

Theoretical approach for the development of tourism activity in the cooperative sector

Aproximación teórica para el desarrollo de la actividad turística en el sector cooperativo

Abordagem teórica para o desenvolvimento da atividade turística no setor cooperativo

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ABSTRACT

The current Cuban economic context requires to stimulate the diversification of activities, which leads to optimize the existing potentialities in the localities; the tourist activity is not exempt of this possibility, this has led to the development of tourist modalities among which agrotourism is potentiated in the cooperative sector, taking advantage of the cultural, natural and historical resources that exist. The objective of this research is to analyze the theoretical and methodological foundations of this sector according to the insertion of the agrotourism modality in the tobacco massif of Pinar del Río, which will allow incorporating the tourism activity to the cooperative sector to optimize and take advantage of resources, stimulate productive chains and diversify economic activities in areas with agricultural predominance, since it is supported by the objectives and the existing legal framework in the country. A theoretical sequence that establishes the bases for the incorporation of the agrotourism modality in tobacco cooperatives is presented; for this, different methods were used, such as the historical-logical and the analysis and synthesis methods, as well as the determination of the primary and secondary sources that made possible to obtain the results of the research. The characterization of the study area was developed and the identification of tourist attractions was obtained from direct observation and consultation of documents. Results were reached where it was established that it is feasible to diversify the activities in the cooperative sector, in the tobacco massif of Pinar del Río, with the insertion of agrotourism.

Keywords: cooperativism; agrotourism; agrotourism attractions

RESUMEN

El contexto económico cubano actual requiere de estimular la diversificación de actividades, lo que aparejado lleva a optimizar las potencialidades existentes en las localidades; la actividad turística no está exenta de esta posibilidad, ello ha conducido al desarrollo de modalidades turísticas entre las cuales se potencializa el agroturismo en el sector cooperativo, aprovechando los recursos culturales, naturales e históricos que existen. La presente investigación tiene como objetivo analizar los fundamentos teóricos metodológicos de este sector en función de la inserción de la modalidad agroturística en el macizo tabacalero de Pinar del Río, lo que permitirá incorporar la actividad turística al sector cooperativo para optimizar y aprovechar recursos, estimular encadenamientos productivos y diversificar actividades económicas en áreas con predominio agrícola, pues se apoya en los objetivos y el marco legal existente en el país. Se presenta una secuencia teórica que establece las bases para la incorporación de la modalidad agroturística en cooperativas tabacaleras; para ello, se utilizaron diferentes métodos como el histórico lógico y el de análisis y síntesis, así como la determinación de las fuentes primarias y secundarias que posibilitaron la obtención de resultados de la investigación. Se desarrolló la caracterización del área de estudio y se obtuvo la identificación de atractivos turísticos a partir de la observación directa y la consulta de documentos. Se llegaron a resultados donde se estableció que es factible diversificar las actividades en el sector cooperativo, en el macizo tabacalero de Pinar del Río, con la inserción del agroturismo.

Palabras clave: cooperativismo; agroturismo; atractivos agroturísticos

RESUMO

O atual contexto econômico cubano exige o estímulo à diversificação das atividades, o que, em conjunto, leva a otimizar o potencial existente nas localidades; a atividade turística não está isenta desta possibilidade, o que tem levado ao desenvolvimento de modalidades turísticas, entre as quais se valoriza o agroturismo no setor cooperativo,

aproveitando os recursos culturais, naturais e históricos existentes. A presente pesquisa tem como objetivo analisar os fundamentos teórico-metodológicos deste setor a partir da inserção da modalidade do agroturismo no maciço fumicultor de Pinar del Río, o que permitirá incorporar a atividade turística ao setor cooperativo para otimizar e aproveitar os recursos, estimular a articulação das atividades produtivas e diversificar as atividades econômicas em áreas com predomínio da agricultura, uma vez que se baseia nos objetivos e no arcabouço legal vigente no país. É apresentada uma sequência teórica que estabelece as bases para a incorporação da modalidade do agroturismo nas cooperativas de fumo; para isso, foram utilizados diferentes métodos, como história lógica e análise e síntese, bem como a determinação das fontes primárias e secundárias que possibilitaram a obtenção dos resultados da pesquisa. A caracterização da área de estudo foi desenvolvida e a identificação dos atrativos turísticos foi obtida a partir da observação direta e consulta a documentos. Foram alcançados resultados onde se constatou que é viável diversificar as atividades do setor cooperativista, no maciço do fumo de Pinar del Río, com a inserção do agroturismo.

