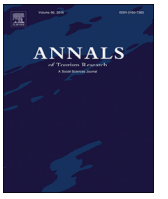
Annals of Tourism Research 103 (2023) 103674

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Annals of Tourism Research

journal homepage: https://www.journals.elsevier.com/annals-of-tourism-research



FULL LENGTH ARTICLE

Understanding Agritourism: A Chayanovian analysis

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 12 November 2022
Received in revised form 25 August 2023
Accepted 19 October 2023
Available online 17 November 2023

Associate editor: Raoul Bianchi

Keywords:
Family agriculture
Differential Optima
Peasant logic
Pluriactivity
Resilience.

ABSTRACT

Agritourism has generally been analysed in relation to the conventional economy and is therefore occasionally concluded to be inefficient. The contribution of the article is to show that agritourism must be understood from a different logic. Applying the Chayanovian concept of "differential optima", we obtain four conclusions: a) Agritourism can only be understood by recognizing the exceptionality of peasant logic; b) no income source is independent in a pluriactive economy, and cannot be studied in isolation; c) tourism does not have a unidirectional impact on depeasantization or repeasantization processes, but rather depends on the economic context and the strategies of each family unit; and d) peasant logic makes it possible to manage the vulnerability of the tourism sector (resilience).

Introduction

Tourism in rural areas is sometimes detached from agricultural production, but on other occasions it is linked. When the latter occurs, the two activities may be combined on the one farm, or they may be independent but carried out by individuals who are part of the same household. Our interest is focused on those cases that have two factors: the domestic unit allocates workforce to both agricultural and tourism activities, and also manages and controls the means of production of both of these. These proposals are known under different names, such as Rural Community Tourism, Peasant Tourism, Experiential Tourism, and Agritourism, among others, and they are managed and organized in different ways. This means that there is no agreed definition of these tourism modalities (Busby & Rendle, 2000; Schilling, Kevin, & Komar, 2012). Therefore, for convenience, we will group them under the generic name of Agritourism.

Agritourism is a term that has become particularly popular in the countries of the North. It is not usual to find it when discussing tourist proposals in the South. There is also no unanimity when it comes to establishing which tourism modalities the concept covers (Ana, 2017). In this text we will talk about Agritourism when a certain domestic or productive unit (cooperative, association or similar): a) combines a tourist offer with agricultural or fishing activities; and b) has significant control over the management of the two types of activity, as well as the ownership or tenure of the resources that allow it. That is, they are not agricultural day labourers, nor employees of tourism companies. This term was chosen because it is a compound word made up of lexemes that refer to the two economic sectors. In this way, we differentiate between those family economies in which tour-

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103674

ism and agriculture complement each other, which we call Agritourism, and rural tourism, which refers to any form of tourism that takes place in a rural area.

Agritourism, therefore, is one of the forms that the rural pluriactivity phenomenon has taken. Pluriactivity refers to the association of agricultural activities on the family farm with other non-agricultural activities carried out by the domestic unit. Obtaining non-agricultural income is not a modern peasant strategy (Kautsky, 1970[1899]). However, it has made up a larger part of rural income since the last third of the twentieth century, both in countries with much of their social fabric dedicated to the primary sector (Grammont & Martínez Valle, 2009; Mesclier, 1993), and in those with only a small percentage of the population dedicated to farming (Eikeland, 1999; Fuller, 1990).

The function of pluriactivity has generated some debate. Some authors consider that it is a simple survival mechanism in the context of the poverty of family farming. From this point of view, it is subordinate to a market for which it is only a reserve labour force. For others, however, it is a strategy that allows a process of accumulation to begin (Kay, 2006). A third approach states that it may be the result of the two situations. In these cases, it is necessary to distinguish when it is a consequence of applying basic survival strategies and when it has the objective of diversified accumulation (Campagne, Carrere, & Valceschini, 1990; Grammont & Martínez Valle, 2009; White, 2018). Without denying that it can also be the result of poverty, from the Chayanovian perspective we propose that pluriactivity is an efficient and resilient strategy for managing the family resources that can be combined with the capitalist market.

In regions of the North, as well as in the so-called Global South, Agritourism is a potential ingredient of the "pluriactive cocktail". Much of the literature that has analysed this phenomenon in the Global South considers that tourism may make the local population more vulnerable and lead to distortions within communities (Faria & Hidalgo, 2012). Ethnographic studies have found that the problem, in some cases, lies in a failure to appreciate the structural limitations of the tourist industry. These limitations make it difficult for the local population to exert effective control over the activity, and their enterprise may then become subordinate to the interests of other agents in the tourism value chain (Blackstock, 2005; Lacher & Nepal, 2010). It has also been argued that tourism facilitates an increased commodification of natural resources (Fletcher & Neves, 2012). For some authors, the influence of factors such as difficulty gaining access to the market, a limited understanding of how the sector functions or a lack of planning at regional level is often underestimated (Blackstock, 2005; McGehee, 2007; Pulido & Cárdenas, 2011). In fact, several studies have shown that many projects fall well short of achieving their expected economic outcomes (Notzke, 2006; Schilling et al., 2012; Tew & Barbieri, 2012), and also that tourism can distort social relationships, heightening conflict and inequality (Gascón, 2013; Pérez Galán & Fuller, 2015; Tucker, 2010).

