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**LA TRANSFORMACIÓN SOCIOTERRITORIAL DE LOS ESPACIOS  
PERIURBANOS MOTIVADA POR EL TURISMO. EL CASO DEL  
MUNICIPIO DEL REAL VALLE DE CAMARGO (CANTABRIA)**

**THE SOCIOTERRITORIAL TRANSFORMATION OF PERI-URBAN ZONES  
MOTIVATED BY TOURISM. THE CASE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF REAL  
VALLE DE CAMARGO (CANTABRIA)**

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# THE SOCIOTERRITORIAL TRANSFORMATION OF PERI-URBAN SPACES MOTIVATED BY TOURISM. THE CASE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF REAL VALLE DE CAMARGO (CANTABRIA)

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## resumen

*Las alternativas turísticas se están ampliando progresivamente y, junto a los destinos tradicionales, plenamente consolidados, se abren paso nuevas opciones de disfrute del ocio en las áreas rurales y periurbanas. El crecimiento del turismo en estos espacios posibilita la diversificación económica y la multifuncionalidad de numerosas zonas ligada al aprovechamiento recreativo.*

*El objetivo de esta investigación se basa en describir un caso especialmente tangible y significativo de turismo periurbano en Cantabria (Real Valle de Camargo), analizando la oferta y la demanda.*

*Para desempeñar esta tarea, la presente investigación ofrece un diagnóstico de la oferta y de la demanda turística del Real Valle de Camargo, logrado mediante la utilización de diversos métodos de trabajo científico, desde el repaso de referencias bibliográficas hasta el análisis estadístico de los resultados.*

*Finalmente, la investigación pretende las posibilidades de generar un desarrollo socioterritorial complementario de los espacios periurbanos a través del turismo, a partir de la puesta en valor de sus atractivos recreativos dirigidos hacia un público objetivo concreto, tomando como caso práctico el Real Valle de Camargo.*

**Palabras clave:** *Espacio periurbano, Real Valle de Camargo, turismo, competitividad, demanda turística*

## abstract

*Tourist alternatives are gradually being developed alongside traditional, fully consolidated destinations. Therefore, new options to enjoy leisure time are opening up in rural and peri-urban areas. The growth of tourism in these zones, with the exploitation of recreation areas, enables diversification and multifunctionality.*

*The objective of this research is to describe a particularly tangible and significant case of peri-urban tourism in Cantabria (Real Valle de Camargo), analysing supply and demand.*

*In order to carry out this task, the present research offers a diagnosis of the current supply and tourist demand of the Real Valle de Camargo, achieved through the use of different scientific methods, from a review of bibliographical references to the statistical analysis of results.*

*Finally, the research explores the possibilities of generating socio-territorial development, complementary to the peri-urban spaces, through tourism, based on the enhancement of recreational attractions aimed at a specific target audience, taking as a case study the Real Valle de Camargo.*

**Key words:** *Peri-urban zones, Real Valle de Camargo, tourism, competitiveness, tourism demand*

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## 1. introduction

The nature of tourist activity stimulates the development of new rural and peri-urban destinations, close to cities with tourism potential, due to the interconnectivity of complementary recreational activities. The availability of certain non-urban resources and leisure facilities places these territories in a privileged place to develop their limited tourism offer. But this alone is not enough to mobilise interest in national and international markets. For this reason, for many of these areas, the development of tourist products and services has become a fundamental objective and a complementary formula to increase the profitability of their geostrategic positioning.

Although our geographic area of study has not for some time been a mainly rural area, the national and international comparisons below show certain common characteristics of the new socio-territorial context that these peri-urban spaces are acquiring.

Peri-urban spaces constitute a potential synergistic network well suited to the implementation of global projects from which all agents are seen to benefit (Fernández and Yañez, 2015). Thus, the spatial distribution and accessibility of services are factors that are determining the success or failure of these peri-urban spaces (Higgs et al., 2000). In this regard, tourism brings together new productive functions and the recovery of old primary activities in the spaces most directly related to the polarised centres (Vera et al., 2011). As in the case of the Vega Baja del Segura in the Valencian Community (Ramírez and García, 2013), peri-urban areas are experiencing significant demographic and economic growth thanks to tourism, a circumstance that generates a quasi-urban environment that tests urbanisation processes and facilities.

Although well-being in rural and peri-urban areas is a subjective concept (Roberts and Hall, 2001), managers in these territories have always seen tourism as an excellent opportunity to generate income and new sources of employment (Troitiño and Troitiño, 2013). The peri-urban zones attract new residents thanks to the opportunity to access new housing and the encouragement of other economic formulae based on alternative agriculture, crafts and services (Blanco and Benayas, 1994; Leslie, 2011).

