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ISSN 2254-0644
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Emerald Publishing Limited
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Bingley BD16 1WA, United Kingdom
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Printed by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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Journal of Tourism Analysis is indexed in:
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- Difusión y Calidad Editorial de las Revistas Españolas de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas (DICE)
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Urban experiential tourism marketing
Use of social media as communication tools by the food markets of Madrid

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Abstract
Purpose – The theoretical framework of this study focuses on the trends towards experiential tourism and new communication channels in the tourist sector. The specific areas of action that are covered in this research work focus on: a definition of experiential tourism, an analysis of markets as a resource of experiential tourism and communication strategies and the use of social media by the markets of Madrid to interact with the new experiential consumer.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper is arranged as follows: first, a review of the documents on new tourist sector trends towards the demand of experiential tourism, on marketing 2.0 and on social media has been carried out; second, communication strategies of the food markets seen as tourist resources are described herein, including results of the research in the use of social media; and finally, conclusions of the study are developed.

Findings – According to the conceptual approach and after reviewing the documents cited in this paper, it is possible to conclude that food markets are tourist resources that shall be exploited as “experiential providers” for a market niche that is increasingly demanding and expects to have a “tourist experience”. The present paper contributes to the literature on experiential tourism, including new communication strategies as a tool to contact experiential tourists. Accordingly, an analysis is carried out of a specific product/resource, such as the food markets of Madrid as resources or experiential leisure centers, and a study on product strategies (offer of experiences) and communication strategies on their experiential tourism offer fundamentally based on social media and websites.

Research limitations/implications – Although this work represents an in-depth study of the food markets analyzed, the research could be extended to other markets or to other cities that are also working with markets as experiential tourism resources, though not in a structured design as in Madrid.

Practical implications – This work is different from previous studies for several reasons. In the first place, food markets are integrated as elements for the study of experiential tourism as tourist resources, and second, commercial interaction and other types of productive activities in urban centers are considered. In particular, social relations and collaboration between small retailers in markets, their managers and the institutions responsible for tourism management in the city of Madrid are barely analyzed in the literature. This includes the collaboration between public (Madrid City Council), cultural and business institutions (Madrid Fusion and Gastrofestival), hospitality and other businesses (established in the food markets) to promote cultural experiences and historic tourism.

Social implications – The performed study has several implications for employers and policymakers. As historical, cultural and experiential tourism are growing trends throughout the world, new tourist consumer profiles must be analyzed. There are new groups of tourists looking for unique experiences and “local”
activities, eager to visit renovated urban historical centers with a developed experiential leisure offer. This tourist activity facilitates the rebirth of the traditional food markets and promotes the creation of jobs and new opportunities for traditional businesses as shown in the present case study focused on the markets of Madrid.

**Originality/value** – The present paper contributes to the literature on experiential tourism, including new communication strategies as a tool to contact experiential tourists. Accordingly, an analysis is carried out of a specific product/resource, such as the food markets of Madrid as resources or experiential leisure centers, and a study on product strategies (offer of experiences) and communication strategies on their experiential tourism offer fundamentally based on social media and websites. The role played by food markets in the creation of an experiential tourism offer in Madrid and the communication strategies generated by them is described in this research. This study not only sheds light on the changes undergone by the tourist demand, specifically urban tourism but also it helps understand some of the strategies that big tourist cities are implementing in historic centers to reduce the risks of mass tourism.

**Keywords**  Social networking, Tourist experience, Experiential marketing, Traditional food markets, Web 2.0 and 3.0

**Paper type**  Research paper

1. **Introduction**

During the past decades, the concept of experiential economy has been defined and used not only in the consumer goods environment but also in tourism, architecture, urban planning and in other areas.

The current tourist demand is undergoing a great transformation, with experience becoming an essential part of the journey and clients feeling a greater need to experience a destination to optimize their trip. In this context, markets are being promoted as spaces that offer leisure experiences, expanding their traditional functions as food distributors.

The present article helps illustrate this reality in the case of Madrid, where markets are becoming cultural resources, spaces that vindicate gastronomy and local lifestyle as tourist experiences, promoting their leisure offer on social media to reach a new experiential consumer.

The theoretical framework of this study focuses on the trends towards experiential tourism and new communication channels in the tourist sector. The specific areas of action that are covered in this research work focus on: a definition of experiential tourism, an analysis of markets as a resource of experiential tourism and communication strategies and the use of social media by the markets of Madrid to interact with the new experiential consumer.

To achieve the purposes of this study, the qualitative information given by the promotional website of the Tourism Department of Madrid, the different traditional food markets websites and their respective social media were crucial to obtain data on different profiles and communication strategies.

The main contribution of this study comes from the analysis of food markets as experiential tourism resources and their interaction with social media as a communication tool with their clients.

A tourist seeking experiences is a person that wants to escape, discover, enjoy and interact with local people and know their customs; therefore, markets can and should be part of this experience pursued by tourists. Besides, it is also essential to reach that new market niche and regarding other previous studies on experiential tourism, this analysis focuses on the way social media contribute in the positioning of tourist resources that offer experiences and, specifically, the positioning of the food markets of Madrid.

This article is arranged as follows: first, a review of the documents on new tourist sector trends towards the demand of experiential tourism, on marketing 2.0 and on social media
has been carried out; second, communication strategies of the food markets seen as tourist resources are described herein, including results of the research in the use of social media; and finally, conclusions of the study are developed.

2. Literature review. The tourist sector in view of the tourist experience and the use of social media for communication purposes

The experiential marketing study is quite recent and is academically in full swing. Experiential marketing consists of an immersion of the consumers directly into the product through the senses, triggering feelings, emotions and thoughts that generate in them positive experiences related the product or service (Moral and Alles, 2012).

The goal of an experience-based marketing is to transform clients of a product in followers or fans. People eager to know the latest news on the brand or product offered are the target (Barkoza, 2013).

In short, the purpose of experiential marketing is not only to focus on a product but also on what the experience represents for a customer.

Experiential consumers do not go unnoticed by the tourist sector and, therefore, experiential tourism has become fashionable, with experiences being the essential object of the trip and clients feeling an increasing need to experience and optimize their stay at their destination. When integrating aspects such as culture and local traditions, tourists feel immersed in the local way of life and receive a positive image of the visited destination.

It has been observed that companies in the tourist sector are going from manufacturing products for their clients to getting involved in a co-creation process between producers and tourists. Advances in the communication networks are enabling both tourists and dwellers of the cities to be producers of tourism resources (Richards, 2016). This was inconceivable some years ago: when visitors recommended a place in a travel guide, their comments were seen much later by the readers. Now, people visiting hotels, museums or any other tourist spaces can publish comments on their experiences in websites that invite users to post recommendations for other tourists or interact in social media in real time.

According to Schmitt (1999, 2003), one of the first authors coining the term experiential marketing, there are five ways to promote an experience among the consumers:

1. via sensorial experience (perception);
2. via emotional experience (feel);
3. via physical experience or lifestyle (act);
4. via cognitive and creative experience (think); and
5. via social identity experience (relate).

Most recent experiential tourism studies focus particularly on sensorial, emotional and lifestyle dimensions, as shown by the studies carried out by:

- Volo (2009), Andersson (2007) and Mehmetoglu and Engen (2011) who discuss the different dimensions of experiential economy.
- Mehmetoglu and Normann (2013) who study how the different dimensions of the experience affect the consumption of tourist destinations.
- Knobloch et al. (2017), Chandralal and Valenzuela (2013) and LuJun et al. (2014) focused on experience and emotion in tourist consumption.
- Kasemsap (2017) on information and lifestyle and their influence on the consumption patterns.
Haenel et al. (2017) have studied the effect of technology in the creation of emotions and how they are influenced by experiential marketing promotional strategies. Ballantyne et al. (2017) have analyzed cultural tourism, emotions and lifestyle. Su et al. (2016) study the participation of the consumer in the creation of the tourist experience. Mossberg (2007) makes a marketing approach on the tourist experience. Salerno (2009) and Williams (2006) study the sensorial and emotional dimensions for a consumer of leisure activities or tourist accommodation, respectively.

The comprehension of the tourist experience, particularly in its sensorial dimension (Schmitt, 1999, 2003), is relevant for the improvement of tourist destinations. Thus, innovative products shall be developed, as well as an attractive environment and experiences that leave a positive print on those visiting a destination while positively contributing to the quality of life of the local community (Agapito et al., 2013, 2014; Kastenholz et al., 2012).

According to the latest trends of the demand, the so-called “last or third generation tourists” use their stay at urban destinations to search rewarding and unique experiences. This turns passive viewers into active tourists. Instead of “observing”, they travel to a destination to “do” things, interacting more with local culture.

Richards (2004) already stated that cultural tourism was becoming an experiential product, whereby visits were evaluated according to all elements of a place and not only to its cultural value. Many consumers increasingly look for local aspects and consider everyday life an authentic experience (Richards, 2011).

Today, local people dwelling in tourist places are more aware of the tourist value and appeal of their town and are therefore more and more involved in the marketing process and creation of a destination.

According to an investigation on tourist profiles depending on traveling motivations (Beltrán y Parra, 2017), which focused on people’s motivations to travel, the need of information, the perception of the destination and the way decisions are made, among other issues, the most frequent profiles are now anthropological, emotional and hedonistic travelers.

A total of 85 per cent of travelers under 35 consider that “living a local experience” is one of their main reasons to visit a place (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2015).

In a business model where the expectations of emotions and experiences have a specific weight through the whole purchase process, it is fundamental to identify the most important trends for the tourist sector when designing a waybill aimed at improving the digital strategy of a destination, a company or a tourist resource.

Shedroff (2001) believes that there are tourists that travel to live unique experiences. According to him, there is a segment of tourist consumers, which he defines as “experiential”.

Hinojosa (2016) sees as the main tourist trends to consider in 2017: ask for the traveler’s opinion (to increase client fidelity), address millennials and offer them customized experiences in hotels and travel planning (customers shall be offered trip ingredients that not only involve more than airplane tickets and hotel stays but also include VIP access to the newest restaurants and many extraordinary experiences).

According to the Travel Market Report (2016), consumers prefer to control their itinerary, including appropriate, comfortable and convenient experiences. Clients know what they want and are becoming experts in transmitting their needs to the tourist agencies.
These changes and progresses have turned travelers into more autonomous subjects, customizing their journeys instead of consuming wholesale products. For this reason, cultural tourism entails not only the typical holiday trip where cities and their heritage and monuments are visited but also a journey where public spaces such as neighborhoods are seen to provide local experiences (Díaz y Castro, 2017).

The twenty-first century tourists are known by their refined and sophisticated taste, a preference for less exploited tourist products that highlight new, innovative experiences (Castañó, 2015).

A high tourist competitiveness demands differentiation in the supply of unique, one and only experiences, associated with a product, a service or a place. This new “experiential economy” stage (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) is defining the kind of products and services that are designed and marketed today.

On the other hand, the consumer must interact in the design of experiences and these must be well-balanced and harmonious. For this reason, an interactive tourism must be supported, where travelers have a wide range of options according to their tastes, likings and emotions, cherishing whatever they please to experience (Alvarez, 2015) and, if possible, something they can share in social media.

The development of the internet has revolutionized the operation strategy of the tourist industry (Theodosiou y Katsikea, 2012). The great impact of the Web 2.0 and 3.0 on the tourist activity reaches both providers, distributors and consumers. The “word of mouth” communication, which is extremely important in the tourist marketing area, is now empowered by the thousands of contacts that an active user can generate on the internet via blog, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram (García, 2016).

Today, internet enables the traveler to socialize the experience during the whole process, even in the preparatory stage. This socialization of the traveling experience entails an opportunity to promote the company when it has met or exceeded the expectations of its clients, having at the same time a negative side, considering that the process of sharing experiences among users takes place without any participation or control by the companies involved (García, 2011).

To dig deeper into these aspects, the British hotel chain “Four Pillars Hotels” has developed an interesting infographic tool that illustrates the impact of new technologies, mobile phones and social media in the tourist industry.

The study shows how social media have changed the perspective of many travelers. It has to be highlighted that 52 per cent of Facebook users have stated that their friends’ pictures have inspired them where to go before deciding a holiday trip.

A study performed by the World Youth Student Educational Travel Confederation indicates that 66 per cent of young travelers read travel blogs to find information on destinations (WYSE, 2014). This is another signal indicating that consumers participate in the creation process of information on the destination. Both bloggers and online travel review sites are becoming increasingly valuable in the decision-making of consumers.

The previous data show how new technologies and social media are having more influence than ever in the tourist sector. Traditional communication channels have been losing effectiveness in favor of new IT-related communication formats (Nail, 2005), which means to reinterpret the word-of-mouth concept as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

The tourist offer provider shall take into account that new tourists traveling on their own are more independent and use the internet and other online communication media to be informed on possible activities at their destinations.
The search of information is an important part of the purchase decision-making, which has significantly evolved thanks to the internet and the ICTs, as they reduce the uncertainty and the perceived risks (Gretzel y Yoo, 2008; Mackay y Vogt, 2012).

The opinions of those who have already been in a destination greatly influence tourist decisions owing to their experiential nature while reducing the risk perceived by potential consumers (Mansfeld, 1992; Mill and Morrison, 2002) and making it possible to imagine own tourist experiences (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004). In other words, what is shared among users generates greater confidence and credibility (Litvin et al., 2008).

Besides, these comments from third parties (users, bloggers, journalists, etc.) are perceived as more credible than official information from websites, tourist information offices, brochures of destinations or tourist services (Huertas, 2008; Litvin et al., 2008) while gaining value in tourism decision-making (Niininen et al., 2006).

The new communication channels generated by the Web 2.0 and 3.0 categories have extended the sense of communications and an unidirectional message has been replaced by a bidirectional one with strong participation of the final user in its generation and release (García, 2011), as the content of the pages can be developed by the company itself and by the information provided by users, bloggers or Instagrammers, which encourages interaction, participation and creation of social media or communities (O’Reilly, 2007).

In short, in the experiential economy the tourism sector must focus on this segment of travelers for whom the essential thing is to have experiences and emotions consistent with their lifestyle. In the case of urban tourism, tourist resources and destinations have to establish new forms of communication with customers. Such information/communication can be generated by these resources and destinations on traditional media, but above all, on their own websites, social media and third-party content sites (consumer portals, blogs or influencers) that contribute to the image generation of different experiential tourism resources.

3. Traditional Food markets seen as urban experiential tourism resources and social media used as marketing tools. The case of Madrid

The quest of differentiation and singularity to attract new visitors leads cities to adopt the management model proposed by the new experience-based economy, staging and offering unique experiences.

Cities have developed the urban regeneration process, promoting the emergence of new “tourist places” as cultural experiences that cover the new needs of experiential tourism.

As the effects of mass tourism increasingly affect the historic city centers, a segment of travelers emerges as a minority, which prefer to explore lesser-known urban areas or new resources (Hosteltur, 2016; Mora, 2011). These places are sought after by a new type of visitor who flees from crowds and attaches more value to cultural, culinary, artistic, social or creative alternatives in general.

Wishing to satisfy the new perceptions of the tourists, experiential tourism proposals arise, with neighborhoods offering spaces that show local idiosyncrasies while adding value and complexity to the cities (Santamaria, 2013).

A clear example of this overload is New York, with an abundant influx of visitors throughout the year, especially in Manhattan. The town council of New York has launched a strategy in five districts, taking visitors from Manhattan to other lesser-known neighborhoods such as Queens and Brooklyn, with less influx of tourists and where they would not have set foot 10 years ago. This is an escape route that diversifies the wealth generated by tourism and decongests big centers. This new idea was suggested by NYC & Company, who managed to bring tourists to the new neighborhoods by associating with
members of the community and launching contents that attract consumers while demonstrating that an association with small businesses can be a good idea to revitalize new target neighborhoods (Canalis, 2016).

Continuing with the tendency to mitigate mass tourism, a segment of minority travelers emerges, preferring to explore new zones that are apparently less attractive and less known. These neighborhoods are separated from the main centers of mass tourism and are sought by people who want to avoid historic centers and the main monuments of cities, wishing to live new experiences that are not only visual but gastronomic, cultural, social, artistic and creative. Some examples are Malasaña in Madrid, Dalston in London and Kreuzberg in Berlin.

These new seekers (“hipsters”), are middle class youngsters who wish to get away from the crowds generated by mass tourism, even if they have to travel to places located far from the center. They look for vintage items, healthy food and products that are generally “original”.

This hipster tendency will open doors to new neighborhoods and destinations for these new visitors, so that big cities are decongested from mass tourism (Canalis, 2016).

These young travelers share the same profile, which is a frequent user of social media capable of influencing other users by turning the areas they visit into new trends that start to be visited by other types of visitors.

In this sense, traditional food markets are tourist resources valued by new consumer profiles for the objective, constructive authenticity they add to the destinations. The use of social media by markets aimed at planning communication strategies and promotion of activities and experiences in their facilities is key to reach their target market.

The interactivity generated in these networks and its use as public relations tools that enable dialog opportunities make it necessary to extract all the interactive potential from them. Therefore, it is relevant to know how the food markets of Madrid – new experiential tourism resources – use social media as communication channels with their target audience.

The generated social presence and social identity positively affect the knowledge of a product in virtual communities (Shen et al., 2010). In the context of this research, it is evident that experiential travelers, people that consume experiences, foodies or gastronomic trend-lovers, belong to a community of users that practice word-of-mouth communication on social media when it comes to traditional food markets.

Using the tools made available by the experiential marketing, cities shall plan, design, create and communicate unique experiences that satisfy visitors, as well as activities that provide visitors an experience that is positive and exclusive of the city of destination (Alvarez, 2015).

In the case of cities like Madrid, as in other big cities, traditional food markets are exceptional spaces with rich local history and culture, emblematic buildings in locations considered architectural or historical heritage.

Some traditional food markets of Madrid have become important tourist attractions or must “sights” in the historical center of the city (García, 2017). Thus, Madrid is becoming a reference among market visitors, as markets have become a great way to approach the local culture of the city.

In view of this reality, the following has been considered convenient:

- Analyze the role of food markets as cultural value resources in urban tourism using the case study of Madrid.
- Madrid has 46 public food markets, 14 of which are located in central districts of the capital (6 in the central district, 2 in Retiro, 3 in Salamanca and 3 in Chamberí. 5 markets of the central district were picked from the 14, 1 from the district of Salamanca and 1 from Chamberí, as well as gastronomic leisure spaces or re-created markets (see the data sheet in Table I).
• Food markets such as San Antón, Antón Martín, San Fernando, Barceló, La Cebada (Centro), Vallehermoso (Chamberí) and Mercado de la Paz (Salamanca) are analyzed. Other gastronomic leisure centers included are San Miguel, Huerto del Lucas and San Ildefonso (center) and Platea (Salamanca). Both markets and gastronomic leisure centers or the analyzed re-created markets carry out the greatest amount of activities related to tourist experiences and those who have designed not only sales areas but also areas implemented for leisure and gastronomic learning activities.
• Study of social media as a communication tool used by food markets to promote their experiential tourism offer to a target public.

Most part of the food markets offered as tourist resources in Madrid are the so-called “traditional renewed markets” and “reinvented markets”. These are the two types of food markets that perform a greater use of social media as a communication tool. In both cases, the main attraction is the combination of traditional and modern elements (see Table II).

The first purpose of this article, as said before, is to analyze food markets as experiential tourism resources.

In the current tourist scenario, gastronomic tourism is becoming more and more relevant in Spain. Gastronomy as a tourist resource of our country is essential to our heritage, conveying an image of innovation, quality, excellence and authenticity, a concept that TurEspaña is taking advantage of as a strategy to diversify our tourist offer. Therefore, food markets are becoming key services/resources of a cultural tourist offer based on the sale of a unique gastronomic experience, representing an intangible cultural heritage of a territory.

The arrival of tourists to these food markets increases local income while remodeling and diversifying market stands to refurbish the architectural ensemble (quite deteriorated and obsolete in some cases). It also provides a foreign visitor-oriented offer with businesses opening in the afternoons or on Saturdays and even on Sundays, which helps include these places as mandatory stops in tourist routes (Crespi y Domínguez, 2013). In short, it allows to create a new tourist offer made of experiential places (Barrado, 2004) to live an “extraordinary day-to-day experience” (Quaglieri and Russo, 2010).

This change in the food markets offer, in the case of Spain, comes basically from the growing hospitality/catering industry in markets, fitting out leisure areas as places where to eat, with an innovative variety that includes “tapas” bars, small restaurants located near fruit, vegetable and fish stands and stores transformed into catering and tasting environments (García, 2017).

| Universe | Traditional food markets, gourmet food spaces and reinvented food markets |
| Geographical area | Limits trade of the city of Madrid |
| Sample | 7 traditional food markets located in Madrid (city center) |
| Sample | 4 gourmet food spaces |
| Sampling procedure | Convenience sampling according to the offer of tourist services based on gastronomy as an experience |
| Sample error | According to the sample size, the maximum permissible error (to estimate proportions) is $\pm 4\%$ in conditions of maximum uncertainty ($p = q = 0.5$) |
| Technique of collection on the information | Observation |
| Period of collection of the information | November-December 2016 (Social networks) |
| Information processing | Univariable and descriptive bivariate analysis |
| Informartion processing | Excell/Similar Web |

Table I. Data sheet of the research
Table III includes all the food markets that are launching experiential marketing activities according to the traditional and reinvented markets categories. Besides, new gastronomic spaces have been considered to operate as markets in areas where no markets existed before, focusing on gastronomic tourism-oriented hotel and catering facilities, apart from organizing gastronomic workshops and tastings.

On the other hand, one of the most important gastronomic activities in Madrid is Madrid Fusion. Among other similar activities that are parallel to Madrid Fusión, there is a key experiential marketing event taking place in the city known as Gastrofestival. In the 2016 Edition, markets have become an essential part in the marketing process of gastronomic activities (see Table III). Food markets are becoming a tourist resource that offers tourist services based on gastronomy as an experience.

The markets of Madrid seen as tourist and leisure offer are, therefore, very diverse. All of them focus on three concepts: Temporality (season products), flextime and tasting (try before buy).

There are some items that show how markets seek to adapt to new tourist and leisure habits (as shown in Table III):

- Operating hours in these markets are extended for leisure and catering purposes.
- There is an increase in employment in stands of leisure and catering businesses (restaurants, gourmet shops with bar service, bars or common leisure catering-centered areas.
- Food markets are increasingly becoming attractions in the tourist map of Madrid.
- Markets perform tastings of products, artistic events, cooking workshops and other experiential activities (see Figure 1).
All the food markets have been able to take advantage of the beauty of their revamped facilities to surpass the gastronomy sales channel and enter the social culture dimension, providing the chance to live a complete gastronomic experience.

As seen in the activities of Figure 1, the idea is to generate experiences for the clients to interact with them through the social media and transmit emotions, brands and values and share activities. In this way, experiential marketing enhances the effects of communication (Segura and Garriga, 2008).

In Madrid, the analyzed food markets have been able to upgrade their spaces, generating in the end important capital flow and social activity in their neighborhoods. In 2003, the Madrid City Council initiated an innovation and transformation plan for its markets, improving security, removing architectural barriers, reforming facades and facilities, etc. This reinvention has led food markets to become “experiential destinations” within the city, most of them based on the following model: traditional market + gourmet offer + gastronomy oriented cultural and leisure activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Open hours</th>
<th>Catering purposes</th>
<th>Gastrofestival activities 2016 in Madrid</th>
<th>Experiential activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Miguel</td>
<td>10-24 J-V-S 10-2</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antón</td>
<td>10-24 V-D 10-1:30</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Gourmet products Gastrofestival</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antón Martin</td>
<td>9-21 9-23:30</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Opening of the Gastrofestival Workshop: cocina fusión Tapas in the market Workshop for five senses Workshop: kids cooking vegetables and fruits</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Fernando</td>
<td>9-21 V-S 9-23 D 11-17</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Blind tasting Kids food School</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barceló</td>
<td>9:20.30 V-D 9-24</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Cebada</td>
<td>9-20.30 D</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallehermoso</td>
<td>9:20:30 9-23:30</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Sushi cooking Tasting: Gran cocido madrileño Tea tasting Tasting of Italian appetizers Tasting of sobaos and quesadas Asian brunch Artisan cheese tasting</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercado de La Paz</td>
<td>9:20.30 10-23</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huerto de Lucas</td>
<td>10:22</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platea</td>
<td>10-2.30</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Ildefonso</td>
<td>12-00</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration and food markets websites; www.esmadrid.com; www.tripadvisor.com; Fuente: www.gastrofestivalmadrid.com/es/cabecera/10/mercados-de-madrid

Table III. Experiential tourism actions performed by the markets of Madrid
4. Use of social media as communication tools for the food markets of Madrid as experiential tourism spaces

The second goal of the present study is to analyze the communication strategies and the use of social media by the food markets of Madrid to communicate with the new experiential consumer.

It must be considered that it is not unusual to find in social media pictures aimed at making an impact and arousing sensations and that a good digital marketing campaign can
transform the reader into a future client, as social media reach targets consumers faster and more straightforward (Dvojak, 2011; Ibáñez et al., 2016).

Most analyzed food markets have become attractive spots in the tourist map of Madrid and in the promotional city website www.esmadrid.com (see Table IV). Besides, positioning in Web search engines such as TripAdvisor (see Table V) has become crucial, as internet is for new travelers an opportunity to play a quite active role in the communication process, providing and exchanging information and opinions more easily.

