

# TOURISTIC GROUPS IN AZORES: THE FINNISH CASE

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**ABSTRACT:** In the last decade, the opening and the bigger exposure of Azores Autonomous Region in the media, as well the assumption of the importance of tourism to the regional economy by the local government, introduced the planning of this sector in those islands. Even if all regions have specific features as the main touristic Portuguese regions such as Algarve, Madeira and Lisboa, the Azores product – Natural landscape – is different from the all the rest. Its difference and specification is directed to market niches, which means not to attract the consumer populations of the most searched touristic product – Sun and beach. Due the fragility and weak capacity of the Azorean touristic product renovation, but still with the necessity of economical income, it's essential the non-allowance of tourist masses but attract a highly economic value and academic instructed tourist type. The Scandinavian population has been one of the bets for a sustainable tourism in Azores, and Finland one of the specific cases with weekly direct flights linking this country with the archipelago. There are some questions: Is this a correct bet? What can Azores offer? What are Finnish searching in their vacations periods? To answer those questions a bibliographic search and an inquiry were made, where to determinate the Finnish tourist profile and the possible satisfaction with the Azores offer it's pretended. **Keywords:** Azores; Islands; Tourism; Economical development; Finnish population.

**RESUMEN:** En las últimas décadas, la gran exposición de la Región Autónoma de Azores a los medios de comunicación social, así como la asunción de la importancia del turismo para la economía regional, puso en el orden del día el planteamiento de esa actividad en aquellas islas. Aunque todas las regiones turísticas portuguesas tengan sus especificidades, como es el caso del Algarve, Madeira y Lisboa, el producto turístico de Azores – el paisaje natural – hace que esta región sea muy diferente de todas las demás. Su diferencia y sus especificidades atraen a nichos de mercado, distintos de los consumidores que buscan el producto turístico más popular – sol y playa. Debido a la fragilidad y a la débil capacidad de renovación del producto turístico de Azores, y también a la necesidad de ingresos, se vuelve esencial evitar el turismo de masas, atrayendo a turistas con mayor poder de compra y niveles de instrucción más elevados. La población de Escandinavia ha sido una de las apuestas para un turismo sostenible en Azores, siendo Finlandia uno de esos casos específicos, con vuelos directos semanales para el archipiélago. De aquí trascurren varias cuestiones: ¿esta será la apuesta correcta? ¿Qué puede ofrecer Azores? ¿Qué buscan los finlandeses en sus vacaciones? Para contestar a estas preguntas se procedió a una revisión de la literatura y a una encuesta que visa trazar el perfil del turista finlandés y la eventual satisfacción con lo que Azores tiene para ofrecer. **Palabras clave:** Azores; Islas; Turismo; Desarrollo Económico; Finlandeses.

**RESUMO:** Nas últimas décadas, a grande exposição da Região Autónoma dos Açores aos meios de comunicação social, bem como a assunção da importância do turismo para a economia regional, colocou na ordem do dia o planeamento desta atividade naquelas ilhas. Em-

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bora todas as regiões turísticas portuguesas tenham as suas especificidades, como é o caso do Algarve, da Madeira e de Lisboa, o produto turístico dos Açores – a paisagem natural – faz com que esta região seja muito diferente de todas as outras. A sua diferença e as suas especificidades apelam a nichos de mercado, distintos dos consumidores que procuram o produto turístico mais popular – o sol e a praia. Devido à fragilidade e à fraca capacidade de renovação do produto turístico açoriano, e também à necessidade de receitas, torna-se essencial evitar o turismo de massas, atraindo turistas com maior poder de compra e níveis de instrução mais elevados. A população da Escandinávia tem sido uma das apostas para um turismo sustentável nos Açores, sendo a Finlândia é um desses casos específicos, com voos diretos semanais para o arquipélago. Daqui decorrem várias questões: será esta a aposta correta? O que pode oferecer os Açores? O que é que os finlandeses procuram nas suas férias? Para responder a estas questões procedeu-se a uma revisão da literatura e a um inquérito, visando traçar o perfil do turista finlandês e a eventual satisfação com aquilo que os Açores têm para oferecer. **Palavras-chave:** Açores; Ilhas; Turismo; Desenvolvimento Económico; Finlandeses.

## INTRODUCTION

The Azores archipelago was awarded in recent years by reputable international magazines of Nature and travel, but with different titles relating to the natural characteristics of the same, and the second on the list of the best islands in the world, through sustainable tourism and vectors hospitality of the population. On the level of national recognition, the Azores is the only region, which has two titles among the seven natural wonders of Portugal.

Tourism is also considered a sustainable economic activity for many territories and the Azores are included in this group. In a process begun during the 90s of last century, the territory of the Azores has changed so as to gradually increase the weight of tourism in the accountability of local development. However, this territory formed by nine islands of very different sizes, located roughly at about 1430 km from the European continent and more than 3900 km from North America, with a small total area of 2334 km<sup>2</sup> and with a population of 246,102 inhabitants (2011), denotes the fragility and uniqueness of the space and the continuing need for its preservation in a very strong correlation with its splendor and beauty, both in terms of the countryside as the humanized space and immaterial culture (the empires of Feast of the Holy Spirit, the philharmonics, the relationship with the whale fishery, volcanism and food, among others).