Other researchers, by contrast, see Agritourism as an opportunity for peasant economies. From this more optimistic perspective, economic diversification through tourism can supplement a family's income and support the viability of active farms (Brune, Knollenberg, & Vilá, 2023; Ohe, 2020). It may also strengthen social organization and increase the resilience of rural communities (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011), adding value to the production and way of life of the family unit (Bessière, 2013; Tucker, 2022). In some cases, it may even serve to establish strategic economic links between the urban and rural working class (Cañada, 2015).

In another text we argued that this disparity in the assessment of the Agritourism may be due to the different contexts of each case analysed, and also to the researchers' particular perspectives, which leads them to focus more on some impacts than on others (Milano & Gascón, 2017). However, there may also be an epistemological limitation: the research on Agritourism has been carried out without considering the debates and theses raised by Rural or Agrarian Studies, an interdisciplinary field that analyses the dynamic relationships between agrarian ecosystems, the reproductive strategies of their inhabitants, and their production systems (Gascón & Ojeda, 2014). However, it is difficult to understand the logic behind certain Agritourism proposals without considering some of these debates and theses. Specifically, the hypothesis of this article is that it is necessary to consider the exceptionality of the economic logic of family agriculture to understand the strategies, and the management of the workforce and natural resources, that are behind an Agritourism proposal. It is a different logic from that which governs a capitalist enterprise: the agrarian family unit is conditioned by – and absorbed into – the capitalist context, but it is not managed under the same rules (Marsden, 1990; Ploeg, 2013).

The exceptionality of the economic logic of family agriculture was described by the agrarian economist Alexandr V. Chayanov (1988-1937) in the 1920s. He expressed it in various texts, the most significant of which are *On the theory of non-capitalist economic systems* – originally published in 1924 – and *The organization of the peasant economic unit* – originally published in 1925. However, it was not until the 1960s that his thinking became a fundamental piece in the analysis of the rural world, when his works were translated, edited and disseminated in English (Chayanov, 1966[1924, 1925]).

One of the things that followed from the availability of Chayonov's texts in English was the introduction into rural and agrarian studies of the debate between formalism and substantivism. Although this debate had long been present in economic anthropology due to the work of Polanyi (2001[1944]), the formalist perspective had, prior to the 1960s, dominated the analysis of agrarian history and economics. The debate concerns the economic logic that is applied by individuals and societies, and it may be framed as follows: Is there a single logic based on the principles of the capitalist market economy (supply and demand, utility maximization) or does each culture have its own logic that derives from its particular adaptation strategies? In our view, this debate has yet to take root within the field of tourism studies, as witnessed by the fact that the analysis of tourism in agrarian societies is predominantly conducted from a formalist perspective. Tourism is obviously a capitalist economic sector, but as shown by work in the field of critical economics (Meillassoux, 1975) and feminist research (Federici, 2004), not all relationships of production on which capitalism is based are governed by entrepreneurial logic.

By applying Chayanovian analysis to an ethnographic case study, our aim here is to explore whether tourist activity in rural societies may be better understood from a substantivist perspective. To this end, we consider two questions. The first is whether

peasants who invest time and resources in rural tourism apply capitalist, entrepreneurial strategies when making economic decisions, or whether these decisions are governed by a logic that is peculiar to these peasants. In addition, we examine whether this peculiar logic, if present, is as irrational as it seems when analysed from hegemonic economic perspectives, or whether it in fact represents an efficient use of available resources. From a methodological point of view, our goal is to determine whether the exceptionality of peasant economic logic, as described by Chayanov, is a useful notion for analysing and understanding a pluriactive rural economy in which tourism is one element.

After first describing the methodology used, we set out the principles of Chayanovian theory that may help in answering these questions. We then apply these principles to an ethnographic case that, by way of illustration, shows how they can be used to analyse Agritourism.

Methodology

The article has an eminently theoretical character. However, it takes as an example an ethnographic case studied: the island of Amantaní, in Peruvian Andes. Amantaní is the largest island that Peru has in Lake Titicaca, and its population is Indigenous Quechua. The study used the ethnographic method, an inductive technique that analyses individual strategies and practices in relation to the historical and social context (Bernard, 2017). The field work lasted for three decades: it began in 1990 and the last research stay was in 2019. The period from 1990 to 1995 was especially intense, with 4-6 months per year being spent on Amantaní. Most of the research tools used were qualitative, and included participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, life stories, informal conversations, and retrospective analysis of field journals. Participatory observation and informal conversation, in particular, enabled us to gather valuable information while living alongside the Amantaní people in their homes for periods of 1-2 weeks.

During the 1990s, our primary focus was on gathering information from different groups of Amantaní residents. For the purposes of the present article, three groups are especially important. One consisted of the Indigenous peasants who had been involved in the conflict over tourism that began around the end of the 1970s: the boat owners who controlled transport to the island, and the opposing sectors calling for an equitable redistribution of the resource. Through semi-structured interviews and informal conversations, we gained an appreciation of their respective discourses and economic strategies. We also gathered life stories from some of the key figures.

