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# TOURIST LOCAL LABOR SYSTEMS, AGRICULTURE AND INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT IN SICILY

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**Abstract** – In Sicily, the relationships between tourism and coastal zones are particularly interesting to be investigated also in their intertwinement with farming and rural development. The paper aims at presenting the first results of a territorial research held in Sicily in order to enlighten existing relationships among agriculture, rural development and tourism, in the view of supporting the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). Analysis of statistical data describes significance differences in performance of agriculture and tourism relationships and its potential evolution within Tourism Local Labor Systems, with specific respect to the ICZM policy adopted by public bodies.

## 1. Sicily: a dual region

The entire Sicilian coastal zone faces problems of deterioration of its natural, socio-economic and cultural resources. The impacts of human activities are particularly strong because the region historically “littoralized” its infrastructures and main economic activities, exposing the coast to hard deterioration. For years, coastal planning activities or development decisions have been taking place in a sectoral way, never being linked one to each other. The sectoral approach to planning and management leads to inefficient use of resources, originating conflicts among economic sectors on land use and wasting opportunities for a sustainable coastal development.

At national level, the Italian law 144/99 explicitly recognized Local Labor Systems (LLSs) as territorial units, relevant for the definition of integrated territorial development policies. These policies are particularly important in the Italian “Mezzogiorno” (i. e. the South of Italy, including big islands such as Sardinia and Sicily), and for the aim of the present paper, in the tourism industry and its territorial diffusion in coastal or inner zones.

Our work tries to discuss the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) from a specific point of view. We consider the agriculture/tourism relationships regarding the case of Sicily, and assuming the Local Labour System (LLS) as the statistical unit for a socio-economic and territorial research. In our research perspective, the Sicily Region originates many topics of interest under a more general point of view. In fact, any socio-economic activity shows a major degree of concentration in the coastal zones and a subsequent relative rarefaction in the inner ones. Per se, this is to be considered a signal of territorial disequilibrium and, in a more specific sense, of industrial and residential congestion in the coastal zones. This general and particular forms of congestion are actually visible as the negative phenomenon named “littoralization”.

With the aim at individuating a possible – yet partial – integrated interpretation of

otherwise distinct socio-economic phenomena, we have chosen to investigate the agriculture/tourism relationships by considering that only at a first glance they are strictly separated productive sectors. Often they are concurrent economic sectors, sometimes do cooperate in a way that can contribute in fostering sustainable development [2]. In any case, agriculture and tourism do face actual rivalry both in labor and land markets.

The main part of the Sicilian territory is classified as rural area [15], still nowadays – and arguably even more in the future – afflicted by some negative aspects such as revenue and employment decreasing, general market difficulties. The stimulus coming from the European Rural Policy (ERP), the Regional Rural Policy (RRP) and the PAC evolution towards the 2020 perspective for a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy [9] aids and supports farmers to adopt a progressive integration of farming with others productive industries. Farmers should be able to implement a real multifunctionality in order to achieve sufficient revenues and sustainable rural society and landscape.

In this perspective, tourism is an actual opportunity for farmers, that assumes real forms of farm tourism managing (for diversifying revenues) and new distribution chains (for increasing revenues) for food products. Both these two are actually entrepreneurial innovations, capable of shortening the supply chain between producers and consumers, avoiding some intermediation steps.

In this framework, farm is progressively becoming a multi-functional and multi-sectoral agent and, in many cases, a trans-sectoral agent, in the sense that while integrating two or more sectors within its organization it factually tends to function as a versatile territorial integrator of diverse activities, becoming a focus round point for sustainable environment programming.

Discoursing about tourism in Sicily, it is fundamental to underline the empirical evidence of a coastal concentration and strong economic importance in regional economy, as of the total 14 Tourist Local Labor Systems (TLLSs), up to 10 are located along the coast (Fig. 1). Rurality is typical of the inner area, while urbanization and tourism concentration prevail in coastal zones, even though agriculture actually plays its productive, social and environmental role in every zone, adapting specific ways of relationship in different contexts.

