evolution over the period considered.

The initial results of the research, still in progress, indicate that the train was still the main means of transport for Italian and foreign tourists, but they also reveal that something was beginning to change. Road transport began to gain space taking advantage of its flexibility not only in freight transport. But these were only the first signs of a phenomenon that would be fully developed after War World II, in the era of mass tourism.

(Key words: tourism history – railways history – Italy – interwar years. JEL Classification: L83, L92, N74, N94)

¹ This paper is the result of a joint research project but only the introduction was written by both authors; whereas Donatella Strangio is the author of paragraphs 2-4 and Marco Teodori is the author of paragraph 5.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to study the evolution of relations between the tourism industry and railway transport in Italy during the interwar years². The research is based on original data on tourist flows and passenger movements on the Italian State Railway (*Ferrovie dello Stato* – FS), between the end of the 1920's and the early 1930's, available for a substantial number of Italian resorts.

The research examines the Italian places that had acquired the status of Health, Residence, and Tourism Resorts (*Stazioni di cura, soggiorno e turismo* - SCSTs) under a 1926 Act, in that they had an Autonomous Agency of Health, Residence and Tourist (*Aziende autonome di cura, turismo e soggiorno*). For these locations the Italian National Board of Touristic Industries (*Ente nazionale industrie turistiche* – hereafter Enit) established a system for data collection – which began to produce the first partial results in 1929 – by instructing the Autonomous Agencies to register the tourist flows. The data for each SCST – whose number varies up to a maximum of about 200 – were published in analytical form for the years 1929-1934; these data refer to arrivals and length of stay of tourists, distinguishing between Italians and foreigners³. The SCSTs, of course, do not represent a comprehensive overview of all the Italian tourist resorts, but they can be considered a cross section divided by type and size; for example the great art cities (Florence and Venice), spas, mountain and seaside resorts. However the geographic distribution was apparently less balanced: there were few southern and island resorts, but this is mainly related to the minor development of tourism in those regions.

The Ministry of Communications published data on departure flows from each rail station run by the Italian State Railway (FS) for the years 1927 to 1933; therefore it is possible, among the 200 SCSTs, to select the ones which had a railway station and these amounted to almost a hundred. For those locations, population data reported in the 1931 census were also considered. The data collected on tourist flows, railway passengers and resident population were analyzed in order to assess the link between these variables and their evolution over the period considered.

2. Tourism in the interwar years

During the interwar years, tourism began to be perceived as an issue of such economic importance that it could no longer be overlooked, requiring strong political and economic commitments to structure and organize the “Industry” of travel⁴. There was a growing awareness of the advantageous position enjoyed by Italy until the Great War, but also of the strong challenge coming from competition from other countries in a phase of a redefinition of tourism and the travel industry, which was more and more oriented towards big business for hotel or transport companies. The years 1922 to 1943 were dominated by a strong cyclical trend: the recovery from inflation was blocked in 1926 by the monetary stabilization of the Lira followed by the Great Depression which

² As regards the role of transport on Italy's economic growth, particularly railways, see among others Maggi (2005), pp. 13-27 and 51-61.

³ Enit, *Statistica del turismo, ad annum*. However, it should be noted, especially for the data detection of early years, that not all the SCSTs provided complete or reliable data every year.

⁴ On the socio-economic importance of tourism in Italy see Berrino (2011). For the role of tourism in the period between the two world wars, see: Strangio (2007), pp. 97-130; Syriama (2007).

led to a period of autarchy with partial economic recovery preceding the war economy and the collapse of the economic system.

The incorporation of tourism into the competence of the Italian Ministry for Press and Propaganda represented an acknowledgment of its political and economic importance⁵. In fact, with November 21 Royal Decree, 1934 n. 1851 and December 3 Royal Decree, 1934 n. 1925, the powers of the Commissioner for Tourism were transferred to the Undersecretariat of State for Press and Propaganda, and the new statute of Enit was approved⁶.

These measures were the logical development of programmatic guidelines that had already led to the establishment of the Commissioner for tourism: give the direction and coordination of tourism activities by a single centralized government entity in order to take a more compact and efficient actions⁷. Through the creation of an Undersecretary, the government wanted to make the action initiated by the Commissioner for Tourism more effective. This action was focused on coordinating and merging the many propaganda initiatives for tourism – which were fundamental to attracting flows of foreign tourists – that already exist in Italy but they were dispersed and often ineffective. In those years, across Europe all governments were taking similar initiatives to attract foreign tourists whose expenditure – as an English financier remarked during his visit to New York – constituted an ideal way “to pay international debts without suffering the burden”⁸.