Tourism in the archipelago in terms of visitor numbers should be directed always to the promotion of niche market, where participation and visitor experience result in the main objective in or-

der to retain tourists and promote local development, doing products from the existing resources in the islands. Another feature of the Azores on the tourism that is indeed a feature present in almost all tourism products is a strong seasonality, derived from the Atlantic rainy winters that do not allow the provision of tourist product most consumed - sun and sand. These two main factors, induced early in this century and through agreements between the regional governments and tour operators of various Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland), the initiation of direct weekly flights between major cities in those countries and the Azorean capital, Ponta Delgada. In any case it is possible to reduce seasonal by creating specific products, which characterize these islands.

Particularizing to the case study, the Finnish tourist population, were formulated the following questions: Is this a sure bet? What Azores have to offer? What do Finns seek in their holiday periods?

The methodology included surveys by interviewing local agents (two professors at the University of Helsinki and a representative of a tour operator that sells the destination Azores), questionnaire surveys of the general population and the bibliography on the subject that in the Finnish case is focuses on the Finnish University Network for Tourism Studies (FUNTS) located in the town of Savonlinna.

## TOURISM AT THE PRESENT TIME

Tourism has been (in recent decades) and still is, and believed to be one of the most relevant economic activities having even been responsible for greater mobility throughout the history of mankind and central economic, social and environmental impacts, some more positive than others. These mobilities and these impacts, which occurred after the second world war, associated, in the language of Cazes (1998 as cited by Silveira, 2009), the "l'explosion du temps disponible" are clearly visible, particularly in coastal areas and in all those areas in which this phenomenon was thought out and designed to meet a demand for increasin-

gly widespread and more mass, corresponding to the dominant paradigm of sun and beach tourism. This organization of free social time, nowadays, most accomplished and offers a diversity that allows us to speak in new tourists and in new tourism. Alongside the mass, tourism in recent decades, has been trying to find new ways in search of a new paradigm, a new paradigm and alternative, with capacity to help tourism to find other dimensions and other destinations.

According to Poon (1993), the changes in consumer behavior are the driving force of the new tourism. The new tourist is characterized by greater information, a higher educational level, a smaller household, living usually in urban areas, free access to culture, a greater travel experience and a higher propensity to travel, to meet other cultures, with a higher level of demand, with a greater discriminatory judgment and the desire to be an active agent within the tourism system.

Cavaco (1996) states that we are seeing a greater attention on new forms of tourism, envisaged in a logic of balance and respect the natural aspects, social and psychological. It is the search for a more ethical tourism and also more free, much better distributed over time and space, since many tourists are beginning to focus more on content, adventure, differentiation, authenticity and integration into the simple life of the communities visited. It is the rupture or the beginning of the break, with organizations and local standardized and stereotyped, that is, commoditized, and the beginning of a tourist route that will meet these new demands of an informed and critical audience, through differentiation, specialization and market segmentation.

The new tourism concepts impose a structuring of tourism around the elements of rural, mountain, nature, and consequently we are faced with the demand for tourism areas where once almost did not come. It is this presence of tourists who leads the Government to adapt its behavior to changing needs, requiring an improvement of public roads, services of electricity supply, water supply and organization of public cleaning services, among

others. "At the tourist activity we have the geographic space as its main object consumption, and it follows one of its most important characteristics: the tourist - consumer, he has, necessarily, to move up to the product to be consumed, the touristic place" (Cruz, 2001).

This does not mean that traditional forms of tourism and massive not continue to play an important role in the tourism economy. In fact urban tourism has today significant growth, adjusted to new products that have sustainability in planning, quality of life and revitalization of historic centers. Its main products, interspersed here and there by great cultural, musical and sporting. In fact, the tourist has become an eclectic and informed customer, demanding quality and engaging in the processes associated with tourism, seeking to know the life cycle of products and services he consumes and thus influencing an offer that needs paying attention to the demand.

The plurality of motivations that gave rise to the movements and characteristics of the individual needs of travelers do not allow clearly define the contours of tourism. In any other market is relatively easy to determine the goods that are in demand but not so with the tourist market where consumptions coexist, on the one hand, satisfy both the tourist and non tourist needs and on the other hand, relate to goods or services produced, exclusively on the needs of residents. It follows that they are many and varied components of tourism and, in many cases, some of them are not included in tourism since it was intended to produce goods and services that are not intended to satisfy tourist needs. The first component of tourism is made up of natural resources, considering as such the economic point of view, the elements of the natural environment to satisfy human needs. The fact that there is a natural element, is not however, a tourism product. Human intervention is needed, whatever its nature and size, which confers the ability to meet needs. Natural resources, as provided by nature, although being the main motivations to travel, are insufficient to guarantee the permanence of travelers. It is in fact ne-

cessary to construct facilities, which, on the one hand, allow the movement (transport travel arrangements, etc.) and, secondly, to ensure that stay (lodging, restaurants, etc.). Without this facilities there will be no tourist activity although there may be movement. There will be no tourism, as it is, characterized by the transfer of funds from one location (center transmitter) to another (the receiving) (Barbosa, 2005). In fact it is necessary to transform resources into products, give them visibility in an increasingly global and organize it in terms of rating, valuation and integration with other goods and or resources.

## ECONOMIC AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

The word “development” implies in its origin an anthropocentric concept, as a process of rational and deliberate overcoming of a certain condition to meet individual or collective goals of meeting social needs. It is a conception of political background and that assumes the existence of political freedom. It can be defined in classical terms, as the expansion of the economy, accompanied by a more or less equitable distribution of wealth further, leading to an overall improvement in living standards and a transformation of the structures of society (Moreno, 2002).