From decades, policy makers are pursuing integrated policies for public intervention in order to achieve a sustainable territorial management both at global and local/sectoral levels. Recently, the European Commission stated as a priority “to consolidate the image and profile of Europe as a collection of sustainable and high-quality destinations” [8]. On the other hand, scholars [6, 7] consider the promotion of the joint quality-sustainability of tourism as an holistic matter, regarding both the tourism sector and the integrated policy of the economy in a territory.

Within the above sketched framework, our main research motivation is to deepen investigation on agriculture/tourism relationships, not immediately and directly considering any aspects of rural tourism and tourism intertwining, but considering agriculture in its still fundamental role of food and fibers productive sector. Thus, the main research question is if agriculture and its territorial characteristics are influenced by alternative location in tourism/not-tourism coastal environments. In the regional case study, the two coastal tourism/not-tourism alternative environments are described by TLLSs (from now LITTURs) and not-tourism LLSs (LITs)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> We did exclude from the analysis any urban LLS, mainly because in Sicily no urban system is

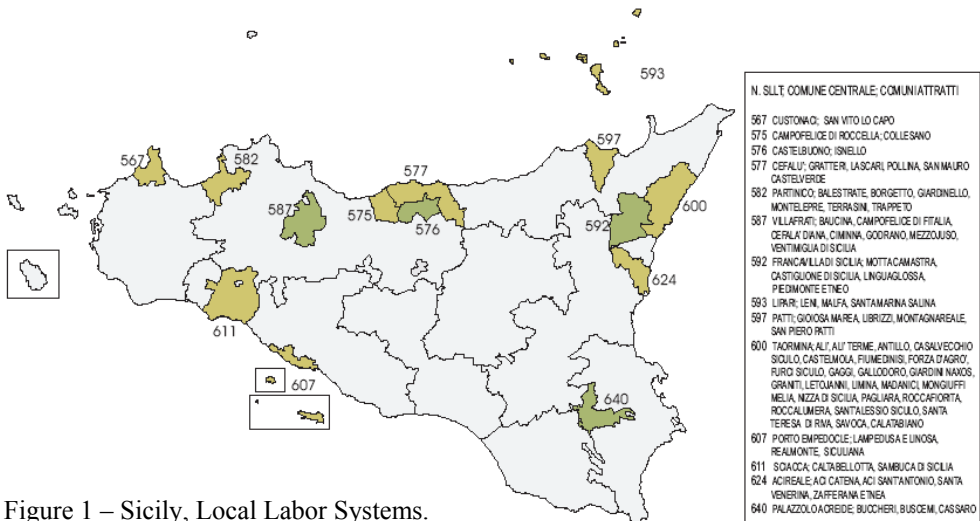


Figure 1 – Sicily, Local Labor Systems.

Source: Regione Sicilia, Atlante socio-economico della Sicilia, 2008; our processing.

Detection of significant differences between LITTURs and LITs will allow us to understand main aspects of contiguity/separation between agriculture and tourism, depending on alternative placing in LITTURs or LITs. As a consequence, we should consider the hypothesis – and thus the necessity – of an integrated management of the two activities with the aim of achieving the best territorial structure managing.

After the introduction, our text follows this order: materials and method, results, discussion, and conclusions.

## 2. Materials and Method

We carried out our research following the Italian Scholars' approach on local development [3, 4, 5, 20] aiming at detecting the variable geographic phenomena of agriculture/tourism relationships in Sicilian coastal zones. The local development approach is useful to better understand the socio-economic-territorial variability that usually characterizes relationships among productive sectors, even when they are located in a (namely) unique environment such as the Sicilian coasts. This approach is also useful to explain how agriculture and tourism do integrate or do separate in a local labor system, and therefore if they can be considered or not as a system, to be potentially managed by an integrated policy.

An important procedural consequence is that the statistical geographical unit to be detected will be the LLS instead of the traditional unit of municipality. The empirical object to be detected, as a proxy of theoretical definition of local system, is the LLS, i.e. the

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classified as a tourism one, since other industries prevail, even though some Sicilian cities are important tourism destinations. Furthermore, the kind of relationship of agriculture in urban environments depends more on general urban characteristics than their touristic features.

territorial structure encompassed by the Travel-to-Work-Area or the geographical space within with the major part of the labor market is self-contained [10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22].