A second group comprised peasants who had not participated actively in this conflict. Our goal here was to understand their alliances with the opposing sides, as well as their pluriactive strategies. In 1994, we carried out an agricultural survey in Incatiana - one of the villages on Amantaní Island. The objective was to learn about the characteristics of all the family farms in a community. The survey also explored the uses they made of the family property and its state of repair. The third group we were interested in comprised those who spent time off the island working in urban areas but who retained both their status as community members and the land they owned.

Between 1999 and 2014, we made sporadic visits to Amantaní (in 2001, 2006, 2009, 2011 and 2012). Because of the close relationship that had been established with our main informants, these stays allowed us to gather valuable information. In the process, we were able to oversee the changes that were taking place on the island, in the developing tourist sector and in the economic strategies of the island's inhabitants. In 2014, 2017 and 2019 we spent two, one and three months, respectively, on Amantaní. During this time, we tracked the new generations of the families from whom we had gathered the greatest amount of ethnographic information in previous decades. In addition, we continued with the life stories of those individuals with whom we had worked during the 1990s, and also contacted new households. The Covid-19 pandemic prevented us from returning to the field in the following two years. However, in that period, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations were conducted online with the main informants.

As a complement to the above, we also analysed the documentation of the last five decades preserved in the archives of local public institutions: Sergeant de Playa (the institution that regulates lake transport), and Governorate and Municipality institutions. Likewise, the minutes of the community assemblies were reviewed. This material made it possible to understand the decision-making processes in relation to the tourism sector.

The exceptionality of peasant economic logic

Until the 1960s, except for a few dissenting voices (e.g. Chayanov, 1966[1924, 1925], Kropotkin, 2020[1902]), the agrarian world was analysed based on the canons established by conventional and Marxist economy. These currents assert that the technification of agriculture allows higher yields to be obtained with lower investment of resources. This principle was consolidated with the advent of the Green Revolution after World War II. Green Revolution is an agri-food paradigm based on replacing workforce by machinery and energy from fossil fuels, using inorganic inputs for pest control and recovering fertility, tending towards productive specialization, and moving commercial interests towards international markets. This model favours land concentration for technical and logistical reasons (McMichael, 2013). The industrialization of agriculture seemed to impose the logic of the economy of scale and, therefore, the disappearance of family farming. Although it was possible to find authors who, from the conventional economy, still considered that the desired modernization was detached from the size of the exploitation (e.g. Dovring, 1969; Mendras, 1967).

In the late 1960s, the Green Revolution began to show its limits. Sometimes increased socio-economic disparities and rural poverty. In addition, it became perceivable that the use of synthetic chemicals had harmful effects on the environment and human health (Bretón, 2010; Shiva, 1991). Moreover, the small family farm did not disappear, as predicted; in fact, more than

600 million people worldwide continue to live on farms of this kind (Lowder, Sánchez, & Bertini, 2019). Faced with this reality, Rural/Agrarian Studies took a radical epistemological turn, moving from a formalist view of the agrarian economy to a substantivist one, according to which economic strategies could have different logics. Family peasant agriculture, considered until then as a primitive phase of agrarian history, began to be appreciated as a specific model of managing natural resources and agroecosystems (Giner & Sevilla Guzmán, 1980).

The work of Chayanov played an essential role in this epistemological change. Unfortunately, Chayanov had been dead for many years when interest in his works revived. Chayanov was a Russian economist who advocated a revolution based on the peasant family unit, along the lines promoted by the Revolutionary Social Party at the beginning of the 20th century. After the October Revolution (1917), he supported the agrarian reform that divided the land among the peasants, and assumed responsibilities as an advisor on agrarian policies. But in the 1930s, his analysis of peasant production strategies and his defence of family farming faced Stalinist dogmas that privileged large collectivisations and agrarian industrialization. He was arrested by the NKVD, and shot in 1937. Beginning in the 1960s, scholars such as Thorner (1966), Shanin (1973) and Palerm (2008) recovered and disseminated Chayanov's work and thinking, and made him one of the pillars of the new Rural Studies.

Chayanov's thinking has enriched debates on various aspects of rural society. However, for understanding rural pluriactivity – and, therefore, the role that Agritourism can play in a pluriactive economy – we believe that the main contribution of his thinking is the assertion that the peasant economy is not governed by the same logic that governs a capitalist business. As a result, the rural family unit can choose to devote labour and capital to activities that are not profitable by business standards. Some authors consider that he was the first to argue that peasant agriculture implied a production model with specific characteristics (Sevilla-Guzmán, 1990; Shanin, 1986). In reality, the Russian Organizational School, of which he was a member, was based on this principle (Kerblay, 1966). Even outside Russia, in the 1910s, Rosa Luxemburg (2007[1913]) had defended the peculiarity of the peasant economy. But it was Chayanov (1966[1924,1925]), based on his research into Russian peasantry, who developed this idea and its theoretical bases.

