

Agrotourism, sustainable tourism and Ultraperipheral areas: The Case of Canary Islands

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Resumen: La ultraperiferia añade a los problemas inherentes a la insularidad los derivados de la lejanía respecto a los principales centros de aprovisionamiento, la considerable escasez de recursos, la fragmentación del territorio, y por tanto, de los mercados. En las últimas décadas se ha ido tomando conciencia del impacto de la ultraperiferia sobre el desarrollo de las regiones y estados insulares. La ultraperiferia es un atributo geográfico que condiciona las opciones de desarrollo y el tipo de especialización de las economías, afecta a la competitividad y a las estrategias empresariales. El agroturismo es una de las actividades que está adquiriendo mayor relevancia en el marco de la diversificación de las explotaciones agrarias, agropecuarias y del turismo. Por ello, la necesidad de activar económicamente las zonas rurales de territorios insulares ultraperiféricos, así como la valorización de las producciones agrarias y agropecuarias vinculadas a la actividad turística, se presentan como elementos vitales para estrategias de diversificación, transformación y mejora de la competitividad y calidad de las mismas. El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar los cambios y el posible impacto que supone la incorporación del agroturismo como una alternativa al turismo de sol y playa, de incremento de rentas de las familias, del desarrollo rural y de nuevas formas de turismo. Se pretende establecer un análisis estratégico del agroturismo, analizar el lado de la oferta y demanda, para sentar la base de las razones de fomentar esta actividad.

Palabras clave: Ultraperiferia; Agroturismo; Turismo sostenible; Islas Canarias.

Abstract: Ultraperipheral regions share certain common characteristics, such as their remoteness from the major supplying centres, their scanty resources, their island status or isolated location and consequent fragmentation of markets. Over the past decades, there has been an increasing awareness of the impact of ultraperiphericity on the development of a number of regions and islands. The concept of “ultraperiphericity” includes specific geographic circumstances that influence the development and specialisation of economies, competitiveness and business strategies. Agrotourism is playing an ever increasingly important role in the diversification of the agriculture, farming and tourism sectors into the Ultraperipheral Regions. Therefore, particular attention should be paid to the economic development of rural areas in Ultraperipheral Areas and to the reappraisal of agriculture, which is closely connected with tourism. Agrotourism is essential to diversify, transform and improve the competitiveness and quality of farms. This paper examines the impact of Agrotourism as an alternative to sun and sand tourism, resulting in the growth of family income, in rural development and, in short, in new approaches to the tourism industry. A further goal of the paper is to develop a strategic analysis of Agrotourism, studying both supply and demand in the Canary Islands.

Keywords: Ultraperiphericity; Agrotourism; Sustainable Tourism; Canary Islands.

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Introduction

One of the main attributes of rural tourism is its localisation in regions and territories which so far have not been exploited by mass tourism. Tranquillity, nature and familiarisation with local customs all play a prominent role in rural tourism (Reguero 1994).

The importance of rural tourism on the Canary Islands cannot be compared with that of sun and sand tourism in absolute economic terms, such as revenues and employment. However, this type of tourism has performed an essential function in the sense of giving prestige to rural life, creating jobs and diversifying the economy. Moreover, rural tourism has contributed decisively to preserve both the cultural and natural heritage in rural settings, with special attention to typical agricultural produce.

Even though rural tourism and Agrotourism are commonly confused terms, a distinction can be drawn between them. While rural tourism is a more generic term, Agrotourism refers to specific sets of leisure activities organised by farmers to cater for visitors (Spanish Ministry of Agriculture 1992). These tourist services are regarded as a complement to the main source of income, so the infrastructures, which are commonly associated in regional networks, clearly belong to the primary sector (Canary Islands Government 1989).

Among the features of Agrotourism, we can mention the following:

1. It includes shared or independent accommodation at the owners' home.
2. It involves the whole family of farmers, whose customs and traditions are preserved.
3. It allows customers to have a peaceful stay, away from crowds, assisted by friendly people and in direct touch with nature.

Agrotourism is more than just another tourist product –it goes well beyond a mere offer of services in a rural setting (Busby and Rendle 2000). Rather, it implies a novel way of understanding travel, a new awareness, a positive attitude towards other worlds, towards the environment and towards local people and their culture.