Our methodological choice depends also on the political interest about ICZM. An explicit interest for integrated management has to be strictly linked to local singularities of agriculture/tourism forms of relationship and for the role of territorial integrator performed by farms. These latter produce their uniqueness draining from places both human specificities (cultural, institutional, technical) and natural resource specificities (more or less transformed by anthropic intervention).

More precisely, our investigation focused on the possibility to achieve the following research goals:

- (i) to understand if LITTURs and LITs show significant differences within agriculture/tourism relationships;
- (ii) to detect characteristics of agriculture that favor relationships with tourism in LITTURs;
- (iii) to describe geographical differences – and understand significative topics of differentiation – we can find along the Sicilian coasts depending from agriculture/tourism forms of relationship.

The ex-ante hypothesis that contiguity between agriculture and tourism can influence some characteristics of farm structure seems acceptable, and consequently that there are farming differences between LITs and LITTURs. First of all, we can hypothesize that farm dimension will be smaller in tourism areas, due to major land value for building purposes and land property fragmentation. Contiguity with tourism can also induce specific cultivation choices, orientated to produce crops to be sold to tourism businesses, implementing a shorter supply chain, instead of selling to agro-industries. This could be consistent also with characteristics of citrus industry that in Sicily has overall peculiar features, besides being a national level industry [19]. Citrus industry is strongly labor intensive, and for this we aspect it competes in the local labor market with alternative and/or seasonal industries, such as tourism.

Fundamental tourism indicators, Accommodation Capacity and Nights Spent Density, describe a territorial specialization that evidently differ between LITs and LITTURs. Respectively they deal to tourism supply and demand and we could consider them as tautological, under the hypothesis there is a substantial matching between numbers of accommodations and tourists in specialized zones. The degree of this specialization is determinant for the feature of local labor market, because it indicates the employment of specialized labor-force and can be compared both to general economic conditions and agriculture patterns. We can hypothesize that in the local system tourism does connote the entire society, actually determining the entrepreneurial atmosphere, and on the other hand, it can more or less induce farms' structure, their productive orientation and marketing in shorter supply chains.

### **3. Results**

Data have been collected from the Socio-Economic Atlas of Sicily [14] which issues organized data coming from ISTAT official Censuses, of Agriculture in 2000 and Industry in 2001. From the general database, we have chosen possible determinants of differences between LITs and LITTURs and stated them in Table 1.

In order to determine the significance of differences, we have considered the

descriptive statistics<sup>2</sup> reported in Table 2. Data refer to the 31 coastal Local Labor Systems in Sicily, excluding the urban ones. Of these 31 coastal systems, 21 are “not-tourism” (LITs) and 10 “tourism” (LITTURs), accordingly to the official classification of the Sicilian Region [14]. We have used the Z-test [18] to evaluate significance differences between the two groups (LITs and LITTURs) using average data of each indicator of Table 1. Results are reported in Table 2, while Table 3 reports the Correlation Matrix among determinants, with significance at 93-95 and 99 %.

Statistical analysis confirms the ex-ante hypotheses about different agriculture/tourism possible relationships in LITs or in LITTURs. The two systems are complexly different in agriculture characteristics (farm structure, types of marketing, importance of citrus farming), in Services Units density, total Local Units density (Entrepreneurial Index), and finally and obviously in Accommodation Capacity and Nights Spent Density.

We have to underline that the two systems do not differ in some general indicators on environmental farming [14]. Average distribution of fertilizers and pesticides is not different between the two territorial systems, in a unique territorial model of farm practice. Furthermore, land fragmentation is seemingly a common issue of the Sicilian land tenure. Main part of farms produce for household self-consumption, but also in the case of citrus farming average UAA is small even though production is mainly dedicated to industrial processing and export in Italy and abroad.

On the other side, farming model within LITTURs has well specified characteristics, confirming our hypothesis about that contiguity with tourism does modify some agricultural features. That is, Farm Employment and percentage of Total Regional UAA are lower than in LITs as well as the Average Dimension of Citrus cultivations. As in the rest of the region, Citrus farming prefers marketing with no contract obligations, presumably due to public intervention in sustaining production [19].

