

The marina of Horta (Azores islands) – Impacts on the local population and in the tourism development

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Abstract

Horta was the first city of the Azores Islands (Portugal) to have a marina, in 1986. The passage of many foreigners and strong connections with the sea are parts of its history. All that justified the construction of this infrastructure. Across the time it is possible to verify that yachts from all over the world brought to this city more than the expected tourism economic impact. In fact, the existence of the marina created and developed a nautical culture in local population, as well as a strong symbolic relationship with the sea, which can be seen at Peter Café Sport and other nautical and social services. That fact makes this structure to be on top, as the most important structure of the city and a brand of this island, as seen in a survey conducted among the local population. As written by a local author, Fraga (1996) “The marina of Horta is one street of the city”, which means that Horta and the marina are seen as just one element. What makes this to happen? The Faial Island has a population of 15038 (2011) inhabitants. Despite that, each year, in one August week there is the “Sea Week” - a nautical festival with competitions, music concerts and other cultural activities. This nautical festival is considered the biggest in Portugal. The Marina of Horta is a reference of best practices and annually is the stage for international yacht sails races partially promoted by the local naval club, one of the most dynamic of the country.

Keywords

Azores, Islands, Horta, Development, Marina

Introduction

Transports and infrastructure support have always been associated with economic development of any territory, including the development of tourism. In the specific case of an island, the connections with other territories must refer to sea and air transports. Shipping started with the discovery of Faial in 1451 and that process continues until today. The air transport began five centuries later, in the late 1930's through the hydro aviation and Lufthansa aircrafts, which used to stopover between the U.S. and continental Europe. The city of Horta, due to its strategic position, has always had an enormous importance. Another key factor for economic development and tourism on the island was the settlement of telegraph companies from the U.S., England, Germany and France between the end of the nineteenth century and up to half of the twentieth century. Communications via submarine telegraph cables that linked Europe to the U.S. were controlled in Horta, taking this city to one of the world main centers of telecommunications.

The historical context of the passage in the island of outsiders over the centuries, with special reference to the twentieth century, as well as the fact that the bay of Horta has

an excellent natural shelter, justified the construction of this marina in 1986 as a way of settling a passage spot for tourists travelling across the sea.

The existence of the marina has not only been the result of the Island history itself but also creates history in this territory, as it is able to get even closer the population to the sea and to the world. This structure is included and connected to the city itself, merged into one element. What causes this to happen is the question. It was in this context, and to carry out this research, that a literature search at the local library and the local press and a questionnaire survey among the population were conducted in order to find out the satisfaction and perception of the local population in what concerns to the economy and tourism development in the Island in the last years, as well as understand what should be done in the future. Some interviews with local agents were conducted (interviews with the Azores Regional Tourism Office representative, with a City Council representative and with the manager of the marina).

Tourism has been (in recent decades), still is, and is believed to be one of the most relevant economic activities. It has even been responsible for greater mobility throughout the history of mankind and central economic, social and environmental impacts, some more positive than others. This mobility and these impacts, which occurred after the second world war, associated, in the language of Cazes (1998 as cited by Silveira, 2009), to “l’explosion du temps disponible” are clearly visible, particularly in coastal areas and in all those areas in which this phenomenon was thought out and designed to meet a demand for increasingly widespread mass, corresponding to the dominant paradigm of sun and beach tourism. This new organization of the free social time, nowadays, allows us to speak about new tourists and in a new tourism. Alongside the mass, tourism in recent decades, has been trying to find a new paradigm and alternative, with capacity to help tourism to find out other dimensions and other destinations.

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

Cavaco (1996) states that we are now paying a bigger attention to new forms of tourism, within a logic of balance and in respect of natural, social and psychological aspects. This reveals a more ethical and free tourism, much better distributed over time and space, since many tourists begin to focus more on content: adventure, differentiation, authenticity and integration into the simple lifestyle of the visited communities. It is the rupture (or the beginning of the break), with the organizations and the standardized and stereotyped places, and the beginning of a tourist route that will meet these new demands of an informed and critic audience, through differentiation, specialization and market segmentation.

The new tourism concepts impose a tourism structure around the rural elements: mountains and nature. Consequently we face the demand for tourism areas where once almost did not come. It is this presence of tourists who leads the Government to adapt its behavior and changing needs, requiring an improvement on public roads, services, electric and water supplies, public cleaning services organization, among others. “At the tourist activity we have the geographic space as its main object consumption, followed by its most important characteristic: the tourist - consumer, who has necessarily to move up to the product to be consumed: the touristic place” (Cruz, 2001).