Food markets are trying to interact with clients via social media and transmit emotions. Experiential marketing enhances the effects of communication and the importance of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Attractive spots in the tourist map of Madrid</th>
<th>Web <a href="http://www.esmadrid.com">www.esmadrid.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Miguel</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antón</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antón Martin</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Fernando</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barceló</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Cebada</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallehermoso</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Paz</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huerto de Lucas</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platea</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Ildefonso</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Own elaboration; www.esmadrid.com (December, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>TripAdvisor information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Miguel</td>
<td>Certificate of Excelence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N°15/720 things to do in Madrid; 4,5/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13,254 reviews (6,909 excelente)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antón</td>
<td>Certificate of Excelence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antón Martin</td>
<td>Nº 87/715 things to do in Madrid; 4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate of Excelence; 4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nº 53/717 things to do in Madrid; 4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1122 reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Fernando</td>
<td>Certificate of Excelence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nº 98/714 things to do in Madrid; 4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barceló</td>
<td>Nº 441/708 things to do in Madrid; 3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Cebada</td>
<td>Nº 10/202 things to do in Madrid; 4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallehermoso</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Paz</td>
<td>Nº 122/708 things to do in Madrid; 4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huerto de Lucas</td>
<td>Nº 1084/8174 restaurants in Madrid; 4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platea</td>
<td>Nº 368/8174 restaurants in Madrid; 4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Ildefonso</td>
<td>Certificate of Excelence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nº 294/8466 restaurants in Madrid; 4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>589 reviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Own elaboration and food markets websites: www.esmadrid.com; www.tripadvisor.com (December, 2016)
transmitting emotions and feelings that arouse the senses of the clients (Segura and Garriga, 2008).

Sørensen (2007) considered the use of social media as emerging communication channels one of the most important elements for innovation in the tourist sector.

In recent years, the Web and social media have become essential communication tools of the tourist sector (Huertas, 2012; Bulchand et al., 2012), for promoting destinations and tourist resources and services.

It is evident that the development of the internet has revolutionized the operational strategies of the tourist industry. The great impact that the Web 2.0 and 3.0 has on the tourist activity reaches all participants in the purchase process, both providers, distributors and consumers. The “word of mouth” communication, which is extremely important in the tourist marketing area, is now empowered by the thousands of contacts that an active user can generate on the internet via blog, e-mail, or a Facebook, Twitter or Instagram account.

Travelers generate on social media a drag effect, making certain destinations and neighborhoods fashionable, as pointed out in the “Global Trends Report 2015” of the World Travel Market.

These comments from third parties are perceived as more creditable than official information, being increasingly more important when making tourism and leisure purchase decisions (Huertas, 2008; Niininen et al., 2006).

Faced with this panorama, markets have considered the use of social media and cyberspace as their main communications tool, using websites, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and blogs as promotional tools (see Table VI).

The analysis of follower measurement results in social media show very diverse data. After studying Table VI, several relevant data are observed:

- Instagram, as the latest network, is not used as a communication tool by all the food markets; nevertheless, El Huerto de Lucas and Platea have more than 10 million followers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Web</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Miguel</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mercadodesanmiguel.es">www.mercadodesanmiguel.es</a></td>
<td>42.749</td>
<td>14,4 k</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antón</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mercadosananton.com">www.mercadosananton.com</a></td>
<td>35.073</td>
<td>6.582</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antón Martin</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mercadoantonmartin.com">www.mercadoantonmartin.com</a></td>
<td>4.795</td>
<td>1.639</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Fernando</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mercadodesanfernando.es">www.mercadodesanfernando.es</a></td>
<td>8.424</td>
<td>3.616</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barceló</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mercadobarcelo.es">www.mercadobarcelo.es</a></td>
<td>2.651</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Cebada</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mercadodelacebada.com">www.mercadodelacebada.com</a></td>
<td>2.535</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valleher-moso</td>
<td>No Web</td>
<td>2.940</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Paz</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mercadolapaz.es">www.mercadolapaz.es</a></td>
<td>1.941</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huerto de Lucas</td>
<td><a href="http://www.elhuertodelucas.com">www.elhuertodelucas.com</a></td>
<td>11.310</td>
<td>2.493</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.5k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platea</td>
<td><a href="http://plateamadrid.com">http://plateamadrid.com</a></td>
<td>26.545</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.4k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Ildefonso</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mercadodesanildefonso.com">www.mercadodesanildefonso.com</a></td>
<td>18.759</td>
<td>4.677</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.716</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table VI.** Use of the Web and social media by the experiential food markets of Madrid

**Source:** Own elaboration (December 2016) and Similar Web (March 2017)
Twitter also shows very different data, considering that all the food markets have less than 10,000 followers, although the market of San Miguel has more than 14 million in this platform.

Regarding Facebook, food markets have been divided into three groups: those with more than 30,000 followers (San Antón and San Miguel), those with 10,000 to 30,000 followers (Huerto de Lucas, Platea and San Ildefonso) and the rest with less than 10,000 followers.

It seems, on the other hand, that there is a relationship between a greater use of social media and the fact of having a better position in TripAdvisor (which is the case of the markets of San Miguel and San Antón, with a very high-ranking position in the “what to do in Madrid” category, according to TripAdvisor).

In view of all these data, it can be said that there are markets with more activity in social networks and most of them are the so-called gastronomic leisure centers.

The markets with the greatest use of social media are clearly Platea, San Ildefonso, San Miguel, San Antón and El Huerto de Lucas (see Figures 2 to 4).

Not only the number of followers in social networks shall be investigated but also the use that markets make thereof to maintain contact with potential consumers via information feedback, retweets and the response to the questions posed by them in these networks.
Once analyzed how food markets use these networks, it is possible to extract the following results:

- Market of San Ildefonso. Although in Facebook there is a lack of feedback to the comments made by users, the market makes an excellent use of Twitter in each tweet where it is mentioned while answering by thanking visitors of the market facilities or providing information and even retweeting users.

- The market of San Antón has an updated Facebook page with at least one publication per day and provides a lot of information about the stands and what to do in the market. When any user makes a comment, the market develops a quick response. Regarding opinions, 60 per cent are valued by users with 5 stars, which highlights the Facebook rating of 4.4 of the market of San Antón.

- The market of Antón Martín makes good use of Instagram, considering that it shows its location, redirecting to the market’s Web page. It uses Instagram particularly for promotion of its events, using geolocation in all of them to provide this information at all times.

- The market of San Miguel is generally the most active one in the use of social networks. In Facebook it has a very active profile with daily posts, informing on the activities that are planned on the day and, above all, it uses pictures, questions or familiar language to create a friendlier profile. Besides, comments made by users are answered quickly (not later than one day after publication). Twitter is used to have all users well informed on any changes or events that take place in the market. Another relevant detail is that its Instagram account posts high quality photos, sharing pictures of recent visitors and using hashtags, while all the images include their location. As in the other profiles, this market answers comments immediately.

- Platea does not have the greatest number of followers in Twitter, nevertheless it makes a very active use of its account towards its users, quoting retweets as an interaction mechanism and highlighting those mentioning the market.

- El Huerto de Lucas (2016), similar to Platea, generates a lot of retweets and comments, although it is more active in Instagram, with a very updated page and reposting of photos uploaded by market users, which provides information and feedback to users for promoting the market in their private networks.

### 5. Conclusions and implications of the study

According to the conceptual approach and after reviewing the documents cited in this article, it is possible to conclude that food markets are tourist resources that shall be...
exploited as “experiential providers” for a market niche that is increasingly demanding and expects to have a “tourist experience”.

There are few studies that analyze the sensorial experience in urban areas and even less regarding leisure activities in food markets as an experiential tourism resource. This article analyzes the experiential tourism market with markets as a foundation of the tourist product and as a response of the current demand of new tourism consumers towards experiences in visited destinations.

The present paper contributes to the literature on experiential tourism, including new communication strategies as a tool to contact experiential tourists. Accordingly, an analysis is carried out of a specific product/resource, such as the food markets of Madrid as resources or experiential leisure centers, and a study on product strategies (offer of experiences) and communication strategies on their experiential tourism offer fundamentally based on social media and websites.

The role played by food markets in the creation of an experiential tourism offer in Madrid and the communication strategies generated by them is described in this research.

This study not only sheds light on the changes undergone by the tourist demand, specifically urban tourism but also it helps understand some of the strategies that big tourist cities are implementing in historic centers to reduce the risks of mass tourism.

The performed study has several implications for employers and policymakers. As historical, cultural and experiential tourism are growing trends throughout the world, new tourist consumer profiles must be analyzed.

There are new groups of tourists looking for unique experiences and “local” activities, eager to visit renovated urban historical centers with a developed experiential leisure offer. This tourist activity facilitates the rebirth of the traditional food markets and promotes the creation of jobs and new opportunities for traditional businesses as shown in the present case study focused on the markets of Madrid.

This work adds to the experiential tourism studies an analysis of social media and new communication tools used to generate interaction with the new tourist searching local experiences in visited destinations.

This work has allowed, on the other hand, to determine that the presence in social networks of companies in the tourism sector is key to their approach to consumers.

The new communication channels generated by the Web 2.0 and 3.0 categories have extended the sense of communications and a unidirectional message has been replaced by a bidirectional one with strong participation of the final user in its generation and release, as the content of the pages can be developed by the information provided by users, bloggers, Instagrammers, etc. which encourages interaction, participation and creation of social networks or communities.

Given this panorama, the markets have considered the use of social media and cyberspace as their main communication tool with the new tourist market niche that seeks new experiences, using websites, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter and Instagram as promotional instruments.

Thus, markets try to communicate the experiences generated via social networks and interact with customers, multiplying the effects of communication.

The study has allowed to conclude that the use of social media is not the same among markets, both in the intensity of use and in the type of networks used.

Finally, one must not forget that this is a tourism product in the first phases of its life cycle and most of the investment has been made in its design. Therefore, it is still early to carry out an in-depth study of communication tools and social networks
implemented for interaction with experiential tourism consumers, considering that Facebook has a more homogeneous use and Twitter and Instagram a more irregular use.

To conclude, this work is different from previous studies for several reasons. In the first place, food markets are integrated as elements for the study of experiential tourism as tourist resources, and second, commercial interaction and other types of productive activities in urban centers are considered. In particular, social relations and collaboration between small retailers in markets, their managers and the institutions responsible for tourism management in the city of Madrid are barely analyzed in the literature. This includes the collaboration between public (Madrid City Council), cultural and business institutions (Madrid Fusión and Gastrofestival), hospitality and other businesses (established in the food markets) to promote cultural experiences and historic tourism.

Further proposals for new activities to be carried out by the markets are possible from the different approaches on the collaboration analyzed:

- **Public institutions (City Council of Madrid):** Our proposal includes: activate a tab on experiential tourism in markets in the tourism portal of Madrid with a complete list including contact links; achieve a better position in search engines of the @mercados_madrid Instagram profile managed by the City Council of Madrid; include signaling in subway stops near the food markets showing their locations; prepare an electronic tourist guide with basic information and activities in markets; and include in guided tours offered by the city tourism offices a link to the “Madrid most famous markets” route.

- **Cultural and business-related (Madrid Fusión and Gastrofestival):** Another proposal is to work towards a greater implication of other food markets in Gastrofestival activities so as to diversify tourist flows to more neighborhoods of Madrid.

- **Catering and commerce (inside market facilities):** We suggest more experiential activities related to entrepreneurs who give personality to their businesses and are demanded by the new tourist profiles as a “contact with local reality”.

Although this work represents an in-depth study of the food markets analyzed, the research could be extended to other markets or to other cities that are also working with markets as experiential tourism resources, though not in a structured design as in Madrid.

A future line of research proposed is to analyze the food market websites, the origin of users seeking information in these websites and the way they arrive at them. This will better help outline the profile of the experiential tourist.

**References**


**Web references**


Urban experiential tourism marketing 21


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Ecotourism as a path to sustainable development in an isolated Magic Town
The case study of La Trampa, Mexico

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to reveal the potential for ecotourism of a locality with high marginalisation index in the municipality of Tlalpujahua, a Magic Town in the State of Michoacán, Mexico.

Design/methodology/approach – This case study was based on several methodologies. First, socioeconomic, environmental, sustainability, geographic and institutional variables were used in the evaluation of 62 localities of the municipality. Geographic information systems identified study areas and determined their potential for ecotourism. Second, participatory diagnosis was used to collect specific information about the locality regarding their organisational aspects, development strategies, current socioeconomic problems, land use and resources availability and interest in developing projects related to ecotourism. Finally, the authors adapted the FAS Model (factors, attractors and support systems) to include environmental and organisational variables contributing to a theoretical approach to ecotourism. To identify attractors, they applied a questionnaire to determine the profile of tourists visiting Magic Towns and their potential interest in ecotourism.

Findings – The authors conclude that ecotourism is a possible alternative to highly marginalised localities within Magic Town municipalities and would be able to expand the benefits engendered by the program. Ecotourism can therefore represent a new option for tourists visiting marginalised communities in Mexico.

Originality/value – A diverse methodology applied key elements to identify localities suitable for ecotourism, characteristics of marginalisation and endowment of natural heritage. The authors conclude that the benefits to localities included in the Magic Towns Program can be expanded to surrounding spaces through strategies such as ecotourism.

Keywords Sustainability, Ecotourism, Development, Magic towns

Paper type Case study

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1. Introduction
Since its origins, tourism has been seen as an option to promote economic development. However, tourism also has undesirable effects on the environment, besides not being equally accessible to households (Cerón, 2016). A series of international agreements presented at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 were consolidated into the “Project or Agenda 21.” The Earth Summit aimed at identifying strategies to reverse environmental degradation through sustainable development (ONU, 1993). Since then, tourism has been redefined as an economic activity able to fight poverty, improve environmental management and encourage changes in consumption patterns.

The steering of tourism policies towards sustainable development, especially in developing countries, aimed to take advantage of their natural and historical heritage and to include indigenous peoples, local communities, low-income urban residents and the rural poor in the execution of sustainable development strategies. Those new policies aim to promote:

[...] environmentally sound and culturally sensitive tourism programmes as a strategy for sustainable development of urban and rural settlements and as a way of decentralising urban development and reducing discrepancies among regions (ONU, 1993, p.73).

In this context, the Magic Towns Program (MTP) was created in Mexico in 2001 with the purpose of promoting the sustainable development of localities through tourism, expected to raise levels of welfare, maintain and increase employment and promote investment (SECTUR, 2014). The concept of “Magic Town” was created by the Ministry of Tourism to denote a locality preserving its historical and cultural heritage through time and despite modernity. By 2015, the number of Magic Towns amounted to 111 (SECTUR, 2016). Most localities named as Magic Towns are found in municipalities with high percentages of vegetation and farmland (INEGI, 2009). Vegetation covers 62.4 per cent of those municipalities (split into 24.5 per cent woodland, 13.5 per cent forest, 12.7 per cent scrubland, 9.7 per cent pasture and 2.1 per cent other types), followed by agriculture (31 per cent) and finally by urban areas, which are very small (between 5 and 16 per cent in 14 towns and under 5 per cent in 94 towns) except in Orizaba, Metepec and San Pedro Cholula (where urbanisation reaches over 60 per cent of the territory).

Most localities included in the MTP exhibit a high degree of marginalisation. A dichotomous pattern can be identified where, on the one hand, localities nominated as Magic Towns are mostly capitals of their municipalities (92 per cent) and show medium, low and very low degree of marginalisation (89 per cent); and on the other hand, the remaining localities mostly exhibit of very high and high marginalisation (78.2 per cent).

From the MTP inception, various problems have prevented tourism from becoming an efficient trigger of development (CESTUR, 2013). Living conditions of locals have not significantly improved (Rodríguez and Pulido, 2010; Hoyos and Hernández 2008), economic benefits have been mostly absent (Covarrubias and Conde, 2009; Guillén, Valenzuela and Jaime, 2013; Hernández, 2012), and target localities have often served tourism without reciprocation (Royuela and Ramirez de la, 2015), among other issues.

Although heterogeneity in culture and biodiversity is notorious among Magic Towns, their socioeconomic context is mostly similar. The diversity of natural resources, agricultural activity and low urbanisation suggests opportunities for alternative tourism projects such as ecotourism, whose mechanisms of natural heritage management are compatible with local forms of organisation. Ecotourism can both diversify the offer of attractions and distribute the benefits of tourism to neighbouring localities and foster sustainable perspectives. This study aims at investigating the potential for ecotourism of a
highly marginalised locality in the municipality of Tlalpujahua, a Magic Town in the State of Michoacán, Mexico. Our case study relied on various methodologies to analyse 62 localities in the municipality and their potential, using the FAS model (factors, attractors and support systems), and based on questionnaires, to determine the willingness of local populations to engage with ecotourism.

2. Ecotourism and local sustainable development

Ecotourism is an alternative tourism model that respects host communities and their sociocultural and natural environment and has balanced development as its target (Jafari, 2005). Alternative tourism recognises and incorporates local populations as necessary social actors, besides promoting more flexible and diversified travel structures through natural spaces including from protected natural areas to artificial urban and rural areas (Osorio, 2010).

Ecotourism offers attractions based on natural settings and on the preservation or protection of natural areas (Hall and Boyd, 2005). Ecotourism is currently defined as:

[...] purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people (OMT, 2014, p. 15).

In their analysis of the concept, Donohoe and Needham (2006) identified six principles underlying ecotourism: reliance on nature, conservation purposes, environmental education, sustainability, equitable distribution of benefits, ethical responsibility for both local population and tourists.

Ecotourism is usually carried out in peripheral areas away from urban centres, and must be seen within the broader natural, sociocultural, political and economic systems that determine their development (Hall and Boyd, 2005). Ecotourism depends on small and medium-sized operators, and generates direct benefits and income to rural, indigenous and poor communities (Garraway, 2009). It is also unique by its commitment to conservation objectives, improvement of living standards of local populations, in addition to intangible dimensions such as the re-evaluation of cultural traditions and beliefs, improvement of community organisation and leadership, increase in community’s self-esteem and pride, and expansion of contact networks involving local people and service providers, international tourists, tour operator companies, private foundations and non-governmental organisations (Stronza, 2008).

Ecotourism generates local benefits and also affects the way tourists perceive, experience and learn about nature, its landscape, flora, fauna and habitats, as well as cultural relics (Kiper, 2013). Therefore, ecotourism has the potential to increase environmental awareness of both the local population and tourists. Hence, it is highly recommended that visitors are educated and prepared in advance to interact with the host community (Dubin and Durham, 2008).

Ecotourism is a model of tourism that envisages an alternative way of development that conserves natural areas and promotes social welfare and economic diversification within a framework of sustainability in economically marginalised communities (poor, indigenous, rural) (Garraway, 2009). The destinations are located in marginalised areas characterised by lack of monetary resources, local skills and mechanisms to ensure fair distribution of benefits, in addition to poor commercial links and experience in planning, finance and product development (Coria and Calfucura, 2012). Government intervention to overcome economic difficulties has been absent, resulting in migratory flows towards the central...
regions, weak domestic economic relations and a lack of effective policies and economic control over decisions that affect local welfare (Hall and Boyd, 2005). Although empowerment is necessary for development, sustainability and preservation of natural resources, the ability of localities to receive large numbers of tourists must be considered so as to avoid a risk of benefits not reaching the community.

3. Methodology

We applied the method of exploratory case study (Yin, 2011), as well as qualitative and quantitative tools, to investigate the potential for ecotourism of a marginalised locality near the Magic Town of Tlalpujahua.

Selection. We assessed 62 localities in the municipality of Tlalpujahua through socioeconomic, environmental, sustainability, geographic and institutional variables (Vázquez-Barquero, 2007; Fayos-Solà et al., 2011; Alburquerque, 2003). Socioeconomic variables were total population, marginalisation, poverty, social backwardness, size, indigenous population, main economic activities, employment, socioeconomic problems of the rural localities, economically active population and population occupied by sector. Environmental and sustainability variables were property regime in municipality, prioritised biodiversity sites and regions, protected natural areas, important conservation areas, relevant forest landscape sites and endangered and prioritised species and current environmental problems in municipality. Geographic variables were location, landscape, climate, land and vegetation use and accessibility and mobility within the municipality. Finally, the institutional variable was the local governance measured through the association between endogenous and exogenous actors to carry out tourism development projects.

To supplement the analysis above, we applied a geographic information system to map several relevant variables. In total, 62 localities of the municipality were spatially mapped to represent their population, indigenous-language speaking population, degree of marginalisation, degree of social backwardness, socioeconomic problems, priority conservation sites and areas, natural continuity, transport infrastructure, terrain, farming centres and land tenure system (common or private). Following the characterisation of Tlalpujahua, the marginalised locality of La Trampa was selected for our case study.

3.1 Participatory diagnosis

Semi-structured interviews were used to explore views of agents on ecotourism. Three endogenous agents were considered:

1. local entrepreneurs holding property rights and able to carry out local development projects;
2. professionals, workers and residents; and
3. local (municipality) institutions and authorities.

As exogenous agents, we included current and potential customers in the locality, competing destinations, and supra-local institutions (Fayos-Solà et al., 2011).

Next, we applied the semi-structured participatory tools proposed by Geilfus (2002) to key agents. As a result of the participatory diagnosis, we obtained maps of natural resources and land use and information on communal representatives. Previous technical and land use studies were obtained as supplementary information.

Application of FAS model to La Trampa. Finally, we adapted the FAS model, a method for planning tourist activity and designing project implementation strategies (Fayos-Solà et al., 2011). The FAS model explains a local system as the complex interaction of three
structured subsystems: productive factors (natural factors, human factors and financial capital); attractors, or motivations for tourist travel (natural, cultural and human-made attractions); and support systems, or services to residents, tourists and clients (infrastructure capacity, hospitality, transport, security, signage, among others) (Figure 1).

The FAS model allows a systematic representation of these three structures of a destination, facilitating the allocation of values and classifying the location according to indicators of comparative advantages and competitive potential. These indicators are selected based on the location or strategic vision of the destination. In the case of La Trampa, we adopted the perspective of ecotourism.

The assigned values were classified and organised into matrices according to the structured subsystems, namely, factors, attractors and support systems. The analysis is carried out by means of evaluation matrices of each of its elements, with their respective indicators of state (IS) and indicators of importance (II), where state is the quality and existence of the indicators, importance is their relevance to ecotourism, and quadrant matrices are divided by IS and II medians. Application of the model produced graphical representations of matrices with four quadrants, providing a structural vision of La Trampa, its comparative advantages and initial endowment of factors relevant to the design of strategies promoting ecotourism.

The attractors index was obtained through a survey to 70 tourists with level of significance of 90 per cent and an error of 10 per cent. Questionnaires presented Likert scales from 1 to 5, where “1” indicated no interest in ecotourism activities involving the attractor and “5” indicated high interest. This questionnaire also revealed the profile of tourists visiting Magic Towns. Familiarisation with La Trampa attractions was based on a tour around its edges guided by a forestry community leader providing information on identified attractions. Indices representing support systems, and factors were derived from conversation with local community leaders and direct observation of current infrastructure.

4. Results
Characterisation of Tlalpujahua. The municipality of Tlalpujahua is located northwest of the Michoacán state (19°48’N, 00°10’W, 2,580m asm). It borders Maravatio and Contepec to the north; Contepec and the state of Mexico to the east; the state of Mexico and Senguio to the south; and Senguio and Maravatio to the west. Its surface area is 190.86 km$^2$ or 0.32 per cent of the state Michoacán (Figure 2).

According to the 2010 Mexican census, Tlalpujahua has a population of 27,587 residents across 62 localities, of which only the capital is classified as urban, with a population of only 2,500 residents. The remaining localities are even smaller (between 66 and 999 residents) and classified as rural by the INEGI. In 2010, 58.8 per cent of its population was living in...
poverty (13.3 per cent in extreme poverty, and 45.5 per cent in moderate poverty). Although
not poor, 36.7 per cent of the population is vulnerable and partially deprived, 1 per cent is
vulnerable because of income and 3.5 per cent is neither poor nor vulnerable. This results in
that 39.8 per cent of the total population has income below the welfare line, and 20.8 per cent
below the minimum welfare line. In addition, 95.5 per cent exhibit at least one aspect of
social deprivation, while 44.3 per cent exhibit three or more (CONEVAL, 2014).

In Tlalpujahua, as a whole, marginalisation was reduced from high to intermediate grade
between 2005 and 2010, but nonetheless marginalisation increased in 11 localities and only
dropped in three and did not change in the 48 remaining localities including the capital.
Thus, most of its localities (52 out of 62, covering 75 per cent of the population) are still
highly marginalised. Of the remaining 10 localities, 7 (11 per cent of the population) show
medium marginalisation and only 3 (14 per cent) of the population are classi-

The use of land is primarily agricultural (44.9 per cent of the territory), including annual
irrigation and temporary farming. Regarding the vegetation, 42.94 per cent is cedar, oyamel
and pine-oak forest, including their secondary shrubs, 10.53 per cent is induced pasture and
1.59 per cent is occupied by the urban area. Agriculture is the main activity in 60 per cent of
the localities, consistent with information from the Agricultural, Livestock and Forestry
Census (2007), as it presents 3,098 production units mostly dedicated to agriculture and
occupy an area of 5,205 hectares (56 per cent of the total municipal territory). In those units,
2,533 workers are relatives and 2,421 are hired by producers.

Only land transport infrastructure is available in the municipality, serving 26 of its 62
localities and connecting Tlalpujahua to four municipalities: two from the State of Mexico
(El Oro and San José del Rincón) and two from the state of Michoacán (Senguio and
Contepec). This road network consists of the Atlacomulco-Morelia federal highway, the San
Pedro Tarimbaro road section (Atlacomulco-Maravatio) and the Angangueo road section
(Villa Victoria-El Oro de Hidalgo), while stretches of unpaved roads link most of the other
localities.