Agrotourism as a leisure activity has been extremely successful. The possibility of enjoying the rural environment and culture at an attractive price appeals to a large market, including families, couples and seniors. The customers of this type of tourism, who usually travel with their family, tend to be educated and of predominantly urban origin (Hall and Jenkins 1998). They respect the local customs and often gather information in advance about the places they plan to visit. Users of Agrotourism services want to avoid mass tourism. Instead, they are interested in maximum contact with nature and in warm relationships with other people. They are environmentally aware and demand natural products, including healthier food. Moreover, they seek genuine local culture, as well as novel activities and sports. And, of course, they look for quality accommodation that ensures peace and rest (Halfacree 1993).

Agrotourism has proved a powerful tool in the reactivation of depressed areas in the Canaries. Besides the turnover derived from accommodation, catering and leisure activities, as well as from the direct selling of local produce and crafts, Agrotourism has brought about other beneficial effects, such as the restoration of the architectural and cultural heritage (see La Laguna; La Orotava; Santa Cruz de la Palma Cities), the appreciation of the role of women in rural communities, the dignifying of the role of farmers in society or the fostering of cultural exchanges. Thus, the agrarian sector is not only a provider of material goods, but also of immaterial goods, especially those connected with culture, education, gastronomy, landscape and the environment. A whole host of innovative activities related to the service economy have arisen, with a consequent boost to new types of employment. However, despite the promising results, it should be remembered that Agrotourism poses particular training and technical demands and would need more incentives for its effective promotion.

An analysis of rural society and space in the past few decades reveals the following factors with an effect on the service sector (Mediano Serrano 2002, Butler and Clark 1992 and Gannon 1994)

- The new economic context, characterised by a general trend towards spatial concentration and towards an increase in the size of the facilities, with the aim of achieving a more competitive quality-price relationship, thus endangering disperse or small-scale services.
- The massive rural exodus from agricultural mid-mountain areas towards large cities and tourist zones, which took place in the sixties and seventies due to the better prospects offered by the construction and service sectors.
- In the eighties and seventies, the search for a more agreeable environment by certain sectors or urban population has given rise to migratory flows towards the mid-mountain areas which are best-communicated and closest to large urban centres.
- Qualitative changes in ways of life, in activities and in forms of family and social organisation have generated a demand for new tourist services. For today's consumers, the most important aspects are quality and the differentiation among various types of tourism.

Several new contexts have arisen:

- A new institutional context, characterized by the distribution of responsibilities and activities among the public, private and associative sectors.
- A new technological context, in which the breakthroughs in information and communication technologies make it possible to overcome, either partially or totally, some of the limitations typical of mid-mountain areas regarding the distance, the scale and the quality of services.
- A diversity of local contexts, on the basis of their shortcomings in services, whose quality generally depends on the degree of proximity to urban centres. Thus, the regions with lowest population density and most distant from urban centres tend to suffer from a deficit in their service network.

Special emphasis is put on diversification, understood as the performance of multiple activities within a farm, with the aim of ensuring its viability and of creating and preserving jobs. The endogenous resources of the farm must be maximised, while synergies and complementarities among its

different activities and with external actors should be generated. This way, it is possible to offer novel goods and services, either agrarian or not, which may take advantage of market niches (Bahamonde 2003, Juan Martínez 2000 and Sanchis Silvestre and Olcina Soler 1995).

To complete this approach to Agrotourism, a SWOT analysis of this type of tourism in the Canary Island Archipelago is sketched below:

Strengths:

- Type of tourism, which has hardly been developed in the Canaries.
- Participation in local ways of life, customs and tasks.
- High quality as far as appeal, tranquillity and security are concerned.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of business training (underdeveloped tourist product).
- Absence of legislation on Agrotourism.
- Scarce complementary offer.
- High cost of house and farm restoration.

Opportunities:

- Promotion of the preservation of local customs and traditions.
- Need to create new employment alternatives in the rural world.
- Alternative market for local produce.

Threats:

- Lack of planning and concrete aims.
- Danger of massification.
- Little political awareness.
- Cultural authenticity could be altered as a result of the attempt to imitate the level of services of conventional tourism.

Once the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been established, it is appropriate to set a series of goals, as well as a number of strategies in order to achieve them. (see Table 1).