To give some instances, in the Argentine city of Bahía Blanca one can see examples of urban and peri-urban agriculture (Lorda, et al., 2008). In Morocco, the Souss Massa Drâa region created the "Agrotech SMD"

platform with the geographical concentration of numerous companies and research institutes for the rational management of water resources, the creation of an irrigation canal and the development of local products for tourist purposes (Hemri, 2012). In the Mexican city of Cabo San Lucas, a study of the peri-urban structure (Bojórquez, 2013) shows the centrifugal and centripetal economic forces generated by tourist products. This activity has generated in this peri-urban environment a great source of employment and economic development, but above all, urban growth. At the national level, "holeritourism", garden and orchard tourism, in the ParcAgrari del Baix de Llobregat, is encouraging small farms to sell their production, generating additional income (Paül and Araújo, 2012). In addition to the commercialisation of agri-food products, in Baños de la Encina, Jaén, the recovery of habitually degraded outskirts areas was undertaken with the aim of diversifying the tourism offer by linking cultural and nature tourism (García-García et al., 2011). Also, in the villages and towns of the Empordanet, the arrival of a new population, settled temporarily or permanently, meant a profound transformation in social and economic composition (Solana, 2006). Finally, in the provinces of Cuenca and Guadalajara, and in a good number of municipalities, more than half of the housing stocks exist for purposes other than habitual residence (Cebrián and García, 2009), and are not always linked to tourist activity, as is the case in the Real Valle de Camargo.

Taking these cases as significant for the change of territorial function, it is important to emphasise that the development of tourism next to big cities is a more accelerated tendency than the remainder of the tourism forms (Figuerola, 2013). The fact that the new generations (Fink, et al., 2013) that make up their populations were not raised locally and have a more international orientation allows an increase in activities and services distinct from the essentially agrarian in the peri-urban areas of the city (Lima and Aguilar, 2009).

Tourists support rural and peri-urban economic development by purchasing raw materials and services but, when local and regional managers speak of the indirect effects of tourism, the stance is more rhetorical than real; the first consideration is whether tourism generates larger or smaller economic returns than other industries (Butler, 1998), a problem that also manifests itself in the municipality under study. A clear example is derived from the growth of large shopping malls in peri-urban areas, as a result of the decentralization of economic activities to low-cost peripheral areas and the dissemination of urban functions to less densely

concentrated zones (Orozco and García, 2014), a circumstance which also manifests itself in the Real Valle de Camargo.

In relation to peri-urban zones, Méndez and Ortega (2013) demonstrate the concept in the case of the Asturian Central Area, where the problems of "urban" growth do not have a satisfactory answer, neither from the theoretical point of view nor with regard to proper management. The unbalanced and inefficient specialization of services is reflected in this complex polycentric network, both in the nodes and in the intermediate spaces. From a tourism point of view, there is no doubt that not all places can become destinations. Some authors argue that tourism projects tend to be intrusive in the lives of rural and peri-urban communities (George et al., 2009), and in many cases the population is not ambitious or interested enough to improve their situation or lack the capacity so to do. Nor, as some authors claim (Molinero and Alario, 1994), is there a unique model of territorial development for any space and time; the pluriactivity arising due to the take off of tourism can allow the maintenance of the population and services in the rural and peri-urban environments; a context that, in part, will be demonstrated in the research hypothesis formulated.

## **2. objectives, initial proposals and research methodology**

Taking this scenario and the previous analysis into account, the main objective of this research is to try to describe the tourist activity, analysing supply and demand, in one of the main peri-urban areas of Cantabria: the Real Valle de Camargo. Although it is understood that its recreational character is limited and its tourist offering is in its infancy, the quality of its resources, together with its proximity to Santander and its good accessibility, is allowing it to take its first steps as a destination. This research describes its existing tourist offering and characterises the demand, in order to advise on its prospects for tourism development; special attention is paid to its socio-territorial transformation, motivated especially by the residential changes that it is encountering due to the processes of exurbanisation.

The initial work approach is based on the fact that the Real Valle de Camargo is taking its first steps as a peri-urban tourist destination, generating complementary economic activity, which shows the first signs of a socio-territorial spacial transformation. The starting point is the assumption that no defined tourist product exists in the Real Valle de Camargo; but the force of habit and the

urban population's need for recreation, along with the existence of local resources with a certain recreational value, is generating tourist associated income in the municipality.

To address this hypothesis, a specific work methodology has been formulated, both for supply and demand.

The study of the tourist offer, without going into the detail of the tourist resources of the municipality (that could be the subject of a further investigation), proposes a brief evaluation of the tourist and recreational resources with the objective of selecting those with the potential of becoming profitable tourism products. These selected elements will require the development of standards by which to evaluate quality and investment needed; such as uniqueness, accessibility, signage, sustainability, conservation, fragility and connectivity.

Three major evaluation blocks are proposed, which in turn include several criteria: firstly, values are given to the intrinsic characteristics of the resource (conservation status, cultural / environmental value, resource fragility and capacity for tourist use). We try to evaluate the resource value independent of the level of its use by tourists; secondly, the tourist value of the resource and its capacity to host tourist-recreational activities (uniqueness / attractiveness, accessibility and signage), in a real or potential way, are considered; finally, thirdly, consideration is given to the capacity of the resource to provide essential added value (general thematic, physical connectivity with other resources in the area, investment required for its total and adequate exploitation, current hierarchical level and potential offering of the resource), in accordance with product development strategies, so that the joint exploitation of these assets contributes a greater tourist value than the individual elements. These parameters are considered essential in a context which tends to look for complex and diversified tourist products, and in which the theming is fundamental.

In principle, it should be noted that the results of the final evaluation are not intended, in any case, to establish absolute values for the configured elements. It is simply a case of establishing tourist use values according to the original estimates of the present research, and in order to be able to compare the different values that, in the chosen strategy, each of the studied resources possess.