One of the questions raised about peasant economic strategies is that they do not appear to be governed by any rational order. It seemed that the peasant farmer devoted efforts and resources to activities with negative returns; that is, when the production costs are higher than the profits. These practices have been attributed, on occasions, to extreme poverty and the lack of job opportunities, which would force the peasant farmer to take advantage of any source of income, even if it was unprofitable and involved investing excessive amounts of work. They have also been attributed to ignorance or the cultural survival of archaic and inefficient production practices. According to Chayanov, neither of these two answers is correct. The peasant economy is simply governed by another logic.

There are two differences that establish the exceptionality of peasant logic in comparison to the capitalist logic. First, the capitalist enterprise seeks to maximize profits, that is, to reach the greatest possible difference between income and costs. However, the peasant domestic unit aims to meet their needs by occupying their available workforce, that is, to offer work to all members of the peasant family, whatever the net benefit that each member generates with their work, provided that it covers the basic needs of the group. The second distinguishing factor is that, for the capitalist enterprise, the workforce is a variable. However, for the peasant unit it functions as a constant. Let's explain this more clearly.

When we affirm that the workforce is a constant we mean that the domestic unit must depend on all its members who are of age and are able to work. Imagine that a peasant family has at its disposal thirty hectares: ten of excellent quality, ten of medium quality, and ten of poor quality. If the family is composed of only a few members, they will work on just their best lands. As the family grows in number of active members, it will also exploit the ten hectares of medium quality. The total income is rising, but average yield per worker is falling, as the new land is not as productive. This is what the classical economy calls *decreasing marginal yields*. Finally, the family grows and new members reach working age. The family unit will then begin to work their worst lands, which offer only a small yield.

A note. The theory of decreasing yields, developed by Ricardo (2003[1817]) at the beginning of the 19th century based on a Malthusian logic, affirms that ploughing marginal lands makes it possible to increase production, but with lower yields. In its day, this theory was answered by Marx (2013[1857-1858]), who considered that technological innovation and the development of the workforce generated leaps in efficiency that made it possible to obtain greater yields from the same resources. The debate lengthened in the twentieth century: Lenin (1979[1908]) delved into this anti-Ricardian line, which was later taken up by, among others, Boserup (2003[1965]) and Grantham (1997), while the Ricardian-Malthusian perspective was supported by Marshall (2014[1890]) and the Neoclassical School. It should be noted that an ecologist rereading of Marx, which began to emerge in the late 1980s, concluded that he never denied the physical limits of growth but merely considered that the decreasing yields detected by Ricardo were due to other factors such as the metabolic breakdown of nutrients, and the lack of investment or disposition of resources by the ruling classes (Foster, 2000; O'Connor, 1988; Saito, 2017).

This strategy would be unthinkable for a capitalist enterprise. For capitalist logic, the workforce is a variable, so it will only employ the labour necessary to exploit the best lands. It will not hire new workers to cultivate the other hectares because the wages would be higher than the income obtained from the lands. A domestic unit does not have as much flexibility with its workforce: it must maintain all its members. It may therefore be desirable to exploit these unproductive lands by occupying the entire family workforce, even if these benefits are small in relation to the invested workforce. Their goal is not to achieve the best price, but rather to meet their consumption needs. However, from a business logic, it seems that the peasant farmer works at a loss.

Chayanov calls the economic objective of the peasant family unit the *differential optima*. If the company "maximizes profits" when it reaches the ideal point between a maximum income level and minimum expense level, the peasant family unit obtains its "differential optima" when it balances the triad "available workforce – exploited agricultural area – invested capital" with the

family needs that ensure the reproduction of the family unit. Another concept related to the differential optima that Chayanov uses is that of peasant self-exploitation. This concept can lead to misunderstandings because Chayanov does not use it according to its usual or Kautskyian definition (Kautsky, 1970[1899]); that is, as an overload of work resulting from poverty. When Chayanov speaks of self-exploitation, he means that, since there are no salaries in the peasant family unit, its members will work to the degree necessary to meet their needs and to be employed, although there are very low returns. In other words, the Chayanovian concept of self-exploitation does not refer to a situation in which the peasant farmer works more hours than socially agreed or under harsh conditions. It refers to the ability of the domestic unit to devote workforce to activities that offer a lower return than the returns a capitalist enterprise could accept. With this, Chayanov concludes that, reaching the differential optima, the peasant family unit is more effective than the capitalist enterprise, since it is able to take advantage of all the available productive resources, and not only those that offer better yields.

Chayanov did not introduce non-agricultural activities into the equation, but the logic of the exceptionality of family farming can be applied to a pluriactive economy. As an example, we will analyse a specific case: the island of Amantaní, in the south of the Peruvian Andes, located on the tourist route that passes through Lake Titicaca.

A Chayanovian analysis: the case of Amantaní Island (Lake Titicaca)

Amantaní is the largest populated island pertaining to Peru within Lake Titicaca. Its entire population is Indigenous Quechua, many of whom have emigrated or reside in more than one location, that is, they combine their life on the island with temporary employment in other areas of Peru. Since the 1970s, sources of income other than agriculture have begun to emerge on the island, the case in point being tourism. This situation should come as no surprise. Indeed, peasant pluriactivity has been a recurrent phenomenon in the Andean region since the final decades of the twentieth century (Burneo & Trelles, 2019), and more recently, Pérez Galán and Asensio (2012) have described the tourism boom as a strategy for improving rural economies. However, the islanders remain dedicated to agrarian production, even though the amount of land per capita has decreased over the past two generations. Since the 1980s, all agrarian production has been destined solely for self-consumption.