Tlalpujahua was included in the MTP in 2005, through the appointment of its capital
Rayón. Until 2015, all the projects from the program have targeted the improvement of
urban appearance and buildings. However, a study published by the former Centre for
Higher Studies in Tourism in 2013 revealed that Tlalpujahua de Rayón showed one of the
worst tourism performances among Magic Towns, as well as being in a period of stagnation.
The concept of tourism performance refers to the degree of “success that a tourist place has,
when citizens and businesses are satisfied with their community, and when the locality in question lives up to the expectations of visitors and investors” (Hall and Boyd, 2005). Pátzcuaro is the Magic Town with the highest tourist performance index, while Cuetzalan has the lowest (Figure 3). Along this spectrum, Tlalpujahua ranks sixth among the towns with the lowest tourism performance index.

In a SWOT (Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats) analysis of Tlalpujahua de Rayón, weaknesses were represented by the insufficient supply of accommodation during cultural events, lack of articulation among natural attractions, among others (ITESM, 2014). As strengths and opportunities, the analysis identified the privileged landscape of the municipality, the potential to create infrastructure and public equipment (ITESM, 2014), proximity to natural attractions such as the Monarch Butterfly, the opportunity to develop tourism products and take advantage of the great potential of its attractions, among others (CESTUR, 2013). The studies recommended a diversification of tourism products, since Tlalpujahua and most other Magic Towns are characterised by a wide extension of vegetation and farmland. Tlalpujahua borders the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve and thus adhered to the Territorial Ecological Management Program of the Monarch Butterfly Region (POETMM) (INE, 2007). For this reason, monitoring the population growth of Tlalpujahua and a reduction in economic activities with high environmental impact such as mining were also recommended. Tlalpujahua is included in the Priority Regions Program for Conservation of Biodiversity because of its relevance to three relevant domains of conservation: terrestrial, hydrological and bird conservation.

Identification of the marginalised locality for ecotourism. La Trampa, selected because of fulfilling most of the necessary conditions for ecotourism, is located in Santa María (Figure 4), an ejido (or communal land) spreading over 950 hectares (570 of high natural forest and 380 divided into farmland, pastures and intractable lands). In total, 55 per cent of the ejido shows minimal alterations and a mountainous relief with elevation between 2,600 and 3,000 m above sea level. Its transport infrastructure consists of a road that crosses the town, and the Villa Victoria-El Oro de Hidalgo-Angangueo road section that connects it to the municipalities of San José del Rincón, Angangueo and to the Atlacomulco-Morelia federal highway. Its 461 residents (none of which speak indigenous language) mostly work...
in agriculture and sustainable timber harvesting and face the problems of unemployment and migration.

4.1 Participatory dialogues in La Trampa and Tlalpujahua

The obtained participatory dialogues revealed that the main economic activity in La Trampa is subsistence agriculture and livestock production, followed by extraction of timber forest certified by the government. Of lower importance are cutting and selling firewood, masonry, employed rural work, work in the capital, Morelia, Toluca, Mexico City or migration to the United States. The main local problems are unemployment, lack of employment for women, badly paid and inconvenient work in the capital, low productivity of farmland, low profitability in livestock activities because of rising animal theft and lack of timber commercialisation channels.

The environmental problems in this locality were revealed to be low-level, clandestine logging, water erosion, soil acidity caused by fertilisers and pesticides and climate change (exemplified by hail, frost, droughts and extreme cold weather) altering agricultural cycles.

The organisational capacity of the local community has been able to support sustainable projects. Initiatives including the deer and wild UMA, “best practices” of forest
management, dams, national certification of sustainable forest management have derived social, economic and environmental benefits to the community.

The dialogue also identified available resources potentially contributing to ecotourism, such as large variety of mammals and birds, medicinal plants, variety of fungi, forests with high conservation value and natural landscapes.

*FAS model applied to La Trampa.* The locality of La Trampa exhibits the structural elements to meet the requirements of ecotourism and the strategies set out by the Tlalpujahua Magic Town.

4.1.1 *Analysis of attractors.* The first of the two phases of analysis of attractors is the systematisation of attributes and evaluation of each georeferenced attraction. The georeferencing system resulted in a map (Figure 5) with 11 different tourist resources (deer UMA, cultivation plot, Pumpkin Stick, Springs, Los Angelitos, La Peña, the Garden, Cañada honda, El Cargadero, the Sawmill and the Hall), in addition to the edges of the ejido, existing communication routes and approximate undertaken route made.

According to Fayos-Solà *et al.* (2014), IS indicators of attractor status refer to the ability to attract and satisfy tourism demands based on existing facilities. On the other hand, II indicators of importance refer to the potential of the tourist attraction to play a strategic role within the destination, or alternatively its desired role in the future (Fayos-Solà *et al.*, 2014), based on the interest shown by tourists visiting Tlalpujahua.

As a result of the survey, we obtained a battery of indicators with classification of attractions (natural, cultural or artificial) based on Gallego and Pedro (2004, p. 28) and Fayos-Solà *et al.* (2014), and their respective ratings on a scale of 1 to 5. The proposed classification scheme consists of natural attractions (NA) relying on natural resources, cultural attractions (CA) such as historic cities or museums and artificial attractions (AA) created specifically to attract tourists such as theme parks, shopping centres or facilities to host congresses and conventions.

According to Fayos-Solà *et al.* (2014), the quadrant A11 is located in the upper left and comprises top priority attractions regarding tourism policies and strategies because of their location and relevance. However, their current evaluation is insufficient as they are unable to satisfy tourist demands and therefore rapid action is recommended. Likewise, attractions in the A12 quadrant are also relevant and prioritised because of their high attractiveness; however, in their current state, they are already able to meet demands, and accordingly actions should focus on maintenance, prevention, planning and management. Attractions in A21 and A22 quadrants are less important because of insufficient attractiveness. In such cases, the available budget and technical resources determine whether those attractions are included in tourism policies.

The attractiveness matrix (Figure 6) presents conservation activities related to the natural resources in the locality. The attractions have high status indicators, placing the threshold line (which triggers actions to improve IE in those attractions) at the median value of 4. It is recommended to improve the condition of only two attractions: “farming plots” and “cultural events”. It is worth mentioning that a score of 4 was given by almost tourists regarding their interest in activities related to nature. This homogenised the line of importance around that value since attractiveness (relevance) is based on interest in the same segment. As a result, attractions related to landscape, forest, diversity of flora, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds, historical background, sites with historical and cultural value, forest-based economic activity, sawmill and environmental education hall talks are all located in A12. This quadrant exhibits a high level of attractiveness and importance, and therefore its attractions are a priority during the initial planning and structuring of tourism products. Table 1 is a full list of local attractions.
4.1.2 Analysis of support systems. This analysis is based on indicators of state. The potential for infrastructure development is derived from assessments of its current status and recommendations for improvement. Figure 7 and Table 2 show the matrix of support systems and corresponding IS and II values.

Figure 5.
Tourist attractions in La Trampa

Source: Own creation based on field work
Because of the lack of tourist products, the locality also lacks indispensable support systems to satisfy the demands of the tourism segment based on nature. Therefore, it is highly advisable to improve the state of the support systems in quadrant S11, namely the infrastructure of lodging in general, cottages, camping areas and restaurants. It should also be a priority to improve the distribution of tourist information, which is virtually absent at

**Table I. Attractions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attractions</th>
<th>IS</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>Quadrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Woodland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Landscape</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Diversity of Flora</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Diversity of mammals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Diversity of amphibians and reptiles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Diversity of birds</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Springs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Rivers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Historical remains</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sites of historical value</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Sites of cultural value</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Economic activity in forests</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Farming plots</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Organisation of cultural events</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Sawmill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Environmental education hall</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** NA, natural attractions; CA, cultural attractions; AA, artificial attractions; IS, indicators of state; and II, indicators of importance

**Source:** Own creation based on fieldwork

**Figure 6. Attractions matrix**
On the other hand, there is a single support system in quadrant S12 (signalling and signage), and hence its maintenance and inclusion in planning effort is a priority.

4.1.3 Analysis of productive factors. The same methods of information collection were applied to the analysis of the current status of natural; physical (NF); financial (FF); and human, social and institutional (HF) production factors. Figure 8 and Table 3 illustrate the matrix of productive factors and corresponding IS and II values.

The matrix shows great similarity with the attractiveness matrix because of the good evaluation of each factor and the importance of natural factors. Ecotourism is highly dependent on land or water areas (Buckley, 2010), which highlights the importance of the indicators of importance at Level 5 on the scale. In addition, activities of conservation and

---

**Figure 7.**
Matrix of support systems

**Source:** Own creation based on fieldwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support systems</th>
<th>IS</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>Quadrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cottages</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>S11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Camping areas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>S11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Catering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>S11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Private transport (taxi)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>S22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Local transport: public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Local transport: tourists</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>S21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Provision of information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>S11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Security</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>S22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Health</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>S22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Signalling and Signage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>S12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table II.**
Support systems

Notes: HS, hospitality system; TS, transport system; SS, supplementary systems; IS, indicators of state; and II, indicators of importance

Source: Own creation based on fieldwork
sustainable management of natural resources and the support to tourism by the Magic Towns program raise the state of natural and capital factors, determining that indicators up to Level 4 should be prioritised. As a result, the F12 quadrant includes 11 productive factors, all with high indicators of state (IS) and importance (II). Based on the observed pattern, it is a priority to focus on factors with a very low IS and II, namely human capital located in quadrant F11. From our theoretical perspective, this means the need to train individuals so that they are able to provide ecotourism services.

**Table III.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Productive factors</th>
<th>IS</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>Quadrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NF</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Springs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rivers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Mountains</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Woodland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Climate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Flora</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Fauna</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Protection areas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HF</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Human capital</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Churches</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Current initiatives: Forest-based economic activity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Religious rites and popular beliefs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CF</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Public expenditure in tourism development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Public expenditure in tourism marketing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Roads</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Capital attraction potential</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** NF, natural factors; HF, human factors; CF, capital factors; IS, indicators of state; and II, indicators of importance

**Source:** Own creation based on fieldwork

Figure 8. Matrix of productive factors
5. Conclusions
The aim of this study was to establish the potential for ecotourism of a highly marginalised locality in the Municipality of Tlalpujahua, a Magic Town in the State of Michoacán, Mexico. The community of La Trampa was identified because of its tourist attractions, local organisation and empowerment, and interested local actors. The results show that studying the characteristics of highly or very highly marginalised localities may contribute to the expansion of benefits brought about by the Magic Towns Program. A diverse methodology applied key elements to identify localities suitable for ecotourism, characteristics of marginalisation and endowment of natural heritage. We conclude that the benefits to localities included in the MTP can be expanded to surrounding spaces through strategies such as ecotourism.

In the Magic Town of Tlalpujahua, ecotourism in the town of La Trampa is a viable and necessary option because of its natural resources available and inclusion in priority sites for biodiversity conservation. It was shown that the town has the essential elements to develop an ecotourism project that promotes social welfare and conservation. The diagnosis identified the specific needs of the population, socioeconomic and environmental characteristics favouring the ecotourism activity, the interest in the resources that can be converted into tourist attractions, and the projects that attempted to overcome some of problems facing the locality.

The information obtained clarified specific questions as to how ecotourism projects can serve local communities. The potential for ecotourism identified through the FAS models highlights the ability of La Trampa to incorporate and initiate tourist activities and products. However, its support systems still show weaknesses that may be solved through the resources at the disposal of the Magic Town of Tlalpujahua.

We have demonstrated the pertinence of proposing an ecotourism project in the locality because of its economic relevance. Furthermore, it is essential to know the will and views of the local population, as the existence of local initiatives play a very important role in triggering endogenous development processes (Vázquez-Barquero, 2002). As a result, we observed that La Trampa exhibits a significant level of organisation and is able to carry out sustainable projects, having already received support in their execution and taken advantage of some of their social, economic and environmental benefits.

The FAS method identified factors to be promoted and the advantages of the peripheral location of La Trampa. To carry out activities related to ecotourism, such advantages must be used in strategies and actions. In general, the locality must improve the conditions of attractions related to farmland and cultural events, as well as create tourism products generating new experiences during visits to trails and plots. Regarding its support systems, the locality of La Trampa must upgrade its lodging and catering infrastructure, mechanisms of distribution of tourist information, signalling and signage at the destination and training in tourism provision.

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Further reading


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Spatial distribution of touristic flows in a gravity model in South America

Natalia Porto and Noelia Garbero
Department of Economics, National University of La Plata, La Plata, Argentina, and

Natalia Espinola
National University of La Plata, La Plata, Argentina

Abstract
Purpose – This paper aims to investigate the determinants of international bilateral tourism demand in countries of Southern Common Market (specifically, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay) and Chile.

Design/methodology/approach – In this study, an augmented gravity model is used to investigate the determinants of international bilateral tourism demand in countries of Southern Common Market. The novel aspect of the analysis is that three models of tourism are defined, depending on the spatial distribution of tourist arrivals and departures. An intra-regional model, an extra-regional model and a general model are estimated using a dynamic panel data model.

Findings – The results indicate that traditional gravity variables are significant in explaining bilateral inbound arrivals, but the characteristics and the behavior of the demand of tourism vary on whether the country belongs to the sub-regional bloc.

Research limitations/implications – The differences found in this paper might have some impacts on the desired design and direction of the touristic policies of each country.

Originality/value – This study analyzes the determinants of international tourism demand through different bilateral relationships, differentiating between intra- and extra-block tourisms.

Keywords International tourism, Augmented gravity approach, Dynamic panel GMM, Regional bloc

Paper type Research paper

Introduction
Tourism is one of the components of services in international trade that is becoming increasingly important in the global economy. It is a common knowledge that tourism is a source of economic growth and an instrument to create employment and reduce poverty (Ghali, 1976; Williams and Shaw, 1991; Samimi et al., 2011; Schubert et al., 2011; Ardahaey, ...
Since the 1980s, several studies have focused on modeling and explaining international tourism demand (Lim, 1999; Song and Li, 2008) and on the characterization of international tourism demand from a group of countries to another one (Sinclair and Stabler, 1995). Many methods have been applied (Peng et al., 2014a, 2014b). However, the use of gravity models to analyze tourism flows begins in the decade of 2000.

The gravity model was introduced into international trade by Tinbergen (1962). The model is based on Newton’s universal law of gravitation, which states that bilateral flows between two countries are directly proportional to the countries’ economic masses and inversely proportional to the distance between them. Gravity models have been extensively...
used to explain international trade of goods (Tinbergen, 1962; McCallum, 1995; Rose, 2000; Anderson and Van Wincoop, 2003; Neumayer, 2010), migration (Mak and Moncur, 2003; Gil-Pareja et al., 2007) and foreign direct investment (Bergstrand and Egger, 2007; Head and Ries, 2008). Since its introduction in economics, the gravity model is considered one of the most reliable empirical tools to understand bilateral trade flows and other economic flows in the world economy (Morley et al., 2014).

Over time, the basic model of gravity has been augmented to incorporate non-economic variables that could have an impact on bilateral trade – such as population (Linnemann, 1966), supply factors, cultural effects, common land borders and languages, among others (Vietze, 2012; Yang and Wong, 2012; Lorde et al., 2015).

In this way, the gravitational equation considers three kinds of determinants of bilateral trade flows: supply factors at the origin point, demand factors at the destination point and a number of factors that obstruct or contribute to a specific bilateral flow.

In specialized literature on international tourism demand, the use of gravity models is relatively recent, mainly due to the lack of the disaggregated data needed to afford them. A brief review and some examples of the literature are analyzed below.

Eilat and Einav (2004) analyzed the determinants of bilateral international tourism movement across time for all countries worldwide between 1985 and 1998. They found that very different factors such as price elasticities, exchange rates, destination risk, common borders and common languages matter for tourism. Gil-Pareja et al. (2007) defined a gravity equation to analyze the role of embassies and consulates on international tourist bilateral flows for 156 destinations countries from the G7 countries[3]. They found a positive and significant effect, which is larger for developing countries. Durbarry (2008) examined the impact of tourism taxes on demand for the UK using a gravity model, finding that increases in both real and relative prices have a negative impact on arrivals while a common language increases arrivals. Vietze (2012) studied the impact of cultural and religious factors of international tourist arrivals in the USA. The results provide evidence that cultural proximity has positive effects on tourism flows. Yang and Wong (2012) found similar results on bilateral international tourism to China.

More recently, Kosnan et al. (2013) examined traditional demand and supply factors in the Malaysian international tourism industry, showing that the number of hotel rooms, the quality in road infrastructure and the air transport infrastructure appear to be as the most important factors considered by tourists. Lorde et al. (2015) modeled international tourism demand for the Caribbean using traditional gravity variables and they also tested the Linder’s hypothesis – tourist flows are partly determined by the similarity in preferences between the destination and origin markets. The results indicate that similarity in preferences between the region and its source markets, the climate, habit persistence, as well as the traditional gravity variables, are important demand factors influencing the decision of tourists.

Most research on these topics has focused on explaining tourism demand and bilateral flows in developed countries, with little attention to developing countries and even less for South American countries. Peng et al. (2014a) reviewed more than 195 studies on international tourism demand, and only three of these studies analyzed international tourism demand in Latin America (Bond and Ladman, 1972; Jud and Joseph, 1974; Vanegas, 2009), but none of them analyzed in detail or exclusively the South American countries.

Vargas da Cruz et al. (2007) identified the determinants of international tourist flows in different regions (Africa, South Asia and South America) for 1981-1999 and they presented an analysis of the main restrictions of its growth. Results show that the income is an important determinant of tourism demand but insecurity; the level of development of the country (proxy by the human development index) and the geographical proximity to rich countries also play a crucial role. Nevertheless, this study does not analyze the bilateral

Touristic flows
relationship between countries and even less differences between sub-regional blocs, as it is proposed in this paper.

**International tourism in South America**

Since the past decades, international tourism has played a crucial role in economic growth around the world and in South American countries in particular. While global tourism industry generated US$7.6 tn (10 per cent of global GDP and 6 per cent of total exports) and 277 million jobs (1 in 11 jobs) in 2014, America was the third most visited region and concentrate 16 per cent of total international arrivals and 22 per cent of total international receipts of the world. During the same year, South America was the second most popular regional destination there, representing 15.7 per cent of inbound arrivals in the region (9.5 per cent of international receipts), after North America with 66 per cent of regional inbound arrivals (76.9 per cent of international receipts). The interesting fact is that in the past decade, international tourism in South America has grown, on average, steadily (except in 2009 due to the global financial crisis), with an annual average growth of 7.2 per cent in arrivals and 11.2 per cent in receipts, and above world average (which was 4.1 and 7.1 per cent, respectively) (World Tourism Organization, 2015; World Bank, 2015).

In South America, Argentina and Brazil are the major destinations and represent more than 40 per cent of the international arrivals and receipts in the region. Chile is the third most visited destination and Uruguay is the fifth (until 2007 was the fourth destination but then it was overtaken by Peru)[4]. A group of selected economic and tourism indicators for South America is presented in Table I.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of international tourism arrivals in the sub-regional bloc (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay) in 1990-2014. Arrivals fell in the region between 2000 and 2002 (nearly 3 million tourists) because of several negative events (including economic and social crises in Argentina that strongly affected arrivals and departures in the region) and during 2009 because of the global financial crisis. However, in recent years, a growing trend can be seen in most countries, except for Uruguay. At the same time, relative changes of the market share of the countries were observed in the period. In the early 1990s, Argentina was the main destination with a mean share of 30 per cent, followed by Brazil but since 1996, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>International arrivals (in million)</th>
<th>Average arrivals growth (2003-2013)</th>
<th>Tourism receipts (US$m)</th>
<th>Tourism receipts/arrivals (US$)</th>
<th>Per capita GDP (US$)</th>
<th>Tourism receipts/GDP</th>
<th>Tourism receipts/exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>7,021</td>
<td>1,208</td>
<td>16,008</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5,032</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>22,067</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3,182</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>22,509</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2,011</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>20,084</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>3,925</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>11,177</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>4,759</td>
<td>2,080</td>
<td>12,830</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1,251</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>10,884</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>18,487</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>5,917</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>8,127</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>29,041</td>
<td>1,068</td>
<td>14,849</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table I.**

Tourism and economic indicators for South America countries, 2014

**Sources:** World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Statistics official websites, UN data
situation had reverted. Chile and Uruguay showed a similar situation over time, whereas in the past years, Chile had become the third most visited destination in the regional bloc.

Table II shows the origin of tourists to the sub-regional bloc in 2014. Uruguay is highly dependent on tourism from the sub-regional bloc, mainly from Argentina (which represents more than 62 per cent of arrivals to the country), whereas in Brazil, 64.2 per cent of tourists come from countries outside the bloc. In the cases of Chile and Argentina, international arrivals share is divided nearly equally between intra and extra-bloc arrivals, although a large part of international arrivals in Chile comes from Argentina (38 per cent).

**Methods and data**

*The model*

A gravity equation model where international arrivals are used to proxy international tourism demand is developed. The study analyzes the international tourism demand of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin country</th>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>Chile</th>
<th>Uruguay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intra-bloc</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra-bloc</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Latin America</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Statistics official websites

**Figure 1.**

International arrivals in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay (in millions of tourists), 1990-2014

*Source:* Statistics official websites

**Table II.**

International arrivals share by origin countries, 2014

*Source:* Statistics official websites
Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay (the sub-regional bloc). To understand the determinants of tourist arrivals in the sub-regional bloc and distinguish the effects among tourists from different countries, a general model (all data), an intra-bloc model (only tourists flows between Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Uruguay) and an extra-bloc model (only tourists flows between countries of the sub-sub-regional bloc and the rest of the selected regions of the world) are carried out.

The general specification for the empirical estimation is as follows:

\[
\ln(y_{ijt}) = \alpha_{ijt} + \gamma_i + \delta_j + \theta \ln(y_{ijt-1}) + \beta \ln(X_{i(j)t}) + \mu_{ijt}
\]

where \(y_{ijt}\) represents the inbound arrivals from country \(j\) (origin) to country \(i\) (destination) in period \(t\); \(\alpha_{ijt}\) is the regression constant; \(\gamma_i\) and \(\delta_j\) are special characteristics of country \(i\) and \(j\), respectively, which are presumed to be constant over time; \(y_{ijt-1}\) is the number of lagged inbound arrivals; \(X_{i(j)t}\) is a vector of control variables (per capita GDP of country \(i\) (?), population of country \(i\) (?), real bilateral exchange rate between \(i\) and \(j\), price of alternative destinations, remoteness indexes of country \(i\) and \(j\), respectively, and the geographical distance between country \(i\) and \(j\); and \(\mu_{ijt}\) is an error term that satisfies the properties that ensure the consistency of the estimators. The logarithmic specification is convenient because it allows the estimated parameters to be interpreted as elasticities and, moreover, it attenuates the differences in scale of the variables.

This specification suffers different sources of bias: omitted variable, third-party effects and multilateral resistance. The standard econometric approach for dealing with these problems is to introduce dummies for origin and for destination countries, both fixed and time variants (Anderson and van Wincoop, 2003; Baier and Bergstrand, 2007; Egger, 2004; Baldwin and Taglioni, 2011; Culiuc, 2014)

**Methodological strategy**

Several techniques have been used to estimate tourism gravity models, and the correct specification depends crucially on the nature of the problem. The usual procedures for estimating panel data models are inconsistent in a dynamic setting like the one followed here. Essentially, when the lagged dependent variable is included as an independent variable, it generates an endogeneity problem: the equation’s disturbance term and the lagged dependent variable are correlated (Sevestre and Trognon, 1985). Arellano and Bond (1991) derived a difference general method of moments (difference GMM) estimator to estimates a first-order dynamic panel data model. This method takes first differences to remove the fixed effects by countries and, at the same time, uses the endogenous lagged variables as instruments.

Some authors have shown that difference GMM estimators are biased in short samples, in the presence of autocorrelation in the error terms and with many moment conditions (Kiviet, 1995; Blundell and Bond, 1998; Hsiao et al., 1999). Biased estimators are also present when the coefficient of the autoregressive variable is very close to 1 (when the series are highly persistent or when they are near to a unit root process), so that the parameter cannot be identified using the moment conditions for equations of first differences. In these cases, Blundell and Bond (1998) showed that the estimator will be strongly biased, and particularly so when the period of time is short. If the explanatory variables are persistent over time, their lags in levels have a weak correlation with the first differences and therefore they fail as instruments and may lead to biased results. Arellano and Bover (1995) and Blundell and Bond (1998) proposed an alternative estimator, system general method of moments (system GMM), which avoids these issues. It combines, in a system, the regression in differences with the regression in levels. The
instruments for the regression in differences are the lagged values of the dependent and other explanatory variables and the instruments for the regression in levels are the lagged differences of the explanatory variables. This method has the advantage that allows the estimation of the variables that are fixed across the time – as the distance between countries – which are essential in the gravity theory. Mainly, for this last reason, this paper uses system GMM to estimate the model. Tests for autocorrelation and Sargan test of over-identifying restrictions are used to determine that the specification is adequate.