Palavras-chave: cooperativismo; agroturismo; atrações do agroturismo

INTRODUCTION

Cooperativism is one of the most important socioeconomic movements in the world, it has as its own raw material the human being; since its beginnings, some years ago, until today, man needed cooperation, so he learned how to achieve it and make a good profit from it. It is essentially a social model based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity, which is aimed at harmonious and sustainable development in the economic, productive and social order (Escuela Nacional de Educación Cooperativista, 2004).

In Cuba, where the cooperative movement developed on the transformation of social structures made possible by the Revolution, the foundations of cooperativism were based on a genuinely socialist conception. According to Hernández and Marín (2016), in Cuba, cooperativism has developed predominantly in the agro livestock sector, assuming three

fundamental forms, in three moments that mark the stages of its emergence, which are: Credit and Service Cooperatives (CCS in Spanish), Agricultural Production Cooperatives (CPA in Spanish) and Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC in Spanish), which constitute first-degree cooperatives. This cooperative movement began after the triumph of the Revolution in 1959. Its origins are based on the democratization of land ownership determined by successive agrarian reform laws, since cooperativism can only exist as an association of free owners or usufructuary people.

In recent years, the development of the cooperative movement has influenced not only the development of its members, but also that of the country's economy, since in the Draft Guidelines of the Sixth and Seventh Congresses of the Cuban Communist Party, PCC, dedicated to economic management, cooperatives have five specific guidelines, which denotes the intention and purpose of the country, to recognize, with greater preponderance, that cooperativism constitutes a way of development for the Cuban socialist social model and the need to extend it to other sectors of the economy (Marín de León, 2016). The authors agree with the previous idea since it is the objective of this work, precisely, the linking of cooperatives with one of the most influential sectors in the Cuban economy, Tourism, adding to the proposal for the creation of cooperatives in other sectors of the economy, created by a group of authors of the former Center for Studies on Cooperative and Community Development of the University of Pinar del Río.

Taking into account the aforementioned criteria, cooperativism in Cuba has developed predominantly in the agro livestock sector, covering exportable and non-exportable items, including among them the tobacco activity that plays a fundamental role, which will also be linked to the objective of this research.

In Cuba, the word Agroecology, linked to the term Sustainable Agriculture, was first heard in the early 1990s; the two concepts emerged in a situation of acute economic and food crisis.

Alaña et al. (2017) expresses some theories on sustainable development, such as the following; he says that there is possibility to summarize them to three different central themes: sustainability is exclusively ecological, limited social sustainability, society-

nature co-evolution. Existing, among these, two fundamental elements: ecological sustainability and social sustainability.

Between the 1920s and 30s of the twentieth century, tourism development began in Cuba, an example of this is what Figueras and Pérez Cárdenas (2015) state, they refer that Havana -not the whole of Cuba- came to receive one out of every two Americans who traveled to the Caribbean between 1920 and 1930. Large and luxurious hotels were built, practically one every year to receive increasing flows of visitors from the northern neighbor, eager for parties, drinks, games and other forbidden entertainments, not well regarded by the rulers of their country. Tourism revenues had become the country's third largest source of foreign exchange.

In 1995, our Commander-in-Chief bet on tourism development in rural areas, with a careful practice; he ratified it when he expressed the following idea at the Summit of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean States:

"In the tourism sector, we have made some progress. But we are still far from having turned the region, as a whole, into a privileged destination for international tourism, to which our natural riches give us credit. This common heritage of our peoples requires special care" (Rodríguez Domínguez et al., 2013).

Lalangui et al. (2017) delve into different authors' definitions of the term "tourism" over the years, an example of which is the one defined by the World Tourism Organization when it says that tourism comprises activities undertaken by people during their travels and stays, in places other than their usual environment, for a consecutive period of less than one year, for leisure, business and other purposes.

According to Sánchez et al. (2020), one of the modalities of tourism is agrotourism, an activity that allows the client not only to exchange with the members of rural communities, but also to participate in agricultural processes and even consume part of the crops planted. This form of tourism allows the agritourist to build his or her own experience based on the existing potential and the link with agricultural production

methods. It also has the possibility of having very low seasonality, since the seasons and crop rotation allow it to be active almost all year round.

Issues related to Agrotourism have been addressed, but there are few examples in Cuba of agro livestock cooperative enterprises engaged in tourism services.