The canaries in the international tourism framework

The Canary Islands are located about 1500 kilometres from mainland Spain and

| GOALS |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To promote communication between locals and tourists, as well as the active involvement of the latter in local life. 2. To foster the development of agriculture and cattle-raising with new services –both basic and complementary- as a source of employment and wealth. 3. To develop a competitive offer. 4. To take advantage of existing commercialisation processes for certain tourist destinations (e.g. Tenerife). 5. To project an innovative image of tourist and environmental quality. |
| STRATEGIES |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation and commercialisation of our tourist product. 2. Promotion and information about our services. 3. Planning and competitiveness. 4. Structuring of communication systems between public agents and our company |

Table 1. Goals and a number of strategies in order to achieve Agrotourism. Source: own elaboration



Figure 1. Map of the Canary Islands. Source: Gobierno de Canarias. (<http://www.gobcan.es>)

500 kilometres from Saharan Africa. They comprise seven main islands as well as a number of small, inhabited islands (see figure 1). The total population of the canaries is in excess of 1.6 million.

The services sector plays an increasingly important role in the economy of the Canary Islands and within this sector the tourism sub-sector is prominent (see table

2). With respect to this sub-sector, the growth in global tourism in recent decades has made the Canaries a major world player in “sun, sea and sand” tourism, with mainly European originating markets (Parra and Baum, 2004). Specifically in the Canaries, tourist activity has acquired such importance that it has become a configurational factor for geography and demography, the prosperity of the economy, as well as for the socio-cultural factors of the region, and currently represents around 83% of the GDP (see figure 2).

The tourist sector in the Canaries is at a crucial point in its development. Significant challenges are being faced that are marked by the appearance of new competing tourism destinations, and by transformations arising from tourist demand and supply, that have increased the likelihood of changes in the tourism model which has been the backbone of its mass tourism development, namely that of a supply chain through originating country travel agents, international tour operators and local suppliers at the destination (Parra, García y Gutiérrez, 2004). These changes have major implications for island destinations such as the Canaries.

As a result, concentration and restructuring strategies are being applied to the tourist business sector and, more specifically, to tourist transport (tour operators, travel agencies and airlines) and hospitality sectors in the Canary Islands, resulting in a loss of independence for lodging units and a greater increase in control and power over tourism distribution for tourist transport, thereby resulting in a distancing of decision-making centres from the Canaries.

Charter and low cost European airlines have increased passenger numbers by an annual average of 46% in recent years and are expected to continue growing by between 20% and 30% per annum over the next few years. Therefore:

- The future could herald consolidation processes between these companies, which might affect the Canary Islands.
- The Island hospitality sector recognises the new markets generated by cheap flight supply as an investment risk.

| | Positive | Negative |
|----------------|--|---|
| Economics | Income increasing | Increase of public expenditure in social service and infrastructure |
| | Investment attraction | Prices increasing |
| | Create employment | To remove others sector |
| | Entry of foreign currency | We can lose some foreign currency in the imported articles and the back of the income |
| Socio-Cultural | Services and infrastructure for the local population | A “sudden” change in the local life style and the traditional culture |
| | Social modernization | Life Orientation towards leisure |
| | Cultural Exchange | |
| | Peace encouragement | Increase of the unsafe |
| Environment | To contribute to preserve the environment | Congestion of the traffic, noise and contamination |
| | Greater environmental become aware | Pressure on the fragile ecosystems and the landscape |
| | To obtain resources to preserve the environment | Scarcity of resources energetic and others |
| | To stimulate the preservation of the environment | Increase of residues |