Up to 1970 the most common way of referring to the area with regard to its “development” was the “regional”. Regional development was seen as the desired outcome of economic planning, more or less centralized but always descending to the subnational level. It was one of the manifestations of the alleged (by governments) concerned state with equity in the national territory, especially after the 2nd world war, with the main instrument to exercise the jurisdiction of economists (Friedmann & Weaver, 1979 as cited in Moreno, 2002). The development begins to acquire theoretical sense in view of local and starts a controlled decentralization in order to provide an increased role of local policy makers, patients with an effective awareness of the needs of each territory.

The development, in any design, should result in economic growth accompanied by improvement in quality of life, ie, must include changes in product composition and allocation of resources between different sectors of the economy, to improve the indicators of well economic prosperity and social (poverty, unemployment, inequality, health, nutrition, education and housing (Garcia, 1998 as cited in Silveira, 2009).

The strong economic growth in major economies in the decades following World War of 1939-1945, led to a pessimistic thought about the prospects of that long-term growth, the structure being based solely on the territorial development of the capitalist nature of economic productivity, leading to theorization of an unsustainable future. As opposed to this definition eminently economist, World Bank, since 1990, joins the word development other factors as the level of life expectancy, education, employment and quality of life. It moved from place to introduce the paradigm of the theory of sustainable development. The etymological meaning of “sustainability” suggests the existence of a form of control, a dependence of an agent: rooted in “support” comes from the Latin *Sustentare* “sustain, support, maintain in good condition, food, resist...” but the clash between economic and environmental sustainability will always be very strong, and the search for an equilibrium solution is critical, especially in the leisure and tourism economy.

Hobson (2001 as cited in Brown 2002) defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Sustainability is increasingly a major concern of those who see it approaching any exclusion or deprivation (time, money, companionship, health and related resources), as the entrance of new powers, which exert a pressure redistribution (in space and time) to the detriment of recent or accumulated privileges and those who feel more or less excluded from certain opportunities for economic and social recovery, by virtue of the social, cultural,

economic, political and territorial claim, that the dominant interests defend. In both cases, sustainability rimes with survival. (Moreno, 2002, p. 456).

At a time like the present (late twentieth century and the beginning of XXI century) when we gather historical perspectives of the various concepts of spatial development and bases that were once used for the transformation of areas: human development, relevant and intrinsic factor today. It is therefore multi-dimensional and dependent on the economic welfare and social desired by the human population going far beyond the standard of living and taking as reference a much more integrated concept which is the quality of life.

#### THE FINNISH POPULATION AS POTENTIAL USERS OF AZORES

The Azorean tourism economy strategy passes through the territory, creating a plan where is included the characterizations, the objectives, the means and the various scenarios to predict. The definition of segments and types of tourist populations is fundamental to the line in relation to the existing product and the creation of the Azores product. It is, in fact, important to organize offers and set target levels of competitiveness and even know the positioning of the product to better fit with the existing potential demand.

The definition of a set of location does not appear on the Scandinavian Peninsula but to the cultural, economic and political links to the other countries. It is based on its tradition, cultural, educational level and purchasing power of the population arising from the case study of a population there, in this case, the Finnish population, where we tried to identify, characterize and complete a possible correlation effective: Scandinavian population – Touristic Destination Azores.

**Table 1. Touristic populations in Azores in 2002 and 2007**

|                             | 2002   | 2007   | 2002 | 2007 |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|------|------|
| Country of origin           | Nº     | Nº     | %    | %    |
| Portugal                    | 185455 | 230082 | 69,7 | 62,0 |
| Scandinavia (excl. Iceland) | 34052  | 51945  | 12,8 | 14,0 |
| Germany                     | 9717   | 15999  | 3,7  | 4,3  |
| United Kingdom              | 5170   | 13338  | 1,9  | 3,6  |
| Rest of World               | 5006   | 12693  | 1,9  | 3,4  |
| USA                         | 6993   | 10761  | 2,6  | 2,9  |
| Netherlands                 | 1759   | 9818   | 0,7  | 2,6  |
| Spain                       | 3149   | 8337   | 1,2  | 2,2  |
| France                      | 7099   | 8016   | 2,7  | 2,2  |
| Canada                      | 2344   | 3907   | 0,9  | 1,1  |
| Italy                       | 2122   | 3183   | 0,8  | 0,9  |
| Switzerland                 | 3219   | 2917   | 1,2  | 0,8  |
| Total                       | 266085 | 371006 | 100  | 100  |

*Source: Drawn from the SREA*

Contextualizing the tourist population in the Azores, Table 1 shows the population of the Scandinavian countries (excluding Iceland) as being both in 2002 and in 2007, the second group that visit the archipelago, and this value has increased between the two years, from 34052 to 51945 individuals and the percentage of the total visitors increased from 12,8% to 14%. It is the main foreign visitor population in this territory.

Performing the FMP - SYLFF Fellows Mobility Programme of the Foundation Tokyo in 2007 we were allowed to run in the capital Helsinki a questionnaire to one hundred (100) individuals to identify and determine their leisure habits during the statutory period of vacation and their potential as future consumers of the space touristic Azores.

Finland, although only partially inserted in the peninsula of Scandinavia, has a tradition and culture attached to it. The country has an area of 338,145 km<sup>2</sup> and in 2011 had a population of 5 388 417 inhabitants.

Due to the high latitude, about a quarter of the territory is above the Arctic Circle, generally having a very cold winter and a mild summer.

The History of Finnish territory includes Swedish and Russian occupations but is an independent country since 1918 and with a nature of neutrality since the Second World War.