On the opposite, in LITTURs the average percentage of farms that process their products and make direct sales is higher. This fact confirms the hypothesis of a potential short supply chain that links farms to the tourism sector, with the usual exception of citrus products. The same higher average has been detected in determinant indicators describing Service Units Density, including the Entrepreneurial Index, and obviously both the tourism determinants.

Correlation Matrix helps us to give some deeper insights. Tourism indicators are self-correlated, confirming that in LITTURs Accommodation Capacity and Nights Spent Density tend to match. These latter are positively correlated to the Entrepreneurial Index, i. e. the Local Units density that is higher in LITTURs than in LITs.

In brief, we can say that in selected territories within with tourism employment is prevalent (that is in LITTURs and with opposite features in LITs) agriculture doesn't prefer citrus production, prefers direct sales of processed products and doesn't perform production marketing with no contract obligations, typical of citrus oriented farms.

We have to pay some future more attention to the interpretation of data on education (percentage of Local Education Units). The density of these types of Local Units is negatively correlated to the Entrepreneurial Index and, substantially to any other indicator of agricultural, services activity, in particular tourism activities. That is to say – in a very first interpretation – that where people work don't care about instruction.

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<sup>2</sup> In processing data we have used LibreOffice 3 Spreadsheet and IBM SPSS package.

## 4. Discussion

Findings of the research are to be considered substantially acceptable, because the statistical analysis confirms the ex-ante formulated hypotheses about possible significant difference in agriculture/tourism relationships between LITTURs and LITs, and are in line with some broader empirical evidences of territorial inequalities in Sicily.

Since the Sixties of the past century, deep socio-economic changes have strongly conditioned the development of urban systems and the entire territory, with particular respect to rural landscapes and coastal zones.

During decades, petrol industries, transportation infrastructures, tourism industry and intensive agriculture, have produced high territorial pressure, with increasingly strong competition in land and labor markets and evident concentration of human activities and settlements in coastal areas. Thus, the uninterrupted moving of population from inner to coastal zones caused a strong territorial disequilibrium.

Urban areas changed quickly and unexpectedly their patterns, developing by means of “spontaneous” and not programmed private building. The subsequent dis-homogeneous spatial demographic distribution caused, beginning from the new century, the concentration of more than the 60 % of inhabitants in coastal municipalities, with the consequential stronger socio-economic vivacity of these zones.

Furthermore, development of tourism during the last decades caused the massive building of accommodations, in hotel, non-hotel and complementary structures. In Sicily, more than 90 % of accommodation units are located in coastal zones and in any case within coastal municipalities [1, 16], with no land use programs, or at least very few concerns for the carrying capacity sustainability.

Saturation of urban areas, increasing of households’ revenues, opportunity of small private investments, jointly to request for a better quality life and spreading of mobility and roads, have sustained the boom of holiday houses in coastal zones. This phenomenon affected not only traditional resorts but also previously deserted coastal areas and minor villages, causing the degrading of old seaside natural areas and altering coastal landscapes. Notwithstanding the seasonal use of holiday houses, the connected land and landscape degradation is going worse.

Moreover, the role of agriculture in shaping Sicilian landscapes has even had great significance, no more in the economic sense, but in the cultural, environmental and social ones. The reorganization of farming toward specialized activities (greenhouses, vineyards, citrus stands), supporting infrastructures (reservoir, canals), services (repositories, warehouses) determined landscape and territorial huge modifications as well as social and economic changes. In a very punctual meaning, the territorial disequilibrium is described by the definitive perishing of the inner region – that of large estates and traditional rural landscapes – in favor of the “modern” Sicily, characterized by industrial landscapes, intensive farming systems, and mass tourism.

Agriculture shows different patterns of organization and marketing in coastal tourism contexts in comparison to not-tourism ones. Contiguity with tourism entrepreneurial specialization and accommodation major density induces agriculture to land fragmentation, crops diversification, and different supply chains.

Furthermore, the Guidelines of the Regional Landscape Territorial Plan [17] do confirm the above mentioned differences, because the agro-forest landscape sub-system in LITTURs is globally characterized by the major diffusion of less labor intensive cultivations,



such as forests, maquis and grasslands, mosaic cultivations, tree crops, herbage, and by the overall minor presence of citrus farming. The presence of a large diffusion of a specialized lemon farming in the LITTUR of Acireale could not be an exception, properly for the quite lack of cultivation of any other citrus, and to be considered as a very local specialization.