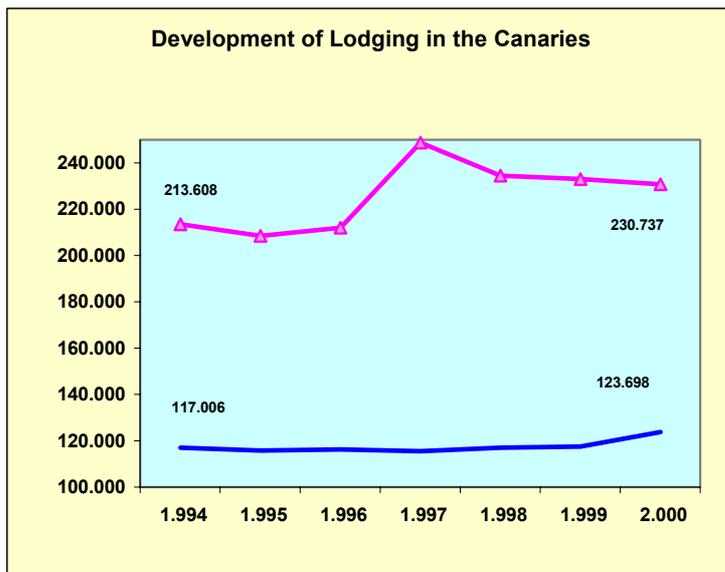


Figure 2. Development of hotel and others types of lodging in the Canaries. Source: Regional Ministry of Tourism and Transport. Government of Canaries, 2001. Note: Hotels are in red and other lodging in blue

- Cheap flights have changed the pattern of holiday demand to Island destinations such as the Canary Islands.
- Low cost airlines have acted as catalysts for the rise in real estate markets of “second homes” or timeshare.

Table 2. Some possible impact above tourism in the Canary Islands. Source: Hernández Martín, 2004a; 2004b

- 90% of travel bookings with new model carriers are made through the Internet.

All these factors affect the seasonality of Island holiday hospitality supply, by offering to open up much wider markets that are more sensitive to pricing (e.g. Eastern European markets). Currently, a need for a change of direction is perceived by local industry players, a change that will strengthen tourist business and administrative policies aimed at increasing environmental and entrepreneurial quality (see table 3). Consequently, there is a call for in-depth analysis and understanding of these matters, resulting in adequate planning and response to these changes and to new demands.

| PREVIOUS MODEL | NEW MODEL |
|--|--|
| Growth, spontaneous development and lack of strategic planning | Growth planning and management, along with strategic agreements with tourist transport firms |
| Market forces and business profitability | Competitiveness and sustainability |
| “Natural” competitive advantages | “Created” and managed advantages |
| Selling beds | Selling experiences |
| Mono-product (Sun and beach) | Diversification |
| Price-Quality | Value added / price |
| Quantitative | Qualitative |
| Rivalry between islands | Coordination / Cooperation |
| Generic and disorganised promotion | Segmented promotion combined with destination brand management |

Table 3. Tourism Planning in the Canaries. General principles for a new model. Source: Gobierno de Canarias, Consejería de Turismo, 2002. (<http://www.gobcan.es/turismo/gpren/nprensa2004.html>)

Sustainability in the Canary Islands

The arrival of tourism brought a number of improvements in infrastructure and way of life, such as the ones mentioned below, to many rural areas that so far had remained neglected (Berry and Ladkin 1997).

- Advancements in communications, which provided access to population centres that were practically isolated.
- Caring of rural areas, which began to be considered an asset in themselves.
- An incipient revalorisation of rural heritage, so far undervalued.

Nevertheless, we should also take into account a series of circumstances that have caused negative impacts, such as (Weaver 2001):

- Irreversible alteration of landscape, due to the proliferation of infrastructures and constructions.
- Disappearance of plant species and forced escape of fauna.
- Increase in waste levels, without an adequate infrastructure that could minimise the environmental impacts.
- Land speculation, which has brought about the excessive urbanisation of certain rural areas, without any proper planning and without allowing for adequate hygienic-sanitary infrastructures.

However, it should be pointed out that most tourists visiting the Canary Islands come in search of sun and sand, so the inland areas have been less damaged.

Today there is a clear demand for the so-called environmental goods, which are mostly located in rural settings (Villar 2003). However, such goods will only be useful if they are managed following sustainability criteria, since rural development and sustainable development are inseparable concepts. Economic development in rural areas cannot be properly planned if environmental criteria are left aside. The main objective, therefore, is to improve the resources, infrastructure and equipment of expanding tourist centres, thus establishing the foundations for sustainable growth and development in the mid-mountain areas of the different islands (Butler 1980).

The growth of the tourist sector has given rise to great concern about the possible depletion of the islands' resources. These worries have prompted a number of political initiatives that have changed the political and legal context (Oreja 1999; Oreja et al, 2004). The declared aim is to slow down the expansion of tourism and to channel its development along sustainable guidelines, in an attempt to strike a balance between the economic development derived from tourism and a

rational consumption of resources. Therefore, the key aspect in future strategic decisions affecting ultraperipheral regions will be the setting of sustainability objectives, within the framework of what Hunter (1997) calls "Sustainable Development through Product-Led Tourism".