The province of Pinar del Rio has a representation of 364 cooperatives, where 71.9% of them are dedicated to tobacco production, within which are today providing services, usufructuary people that are associated in the modality of cooperatives, mainly, concentrated in the tobacco massif, highlighting the area of San Juan y Martinez and San Luis, specifically the Vegas "Hoyo de Mena", "Quemado del Rubí" and "El Pinar", belonging to the fortified CCS "5to Congreso" and CCS "Vietnam Heroico" respectively, which stand out for complementing the tobacco culture with the tourist activity, which is the subject of this research.

From the analysis carried out, it can be seen that the cooperative sector, in general, does not make optimal use of the possibilities of diversifying its management, using the potentialities that can form tourist attractions to develop the productive base of the municipalities integrated in it and propitiate new employment opportunities for the inhabitants, additional income from tourism and local productive chains.

The objective of this article is to design a methodology to integrate the agrotourism modality to the cooperative sector in the tobacco massif of San Luis and San Juan y Martínez.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Among the theoretical methods, the following were used:

The logical-historical method was applied to determine the theoretical-methodological antecedents of the management of the Cooperative Sector and the Tourism Sector, emphasizing the modality of agrotourism, evolution of these terms and their relation with the socioeconomic development of the country. The analysis and synthesis were used as procedures for the study of the different aspects related to the development of

the management of the process of integration of the agrotourism modality in the cooperative sector. The systemic method facilitated the characterization of the object and the field of action of the research, by specifying the constituent elements and the relationships established between them.

For the process of characterizing the object of the research, the sources of information, both secondary and primary, were determined. With respect to the secondary sources, a bibliographic review was made of statistical reports, annual balance sheets, laws and regulations, Mintur's (Ministry of Tourism) Strategy, General Plans of Territorial Ordering, Commercial Reports of the tourist activity, Book of the Client of the farms in tourist service and analysis, investigations related to the thematic of tourism and cooperativism, among others, all with the objective of establishing the necessity and justification of the integration of the agrotourism in the Cooperative Sector.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptualization and evolution of cooperativism

The origins of cooperativism can be found in the primitive community, the first humans worked in a basically cooperative way. Even when the evolution of history has given rise to other modes of production such as slavery, feudalism and capitalism, cooperative work has continued to exist in different forms in some areas, both in the center and in the periphery. Examples of precursor experiences of modern cooperatives have been documented in the most diverse regions of the planet and as far back as the 25th century before our era.

The conceptual antecedents of contemporary cooperativism date back to the 17th century when, in 1659, writings appeared about the organization of an economic association that, while preserving individual property, would eliminate the exploitation of some men by others and distribute the benefits among the members of the organization. This proposal consisted of a kind of integral cooperatives of production and consumption, both for industry and agriculture, it was proposed the creation of cooperative work colonies formed by means of shares, where the multiskilling would contribute to a better use of the labor force, combining the work of artisans and farmers

and the funds. Once the needs of the members are covered, they would be destined to the expansion and strengthening of the organization and its management combines in a balanced way the needs of its members, their capacities and resources and makes it possible to satisfy the needs of third parties as a way to achieve different results, including economic ones, as Labrador (2020) emphasizes.

The same author points out that it is widely recognized that the Industrial Revolution was the historical framework where cooperativism emerged as a theoretical-practical trend, linked to the scientific-technological advances and the development of the productive forces that unleashed a great competitive struggle, expanding the accumulation of capital, the consequent impoverishment of the working class, its subordination to capital and the strengthening of the capitalist system.

With the advance of industrial capitalism, supported by the rapid development of science and technology and its incessant privatization of common goods and socialization of costs for individual profit, the situation of workers and the unemployed worsened. It is, in this context, that cooperativism begins to gain attention as some political and religious movements that rejected the dominant individualist ideology, such as the Quakers Plockboy and Bellers and the utopian socialists Owen, Fourier, Buchez and Blan became interested in the experiences of cooperatives that had been originating in isolation (Battilani & Schröter, 2012).

The debate about the initial moments of the cooperative movement is broad; cooperatives arise in England as a spontaneous reaction of industrial workers to overcome the difficulties of their living conditions, socialist thought and Ricardian anti-capitalists develop a notable influence on it, so that the origin of modern cooperativism is made to coincide with the creation of the Rochdale cooperative, in England, in 1844.