For this reason, the same values and importance have not been given to the three major criteria groups. So, intrinsic characteristics is the group with the least

value attributed, 25% of the final weight, since the value of a resource as a natural, cultural or anthropological element is not equal to its value as a tourist resource. It is obvious that there are important natural or cultural resources that, however, have little capacity to be tourist attractions. Clearly, the fragility of the resource must be very much taken into account in relation to its intrinsic value, so this criterion must be relevant for the third group, and be included when considering the "investment required for its use"; this investment will take into account the costs of conservation or the expense of restoration.

To the second of the large groups, the characteristics of the resource in relation to tourist use, is assigned a weight of 35%. It is clear that this is a set of elements of greater importance than the previous, since it expressly measures the capacity to attract and satisfy tourist needs.

Finally, a 40% weighting is given to the capacity of the resource to contribute potential for the creation of tourism product development strategies. Contrary to the tradition of evaluating resources individually, it is considered more important in this project to take into account the possibility of generating synergies both between the resources of the same tourism development unit and with those elsewhere in the region. It seems quite obvious that, with few exceptions, only a small number of resources have the capacity to create constant tourist flows, which generate repetition and retention of clients, so it seems more important to initiate synergies and adapt appropriate development strategies. In order to provide data that significantly differentiates between resources, values are given in relation to 100, thus showing a graduated interest and importance.

In the second part of the research Camargo tourist demand is analysed, using a method of exploratory analysis, consisting of the application of a personal questionnaire that captures the characterisation and the expectations of residents, tourists and travellers. This primary source data allow us to determine in more detail; sociodemographic characteristics, place of residence, mode of organisation of the trip, sources of information used, accommodation and transport used, as well as tourism interests and travel habits. Sociodemographic, psychographic and behavioural references have also been considered, providing, in all cases, significant features that allow an understanding of the territory. Using this work methodology, a sample of 593 cases was extracted, segmented for analysis into three distinct groups; 71 overnight tourists, 332 non-resident excursionists and 190 registered residents.

Since there is no precise information on the number of tourists that the municipality receives, the study sample used is the number of visitors to Camargo's main tourist resource in 2015, the El Pendo cave. Therefore, the representativeness data of the 403 tourists surveyed gives a 95% confidence level with a sampling error of 4.76%. For the results of the resident population (30,766), the sample error of 190 individuals increases, under the same level of confidence, to 7.1%. For both scenarios, the relation of the selected sample, with respect to the population in each segment, is considered completely appropriate and significant of the normal tourist flows in this municipality

Subsequently, all information collected from the 593 records was statistically analysed by combining the 97 variables extracted.

### **3. Camargo as a tourist destination: new times, new approaches**

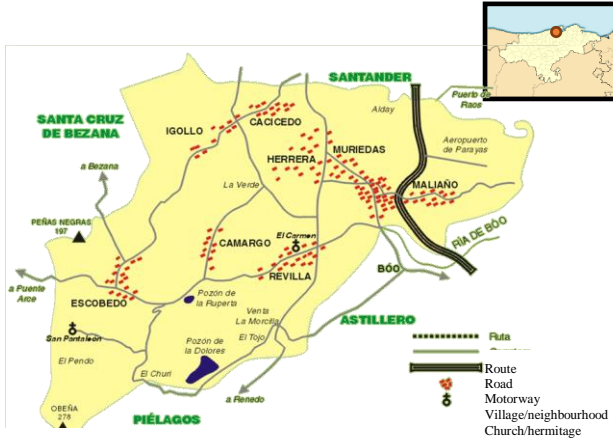
#### **3.1. character of the municipality**

The municipality of Real Valle de Camargo (or simply Camargo) is a territory located near the capital, Santander, forming part of its metropolitan area. It is a municipality with a particularly industrial background (Arranz, 2004) that has been developing year on year, both in terms of number of inhabitants and in facilities and services. The area had seen previous growth, throughout its notably industrial past and as a result of the exploitation of its iron mines and its connection to the Altos Hornos de Nueva Montaña (New Mountain High Furnaces) (Lobato, 2012). The territory is characterised by its diversity in terms of population density and mode of settlement, its physical environment and its socioeconomic features.

Camargo has an area of 36.6 square kilometres with 8 villages, Cacicedo, Camargo, Escobedo, Herrera, Igollo, Maliaño, Revilla, and the capital, Muriedas. Despite having more than 30,000 inhabitants (National Statistical Institute, 2014) and a record of constant population growth in the last 10 years, it is a municipality little known in the tourism world (Map 1). Taking as reference some studies (Reques et al., 2010), projections suggest a sustained growth to 42,000 inhabitants by the year 2020.

Since the beginning of the century, this municipality, as a peri-urban area of direct impact on Santander, has begun to rejuvenate its infrastructure (Government of Cantabria, 2002) (Map 1).

Map 1: The Municipality of Camargo

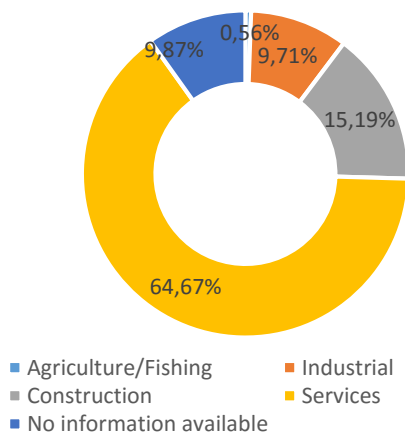


Source: Town Council of Camargo (2009).