England, as well as France, formulated a series of initiatives to facilitate the arrival of tourists across the railway and shipping lines. Other innovations were adopted in Germany, such as checking passports and luggage directly on the train to avoid the slightest discomfort of passengers. In order to make the journey more comfortable for foreign tourists, postal clerks, police officials, railways staff and other public administrations employees were required to know a foreign language. Italy was also active by means of the Italian Tourism Company (*Compagnia italiana per il turismo* – CIT) and Enit. An interesting comment was made by the Minister Mosconi about some of the data submitted on August 18 1930 to the Governor of the Bank of Italy, Mr. Stringher, in which he highlighted the urgency of dealing the “tourism problem” with due care and importance⁹.

Table 1. Balance of the contribution of tourism in the Italian currency (millions of lire)

years	active	years	active
1923	1.994	1932	954
1924	2.518	1933	1.236
1925	3.175	1934	1.163
1926	2.744	1935	974
1927	2.212	1936	-
1928	2.260	1937	2.352
1929	-	1938	1.870
1930	1.711	1939	1.109
1931	1.306		

Source: Enit (1928); Troisi (1942). The figure is derived from thirty years of new detection methods introduced in 1931 by Enit.

⁵ Ministero della Cultura Popolare (1939), pp. 29-30.

⁶ Regarding the role of Enit see Enit (2002).

⁷ Touring Club d'Italia (1935b), p. 77.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Historical Archive of Bank of Italy (ASBI), Fonds 35.3, s. 1 n. 32, file 1.15, p. 30

In those years, the Italian tourism balance of payments was strongly positive (see Table 1). Furthermore, the ratio between the net balance in the tourism balance and the deficit of the trade balance showed a positive trend. In Italy the income derived from foreign visitors needed to cover the deficit of the trade balance; in those years, this happened in percentages which ranged from 30 to 53 percent, in some cases even higher.

From a monetary point of view the composition of flows of foreigners was also important; although within this period there had been changes, a hypothetical ranking of the number of foreign tourists saw Germany in first position followed by the United States, Austria, England, France, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and gradually all the other nationalities¹⁰. These were the nations with which Italy had active trade relations and found an effective integration even in tourist relationships.

Once the effect of religious celebrations related to extraordinary Holy Year of 1929 had finished, the crisis began to bite since 1931, registering a decline of foreign currency revenues by 25 percent. The negative trend was accentuated in the following year with greater reductions in both cash flows and number of arrivals. This decrease is also evident from a diminution in the average length of stay, which is in fact a feature of the 1930's. In 1933, the great attraction of the special Holy Year, proclaimed by Pope Pius XI for the nineteenth centenary of Christ's Death, and the gradual normalization of relations in international currency, even if only modestly in Europe, all influenced the recovery of arrivals from abroad and hence the currency balance.

The recovery was probably favored by promotional interventions made by the new Undersecretary for Press and Propaganda, in order to meet the new mobility needs of international tourism. As in the 1920's, these interventions were mainly focused on the reduction of railway tickets; but this time the discounts had higher rates and there were also new initiatives such as all round railway tickets, sold in Italy and valid from 15 to 45 days. Special rates and discounts were added: lower than 30 percent for a minimum stay of six days, up to 50 percent for longer stays and groups of travelers¹¹.

Enit also offered other facilities, such as for the "honeymoon in Italy", allowing couples of any nationality to travel from the Italian railway station closest to the town of residence to Rome at a cost of only 30 percent of the true price of the ticket, with the possibility of a stopover in Venice¹². Particular developments occurred in 1934 when the World Football Cup took place in Italy with a great international success also from the organizational point of view. These initiatives were reflected in the composition of foreign arrivals in Italy, in that 60 per cent of the arrivals was made up of components from Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Hungary¹³.

¹⁰ Paloscia (1994); Enit, (1924-1933).

¹¹ Pagliari (1931).

¹² Mochi (1982), p. 182

¹³ For the different methods of calculation, see Strangio (2006), pp. 276-277; Paloscia (1994) p. 25; Mariotti (1933), p. 204; Enit (2002), p. 44.

Table 2. Italian invisible balance of payments 1927-1942 (millions of dollars - purchasing power in June 1946)

years	tourism	emigrants remittances	freight	total	passive	balances
1927	131	123	62	316	43	273
1928	138	125	64	327	78	249
1929	134	135	74	343	84	259
1930	121	128	71	320	104	216
1931	106	125	60	291	102	189
1932	83	77	57	217	78	139
1933	119	59	37	215	64	151
1934	114	52	30	196	62	134
1935	87	33	33	153	56	97
1936	104	53	24	181	33	148
1937	160	56	48	264	32	232
1938	120	45	36	201	30	171
1939	68	45	40	153	26	127
1940	14	17	11	42	8	34
1941	9	6	-	15	5	10
1942	5	1	-	6	3	3

Source: Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Reconstruction, "The Italian economy in 1947", report submitted by the Delegation of the Italian Government to the 5 th General Council of UNRRA, Milan 1946.