The theoretical discussion developed by the classics of Marxism about cooperativisation confirms the importance given to this sector of the economy. The main moments of this debate are summarized as follows (Escuela Nacional de Educación Cooperativista, 2004):

- In capitalism, cooperatives constitute a collective form of work organization that allows workers to defend their economic interests, even though they bear the stamp of that society
- The cooperatives that emerged under capitalism as an organization of the working class oppose the bourgeoisie and constitute the first breach in the capitalist relations of production
- These entities acquire various social functions that are opposed to the capitalist regime, although they cannot go beyond the limits of this economic-social formation
- Cooperatives in capitalism can degenerate into capitalist enterprises and do not lead to radical social change, if they are not controlled and violate their socio-economic essence
- At the same time, the classics of Marxism-Leninism stressed that in the construction of socialism, cooperatives constitute a premise for the transition period and an instrument of socialist transformation, an affirmation of vital importance in the current context of perfecting our economic and social model

It did not take long for this form of social and business organization to spread around the world. Cooperatives of all kinds were created all over the world from the end of the 19th century with the settlement of European immigrants, especially in India and Latin American countries.

The beginnings of cooperativism in Latin America and its influence on the economic and social development of Latin American countries showed its gradual growth, starting in the first half of the 19th century, with the first experiences even before the Rochdale Cooperative was created in 1844. At the time of the establishment of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in 1895, co-operatives already existed in some countries, since cooperativism in Latin America had co-operative enterprises before the English experience and were influenced by European immigrants.

After the crisis of the 1930s, the model developed as an option for social and business organization to respond to the needs of the time. In all Latin American countries, cooperativism has been part of the historical development of their economies and

continues to be so today, with cooperatives operating in all sectors of the economy, in some countries more than in others.

In Cuba, from the triumph of the Revolution, social transformations arise that allow the emergence, in the country, of the cooperative movement, beginning in the agricultural sector; such is so, in the decade of the 60s, the Cooperatives of Credits and Services are created, some years later the Cooperatives of Agro livestock Production in 1976 and the Basic Units of Cooperative Production constituted in 1993, which belong to the group of the cooperatives of first degree.

The development of cooperativism has occurred in correspondence with the system of contradictions of capitalism, but it is not a movement exclusive to this mode of production. In the socialist construction, together with state property, cooperative property is a form of collective social property that, together with private property, make up the social economic fabric and the cooperative is one of its fundamental forms, still susceptible to improvement and consolidation within the framework of the model.

The Declaration on Cooperative Identity and Principles provides the definition of a cooperative in current use, adopted at the second ICA General Assembly in 1995 and reproduced by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which states that: "A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons who unite voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically managed enterprise" (ICA, 2002).

The declaration itself defends the values that should guide these organizations: self-help, personal responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity and an ethic based on honesty, transparency, social responsibility and concern for others (ICA, 2002). The following are also established as co-operative principles: voluntary and open membership, democratic management by members, economic participation of members, autonomy and independence, education, training and information, co-operation between cooperatives and concern for the community" (ICA, 2002).

The cooperative principles defined by the ICA are the result of its development; those promoted by the Rochdale co-operative were adopted by all kinds of co-operatives and

today constitute the backbone of the ICA. These principles began with rules which they had to strictly respect and which were one of the causes of their success, because from that moment they were clear about the objectives they wanted, demonstrating in them the values, principles and goals with which they had created this co-operative organization and with which they would defend it.

As Rivera, et al. (2012) states, the cooperative enterprise is a voluntary association of people who join together to create a collectively owned and democratically managed enterprise, which has its own legal personality to meet their economic and social needs, contributing to local development and society as a whole, which determines a peculiar form of management, where values of equity and social justice are present. Marín (2016) considers that it shows an integral character in its conception, by incorporating the social dimension and its contribution, not only to the internal scope of the company, but in its projection and contribution to society in general.

With regard to definitions related to the term cooperative, the National Office of Statistics and Information (Onei in Spanish) sets out the classifications and criteria currently held by the Ministry of Agriculture. The universe of reporting centers is composed as follows (Onei, 2019):

- The state sector includes agricultural enterprises and other state entities that carry out agricultural and livestock activities
- The non-state sector comprises the Basic Units of Cooperative Production, Agro livestock Production Cooperatives, Credit and Service Cooperatives and dispersed private (peasant) producers who establish commitments with the State

The Basic Units of Cooperative Production were created in 1993 and are made up of workers from state enterprises; the land transferred to them has been in usufruct and the means of production have been purchased from the state. These UBPCs are classified according to their main activity as sugar cane and non-cane, dedicated to various crops, citrus, fruit, coffee, tobacco and livestock.

The Cooperatives of Agro livestock Production constitute a collective form of social property and are created from the decision of the peasants to unite their lands and other fundamental means of production.