From this point of view, the Real Valle de Camargo is characterised as a hybrid urban-rural zone with diffuse boundaries and an anarchic disposition, as well as having new, large factories (Cueto, 2012), which generates different uses (residential, industrial, commercial, service, agricultural-livestock), and infrastructures and free spaces in a location that does not follow ordered spatial patterns (De Cos et al., 2007).

Although its historical focus has always been linked to industry, modern developments put Camargo in a continuous process of deindustrialisation and tertiarisation; and for some years industry has not been the main sector of economic activity or employment, with activity turning towards the services sector (Graph 1).

Graphic 1: Establishments by sector



Source: ICANE. December (2009).

Camargo is a municipality strategically located in the metropolitan area of the Bay of Santander and, thus, as it has good communications with the city is of residential use. The Bay of Santander has a decisive

importance in the socio-spatial structures of the surrounding urban environment (Gil, 2002), which has positioned the municipality as a zone dominated by the services sector, with large shopping malls, and in which recreational activities are going gradually to acquire a new focus, due to the great patrimonial value of its resources.

Large commercial peri-urban shopping malls have been built in the vicinity of Santander and are functioning as an important focus of residential attraction. These large shopping malls are not a focal point of residential attraction per se, but their evolution, in this regard, represents the first example of a change of land use from industrial to commercial and, in a second phase, these changes have been extended through the construction of medium-quality houses (permanent housing).

From the functional point of view, the territory shows a marked process of spatial segregation, emphasising the concentration of tertiary activities in the urban centre and peri-urban zone due to the appearance of shopping malls; the industrial sector is located on the western arc of the Bay and the strongholds of agriculture-livestock activities in the outer part. In addition, its peri-urban character allows the development of new residential growth areas, land development, the introduction of new economic activities, among other aspects (Reques et al., 2010). Some authors (Lobato, 2012) note that its industrial estates have been converted into storage spaces for distribution and logistics and, since the beginning of this century, large shopping malls have expanded into these estates.

### 3.2 Camargo's tourism offer

As has been described, Camargo is a very sensitive area that has been altered by population growth and by the abandonment of agricultural activities (Campo et al., 2004). This has caused, in the last years, its acceleration toward becoming a "complementary" place to visit for tourists arriving in Santander, which raises the issue of proposing measures to solve the lack of connectivity between its main resources (Camargo City Council, 2009).

Thus, the implementation of the Tourism Development Plan 2012-2015 (Sariego, 2012) was the first declaration of intent in this matter by local managers, a document in which small thematic tourist packages are defined that allow the connection of the offer to the potential market, as well as proposing different tourist scenarios that guarantee the use of the territory in an orderly, structured, profitable and sustainable way. In

addition, operational development plans are proposed, concerted coordination of different areas and products, positioning, distribution and marketing and market segmentation. Furthermore, small consumption routes that contribute authenticity and effectiveness to operational proposals are contemplated.

In the municipality of Camargo, historical-artistic resources predominate, being almost 50% of the total; however, there is no connection between them despite their proximity. From its beginnings, Camargo has been a place of human settlement and, therefore, is a municipality rich in archaeological sites (Muñoz and Malpelo, 1992). The archaeological chart, designed by C.A.E.A.P (Collective for the Expansion of Studies of Prehistoric Archaeology) shows the distribution of sites by population centre (Table 1).

Table 1: Number of sites per centre of population

Village	Number of sites
Escobedo	54
Revilla	29
Camargo	23
Igollo	19
Herrera	14
Muriedas	11
Maliaño	4
Cacicedo	0

Source: C.A.E.A.P. Own design

Escobedo is the centre of population with the largest number of sites in the municipality, including "El Pendo Cave", declared a World Heritage Site in 2008 by UNESCO, and integrated into a network of caves described as "the prehistoric caves of Cantabria, caves with pre-historic art, open to the public". Inside the caves are, among other images, the first representations of bird figures in European Palaeolithic cave painting (Jiménez, et al., 2011).

From the tourist point of view, El Pendo was the third most visited prehistoric cave in 2015, with 8,172 visits. Some caves offer special tours with a maximum visitor quota, shown in table 2.

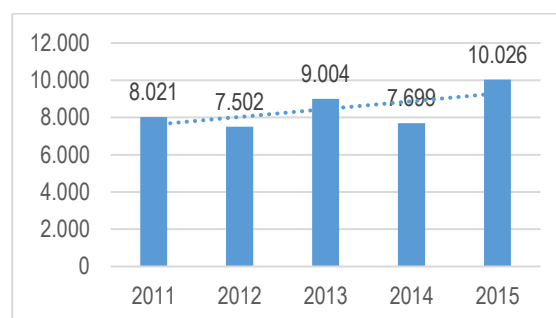
Table 2: Number of visits to the prehistoric caves of Cantabria

Resource Name	Number of visits (2015)
Covalanas	7.324
Cullalvera	9.590
El Castillo	39.225
Las Monedas	21.492
Talleres cuevas prehistóricas/prehistoric caves	3.699
Castillo – special visits	22
Monedas - special visits	16
Pasiega – special visits	21
Chimeneas – special visits	19
El Pendo	8.172
Hornos de la Peña	1.381
Chufin	1.519

Source: Network of Prehistoric Caves and Cultural Centres of Cantabria.