For the general model, the data are a panel that runs from 1990 to 2014 on an annual basis, whereas for the intra-regional and extra-regional models, the data are a panel with selected years (1991, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014). The latter is because the observations are reduced when the sample is divided between the two groups, so in these cases T is too big relative to N and when there are few individuals in a sample is most likely the existence of over-identification in the model selected. The rule is to have the number of instruments equal to or less than the number of groups of individuals. An empirical strategy to avoid this problem is to reduce T (Labra and Torrecillas, 2014)[7], as we have done here. In the general model, 28 bilateral relationships per year are analyzed and in the intra- and the extra-bloc models, 12 and 16 bilateral relationships per year are analyzed, respectively.

**Control variables**

Traditional gravity variables as income, population and distance are analyzed. In the broad sense, a destination’s income and population can be viewed as indicators of potential supply, and the origin’s income and population as indicators of potential demand (Linnemann, 1966). The income is approximated by per capita GDP and is expected to be positively associated with tourism demand: as a destination country becomes richer, it offers more services and infrastructure to attract tourist; as income of origin country increases – if international tourism is a normal consumption service – its demand will increase. The size of the economies is approximated through its populations. Most populous countries have higher potential supply of tourism services (destinations countries) and generate higher potential amount of tourism (origin countries). Therefore, the sign on both origin and destination population parameters is likely to be positive.

Because of the complexities of the price structure of transportation and the lack of consistent data, transportation costs in gravity studies are typically approximated by the distance between capital cities (Lorde et al., 2015, p. 4). This variable captures the cross-sectional variation in transport costs but it does not change over time. A more accurate variable, which considers not only the distance between countries but also their bilateral and multilateral relationships in terms of their size, is the remoteness indicator. The main idea of this variable is that the flow of bilateral tourism is only a simplification of a multilateral system and may be sensitive to changes anywhere in the system, such as those in the rest of the countries that are considered alternative destinations. For this reason, the gravity equation has been corrected to include remoteness, both of origin and destination countries. The remoteness indicator was used by Anderson (1979) and Deardorff (1998), and is calculated as:

$$rem_{it} = \sum_h \frac{dist_{ih}}{GDP_{hi}}$$

(2)

where $dist_{ih}$ is the distance between source market $i$ to other tourist centers $h$ weighted by their size (approximated by the GDP). This index establishes that the remoteness of any economy $i$ (related to economy $j$) is given by the sum of the distances between that economy $i$ and all its potential tourism partners $h$ (excluded $j$), each divided by the GDP of the
respective partner. The potential partner $h$ is less attractive for the country $i$ (in relation to country $j$) when the distance between $i$ and $h$ is greater, and the GDP of $h$ is lower. A positive relationship is expected between an increase in the remoteness indicator (between $i$ and $j$) and tourist flows in a particular region. That is, when country $i$ is more remote related to $h$ origin partners (except country $j$), more tourists arrive to $i$ from origin country $j$. An additional advantage of the remoteness indicator is that it serves to control by multilateral resistance factors (Culiuc, 2014).

In relation to price variables, destination prices and prices of alternative destinations are used. The first are proxied by the bilateral real exchange rate and reflect the cost of touristic activities in each selected destination country relative to those in the origin country. Tourists tend to be more aware of exchange rate changes before they travel than they are of inflationary effects in the destination country (Peng et al., 2014b)[8]. The proxy of destination prices is positively related to demand. A depreciation of the bilateral real exchange rate improves the competitiveness of destination country, reducing costs of tourism goods and services, increasing the number of arrivals.

The effect of the prices of alternative destinations is estimated using the following specification:

$$pc_{it} = \sum_{h} \frac{rber_{ih}t}{nh}$$

where $rber_{ih}$ is the real bilateral exchange rates of destination country $i$ and alternative destinations $h$, and $nh$ is the amount of alternative destinations. The price of potential destinations should have a positive effect on the flow of tourism between any pair of countries.

Arrivals lagged by one year are included as another determinant in the gravity equation to capture the quality of the experience of the tourist in a particular destination. It is used as an indicator of the strength or durability of habit persistence in travel preferences (Naudé and Saayman, 2005; Peng et al., 2014b; Lorde et al., 2015). This variable is expected to have a positive effect on tourism demand.

The data were obtained from several sources of information. Arrivals are obtained from the National Institute of Statistics and Census of Argentina (INDEC), the Brazilian Institute of Tourism (EMBRATUR), the National Tourism Service of Chile (SERNATUR) and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Uruguay. The GDP purchasing power parity and populations are obtained from the International Monetary Fund; bilateral real exchange rates are constructed on the basis of the bilateral real exchange of each country with respect to the USA from the USA Agriculture Department (USDA); and distances between commercial centers of the countries come from Geo Bytes[9].

Results

Table III presents gravity equation results using system GMM for the three models: general, intra-bloc and extra-bloc.

General model

In the general model, results show that the habit persistence has a positive and statistically significant coefficient, implying that there is a relatively high level of repeat visitation to the region. This result is in line with some findings of recent literature (Peng et al., 2014a; Lorde et al., 2015). The high degree of habit persistence should be taken into account by the
destinations if they want to increase their share in tourism worldwide, exploring in detail the determinants of the preferences of this regular tourists.

In line with the expected signs of economic theory, income and population elasticities for origin countries are significantly positive, showing that an increase of 10 per cent in per capita GDP (population) of the origin country increases the number of international arrivals in 4.1 per cent (3.7 per cent). These results suggest that the tourism demand in the region depends fairly on economic conditions existing in the origin countries. The attraction capacity of destinations countries is not a relevant indicator for regional tourism demand: income and population elasticities for destinations countries are not statistically significant.

In relation to resistance factors, the competitiveness of destinations and price of the competing countries, both have a positive and significant effect in explaining the behavior of arrivals in the region: there is more arrival when the destination country is more competitive and the other alternative destination is more expensive. An increase of 10 per cent in the bilateral real exchange rate increases arrivals in 1.8 per cent, whereas the price of the competing countries causes an increase of 1.1 per cent in the total arrivals.

The effect of distance is statistically significant and negative. Countries farthest, with higher transportation cost, generate a less demand of tourism in the region. The remoteness indicator for origin country is positive, according to the theory, but not significant. Nevertheless, the remoteness indicator for destination country is negative, not as expected. This means that greater distance between the destination countries in comparison to the rest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>General model</th>
<th>Intra-bloc model</th>
<th>Extra-bloc model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log of tourist arrivals in t-1</td>
<td>0.6736***</td>
<td>0.4769***</td>
<td>0.4983***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of the per capita GDP of country i</td>
<td>2.7299 (9.5165)</td>
<td>15.9446 (11.7459)</td>
<td>-2.0156*** (0.5273)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of the per capita GDP of country j</td>
<td>0.4110***</td>
<td>0.1927 (0.2502)</td>
<td>0.4389***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of the population of country i</td>
<td>-0.1092 (2.4892)</td>
<td>2.0383 (3.0387)</td>
<td>-0.3294 (0.4181)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of the population of country j</td>
<td>0.3779**</td>
<td>3.4686***</td>
<td>-0.3467 (0.3003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of bilateral real exchange rate</td>
<td>0.1846***</td>
<td>-2.8232*</td>
<td>-1.3054*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of the price of the competing countries (h)</td>
<td>0.1129**</td>
<td>3.0099** (1.3859)</td>
<td>-1.5356** (0.7126)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of the remoteness of i</td>
<td>-0.9949***</td>
<td>-1.1259***</td>
<td>4.2359*** (2.0552)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of the remoteness of j</td>
<td>0.1888 (0.2051)</td>
<td>0.7368*</td>
<td>7.4077*** (2.6160)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of distance between i and j</td>
<td>-0.3957**</td>
<td>-15.5239***</td>
<td>6.3354*** (2.1307)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Fixed effects by country and bilateral relation | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Effects by year                           | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Variables effects by country              | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations                              | 575 | 125 | 161 |
| Number of id                              | 28  | 12  | 16  |
| Sargan test                               | 18.64 | 21.60 | 12.80 |
| p-value                                   | 0.722 | 0.305 | 0.307 |
| AR(1) p-value                             | -13.82 | -4.177 | -6.812 |
| AR(2) p-value                             | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| AR(2) p-value                             | 2.038 | 0.434 | -0.708 |
| AR(2) p-value                             | 0.041 | 0.664 | 0.479 |

Table III. Estimates of gravity models, system GMM

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1; Hansen test is an over identification test for instruments and AR are tests of autocorrelation
of the tourist destinations or a lower per capita GDP of the other destinations generates a reducing bilateral flow of tourists: a 10 per cent increase in the remoteness of the destination country $i$ related to alternative countries $h$ (excluded $j$, for which the index is calculated) generates a reduction of 9.9 per cent tourist arrivals from country $j$ to country $i$, showing that tourists may place a premium on destinations that are “off the beaten path” (relatively far from larger economies). This also may be due to the fact that the countries that are closest to other tourist centers are chosen by the tourist who prefers to make tourism using the economies of scale to travel to tourist poles. These results in both remoteness indicators are consistent with those found by Culiuc (2014).

**Intra-bloc model**

In the intra-bloc model, an effect of habit persistence is observed: those people who prefer these destinations continue to choose them along time. Tourism is highly persistent over time.

The size of the destination country has no significant effect on explaining tourism demand: not always the most populous countries are the most visited. However, the size of the origin country is significantly positive, probably because the most populous countries (Argentina and Brazil) are the principal issuers of tourists in the region. The GDP of destination and origin countries are not statistically significant.

The bilateral real exchange rate – proxy of the inverse of destination price – does not present the expected sign. This could be explained by the hypothesis of cheaper destinations: countries of the region prefer to visit other destinations similarly accessible out of region. Another explanation may be that a devaluation of bilateral real exchange rate is associated to some negative social historical events that deteriorate the image of destination country, counteracting the positive effect via competitiveness. However, it is only significant at 10 per cent. Competitors’ prices are positive and significant in this bloc: an increase in 10 per cent in the price of alternative destination increases arrivals in 30 per cent.

The distance is significantly negative, suggesting that there is a preference to visit neighbor countries, which is confirmed with the remoteness indicator of origin country. The effect of the remoteness indicator of destination country is positive and significant as in the general model.

**Extra-bloc model**

In the extra-bloc model, most of the explanatory variables are statistically significant, except elasticities population, both for origin and destination countries. In relation with income elasticities, an increase of 10 per cent in per capita GDP of origin countries increases arrivals in the region in 4.3 per cent, whereas income elasticity of destination countries shows a negative sign. This means that extra-bloc tourists prefer to visit countries with lower per capita GDP, as they can see them as some type of exotic places[10].

For the rest of the variables, some interesting and a bit surprising results arise:

- as we already said, income elasticity of destination has a negative sign;
- the proxy of the inverse of the destination price has a negative and statistically significant coefficient at 10 per cent (an increase in the bilateral real exchange rate decreases the number of arrivals to the destination country);
- competitors’ price coefficient is negative;
- the remoteness of destination countries has a negative effect on arrivals[11]; and
- the distance is significant in explaining tourism demand and has a positive effect.

Summarizing these extra-bloc results, we can conclude that, for that market, expensive destinations, cheaper alternative destinations, remoteness of origin countries and more far
away economies, are the factors that increase tourist arrivals. Opposite to the theoretical expected results, the extra-bloc model behavior shows that it responds to different determinants than those related to the general or the intra-bloc models. Literature based on motivation of tourists may help to give these results some support. In particular, Pappas (2014) found that tourists use their travel as a pathway to reconfirm to friends, relatives and colleagues their social positioning, and they usually perceive it as an interconnection between their social class and the distance or type of voyage they do.

A summary of results is presented in Table IV. The last column shows the results for Caribbean countries obtained by Lorde et al. (2015), using a similar estimation model. Many differences are observed taking into account the spatial distribution of tourist arrivals and departures, both in size and signs, demonstrating that the behavior of tourism demand depends, in part, on the relationship of the countries or bloc of countries being analyzed.

### Conclusions

Tourism is a sector with particular characteristics. It is a set of goods and services that are summarized in a non-traditional export. Trade in tourism involves the consumption of goods and services in a territory, which needs the physical displacement of the people who make tourism. In the analysis of the determinants of tourism, the traditional variables that affect trade in goods and services come into play, but in addition, there are many other factors that influence the decision of the tourist: the endowment of touristic attractions of a country, the climate, social and political security conditions and availability of free time for holidays, among others.

Despite the complexity that encompasses the analysis of the tourism phenomenon and the multiplicity of factors that can influence the decision of an individual to make a trip and choose a location to visit, this paper is a first step in the exploration of the flows of inbound tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>International tourism demand</th>
<th>Total Caribbean (Lorde et al., 2015)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Intra-bloc flows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habit persistence</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita GDP of destination countries</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita GDP of origin countries</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of destination countries</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of origin countries</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral real exchange rate</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>−2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price of the competing countries</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remoteness indicator of destination countries</td>
<td>−0.99</td>
<td>−1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remoteness indicator of origin countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>−0.39</td>
<td>−15.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Lorde et al. (2015)
tourism in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, taking into account the country of origin of the tourists.

Beyond the estimations and the results obtained, this paper contributes to the systematization of information flows of international tourism and its characterization in the countries of this regional bloc, considering the spatial distribution of tourist arrivals and departures.

The results show that there are other key variables besides the traditional gravity ones – habit persistence, distance and remoteness – which have a role in explaining tourism in the region. The habit persistence is a relevant determinant of tourism demand revealing the importance of designing strategies to maintain the level of arrivals at their long-run trend. However, there are some differences in the relative importance of these variables according to whether the model considers the total flows of tourism, those restricted to the sub-regional bloc or those restricted to the rest of the world (extra-bloc). The spatial distribution of tourism flows is a key variable that can give insights about strategies for tourism policies. In particular, motivations for visiting exotic destinations and tourism as expression of perceived social status are new key variables to consider when looking for the extra-bloc tourism demand. As already said, this demonstrates that the explanation of tourist flows is not unique, and that it is possible to generate differentiated strategies for each case, depending on the origin country of the demand.

With more proactive action from policymakers to understand the dynamics of the tourism phenomenon, the region will be able to increase the quality of the tourism industry to be the main center for tourism. In particular, the regional-bloc must generate a differentiated brand for its touristic products to capture the motivation and time of tourism, mainly of the extra-bloc countries.

The challenge is to identify the correct policy, at the correct time and for the relevant market.

Notes

1. The commercial sub-regional bloc of the region, which is defined in this paper, is formed by three of the member countries of MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Sur in Spanish), Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, and one of the associated countries of Mercosur, Chile. The MERCOSUR is a commercial regional bloc that promotes free trade and the fluid movement of goods, people and currency between members.

2. The extra-bloc regions selected are North America, Europe, Paraguay (as a representation of the rest of Latin American countries) and Asia.

3. G7 countries are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the USA.

4. It is interesting to note that Uruguay presents the highest contribution of tourism to GDP and exports in South America, being of 2.94 per cent and 14.64 per cent, respectively. This reveals a great dependence of the country on tourism, with values similar to those of the Caribbean countries. In Argentina, these contributions are 0.54 per cent and 5.22 per cent; in Brazil, these are 0.21 per cent and 2.51 per cent, respectively.

5. The number of tourist arrivals is the most popular measure to proxy tourism demand (Song and Li, 2008) but many times, it is used because of the wide unavailability of data on international tourism receipts for many countries.

6. The inclusion of so many fictional variables affects the performance of the estimation method. For this reason, the dummies by country of origin that varies in time are not included.

7. A robustness analysis was conducted through the estimation of the gravity equations for different sets of years within the period, arriving at similar results. The results can be requested from the authors.
8. In the case of North American and Asian regions, this indicator is proxy by the bilateral real exchange rate of the USA and China, respectively, as these markets are the main sources of tourism in these regions.

9. The panel is unbalanced due to the lack of some data and this may implicate a selection bias. Data on arrivals from Chile in 1995-1997 and from Brazil in 1995-2002 and data on the bilateral relationship between Uruguay and Asia since 2008 are not available. For practical purposes, it is assumed that there is no selection bias since it is a common factor when considering data from countries or regions (Wooldridge, 2002).

10. There is enough literature that studies tourist’s motivations. Mahica (2011) argued that tourists who belong to a particular group or social class choose holiday in exotic destinations. Correira et al. (2007, p. 20) considered “the decision to travel to exotic places arises from the desire of knowledge, having social status and intellectual leisure.”

11. The remoteness of origin countries has a positive effect as expected.

12. Lorde et al. (2015) analyzed 18 destination countries: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States Virgin Islands. These countries were selected on the basis of the availability of data for the variables in the demand model. The origins are the four main source markets: the USA, Europe, Canada and the Caribbean. This study does not differentiate between intra- and extra-bloc relationships.

References


**Further reading**


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The epistemological structure of mobilities

Tourism, touring and consumption in the days of terrorism

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to revolve around two problems which, though imagined as different, can be addressed altogether. On one hand, the advance of terrorism as a major threat to the tourism industry, while – on the other – we discuss the ontological nature of tourism as a rite of passage, which is vital to keep the political legitimacy of officialdom. At the time, paradoxically, social scientists shrug off tourism as a naive commercial activity, while the main tourist destinations are being attacked by jihadism. This suggests the disinterest of ones associates to the interests of others.

Design/methodology/approach – The author holds the thesis that tourism derives from ancient institutions, which illuminated in the growth of Occident and the formation of hospitality. Capitalism hides the importance of tourism as a mere trivialization as a bit-player. However, a closer look reminds precisely the opposite. The recent attacks perpetrated at main destinations reveal tourism as an exemplary (symbolic) center of the West, a source of authority and power for the existing hierarchal order.

Findings – The issue captivates the attention of scholars, officials and policymakers, and at the same time, epistemologists of tourism receive a fresh novel debate regarding the origins of tourism.

Originality/value – It is a great paradox that tourism would be selected as a target for jihadism but at the same time a naive activity for social scientists or at the least by the French tradition. Despite the partisan criticism exerted on tourism as an alienatory force, this work showed two important aspects, which merits to be discussed. At a closer look, tourism should be understood as “a rite of passage” whose function associates to the revitalization of those glitches happened during the cycles of production. Second, and most important, tourism accommodates those frustrations to prevent acts of separatism or the rise of extreme conflict among classes.

Keywords Tourism, Epistemology, Consumption, French tradition, Terrorism

Paper type Viewpoint

Introduction

Although tourism and hospitality have experienced a rapid growth that resulted in countless changes for modern lifestyle worldwide (Crouch, 1994; Vanhove, 2011; Pigram and Wahab, 2005), its experiential nature makes it sensitive to global threats and dangers (Larsen and Brun, 2011; Korstanje and Olsen, 2011). Over the recent years, the rise of jihadist terrorism beyond the borders of Middle East paved the ways for new urgent policies to protect tourist destinations. Academicians of all stripes devoted considerable efforts and
resources to understand and mitigate the negative effects of terrorism (Tarlow, 2006; Schroeder et al., 2013; Bassil, 2014; Bassols, 2016). Living in a world manipulated by emotions (Bigne and Andreu, 2004; Bleiker and Hutchison, 2008), undoubtedly terrorism woke Western nations from the slumber they were.

Still further, some voices alerted on the problems of this fast growth as the main causes of a much deeper epistemological crisis to grasp an all-encompassing model to define what tourism is. As Tribe (2010) puts it, the epistemology of tourism faced a serious crisis because of the dispersion of produced knowledge, as well as the indifference of an international academy in setting a clear unified agenda to be followed by scholars. In this respect, “the indiscipline of tourism” exhibits some claims revolving around the fragmentation of the different studies and approaches among academics, which prevented the maturation of the discipline as a serious option (Tribe, 1997).

As the previous backdrop, this paper aims to resolve both the problems – though apparently different in essence – by not only exploring on the nature of tourism as a rite of passage but also explaining why modern terrorists target leisure-spots and tourism to perpetrate their attacks. At a first look, we hold the thesis that tourism should be defined as a rite of passage, whose chief goals correspond with the revitalization of the frustrated ego. Like the state of sleep that rekindles the body for a better performance once the subject awakens, tourism handles higher levels of anxiety and frustration. The importance of tourism, oddly to keep the society united, is directly conducive to the means of production each society develops. As the founding parents of anthropology envisaged, leisure and tourism play a leading role in two different directions. On one hand, it endorsed the legitimacy of authorities or officialdom, while on the other, lay-citizens embraced the cultural values of their respective societies. With this in mind, it is not accidental that terrorists appeal to vulnerate tourists to undermine the credibility of nation-states and officials. What is more than important to discuss is to what extent terrorism appeals to political instability to affect the basis of nation state and its legitimacy. Here, two significant assumptions should be made. First, the safety and security of foreign tourists depends on the hosting state, which should be held accountable for its deeds by other tourist-delivering governments. After the attacks in Bali (2002) where almost 88 Australians were killed, Indonesia reported to Australia what would be the next steps and protocols to find the responsible terrorists, as well as making the necessary arrangements for repatriating remains. This happens because tourism rests on the anthropological roots of hospitality, which activates reciprocity between two or more parts (states). Second, and most important, the credibility of Indonesia, which in the international relations, was seriously affected in view of its incapacity to protect visitors coming from the First World. This paper inscribes into the sociology of tourism as the main genre but explores other subthemes as mobilities, the theory of non-places, terrorism and political violence. For some reason, the caveats in the sociology of tourism were not replicated by anthropology, which advanced interesting steps in the recent years.

The nature of tourism

Over decades, theorists and academicians have interrogated on the nature of tourism (Smith, 2001). One of the dichotomies to reach some consensus was the dissociation of two contrasting viewpoints which inevitably created a gap almost impossible to bridge (Tribe, 1997). The economic-centered paradigm includes all studies and positions that debate tourism from its economic nature, alluding to the management of tourist destinations and individual motivations as the key factors of tourism industry. Tourism management brings an interesting reflection into the foreground while it introduced management as a guiding
discipline in the applied research. This family of theories is oriented to understand the creation and evolution of tourism cycles without mentioning the innovative features or the risks that can threaten the destination (Weaver and Oppermann, 2000; Ryan, 2002; Dwyer et al., 2009; Fernández and Rivero, 2009). Rather, a second wave known as tourism-as-social-institution signaled to the social roots of the activity, which dated back to the end of Second World War and the expansion of aero commercial industry. For the founding parents of the sociology of tourism, there was nothing like tourism in the ancient cultures or much time earlier than the advance of industrial revolution (Boorstin, 1962; MacCannell, 1976, 1992, 2001; Urry, 1990, 1992; Urry and Larsen, 2011). Hence, this wave stipulates that tourism serves as a mechanism of escape aimed at revitalizing after the daily frustrations of work. Thanks to tourism, not only society keeps working but also capitalism – as a leading project – expands worldwide. The sociologists of tourism toy enthusiastically with the belief that tourism consumption not only mediated between citizens and their institutions but worked as an alienatory force that internalizes the mainstream cultural values of capitalism into citizens to protect the interests of a privileged elite (MacCannell, 2001; Meethan 2001, 2003). Echoing the original worries of Les Année du Sociologique and its most reputable members, Mauss or Durkheim (2014), the advance of industrialism would surely disorganize the life and social bondages towards more exploitative forms passing from the “mechanic” to an “organic solidarity”. MacCannell toys with the same belief, posing money and trade as mediators between the self and the authentic experience.

This tradition, somehow, has not been inoculated in German-speaking countries. Swiss-born economist Krippendorf (1987) developed an interesting model to understand tourism which needs further attention. His original approaches versed on discussing the nature of motivations in holidays as something else than behavioral attitudes. While human needs are physiologically met by the articulation of diverse institutions, relax is culturally practiced as a rite in different cultures. As Krippendorf adheres, the rank-and-file workers are trapped between the wall and the deep blue sea, since they are daily exploited by the capitalist production. These frustrations should be redeemed by the introduction of pleasurable activities within specific circles of consumption, holiday-making. As a sacred-space, holidays subvert temporally the rules of productivity while the mainstream cultural values of society are internalized. Departing from the thesis that leisure and economy are inextricably intertwined, Krippendorf applauds the idea that once the productive system turns more oppressive further forms of consumerisms arise. The decline of happiness in Western cultures derives in the needs of new experiences that take people from the humdrum routine they are in. One of the symbolic functions of tourism appears to be the emulation of lost-paradise, or the Eden, from where humans were energetically exiled after the original sin. The eternal quest for pleasure, per Krippendorf, is nothing other than the need to return to Mother’s womb. The myth of lost Eden revives this biological necessity. Though for Krippendorf, each culture molds a different idealized stage – comparable to tourism – no less true is that capitalism has expanded to index peripheral economies while the workers are subject to a climate of exploitation that engenders resentment and irreversible material asymmetries. This does not mean that tourism – as a commoditized form of leisure – results from capitalism but countless forms of evasion adapted to the means of production of every society (Krippendorf, 1975, 1982, 1986, 1989, 1995).

In the opposite direction, MacCannell (1976) dissects the nature of tourism as the direct results of combined factors, which oscillate from working hour reduction and the technological breakthrough proper of industrial revolution. Taking his cue from Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Erving Goffman and Karl Marx, MacCannell contends that the figure of Totem as the great articulator of politics in primitive tribes sets the pace to tourism
in modern societies. The process of secularization, which means an ever-increasing reduction of religiosity in the urban cities, leaves an emptied center that is fulfilled by tourism and consumption. The consumption of authenticity, MacCannell adds, is also the thread that holds society together. As a sacred-object, the totem confers political authorities to chieftom whereas it provides with a valid explanation about the universe. In the urban societies, things are not to easier, and more complex ideologies are necessary. Whether Krippendorf and MacCannell shared the same view on tourism as an instrument of escapement, the former accepted ancient forms of tourism, while the latter circumscribed tourism to the industrial logic. Ultimately, Salazar (2015) centers a critical diagnosis of tourism which deserves attention. While traveling, tourists are in quest of the otherness, but it is previously constructed by the wider media stereotypes externally designed to commoditize what is gazed. In this token, tourists start from previous cultural narratives where a real engagement with the alterity is replaced by consumption. The native is subordinated and silenced to what tourists crave.