**Figure 1. Finland and the Azores in the European context**



*Source: Author*

Its economy is based on the secondary sector, which includes the timber industry, metallurgy, engineering, electronics and telecommunications. This last area has grown with the main focus from the 90s and with great relief by the Nokia brand, and is now a leading global brand in this sector and major economic driving force in the country.

Finland now has one of the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of the world, occupying according to 2005 data from the World Bank, the 12th position.

The Human Development Index (HDI), a measure that compares countries in the areas of literacy, education, wealth, life ex-

pectancy and birth rates, puts Finland in 11<sup>th</sup>, with the base year of 2005, published in 2007 by the United Nations (UN).

The population of this country has an effective high standard of living, having a high general purchasing power and benefits from a free education, health and social quality system. Being a population with a significant proportion of goods and services and technological developments that allow more money present themselves as a very interesting case study since, having an attribute with the quality of life, are informed and discerning consumers who have a central purpose in demanding actual experiences of life, which can be provided by the Azores.

The inquiry was conducted in the English language to individuals with 16 or more years (working age population and retired).

When they were invited to respond to the questionnaire was made a presentation on the topic and purpose of the investigation. The last part of the investigation was aided by the distribution of a promotional magazine of the Azores with brief texts in Finnish and English majority and of course filled with photographs of the archipelago; edition of the Regional Tourism in the Azores. The survey was divided into four parts:

- 1 - Personal information;
- 2 - The holiday habits;
- 3 - Azores as a destination;
- 4 - The islands of the Azores as a future tourist destination.

### *Personal information*

One hundred individuals were surveyed. The Table 2 represents the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample. The Year of Birth and Age of respondents are divided into four classes. Up to 1946 inclusive, or 61 and over were challenged 16 individuals (16%). This number increases to the 23 (23%) from 1947 to 1961 or to the class of 46-60 years of age. The class of 1962-1976 years of birth or population between 31 and 45 has a representation of 31 respondents (31%) and the class of 1977-1991, 30 patients (30%). The majority of respondents (91%) were Finnish and 9

had other nationalities. All the reporting population is resident in this Scandinavian country. The proportions are therefore 91% native and 9% from other countries.

**Table 2. Sample characteristics**

| Samples characteristics | Frequency |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Age of respondents      |           |
| From 16 to 30 years old | 30        |
| From 31 to 45 years old | 31        |
| From 46 to 60 years old | 23        |
| 61 years old or more    | 16        |
| Year of Birth           |           |
| Until 1946              | 16        |
| 1947-1961               | 23        |
| 1962-1976               | 31        |
| 1977-1991               | 30        |
| Gender                  |           |
| Male                    | 44        |
| Female                  | 56        |
| Nationality             |           |
| Finnish                 | 91        |
| Other                   | 9         |
| Level of education      |           |
| Primary                 | 1         |
| Secondary               | 28        |
| Technical               | 26        |
| University              | 45        |

*Source: Inquiry to the finnish population*

Concerning the degree of education, four levels were identified: Primary, the first 6 years of schooling, Secondary, completed 12 years, Technical, intermediate level between secondary and university and last level, the University as mentioned above.

Forty-five (45) individuals with higher qualifications (University) corresponded to the group with the largest representation, equivalent to 45% of the population surveyed. With lower education level is equivalent to only 1% of respondents. Although a sample of 100 surveys of a universe of more than 5 million residents in Finland, education has been a priority area since a few

decades and this is reflected in the results. The higher of the level of education and training, assumes a greater acquisition of income and a higher standard of living, including the possibility of the consumption habits of leisure time, including travel.

### *The holiday habits*

The second group of survey (Table 3) questions refers to the vacation habits. All subjects experienced, at least, do casually travel outside their country but 80% (80 individuals) answered Yes going on holiday as usual. The percentage is very high and assumes a high demand for international tourism originating in this country.

**Table 3: holiday habits**

| Holiday habits                                                                           | Frequency |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Do you usually go abroad on holidays?                                                    |           |
| Yes                                                                                      | 80        |
| No                                                                                       | 20        |
| How many days do you usually spend?                                                      |           |
| 1-5 days                                                                                 | 9         |
| 6-8 days                                                                                 | 59        |
| 9 or more                                                                                | 32        |
| How much money (€) do you usually spend on your vacation?                                |           |
| Less than 500€                                                                           | 12        |
| 500-1000€                                                                                | 55        |
| More than 1000€                                                                          | 33        |
| Maximum amount that can be spent if there is much interest for a certain destination (€) |           |
| Less than 500€                                                                           | 0         |
| 500-1000€                                                                                | 42        |
| 1001-2000€                                                                               | 48        |
| More than 2000€                                                                          | 10        |

*Source: Inquiry to the finnish population*

Concerning the question about how many days usually spend on holiday. Nine (9) individuals responded that their vacation abroad generally comprises from 1 to 5 days. This number rises to 59 in the period 6-8 days, with the largest absolute number and

percentage, usually associated with this period is 8 days (1 week). Not to belittle the 32% of respondents who hold their vacation at the time of 9 days or more. For their comments this period is generally 15 days, which corresponds to two weeks, mostly in the same destination.

It is observed that 91% of the population surveyed spent at least 6 days in the selected destination. In the context of the Azores this fact proves to be as positive as a region that is geographically distant and divided into nine islands is not attractive for short holiday periods. The Finnish tourist has thus far set features the Azorean tourist as to take advantage of the potential tourism products, it must go beyond the stay of 5 days.