Similarly, Camargo has the Ethnographic Museum of Cantabria, where visit numbers are growing (Graph 2). In addition, the municipality has different natural environments near the city. Most notable are the Alday marshes, part of the Green Ring of the Bay of Santander, which have a great ornithological and environmental significance, being the habitat of numerous waterfowl and different species of rushes, reeds and bulrushes.

Graphic 2: Number of visitors to the Ethnographic Museum of Cantabria 2011-2015



Source: Ethnographic Museum of Cantabria. Own design



With regard to the tourist facilities, in addition to noting that the airport is within its geographical limits, we highlight the 7.5 Km bike track bordering "Seve Ballesteros" airport, which passes through the bay by way of the artificial beach of Punta Parayas and the Rowing Club; all sorts of visitors use it for recreation.

Based on the methodology previously described, the values of tourist and recreational resources of the Camargo Valley are summarised in table 3.

Table 3: Valuation of tourist and recreational resources

Resource name	Weighting (from 100)
Museo Etnográfico de Cantabria (METCAN)/Ethnographic Museum	75
Carril bici/bike track	64
Cueva del Pendo/El Pendo Cave	61
Termas romanas San Juan/Roman baths	58
Park/Parque Punta Parayas	56
Marismas de Alday/Alday Marshes	56
Quarries/Canteras de Bilbao	56
Church/Iglesia de San Juan Bautista	53
Festival of the Heroes of 2 May/Fiesta Héroe 2 de Mayo	53
Cultural Centre/C.C. La Vidriera	47
Festival of the Hermitage/Ermita del Carmen - festividad	44
Castle/Castillo del Collado	42

Source: Own design

Through this methodology and by evaluating the opinion of tourists and excursionists, although it is unthinkable to compare their cultural and heritage value, it is noteworthy that the bike track can generate greater socio-economic benefits than a prehistoric cave. The "bike track", while conceptually not a tourist element in itself, is recreational, and its impact is, both for the regional population and for domestic and foreign visitors, becoming more important for neighbouring establishments.

Also worth highlighting is the potential of other resources that have been scarcely considered, as is the case with Castillo (Castle) del Collado (Image 1), from where the Bay of Santander can be seen and which is an example of military architecture, a high (middle period) medieval castle situated on the heights, surrounded by a wall which follows the geographical relief.

Image 1: Panoramic view of the Real Valle de Camargo, from the Castillo (Castle) del Collado



Source: Own design

In addition, along with the current valued resources, some authors (Lobato, 2012) argue that the Real Valle de Camargo also has an important industrial and mining heritage, not yet catalogued; resources that the municipality and its inhabitants speak of as their own.

Finally, with respect to its tourist infrastructure, the Real Valle de Camargo is a municipality with little accommodation, characterised by small establishments, with the necessary amenities and services to have a pleasant stay, but without great luxuries. Throughout the municipality you can find both hotels, none having more than 3 stars, and bed and breakfasts, notable for their low prices and proximity to Santander. In numbers, the Real Valle de Camargo has 246 beds, 41 restaurants, 12 cafes, 92 bars and pubs, 8 travel agencies and 2 active tourism companies (Cantabrian Statistical Institute, 2013).

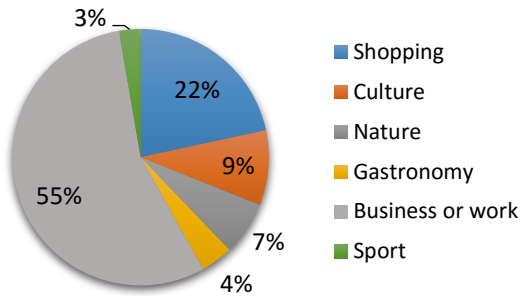
### 3.3 the tourist demand in Camargo

In this second part we undertake an analysis of the tourist demand of the Real Valle de Camargo to discover tourist motivations and the image that the municipality transmits to its visitors. The study of tourist demand always involves great complexity due to its peculiar characteristics, so we propose to adopt a common approach for three profiles of groups of visitors with different behaviours in terms of leisure and consumption habits: tourists, excursionists and residents.

### 1. Tourists

As regards the Camargo tourists, more than half of the respondents said that the main reason for the visit to the municipality is "Business or Work" and just over a fifth indicate that the main motive is "Shopping". Next, they cite as motivations: "Culture" (9%); "Nature" (7%); "Gastronomy" and "Sport", (4% and 3%, respectively) (Graph 3).

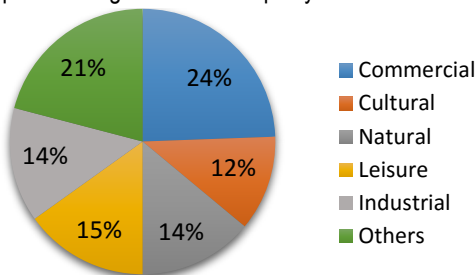
Graphic 3: Principal motive for visit



Source: Own design

In respect of what is evoked by the municipality of Real Valle de Camargo, almost a quarter of the respondents (24.4%) regard the municipality as "a commercial place"; next are those that see it as having "other values" (20.9%); the third answer is "a place of leisure" (15.1%); "an industrial place" and "a place with natural resources" (both 13.9%). Finally, 11.6% of the interviewees regard the Real Valle de Camargo as "a place with cultural resources" (Graph 4).