In 1935, there was an agreement, made under the auspices of the Undersecretariat, between the National Fascist Federation of Hotels and Tourism – the trade association of entrepreneurs in the tourism sector – and more than 1,500 Italian hotels for the establishment of hotel vouchers – to be sold at a minimum of five to foreigners and Italians – which gave price discounts on hotel rooms. Other benefits were introduced such as petrol coupons, tax exemptions and more¹⁴.

In 1937, clearings also began to be used in the tourism. Clearings were instruments sold only upon delivery of uniforms or indictment of foreign currencies by the offices responsible for the Italian State and these reached a total of 200 million lire in the financial year 1937-38¹⁵.

Also thanks to these measures, the arrivals of foreigners rose to 1925 levels. Moreover, there was the return of American tourists who came to visit the International Exhibition of Paris, and poured into Italy attracted by the prestige of that fascism was gaining.

The reduction in foreigners entering Italy in the years 1938-39 was accompanied by a lower contribution of foreign currency in proportion to their numerical reduction¹⁶. This phenomenon was not only due to the granting of the pound at an unusually favorable exchange rate. However, this growth was short-lived because, after the Austrian and Czechoslovak crisis and the subsequent German invasion of these countries, the decline of these strategic markets for tourism began in our country.

This trend is highlighted in Table 2 where the data on currency revenue, calculated by Enit, indicated that foreign tourism gave a contribute to the balance of payments, amounting to 131

¹⁴ Battilani (2009). See Teodori (2007) on the economic policy of hospitality.

¹⁵ Banca d'Italia (1938), p. II. vol. II, p. 1827; Mochi (1982), p. 184.

¹⁶ March 20 Royal Decree Law, 1936 n. 410, which aimed at encouraging the flow of tourists into the Italian Kingdom, in the colonies and in the other possessions of Italy.

million dollars in 1927, and reaching its peak in 1937 at 160 million. However, the importance of tourism activities in these years was such that it almost covered the trade deficit; this factor was even more important given that the level of remittances from migrants suffered a fall of 60 percent between 1930 and 1939, due to the restrictive policies of states and the deterioration of living conditions for migrants¹⁷.

The 1930's also saw the expansion of tourism in to wider areas of society; the new tourists were from lower income areas and then stayed for shorter periods, without counting those who did not even stay overnight, which was up to 40% of the foreigners registered at Italian border.

A number of changes which happened during that period had a considerable impact in the tourism sector, for example the construction of big hotels in the major cities, in some cases with the State support; the organization of the International Exhibition of 1942 in Rome, regulated by December 26 Act, 1936 n. 217, which established that the Exhibition would receive "everything that people have done in the material and spiritual domain"¹⁸; the establishment of an industrial area for cinematography in Rome (May 29 Act, 1927 n. 927)¹⁹. Mochi writes: "alongside this process of rationalization, there were also processes of atomization of accommodation activities, due to the search for forms of integration of the low incomes of Italians"²⁰. As shown by Vera Zamagni²¹, this downward trend, in terms of income and tourism activities, led to an uncontrolled development of marginal activities, such as the huge increase bed renters (*affittaletti*). A similar situation was already happening in the trade sector, where licenses were issued easily to street vendors in order to relieve the unemployment problems of the time.

To conclude this brief examination of the period, we should also refer to the estimated added value for classes and subclasses of the industry in 1938, based on research carried out by *Confcommercio* in the 1930's and processed by Vera Zamagni²². Zamagni made a comparison between the employment data of the 1936-39 census of production activities and those of April 1936 population census, in order to obtain better and more realistic data about the production quota attributed to small businesses. As regards the hotel industry and the public services, Zamagni calculates that the employees of hotels and other public services were 286,704 and those of trade sector totaled 106,637; consequently the estimate of added value for hotels and restaurants was 1,964 million lira and likewise for trade intermediaries 2.034 billion lira²³.

3. "Domestic" or "internal" tourism

We must consider that during the interwar years tourism in Italy was not limited to only a few places but it was a widespread economic activity, sometimes predominant in various places, or at least that was the aim of the authorities. Moreover the benefits resulting from these tourist flows were not only limited to the tourism sector but they also had beneficial effects on the transport system, the entertainment sector, handicrafts retailing and other activities; the improvement of these economic areas was therefore instrumental to the achievement of national interests²⁴.

Besides tourism based on the influx of foreigners, the government also pushed towards greater development in national tourism, which had different purposes and characteristic from the former

¹⁷ Mochi (1982) p. 185.

¹⁸ Comune di Roma (1955), p. 888.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ Mochi (1982) p. 198.

²¹ Zamagni (1982), pp. 143-146.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ Zamagni, Battilani (2000), p. 277; Rey 2002.

²⁴ On these issues see also Tizzoni (2011).

type. There are several non-economic causes that drove the Italians out of their town of residence. On the one hand the labor laws influenced this evolution such as: the reduction of the workweek to forty hours; the so-called "fascist Saturday" (*sabato fascista*); the obligatory nature of paid holidays.