Limited number of tourists

The increasing number of minifundia on Amantaní was the result of two factors. On the one hand, a culture based on the land being inherited and divided among all children. On the other, a population growth – between the middle and the end of the twentieth century, the island went from about 1,500 to 4,000 inhabitants. Currently, few farmers have more than half a hectare. Already in the 1960s-1970s, the land did not cover the basic needs of most domestic units, making it necessary for agricultural yields to be supplemented by other economic activities. Pluriactivity became a strategy of the most impoverished domestic units, who sought to address land scarcity by accessing other income sources. It also became a strategy of those with a certain capacity for capitalization, who saw in these activities the possibility of investment.

During the 1970s, the inhabitants of Amantaní came to see tourism as a means of economic diversification. This was driven by the island's location at the heart of the most important tourism circuit in the Andes, the one connecting Cusco with Lake Titicaca and on to the cities of Arequipa and La Paz. The islanders made the necessary preparations, and Amantaní was officially recognized as a tourist destination. Many residents created a guest room for tourists in their home, and the Municipality established a mechanism for allocating tourist accommodation in an equitable way so that all providers could benefit. In the 1980s, however, the hopes that had been placed in this new resource began to fade, for two reasons: the limited number of tourists, and the monopoly that a certain sector of the population had over them.

Although the number of tourists visiting the island did increase between 1980 and 1989, it never reached any considerable level: by the end of the decade, an average of only 15-20 travellers arrived each day during the high season months of July and August, and during the rest of the year, visits by tourists were few and far between. At the beginning of the 1990s, tourism almost disappeared completely due to renewed armed conflict involving the Shining Path guerilla movement.

A further problem was that the small number of tourists were monopolized by a minority sector of the island's population: the boat owners who ferried them between Amantaní and the mainland. At the beginning of the 1990s, these boat owners accounted for around 10% of the total population (Gascón, 1996, 2005). Their monopoly was possible for two reasons. As it was they who transported tourists to and from the island, the boat owners were able to offer directly to accommodate them in their homes, bypassing the allocation system that had been established by the Municipality. In addition, the boat-owning community gained control of what at the time was Amantaní's primary political institution, the Governorate.

Governors served a one-year term, and between 1975 and 1995 only two post-holders were not members of the boat-owning community. There were two reasons why this came about. One was that fulfilment of the role implied a considerable financial outlay for which there was no State funding. Consequently, only those with greater purchasing power could assume the role, and as a result of tourism the boat owners had become the most well-off sector of the population. The other reason was that the outgoing Governor chose his successor.

Taking control of the Governorate was obviously of interest to the boat owners, as it enabled them to use institutional resources to their own advantage. Between 1975 and 1995, a considerable proportion of the projects promoted or undertaken by the Governorate benefitted the boat owners: building new docks for their boats, tourism promotion campaigns, etc. By controlling the Governorate, they were also able to undermine opposition to their monopoly: in particular, they blocked attempts to introduce new rules designed to ensure that tourist accommodation was allocated more equitably among the population.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, tourism was the main cause of social conflict on Amantaní. Opposition to the boat owners took a variety of forms. On its simplest level, it involved criticizing them or boycotting their proposals for promoting tourism. More decisive action was taken by the Municipality, which on two occasions sought to establish the role of 'tourist allocation officer' to oversee the process. Both attempts ended in failure, however, as it was the boat owners who controlled the primary institution, the Governorate. Furthermore, without their boats no tourists would arrive on the island. There was also the realization that spreading an already small number of tourists across a larger number of accommodation providers would not yield sufficient income for individual families to compensate them for the cost of maintaining a guest room.

For most of the population, therefore, the main sources of non-agricultural income were found in emigration. In some cases, emigration was definitive (Gascón, 2004). However, many families practiced temporary emigration: during the months between harvesting and sowing some of the family members went to work in the nearby cities of Puno and Juliaca, or even to more distant places.

Definitive emigration reduced the pressure of the minifundium phenomenon. Most gave it to relatives through some arrangement, or even sold it to a close relative. However, temporary emigration created a strain on the agrarian ecosystem for two reasons. One was the islanders' interest in making the most of their agricultural resources. Emigration is a difficult and unpleasant decision for an Indigenous rural population in a society marginalized by ethnicity and class. This was even more true in the economically difficult period for Peru. The 1980s and 1990s were characterized by an economy and labour market in perpetual crisis (Gonzales de Olarte, 1998). For all these reasons, the islanders tried to depend as little as possible on temporary emigration, and for this they needed to obtain the maximum possible benefit from their lands. This entailed the intensification of agricultural activity beyond the land's capacity for recovery.