Credit and Service Cooperatives are primary organizations of a collective nature that enable the common use of irrigation, some facilities, services and other means, as well as the global processing of their credits, although the ownership of each farm, its equipment and the resulting production remain private (Onei, 2019).

The above summary of criteria of the cooperativism emergence worldwide and in Cuba, as well as the different definitions and classifications of the same allow affirming that the cooperative is an organization that is constituted by the voluntary union of a group of people and is sustained by the work of its partners, whose general objective is the production of goods and the provision of services for the satisfaction of the social interest. It has legal personality and its own assets. It is distinguished by its duality as an economic enterprise, with a high social purpose. Moreover, in Cuba, since its inception, it has been an important line in the economy, acquiring the necessary transformations for its development in the Cuban socialist system.

General aspects of the socio-economic development of the province of Pinar del Río

Physical-geographical characteristics of the province of Pinar del Río

Territory: It is a province located in the westernmost part of the island of Cuba. It is bordered on the north by the Gulf of Mexico, on the east by Havana, on the south by the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Batabanó and on the west by the Yucatán Channel. It covers 8 883.74 km² distributed in 11 municipalities, 8 816.74 km² corresponding to the mainland and 67.0 km² to the different keys of the province. Due to its extension, it occupies the fourth place among the provinces of the country. The total length of its coasts is 880 km. In terms of hydrographic resources, it has 11% of the country's river basins. Its largest and longest rivers flow into the southern coast. Among the most important are the Cuyaguaje (112.0 km), Rio Hondo (113.2 km) and San Diego (97.0 km). The main reservoirs are: La Juventud and El Punto. According to 2016 population

figures, the Pinar del Río population is 588 272, representing 5.2% of the country, with a population density of 66.2 inhabitants per km² (Onei, 2019).

Geology: It is characterized by the presence of the deposits of the stratigraphic column of the Sierra de los Órganos, from the oldest, from the San Cayetano formation, to the most recent, from the Quaternary. The tectonic picture of the area is quite complex, with a predominance of rapses and the influence of a transversal faulting that can have normal or transcurrent behavior, which has played a determining role in the current morphology of the mogotes in the Viñales region. The folding is quite intense in the San Cayetano formation and is less developed in the calcareous sequences (Onei, 2019).

Temperature, rainfall and humidity: The average annual temperature in the municipality is 24.7°C, on the coast the average is higher than 25°C, in the rest of the plains and in the highlands, the average fluctuates between 24 and 25°C, in the valleys and karst mountain ranges the average is 23 to 24°C, reaching values below 22°C in several peaks of these mountain ranges. The accumulated annual average rainfall is 1437.5 mm, with an average of 122 rainy days per year. The relative humidity is high 80.7%, the month with the highest humidity is July with 89%, the areas with the lowest humidity are the summits of the sierras and mogotes, while the valleys are the most humid.

Biodiversity: It is the second region of endemism of the country, it presents a high variety of ecosystems that allow the existence of a multitude of *habitats*, so it is not possible to specify the spatial variations; due to this, there is a great diversity of its flora and fauna. The flora is constituted by more than 1200 species, reaching an endemism close to 30% in carbonate substrates, while the fauna (still to be known), presents very high endemism in particular groups, such as mollusks, can reach 90%. Amphibians, reptiles and crustaceans probably reach 30 % endemism, similar to the flora.

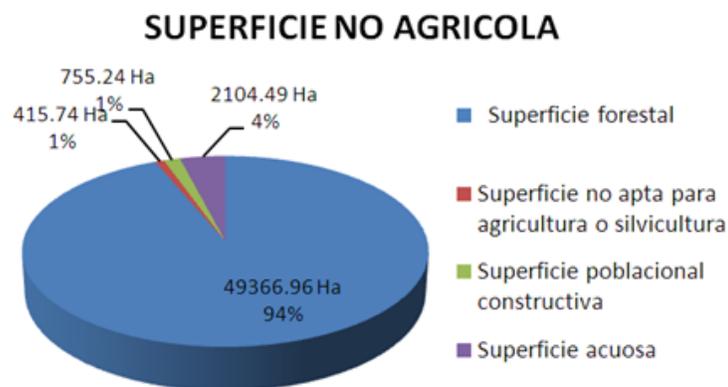
All these elements described above condition the development of an adequate tourist activity in the province and are part of the tourist attractions that provide value for the development of Rural Tourism, where the agrotourism modality prevails.