On the other hand, the propaganda of the regime changed the popular recreational habits proposing new ways to spend free time, creating mass new audiences for the theater, film, radio and excursions. Underlying these programs, there was the establishment of the National After Work Board (*Opera nazionale dopolavoro* – hereafter OND) which began to operate with the creation of popular trains, introduced for the first time on 2 August, 1931, in part also established to give State Railway extra support²⁵.

Of course, although the OND did not have its own significant resources, it did not just promote rail trips, but also produced a series of agreements with private shipping companies that provided discounts of 35 percent on the ticket for cruises for groups of more than twenty-five people. In this case, the initiative had a marginal role because the cost of cruises was well above the real possibilities of the great mass of workers who joined the OND: in 1937 only five cruises were sponsored, with six thousand participants.

Overall, during those years there was a profound change in the public administration of tourism which lost its only local structure with a great deal of autonomy to give way to a hierarchical structure where everything was rigidly centralized in the hands of the head of government.

A peripheral structure composed by half-voluntary Autonomous Agencies was inadequate to support a process whose intended ions were to induce people “to reduce their provincial identity [...] to know [...] the configuration of a greater Italy”²⁶.

In this way, the Fascism created new peripheral bodies of government, the Provincial bodies of tourism (*Enti provinciali del turismo* – EPT) – June 20, Royal Decree, 1935 n. 1425 – which implemented "unity of method and a directive on the whole internal tourism organization"²⁷.

4. The Autonomous Agencies of Health, Residence and Tourism

Fascist doctrine encouraged state intervention in the economy, in this way Fascism continued to intensify measures in tourism, initiated by the government of President Nitti with the creation of Enit. A 1926 Act allowed the establishment of Autonomous Agencies of Health, Residence and Tourism in the municipalities where tourism was an important component of the economy²⁸.

These Agencies operated in an area coinciding with municipal border or even including more than one municipality. These regulations broadly define, Enit's responsibilities, and the organ became the operational arm of Government's tourism policy. The 1926 Act was marked the "cornerstone of tourism", "one of the greatest merits of the Fascist regime in tourism"²⁹. The new law encouraged private initiative and separated the tasks of the municipal administrations from those of the Agencies which, in some municipalities recognized as Health resorts by a 1910 Act, levied residence tax, officially to carry out improvement measures but in reality to balance their municipal

²⁵ De Grazia (1981), p. 208.

²⁶ De Grazia (1981), p. 211.

²⁷ Paloscia (1994), p. 137.

²⁸ April 15 Royal Decree-Law, 1926 n. 765 replaced by 1° luglio Act, 1926 n. 1380, “*Provvedimenti per la tutela e lo sviluppo dei luoghi di cura, soggiorno o di turismo*”; June 19 Ministry of the Interior Communication, 1926 n.16600, and Regulation approved by august 12 Decree, 1927 n. 16151.

²⁹ See also *Stazioni* (1927).

budgets³⁰. On the other hand, by law, the Town Council, which was to look after the needs of the residents, could not use these funds for purposes unrelated to the attraction of tourist flows.

The Government defined the rules and regulations for the organization of Agency governing bodies, their budgets and controls; their financing was secured mainly by the revenues of residence tax, which was, normally, collected by Agencies.

The proposal to establish an autonomous agency was made at the local level, while the Ministry of the Interior approved it if there were the requisites. The Autonomous Bodies had legal status, and were administered by a committee which was representative of the hotel industry and trade sector. Autonomous Agencies of Health, Residence and Tourism had to contribute to:

- the improvement and beautification of streets, squares, beaches, gardens;
- the building and improvement of infrastructure and transport;
- the encouragement of initiatives that increased the influx of foreigners;
- the implementation and management of meteorological stations;
- publicity and propaganda designed to encourage the influx of tourists;
- participation in competitions and exhibitions.

In general, the Agencies had the function of supervising all the public “establishments” visited by tourists, with the obligation of reporting to the competent bodies about irregularities and drawbacks. The Agencies also had to gather data on tourism flows in the area under their jurisdiction, according to the directives of the central statistical offices and Enit.

The most renowned Autonomous Agencies of Health, Tourism and Residence arose in Florence, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Viareggio and San Remo. In Rome, the Agency was not formed because an article of the Concordat with the Catholic Church forced the Italian State to respect the sacred character of the city, consequently the government did not want to impose the residence tax on pilgrims who visited the center of World Catholicism.

The Autonomous Agencies played an important role because they often represented the first contact of foreign guests with Italy. Each tourist felt cared for in every circumstance and received free information and illustrative material about the location being visited. Assistance in the event of theft or fraud, which unfortunately happened quite often to the tourist at that time, was much appreciated. It can be said, therefore, that the Autonomous Agency of Health, Residence and Tourism, continued the propaganda initiated abroad by other Italian bodies such as Enit³¹.