The average total amount spent on the holiday period was divided into three classes, less than 500 euros (€), between 500 and 1000 € and more than 1000 €. The majority of the population (55) spent between 500 to 1000 euros, monetary middle class and comprehensive. The two higher classes correspond to the amounts spent 88% of the population surveyed. This trend of availability of spending meets the expectations of the Azores to have a higher quality tourism and tourist population selection, sequencing a greater economic gain in that territory.

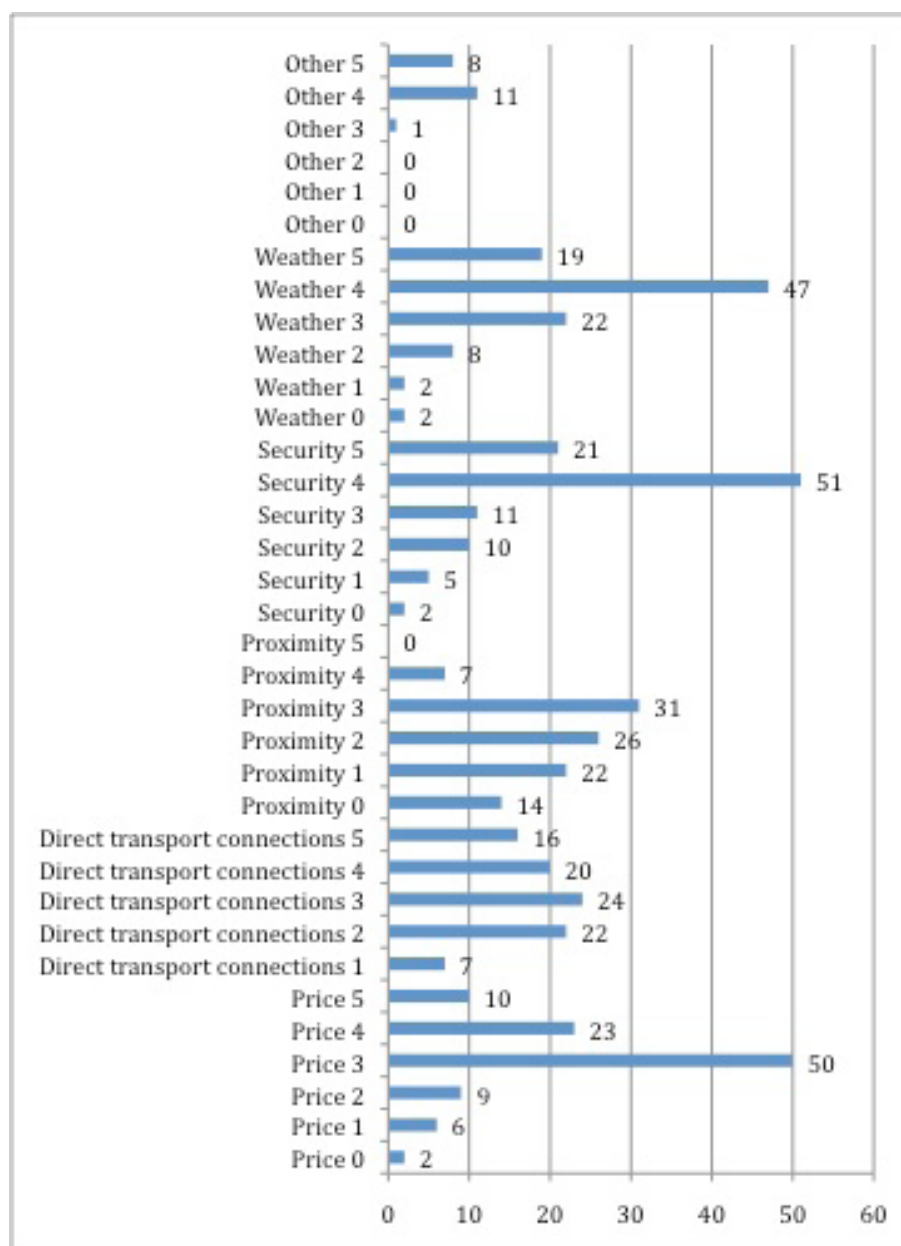
When questioned the amount that each individual could spend on a holiday if the destination was greatly of interest, were zero (0) responses as less than 500 €. In the class of between € 500-1000, were 42 respondents who identified themselves with this range. The interval €1001-2000 was identified by 48 individuals and the last, more than 2000 €, 10 answers.

This means that advertising and promotion of a destination are vital to the initial uptake of attention from potential consumers. With good references and a work of creative and original promotion of the Azores, as well as the existence of quality hotel infrastructure, good transportation and recreational activities, may have the ability to attract these 58% (48 +10) population that has a willingness to pay over 1000 euros on vacation. This

reality is even more important as we know that customer loyalty can become a multiplier effect of great importance because the tourists themselves become publisher of the product.

In Figure 2, there is the importance of each factor by a note (0 - not important to 5 - very important) for the choice of holiday destination. The factors asked were the price, the direct transport connections, Proximity, Security, the State of seasonal weather and Other.

**Figure 2. Evaluation of factors importance when selecting a destination**



*Source: Inquiry to the Finnish population*

The price factor was evaluated and differentiated with 50% of responses with a classification of 3. An intermediate value that corresponds to a frank money supply received by the Finnish, through wages.

Transport links are a direct factor that diverged sharply in the evaluation by respondents. The most frequent score was 3 with 24 answers, followed by score 2 with 22 and score 4 with a 20 answers.

