STUDIES AND PERSPECTIVES

ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CARIBBEAN

Towards a demand model for maritime passenger transportation in the Caribbean

A regional study of passenger ferry services

Omar Bello Willard Phillips Delena Indar

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Omar Bello Willard Phillips Delena Indar



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Contents

Abstract		5			
Introduc	tion	7			
I. Re	eview of maritime transportation literature	9			
II. Tł	ne database	11			
III. M	odel and estimates	19			
IV. Conclusion					
Bibliogra	aphy	27			
Annex		29			
Studies a	and Perspectives Series – The Caribbean: issues published	33			
Tables					
TABLE 1	KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF FERRY SERVICES ASSESSED IN THE STUDY	11			
TABLE 2	OVERVIEW OF THE MARITIME PASSENGER OPERATIONS IN THE STUDY	14			
TABLE 3					
TABLE 4 TABLE 5					
TABLE 6					
TABLE 7					

TABLE A.1	OVERVIEW OF SOME DOMESTIC MARITIME PASSENGER OPERATIONS	30
TABLE A.2	OVERVIEW OF SOME INTRA-REGIONAL MARITIME PASSENGER OPERATIONS	31
Figures		
FIGURE 1	FERRY PASSENGER DEPARTURES IN SELECT COUNTRIES SHOWING INCREASING TRENDS	15
FIGURE 2	FERRY PASSENGER DEPARTURES IN SELECT COUNTRIES SHOWING DECLINING TRENDS	
Maps		
MAP 1	ROUTES OF CARIBBEAN FERRY SERVICES CONSIDERED IN THIS STUDY	12
MAP A.1	ROUTES OF CARIBBEAN FERRY SERVICES	

Abstract

In this paper, the main factors that influence the demand for maritime passenger transportation in the Caribbean were studied. While maritime studies in the Caribbean have focused on infrastructural and operational systems for intensifying trade and movement of goods, there is little information on the movement of persons within the region and its potential to encourage further integration and sustainable development. Data to inform studies and policies in this area are particularly difficult to source. For this study, an unbalanced data set for the 2000-2014 period in 15 destinations with a focus on departing ferry passengers was compiled. Further a demand equation for maritime passenger transportation in the Caribbean using panel data methods was estimated. The results showed that this demand is related to the real fare of the service, international economic activity and the number of passengers arriving in the country by air.

Introduction

Caribbean countries face unique development challenges. As part of the global community of small island developing States (SIDS), these challenges have been analyzed in several studies (Grenade, 2007; Sanjay and others, 2005), and highlighted through global initiatives and international fora for SIDS development. These analyses consistently point to the critical importance of stronger regional collaboration in order to overcome barriers which impede regional economic growth and development.

Over time, there have been on-going attempts to strengthen integration of Caribbean markets and economies through increased trade and freer movement of people. These efforts² notwithstanding, the promise of significant regional development premised on these initiatives has not been realized. Among the myriad causes has been the difficulty of forging full-fledged, efficient connectivity between Caribbean states in order to facilitate the free-flow of goods and persons across the region. Although served by a number of international air and sea carriers which enable the transfer of tourists and goods into the region, the movement of goods and people among Caribbean islands remains unreliable and costly, both in terms of money and time. Consequently, a major constraint to achieving regional integration continues to be limited intra-regional transportation services.

While the benefits of transportation are many, it consumes vast amounts of raw materials such as

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