5. Tourism and railway transport in the Health, Residence and Tourism Resorts

The research examines 92 Health, Residence and Tourism Resorts. They are little less than half of total SCSTs³². We excluded those places for which it is not possible to relate data on population,

³⁰ Berrino (2005).

³¹ Agosteo, Sereno (2007), p. 26.

³² The sites studied are: Abano Terme (Veneto), Acireale (Sicilia), Acqui (Piemonte), Agrigento (Sicilia), Alassio (Liguria), Albissola Marina (Liguria), Anzio (Lazio), Arenzano (Liguria), Assisi (Umbria), Bagni di Lucca (Toscana), Bagni San Giuliano (Toscana), Bardonecchia (Piemonte), Baveno (Piemonte), Belluno (Veneto), Bolzano (Trentino Alto Adige), Bordighera (Liguria), Bressanone (Trentino Alto Adige), Castellammare di Stabia (Campania), Cattolica (Emilia-Romagna), Cava dei Tirreni (Campania), Celle Ligure (Liguria), Cervia (Emilia-Romagna), Cesenatico (Emilia-Romagna), Chianciano (Toscana), Chiavari (Liguria), Como (Lombardia), Diano Marina (Liguria), Dobbiaco (Trentino Alto Adige), Fano (Marche), Finale Ligure (Liguria), Firenze (Toscana), Formia (Lazio), Forte dei Marmi (Toscana), Frascati (Lazio), Grado (Friuli - Venezia Giulia), Grottammare (Marche), Guardia Piemontese (Calabria), Lavagna (Liguria), Levanto (Liguria), Lèvico-Vetriolo (Trentino Alto Adige), Limone Piemonte (Piemonte), Loano (Liguria), Loreto (Marche), Luino (Lombardia), Luserna San Giovanni (Piemonte), Marina di Massa (Toscana), Merano

tourism and railway transport³³. Obviously, the research does not consider the resorts which do not have a railway station run by the Italian State Railways (FS) within municipal boundaries³⁴. An exception was made for the railway stations that had the same name as the SCSTs but were located in the territory of neighboring cities. Even the SCSTs which did not have jurisdiction throughout the city were excluded³⁵. Despite these exclusions, the SCSTs examined are a very significant set: in the 92 SCSTs examined 1,387,308 tourists were registered in 1932. They were about 17% of the total arrivals reported in Italian hotels (about 8 million); this rate rises to 30% when considering only foreign tourists (374,486).

The SCSTs are distributed in varying degrees among the Italian regions (see Table 3)³⁶. Most of the examined resorts are in Liguria (21.5%). Toscana was also well represented (13%) although at a lower level in the list, like Emilia-Romagna and Piemonte (9.7%), Trentino-Alto Adige (8.6%) and so on³⁷.

Overall, the resident population of SCST examined is almost 1.7 million but there is considerable variability between the regions due to the different number of SCSTs and their different demographic weight. The average number of residents of the municipalities is 18,000, but among the SCSTs there are cities like Firenze with 305,000 residents, Ravenna 78,000 and Rimini 63,000, as well as small mountain villages. The smallest were Orta San Guido (1,108 residents) and Pré Saint Didier (821).

There also are clear regional differences in the distribution of tourists arriving in the SCSTs. Toscana is in top of the list with 30% of the arrivals³⁸, followed by Trentino-Alto Adige (19%), Liguria (13%), Emilia-Romagna (10%) and Abruzzo (9%).

Furthermore, the SCSTs in Toscana excel for tickets sold in railway stations too (1,848,000). Those of Liguria reach levels which are not much lower (1,621,000), even though they were less populous towns with lower total tourist flows. Lombardia and Trentino-Alto Adige (6-700,000 tickets, 9-10% of total) have lower percentage.

An attempt was made to relate the data on population, tourism and rail movement by calculating some simple ratios (see Table 3)³⁹. The relationship between tourist arrivals and resident population (TA/RP) suggests a different degree of impact of tourism on the SCSTs.

(Trentino Alto Adige), Monsummano (Toscana), Montecatini (Toscana) Nettuno (Lazio), Orta San Giulio (Piemonte), Ortisei (Trentino Alto Adige), Ospedaletti (Liguria) Pallanza (Piemonte), Pesaro (Marche), Pescara (Abruzzo), Pietrasanta (Toscana), Porretta Terme (Emilia-Romagna), Porto S. Giorgio (Marche), Pozzuoli (Campania), Pré Saint Didier (Valle d'Aosta), Rapallo (Liguria), Ravenna (Emilia-Romagna), Riccione (Emilia-Romagna), Rimini (Emilia-Romagna) Riolo dei Bagni (Emilia-Romagna), Rivisondoli (Abruzzo), Roccaraso (Abruzzo), Roncegno Bagni (Trentino Alto Adige), Ronco Scrivia (Liguria), Saint Vincent (Valle d'Aosta), San Benedetto del Tronto (Marche), San Candido (Trentino Alto Adige), San Gimignano (Toscana), San Remo (Liguria), Santa Margherita Ligure (Liguria), Sant'Andrea Bagni Medesano (Emilia-Romagna), Sciacca (Sicilia), Senigallia (Marche), Sestri Levante (Liguria), Siena (Toscana), Siracusa (Sicilia), Sirmione (Lombardia), Spotorno (Liguria), Stresa Borromeo (Piemonte), Taormina (Sicilia) Varallo Sesia (Piemonte), Varazze (Liguria), Varese (Lombardia), Viareggio (Toscana) Viggiù ed Uniti (Lombardia), Zara (Croazia) Zoagli (Liguria).