The Helsinki airport is served by a structure offering very comprehensive and special destinations provided by that country's flagship airline, Finnair. This airport is located in one geographical influence area of more than two million inhabitants and at high latitude, is now a transit point for many flights linking Europe to Asia and North America, since the routes are shorter. The fact is that this airport is one of the most moderns and functional structures of the World. Is also central to the attraction of air traffic.

The trend of the response, distributed by scores 2, 3, 4 and 5 reveals the relative importance of this factor as a maker of holiday destination. It can influence but not be decisive, depending on other factors such as travel time, price, etc.

Respondents generally do not use their longer-haul vacation periods in near destinations; they do not stop at North and Central Europe. The trend goes to southern Europe and tropical countries of America and Asia. This reason is for higher temperatures and cultural differences. It is because of this choice of tourist destinations (that are not near that country) that when the importance of proximity to the selection of holiday destination was asked, the most scores are assigned - scores 3, 2, 1 and 0, encompassing 97% of responses.

Today, society is ruled by tensions in relation to safety across the planet in general. When this factor is questioned, the scores 4 and 5, taken together comprise 72%, and the score 4 in itself includes 51% (51 responses). We know that the Azores is a territory in which the Security emerges as main reference, usually associated with great hospitality. So the destination Azores presents itself as a destination suitable to the characteristics of Finnish tourists looking for others outside their country.

The factor Weather in general was assessed with greater frequency in score 4, which included 47 responses, followed by score 3 with 22 answers and score with 19 answers.

A climate where most of the year is filled with cold temperatures and heavy rainfall as the Finnish climate, instills in people the need and demand for basically opposite weather. Most respondents stated just the demand of the “heat” on holiday. Although the Azores are not an area with lots of sunny days per year, its climate is extremely mild in winter and hot in summer, offering excellent conditions of stay for a population that does not seek the sun and beach tourism as first product.

In this survey another item was placed with Factor Other to find out some other relevant factor to each one of the respondents. Twenty (20) individuals used this item to identify other factors. The scores go from score 3 to score 5. Has been reported as an asset to a tourist destination being a good place for fishing, be inserted and surrounded by nature, be culturally rich, be served with many activities for the tourist population and that indigenous people talk in a language accessible as a Latin or Anglo Saxon, the most dialogued within these as Spanish and English.

It follows then a summary of the scores assigned to each factor based on two more scores assigned.

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| - Price:                        | 3-4 |
| - Direct Transport Connections: | 3-2 |
| - Proximity:                    | 3-2 |
| - Security:                     | 4-5 |
| - Weather:                      | 4-3 |
| - Other                         | 4-5 |

Factors Price, Direct Links Transport and Proximity are assumed as intermediate factors in the evaluation. May contribute to the final selection but are not fundamental. The level of average wages in Finland allows a considerable purchasing power when choosing a vacation package, a fact which tends continually to increase due to transport more competitive prices, an effective increase of new resorts and destinations, allowing greater competition in the monetary issue.

The world of commercial aviation is increasingly organized and formed by groups of companies that allow a greater number of destinations and although it has to do some layover, the time between the various flights is becoming smaller. Respondents, revealing the average score of 3, tolerate this factor.

The planet is increasingly “smaller.” Today, to make a visit to a neighboring country in the European context is increasingly seen as something common, necessary for a variety of reasons. The novelty of a different holiday is farther away, or on the opposite side of the continent or even another continent. The proximity here takes a 3-2 rating. It is a score below the average, the distance is less important because what matters is distance - time.

Fundamental to the residents of that Nordic country are: Security, a favorable climate and other factors, which fall within the proximity to the sea, an immersion in nature and culture: a destination that offers diversity.

**Table 4. Evaluation of the favored type destination**

| What kind of destination do you prefer? (0 to 5) | Sun and Beach |    |    |    |    |    | Cultural |    |    |    |    |    | Religious                  |    |    |    |    |   |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----------------------------|----|----|----|----|---|
|                                                  | 0             | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 0        | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 0                          | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 |
|                                                  | 6             | 11 | 2  | 19 | 38 | 24 | 0        | 2  | 6  | 23 | 50 | 19 | 39                         | 32 | 17 | 8  | 4  | 0 |
|                                                  | Urban         |    |    |    |    |    | Rural    |    |    |    |    |    | Mountainous (cold weather) |    |    |    |    |   |
|                                                  | 0             | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 0        | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 0                          | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 |
|                                                  | 4             | 2  | 22 | 48 | 24 | 0  | 8        | 14 | 23 | 41 | 12 | 2  | 10                         | 24 | 21 | 17 | 24 | 4 |
|                                                  | Other         |    |    |    |    |    |          |    |    |    |    |    |                            |    |    |    |    |   |
|                                                  | 0             | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |          |    |    |    |    |    |                            |    |    |    |    |   |
|                                                  | 0             | 0  | 0  | 0  | 5  | 1  |          |    |    |    |    |    |                            |    |    |    |    |   |

*Source: Inquiry to the Finnish population*

The question of the Table 4 wants to evaluate several types of the respondents destinations. As in the previous question, was asked to assign a score from 0 to 5 where the higher the value, the greater the degree of relevance of this target for the respondent.

The types of destinations are Sun and Beach, Cultural, Religious, Urban, Rural, Mountainous (cold weather) and Other.

Marked with the colors black and dark grey in Table 4, are the two more often scores.