Graphic 4: Image of the municipality



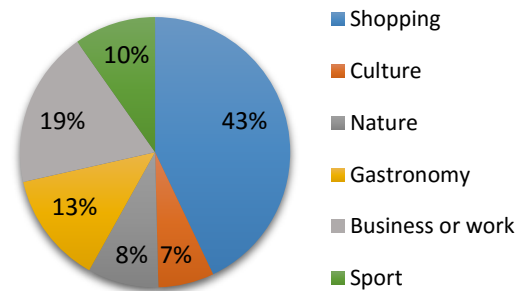
Source: Own design

### 2. Excursionists

Almost half of the respondents (42.9%) indicated the main reason to visit the municipality was "shopping"; Next were those who visit the Real Valle de Camargo for "business or work" (18.8%); next are those who are attracted by "gastronomy" (13.4%). "Sport" is an attraction for 9.8% of the interviewees; 8.5 per cent

highlight "nature". Finally, 6.7% of excursionists say that the main reason for their visit is "culture"

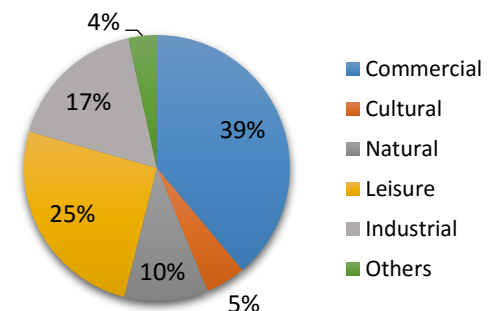
Graphic 5: Principal motive for visit



Source: Own design

In respect of what is evoked by the municipality of Real Valle de Camargo, 40% of the respondents saw it as a "commercial place"; a quarter (25%) opined that it was "a place of leisure"; 17% said "an industrial place"; 10% saw it as a "place with natural resources" and, finally, those that saw it as a "municipality with cultural resources" represented 5%; the response "other values" was given by a scant 4% (Graph 6).

Graphic 6: Image of the municipality

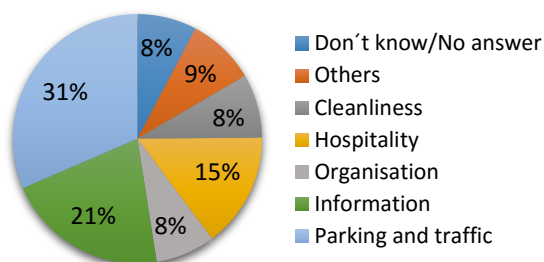


Source: Own design

### 3. Residents

Unlike the previous groups, for obvious reasons the local population was not asked to visit the Real Valle de Camargo, however, other aspects were investigated and the locals gave their views, from their knowledge, on how to improve the tourism potential of the municipality. Almost a third of the residents consulted (31.5%) spoke about "parking and traffic"; 21% believed that the municipality should improve its "information" services; "hospitality / leisure is cited by 14.9% of the respondents; "other aspects" (8.8%); the subject of "cleanliness" was given by 8.3%; and "municipal organisation" (7.7%). Finally, 7.7% said they did not know or gave no answer. (Graph 7).

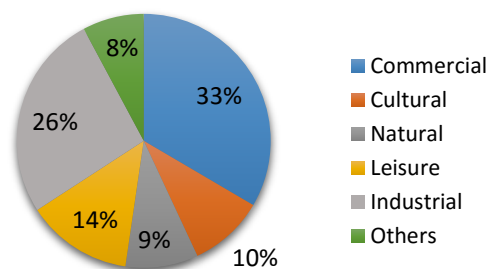
Graphic 7: Ways to improve the municipality



Source: Own design

Regarding the image that the inhabitants have about their own municipality, for 33% of the respondents it is a "commercial place"; just over a quarter (26%) believe that it is "an industrial place"; to 14% it suggests "a place of leisure"; 10% said "a place with cultural resources"; 9% chose "a place with natural resources"; "other values" was given by 8% (Graph 8).

Graphic 8: Image of the municipality



Source: Own design

#### 4. statistical analysis of the results

From these first descriptive assessments we have been able to identify issues of interest in the profile of visitors to, and residents of, the municipality of Real Valle de Camargo. Nevertheless, these results would be incomplete without a detailed statistical study of the most important variables that affect tourist activity in the municipality and are the factors that attract visitors. To this end, we apply a statistical analysis. Statistics, as a science, is capable of analysing, organizing, presenting and interpreting data, and whose objective is to infer and generalise characteristics of a large group based on the data contributed by a sample.

The main characteristic of this type of sampling is that, within the different segments (tourists / visitors / residents), the representativeness of each sector is random. Based on the fact that the samples are mostly non-parametric, the Spearman correlation coefficient is used. This coefficient permits the measure of correlation

or association between two variables when working with an ordinal scale. In the case of parametric samples the Pearson correlation coefficient is used. Then, only the most significant results obtained with the crossing of variables are presented:

a) For tourists:

In the first analysis we applied the Spearman rho correlation test to the independent variables "having friends in Real Valle de Camargo" and "number of visits" in order to determine the degree of association; we obtained a  $r = -0.420^{**}$  and  $p < 0.01$ . This indicates to us that having friends in Camargo is not a decisive factor in visiting the municipality for tourism or leisure purposes. Of the sample total 73.2% do not have friends in Real Valle de Camargo.