In LITTURs farming is globally characterized by the minor importance of labor intensive crops and not oriented to the industrial processing to be marketed abroad Sicily. In LITs, where the labor market and the entrepreneurial atmosphere are not characterized by tourism, agriculture is well identified by traditional strong farming systems (vineyards and wine production, in the zones of Trapani and Agrigento, greenhouses in the South East area, citrus stands in Syracuse and Catania zones).

## 5. Conclusive reflections

The territorial situation of Sicily is clearly asymmetric. The dual distribution between the inner and costal zones of human settlements, industrial activities, infrastructures is quite self evident. Main part of inhabitants, main urban systems (metropolitan areas of Palermo, Catania, Messina and big towns as Siracusa and Gela), heavy industry (petrol-chemical poles) insist long the coast. Moreover, also main tourism resorts and intensive agricultural systems are located in coastal zones. The “littoralization” pertains also (and obviously) to the tourism industry that, in selected areas, has reached high degree of development, entrepreneurial specialization and does actually play an important role in the local labor market, characterizing main cultural traits of the local society.

The research question we have tried to answer is if tourism can induce some kind of adaptation on farming, and consequently if contiguity between agriculture and tourism in specialized tourism areas has some consistency.

The results of the research allow us to affirm that, globally, in costal Tourism Local Labor Systems, agriculture performs different types of organization, land tenure and marketing, in comparison to Not-Tourism Local Labor Systems. Some features of farming, such as use of pesticide and fertilizers, do not differ between coastal and inner zones nor between tourism and not-tourism zones. But, in coastal areas, the contiguity between tourism and agriculture is significant for some important features, such as average dimension of farms and feature of the supply chains. Thus, in some degree, this finding is to be considered in a positive manner, properly in the perspective of an effective ICZM.

In fact, the adaptation capability of agriculture with the tourism industry could be the possible inception of an integration between to different and distinctive productive sectors and could be a political topic for public administrators. In tourism local labor markets, agriculture and tourism contribute to the integration of labor calendars of employees. This fact has some importance to be investigated by means of future deeper case studies.

On the side of territorial integrated policy, historically, Sicily has never demonstrated great capacities of political planning of land and economy. Specially in the ICZM, any long term perspective has failed at all, since local policy makers forgot any national or international declaration or political act. On the contrary, in a long term perspective, policy makers should consider the possibility to adopt integrated policies, trying to valorize real synergies between agriculture and tourism, that our research helps to enlighten.

The importance of coasts in the general framework of the entire situation of Sicily

is per se evident. A dedicated policy should be based on local vocational endowments and entrepreneurial capabilities, implementing an actual “zonation” management, giving importance to territorial specialization, in the light of sustainable principles of development, declared in the far 1992 and recently renewed during Rio+20.

Tourism destinations are very fragile objects, in danger for the complex and variable relationships among sectors in local communities. Moreover, also local labor markets are very fragile socio-economic objects, within with some social equilibria could be menaced by human overpressure, risking to break down and even disappear, for social struggles. For this, it is important a future integrated and strategic political vision, stopping the sectoral approach of land management. In this line, the role of local authorities in political decision is, and will be, essential for the actual feasibility of any political implementation of ICZM. In this sense, it will be essential the adoption of a territorial policy based on the precautionary principle in the light of natural resource conservation, preventing any environmental damages in accordance with an equilibrated socio-economic development.

Nevertheless, this specific finding should be further deepened in each of the LITTURs in order to be really useful to the contribution of an effective ICZM. Our research would need some qualitative further investigation, to be held by means of case study method in local systems aiming at the definition of specific intervention on environmental social, economic and territorial features.