This does not mean that traditional forms of massive tourism do not continue to play an important role in the tourism economy. In fact, urban tourism has today significant growth, adjusted to new products that have sustainability in planning, quality of life and revitalization of historic centers. Its main products are interspersed here and there by great cultural, musical and sporting events. In fact, the tourist has become an eclectic

and informed customer, demanding quality and engaging in the processes associated with tourism, trying to know the life cycle of products and services he consumes and thus influencing an offer that needs to pay attention to the demand.

The plurality of motivations that gave rise to the movements and characteristics of the individual travelers needs do not allow clearly defining the contours of tourism. In any other market is relatively easy to determine the goods that are in demand but not so with the tourism market where consumptions coexist, on one hand, satisfying both the tourist and non-tourist needs and, on the other hand, relating to goods or services produced exclusively on behalf of the resident's needs. There are many and varied components of tourism which in many cases are not included in tourism, since they were firstly directed to be goods and services that were not intended to satisfy tourist, but local needs. The first component of tourism offer is made up of natural resources. Within the economic point of view, we are talking about the elements of the natural environment that satisfy human needs. The existence of a natural element, is not itself a tourism product. Human intervention is needed, whatever its nature and size, which confers the ability to meet needs. Natural resources, as provided by nature, even if they are one of the main motivations to travel, are insufficient to guarantee the permanence of travelers. It is in fact necessary to build facilities, which allow the movement (transports travel arrangements, etc.) and ensure that stay (lodging, restaurants, etc.) as well. Without these facilities there would be no tourist activity although there might be movement. There will be no tourism, as it is characterized, by the transfer of funds from one location (center transmitter) to another (the receiving) (Barbosa, 2005). In fact it is necessary to transform resources into products, giving them visibility in an increasingly global market and organize them in terms of rating, valuation and integration with other goods and or resources.

City of Horta, Faial Island

Faial Island is part of the Autonomous Region of Azores, located in the North Atlantic, which consists on nine islands belonging to Portugal. This Island has an area of 173.8 km² and, in 2011, had a population of 15,038 inhabitants. It is the 5th largest island in surface and the 3rd most populous of the Azores.

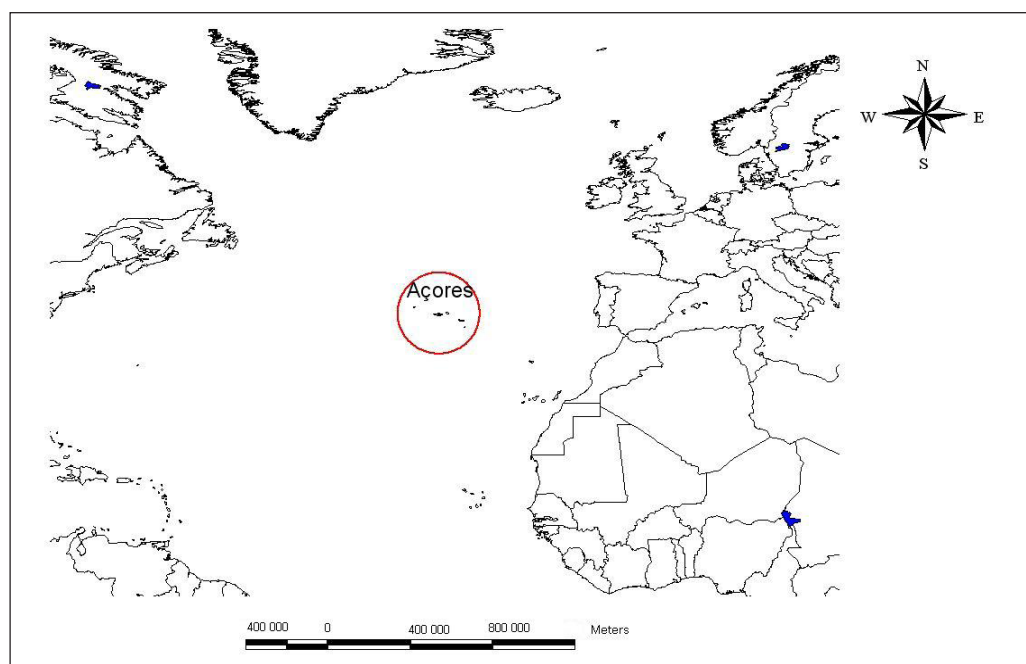


Figure 1: Geographic position of Azores (Source: Authors).