Many of the measures that have been enforced through a series of legal norms relate to "*MORATORIA*" imposed on the building (or on licence-obtaining procedures) of tourist constructions. The only exceptions would be buildings used for rural tourism, urban hotels and the restoration or refurbishment of tourist facilities –as long as they constitute classified buildings or their accommodation capacity is not increased (Villar 2003).

Sustainable tourism calls for appropriate instruments to measure the extent to which the desired balance has been achieved. The concept of carrying capacity (Mathieson and Wall, 1982), mentioned in Act 19/2003, approving the General Planning and Tourism Planning Guidelines for the Canary Islands, could be a good start. This Act aims at identifying the set of factors that allow for the tourist use of an area, with all the necessary general equipment, services and infrastructure, but without implying an unacceptable decline in the quality of the experience obtained by visitors, an excessive burden on the tourist resources, an inadmissible alteration of the ecology, territory and landscape of the area, or disproportionate pressure on the host community.

This carrying capacity will be established depending on each individual island and even on different zones within each island. In fact, tourist growth may be completely barred in areas considered saturated because supply exceeds estimated demand. The main difficulty met by the political institutions on the Islands lies in refining this index, since carrying capacity is an extremely complex concept. Among the facets of carrying capacity, as expressed in the current legal norms of the Canary Islands, the following factors can be mentioned: ecological capacity, social capacity, landscape capacity, infrastructure capacity, market capacity, availability of technological, professional and labour resources, availability of tour-

ist resources, or the inventory and assessment of natural resources.

The above-mentioned Act also establishes the suspension of building licences for new tourist facilities for the period 2003-2006, with the exception of urban hotels, hotel refurbishments which do not bring about an increase of accommodation capacity, and the projects whose licence had been granted before 1st January, 2001. According to this Act, the growth rate of new tourist beds will be reviewed every three years.

All these restrictions aim to achieve sustainable tourism, i.e. tourism that does not surpass the island's carrying capacity.

Objectives and methodology

This paper is a definitive approach to the relationship between the concepts "Agrotourism", "sustainability" and "Ultraperipheral" regions, specially the Canary Islands case. The model proposed below, based on both quantitative and qualitative methodological foundations, has been outlined in the Canary Islands Archipelago and it attempts to lay the foundations for a model of economic and tourist development in the rural regions of its different islands.

Since this is a pilot study, two different modes of analysis were adopted:

- The initial stage consisted in locating the different tourist areas in the Canaries and establishing the first contacts with experts in the sector. As a result, we formulated a series of questions which were included in a structured questionnaire.
- A qualitative methodology that explored the attributes related to the above-mentioned concepts, with the aim of identifying the issues that can be regarded as critical variables in the current dynamics of Agrotourism.
- Finally, a thorough review of previous research on Agrotourism, sustainability and ultraperipheral areas, in order to raise the questions addressed in the sections below.

The study was conducted in three distinct phases, using three different tools of primary research, namely unstructured

interviews, questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Qualitative interviews with a reduced group of experts in tourism in the Canary Islands, both academics and members of ASHOTEL and ASOLAN¹, helped us obtain more accurate information that helped clarify the issues under discussion. The unstructured discussion with researchers and students of the Master's in Tourist Companies Management at the University of La Laguna, resulted in an in-depth discussion that helped identify the issues addressed below. In addition, the information gathered enabled us to prepare a first questionnaire with 11 items for analysis.

In order to analyse data from sources other than suppliers and academics, we

requested information from tourists lodged in rural hotels and houses throughout the different islands (up to a total of 200 questionnaires). The information obtained about the main variables on the demand side provided new insights on the consumers of this type of product and on how certain aspects of supply could be corrected in order to match the tourists' needs more closely. As shown in table (5), which displays the results of the "Analysis of inbound tourism", our demand analysis provided answers to both qualitative and quantitative questions.

Figure (3) below illustrates the research procedures, specifying for each stage the objective set, the methodology followed and the expected outcome.