The other factor that strained the agro-ecosystem was the maintenance of agricultural infrastructures. Amantaní is an island with a pronounced difference in altitudes. In less than 9.5 km^2, it goes from 3,810 metres high, the level of Lake Titicaca, to 4,150 metres at its highest point. Therefore, since pre-Hispanic times the island's agriculture has been based on a system of terraces. This agricultural infrastructure needs frequent maintenance. Traditionally, this work was carried out between harvesting and sowing, activating mutual aid systems between families. However, these months began to be used for temporary emigration, and maintenance work was postponed sine die. In the end, much of the terrace system collapsed.

A technical study conducted in 1990 found that a quarter of agricultural land had been eroded or lost because of these factors (CIRTACC, 1991). This was confirmed by a survey we carried out in 1994. Another part had been abandoned temporarily or permanently as its owners had emigrated permanently without having given their land to neighbours or relatives.

The tourism boom

By the mid-1990s, the armed conflict had been restricted to a few territories in the Amazon. As a result, the number of international tourists arriving in Amantaní increased. In addition, there was an improvement in national macroeconomic indicators based on the export of commodities. At the turn of the century, Peru became one of the most dynamic economies in the subcontinent, with annual GDP growth rates ranging from 4.5 to 5% (INEI, 2020). This growth took time to reach the popular sectors, but in a few years, it strengthened a national middle class that also began to travel around the country (Cotler, 2011).

Another change took place during the 2000s: the Municipality was awarded an annual budget by the State, and as a result it displaced the Governorate as the main political institution on Amantaní. The increased number of tourists and the loss of political influence among boat owners enabled the Municipality to establish, around 2010, a mechanism for ensuring a more equitable allocation of tourist accommodation.

This mechanism operated based on a system that distributed visitors to the island in turns. Due to the distance between Amantaní and the city of Puno, where the tours that travel Lake Titicaca start, most tourists must spend at least one night on the island. They are accommodated in the actual homes of the islanders, who also provide the food. The Municipality established an agreement with different travel agencies to distribute their customers according to a rotation system. Amantaní divides its territory and population into ten communities. When it was the turn of Community A, all tourists were taken there. When all members participating in the rotation system of that community had received the number of overnight stays previously established, the turn was transferred to Community B. And so on, until it returned to Community A.

Before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic (2020), approximately 55% of the islanders were hosting visitors thanks to the rotation system. However, the distribution of benefits remained very unbalanced. Those family units who had homes that were more prepared for accommodation had bilateral agreements with the most powerful travel agencies, and the arrival of websites such as Booking also facilitated that this minority had a greater connection to the tourism market. In addition, a large part of the population still did not receive tourists. There were diverse reasons for this exclusion. For the most part, they were elderly people who either did not have their housing adapted to the quality requirements demanded by the Ministry of Tourism, or did not want to accommodate tourists since they had enough with the subsidies they received from the State, the help of their children in emigration and/or their agrarian income. Some islanders did not participate in tourism because they had other well-paid sources of income: they were builders, bakers, shop owners, etc. Finally, there were families who spent most of the year in emigration, which prevented them from engaging in tourism.

The increase in household income, thanks to the increase in the flow of tourism and a system that redistributed its benefits more equitably, reduced migration trends. Even more: it encouraged many emigrants to return. This had consequences for the agro-ecosystem of Amantaní, basically due to two factors: the requirements of the tourism sector and rotation system, and the Chayanovian strategies aimed at occupying the family workforce.

Tourism and the expansion of the agrarian frontier

Tourist accommodation does not generate a daily or systematic work activity. The rotation system meant that families spent weeks without receiving tourists, and even months in the low season. However, it was difficult for islanders to have a job off the island if they wanted to participate in the rotation system because it was necessary to be present on the island when it was time to accommodate visitors. It was also required to be an active member of the community, which involved participating in assemblies and community work.

Tourist accommodation and community obligations did not have a fixed calendar. Even if that had been the case, few islanders could establish employment contracts off the island with such an irregular temporary nature. Therefore, participating in the rotation system required that some of the family members always resided in Amantaní. This created a dilemma for families: what should they do with this workforce that resides permanently on the island if tourism only uses it intermittently?

As the participation of islanders in tourism activities increased, the primary sector played a smaller role in the household income. However, this did not lead to the islanders losing interest in agricultural activity. Paradoxically, the opposite occurred. Since the 2000s, most families have shown an interest in recovering and making the most of their land. This was especially significant for those islanders who were more actively involved in tourism. The result was the extension of Amantaní's agrarian frontier.

Islanders expanded their productive capacity through various strategies. The first was the recovery of agricultural terraces that had been lost in previous decades. By the end of the 2010s, virtually all of these terraces were in perfect condition and in full use.

The agrarian frontier also expanded onto land that had never been used for agriculture or had low yields. This was the second strategy. Patapampa is a plateau that crowns the island. It occupies about 240 hectares, and is located over 4,000 meters above sea level. Traditionally, it was dedicated to grazing, since it did not have the appropriate conditions for agricultural production as it is dry and eroded by strong winds. However, above all, agriculture was not possible because of the continuous frost. Nevertheless, climate change, which is very decisive in the high elevations of the Andean mountain range (Pérez et al., 2010), has reduced the impact of these frosts. This encouraged the islanders to plough Patapampa and use it for agriculture. The plain's soil quality is very low, which means that the land must be left to rest for years after one or two harvests. However, in 2019 we calculated that approximately 80% of Patapampa was being cultivated, or had been and was being left to rest.