The island comprises only one municipality and has its political centre in the city of Horta (6134 inhabitants). It is one of the five cities in the Azores archipelago. Despite the regional government is settled in the city of Ponta Delgada (São Miguel Island), the parliament is situated in Horta.

The Azores archipelago has always had a very close relationship with the sea, which in fact is omnipresent in the landscape. Moreover, the archipelago has in its history a narrative of diaspora and migration, which shows that the sea has never been a form of isolation but a relationship channel with the world. The marina and tourism issues discussed here potentiate all this.

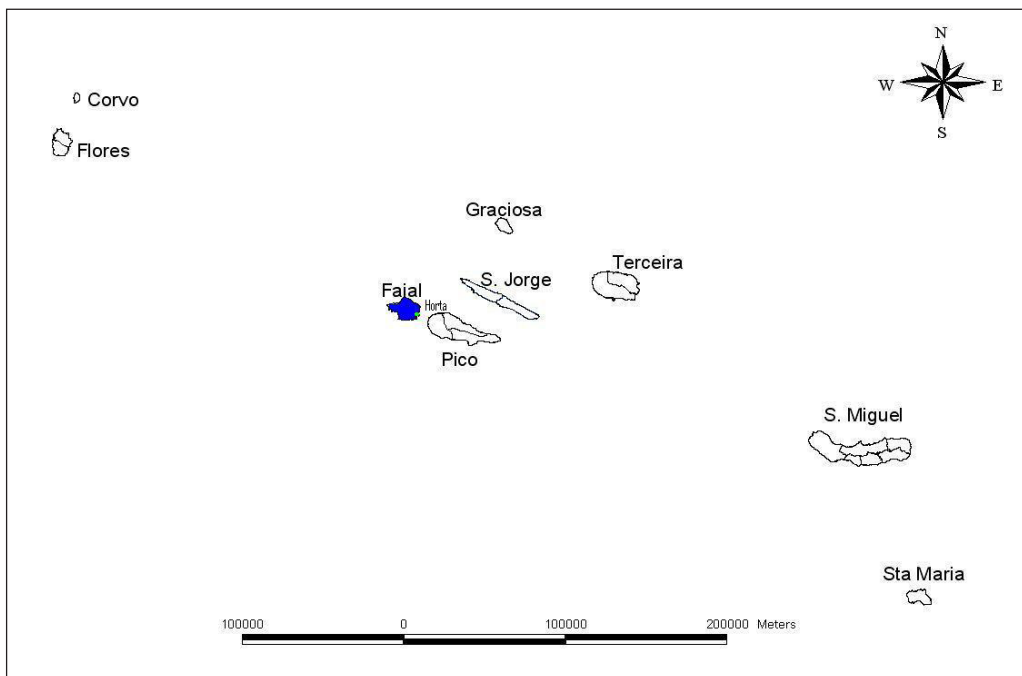


Figure 2: Faial Island in the context of Azores (Source: Authors).



Figure 3: City of Horta (Source: Authors).

Horta's population lifestyle

Many features and activities that still exist among the population of Horta are a consequence of the telegraph companies employees presence on the island, in how they lived, worked and occupied their free time. The population of Horta have the habit of an “end of the day strolling” on the “25 de Abril” promenade, the main avenue and the closest to the sea (Figure 4). The Companies, with its ballrooms, organize many events to the population and it is frequent among the local population to do picnics (habit brought by the British), as seen through the great avenues of seaside tourism marginal locations, valued especially since the period of the “Belle Époque”.



Figure 4: Map of Horta (Source: Publiçor, 2012).

The presence of foreigners in the city also promoted the cult of sports. Besides football (almost total dominating in the rest of the country), there are the sea-related sports (swimming, rowing, canoeing, sailing, etc.). The first nautical competitions started in 1891. Tennis, athletics and handball (this little town has a team that plays in the national man league) also have a major impact in this county. Germans left in the population a taste for musical activities, once reflected in orchestras, and in four brass bands that currently exist.