The Sun and Beach type was more often assessed with the scores 4 and 5, 38 and 24 responses, respectively. The prospect of meeting the sun and temperatures with some heat, temperatures opposed to Finnish, is the ideal vacation for the respondents and this is reviewed by maximum scores 4 and 5.

The Cultural destination type was assessed immediately by 50% (50) of respondents with score 4. If the 19 responses to score 5 are added, 69% of the population highly values the culture in vacation time. The common experience with culture, within the general scope, in this population, instills an interest in experiencing it also in the vacation spot. But is different regarding the Religious destination, as is not considered attractive for the population; Scores 1 and 0, 39 and 32 responses respectively, were most marked.

Urban and Rural target types were evaluated with 3. Are relevant but not enhancers as a destination in itself. They must be inserted in a wider context.

The Mountainous target type (associated with cold climates) was evaluated with equal frequency by the larger and scores 1 and 4, with 24 responses each. This apparent contradiction comes in the evaluation of the charm and attraction that the Finnish population feels and lives in relation to this target type. It's a type that is associated with low temperature and sports, mostly related to the snow. It is a kind of destination that is already very present in Finland. In this context, 24% of respondents, because they already enjoy, even in short periods of time as weekends, this type of destination, so, they are not looking at major holiday periods and that justifies the score 1. The other 24%, score 4, act to seek the same conditions and same activities by the taste and attraction inherent to this destination but in other regions and countries.

When the type "Other" were asked, so that respondents could add anything that have not been reported, six individuals responded as having to be a destination near the sea and history. Of these six, five evaluated with 4 and one with 5.

The evaluation with the two most common scores features as follows:

|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| - Sun and Beach: | 4-5     |
| - Cultural:      | 4-3     |
| - Religious:     | 0-1     |
| - Urban:         | 3-4     |
| - Rural:         | 3-2     |
| - Mountainous:   | 1 and 4 |
| - Other:         | 4-5     |

Respondents provide vacation to be lived in waterfront destination, with good temperatures and at the same time a culturally rich place with its history, its gastronomy, its popular traditions, among others. It may be a target type with a more urban or more rural but must generally be supplemented with the first two both of these, Sun and Beach and Cultural with score 4.

**Table 5. Favourite types of accommodation**

| Type of accommodation                     | Frequency |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|
| What kind of accommodation do you prefer? |           |
| Hotel                                     | 35        |
| Apart hotel                               | 30        |
| Guesthouse                                | 13        |
| Camping park                              | 7         |
| House renting                             | 14        |
| Other                                     | 1         |

*Source: Inquiry to the finnish population*

Table 5 represents the answers from respondents to preferred type or types of accommodation when on vacation.

The type of accommodation that has been selected more times for 35 respondents was Hotel, followed by 30 responses, Aparthotel. In this context, the respondents are in line with the two types of accommodation that worldwide offers more beds.

There are 13 answers to Guesthouse and 14 answers for Renting House. They are generally two types of housing more asso-

ciated with longer stays and individuals with greater emphasis on originality and in search of “difference” in their travels.

### Azores as a destination

The third part of the investigation, Azores as destination, consists on identifying the degree of knowledge of the sample in relation to this archipelago and their views regarding the same.

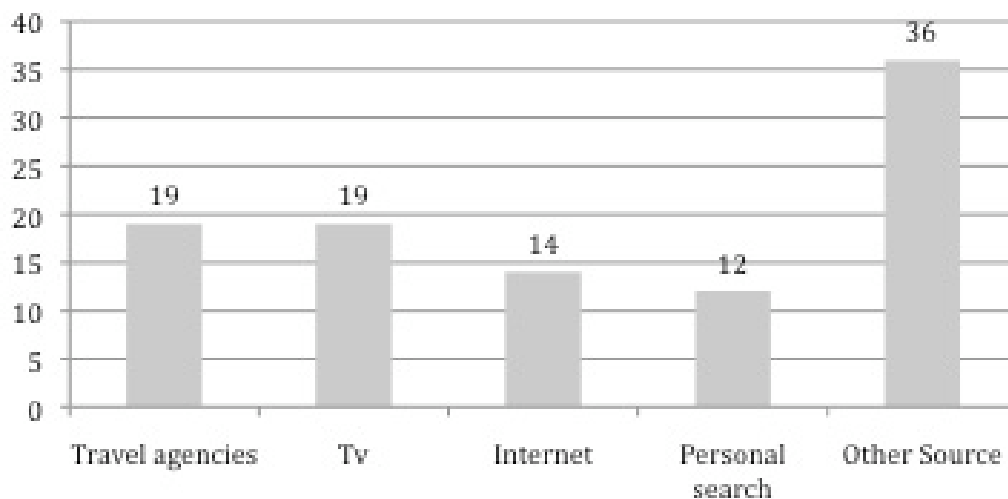
**Table 6. Degree of knowledge about the Azores islands**

| Degree of knowledge                       | Frequency |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Have you ever heard about Azores islands? |           |
| Yes                                       | 72        |
| No                                        | 28        |

*Source: Inquiry to the finnish population*

*Associated with the question on Table 6, “Have you ever heard of the Azores Islands?”, 72% of respondents answered Yes and 28%, No. Who said yes, was asked the source of that knowledge (Figure 3).*

**Figure 3. Sources of information**



*Source: Inquiry to the finnish population*

*Based on Figure 3, the most reported source of information and answers was 36, Other Source. Friends who went to the Azores, travel magazines and learning in school are the sources mentioned by respondents. Not to neglect the relevance of the later response as to the source, learning in school. Individuals, who reported this, cutting across all age groups, allow us to reflect on how this can create curiosity in the population towards once meet the geographical area concerned.*

### The islands of Azores as a future touristic destination

This part was started with a brief oral presentation using visual and tourist brochures of that territory available in English and Finnish, as explained above.