The discussion between management and social sciences has not only not been closed but also prevented the unification toward a shared definition. In this vein, Korstanje and Seraphin (2017) acknowledge that the advancement of sociology of tourism shows two important caveats. On one hand, it is heavily influenced by French philosophy, which not only echoed the initial concerns of Durkheim about the advance of the free trade but also fleshed out a pejorative view of tourism – as an alienatory or disciplinary mechanism of control. This viewpoint led scholars to misjudge the nature of tourism or similar forms of tourism in ancient history. Paradoxically, the sociologists of tourism – such as MacCannell, Augé and Virilio – contributed to the creation of a negative connotation on the activity that impeded its consolidation as a leading discipline. Most certainly, historians of tourism turned their attention to Middle Age instead of delving in ancient history. In consequence, they precluded that tourism was born with the industrial revolution. As Vidal-Naquet (2001) – a well-known Latinist – evinces, thousands of ancient travelers visited the supposed tomb of Achilles during fifth and sixth centuries BC. These testimonies coincide with the leisure consumption described by Paoli (1963) in his book, *Rome its people, life and customs*. With some differences, Romans practiced similar forms of leisure and tourism to modern times. Equally important, an etymological look suggests that the term *feriae* (Latin), which means “leave”, was used to give Roman citizens a temporal permission to visit relatives and neighbors at their birth-places. In that way, the empire not only granted the cohesion between the center and its periphery but also revitalized the trust of Roman citizens and the central authority. It is safe to say that this institution antecedes the modern holidays to the extent of some Indo-European languages, as German and Portuguese share the same etymological root, as *Die Ferien* (German) and *das Ferias* (Portugal). It is important not to lose the sight of travels and tourism that seem to be conducive to the expansion of empires, and Sumerians, Babylonians and of course Romans, which constructed the paths to move the armies in the days of warfare, while the same was used to touring in peacetimes. As stated in the introductory section, whether anthropology eluded the same one-sided argument as sociology, there is no clear way to frame Marc Augé. For this reason, in the next section, we shall scrutinize closer the main problems of the theory of non-places, which was originally formulated by Marc Augé to explain the origin of tourism.

**The theory of non-places**

The French ethnologist, Marc Augé coins the term non-places to denote the alienated life at leisure-spots, airports and tourist destinations. In the book *Non-lieux. Introduction a une
antropología de la submodernité, which found the light of publicity in 1992, Augé talks of “non-places” as spaces characterized by anonymity and depersonalization. Not only the travelers’ identities are radically transformed, through the liminality of these spaces, but also the tradition is effaced. The concept of non-places arrived polemically to social sciences to discuss further on the advance of modernity and globalization. Taking his cue from previous ethnographies in Africa, Augé defines “place” in view of the relational perspective created by history and tradition. If a place can be defined as a space of tradition, a non-place exhibits the opposite character (istics), a much broader tendency toward the nothing (Augé, 1996, p. 83). This existential perspective is reinforced by Augé’s personal fieldworks at Paris’ Airport (Augé, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2008). He realizes that, in particular, modern tourists are hyper-mobile agents enshrouded in a veil of anonymity. Until travelers are checked out by the customs and migratory officers, they lack citizenship or identity; they are mere consumers who wander at the airport shopping malls. The idea here is that with the involvement of corporations in airport design such spaces are stripped off any association with the land in which they were built. Even the identities of global tourists are only validated before boarding their flight (Augé, 2001, 2002, 2008). The question of whether airports produce “anonymity” is linked to the antinomy between remoteness and closeness, affecting even perceptions of the very subject of anthropology. Augé situates the origin of anthropologics in the place of the other, which is an exotic, different place. Nowadays, however, the other is more like us and lives more like us. This means that the anthropological boundaries formed around notions of “us versus them” dissipate or are being blurred (Augé, 2001). For Augé, today, the traditional foundations of Western epistemologies are challenged because modern ethnologists have to re-evaluate the tools and methods by which they study far-away others, who are more and more like us (Augé, 1996). Neither hospitality nor politics are part of the concerns that guide Augé’s books. Rather, oriented to admit that mobilities and velocity are prone to change the sense of places, Augé acknowledges that the saturation of present, where consumption is centered, implies the destruction of pastime and tradition.

In L’Impossible voyage (The Impossible Trip), the French ethnographer frames a critical diagnosis of tourism which is defined as an industry of fantasy. Under the exclusive auspices of global capitalism, tourism – generally – and tourists – more specifically – travel to distant landscapes and cities only to find what they desire, exhausting any direct contact with the otherness. Tourism suggests the fictionalization of the World while the proliferation of image and idealized landscapes mediate between citizens and their institutions (Augé, 1997).

Though eloquently for some social geographers and theorists of mobilities, Augé not only glosses over the role of nation-state and airports in the good-exchange rite that fosters tourism consumption but also puts the horse before the cart, misjudging the intersection of human networks and travel machines (Cresswell, 2001; Lash and Urry, 1993; Urry 2002; Tzanelli, 2007). As John Urry noted, the subjectivity of perception (gaze) cannot be operationalized by direct observation, as Augé did, lest by a much broader cultural matrix that precedes the tourist-gaze (Urry, 1990, 1992, 2002; Urry and Larsen, 2011). The thoughts struck us that like MacCannell, Augé is strongly influenced by the radical turn of French legacy, which theorizes on tourism as an alienatory – or at the best a predatory force. Last but not least, in a recent work entitled Mobilities Paradox, a radical analysis, Korstanje (2018) calls the attention on the fact that Augé misjudged the nature of airports. After collating evidence from self-ethnographies at most important airports Korstanje argues convincingly, which far from being spaces of anonymity, airports represent spaces of discipline, where passengers are scrutinized and strictly-
surveilled by the nation-state. Through this rite, the state gives hospitality to the incoming aliens. The tourists (candidates) are undergoing disciplined security checks that emulate the most important values of hosting-society: mobilities, trade and security. The migration office will check the identity of travelers, while Police and Customs check their properties and luggage. The rite closes once the involving candidate is reintroduced into the world of consumption at the duty-free shop malls. As exemplary centers airports are often targeted by radicalized terrorist cells to cause political instability and mistrust in society. In consequence, this observation led us to re-think tourism as a rite of passage, a point which would be addressed in the following lines.

Tourism as a rite of passage

The discussion revolving around the roots of tourism took two wrong paths. The economic-based paradigm adopted a materialist definition, posing tourism as the result of technological shifts and the development of main economies situated in Europe and the USA. Rather, for the critical turn which is previously determined by the influence of French sociology- tourism works as an instrument of alienation and social control. Of course, over years, both positions struggled in vain to reach some consensus respecting to the nature of tourism. Unlike sociology, anthropology advanced a lot in articulating a convincing theory, which rested in the evidence collated in different cultures and times (Nogues Pedregal, 2009). One of the founding parents of modern anthropology, Malinowski (1944), accepted that social institutions result from the projection of psychological individual needs, or at least, institutions are crystalized according to how efficient such needs are fulfilled. In view of this, humans are moved for some biological instincts, he enumerated as metabolism, reproduction, safety, movement, bodily comfort, growth and health. While the reproduction leads culture to the formation of kinship, the bodily comfort and movement pave the ways for the rise of leisure travels or plays. It is unfortunate that Malinowski never deepened on the ways native used to escape from routine or the lines of recreational behaviors in non-Western tribes. This has been a gap, which few ethnographers liked to fill. Nonetheless, his legacy inspired some others authors such as Van Gennep (2011) to decipher the nature of travels. In his book Les Rites de Passages, he contends the cycle of production needs moments of disruption which accommodate the role of members into a new status. Each community develops its own rites of passage, where peoples, roles and status are mutually negotiated and exchanged. One of the aspects that define these rituals consists in displacement out of home, placing the candidate in a state of temporal isolation to be lately introduced in a new status. This separation leads to the differentiation of genres – males and females – or even of cosmologies – sacred and profane. Hence, the rites of passage are marked by three clear-cut stages, separation, liminality and incorporation. The efficiency of rituals depends on each stage performing exactly as designed. If something goes wrong, the authority of officials is also seriously affected. Besides, these rituals are oriented to detach the person from the group they belonged to and be introduced in a new group, dotted with new rules and a new identity. Candidates should show not only their worthiness and virtues but also skills as new free-men.

As the previous argument given, tourists not only emulate the role of candidates but also renovate themselves from the world they want to leave behind. In consonance with Van Gennep, Victor Turner sets forward a model to understand the connection between passage and liminality. His interest was centered on an African tribe, Ndembu (Zambia), a case which facilitated his Doctoral thesis completion. Similar to Van Gennep, Turner writes that the rite of passage should be divided in three stages, pre-liminal phase (separation), liminal phase (transition) and post-liminal phase (reincorporation). The role of liminality is crucial to
determine the new status of candidates, Turner adds. This happens simply because the transitional stage or in-between states are a valid mechanism adopted by community to bear ambiguity. Embedded in a limbo, candidates are tested to achieve a much deeper sentiment of communitas (Turner, 1995).

Korstanje and Busby (2010) continued the contributions of Turner and Van Gennep applying their main outcomes to tourism fields. As per Korstanje and Busby, the Bible offers a fertile background – as the book of all Christian myths – to understand the nature and evolution of tourism in the modern world. As a rite of passage, tourism not only sublimates the needs of returning to lost-paradise but also renovates the desire to accept the laws of the Lord. These rites should not be limited to aborigines or tribal organization simply because modern man performs many rites of passage (celebrations) as baptism, graduate trips, Christmas or the New Year to reinforce the communion with the divinity. In this respect, tourism seems not to be an exception. In the same way, the Lord rested in the seventh day, lay-people are morally forced to relax. The figure of renovation plays a leading role as not only necessary to detach from rules but also the redemption of sins. Not surprisingly, the oceans and sun mimic the ancient role of water and fire in the rites of passage:

We can conclude that renovation of norms that entails the return is enrooted in the figures of baptism, guilt, sacrifice and expiation. This moral process can be compared with social duties or rules visitors abide by every day. These forces not only determine individual behaviour but also pave the pathways towards a new reinsertion. This eternal return to day-to-day life (once the vacation is over) demonstrates an ambivalent nature. On the one hand, we change in some way but certainly it is unquestionable we are subject of a process of forgiveness. On another hand, there is continuity because we were introduced in the same real before our departure (Korstanje and Busby, 2010, p. 107). As a civilizatory process, which reanudates the individual affiliation and members’ loyalty to a certain community, tourism ascribes to the needs of honoring the division of labor as a sacred-mandate (Korstanje and Busby, 2010). This point coincides with Eric Cohen’s development (Cohen, 1979), which widely analyzed the nature of tourist experience as something other than frivolous pursuit for pleasure. In sharp contrast with MacCannell and Boorstin, he claims that tourism emulates the quest of the sacred center – paragraphing Eliade. The idea of center-out-there explained by Turner, Cohen adds, explains the intersection of moral values with movement, or namely travels. Although every traveler is in search of its own experience, the needs of recovering the “lost paradise” through the consumption of authenticity prevail. In fact, Cohen narrows closely to MacCannell’s argument at the time he presents a refreshing alternative view, which remains associated to define tourism as a-sacred-pilgrimage.

As per the previous argument, Graburn (1976, 1983) presents an interesting conceptual framework that helps understanding tourism beyond the paradigm of the commercial activity. For him, tourism should be understood as a rite of passage, which emulates “a sacred-journal” where the cultural values are validated, accepted and negotiated. The figure of “play” is vital in his argumentation to accept the idea that host-guest meeting revolves around to higher levels of uncertainty. As Graburn observes, tourism escapes to the commoditization of culture, as it is practiced by many classes and groups; rather, it activates a dream-like logic, which intersects with magic:

The food and drink might be identical to that normally eaten indoors, but the magic comes from the movement and the non-ordinary setting. Furthermore, it is not merely a matter of money that separates the stay-at-home from the extensive travellers. Many very wealthy people never become tourists, and most youthful travelers are, by western standard, quite poor (Graburn, 1989, p. 24).
In dialogue with other authors, as MacCannell who developed the binomial Totem-Tourism or Cohen who worked on the idea of lost-paradise, Graburn (1989) defines tourism as a “sacred-pilgrimage” where the play reproduces the borders of an idealized wonderland. Valent Smith, in consonance with Krippendorf, has said that the host–guest encounter denotes the principle of hospitality, which is the touchstone of tourism. Aside from the economic factor, tourists are motivated from the needs of evasion and physical displacement from the routinized life. Oriented to revitalize the deprivations of social life, tourism contributes notably to the cohesiveness of society.

Tourism and terrorism

Once tourism is defined, it is important not to lose the sight of the interests for terrorists to vulnerable innocent tourists. Though specialists and pundits agree there are antecedents of terrorist cells that target tourist destinations—to set an example the assassination of Israeli team in the Olympic Games held in Munich—in the month of September of 1972 (Tarlow, 2014) or in the Massacre of Luxor, -Egypt, 1997- (Sönmez, 1998), no less true is that the attacks to World Trade center on 11 September of 2001 inaugurated new tactics for emerging radical groups. Unlike its predecessors that looked to harm the integrity of important persons such as celebrities, chief police officers or politicians, “jihadist terrorism” weaponized mass means of transport against innocent tourists and civilians (Diken and Laustsen, 2002; Diken, 2011; Sheller and Urry, 2006; Hall et al., 2012; Korstanje, 2017). Luke Howie alerts that terrorists do not want a lot of people dying, but a lot of people watching! While terrorists need to captivate the attention of global publics through the articulation of violence, fear and extortion, mass-media profits from the terrorism-related news creating a vicious circle which is very hard to breach (Howie, 2012). As a distinguished professor, David Altheide argued that terrorists instill a discourse of panic not only for their claims to be unilaterally accepted by state but also to forge popular forms of entertainment which are conducive to governments (Altheide, 2006, 2009, 2017).

In the midst of this mayhem, many policymakers focused their attention on the negative effects of terrorism jeopardizing the organic image of international destinations (Mansfeld, 1999; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Arana and León, 2008; Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006; Korstanje and Tarlow, 2012; Saha and Yap, 2014; Korstanje, 2015). Innovating in crueler and shocking tactics, terrorists perpetrate their attacks in paradisiacal tourist destinations, malls or leisure-spots. Over the recent years, a wider range of explanations were aimed to give some hint on why tourists are killed by terrorists. For the sake of clarity, all these theories can be grouped in three families: economics theory, psychological theory and anthropological theory.

At a first glimpse, one of the pioneers of economics theory does not come from tourism fields but from economics. In a seminal work, *The Political Economy of Terrorism*, authors wonder whether terrorists select tourism consumption sites for their blows. Paradoxically, although this book became one of the most cited studies of terrorism research, it remains unknown for tourism-related scholars. Enders and Sandler (2011) explore the rational interests of terrorists as the interplay of costs and gains. They hold the thesis that far from being maniacs or hatred-filled psychopaths, terrorists are rational agents who ponder benefits and discard risks. Under the theory of gain-maximization, which is enrooted in the core of classic economics, Enders and Sandler clarify that as tourists are unfamiliar with the visited places and the presence of security forces is slim, tourism destinations offer lower costs for their attacks. At the same time, the gains
terrorists often obtain are higher, as the news is globally packaged and disseminated by the media to be consumed by a vast audience. The efficacy of terrorism to disseminate terror rests on the fact that lay-people think that what happened at the affected destination may repeat at a later date anytime and elsewhere. That way, the economy of terrorism reveals two important things. On one hand, the surprise factor adjoined to randomness play a vital role in fabricating a message of fear, which is conducive to terrorists. On the other, the easy access to hotels and beaches makes tourism more attractive than other places to terrorist activity. With the benefits of hindsight, the economics theory emphasizes on the importance of “precautionary principle” and the multivariable analysis to understand why some destinations are more vulnerable than others (Ryan, 1993; Pizam and Smith, 2000; Pizam and Fleischer, 2002). The economics theory focuses on the negative effects of terrorism laying the foundations of a new platform which measures the resiliency of destinations in contexts of risks (Paraskevas and Arendell, 2007; Uriely et al., 2007; Fyall et al., 2012; Tarlow, 2014).

Rather, the psychological theory delves into the borders of personality to predict under what factors the process of radicalization occurs. Those scholars who embrace psychology to explain the evolution of modern terrorism pay attention to the role of frustration, poverty or resentment as the key factor toward hate and terrorism. In the same way, modern tourism flourishes only in consolidated democracies or developed cultures dotted with the benefits of freedom and mobilities, it is important to look at failed states or undemocratic nations as fertile grounds for authoritarian and radicalized minds. As a result of this, the hostility against Western tourists hides a repressed psychological resentment, which is ultimately rechanneled through violence. As a factor of democracy, tourism should be applied in non-Western nations to avoid any sign of political instability that places western tourists in jeopardy (Sönmez, 1998; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008; Rashid and Robinson, 2010; Scheyvens, 2012).

Finally, the anthropological theory goes on a third way. Terrorists move to undermine the trust of citizens in their authorities cutting their performance as travelers, affecting not only the credibility of the nation-state before their citizens but before other states. As through the performances of touring – gazing – citizens renovate their trust and loyalties in the nation-state, not surprisingly any failure in the rite leads towards a sentiment of vulnerability, which is facilitated and exploited by terrorists. The importance of tourism to keep the society united is directly proportional to the attention paid by ISIS and others radicalized cells. What terrorists want is to erode one of the most important symbolic cores of Western civilization: hospitality. In the book Terrorism, Tourism and the end of hospitality in the West, Korstanje (2017) ignites a hot debate around the problems of West to conceive the alterity. Over centuries, the same sense of restricted hospitality that helped European expansion, nowadays is being used by terrorists as a weapon against the liberal thought. This exhibits the fact that the same means of transport situated as the pride of Western civilization are being weaponized against civilians. As a result, the trust in the other not only plummeted but also allowed the emergence of radical discourses (as anti-tourist movement or Islamophobia) in the main maturate democracies. At the time when fear knocks the doors of heaven, the borders are tightened (Korstanje and Clayton, 2012; Korstanje et al., 2014; Korstanje, 2015; Bianchi, 2006; Bianchi and Stephenson, 2013). What sounds particularly interesting, associates to how modern tourism commoditizes death as a form of media entertainment in new more morbid forms of consumption as Thana-Tourism, War-Tourism or Dark-tourism, but very well this seems to be a much deeper-seated issue that merits to be continued in the years to come.
Conclusion
It is a great paradox that tourism would be selected as a target for jihadism but at the same time a naive activity for social scientists or at the least by the French Tradition. Despite the partisan criticism exerted on tourism as an alienatory force, this work showed two important aspects, which merits to be discussed. At a closer look, tourism should be understood as “a rite of passage” whose function associates to the revitalization of those glitches happened during the cycles of production. Second, and most important, tourism accommodates those frustrations to prevent acts of separatism or the rise of extreme conflict among classes. As discussed, the French philosophy flouted tourism as a commercial travel glossing over the contributions of anthropology in the fields, as well as ancient forms of tourism, which escaped to the attention of scholars to date. Anthropologically speaking, tourism activates long-dormant channels of solidarity that – in the threshold of time – have drawn hospitality. It is not surprise that terrorism targets tourist destination to undermine the trust of citizens in their authorities, in view of the importance this institution has for the society. Doubtless, tourism and terrorism are inextricably intertwined. As terrorists look to destabilize Occident, the best course of action seems to be affecting the sources of solidarity, as the rites of passage that keep the society together. The dilemma is that the major contemporary threat of tourism – terrorism – most likely is the main conduit to overcome the prejudices and stereotypes of part of the modern sociology.

References


Further reading


About the author
Maximiliano E. Korstanje is Editor in Chief of *International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism* (UP Argentina) and Editor in Chief Emeritus of *International Journal of Cyber Warfare and Terrorism* (IGI-Global US). Besides being a Senior Researcher in the Department of Economics at University of Palermo, Argentina, he is a global affiliate of Tourism Crisis Management Institute (University of Florida US), Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies (University of Leeds), The Forge (University of Lancaster and University of Leeds UK) and The International Society for Philosophers, hosted in Sheffield UK. With more than 1,200 published papers and 35 books. His recently authored works include, *Strategic Tool and Methods for promoting Hospitality and Tourism Services*, *Virtual Traumascapes and exploring the roots of Dark Tourism* and *Research Practices and innovations in Global Risk and Contingency Management* by IGI Global, *The Rise of Thana Capitalism and Tourism* by Routledge, *Terrorism, Tourism and the end of Hospitality in the West* by Springer Nature, *The Mobilities paradox: A critical analysis* by Edward Elgar, *Risk and Safety Challenges for Religious Tourism and Events* by CABI and *Terrorism in a Global Village* by Nova among others. Now, he co-edits almost ten specialized journals and takes part in almost 30 journals associated to themes as human rights, mobility, tourism and terrorism. Korstanje was nominated to five honorary doctorates for his contribution in the study of the effects of terrorism in tourism. In 2015, he was awarded as Visiting Research Fellow at School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, UK and the University of La Habana Cuba. In 2017, he was elected as Foreign Faculty Member of AMIT, Mexican Academy in the study of Tourism, which is the most prominent institutions dedicated to tourism research in Mexico. He had a vast experience in editorial projects working as advisory member of Elsevier, Routledge, Springer, IGI global and Cambridge Scholar publishing. Korstanje had visited and given seminars in many important universities worldwide. Maximiliano E. Korstanje can be contacted at: maxikorstanje@arnet.com.ar

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Strategies to improve the quality and competitiveness of coastal tourism areas

Applying tourism standards

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Abstract

Purpose – The quality of tourist accommodation establishments is a recurring theme in public strategies for planning and managing tourist destinations. The applying standards as a way to achieve quality. This strategy consists of legally regulating a series of minimum physical standards by using measureable parameters, as well as the desired characteristics or levels of amenities, which vary according to the type of provision required. The purpose of this study is to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of applying strategies that regulate standards for accommodations in coastal tourism areas in the Canary Islands (Spain).

Design/methodology/approach – The authors used an explanatory case study methodology. An “inter-case” comparison has been chosen, because the object of analysis (public policy applying tourism standards) has changed over time; furthermore, a content analysis approach was selected so that the subject of this research is the process of implementing this kind tourism policy. The result is a systematization of the process in stages.

The research behind this work is the result of the project entitled, “Analysis of urban sustainability as strategy to regenerate public spaces in coastal tourism areas”, financed by the CajaCanarias Foundation and managed by the Vice-Rectorate for Research of the University of La Laguna. It is also registered in the “Crisis and reorganization of Spanish coastal tourism areas” project of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO) (CSO2015-64468-P).
Findings – Quantifiable criteria that exclusively consider the physical or operational parameters of a tourist establishment are no longer sufficient to provide quality service that meets the needs and expectations of customers. It is not enough to set standards for surface area parameters or essential amenities when organizing new tourist developments, but rather it is the qualitative aspect that must be addressed. At the same time, quality tourist accommodation establishment is not obtained merely by reducing density, which constitutes the significant standard.

Research limitations/implications – This paper evidence is presented that may influence the quality of accommodation perceived by the client, which increases their level of satisfaction and, in turn, the degree of trust and, therefore, fidelity, understood as the future decision to repeat or not the tourist experience. There are also issues related to the approach that the quality of accommodation establishments has a direct effect on the visitor's perception of the destination, which cannot be merely physical, measurable in square metres.

Practical implications – The relationship between urban standards and quality is no longer linear. This determines that the regulated tourist accommodations (defined by sectoral regulations) it is common to set a required plot size in m² based on the number of bed places offered by the establishment is no longer valid. Today, tourists rate accommodation establishments by the prestige of their brand or the diversity of services and experiences (entertainment, sensations, emotions, etc.) they provide. These experiences play such an important role in producing customer satisfaction and loyalty to a hotel that guests are willing to pay more for their stay, with the understanding that they will be able to experience certain emotions. It has been evidenced that the main reason for setting physical quality parameters that can be measured by a rating system for accommodation establishments, to provide a basic reference for customers, is no longer necessary, given the amount of easily accessible real-time information freely available through multiple independent channels based on the 2.0 paradigm, information technologies and communication, as well as applications and virtual platforms.

Social implications – Applying this public strategy of classifying or rating tourist accommodations on a territorial scale has some strengths and weaknesses. However, it is not easy to find a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of such strategies because, among other issues, the public administration seems disinterested in measuring the consequences of their decisions, instead focussing on whether the formal legal requirements are being complied with. Moreover, whenever such assessments have been carried out, the discussion has been limited to the effectiveness of the implementation. This is why, beyond such purely mechanical responses, there are currently no studies or technical reports that specifically examine the positive or negative effects of such approaches. Evidently, these circumstances make any work analyzing this material relevant and timely. Likewise, the main reason for setting physical quality parameters that can be measured by a rating system for accommodation establishments, to provide a basic reference for customers, is no longer necessary, given the amount of easily accessible, real-time information freely available through multiple independent channels based on the 2.0 paradigm, information technologies and communication, as well as applications and virtual platforms.

Originality/value – The paper determines that the impact of the strategies of set a required plot size in square metres based on the number of bed places offered by the establishment is limited. Applying this public strategy of classifying or rating tourist accommodations on a territorial scale has some strengths and weaknesses. However, it is not easy to find a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of such strategies because, among other issues, the public administration seems disinterested in measuring the consequences of their decisions, instead focussing on whether the formal legal requirements are being complied with. Moreover, whenever such assessments have been carried out, the discussion has been limited to the effectiveness of the implementation. This is why, beyond such purely mechanical responses, there are currently no studies or technical reports that specifically examine the positive or negative effects of such approaches. Evidently, these circumstances make any work analyzing this material relevant and timely.