This eagerness to plough and cultivate wastelands was also observed in the lower part of the island. In the mid-2010s, taking advantage of the fact that the level of Lake Titicaca had decreased by several metres since the mid-2000s, the lands adjacent to the lake were ploughed and prepared for agriculture. In September 2019, we estimated that about 2.5 hectares of beach had been recovered for agriculture. These lands are of good quality and easily irrigated as they are next to the Lake. However, ploughing this land involved great effort as it was covered by rocks, sometimes of considerable size. Preparing the land involved an effort that did not seem to be compensated by the agricultural yields that these lands could offer in the medium term. In addition, there was always a risk that Lake Titicaca would return to its previous level. In fact, this is what happened at the beginning of 2022, spoiling all the work invested.

Another strategy was the purchase and sale of land. On one hand, some islanders saw that buying land could reverse the effects of divisional inheritance. On the other hand, some people who had emigrated definitely decided to sell their properties. In most cases, this acquisition of land took place between members of the same family, between brothers, cousins, uncles and nephews. However, when that was not the case, only islanders with greater purchasing power could buy land. Those better connected to the tourist economy were especially interested in investing their profits in acquiring agricultural plots.

Finally, a fourth strategy used to increase the productive capacity of island lands was the emergence of a trade in organic fertilizer from Ccotos, a peninsula near Amantaní specialized in livestock production. The traditional way to recover the fertility of the land was to leave it fallow for a few years, or use the manure provided by the scarce livestock on the island. Very occasionally, some islanders bought industrial fertilizers. However, throughout the 2010s, sacks of manure purchased from Ccotos farmers and stored at Amantaní docks became a regular sight.

An example that shows that the commitment to agricultural work – and the maximum use of marginal lands – is not the result of economic hardship can be seen in Francisco's family. Francisco was, in 2020, about 75 years old. In the 1970s, together with his two brothers, he had owned a speedboat, which meant he was part of the small minority of islanders who monopolized tourism until the 2010s, when the tourist rotation system was established. As his children formed their own families and became independent, they used the economic capital accumulated by their father thanks to tourism, their knowledge of the sector, and the extensive network of contacts he had established with travel agencies and guides: they adapted their homes and their kitchens to offer a high-quality service, and established agreements with tour-operators from Puno, Cusco and Lima. Therefore, in addition to participating in the tourist rotation system, they received exclusive travellers. This meant they had to always live on the island. Tourism only occupied them when they received travellers, and it could take weeks for any to arrive, but they did not take on temporary jobs in the city because they could receive a reservation at any time. In addition, as we have explained, participation in the rotation system was only possible if you were an active member of the community, which limited the possibilities of being absent for long periods.

Although they were one of the most affluent families on the island, Francisco and his children were among the first to plough the areas of the beach that they owned: a small plot of about 25 m^2 covered with stones, some of considerable size, and up to one metre deep. Two of his children even bought a similar plot of land, which they also had to clean up, for a price that forced them to borrow from family and relatives.

Making a Chayanovian reading, we can say that the economic strategy of Francisco's family was based on increasing its agrarian frontier. Despite the low yields and the high work investment, as well as the expense of acquiring land at a high price, this

strategy is a way to maximize the family's domestic workforce. In a peasant economy, the calculation is not based on the relationship between investment and profit. The aim is to give employment to the entire available workforce, albeit with returns below production costs. The availability of domestic labour is not elastic: whether or not it is occupied, the family must ensure the reproduction of all its members. It was therefore more useful to devote that workforce to low-performing activities than to leave it idle. Tourism is not an activity that requires all the available family workforce; however, it limits the possibility of accessing work outside Amantaní.

Family units also recover the agro-ecosystem because the income from tourism is not enough for most families, who only have access to the benefits of this sector through the rotation system implemented by the Municipality in the 2010s. Self-consumption agriculture continues to play an important role in the household economy: it supplies household consumption of staple foods for a large part of the year. However, that those domestic units more connected to the tourist market, and in a better economic situation, devote work and capital to increasing their agrarian frontier despite very low compensation, demonstrates the particular character of the economic logic with which they work.

Conclusions

From the mid-2000s until the Covid-19 crisis, Amantaní was in a paradoxical situation from the view point of the conventional economic logic. On one hand, its inhabitants had access to new sources of income: on the island itself, through the growing tourism whose benefits now reached the majority of the population (Gascón & Mamani, 2021); and also off the island, in terms of the labour market that was much friendlier than before the turn of the century, resulting from the sustained growth of the Peruvian economy that finally reached the popular sectors (Asensio, 2017). To this we need to add that the State redistributed part of its budget among the rural and Indigenous population through different assistance programmes – the elderly and single mothers received economic aids – and increased their contributions to the municipal coffers. In Amantaní, the Municipality redistributed these contributions by paying for community work – road repairs, expansion of the docks, etc. – and hiring personnel for administrative, cleaning and security tasks.