**Table 7 - Interest shown in visiting Azores**

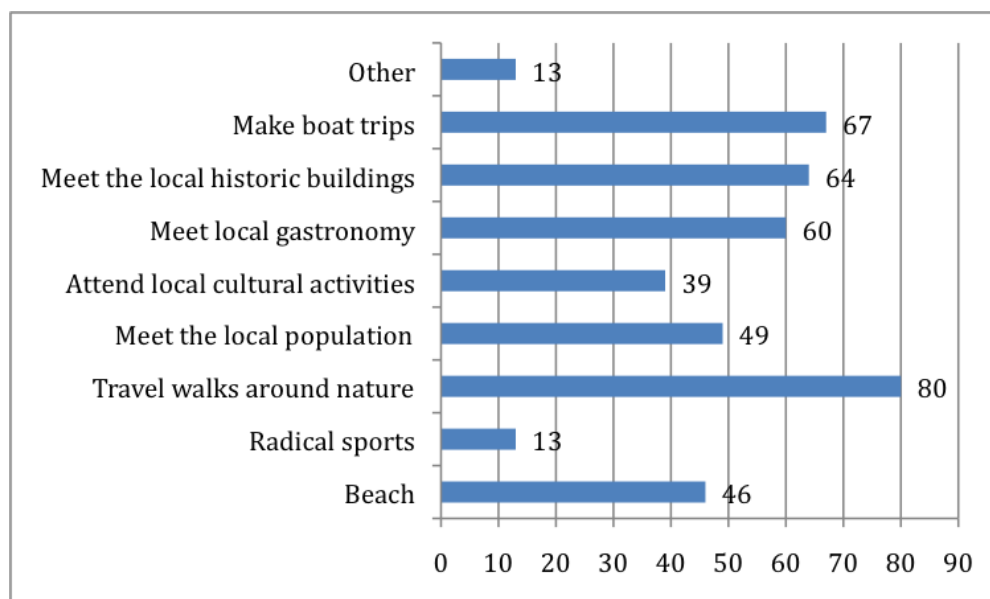
| Interest on holidays in Azores                                               | Frequency |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| After the small description are you interested on holidays in those islands? |           |
| Yes                                                                          | 94        |
| No                                                                           | 6         |

*Source: Inquiry to the finnish population*

“After this short description are you interested in taking holidays in the islands?”, 94 respondents answered Yes. The six individuals who responded No, justified their answers with their preferences eminently on urban tourist destinations, associated with arts and entertainment.

For the 94 respondents who expressed an interest in choosing the Azores as a tourist destination it was questioned the identification of activities to be performed in that expectant territory (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Expectations regarding the activities to be carried out in a trip to Azorean Islands**



*Source: Inquiry to the finnish population*

Future tourists expressed interest in experiencing some marked activities. Travel walks around nature with 80 responses, make boat trips in the interests of inter-island transport, observation of coastal scenery and marine life (Make boat trips) with 67 responses, knowing the historical site (Meet the local historic buildings) with 64 responses and know the local cuisine (Meet local gastronomy) with 60 responses, are the more pronounced activities and adhered to. We have identified the activities “know the day-to-day of the population” (Meet the local population habits) with 49 responses, Beach, 46 answers and watch and experience the local cultural activities (Attend local cultural activities) with 39 responses. Extreme Sports and Other were less pronounced, with 13 responses each. Within “Other” expectations, golf and fishing were identified.

## CONCLUSIONS

With the official discovery of the nine islands of the Azores in the fifteenth century, began the Human – Environment relation process that has been filled with activities, experiences, changes and harmony, until the present day.

Coming from a course of changes in the economy, regional development went through the production of dye plants, fruit production and whaling. Today the area is an economy of livestock services in conjunction with the production of cow milk (processed into cheese and butter). The current position in Services includes a sketch of dedication to tourism, business for many years existing on some islands but without relevant economic importance.

The volcanic island origins resulted in a territory with unique landscapes. The settlement with individuals from various parts of mainland Portugal and Central Europe led to a rich human culture that remains to this day.

The opportunity of conducting a survey among the Finnish population and living in that country for a period of time, allo-

wed to consolidate the concepts of being a highly educated population with purchasing and decision power. Finns have many leisure habits, including more than once yearly average holiday. Finnish tourists can spend a high economic value (over 1000 euros) on a tourist destination as this destination presents quality and originality of supply in several areas, combining security and a climate with mild temperatures. This group seeks tourist destinations that have a very unique culture, located near the sea and enabling a direct contact with both the urban and the rural. Infrastructures as the traditional Hotels & Aparthotels are the most frequently used in their holiday stay.

The Finns, most of them are aware of the existence of these islands. Learning in education and conversations of friends were the main transmitters of the word Azores. When confronted with advertising and characterization of the Azorean territory, they assume to be a tourist destination to visit. The direct contact with nature through hiking, as well as maritime activities, customs and habits of Azores, historic buildings, cultural events and local cuisine, pleases them.

Culturally shaped by their “country of one thousand lakes”, consisting of vast natural areas and benefiting from an advanced education system - quality and free -, Finns are a population with a particularly respect and a symbiotic relationship with nature. We define the destination Azores as being in an environment of leisure travel for the Finnish population.

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