³³ The data on the movement of passengers at railway stations refer to departures from the stations, but it may be assumed to represent a good approximation of the data on arrivals.

³⁴ Some cities had train stations used by private railway companies; in these cases the data on the number of passengers are not available.

³⁵ In those cases, the data on tourist flows refer to only part of the city. Venice is the most significant exclusion, the SCSTs in fact did not include the Lido, the beach of the city, where there were many hotels.

³⁶ Table 3 refers to 1932 because for that year the data are available for a greater number of locations.

³⁷ Note also the presence of a place in Croatia which was, at that time, part of the Kingdom of Italy.

³⁸ The primacy of Tuscany is mostly due to the presence of Florence (246,000 arrivals).

³⁹ More sophisticated statistical analyses are currently in progress.

The ratio between rail tickets sold to the railway station and the resident population of SCSTs (TTS/RP) highlights the role of one of the variables determining the level of rail traffic.

We want to achieve a similar purpose by calculating the ratio between train tickets sold and tourist flows in the SCSTs (TA/TTS), although the data does not allow us to distinguish clearly between different reasons for using rail transport in the SCSTs.

These ratios show a high degree of variability (see Table 3); we will just highlight some of the salient items which emerged from the results.

Table 3. Resident population, tourists arrivals and travelers departures from railway stations in 92 Italian SCSTs in 1932 sorted by region (thousands)

regions /STATE	SCST		resident population in 1931 (RP)		tourists arrivals (TA)		train tickets sold (TTS)		TA/RP	TTS/RP	TA/TTS
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	%	%	%
Toscana	12	13,0	518	30,8	417	30,0	1.848	25,3	80,5	356,8	22,6
Trentino Alto Adige	8	8,7	89	5,3	258	18,6	684	9,4	289,9	768,5	37,7
Liguria	20	21,7	163	9,7	175	12,6	1.621	22,2	107,4	994,5	10,8
Emilia-Romagna	9	9,8	195	11,6	142	10,2	484	6,6	72,8	248,2	29,3
Abruzzo	3	3,3	47	2,8	125	9,0	189	2,6	266,0	402,1	66,1
Sicilia	5	5,4	143	8,5	63	4,5	321	4,4	44,1	224,5	19,6
Piemonte	9	9,8	56	3,3	50	3,6	371	5,1	89,3	662,5	13,5
Lombardia	5	5,4	112	6,7	43	3,1	734	10,0	38,4	655,4	5,9
Marche	7	7,6	132	7,8	29	2,1	331	4,5	22,0	250,8	8,8
Veneto	2	2,2	34	2,0	21	1,5	75	1,0	61,8	220,6	28,0
Umbria	1	1,1	21	1,2	14	1,0	33	0,5	66,7	157,1	42,4
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	1	1,1	6	0,4	13	0,9	2	0,0	216,7	33,3	650,0
Lazio	3	3,3	43	2,6	11	0,8	207	2,8	25,6	481,4	5,3
Campania	3	3,3	100	5,9	9	0,6	365	5,0	9,0	365,0	2,5
Valle d'Aosta	2	2,2	3	0,2	8	0,6	38	0,5	266,7	1.266,7	21,1
CROAZIA	1	1,1	18	1,1	8	0,6	1	0,0	44,4	5,6	800,0
Calabria	1	1,1	4	0,2	2	0,1	5	0,1	50,0	125,0	40,0
Total	92	100,0	1.684	100,0	1.387	100,0	7.309	100,0	82,4	434,0	19,0

Source: elaborations on data from Statistica del turismo (1933); Ministero delle comunicazioni (1935), Istat (1932).

The case of Liguria is of particular interest considering the number of SCSTs and the number of tourist arrivals. In the Liguria railway stations the passenger traffic was very intense compared to the number of residents (TTS/RP: 995%), but the percentage of tourists compared to the total tickets sold at stations is not high: TA/TTS: 11%. This figure is compatible with a massive use of the train by the residents, perhaps because it was the most effective means of transportation along the coast given the orography of the region. As the SCSTs of Liguria were seaside resorts, the train was certainly widely used by residents of nearby towns who spent the day at the beach but did not stay overnight.