## Tables

Table 1 – Possible determinants of differences between LITTURs and LITs.

n.	Indicator	Data	Indicator Nature
1	Specific Index of Economic Endowment: Agriculture	% Employees to Population	Socio-Economic
2	Farm Dimension, Utilized Area	% of Total Regional UAA	Agro-Structural-Commercial
3	Farms by production orientation: Citrus	Average Dimension in Hectares	Agro-Structural-Commercial
4	Farm production marketing: Cultivations	% of Farms by Product to Total Marketing farms	Agro-Structural-Commercial
5	Farm production marketing: Processed products	% of Farms by Product to Total Marketing farms	Agro-Structural-Commercial
6	Farm production marketing: Direct sales	% of Farms by Product to Total Marketing farms	Agro-Structural-Commercial
7	Type of farm production marketing: No contract obligations	% of Farms by Product to Total Marketing farms	Agro-Structural-Commercial
8	Entrepreneurship Index	Local Units on 1.000 Inhabitants	Socio-Economic
9	Service Local Units	% to Total Units	Socio-Economic
10	Type of Local Service Units: Services to Businesses and Consumers	% to Total Service Units	Socio-Economic
11	Type of Local Service Units: Education	% to Total Service Units	Socio-Economic
12	Type of Local Service Units: Other Public, Social and Personal Services	% to Total Service Units	Socio-Economic
13	Accommodation Capacity	% to Total Service Units	Touristic
14	Nights Spent Density	Average Nights Spent to 1.000 Inhabitants	Touristic

Table 2 – Comparison between LITTURs and LITs. Descriptive Stats, average, variance standard deviation, Z-test, p.

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
n. LIT	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
n. LITTUR	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
n. LIT + LITTUR	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
Average LIT	5.27	0.311	0.806	65.1	27.4	18.7	56.5	49.4	39.3	72.5	2.07	21.6	38.4	6.4
Var LIT	6.72	0.057	0.334	366	136	188	390	57.3	62.8	14.5	0.784	7.67	1359	43.6
DS LIT	2.59	0.239	0.578	19.1	11.6	13.7	19.8	7.57	7.93	3.8	0.886	2.77	36.9	6.60
Average LITTUR	3.20	0.151	0.473	53.6	39.6	30.4	44.5	57.0	47.9	77.4	1.43	18	200	35.7
Var LITTUR	1.67	0.028	0.083	235	215	207	272	154	71.2	41.0	0.703	19.7	35787	881
DS LITTUR	1.3	0.166	0.288	15.3	14.7	14.4	16.7	12.4	8.44	6.4	0.838	4.44	189	29.7
Test z	-2.97	-2.17	-2.14	-1.79	2.3	2.15	-1.78	1.80	2.71	2.24	-1.96	-2.50	2.67	3.08
p	0.997	0.977	0.960	0.930	0.980	0.968	0.930	0.930	0.993	0.970	0.950	0.990	0.992	0.997

Table 3 – Correlations Matrix.

n.	Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Specific Index of Economic Endowment: Agriculture	-													
2	Farm Dimension, Utilized Area	.045	-												
3	Farms by production orientation: Citrus	-.076	.533**	-											
4	Farm production marketing: Cultivations	-.09	.345	.447*	-										
5	Farm production marketing: Processed products	-.114	-.416*	-.437*	-.888**	-									
6	Farm production marketing: Direct sales	.069	-.463**	-.403*	-.791**	.745**	-								
7	Type of farm production marketing: No contract obligations	.181	.195	.354	.354	-.424*	-.294	-							
8	Entrepreneurship Index	-.032	-.308	-.364*	-.309	.450*	.395*	-.350	-						
9	Service Local Units	-.305	-.491**	-.26	-.241	.335	.356*	.167	-.531**	-					
10	Type of Local Service Units: Services to Businesses and Consumers	.05	-.517**	-.502**	-.495**	.536**	.547**	-.105	-.651**	.642**	-				
11	Type of Local Service Units: Education	-.09	-.509**	-.335	.483	-.506**	-.657**	.014	-.384*	-.453*	-.654**	-			
12	Type of Local Service Units: Other Public, Social and Personal Services	.086	.473**	.458**	.429*	-.507**	-.405*	.145	-.594**	-.597**	-.931**	.469**	-		
13	Accommodation Capacity	-.161	-.313	-.407*	-.319	.414*	.253	-.438*	.726**	.418*	.664**	-.379*	-.651**	-	
14	Nights Spent Density	-.205	-.309	-.381*	-.328	.408*	.272	-.413*	.694**	.471**	.670**	-.350	-.655**	.975**	-

\*: significance 95 %      \*\*: significance 99 %

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