Subsequently, we applied the Rho Spearman's correlation test to the independent variables "age range" and "what the municipality of Real Valle de Camargo suggests to you"; significant data were obtained showing a very significant correlation in the two cases  $r = 0.369^{**}$  and  $r = -0.434^{**}$ , with values of  $p < 0.01$ . That is, the older the respondent, the more likely that the municipality of Camargo is perceived as an industrial place; similarly, the younger the tourist, the more it is regarded as something else.

When performing the Spearman rho correlation test for the independent variables "number of visits" and "motive of visit", a  $r = 0.315^{**}$  and a  $r = -0.641^{**}$  are shown in both cases with  $p < 0.01$ . These figures show a moderate association between variables; we can say that there is a direct or positive relationship, that is to say, for the majority of visits to Camargo, "shopping" is one of the main motivations. On the other hand, there is an inverse relationship between visiting Camargo for business or work and the number of times one visits the municipality. This indicates that one-off visits are mostly for business or work and not for tourism.

The Spearman rho correlation test for the independent variables "number of visits" and "reason for next visit" yielded the following results:  $r = 0.451^{**}$  and  $p < 0.01$  show the relationship as direct and moderately strong between the number of visits previously made and a greater intention to revisit Camargo for gastronomic purposes; a  $r = 0.242^{*}$  and  $p < 0.05$  show a direct and significant relationship. That is to say, the more one visits Camargo, it is observed, with a lower association, that there is a greater interest in the picnic areas;  $r = 0.327^{**}$  and  $p < 0.01$  show a direct and moderate relationship.

The more times one visits Camargo, the greater is the interest in the natural areas.

When the Pearson correlation test is performed on the independent variables "visit motive" and "resources visited", a  $r = -0.285 *$  and  $p < 0.05$  are shown. These values indicate that there is a moderate and inverse relationship. In other words, if the motive highlighted is to make purchases, fewer visits will be made to tourism resources.

The final tourist analysis shows that, through the Spearman rho correlation test, for the independent variables "motive of the visit" and "number of nights stayed", a  $r = -0.257$ ,  $r = 0.289$  and  $p < 0.05$ ; in all cases the results are not very significant. In the first case, there is a certain inverse relationship between the motive "business or work" and the days stayed, that is, for those who stay for a short period of time, their main reason for visiting is for their business or work.

#### B) For excursionists:

In the first place, we applied the Spearman rho correlation test to the independent variables "having friends in Camargo" and "number of visits", which showed a  $r = -0.340 **$  and  $p < 0.01$ . These values indicate that there is a moderately strong and inverse relationship. So, to have friends in the municipality of Camargo is not a decisive reason to visit it for tourism or leisure purposes.

Next, we developed the Spearman rho correlation test for the independent variables "age range" and "what the municipality of Real Valle de Camargo suggests to you"; we show a  $r = 0.101$ , a  $r = 0.090$ , a  $r = 0.088$  and a  $r = 0.008$ . In all cases a low and direct relation is shown and with the coefficients ordered in such a way that, for older respondents, the municipality of Camargo suggests a cultural place, a commercial place, an industrial place and a place with natural resources. Similarly, there is an inverse relationship with  $r = -0.101$  and  $r = -0.069$ , that is, for the younger ages, the Camargo municipality suggests a place of leisure and a place for "other activities".

After applying the Pearson correlation test to the independent variables "province" and "motive of visit", we obtained the significant data  $r = 0.142 **$ ,  $r = -0.162 **$  and  $p < 0.01$ . It should be noted in this data that the excursionists are mostly from Cantabria. In the first case there is a direct relationship in that, as there is an increase in the number of Cantabrian excursionists, one of the reasons to visit Camargo is to go shopping. In the second case there is an inverse relationship, which also

shows us that another of the reasons to visit Camargo is for business or work.

When the Spearman rho correlation test is applied to the independent variables "age range" and "tourism resources visited", this shows  $r = -0.157 **$  and  $p < 0.01$ . These figures indicate that there is an inverse relationship, that is to say, the younger the respondent, the less likely the motive for visiting Camargo will be to go to a tourist resource; it is also possible to observe that the older group visited the Ermita (Hermitage) del Carmen, the Ethnographic Museum, the El Pendo Cave and Punta Parayas.

Spearman's rho correlation test for the independent variables "number of visits" and "motive of visit", showed  $r = 0.172 **$  and  $p < 0.01$ . These figures indicate that there is a direct and very significant relationship between visiting Camargo (without an overnight stay) and the shopping motive. That is to say, there are a high percentage of visits for this reason.

Taking the independent variables "number of visits" and "reason for next visit", Spearman's rho correlation test shows  $r = 0.113 *$  and  $p < 0.05$ . These figures indicate that there is a direct and significant relationship, that is to say, there is an interest in revisiting Camargo to utilise the picnic areas.

The Pearson correlation test for the variables "visit to the Ethnographic Museum of Cantabria" and "reason for visiting Camargo", shows a  $r = 0.111 *$  and  $p < 0.05$ ; these figures indicate that there is a direct relation between the number of excursionists who visit the Ethnographic Museum of Cantabria and the main reason for their tourist visit.