Lombardy has some similarities to Liguria, although the SCSTs in the region are lake locations: high TTS/RP, low TA/TTS. In this case, however, among the towns that had obtained the qualification of SCST there are two provincial capitals, Como and Varese, which certainly attracted daily visitors for administrative and economic reasons.

The resorts analyzed are not equally distributed also according to the categories used by Enit for SCSTs classification: sea resorts, thermal resorts, mountain resorts, cities of art and centers of tourist attractions, lake resorts (see Table 4). The number of seaside resorts clearly prevails with

44% of the total, followed by thermal resorts (20%), mountain resorts (18%), cities of art (nearly 10%) and lake resorts (more than 7%). Besides with regards to tourist arrivals and the number of train tickets sold, seaside resorts were still largely dominant (TA: 40%. TTS: 42%), followed by art cities (TA: 25%, TTS: 21%) and mountain resorts (TA: 20%, 14%).

It can be noted that the impact of tourism in relation to the resident population of mountain villages is very high (TA/RP: 185%), twice the number calculated for the seaside resorts (93%). The small demographic size of mountain resorts explains the high level of TTS/RP (680%) and TA/TTS (27%); these figures are compatible with a very strong link between tourism and the railway in the mountain resorts that had a train station⁴⁰.

Table 4. Resident population, tourists arrivals and travelers departures from railway stations in 92 Italian SCSTs in 1932, sorted by type according to ENIT classification (thousands)

Type	SCST		resident population in 1931 (RP)		tourists arrived (TA)		train tickets sold (TTS)		TA/RP	TTS/RP	TA/TTS
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	%	%	%
	sea resorts	41	44,6	601	35,7	558	40,3	3.038	41,6	92,8	505,5
thermal	19	20,7	246	14,6	138	9,9	950	13,0	56,1	386,2	14,5
mountain resorts	17	18,5	151	9,0	279	20,1	1.023	14,0	184,8	677,5	27,3
cities of art - center of tourist attraction	8	8,7	563	33,4	342	24,7	1.546	21,2	60,7	274,6	22,1
lake resorts	7	7,6	122	7,2	69	5,0	752	10,3	56,6	616,4	9,2
total	92	100,0	1.684	100,0	1.387	100,0	7.309	100,0	82,4	434,0	19,0

Source: elaborations on data from Statistica del turismo (1933); Ministero delle comunicazioni (1935), Istat (1932).

The mean values calculated for the population, tourist arrivals and train tickets sold confirm what has already been highlighted above (see Table 5).

Table 5. Average of resident population, tourists arrivals and travelers departures from railway station in 92 Italian SCSTs in 1932 (thousands)

Type	averages		
	resident population in 1931	tourists arrived	train tickets sold
sea resorts	14,7	13,6	74,1
thermal	12,9	7,3	50,0
mountain resorts	8,9	16,4	60,2
cities of art - center of tourist attraction	70,4	42,8	193,3
lake resorts	17,4	9,9	107,4
total	18,3	15,1	79,4

Source: elaborations on data from Statistica del turismo (1933); Ministero delle comunicazioni (1935), Istat (1932).

Data presented in Tables 3-5 were used mainly to define the composition of the group of SCST examined and give some first information on the relationship between population, tourism and movements by rail in 1932. However, a more interesting question concerns the possible evolution of the relationship between railroad and tourist movements in those years. For 69 SCSTs is possible to compare the trend of tourist flows and the number of passengers departing from the train stations between 1930 and 1932.

⁴⁰ Other mountain resorts not included in the 92 examined SCSTs were reached by train, but the railways were run by private companies.

The total number of tourist arrivals decreases by 11,1%, while the total number of train tickets sold dropped by 22.6%⁴¹. Therefore, the total movement of rail passengers falls much more than tourism in those SCSTs. The data on the tickets is similar to that of the entire rail network of Italian State Railway from 1930 to 1932 (-23.5%), but it must be noted that since 1931 the FS began to introduce a pricing policy of concessions and rebates aimed at stimulating tourists traffic⁴². The decrease of passengers had already started in the second half of the 1920's (see Table 6).

Table 6. Train tickets sold in Italy in State Railway (FS) stations (thousand)

Years	first class	var.%	second class	var.%	third class	var.%	total	var.%
1924	1.958		12.206		85.971		100.135	
1925	2.350	20,0	13.102	7,3	93.656	8,9	109.108	9,0
1926	2.815	19,8	12.978	-0,9	99.874	6,6	115.667	6,0
1927	2.747	-2,4	12.540	-3,4	100.455	0,6	115.742	0,1
1928	2.593	-5,6	12.061	-3,8	97.585	-2,9	112.238	-3,0
1929	2.403	-7,3	11.882	-1,5	96.846	-0,8	111.131	-1,0
1930	2.191	-8,8	10.973	-7,7	91.717	-5,3	104.881	-5,6
1931	1.707	-22,1	9.011	-17,9	77.715	-15,3	88.434	-15,7
1932	1.356	-20,6	7.725	-14,3	71.427	-8,1	80.508	-9,0
1933	1.370	1,1	8.323	7,7	70.513	-1,3	80.206	-0,4

Source: Enit, Statistica del turismo, marzo 1934, tab. VI.