Economic Aspects of the Province of Pinar del Río

According to secondary sources such as the Commercial Report of the Office of the Delegation and the Report of the Closing of the Behavior of Nature Tourism of the Ministry of Tourism in Pinar del Río (Onei, 2020), the economic structure of the province is based on three fundamental lines: Agro livestock, Forestry and Tourism.

Agro livestock: The most attractive crops in the province are the various crops among which tobacco stands out, which is cultivated mainly in the municipalities of San Juan y Martínez, San Luis, Consolación Sur and, to a lesser extent, in the municipality of Pinar del Río: San Juan y Martínez, San Luis, Consolación del Sur and, to a lesser extent, in the head municipality of Pinar del Río. Other productions are raw sugar, lobster in its derivatives, canned fruits and vegetables. In mining, copper concentrate is worked, construction materials are also produced, as well as the presence of tourist activity. The main problems lie in: the fixed work force, the incidence of adverse weather phenomena, water limitations for irrigation, etc. There is a tendency to increase the areas dedicated to various crops through the figure of the usufructuary, there is also discouragement of farmers as they are dedicated to other crops that are more attractive to them and that generate more income. General Land Use Plan (PGOT in Spanish, 2019).

Forestry: The forest heritage occupies 93.69% of the non-agricultural area (Graph 1), with a predominance of natural forests with 52.75%, which represents a significant percentage of areas dedicated to conservation (PGOT, 2019).



Graph 1 - Surface area showing the percentage of areas occupied by forestry activities

Source: PGOT (2019)

The forestry activity is developed mainly in the areas that occupy the Slate Heights, while the agricultural activity is located in the intermountain valleys and in the northern plains.

This activity is very important since a large part of the tourism on offer is nature tourism, precisely because of the possibilities offered by the good condition of the natural forests, mainly the pine forests, which are responsible for the name of the province.

Tourism: Tourism is one of the fundamental pillars of the economic structure of the province. At present, it is mainly concentrated in the municipality of Viñales, where the karst mountain ranges alternate with the heights of slate and wide valleys, deployed in the contact zones between both types of elevations. Tourism in the region began, at first, with the construction of a lookout point on the heights of Pizarras del Sur, in the locality of Los Jazmines, around 1901. Although infrastructure for tourism continued to be built gradually, it was not until after the triumph of the Revolution in 1959 and with the rise of agrotourism, represented by the Tobacco Route within the region's tourism development program, that the introduction of agricultural practices and lodging in private houses rented to tourists was allowed (Melero Lazo, 2005).

ONEI (2019) registers the following as tourist attractions: Viñales Valley, named Cultural Landscape of Humanity, Guanahacabibes Peninsula, Biosphere Reserve, Cayo Levisa, Cayo Jutías, Cayo Paraíso, City of Pinar del Río, San Diego de los Baños and the so-called tobacco region, due to the denomination of the best tobacco land in the world that the municipality of San Juan y Martínez has earned for the production and quality of tobacco leaf and culture.

Within the types of tourism that are practiced in the region, the following modalities can be found:

- Conventional Tourism
- Nature Tourism
- Specialized Scientific Tourism
- Adventure Tourism
- Rural Tourism, agrotourism modality

Rural tourism, specifically the agrotourism sub modality, has its beginnings in the province of Pinar del Río in 2010, with the tourist project Tobacco Route, a proposal entirely aimed at the practice of agrotourism activity, linked to the culture of tobacco. In 2015, it enters the tourist market with the offer of visitation and appreciation of the most diverse activities related to the work done to the precious tobacco leaf, although at that time it did not yet cover the entire area conceived within the Route.

One of the most successful opportunities offered by the project is the implementation of the two agro-tourist nuclei in the "Quemado del Rubí" and "Hoyo de Mena" plantations, belonging to the fortified CCS "5to Congreso", located in the municipality of San Juan y Martínez, Pinar del Río, with a scheme based on the concept of family micro-enterprises facilitating agro-tourism services, which include the appreciation and practice of tobacco production activities complemented with lodging and catering (Mateo Burbano et al., 2020). All this provides an economic income that allows substantial changes in the production and quality of life of the peasant family, as well as the local population.

This led to the rest of the country to become interested in other farmers, and in 2014, another proposal for agro-tourism activity began, the Local Agricultural Innovation Program (Pial in Spanish), which brought together, at first, a group of women producers from several provinces. In addition, they began to provide training related to these issues that facilitated the emergence of several agrotourism products that have been successful, including "La Picadora" in the municipality of Yaguajay, Sancti Spíritus; "La Campiña" in the municipality of Viñales and "Charrabascal" in the municipality of La Palma, corresponding to the province of Pinar del Río.