However, at the same time, the islanders increased the agrarian frontier by ploughing and preparing marginal areas that had never been cultivated due to their low productivity. To do this, they allocated a workforce (and even capital to buy the land) that did not seem to correspond to the yields obtained.

In other words: just when the capitalist market offered the best job options, there was a process of repeasantization based on ploughing marginal land for self-consumption. We cannot resort to the hypothesis of extreme poverty – according to which the peasant farmer carries out uneconomic practices to survive – because we have seen that those with greater purchasing power were the first ones interested in taking advantage of the marginal lands available to them. Nor is it useful to assert that Indigenous people culturally maintain traditional forms of production beyond their usefulness, since the marginal lands that were cultivated were unused lands just one generation ago.

In short, it is not possible to solve the paradox based on the logic that governs the business economy; however, with a Chayanovian viewpoint, it is possible. What does this perspective contribute to the understanding of the analysis of tourism typologies linked to agricultural production?

First, that the pluriactive strategy in which tourism is inserted can only be understood by considering the peculiarities of peasant logic. In Amantaní, the connection of the islanders with the market generates various pluriactive strategies, many of which incorporate Agritourism and low-yield self-consumption agriculture. The family unit does not consider the effort to increase the agrarian frontier to be uneconomic, since it does not allocate a salary to pay for the labour. They already have the workforce and they need to maintain it. Therefore, the family's concern is to seek and provide employment for their members, even in tasks that, from a business point of view, would be at a negative cost. This is the Chayanovian definition of self-exploitation – which, as we have explained, has nothing to do with the usual meaning.

Even more: if the family has the opportunity and needs to occupy its domestic workforce, they will buy land that will barely return the purchase price. Amantaní is not an exceptional case: allocating non-agricultural income to improving and increasing family farming is common in agricultural societies (Narotzky & Smith, 2006). From the orthodox economy, transferring capital obtained from a resource that provides good net returns, such as Agritourism in Amantaní in the 2010s, to another that only offers marginal returns, does not make sense. However, the main objective of the peasant farmer is to occupy the family workforce and it is only a secondary aim to maximize profits.

Second, and as a result of the previous point, the Chayanovian view shows that no income source is independent in a pluriactive economy. The analytical interest may be tourism, but it cannot be studied in isolation when it is part of a rural economy of pluriactivity. All economic activities are part of an overall strategy to optimize resources – land, domestic workforce, social networks, knowledge and expertise in each economic sector, capital, etc. – with the aim of meeting the family's needs and occupying the available workforce; that is, to reach the differential optima.

Only in this way can we understand the mechanics that exist in the depeasantization and repeasantization processes linked to Agritourism, and pluriactivity in general. This is the third contribution offered by the Chayanovian perspective. Depeasantization and repeasantization have to be understood as strategies that the family unit establishes to circumstantially connect itself to the market (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010; Narotzky, 2016; Ploeg, 2008). From the liberal-conventional economy and the Marxist-Soviet one, depeasantization is the result of the impossibility of family farming to compete with a modern agrarian market, and repeasantization can only be explained by a modern labour market in recession, unable to incorporate the surplus rural workforce. However, Amantaní shows the opposite of this: depeasantization in a context in which the capitalist work market is in crisis –

during the decades at the end of the twentieth century – and repeasantization when it is at its greatest peak – in the decade of 2010. The Chayanov viewpoint shows that the family strategies of connecting to the Agritourism market, which are accompanied by dynamic processes of depeasantization or repeasantization, are explained through the differential optima; that is, accepting that the objective of the family unit is to maximize the work income, and not the capital.

Finally, peasant logic also makes it possible to manage vulnerability. The Amantaní islander cannot control the tourist flows, or the labour market in emigration, or the price of the products of domestic consumption, but they can control the production for personal consumption. The Covid-19 pandemic, which had a strong impact in Peru, highlighted this situation. During the first weeks of confinement, many migrant families returned to the island and began working their land. Having lost their income sources in emigration, and although tourism disappeared completely in Amantaní, their agricultural plots offered them the possibility of partially covering their reproduction cost (Mamani & Gascón, 2021). The self-exploitation capacity of the peasant economy – in the Chayanovian sense, once again – allows the maximum use of their available agricultural resources, and this acts as a strategy of resilience. Subsistence agriculture may seem primitive from the point of view of the conventional economy, but it is an effective safeguard against the uncertainty that characterizes tourism, an activity vulnerable to political and economic crises, competition from new destinations, the price of oil and also health problems.

We will end with a methodological consideration. The case of Amantaní shows that peasant logic impregnates not only agrarian but all economic activities. Yet the field of rural studies has not applied a Chayanovian perspective to non-agrarian activities, and neither has tourism research proposed a substantivist analysis of Agritourism. However, Agritourism can only be understood by considering all the domestic activities in which a family unit is engaged, because peasant logic is based on the efficient use of the available family workforce, which is spread across all these activities. No single ingredient of the peasant pluriactive cocktail, whether the family's agricultural activity or Agritourism, can be analysed in isolation.

Funding sources

This work was supported by the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation and the NGDO Xarxa de Consum Solidari, under Grant ACC145/21/000061.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Jordi Gascón: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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