Obviously, considering that the crisis began at the end of the previous decade, and reached the lowest point in 1932, it was not only the number of passengers who used the train for tourism to fall. However the gap between tourists and rail passengers seems significant and needs further investigation.

Table 7. Foreigners arrived in Italy by way of access, 1931-1934 (thousands)

years	railroad		road		ship		airplane		total
	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	n.	%	
1931	919	42,1	1.157	53,0	108	4,9	2	0,1	2.185
1932	706	37,1	1.102	57,8	95	5,0	2	0,1	1.905
1933	922	36,5	1.495	59,1	109	4,3	2	0,1	2.528
1934	882	28,1	2.139	68,1	119	3,8	3	0,1	3.143

Source: Statistica del turismo, marzo 1935 tav. II.

The data on arrivals of foreigners to the Italian border at the beginning of the 1930's show that the percentage of those who arrived by train was decreasing gradually; at the same time the number of those who entered in Italy by road was growing (see Table 7)⁴³.

In those years, the network of public transport in Italy began to change. The length and the importance of extra-urban bus lines grew rapidly: +68% from 1928 to 1932 (see Table 8); in some cases they had only a subsidiary role with respect to rail, but in other cases they were competitive.

⁴¹ Ministero delle Comunicazioni (1930, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1935b). The SCSTs for which the railway passengers do not decrease, compared to the tourist number, are a minority.

⁴² Maggi (2003) pp. 188-191; Giuntini (2003). However, these measures contributed to the resumption of passenger traffic on railways from 1934 until the war.

⁴³ From 1934 to 1937 the percentage of foreigners arriving by train at the Italian borders did not change compared to those of 1933 (28-29%); the percentage rose only in 1938 and 1939 (34% and 38%).

In addition to the kilometric length of the extra-urban bus lines, the increase in the number of buses and coaches on Italian roads must also be considered: +34% in the same years (see Table 9)⁴⁴. The rapid increase in the car numbers (+60%) and motorcycles (+52%) should also be noted. It was not yet the time of Italian mass motorization – which would occur only after three decades – but road trips with individual means of transport were no longer limited to a small elite.

Table 8 - Public transport services in Italy. Lines in KM.

years	railways				extra urban tramways			funiculars	extra urban bus		inland navigation	airline	
	state	private	total	index	total	index	total		index	national		intern.	
1928	16.670	4.928	21.598	100	4.245	100	39	59.979	100	432	5.347	3.297	
1929	16.749	5.106	21.855	101	4.256	100	41	66.891	112	432	7.810	5.522	
1930	16.850	5.269	22.119	102	4.217	99	45	78.341	131	453	9.810	4.694	
1931	16.928	5.626	22.554	104	3.988	94	47	101.856	170	421	10.209	8.424	
1932	16.918	5.900	22.818	106	3.820	90	49	100.919	168	451	10.245	9.229	

Source: Statistica del turismo, marzo 1934, table IX.

Table 9 - Numbers of vehicols in Italy (1928-1932)

years	cars	index	buses and coaches	index	trucks	index	tractors	index	motor-cycles	index	scooters	index
1928	142.091	100	6.794	100	40.067	100	1.803	100	66.072	100	20.077	100
1929	180.963	127	8.015	118	52.485	131	8.964	497	80.622	122	25.227	126
1930	201.919	142	8.750	129	63.993	160	11.273	625	89.146	135	32.234	161
1931	211.844	149	9.078	134	73.321	183	13.112	727	95.518	145	39.803	198
1932	227.445	160	9.108	134	81.243	203	13.488	748	100.552	152	45.599	227

Source: Statistica del turismo, marzo 1934, table X.

The official yearbook of Italian hotels provides evidence of this evolution. During the 1930's, especially in the most important cities, the number of hotels offering a private garage for the cars of their clients grew significantly⁴⁵.

What conclusions can be drawn from the evidence reported so far? Research is still in progress and has produced only partial results. Many aspects will be deepened with further investigation and more sophisticated statistical analyses (such as cluster analysis, regression) which are being carried out.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate the relationship between tourism and the railroad after 1933, when the rail movement started to gain a new momentum. Unfortunately, fewer analytical data are available for those years.

However, the data examined seem to indicate that the train was the main means of transport for Italian and foreign tourists but changes were taking place. Road transport began to gain space taking advantage of its flexibility as was already happening to a greater extent in freight transport. But this

⁴⁴ See also Ministero delle Comunicazioni (1937).

⁴⁵ See *Alberghi d'Italia*, ad annum, the guide published by Enit and the National Fascist Federation of Hotels and Tourism.

evolution was only the first sign of a phenomenon that would be fully developed after War World II, in the era of mass tourism.

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