Keywords Quality, Territorial impact, Tourist accommodation, Tourist ratio, Urban development standard

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction
The quality of tourist accommodation establishments is a recurring theme in public strategies for planning and managing tourist destinations. Rather than pursuing a goal of
zero defects, the search for quality must start with the needs of customers (what they expect) and end with their satisfaction (perceived value) (Kotler et al., 2005). In other words, quality consists in the guest’s level of satisfaction with the features and characteristics of an establishment in relation to their expectations; their satisfaction is derived from the comparison between what they perceive and what they expected, that is, by having their expectations about the establishment fulfilled. Therefore, quality and customer satisfaction constructs are usually considered to be synonymous (Liljander, 1994). This is because of the fact that the perceived quality of the accommodation increases the level of satisfaction of customers, which, in turn, affects their level of trust and, hence, loyalty, understood as a future decision on whether to repeat the tourism experience. In the same way, accommodation quality has a direct effect on how a visitor perceives a destination, which in turn will influence other aspects, such as the number of overnights, the possibility of a repeat visit or recommendation or the positive image of the establishment – or even of the destination (Bigné et al., 2000; Scheyvens and Russell, 2012). Therefore, quality has become a key variable of competitiveness, with the following impact on the main indicators of tourism and business profitability (number of overnight stays, average length of stay, occupancy rates, average daily room rates, average daily income per available and occupied room, etc.).

Various authors, such as Blanquer Criado (2000), Socias Camacho (2001, 2009), Blasco Esteve (2002, 2004), Rullan (2005), Sola Teyssiere (2007) and Salom Parets (2012), have suggested applying standards as a way to achieve quality. This strategy consists of legally regulating a series of minimum physical standards by using measureable parameters, as well as the desired characteristics or levels of amenities, which vary according to the type of provision required. Therefore, for regulated tourist accommodations (defined by sectoral regulations), it is common to set a required plot size in square metres based on the number of bed places offered by the establishment. In addition, other standards that affect urban development are also included, such as increasing the amount of free space and giving rise to urban areas determined by a particular approach to designing a city. Applying these standards converts bed place into the true measure of tourism (Navalón García and Martínez Pérez, 1999), as it is set as the basic reference for the surface area of green spaces, pools and sports facilities, etc. of a tourist accommodation, while also applying a specific urban planning format.

Applying this public strategy of classifying or rating tourist accommodations on a territorial scale has some strengths and weaknesses. However, it is not easy to find a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of such strategies because, among other issues, the public administration seems disinterested in measuring the consequences of their decisions, instead focussing on whether the formal legal requirements are being complied with. Moreover, whenever such assessments have been carried out, the discussion has been limited to the effectiveness of the implementation. This is why, beyond such purely mechanical responses, there are currently no studies or technical reports that specifically examine the positive or negative effects of such approaches. Evidently, these circumstances make any work analyzing this material relevant and timely.

With this in mind, the objective of our work is to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of applying strategies that regulate standards for accommodations in coastal tourism areas in the Canary Islands (Spain). Our working hypothesis is that the degree of success of a public programme or policy must be assessed by examining the results of its implementation, keeping in mind that the relationship between quality and standards is no longer linear because of the development of internet applications and virtual platforms. For this reason, we used an explanatory case study methodology. An “inter-case” comparison
has been chosen, because the object of analysis (public policy applying tourism standards) has changed over time; furthermore, a content analysis approach was selected so that the subject of this research is the process of implementing this kind tourism policy. The result is a systematization of the process in stages.

2. The process of applying accommodation standards in coastal tourism areas in the Canary Islands

2.1 First stage (1986-1994). Regulating minimum sizes of the structural elements of tourism accommodations

The regulation of tourist accommodations has traditionally been subject to the establishment of standards that have conditioned their physical characteristics to a lesser or greater degree. Briefly, the first norms regulating hotel development in Spain date back to 8 April 1939, with the approval of an order to make provisions in force at the time regulating the hotel industry more effective and to define the National Tourism Service’s competence over this material. Through this order, the administration specified that the service had competence over authorization and inspection, as well as the creation of categories, which would depend on the provision of certain services that necessarily conditioned the physical structure of the establishment. This public intervention on the physical characteristics of the establishments consisted in setting requirements for the percentage of the surface area that each of the regulated elements should occupy, in accordance with Order 14 of June 1957, regulating the hotel industry.

These standards were translated into square metres by the Order of 17 January 1986, regulating apartments, bungalows and similar accommodations. The same occurred later for hotels with the Order of 19 July 1968, classifying hotel establishments. In this way, the physical characteristics of the establishments were gradually regulated, with different parameters applied to hotels and other kinds of accommodations. These standards were completed by Decree 3,787/1970, of 19 December, regulating the minimum infrastructure required to avoid the irreparable deterioration and discredit of the Spanish tourism offer, and by specific regulations such as the Order of 25 September 1979, on fire prevention in tourist establishments, which was passed in response to the devastation caused by the fire in the Corona de Aragón Hotel (Velasco González, 2004).

In this context, in 1977 work was carried out in response to:

[...] the need expressed by the General Sub-directorate of Tourism Businesses and Activities to create an internal document that explained the criteria and objectives of the requisites for planning tourism developments in general (Lamela, Moliní and Salgado, 2011).

Although Royal Decree 1346/1976, of 9 April, which approved the consolidated text of the Law on Land-Use and Urban Planning, established that all types of real estate development were required to comply with its regulations, in reality, it was considered to refer only to compact urban environments, not tourist areas (Frechilla et al., 1977, p. 7). That is why it recommended density, buildability and amenity standards. It established gross maximum densities for land dedicated to tourism in diverse territorial settings:

- 75 inhabitants per hectare in insular environments;
- 50 inhabitants per hectare in coastal and inland areas; and
- 25 inhabitants per hectare in mountain areas.

Greater density was allowed on the islands because they have less land and set a lower density in mountains because of the elevated reservation of public free space required there.
The gross buildability in tourist areas, according to geographic location, would be 0.8 m$^3$/m$^2$ in island regions; 0.6 m$^3$/m$^2$ in coastal and inland areas; and 0.3 m$^3$/m$^2$ in mountain areas. Regarding accommodations, they set maximum net densities on plots of land depending on the classification: 20 homes per hectare or 100 inhabitants per hectare for detached single-family homes; and 66 homes per hectare or 330 inhabitants per hectare for apartments. Finally, they specified different development potential on plots of land according to classifications: 1 m$^3$/m$^2$ for detached single-family homes; 3 m$^3$/m$^2$ for single-family row houses; and 3 m$^3$/m$^2$ for flats.

The state administration updated the regulations for non-hotel accommodations in 1982 and for hotels in 1985. However, neither of these two regulations was in force for long. After the Spanish Constitution was approved in 1978, the competences over planning and promotion of tourism were transferred to the autonomous communities, relegating state regulations on this material to supplemental law. In this context, the first formal normalization of the physical standards of accommodations located in tourism areas in the Canaries was seen in Decree 149/1986, 9 October, on the organization of hotel establishments, and Decree 23/1989, 15 February, on the organization of tourism apartments, both dealing with the establishment of tourism standards. Both decrees were focussed on improving the “quality” of tourist accommodations, mainly by regulating the physical elements related to their construction (Simancas and García, 2010), as can be seen in the preamble to Decree 149/1986:

[...] increasing the quality of the establishments, is manifested in the requirement for better minimum conditions in accordance with their category, both in terms of minimum surface area of the accommodation units and in the services they must provide.

Although the criteria were conceived as requisites for the classification of hotel establishments (hotels and apartment hotels) and non-hotel establishments (apartments, bungalows and villas), in practice, they implied common and minimum determinations for the physical dimensions of different structural elements of tourist accommodations (room size, percentage of green areas or sports facilities, etc.), the classification and technical requisites of room amenities and the supplies and some of the services they provide. In reality, they became direct requirements for the construction of tourist accommodation establishments, and the public administration monitored that they were complied with. In this sense, these physical quality parameters were measured by categories whose fundamental purpose was to provide customers a basic reference, a rating, which they could use to choose accommodations without knowing their specific characteristics.

The physical parameters focussed on defining the sizes of rooms and common areas (Tables I and II). Greater attention was paid to elements related to tourist accommodations, relegating other amenities, such as solariums, terraces, pools, sports facilities, open areas or green spaces, to the background; standards for pools, solariums and sports facilities were only set for non-hotel establishments (Table II). Also not set were a minimum size for plots of land, a limit to the ratio between open areas and built areas or the number of floors, relegating their regulation to the urban planning legislation that was in force, namely, Law 19/1975, 2 May, on the reform of the Land and Urban Planning Law, Royal Decree 1346/1976, 9 April, approving the Consolidated Text of the Land and Urban Planning law, Royal Decree 2159/1978, 23 de June, establishing the Urban Planning Regulation, Royal Decree Real Decree 2187/1978, 23 June, approving the Urban Discipline Regulation, and Royal Decree 3288/1978, 25 August, approving the Urban Management Regulation. All these norms were inserted into a context in which building “vertical” tourist accommodations had been viewed
### Table 1. Minimum surface area requirements of hotel establishments set by Decree 149/1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Five-star Hotels</th>
<th>Four-star Hotels</th>
<th>Three-star Hotels</th>
<th>Two-star Hotels</th>
<th>One-star Hotels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apartment-hotel</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Apartment-hotel</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Apartment-hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooms ($m^2$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singles*</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubles*</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suites**</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lounge-dining area</td>
<td>2 m²/bed place</td>
<td>18 m²</td>
<td>1.75 m²/bed place</td>
<td>16 m²</td>
<td>14 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only lounge</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>12 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% in relation to bed places)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Note:**  
*Includes bedroom, bathroom and balcony  
**Includes bedroom, sitting area, bathroom and balcony  

**Source:** Decree 149/1986
positively. In this sense, the physical dimensions were generally in accordance with the parameters of tourist accommodations built in the 1970s and 1980s.


2.2 Second stage (1995-2012). The establishment of density standards for plots of land used for tourism and accommodation establishment amenities

2.2.1 The process of establishing tourism standards. Based on the tourism ratios contemplated in the pioneering legislation of the Balearic Islands, specifically the Cladera Decrees (1984 and 1987) and Law 7/1988, 1 June, on transitory measures of organizing hotels and tourist establishments, Gran Canaria’s Territorial Planning Law (Plan Insular de Ordenación), approved by Decree 7/1995, 27 January, incorporated the concept of “net density”. This was understood as the “basic factor in the quality of tourism products” (Article 30) applied to all construction or urban planning projects. It set the square metres of the surface area of buildable land per bed place or per accommodation unit with kitchen, which, according to the type of accommodation (hotel or apartment) or territorial context (northern coast or southern area of Gran Canaria, that is, consolidated coastal tourism area or not), oscillated between 100 and 70 m². Although the Chamber for Contentious Administrative Proceedings of the High Court of Justice of the Canary Islands (Sentences 8 and 9 of January 1995) declared Decree 7/1995 invalid, arguing, among other things, that it was infringing on the competence of municipalities, its later sentence, 1064/1999, 1 July, stated the contrary.

Law 7/1995, 5 April, on tourism planning in the Canary Islands, modified by Law 7/1997, abrogated by Law 5/1999, 15 March, which is still in force, once again alluded to the need to preserve the quality of accommodation establishments (Article 44). To do so, it called for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Five stars</th>
<th>Four stars</th>
<th>Three stars</th>
<th>Two stars</th>
<th>One star</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rooms (m²)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single rooms*</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double rooms*</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studios (bedroom + Sitting-dining room + kitchen)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens Bungalow (%)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villa (%)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concierge – reception</td>
<td>50 m²</td>
<td>40 m²</td>
<td>35 m²</td>
<td>20 m²</td>
<td>20 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pools**</td>
<td>1.50 m²/bed place</td>
<td>1 m²/bed place</td>
<td>0.75 m²/bed place</td>
<td>0.50 m²/bed place</td>
<td>0.50 m²/bed place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solarium***</td>
<td>3 m²</td>
<td>2.50 m²</td>
<td>2 m²</td>
<td>1.50 m²</td>
<td>1.50 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum surface area</td>
<td>100 m²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** *Bedroom + sitting-dining room + kitchen + bathroom + balconies; **Minimum surface area: 50-400 m², with larger areas optional. Optional in establishments with less than ten accommodation units; ***Minimum surface area: 75-500 m²/bed place, with larger areas optional.

**Source:** Decree 23/1989

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Table II. Minimum surface area requirements of non-hotel establishments set by Decree 23/1989
regulations on several aspects that could be separated into two general groups: the first group was related to different standards applicable to tourism development and, in general, to land used for tourism; the second was related to defining the objectives, criteria and requisites that had to be covered by urban and territorial planning laws to guarantee the effective and correct implementation of the different provisions required. In addition, it set a minimum accommodation ratio standard in relation to the net plot at 60 m²/bed place for newly built accommodations; in this way, the elevated occupation densities (30/50 m² of plot per bed space, which implied 100 bed places/hectare) that had predominated to that point (Cáceres Morales and Pescador Monagas, 2001) were modified so that now, the minimum size of a plot for a new hotel with 1,000 beds is 60,000 m², of which at least 7,000 and 2,000 m² must be destined to green spaces and sports facilities, respectively, and could not be built taller than five stories. This substantially modified the earlier situation, which had maximized land usage by producing accommodation infrastructures that occupied smaller plots of lands (less than 0.5 hectares) and designed as vertical towers of more than five stories, in some cases, reaching up to 10; this explains how the occupation density was at 30-40 m²/bed, which averaged out to more than 100 bed places/hectare (García Cruz, 2014).

Later, Decree 10/2001, 22 January, regulating tourism standards, was inserted into the process of regulating tourist accommodations and land used for tourism that had been initiated by the Government of the Canary Islands with the enactment of Decree 4/2001, 12 January, which stipulated the creation of General Planning Standards and Tourism Standards, informally known as the “Canary Islands Tourism Moratorium”. Although it was initially proposed because of the need to modulate the extraordinary expectations of growth in tourist accommodations, in practice, it was revealed as a strategy to convert the tourism model in the Canaries (Simancas Cruz, 2015) articulated in three interdependent pillars (García Márquez, 2007): the sustainable transformation of the tourism model, the limitation of growth in accommodations and the efficient use of public and private space.

The Decree 10/2001 has become a considerable force in the process of regulating the accommodation and infrastructures ratio applicable to tourism land and, by extension, tourism planning, in the measure that, as stated in its preamble:

[...] it sets reasonable limits to growth and land occupation, in this way guaranteeing the development of a sustainable tourism structure with the goal of finding the necessary balance between the need to adapt infrastructure to the constantly growing population and the scarcity of resources and provisions.

To this end, the decree establishes four kinds of standards:

1. **Tourism density**: This defines the minimum net surface area of a plot needed to build each place for tourist accommodations. Thus, it established minimum standards for square metres of land needed to build each bed space: while it maintained the 60 m² of minimum land set by Law 7/1995 for newly built establishments, it added 50 m² for building renovation. It attempted to establish low densities in land that had not yet been built up by limiting the number of new bed places allowed per buildable plot, insofar as it directly set a net density (understood as a tourist ratio) for new authorizations for hotel construction. In this way, it introduced various proportions of accommodation/provisions and amenities for newly occupied areas, thereby becoming the variable that controlled authorized gross density and its consequent relationship with net density, established globally.

2. **Complementary equipment**: This determines the minimum reserves that tourist accommodation establishments must maintain.
(3) **Infrastructure and services:** This establishes the minimum levels that new tourist developments must have.

(4) **Standards:** These are standards relative to general urban planning rules on designing and creating a tourist development related to open spaces, the road network and facilities and its maintenance.

To some degree, Decree 10/2001 resolved the gaps in regulations left by Law 7/1995 regarding tourism standards. It also satisfied the need to set general deliberation criteria to determine the minimum density standard and its application to delimited groups of plots that had been widely demanded by all sectors involved, as well as setting minimum parameters for the necessary infrastructure and services, applicable to all land used for tourism. In this way, consistent with the experience in the Balearic Islands, the tourist ratio is a measure that has its equivalent in terms of urban planning (surface area per plot) and, hence, in terms of density; however, as Socias Camacho (2001, p. 85) astutely pointed out:

[... ] the tourist ratio –understood as the minimum surface area of buildable land per bed place – and density –understood as inhabitants per hectare – are equivalent parameters, but they are not exactly the same.

Regarding material planning requirements, these standards must be respected by urban planning – at the municipal scale – insofar as they involve an obligatory, but not directly applicable structural requirements. Although not an instrument to intervene in the real estate market, setting these tourism standards has conditioned the how plots can be used, in the sense that the competent administration acquires the power to intervene in this area. Implementing these standards has differentiated urban tourism areas from non-tourism areas. At the same time, they will provide orientation for urban planning, conditioning the urban model of tourist areas, as well as reduce the freedom with which planners work and, for that matter, their authority to plan (García De Enterría and Parejo Alfonso, 1981).

Naturally, the tourism standards in Decree 10/2001 define the minimum parameters of island accommodation models set in territorial planning regulations in every insular area (at the supra-municipal scale). For example, Fuerteventura’s Territorial Planning Law (*Plan Insular de Ordenación*), which was enacted by Decree 100/2001, 2 April, and Decree 55/2003, 30 April, which definitively approved the requirements regarding tourism, establishes that new hotels must have at least a four-star rating, with a minimum built area of 70 and 35 m$^2$ for net accommodation uses per unit and bed place, respectively, and a minimum of 60 m$^2$/bed place, no matter what the category. It also applies the condition that the maximum global density must be less than 60 inhabitants per hectare or a maximum buildability of 0.20 m$^2$/m$^2$. It establishes that the type of construction will be detached single-family residence, allowing a maximum of 15 per cent of semi-detached houses and another 15 per cent row houses, while homes of less than 90 m$^2$ built are not allowed.

All of the physical parameters in Decree 10/2001 must be complied with to obtain the required prior administrative authorization contemplated by Article 24 of Decree 7/1995; this authorization verifies and determines a tourist accommodation establishment’s compatibility with the applicable territorial tourism planning and sectoral norms and determines the validity of the building licence. In this way, compliance with the tourism standards became mandatory to obtain a municipal building licence to build new tourist accommodations and also to renovate existing ones. As Sola Teyssiere (2007) points out regarding the Balearic Island’s tourism ratio, the application of such standards has allowed the public administration to control how plots are used for tourism through the granting of the authorization, instead of what had happened prior to that moment regarding the
planning parameters set for larger spaces and which are now overwhelmed in practice by pressure from tourism.

Decree 187/2001, 3 October, modified the standards defined by Decree 10/2001, which must be complied with by five-stars hotels in accordance with the provision of Article 2.4.e) 0.2) of Law 6/2001, 23 July, on urgent measures in territorial and tourism planning in the Canaries. The latter was the third law of the first stage of the tourism moratorium in the Canaries, which allowed unlimited construction of five-star hotels and which, in contrast to Decree 4/2001, no longer viewed them as a complement to leisure, sports or health activities or facilities, with the only condition that they are adapted to the requirements established in Decree 187/2001, enacted in compliance with the mandate established in the Second Final Provision of Law 6/2001; this was due to the fact that this types of tourist establishments are considered an essential part of the strategy to rate accommodations inherent to the tourism moratorium. Among the most significant changes are setting 15 and 3 m²/bed surface for gardens and sports areas, respectively, an increase of 25 m² in the minimum area of the bedroom, implying a minimum size of 35.5 m² for the accommodation unit, and making it mandatory for at least 15 per cent of the accommodation units to be suites, with a minimum surface of 38 m² (including bedroom, bathroom and balcony).

Finally, Decree 142/2010, 4 October, approving the Tourist Accommodation Activity Regulation, modified Decree 10/2001 (Tables I and IV). Its enactment was inserted into the deregulation process advocated by the European Union’s competition policy, specifically, the partial transposition of our national planning by Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, 12 December 2006, on services in the internal market (EU OJ L 376, of 27.12.06), incorporated into the internal Spanish legal system by Law 17/2009, 23 November, on the free access and exercise of service activities (Tables III and IV).

2.2.2. The effects of setting a density standard on the construction of new tourist accommodations: the appearance of “horizontal hotels”. Among the effects of applying the standards of Decree 10/2001, we can highlight two effects: the appearance of “horizontal hotels”, with the consequent increase in the size of plots required to build them, which, in turn, has favoured a certain “privileged group” who own such plots.

Regarding the first effect, the territorial implementation of the minimum standard of square metres of plot/bed place and of parameters related to the infrastructures, amenities, buildability and heights have generated a link between the capacity and physical dimensions of new tourist accommodation establishments. In so doing, small- and medium-sized developments (between 100 and 500 bed places), which required less capital to build (Cáceres Morales and Pescador Monagas, 2001), gave way to establishments with larger accommodation capacities.

This has led to a change in the morphology of the ground plans for tourist accommodations, as well as in the distribution of uses by which plots are organized, causing the vertical tower building model that had been predominant to be abandoned (Figure 1). In its place, a new building model has emerged, which, in their attempt to imitate “Caribbean resorts”, we have denominated “horizontal hotels”. These usually take up an entire block, while having an irregular layout, a vertical limit of five stories, a larger built up area (due to the increase in the size of the accommodation units and common areas) and an elevated use (around 33 per cent) of the unbuilt land for green areas, pools, solarium and sports and recreation facilities. The fundamental reason for the spatial distribution of the physical elements is to make it possible to concentrate on the different productive processes of the tourism aggregate (Russo and Segre, 2009), in that these tourist accommodations must contain a broad, diverse, innovative, specialized and differentiated set of integrated products and services. Furthermore, consistent with what Blasco Esteve (2002) pointed out about the
### Table III.
Comparison between the minimum sizes required for hotel rooms by Decree 149/1986 and decree 142/2010 (in m²)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubles</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suites</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
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</table>

**Sources:** Decrees 149/1986 and 10/2001
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of standard</th>
<th>Element built</th>
<th>Decree 10/2001</th>
<th>Decree 142/2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>Minimum net surface area of the plot per bed space</td>
<td>60 m²</td>
<td>50 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conventional in renovation areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>Parking facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Driveways to allow the easy arrival of vehicles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool</td>
<td>Terraces dedicated to solarium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific place for waste containers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface area of garden green spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface area of sports areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure and services</td>
<td>Supply of potable water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and development of the tourist establishment</td>
<td>Tourist accommodation establishment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum number of stories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Decrees 10/2001 and 142/2010. Created by authors
tourism ratio in the Balearic Islands, the standards in Decree 10/2001 introduce a quality requisite directed at providing more space and, therefore, greater comfort for the customers. On top of everything else, the type of architecture used has attempted to avoid the standard, undifferentiated product that had been built until then, as well as international stereotypes lacking personality or identity (Cáceres Morales and Pescador Monagas, 2001).

This new kind of hotel has led to a significant increase in the average size of the plots occupied by new establishments. The average size has been increasing since the middle of the 1990s, after the enactment of Decree 10/2001, translating to significant growth in the area occupied by accommodation establishments (Figure 2); therefore, an establishment that occupied on average 0.5 hectares in the 1970s and over a hectare in the 1980s now occupies plots as large as 3 and 4 hectares; in this way, a single horizontal hotel occupies the same space as seven or eight establishments from the 1970s (García Cruz, 2014). This explains a change in tendency: although the number of tourist accommodation establishments that were built during the first and third tourism boom was greater than the occupied area, the accommodation model at the end of the 1990s and therefore what was developed during the third tourism boom, is characterized by the incorporation of fewer accommodations, but of greater size (Figure 3).

However, the smaller surface areas of unoccupied land, the empty spaces where new infrastructures could be developed and plot structures whose average size was too small made it difficult to apply tourism standards to new tourism projects that wanted to fit into the existing urban layout. We must keep in mind that the average size of a vacant lot in the 36 tourism areas in the Canaries is 0.53 hectares, well below the needs for the new model of tourism accommodations (García Cruz, 2014). Only four tourist areas have vacant plots that average more than 1 hectare in size (Figure 4). Decree 10/2010 tried to resolve this problem by making it possible to obtain special dispensation from the density standard (Article 4).

The need for more space made it necessary to build new horizontal hotels in areas adjacent to or near consolidated tourist areas or in other, less congested municipalities. The
increased plot sizes derived from the requirements of density standards were a significant driver behind the fact that the surface area occupied by tourist accommodations was the third largest form of production in tourist areas during the second stage of the tourism boom (23 per cent), behind the complementary offer of golf courses (13 per cent) and residential
areas (18 per cent) (Simancas Cruz et al., 2011; García Cruz, 2014). Therefore, it contributed to an intense increase (56.6 per cent) in surface area occupied by tourist areas on islands of the Canary Archipelago that have a consolidated tourism industry, between 1998 and 2009 (García Cruz, 2014), producing unequal situations, depending on the island (Figure 5).