They are still isolated empirical cases that are not contemplated within a strategy that allows the development under conceptual and methodological precepts of agro-tourism activity and that respond to local interests. Today the conditions are created in the country, structurally and in the political will of the government to intensify the creation of agro-tourism projects throughout the country, but there is a lack of a strategy that reflects the how, where and for what the tourism sub-modality should be developed. The New Cuban Constitution, the economic-social development program until 2030,

municipal autonomy and the decentralization of the business system are opportunities for its implementation according to Sánchez et al. (2020).

In the province of Pinar del Río, pioneer in the elaboration of the Municipal Development Strategy in all its municipalities, the Local Sustainable Tourism program has been identified in each of them, which stimulates proposals from the potentialities and local identity of agrotourism products, among other modalities (Ramos et al., 2017).

Characterization of the agrotourism activity in the Cooperative Sector in the Tobacco Massif of Pinar del Río

The sub-modality of agrotourism is a form of tourism in which rural culture is used to provide various options of distraction and attract tourists with nature and mainly with "cultivated landscapes". This term is key to agrotourism, it is essential to first develop a culture of healthy crops and, as a result of their plant health, efficient, profitable and competitive crops, in general, crops worthy of signing or photographing and with a high cultural content. According to the definition of the World Tourism Organization, (Barrera, 2006), agro-tourism is the activity that takes place in agricultural exploitations (farms or plantations), where the actors complement their income with some form of tourism in which, in general, they provide lodging, food and the opportunity to familiarize themselves with agricultural work.

Authors such as Ramirez and Perez (2014), agrotourism is a specific sub-modality of rural tourism, which takes place in agricultural facilities, farms, cooperatives or farms, where the motivation of the visitor focuses on agricultural and livestock practices, with the knowledge and enjoyment of cultural traditions linked to agriculture. To this, food and lodging services are added, all of which provide additional income to the farmer.

The tobacco tradition of the territory of Pinar del Río, with the passing of the centuries, has become a stage of international reference, as, in the opinion of producers, manufacturers and consumers, the best tobacco in the world is produced here. Although it is a strength, it has not been properly used in terms of tourism management of the Pinar del Río destination.

By virtue of this, it is necessary that the territory incorporates the tobacco culture as one of the main motivations, for which they visit the destination. That is why the development of agrotourism activity in the province is evident in the tobacco massif of Pinar del Rio, mainly in the municipalities of San Juan and Martínez and San Luis, being representative in infrastructure, production and management, contributing about 20% of the leaf of the prized crop (Mintur, 2019).

The farms involved as a tourist attraction until today, in the agrotourism activity, are Quemado del Rubí and Hoyo de Mena, representative in the production of the necessary layer in the elaboration of the Habano, representative product in the exportable line of the country.

Both farms are located in the Obeso community, in the municipality of San Juan y Martínez. The topography of the area is characterized by a plain with undulations and small valleys, associated to fossil fluvial terraces, which has favored the cultivation of tobacco for centuries.

The description of the study area was carried out through the method of direct observation, carried out during visits by the authors and the review of documents, such as: Tobacco Route project. The Mintur report (2019) found that the farms have the same structure and only differ in the extension of land, where Quemado del Rubí has six hectares and Hoyo de Mena has four hectares. They are made up of two zones: the tobacco cultivation zone and the *batey*, where the domestic and processing facilities are located.

In the productive zone, there is the land dedicated to traditional tobacco cultivation and rotational crops (corn and velvet beans for fertilizer) for the inter-harvest period. At harvest time, about 30 workers work in tobacco production, leaving only six workers in the period between harvests.

In the *batey* area are:

- Owner's homes
- Tobacco or drying houses

- Ranch with capacity for 60 pax and 100 pax respectively
- An Ecolodge in the case of the Farm Quemado del Rubi

The services are guaranteed, the drinking water comes from the aqueduct, which represents a guarantee for the adequate development of the tourist services. In the same way, all the facilities of the farms have electricity. The primary health services are guaranteed in a family doctor's office and studies up to secondary level are carried out in a local school. Both farms have land access roads in good condition. This demonstrates that conditions and potentialities exist for the development of the rural tourism modality, specialized in the tobacco culture, in the municipality of San Juan y Martínez.

In both meadows tourist activities are developed in the agrotourism modality; for the practice of the same, the traditional utensils with which the cultivation is developed are used.