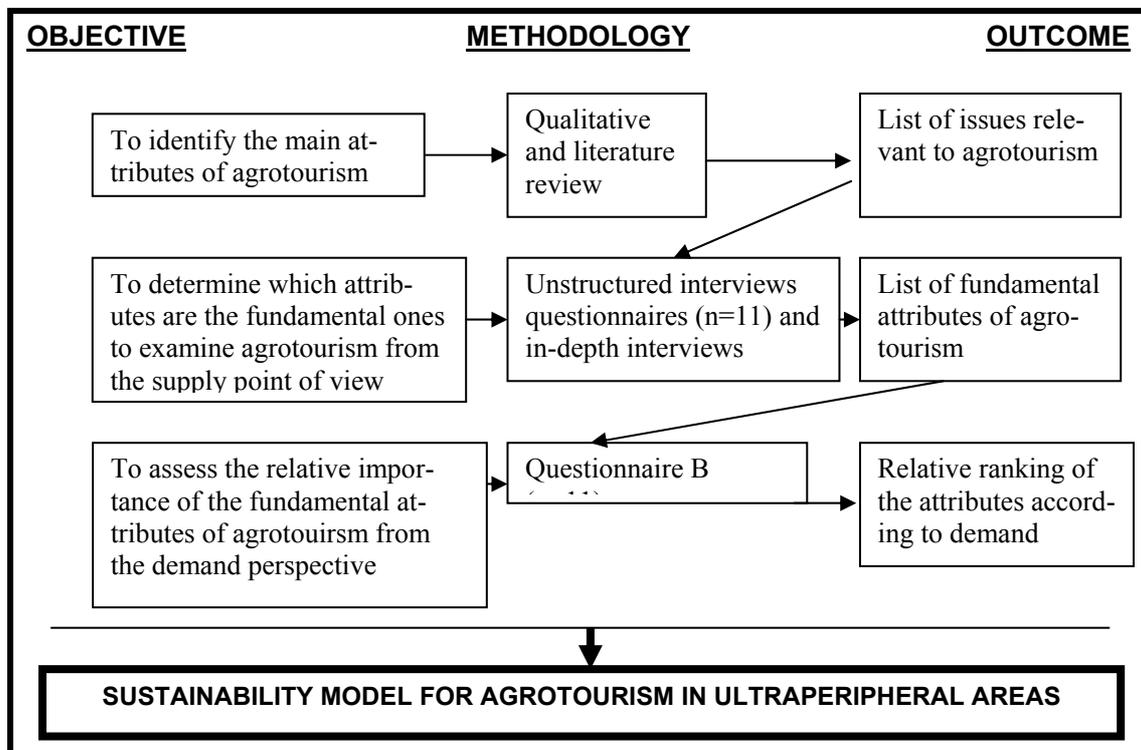


Figure 3. Research design. Source: Own elaboration. The model will be henceforth called MOSAZU (Spanish for *Modelo Sostenibilidad en Agroturismo para Zonas Ultraperiféricas*).

Identification of subjective aspects of agrotourism

To obtain a reliable picture of the most relevant attributes of Agrotourism in Ultraperipheral Areas, a review of the literature was undertaken, including previous work on the dimensions of the ultraperiphery, sustainability and complementary tourist products, questionnaires used by other researchers, and

specific materials on Agrotourism. This review resulted in a long initial list of items deserving analysis -one of the most important sources used was the study by Bigné (1997) on green consumers and their patterns of behaviour. We also examined the work of Bosch *et al* (1998) on the direct relationship between tourism and the environment, which throws light on the least tangible aspects of the rela-

tionship between tourism, sustainability and the complementariness of tourist products. Likewise, the work of the Commission of the European Communities (2001) on a common cooperation framework for the future of European tourism revealed certain imbalances as far as sustainable tourism, Ultrap-

eripheral Areas and complementary tourist products are concerned.