This territorial expansion is due to the fact that municipal public administrations have been “obsessed” with creating new tourist areas as a strategy to rejuvenate consolidated tourist areas (González Hernández, 2008) and so habitually prioritize investment in new infrastructures for those areas. It has also been favoured by the enormous, in relative terms, amount of land available on the periphery of consolidated tourist areas or in municipalities that until that moment had not been exploited for tourism, which is better suited for building the new type of tourist establishments in demand. This has led to the creation of new tourist developments and a consequent increase in the offer of tourist accommodations, with better operating conditions consistent with the physical parameters outlined in Decree 10/2001. The result was a widespread “scorched earth” strategy, which led to a highly paradoxical

![Figure 4. Average size (ha) of empty plots in tourist areas in the Canaries (2009)](image)

![Figure 5. Growth rate of land occupied by tourism activity between 1998 and 2009 on islands with a consolidated tourism industry)](image)

**Source:** García Cruz (2014)
situation: while the newer tourist developments “colonized” new areas, the older ones, with worse operating conditions and less competitive, were located in the most desirable areas of the coast for tourism.

In any case, this growth in tourist areas contradicted a strategy of both the Territorial and Tourism Planning Directives approved by Law 19/2003, which was to reduce new land consumption and reuse land in areas where tourism was already consolidated. In this sense, the physical standards established in Decree 10/2001 contradict the approach of Territorial Planning Directive 77 regarding “territorial efficiency”, in that land usage policies should avoid promoting high consumption models and endeavour for compact and dense actions and implantation in underused urban settings. It also repudiates Territorial Planning Directives 66 and 69, which seek to avoid new land consumption through planning that “minimizes land consumption and prioritizes the efficient use of land that is already occupied through renovation and reuse”. It also enters into conflict with territorial sustainability, because the resulting accommodation model consumes more key environmental resources (energy, water, etc.) and generates a greater volume of waste.

In the same way, the physical standards set forth in Decree 10/2001 favour the colonization of new land in detriment to the renovation of existing accommodation establishments and, therefore, strategies to create new tourist areas to rejuvenate consolidated tourist areas. As mentioned, this was favoured by the relatively huge amount of land available in the “peripheries” of consolidated tourist areas or in municipalities that had not yet been used for tourism and that were suitable for new tourist developments (Figure 6).

Figure 6.
Evolution of the age of tourist accommodation establishments in Costa Adeje (Tenerife)

Source: Urban cadastre, created by authors
The second effect of the standards set by Decree 10/2001 is related to their consideration as urban parameters rather than tourism parameters (Blasco Esteve, 2002; Sola Teyssiere, 2007), which was a technique to effectively implement limits consistent with the tourism moratorium strategy in the Canaries (Simancas Cruz, 2015). More specifically, because these urban standards essentially delineate the legal framework that defines private ownership of land, they forced private developers to abide by a particular building model. In other words, the application of these standards did the opposite of “liberating” the building model; by affecting, among other aspects, the size of the plot or the time and money needed to develop land and build a tourist accommodation, the strategy has limited the elasticity of the accommodations on offer. This was an example of the technical and political sector coercively implementing criteria; a decision made by public authorities to intervene in land usage in a way that directly impacted free enterprise, curtailing its creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as restricting the constitutional right to property (land usages) (Villar Rojas, 2004), thereby affecting business equality and freedom (tourism activity) on the whole and, in particular, the ability to freely access and remain in the market. This explains the decision to replace small- and medium-sized promotions (between 100 and 500 bed places), which required risking smaller amounts of capital for high occupancy hotels derived from the application of Decree 10/2001. Of course, this change required greater amounts of capital that only a certain kind of operator was capable of investing. The urban standards can be considered a discretionary filter set by established businesses to make it more difficult for competitors to enter the market, affecting, above all, smaller developers who could not undertake building large hotels, mainly because of the size of the investment required and the scarcity of plots of land large enough to meet the legal standards. All of this favoured large hotel companies, in so far as they could assume the large investment and also had access to plots large enough to comply with the standards.

From this perspective, this can be viewed as an example of a group of businessmen – and therefore, of entrepreneurship – having influence over the executive or legislative branch of the government, giving rise to a case of “regulatory capture”. In this case, real estate developers, the majority with large stakes in the tourism market and access to information that their competitors did not have, had already acquired plots of sufficient size before the size requirements had even materialized. In this regard, just as occurred with the legislation on this material in the Balearic Islands (Socias Camacho, 2009), the application of the density ratio defined in Decree 10/2001 generated the need for larger amounts of land and, despite the large offer of plots zoned for tourism, which had at the time generated the need to implement tourism moratorium (Simancas Cruz, 2016), the price of land rose, because there was a scarcity of plots with the right dimensions.

All of this meant that Decree 10/2001 exclusively favoured the interests of a certain sector of the tourism industry, big developers who had taken part in a private consultation. These actors became a “privileged group”, each with individual interests and areas of power, who would behave as “definitive stakeholders” (Mitchell et al., 1997) with decisive influence on local authorities, even defining the political agenda on this material. In other words, they acted as lobbies whose conduct approximated that of an oligopoly. Because of the servitude of political actors who had the capacity to intervene, this situation resulted in the subordination of collective interests to private ones, guided by the logic of market opportunities, to the point that they even interfered with the principle of non-discrimination of economic operators. The regulatory process has favoured the most influential offerors, specifically, large, specialized companies with the capacity to manage highly skilled sectors. Those who have not been able to adapt to the new conditions defined by Decree 10/2001
have been forced out of the market, while those who already had powerful positions have been protected and further enriched.

2.3 Third stage (2013-today). The reduction of plot density standards for tourist accommodations undergoing building renovation

Requiring prior authorization from the competent administration (Cabildo) to renovate the buildings of tourist accommodations (article 21 of Decree 10/2001) became a constraint to their viability, despite the fact that, as mentioned earlier, it had been intended to be one of the main pillars of the tourism moratorium. This was due to the fact that the majority of the establishments built before 1995 did not meet the density standard; according to the Evaluation Report of Law 2/2013, October 2014, on tourism renovation and modernization (Government of the Canary Islands), the standards common at that time ranged between 20 and 30 m² of plot per bed place. This discrepancy with the provisions of the new urban planning directives caused a large number of establishments to be classified as “unregulated”. So, in general, they could only carry out work to preserve habitability or work related to the original usage of the accommodation establishment.

A paradigmatic example of this situation can be seen in the municipality of Puerto de la Cruz (Tenerife): if we consider the plots of land covered by the 2000 Urban Cadastre, 59.4 per cent (4,503 plots) are no larger than 1 hectare, with recreational space limited to small sports areas, green spaces, small pools and other features (Figures 3 and 4). In these cases, the application of the tourism standards makes it impossible to build new tourist accommodation establishments or to renovate existing ones (Figures 7 and 8).

Source: Dorta Rodriguez and García Cruz (2010)
As a consequence, applying these urban standards came into conflict with the tourism moratorium in the Canaries: while the moratorium policy sought to limit the expansion of land used for tourism and the massive growth of new bed places, the norms that were enacted to classify accommodations created an enormous obstacle to renovating accommodations that were built in tourist areas prior to 2001. There was an attempt to correct this conflict in Tourism Planning Directive 19, which stated that if the urban planning rules in force in a tourist area allowed total buildability to be increased, it could be applied to a plot that was to be substituted without having to meet the standards of Decree 10/2001, as the number of bed places was not increased.

The situation changed during the third stage of the tourism moratorium in the Canaries (2009-present day). This began with the enactment of Law 6/2009, 6 May, on urgent measures in territorial planning for the revitalization and planning of tourism, which partially modified Law 19/2003, and was later substituted by Law 2/2013, 29 May, on the renovation and modernization of tourism in the Canaries, which, in turn, was modified by Law 9/2015, 27 April. This set of laws had a common goal: to incentivize renovation of tourist accommodations by removing obstacles to this process (Simancas Cruz, 2016). To this end, Law 2/2013 made it possible to reduce the density standard of tourism land for establishments that renovate their structures in two circumstances contemplated in the corresponding Modernization, Improvement and Increased Competitiveness Plans that had originally been stipulated by Law 6/2009:

- The density may be reduced to the standard at the time the accommodation establishment was authorized or, if more favourable in the interested party’s judgement, to that which was in force at the time the renovation was authorized for.
establishments that will improve their rating without increasing the number of bed places and buildability.

- To a minimum of 50 m²/bed place for establishments with a current standard between 50 and 60 m²/bed place and whose renovation project involves increasing the number of bed places and built-up area.

These measures were added to the dispensations contemplated by Article 35 of Decree 142/2010, which allows non-compliance with certain standards, when justified by a report by the competent authority of the regional government.

Evidently, this decision was made to favour the renovation of tourist accommodation establishments opened before Law 7/1995 came into force. In addition, it was an attempt to allow a significant number of establishments to shed the “unregulated” status initially generated by Decree 10/2001, insofar as they had the right to the density standard in force when they were originally built or, if more favourable, the density standard in force at the moment the renovation was authorized. This exoneration from certain tourism parameters facilitated access to the urban incentives contemplated in Law 6/2009.

3. Discussion and conclusions

Our analysis verified that the final objective of setting standards for tourist establishments was to improve their quality by defining the minimum physical dimensions of the establishment’s structural elements (room size, percentage of green spaces and sports facilities, etc.). Because of that, they passed from regulating the minimum dimensions of structural elements of tourist accommodations to the regulation of density standards. This made it possible to improve the rating of tourism establishments.

However, the “quality tourism” euphemism, which has been frequently used to justify the application of these standards in the past, is based on a conceptual error that judges the quality of a tourist accommodation establishment according to its rating and its minimum physical characteristics. There are several reasons why we believe that physical parameters should be replaced as a rating criterion for accommodation establishments.

First of all, quantifiable criteria that exclusively consider the physical or operational parameters of a tourist establishment are no longer sufficient to provide quality service that meets the needs and expectations of customers. In this sense, it is not enough to set standards for surface area parameters or essential amenities when organizing new tourist developments, but rather it is the qualitative aspect that must be addressed. At the same time, a quality tourist accommodation establishment is not obtained merely by reducing density, which constitutes the significant standard. Moreover, the problems of low quality in tourist areas are not only caused by excessive density. According to the 2014 report published by the Spanish Confederation of Hotels and Tourist Accommodations on the performance of hotels from 2008 to 2013, those that have specialized and offered a differentiated service have positioned themselves among a specific objective public, thereby allowing them to increase rates and profits. However, the way tourism standards have been set in the Canaries has committed the common error of overlooking the customer’s (subjective) perception and, above all, the importance of meeting their expectations, which can be measured through qualitative and intangible criteria (service, personalized treatment, etc.). In this sense, quality of service is a key factor in differentiating what an establishment offers the client and, hence, in creating competitive advantages in tourism (Hudson et al., 2004). In this regard, price no longer depends on the star rating of a tourist establishment, but rather on the services provided, and the quality of service is measured simply by
comparing what customers expect with what they receive; in other words, to achieve quality, the expectations of the customers must be satisfied and exceeded.

Second, the relationship between urban standards and quality is no longer linear. That is why we believe that Decree 142/2010 perpetuates an out-of-date legal framework that is disconnected from a dynamic tourism market. Today, tourists rate accommodation establishments by the prestige of their brand or the diversity of services and experiences (entertainment, sensations, emotions, etc.) they provide. These experiences play an important role in producing customer satisfaction and loyalty to a hotel (Fuentes Medina et al., 2016) that guests are willing to pay more for their stay, with the understanding that they will be able to experience certain emotions. For example, some tour operators have substituted star ratings for “concepts” by developing unique, specialized and thematic tourism products. For example, based on a GfK study, in 2010 TUI group began concentrating other tour operator brands under its own segmented brands; it consolidated hotel brands such as Sensimar (adults only), Magic Life (all-inclusive with sports activities) or Best Family (for families with children); and it has begun to develop others, such as Lifestyle (modern hotels near nightlife areas offering quality entertainment and restaurants), Nature (for families who want nature vacations) and Scene (downtown hotels for 30-45-year-old customers who want more affordable accommodations with breakfast available until midday). Another example is Thomas Cook, which has created four brands of thematic hotels: Sentido, Smartline, Sunwing and SunConnect.

Third, the main reason for setting physical quality parameters that can be measured by a rating system for accommodation establishments, to provide a basic reference for customers, is no longer necessary, given the amount of easily accessible real-time information freely available through multiple independent channels based on the 2.0 paradigm, information technologies and communication (Buhalis, 1998), as well as applications and virtual platforms (Sigala, 2017). Online reputation and positive reviews posted by customers on social networks have a direct impact on sales; in this respect, Anderson (2012) pointed out that the experiences of other guests is the primary factor behind choosing a hotel, above even location and price. Reviews affect the decision-making process before, during and after taking a trip, and this includes choosing accommodations. At the same time, accommodation establishments are starting to have access to more information about their customers and are adapting their messages to new consumer demands (Ayeh et al., 2013).

Finally, because these standards involve non-derogable minimum criteria that are usually more stringent than those that they replace, their application in the Canaries has resulted in the creation of unsurmountable obstacles or handicaps that condition the processes set in motion when tourist accommodation establishments do not comply with them: they are classified as “unregulated”, contingent on individual negotiations over exceptions and waivers or they require legal reforms that acknowledge the particularity of certain cases (for example, the establishments that were built following the parameters of earlier regulations) or areas (such as accommodations associated with projects to renovate a certain tourist area). This situation affects a large number of tourist accommodations that are trying to renovate but are unable to do so because of their physical structure, regardless of the quality and success of their business models. The same occurs with new accommodations that are being built, in that they require plots of land of minimum dimensions. Therefore, to the degree to which the tourism standards seem to have been designed more for the construction of new accommodations, they have been revealed to be handicaps to the renovation of existing accommodations. Indeed, until the enactment of Law 2/2013, this put at risk the viability of this key strategy of any policy that sought to improve the competitiveness of consolidated tourist areas.
Ultimately, we suggest that it is necessary to rethink the strategies to rate tourist accommodations by legally regulated physical standards. Today, the quality of an accommodation establishment is measured by intangible parameters, such as the services provided and the experiences they generate.

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Further reading


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Tourism and mobile devices: provenance of academic research through a bibliometric study
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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to outline a map of all the research that exists on mobile technology and tourism archived in the two main databases worldwide (Web of Science and Scopus). Accordingly, with the identification of all the scientific articles that deal with both mobile technology and tourism, the authors seek to ascertain the evolution of mobile technology in the tourism sector through the years, countries, universities and authors and determine the various collaborations brought about between authors, universities, institutions and/or companies in various research projects. Finally, it also allows the authors to distinguish the main topics under study within the scope of ‘mobile tourism’.

Design/methodology/approach – A mixed methodology has been carried out. The search focused on the principal databases of bibliographic references and citations of periodical publications, such as articles from scientific journals, books and other types of printed material. Once the results were obtained in the respective databases, it was necessary to be able to work with them. In this respect, the authors had to extract the relevant data and dump it in a bibliographic reference manager, for which they chose Mendeley. After this, the tabulation of data was performed in Excel and tables and graphs were created from all the data collected.

Findings – The main results obtained and analyzed are the number of articles per year, countries and universities. In the same way, it is interesting to highlight the number of countries and universities that participate in each article under study. On the other hand, an analysis has been carried out regarding the number of articles per author, as well as the topics dealt with in the different articles.

Originality/value – This analysis reveals the role that has been played by mobile phones in tourism since the first scientific article was recorded in 2002. In this regard, in recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of articles, finally resulting in moderate figures in relation to countries (40) and universities (233) that have formed part of the subject matter under study. In contrast to other areas of research in tourism, the relevance of this subject is therefore evident, as is the need for greater background knowledge to establish research models adapted to the new reality of tourism in a world of ever-increasing mobility.

Keywords Hotel, Tourism, Smartphone, Application, Mobile device

Paper type Research paper

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1. **Introduction**

In a world in which mobile technology has evolved from being an extra complement in our lives to constituting an essential need, to such an extent that, in developed societies, this technology could be included within the first ranks of the Maslow pyramid, our interest arises in ascertaining the link that this technology has with tourism. In this respect, the research presented here aims to show what can be found together in the scientific literature on mobile technology and tourism.

First, reference has to be made as to how information technologies in tourism have grown in recent years as never before, which helps to gather client demands in a timely manner (Singh and Kasavana, 2005; Connolly and Lee, 2006; Law et al., 2009). In this respect, Law et al. (2009) indicate that ubiquity (characteristic of new information technologies, and of mobile devices in particular) helps towards providing a quality service, and therefore improves operational efficiency and costs. In addition, Law et al. (2009) state that the adoption of new information technologies in the tourism and hotel industry helps companies manage information proactively, while also positively influencing the way in which investments and decisions are made. Thus, today’s fast-paced world makes information technology an essential element in tourism for the management of competency and marketing of these companies, regardless of their size.

Within this sea of technology, information and tourism, many tourists use a smartphone or other mobile device to book a hotel, buy a flight, consult information about a location, check the weather, search for opinions on accommodation, inquire about different activities or attractions in a city and consult the different transport options to move from one place to another, and innumerable other actions that can be carried out by means of a mobile device (No and Kim, 2013; Kim and Law, 2015). In this way, the tourist of the twenty-first century is an interconnected tourist, in such a way that the whole process of the trip is recorded in the network as if it were a logbook. The internet is thus present before, during and after the trip, as mobile technology enables tourists to share their experience at any time and place (Tussyadiah, 2013).

Therefore, the growing importance of smartphones and mobile technology in tourism has made mobile communication an essential channel for companies in the sector. In this regard, it is observed that companies have increasingly paid special attention in the provision of mobile services to travelers (Stienmetz et al., 2013; Kim and Law, 2015), as this technology breaks through two important barriers, those of time and geographical location, in such a way that the tourist product or service is constantly available anywhere (Grant and O’Donohoe, 2007).

However, new information technologies suppose a benefit for not only tourism but also the customers and suppliers. Clients can search for and buy the tourist product according to the requirements that they deem appropriate (an example of this is given in the multiple mobile applications available and the various possibilities of narrowing the selection therein). On the other hand, the provider of the tourist product or service can manage and distribute without any geographical limit, thereby contributing toward the globalization and extension of its industry (Buhalis and Law, 2008; Ip et al., 2011). In the same way, the current trend that is better known as the study of “big data”, whereby greater and more continuous access to what the client demands is available through the new information technologies, helps to customize and personalize the tourism product (Niininen et al., 2007; Law et al., 2009).

However, in contrast to that stated above, Law et al. (2007) and Ip et al. (2011) indicate that, given the characteristics of the hotel sector as being a customer-oriented and service-oriented sector, it is inevitable that this industry will find it hard to appreciate the benefits and potential of new information technologies, as is often the case with small- and medium-sized companies. In this respect, Camacho-Mateos et al. (2015), show how a hotel in the city
of Seville acquires first place in the Trip Advisor ranking with a practically null Web 2.0 policy, stating that “its success lies in the off-line treatment with the public, in its ability to connect with customers and know their tastes to satisfy them to the fullest”. However, Fuchs et al. (2014) tell us that this reality is changing, as hoteliers themselves are immersed in the new concept of “big data”, whereby technology, specifically in the form of mobile devices, is becoming a major ally for obtaining diverse information on customers. In this respect, Ni et al. (2016) and Fuchs et al. (2014) explain how the value of an organization is limited to the amount of information it possesses. Highly interesting information can be obtained through mobile devices and different applications to define the commercial line of the company: information such as preferences and tastes of customers, geolocation, displacements and frequency of visits to an establishment or place.

Faced with this new scenario, many managers in the tourism sector possess inadequate knowledge regarding the new information technologies, and hence must familiarize themselves with the advantages that these tools have to offer, and must dedicate both time and effort to improving their management. In this way, managers of the tourism industry should maintain good relations with customers by using the appropriate information technologies, integrating these into the company and also by teaching and motivating employees to master these tools, at the same time as keeping up-to-date with respect to the latest technological trends (Ip et al., 2011; Law et al., 2009).

With this panorama of mobile technology in the tourism industry, we are faced with the question of how much effort has been invested in the scientific field on this subject. According to Kim and Law (2015), previous studies have shown the importance that bibliographic reviews hold in the identification of the state of research of a specific topic, that is, what has been studied, what is currently being studied and what deserves further study. The objective of our work is therefore to determine exactly what is written about mobile technology and tourism in the two main scientific databases: Web of Science and Scopus. In this respect, the work presented here helps to identify the evolution of tourism and mobile technology in scientific research, by establishing a list of those countries that are at the forefront of a topic, while helping those researchers interested in mobile technology and tourism to identify which authors, universities, institutions and companies are leaders in “mobile tourism”. Likewise, a review of the most popular topic dealt with in the articles studied is also given.

We can conclude this section by expressing the need to carry out quantitative studies on the state of this topic in certain fields of research, as this will help us determine the research needs of a specific sector (Phillips and Moutinho, 2014; Ruhanen et al., 2015).

2. Objective
This research aims to outline a map of all the research that exists on mobile technology and tourism archived in the two main databases worldwide (Web of Science and Scopus).

Accordingly, with the identification of all the scientific articles that deal with both mobile technology and tourism, we seek to ascertain the evolution of mobile technology in the tourism sector through the years, countries, universities and authors, as well as to determine the various collaborations brought about between authors, universities, institutions and/or companies in various research projects. Finally, it also allows us to distinguish the main topics under study within the scope of “mobile tourism”.

3. Status of the issue
Tourism has always been a sector at the forefront of research and has assumed changes produced in society ahead of other sectors. However, it was not until 1970 that interest in
research in tourism was raised as an economic, social and cultural phenomenon (Airey, 1979; Graburn and Jafari, 1991; van Doren et al., 1994; Echtner and Jamal, 1997; Cheng et al., 2011). In the study by Cheng et al. (2011) on the development experienced by tourist journals, they point out that more than half of these journals have debuted in the last decade, and more scientific journals have appeared every year. In this regard, Weiner (2001) suggests that the constant requirement of publication by the faculties constitutes a key factor in the proliferation of scientific journals.

On the other hand, we have recently witnessed a change in the paradigm of the business of tourism, which has been largely motivated by new technologies; thereby transforming the nature of tourism, the hotel sector, processes, companies and that of competency itself (Porter, 2001; Law and Jogaratnam, 2005; Grant and O'Donohoe, 2007; Buhalis and Law, 2008; Law et al., 2009; Ip et al., 2011; Kim and Law, 2015).

Given the circumstances described, it is inevitable that such a reality has its reflection in the scientific literature, whereby a large number of publications have been generated that deal with technology and tourism, as stated by Cheng et al. (2011). Proof of this is given in several bibliographic reviews, such as the one carried out by Law et al. (2013) on the progress and development of information technologies in the hotel sector, and that by Zeng and Gerritsen (2014), which carries out a study on everything that has been written in relation to social networks and tourism. However, according to Law et al. (2009) and Ip et al. (2011), very few reviews analyze the publications on new technologies and tourism, or on the progress of these technologies in the tourist sector; moreover, these reviews are limited, as they are reduced to only a few specific journals. This lack of research is also endorsed by other authors such as Yoo et al. (2011) and Oh et al. (2004). It should therefore be noted that, despite the efforts of certain authors, according to Law et al. (2009), there is no standardized list of journals that publish on information technologies in tourism.

Another aspect that deserves special attention when discussing new technologies and tourism is that of obsolescence: in certain cases, existing bibliographical reviews have become obsolete because of the rapidity with which the technological world changes.

On the other hand, although there are only a few revisions of the literature on new technologies and tourism, still fewer publications exist that analyze mobile technology and tourism. This circumstance is made manifest, as only one review can be found that addresses this topic. Said publication is that of the authors Kim and Law (2015), which analyzes 104 articles published between 2000 and 2013 on smartphones in tourism and hotel marketing. This review remains in the qualitative field however, since it analyzes the smartphone from the perspective of the employer and the consumer, without considering the relationships that these articles could have with the countries, universities and magazines where they are published. In fact, Kim and Law (2015) themselves indicate that, despite the growing importance of smartphones, there is a clear lack of bibliographic reviews on the use of the smartphone in the context of tourism and hotel marketing. In this respect, our study is committed to go a little further and extend the bibliometric analysis to articles that deal with tourism and any type of mobile device.

Scientific journals symbolize the development of a field of research: not only are they the showcase of new research but also they constitute a stage on which all the progress and trends of a scientific area can be observed (Cheng et al., 2011; Ip et al., 2011; Leung and Law, 2005). In this respect, the tourism sector has paid special attention in recent years to the development of its scientific journals, as stated by Cheng et al. (2011), who explain that a complete idea of the structure of the tourism sector can be obtained through academic journals. This is a field that has been studied by a large number of disciplines throughout history, in which Jafari and Ritchie (1981) identified five major areas of knowledge in the study of tourism, such as
economics, sociology, psychology, geography and anthropology, which were increasing over the years because of the multidisciplinary nature of the tourism sector until, in 2011, Cheng et al. (2011) identified up to 29 different disciplines that study tourism in their various journals, and hence there is now a greater specialization in scientific journals on tourism, with the consequent increase in their number. This proliferation of disciplines that study tourism is nothing more than a symbol of the progress that this sector has experienced.

The tourist companies’ own structure helps to define what has and has not been investigated on an issue. Thus, Ip et al. (2011), on analyzing the progress of information and communication technologies in the hotel sector through publications made between 1998 and 2008, establish seven dimensions that match the departments of a hotel: human resources and practices, security, reservations, revenue management, marketing, customer service and strategic and operations management.

Cheng et al. (2011) risk a little more and link all of the above with the variation of journal titles and their mission over the years. These authors emphasize that this evolution helps researchers understand how the tourism sector has progressed and how each discipline has been involved in this process. In this way, it has been observed how the titles of these journals have evolved from being general to more specific.