Other important tourist attractions are the *despalillo* and *escogidas* of Vivero, they are two facilities one near the other, the first one is an old installation of traditional architecture, erected for the works of benefit of the tobacco leaf, specifically for the *despalillo*. The other, the *escogida*, is a more recent installation according to the activity itself. In both facilities, an important number of workers work, where the female gender stands out. Traditional manufactured activities of tobacco leaf processing can be appreciated.

As a complement to the local culture and history, the Municipal Museum of San Juan and Martínez, located in the heart of the homonymous city, is added to the list of attractions. Its association to the proposal aims to add value with a room themed and specialized in the culture of tobacco.

The culture of sowing, the myths and realities that adorn the cultivation and twisting of the aromatic leaf, is an essential attraction. The tillage at harvest time is developed with traditional instruments, from the labeling of the land to the twisting of the cigar, using instruments such as the Creole plow, animal traction, accompanied by a predominance of manual labor, which gives greater value to the resource because each twisted tobacco is a unique piece. On the other hand, the greenery of the landscape and the popular

culture come together in the festival of the Veguero, a festivity that accompanies each harvest for 4 days and closes with the contest for the lesson of the Flower of the tobacco; accompanied by the oral tradition of the tobacco producers, who transmit from generation to generation the techniques of cultivation and even confer medicinal and folkloric virtues to the leaf.

The main tourist activities that are developed in the agrotourism proposal in the tobacco lands of San Juan and Martinez are associated with the stages of cultivation, planting, harvesting, drying or curing, which gives the product very low seasonality, because the sequence of the stages of harvesting can guarantee the visitation at any time of the year, in addition, catering services, accommodation, entertainment and guiding are provided. The main agro-tourist activities that are currently being developed are the following:

- Observation of all agricultural activities in tobacco cultivation
- Observation of the tobacco fields where the tourist can appreciate the seedbeds, tobacco plantations and the cultivation in the sun and under cover
- Exchange with farmers and workers of the region or locality with more experience in tobacco cultivation
- Exchange with world-renowned personalities from the world of tobacco
- Tours on horseback, ox carts or on foot to observe and enjoy the various tourist attractions
- Moving and animal care
- Visits to tobacco leaf curing and drying houses where you will receive the technical information you request
- Visits to tobacco plantations and places with history, tradition and national and international prestige in the tobacco world
- Visits to the *escogidas* and *despalillo* houses to observe the selection of leaves for casings and binders used in the manufacture of Habano cigars
- Lectures on the history and development of tobacco cultivation in Pinar del Rio
- Visits to the Habanos of Pinar del Río Cigar Factory
- Acquisition of general knowledge of tobacco culture
- Practicing relaxation exercises in the open air

The behavior of the visitation of the activity in 2019, according to the main travel agencies, (Paradiso, Habanatur and Cubanacán), which market the product under the forms of excursions, ascended to 688 visitors, which represents only 13% of the accumulated of the 5 years preceding 2019, dismissing the visitation of 2020 due to the negative effects of the COVID that currently suffers the tourist activity at international and national level (Mintur, 2019).

A summary of conceptual criteria and on the emergence of cooperativism at world level and in Cuba was made, in addition to elements that allow the description of the characteristics, potentialities and classification of this sector and of the sub modality of agrotourism in Pinar del Río province, which allowed making a theoretical analysis in relation to the insertion of the latter to the cooperative sector.

Based on the above criteria, the authors conceptualize the insertion of agrotourism in the cooperative sector, concluding: the agrotourism sub modality within the cooperativism means an activity that, from the modification of the social object of the cooperatives, contributes to generate greater income or profits to the cooperative members) propitiating jobs, productive chains, diversifying the economic activities of the whole region, besides the interaction of the different cooperatives (CCS, CPA, UBPC), contributing to the well-being of the cooperative members and the development of the community.

The integration of agrotourism activity in the cooperative sector is a proposal aimed at obtaining benefits that enhance development and that can be identified in: job creation, diversification of the economy, motivation to obtain better quality products, revives the cultural elements of the region, raises the ego of the cooperative members and improves the standard of living and quality of life of the farming family and society in general.

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Authors declare not to have any conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution:

Yelina Magariño Pimentel, Odalys Labrador Machín and Iverilys Pérez Hernández designed the study, analyzed the data and prepared the draft.

Clara Elena Pimentel Fernández and Jorge Freddy Ramírez Pérez were involved in data collection, analysis and interpretation.

All the authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approve the version finally submitted.



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