As a result of this work, we drew up an initial list with 30 subjective aspects that could affect Agrotourism, which we used in the preliminary stages of our research.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| INFORMATION | |
| • Information requested | Location and access, services and activities offered, prices. |
| • Who requests the information | The male head of the family and, in some cases, the female one. |
| • How they get the information | Through travel agents, specialised travel guides, friends and family, promotional brochures, tourist offices and web pages. |
| • How they obtain the information | One or two months in advance. |
| • When they get the information | In the towns and cities where they live. |
| PURCHASE | |
| • What they buy | Holidays in a rural setting, tranquillity and environment. |
| • When they buy | A few weeks before the trip. |
| • Where they buy | Mostly through travel agents. |
| • When they buy | Through travel agents, contacting the company by phone, through central reservation systems and through the Internet. |
| • Why they buy | To enjoy nature, rest and tranquillity in places where families can be safe. |
| USE | |
| • What they use | Accommodation, catering services, leisure areas, well preserved natural areas, cultural and historic attractions, genuine rural life. |
| • Who uses it | The whole family |
| • How they get to use it | Customers arrive in their own vehicle and sometimes by plane. |
| • Why they use it | Because they want to receive friendly service, enjoying the authenticity of rural life, with all the necessary services and no crowds. |
| • When they use it | Weekends and (short) holidays. |
| • How long they use it | Two or three-day periods (weekends) or eight-day to two-week spans (holidays). |

Table 4. Result of the process to have the outline of an Agrotourist offer together with farming activities oriented towards the family market segment. Source: Own elaboration, partly based on Bahamonde (2003).

Determination of the fundamental attributes for the assessment of agrotourism according to perceptions from the supply side

In this second phase, the goal was to detect the fundamental attributes of Agrotourism from the perspective of the accommodation supply.

To this end, we sent a questionnaire which attempted to deepen communication between tourists and the host community in order to set common goals. The questionnaire aimed to raise awareness of the need to develop agriculture and cattle-raising, as well as their relationship with a competitive Agrotourism offer which suits the needs of ultraperipheral areas and projects an innovative image of tourist and environmental quality.

The result of the process was the outline of an agrotourist offer that could include accommodation in rural establishments, together with farming activities oriented towards the family market segment, as summarised in the table 4.

The application of this matrix may contribute to understand the market segment corresponding to potential users of agrotourist products in ultraperipheral areas, thus sustaining the MOSAZU model from the point of view of accommodation supply.

Identification of the fundamental attributes for the assessment of agrotourist activity from the point of view of demand

The aim of the third phase of the study was to ascertain the ideal tourist profile suitable for Ultraperipheral Regions, along the lines of the above-mentioned attributes. To that end, a questionnaire was shown to a sample of tourists staying at rural hotels (200 questionnaires), who were asked to assess the importance they attached to Agrotourism (see table 5).

A Likert scale was chosen, since the attributes had to be evaluated along a continuum (Oppenheim, 1992). In this case, the continuum was the relative importance of each attribute for the assessment of Agrotourism in ultraperipheral areas.

A six-point scale was chosen to avoid the tendency to select the intermediate value, thus forcing tourists to choose either a more favourable or less favourable opinion. Among the advantages of this scale we can find its reliability, its easiness of construction, the accuracy of the data obtained and the wider range of answers they allow for (Oppenheim, 1992). The research methodology adopted has provided us with a greater insight into the different tourist areas analysed. Apart from yielding information on the latest trends and issues with an impact on Agrotourism and Ultraperipheral Areas, our method has enabled us to retrieve a wealth of both qualitative and exploratory information.

| CHARACTERISTICS OF DEMAND | German | Spanish | Swiss | British | Dutch |
|--|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Tourists demanding Agrotourism | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Average stay | 8 to 10 days | | | | |
| Age | 35-60 years | 35-50 years | 35-50 years | 38-50 years | 35-50 years |
| Way of travelling | 80% in couples and 20% in groups | | | | |
| Means of acquaintance with Agrotourism | 78% through tour operators and travel agencies. The rest, independently. | | | | |

Table 5. Analysis of inbound tourism Source: Own elaboration on the basis of surveys answered by tourists.