When performing the Pearson correlation test for the independent variables "visit Camargo for sport" and "to use the bike track" shows  $r = 0.200 **$  and  $p < 0.01$ ; these figures indicate that there is a direct and very significant relationship. This suggests that visitors who came to Camargo to practice sport have done so to use the airport circuit bike track.

Finally, data from the sample of excursionists show, through Spearman's rho correlation test for the independent variables "motive for next visit" and "expenditure incurred",  $r = 0.144 **$  and  $p < 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.117 *$  and  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.134 *$  and  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.166 **$  and  $p < 0.01$ ,  $r = -0.177 **$ ,  $r = -0.139 *$ . These figures indicate that there is a direct relationship between expenditure incurred and the higher that the budget for these activities had been set: sport and traditional festivals; this shows instead an inverse relationship

between expenditure incurred and anticipated spending on the next visit to museums and archaeological resources.

c) For residents:

The last aspect of the study refers to the statistical analysis of the resident population of Camargo. From these data, the Spearman rho correlation test for the independent variables "age range" and "resources visited" shows  $r = -0.153$  \* and  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.152$  and  $p < 0.05$ . These figures indicate, in the first case, that there is an inverse relationship, which shows that younger respondents make a greater number of visits to the airport circuit cycle track; the second figure indicates that there is a direct, but not significant, relationship that for the older respondents one of the most visited resources is the roman baths, which currently serve as a local cemetery.

## 5. final considerations

The competitive framework is becoming more complex and, consequently, more difficult. Virtually all countries and regions are currently choosing, as far as possible, tourism as an economic activity and a tool for territorial rebalancing. Tourism is no longer confined to its traditional zones; virtually every region, territorial subdivision or municipality wants to develop tourism, regardless of its endowments or its available resources.

In the case of this research, the natural and cultural resources of the Camargo peri-urban area, still limited in value and number, are not developing to match their potential, due to the scant tourism services offered: the area has 154 archaeological sites, many of which are unknown to the majority of visitors.

From this perspective, the elements or activities of the commercial chain act in an individualised way and are barely configured as an integrated and structured product. According to some authors (Lobato, 2012), Camargo is able to offer low impact leisure activities throughout the territory, which in turn could serve as a complement to others. For this reason, the improvement in Camargo tourist activity needs to find new formulae to attract income, and develop a tourist welcoming culture. Neither the local population nor a large part of the business sector accept the relative importance of tourism as a complementary sector and of great relevance for the future of the municipality. This is despite the growth of investment in new infrastructure and recreational facilities, and the areas current functionality is mainly associated with large shopping malls.

Although tourism training is being promoted by various entities, many professionals in the sector have notable training deficiencies that prevent the adaptation of human resources to current and real tourism needs. The regional level training courses for hotel industry and client support staff do not usually have an appreciable attendance of entrepreneurs which, in many cases, means that local people do not acquire the knowledge required to be true tourism business people and, therefore, they do not provide an adequate tourist service.

In addition, the lack of fluid work dynamics between the public and the private sector in tourism prevents the restructuring and consolidation of the different atomised activities, so that this action is taken as a strategy of social development in the different Camargo villages.

The proper management of tourism in peri-urban areas can help to integrate and give a sense of territorial identity to their local population (Hall et al., 2011). Although small tourism associations, municipal development agents, societies, and landowners perceive the area from different perspectives, all groups begin to feel the need to restructure in order to achieve a greater return from this economic activity; today tourism is still perceived as a residual activity; 55% of visitors go to the municipality for work reasons.

The successful commercialisation of a destination is based on developing actions on many related fronts (Clarke, 2005); but, in the case of Camargo, the scarce information available, and the lack of tourist promotional activity, produces only a weak packaging of the tourism offering and does not allow full commercialisation of the area.

In relation to the municipality's tourist demand it can be concluded that: the residents consider the municipality to be a commercial zone and, according to the answers given by excursionists and tourists, it is not decisive to have friends there in order to visit. In general, the main reason for visiting Camargo is shopping, business and work activities; even those who stay for "more than one day" do so for this same reason. Although gastronomy is not a main visit motive, nevertheless, one might anticipate a future interest in making this variable a sufficient reason to visit; and finally, there are significant differences (from the analysis of equality of means) between the three groups studied. Thus, for the question, "what tourist resources have you visited in the municipality?", while tourists choose "other resources", the excursionists focus on the Punta de

Parayas (picnic area), and residents say the bike track and the Roman Baths.

300,000 people live in proximity to Camargo, many of whom hardly know the existence of its tourist resources. The development of "internal" tourism through small tourist packages for the "local" population could generate great dynamism for the municipality and could generate resources to position it towards more ambitious challenges. In this regard, as it is a young peri-urban destination with great potential for development, its policies should be oriented, always within its capabilities, towards the provision of complementary recreational services for the local environment that could boost its resources and generate a tourist offer to capture the interest of its main source of visitors: the citizens of, and visitors to, Santander.

As a result, the perception that Camargo is not a tourist destination is corroborated, as it lacks an integral and holistic system. Camargo's circumstances, however, are developing in a gradual and relatively spontaneous way, and it is adapting to the potential tourism segments, which mostly come from the main source; visitors and tourists coming to Santander. This, therefore, is causing a growing socio-territorial transformation.

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