In short, it can be said that the improvement of academic journals reflects the development and progress of a scientific community (Graburn and Jafari, 1991; McKercher, 2005; Cheng et al., 2011). Along these lines, according to Sheldon (1990) and Cheng et al. (2011), a mature research field has its own journals with diverse sub-areas of knowledge, where the ideas of a specific group of researchers are revealed, who share the same values, experience and/or interests in a subject or discipline, as Burdge (1983) indicates.

On the other hand, bibliographic reviews lead to the systematization and classification of journals on a specific subject. Thus, as Korobkin (1999) and Jamal et al. (2008) establish, the rankings on tourist journals provide an incentive for the editors of journals to select certain work, but these wishes of the editors regarding the selection of certain articles can also encourage the authors to publish in their journals, thereby producing research along the same lines.

Given that this work focuses on the analysis of articles published on mobile technology and tourism from 1983 to 2015, it must be stated that although scientific papers are not the only means by which knowledge and new research is disseminated, they do gather a series of characteristics that render them indispensable in the investigation of our times. Hence, Weiner (2001) defines three principal functions of scientific journals:

1. produce, disseminate and exchange academic knowledge;
2. provide the means to evaluate research and academic work to distribute research funds; and
3. report decisions that involve agreements and promotions.

Similarly, another reason that places scientific papers as the focus of our study is that these serve as a distribution channel of knowledge that can deliver results and rigorous and impartial points of view on the matter that concerns us, as expressed by Ip et al. (2011).

Finally, it should be borne in mind that the trends in hotel marketing research journals have evolved as the reality of the hotel industry has required. Accordingly, while consumer behavior is a topic that has been addressed more consistently by tourism research over the years, issues such as social responsibility and sustainability have only recently featured in current research. However, researchers’ efforts to address clients’ emotions, perceptions and new forms of relationships through social networks remain insufficient and should be investigated profusely (Yoo et al., 2011).
4. Methodology

The proliferation of scientific and commercial articles on the subject under study has become highly evident in recent years, probably motivated by the information society in which we live and the need for communication. In this respect, and to choose the information that is indeed relevant to our analysis, a list of quality and convenience criteria were defined to select and analyze those scientific articles that will effectively address both tourism and mobile devices.

It should be qualified that, as Domingo Carrillo et al. (2014) point out, by following the line of other bibliometric studies, we have focused on the analysis of papers published in journals, in such a way that books, communications presented in congresses and other types of documents are excluded from this study. In this respect, Law et al. (2009) argue that conference proceedings, books and professional journals use a peer-review system different from those used in scientific journals, wherein multiple rounds of reviews follow one another before an article is accepted for publication.

First, we set a time horizon that would determine our search in the two main worldwide suppliers of scientific literature (Web of Science and Scopus). The year 1983 was established as a starting point, and the search was continued until 2015, the last full year before the period in which this research began to take shape (March-July 2016), to include finished years in our analysis.

Justification as to why 1983 was taken as year one involves taking into account the close link that mobile technology has with the smartphone concept, and the fact that it was in 1983 when Apple, in collaboration with the design company Frog Design, first created a landline with a touch screen interface that allowed various digital functionalities, such as saving contact information (Pastor, 2014).

Our search focused on the principal databases of bibliographic references and citations of periodical publications, such as articles from scientific journals, books and other types of printed material. These databases are the Web of Science, owned by Thomson Reuters, and Scopus, owned by Elsevier (Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad, 2015).

The search process took place over a period of four months (from 16 March, 2016 to 16 July, 2016), with the results for the analysis and selection of articles renewed monthly. The procedure used in the search for articles in the databases is presented below:

In both databases, the search was performed in an advanced manner using the following criteria:

- It was decided to search by means of keywords or topics (KEY) (TS) and in two groups of words (OR) combined in a mandatory way (AND). On the other hand, the decision regarding the final search terms was based on the objective of our study, the review of other scientific articles on tourism and new technologies, as well as the recommendations of experts in librarianship and documentation. In this way, the result of the search formula for Web of Science in the first place, and later that for Scopus, was the following:

$$TS = (\text{mobile OR smartphone OR app OR application}) \land TS = (\text{touris* OR hospitality OR hotel OR travel})$$

$$\text{KEY} (\text{mobile OR smartphone OR app OR application}) \land \text{KEY} (\text{touris* OR hospitality OR hotel OR travel})$$

- The search was carried out in all languages and in terms of articles.
- The time period was from 1983 to 2015 inclusive.
- The fourth and final step for Scopus was to select the type of document, which, as previously explained, consisted of scientific articles.
In the “more adjustments” section, inside the “main collection of the Web of Science: Index of citations”, the indices most closely related to our area of knowledge were marked, that is, the “Science Citation Index Expanded” and the “Social Sciences Citation Index”.

Finally, the search was refined for the category “Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism” within the different categories offered by the Web of Science.

With these criteria, 519 papers were obtained in the Web of Science and 923 articles in Scopus.

Once the results were obtained in the respective databases, it was necessary to be able to work with them. In this respect, we had to extract the relevant data and dump it in a bibliographic reference manager, for which we chose Mendeley. For such a task, it was therefore necessary to obtain the data in a format compatible with the bibliographic manager in such a way that the 519 records of the Web of Science database was exported in BibTex format, while the 923 records of Scopus were made in the Ris format. The last step to enable each article to be handled involved importing the data to Mendeley.

The analysis and selection of articles was performed independently with respect to the database, and it was only after having obtained the articles that were going to be the result of the bibliographic review that the elimination of duplicates would be applied (after a first test for the elimination of duplicates, it was found that these numbered fewer than twenty). In this way, several phases in the selection of articles can be distinguished, in which at all times the three authors of the investigation were involved:

- **Phase 1**: Selection of articles based on the title, summary and keywords. After a first reading of the aforementioned criteria, it was decided whether to keep the article for further analysis by tagging the paper with a star in Mendeley for its maintenance, or with a point when any doubt was generated.

- **Phase 2**: Search of the full articles that have been selected. The search was made through the electronic resources of the library of the University of Seville, as well as through Google for those that were not present on the University website.

- **Phase 3**: Once we had the vast majority of the full articles, the final selection was carried out in which a more in-depth reading of those articles that merited some kind of doubt for their consideration in the analysis. Finally, 49 articles were obtained by Web of Science and 146 by Scopus. At this point, all 21 duplicates were eliminated, and hence the final number of articles to analyze was 174.

- **Phase 4**: The tabulation of data was performed in Excel. Although the first action involved exporting the metadata from Mendeley in XML format, and then importing this data into an Excel spreadsheet, it was found that there were certain errors in the name of authors, universities, countries and keywords. This circumstance led us to the arduous task of manually entering all the data that could be analyzed (title, author, journal, year, keywords, country and university and institution or company), for which it was revised article by article.

- **Phase 5**: Tables and graphs were created from all the data collected, and the results of our study began to take shape. In this respect, other similar investigations studied in the second section served as a guide and pattern for the data analysis that takes place in the following section.

Regarding the variables analyzed, it must be indicated that, depending on the authors, research of a more extensive nature can be found while other studies focus on only one
specific aspect. In this way, Barrios et al. (2008) analyze the impact factor of each journal, the number of citations, the collaborations between institutions, the evolution of the number of articles per year, the evolution of the number of authors per article, the number of articles per country, as well as the categorization of articles in JCR. However, other authors, such as Phillips and Moutinho (2014) and Ruhanen et al. (2015) make a more concise bibliometric study, where the study method used in each article is considered as are the main topics covered in such articles. There are even authors who focus only on analyzing the study method used in a specific area of research, such as Yoo and Bai (2013). On the other hand, we find authors, such as Keathley-Herring et al. (2016), who carry out a study to assess the maturity of a research area through a bibliometric analysis; in this case, the aspects analyzed are the publications per year, the publications in terms of study topics, the impact factor of the journals, the authors that publish the most prolifically, the countries of origin of the authors and the articles most cited.

Given this scenario, and given our spatial restrictions, research for the development of a second article that complements this first work is herein proposed. In this way, in this study, we analyze the number of articles per year, the number of articles in terms of countries and institutions, the authors of the articles and the collaborations established between countries, institutions and authors, while determining those collaborations that are carried out between universities only and those that are also carried out between universities and companies, and culminate this with the analysis of the topic dealt with in each article.

5. Findings and data analysis
In this section, we show the main results obtained after the tabulation of the main indicators of the selected articles. Thus, the number of articles per year, countries and universities will be analyzed. In the same way, it is interesting to highlight the number of countries and universities that participate in each article under study (these data are offered in relative terms, as, in terms of the number of articles analyzed, the analysis is more understandable based on percentage figures). On the other hand, an analysis will be carried out regarding the number of articles per author, as well as the topics dealt with in the different articles. Finally, we must point out that these results make up the first part of a more comprehensive study. Therefore, in a second publication, the methodology used in each article will be analyzed, among other variables.

5.1 Number of articles per year
As can be observed in Figure 1, there is an upward trend in the number of scientific productions per year with respect to mobile technology and tourism. This is a progressive trend without major lurches, except for that produced in 2014, where it jumped from 19 items to 31. It is true, however, that of the 14 years considered, there are four years that buck this upward trend (2003, 2005, 2010, 2013). It can be observed that the default difference is anecdotal in three of these four years that break this trend, and is more significant only in 2013, with a difference of eight articles fewer.

5.2 Number of papers per country and collaborations between countries
This section highlights that which, in the research world, is already assumed in many scientific areas. The USA heads the list of those countries with the most articles and assumes almost 20 per cent of the total of the 174 articles studied. In second place, we find Spain and the UK, which reach almost 10 per cent each of the total number of articles. Likewise, South Korea holds third place, with 8.62 per cent of the total scientific production analyzed. These data are striking when compared with the report that Google released
regarding the use of smartphones (Google, 2012), which placed the USA and the UK at the forefront in the use of mobile devices, followed by Spain, France, Germany and Japan. However, in our study, Germany and Japan fail to attain very good positions, as does France, which does not even have an article, probably because in countries like Germany and France, the universities tend not to publish in academic journals.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that, in the criterion used when determining the countries according to which university, institution or company signed the article, there were articles that were subscribed by up to four countries (Table I).

In this same section, we have considered it appropriate to make a visual image of the collaboration between countries in the various papers under study. In this respect, it should be pointed out that there are 40 countries that sign the authorship of the 174 articles. In this way, and as shown in Figure 2, more than 80 per cent of the 174 articles originate in a single nation, with just over 15 per cent of the articles reaching those in which two nationalities collaborate. This figure is reduced to practically anecdotal percentages for those articles in which three or four countries collaborate (2.30 per cent and 0.57 per cent). Therefore, there is an evident lack of collaboration in scientific production in the area that we work.

5.3 Number of papers per university; institution or company; number of universities per country and collaborations between universities, institutions or companies

After having tabulated the different universities, institutions and companies that are behind each of the 174 articles analyzed, a total of 233 universities were obtained. Obviously, the reason why the number of universities, institutions or companies exceeds the number of articles is because more than one entity collaborates in several articles: this aspect (the collaboration) will be analyzed in the following subsection of the point that concerns us.

The universities that publish most on mobile technology and tourism include “University of the Aegean” (Greece) and “The Hong Kong Polytechnic University” with a total of six articles each, followed by “Temple University” (USA) with five, being relegated to third place (with four articles each) an Estonian University, one from the UK and one from the USA, “University of Tartu”, “Bournemouth University” and “Virginia Tech”. On the other hand, the universities of Spain belong to the group of those that have published three articles or fewer.

We cannot state, however, that this criterion is representative with respect to the country where the most publications have been made, as the fact that a university in a specific
Table I. Number of papers per country

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
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<th>No. of papers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>The UK</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Others (seven more countries)</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ own

Figure 2. Collaboration between countries

Source: Authors’ own
country has published profusely does not necessarily mean that other universities in the same country have done so, albeit in smaller or greater amounts. In this respect, in Figure 3, we can distinguish the number of universities that have published in the first 32 countries of the 40 that we considered (the remaining eight coincide in the publication of a single article with a single university), whose results are very similar to those analyzed in the section where the number of articles per country was studied. The USA remains at the head of the 34 universities that have published on both mobile technology and tourism, followed by Taiwan with 21, Spain and the United Kingdom with 19 universities each and China in fourth place with 17 universities.

To clarify how the number of articles maintains a close relationship with the number of universities, in Figure 3, the number of articles published by each country is presented. It can be observed in general terms that the number of universities per country increases progressively and gradually with respect to the number of articles, which can be interpreted as because of possible collaborations between the various universities, institutions or companies of the same country in the same article, whereby the cases in which the opposite occurs (for South Korea, Hong Kong, Estonia, Malaysia, Denmark and Singapore) remains anecdotal. That is, in our research, the definition of countries is given by the universities in question, and hence if we find more universities per article than countries per article then it indicates that there are articles in which different universities in the same country collaborate with each other.

The last aspect that we consider necessary for analysis in this subsection includes the number of universities, institutions or companies that collaborate in each article. To this end, Figure 4 shows that just over half of the articles studied are presented by a single university, institution or company leaving the other half for joint collaboration. In this respect, we observe that the collaboration between two or three universities, institutions or companies monopolizes more than 40 per cent of the total number of articles, leaving less than 5 per cent for cooperation between four, five or six institutions. Thus, a balance is observed between those institutions that decide to work on their own account and those that establish ties to work jointly.

5.3.1 Collaboration among universities and between universities and companies. In this section, Figure 5 corroborates that just over half of the 174 articles under analysis are the result of the work of a single university or a single company (90 articles generated by universities and 1 by a company). Meanwhile, the remaining articles are the product of various types of collaboration, such as collaboration among two or more universities (68 articles) and university-company collaboration (15 articles). It should be noted that university–company collaboration is largely bidirectional, that is, the collaboration is between a single university with only one company. In this respect, within the 15 collaborations of this type that have been registered, there are only four articles in which several universities collaborate with a company. On the other hand, only one single article is the product of collaboration of a single university with two companies.

5.4 Number of papers per author and collaborations between authors
After having performed the tabulation of all the authors of the articles examined (whatever their position), 444 records were obtained. Table II shows the 51 authors who have the authorship of at least two articles. Therefore, the remaining 393 authors, who are all holders of a single article (whether shared or not with other authors), are excluded from said table.

Given the data obtained, mention must be granted to Damianos Gavalas, who is placed in first position with five articles that analyze tourism and its link with mobile technology. This author can therefore be defined as a person of bibliographic reference in this field,
Figure 3.
Number of universities, institutions or companies and papers per country

Source: Authors’ own
along with Rein Ahas, Michael Kenteris and Dan Wang, with four articles each. In addition, there are only eight authors that have three articles each, while 39 authors possess two articles each. To conclude this recount, and with the intention of clarifying this tide of data, we compose Table III, in which these figures can be summarized.

Likewise, it is interesting to ascertain the number of authors that each article has. In this respect, the articles range from having seven authors down to one single author, as shown in Figure 6, where the percentage of the total number of articles analyzed is given. With this data, we can reveal that the most common publications involve articles of 0 or three authors, which cover almost 55 per cent of the total number of articles analyzed on new technologies and tourism. On the other hand, at almost 18 per cent we found the articles written by four authors, while those of a single author reach just over 14 per cent of the papers. Finally, at more than 13 per cent, we find those articles that are made by five, six, seven or eight authors.

5.5 Topics addressed in the papers

For the classification of the different papers that are the object of our study, a partial detailed reading of each abstract has been carried out, which led to a complete reading of the article in those cases in which any doubts arose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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<td>52</td>
<td>Others (393 authors with one article)</td>
<td>393</td>
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</table>

**Table II.**

Number of papers per author  

**Source:** Authors' own
First, according to Cheng et al. (2011), we can say that the disciplinary approaches covered by tourism research have increased over the years, resulting in the specialization of research in specific sectors. On the other hand, as stated by Cheng et al. (2011), it must be borne in mind that until 1991, tourism research journals covered a wide range of topics, while the more recently established journals handle topics of a more specialized nature. In this respect, we have taken as starting point the classification that the previous author establishes to make a first coding of the subjects that treat the articles objects of our study, as can be observed in the following table (Table IV).

Taking the above table into account, from among the 174 articles of our analysis, we have identified 14 of the 29 disciplines established by Cheng et al. (2011). In this regard, all the articles deal with technology, while tourism companies, tourist behavior and the location of businesses and tourist attractions in relation to mobile technology are topics covered in more than a third of the articles analyzed. On the other hand, issues such as market studies, the competitive environment and the administration of hotels and restaurants are barely treated in only 10 per cent of the articles; there are extremely few articles that address the management of tourism companies and the economy with respect to the adoption of mobile technology as a new sales channel.

From this first classification, and in accordance with suggestions by Oppermann and Cooper (1996), we decided to classify articles in terms of specialized topics, since the maturation of tourism research has led to a greater division of topics. This new classification process was created from the reading of the abstracts of the various articles and the analysis

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<td>98.51</td>
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</table>

**Source:** Authors' own

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**Table III.**
Number of authors per number of papers

**Figure 6.**
Collaboration between authors

**Source:** Authors’ own
of the keywords therein. In this respect, 84 specific topics were identified in the 174 articles. Those topics that were covered by at least 10 per cent of the papers in question are presented below in Table V. The geographic location linked to mobile technology is the issue of greatest concern, followed by tourist destinations, mobile applications, and all types of mobile devices. On the other hand, information services, the tourism industry in general, travel, tourist behavior and recommendation systems are included in approximately 20 per cent of the articles. Finally, issues such as the hotel business or augmented reality feature in only 10 per cent articles.

<table>
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<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile devices</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Information services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism industry</td>
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<td>Travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourist behavior</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation systems/Customization</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist guides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web technology</td>
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<td>Mobile technology</td>
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<td>Mobile Tourism Industry</td>
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<td>Hospitality Businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augmented Reality</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ own
6. Conclusions
In this section, a summary is presented of the impressions and general tendencies observed following the review and analysis of 174 articles concerning tourism and mobile technology. The first reflection is the scarcity of scientific literature on this subject: primarily, as with respect to the 1,442 articles resulting from the first search, the selected articles only represent 12.07 per cent of the original total; and second, because in comparison with other bibliometric reviews, the number of articles selected falls below the vast majority of the bibliographic reviews analyzed, where the number of 200 articles is exceeded at all times, as in the case of Law et al. (2009) with 215 articles, Yoo et al. (2011) with 570 articles, and Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) with 279 articles. In this respect, and after sweeping through the past 32 years in the two main providers of scientific literature, we can verify that it has remained a topic of little interest, in contrast to that which is happening in twenty-first century society, in which mobile technology has become more than indispensable in the daily life of the population. Despite this, in the past four years there has been a major increase in the generation of publications that deal with the issue at hand. It is also worth noting that, although it was in 1983 when the basis of what we can now understand as mobile devices was established, it was not until 2002 that the first article dealing with this issue linked to tourism could be found.

Regarding the top ten countries that publish the most, the USA is in the lead with 33 articles, followed by Spain and the United Kingdom with 17 articles in each country. It should therefore be noted that Spain will remain in such a position in the ranking, although, on taking into account the global study conducted by Tomi Ahonen Consulting (2011), the interest in this sector is not surprising because Spain is situated with a 46 per cent penetration of smartphones after Singapore, Hong Kong, Sweden and Australia. Therefore, although smartphones constitute just one type of mobile device, they remain the most abundant, in such a way that they can help us identify trends in the sector. Of course, Asian countries are not left out of the top ten: South Korea and Taiwan have 25 papers in each country, China has 11, while Hong Kong has eight and Japan has seven. Finally, two European countries that were included in those most severely affected during the crisis are included in this list: Greece has ten articles and Italy six, which causes us to reflect on the idea of how countries that have been largely punished from the economic point of view, have generated more scientific literature on technology and tourism than others in better circumstances. In this respect, we can only remember the lapidary phrase of Albert Einstein that states that “in times of crisis, only imagination is more important than knowledge”.

The dearth of collaboration between countries when publishing should be pointed out, as evidenced by the fact that almost 93 per cent of the articles are signed by a single country. Only 27 of the 174 articles contain some collaboration between two countries. We understand that in this way, despite an increasingly globalized world, knowledge remains national, without it flowing and becoming enriched through joint contributions from the global community. This shortage of international collaboration is presented as a difficult complication to understand, even more so when it is a matter as relevant as the tourism-mobile technology binomial. Collaboration between countries should contribute toward interesting and complementary solutions, as a result of the different experiences and the evolution of this binomial to the specific characteristics of each offer and demand.

On the other hand, given the comparison that is made in Section 5.2 regarding the number of articles per country that is determined herein, and the study conducted by Google on the use of smartphones on different continents (Google, 2012), it is observed that the first
positions are held by the same countries in both cases, except for Germany, Japan and France. This comparison leads us to believe that scientific production enjoys more and greater links with the real world.

In the analysis carried out on the universities, institutions or companies that are responsible for the various studies, we observed that not only is there a huge number of these entities, but that the collaboration between them is worthy of note. Not only do we indicate which universities produce more articles, such as the University of Aegean in Greece, the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong in China and the Temple University in the USA, but also we explain in which countries the largest number of universities exist and the collaboration that takes place between universities, institutions and companies in the different articles. In this respect, we must again highlight the USA as the country in which there are a greater number of universities that write about mobile technology and tourism, followed by Taiwan, Spain, the UK and China. These results should hold no surprise, as they occur in countries where tourism is a major source of income for their economies, and it is therefore understood that university qualifications in tourism are a priority. Likewise, it is curious how the results relegate Greece to sixth place in terms of the number of universities per country, that is, although one university support the largest number of articles, the scientific production in general does not exceed ten articles in Greece. A final consideration to consider in this respect, is how slightly fewer than half of the articles analyzed establish ties between universities in different investigations, with a surprisingly high number of ties found between two or three universities, institutions or companies. Likewise, it is necessary to compare the collaboration between universities (47.70 per cent of the articles analyzed), with the collaboration between countries as shown above (7.19 per cent of the articles analyzed). Hence, our expectations are confirmed: there is collaboration between the authors of the articles, but it is largely limited to collaboration between different universities within the same country and fails to include any international collaboration.

Furthermore, the relationship between university and business is analyzed: an aspect that acquires special importance when considering mobile technology and tourism, as to some extent this relationship highlights the transfer of knowledge between the two areas of business and knowledge. In this way, we observe that only 9.80 per cent of the articles involve the aforementioned collaboration, and that the vast majority of research is carried out under the name of one single university, several universities or of universities in collaboration with any type of institution that is also dedicated to the field of research, but not with companies or institutions related to the business sector.

Focusing on the authors, the final count reached the figure of 444 different researchers. In this respect, 88.51 per cent of these authors appear in only one article, and very few are the authors of two (8.78 per cent) or more articles (2.71 per cent). Moreover, only one author, Damianos Gavalas, who is ranked first, has five articles. As in previous sections, we have studied the collaboration between authors for the production of an article and have found that 85.63 per cent of the 174 articles examined involve collaboration between two or more authors, whereby cooperation between two or three researchers supposes greater representativeness (54.60 per cent of the papers analyzed).

Finally, in relation to the content of the articles analyzed, we found the geographic location and information services to be the aspects of greatest concern, as is the adoption of mobile technology by the different agents that make up the tourism industry. The analysis of human behavior deserves special mention in both the realization of trips, and in the choice of tourist company and tourist destination, and constitutes the subject addressed in a large proportion of the research articles. It is surprising, however, how topics related to social
networks, the administration and management of tourism companies and to augmented reality, are those that occupy the fewest articles.

In summary, this analysis reveals the role that has been played by mobile phones in tourism since the first scientific article was recorded in 2002. In this regard, in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of articles, finally resulting in moderate figures in relation to countries (40) and universities (233) that have formed part of the subject matter under study. In contrast to other areas of research in tourism, the relevance of this subject is therefore evident, as is the need for greater background knowledge to establish research models adapted to the new reality of tourism in a world of ever-increasing mobility.

7. Limitations

Through the understanding that there may be different criteria when considering one or another database with respect to the collection of articles dealing with mobile technology and tourism, we have been able to clarify that this flexibility may constitute a limitation of our study. In this respect, for example, Google Scholar is gaining more importance, and more scientific rigor is being systematized and achieved over time. However, the two databases selected guarantee the quality and quantity of articles in the best scientific journals worldwide.

The fact that only part of a bibliometric study is provided in this article must be identified as a limitation, as there are other aspects, such as the impact factor, the number of citations and the quartile within which the various journals lie, that will be studied in a second article.

A further limitation may be involved in the selection of search terms. Although we carefully studied the key words that would help us obtain all the relevant articles and not to omit any, it is possible that certain authors have not considered the same terminology as ours, even though their article is on the subject studied, with the consequent automatic elimination when performing the search in the different databases.

On the other hand, any research linked to new technologies is subject to a high and rapid degree of obsolescence, given the vertiginous rate of change to which they are exposed. Needless to say, if the “mobile” factor is added to the new technologies, then the probability of change is multiplied. Similarly, in recent years, tourism patterns have been subjected to large and expeditious changes, which have led to a new paradigm of business models in the tourism sector. Thus, in our research, two variants with a high degree of transformation are combined. Therefore, although this study focuses on a bibliometric analysis, in which the results obtained per year should not vary, this circumstance does generate a limitation for future publications, which may have a greater or lesser impact on the results obtained.

8. Future lines of research

This study supposes only the beginning of several lines of investigation that have yet to be explored. Therefore, once the 174 articles on mobile technology and tourism have been compiled, it is suggested that a more in-depth analysis be carried out to enable their classification in terms of tourism sub-sectors, as well as the identification of the different methodologies used in each sub-sector. In addition, it would be interesting to analyze not only the keywords proposed in the various publications but also those journals that publish the most articles.
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Further reading


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