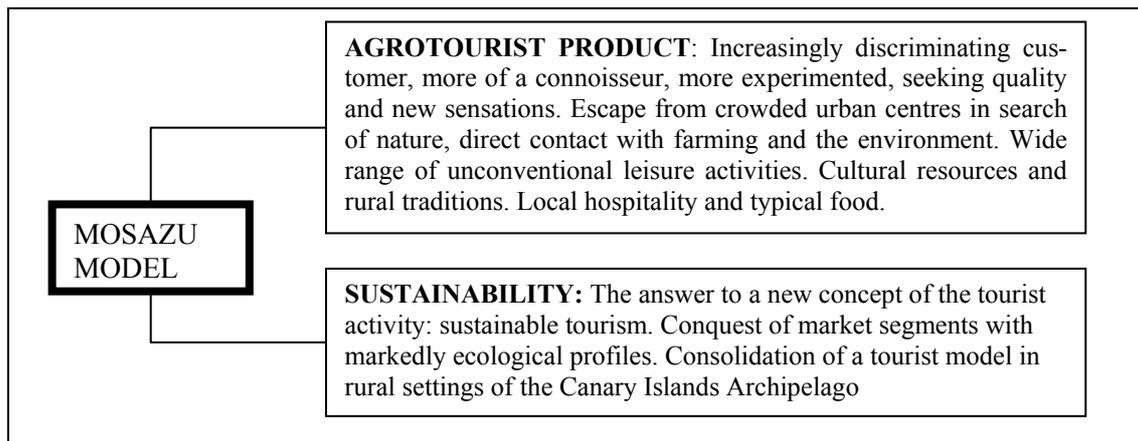


FIGURE 4. The link between Agrotourism and sustainability. The MOSAZU MODEL. Source: Own elaboration.

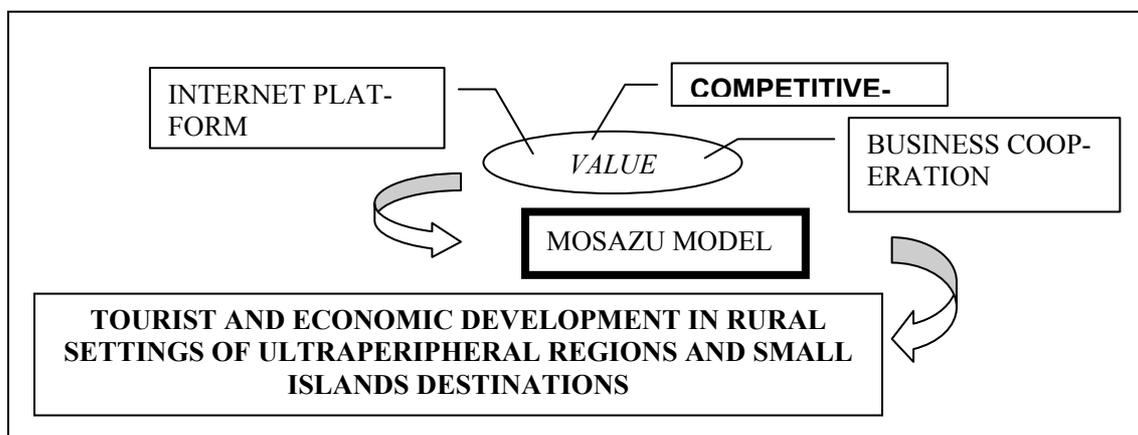


Figure 5. Relationship network for Ultraperipheral Regions and Small Islands Destinations, based on the MOSAZU MODEL. Source: own elaboration

The link between agrotourism and sustainability

Finally, the fourth stage of the study attempts to achieve one of its main objectives, i.e. examining the ultimate relationship between Agrotourism and sustainability in ultraperipheral regions, along the lines of the MOSAZU model (see figure 4).

Final implications

The analysis of Ultraperipheral Regions has traditionally been one of the major neglected issues in the international arena. We hope that the present study can contribute to start promoting changes in that respect.

The MOSAZU model also attempts to provide orientations for environmental policymaking in ultraperipheral regions and small Island destinations, in order to

satisfy the expectations and motivations of tourists and to guide the elaboration and implementation of Environmental Strategic Plans, as well as the creation of good practice codes.

In addition, we firmly believe that the key factor for a spectacular economic and tourist take off in the Canary Islands Archipelago probably lies in the joint application of quality and environmental management systems in the tourist sector and, secondly, in the integration of businesses within society (see figure 5).

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NOTAS

- ¹ ASHOTEL: Association of employers in the accommodation sector of the province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife (made up of four islands: Tenerife, La Palma, La Gomera y El Hierro). <http://www.ashotel.es>
 ASOLAN: Association of employers in the accommodation sector of Lanzarote island. <http://www.asolan.com/pub/>

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