The nautical club of Horta is one of the oldest in the country, founded in 1947. It is the club that promotes more activities and has the largest number of sport modalities when compared to other clubs. It has the following modalities: Apnea, whaling boats, Canoeing, Diving, Swimming, Sport fishing boat, Angling shore, Mini sailboats, Leisure sailing cruise, General sailing and Chess. In the context of the island, Horta is also the area that most sports athletes have (534 athletes of which 264 are federated). The practice of water sports became a family tradition that passes from father to son. Every year international

regattas take place, usually crossing the ocean with the goal or scale at this marina, connecting other cities in Portugal mainland, United Kingdom and France.

It is said about this connection between the population and the sea that “It is so important for a Horta individual to have a boat as having a car.” The English population generally transmitted the cult for sports.

The attention of people towards sports and culture activities has its greatest impact during the Sea Week, which is one of the largest festivals in the country. Essentially related to racing and water sports, is complemented with musical concerts and other cultural activities such as poetry and literature. Since 1977 (first year of implementation), it attracts every year thousands of individuals from other parts of the country and abroad. It is also still very common to find people who speak fluent English, French and German. This feature is currently fueled by the constant passage through the harbor of individuals from virtually every nationality.

The marina as a bridge between the yachtsmen and the city

The opening of the marina of Horta took place on June 3, 1986 with capacity for 120 boats and was the first to exist in the Azores.



Figure 5: Marina of Horta in 1986 (Source: CM Horta, 2007).

The increasing number of sailboats and motor yachts made Horta a stopping point on travels, leading to the need for expansion, which occurred in 2002 with a new total capacity for 300 vessels. It is currently the fourth most visited ocean marina, one of the most important in the world.



Figure 6: Marina of Horta after expansion in 2002 (Source: CM Horta, 2007).

This structure differs from others in several aspects. The viability of any marina requires the implementation of a real estate project to build around it. In addition to the facilities in their role as sailing marina, apartments, hotels and similar establishments are planned, such as specialized commercial or not, bars, clubs, recreational areas and tennis courts, pools, etc. In Europe there are examples of this theory in nautical tourism complex built, mainly in the western Mediterranean. However, in the conception and design of the marina of Horta, the process developed in a completely opposite direction. Instead of building an urban complex around a nautical marina, the marina was built in the city. Rooted in the center of Horta, its accesses allow a direct entry in the “heart” of the city, becoming an extension of it.

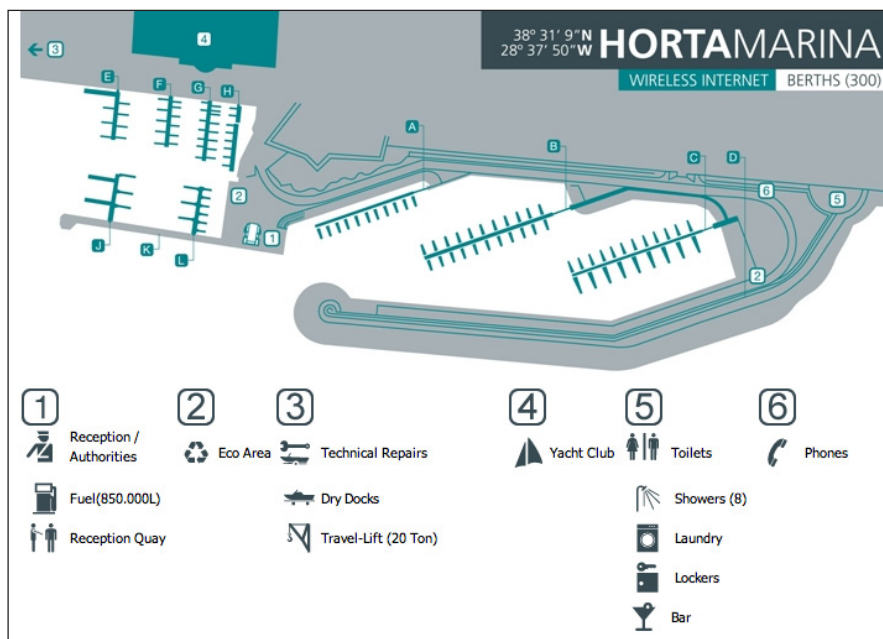


Figure 7: Marina of Horta map (Source: Marinas of Azores, 2012).

Contrary to what occurred in many marinas with an insufficient number of lashings to monetize shops, restaurants, bars, etc., in Horta is the city that serves as a constant exchange of support. Contrary to many theories of economic profitability, this Marina is so embedded in the city that gave it the name which, after all, is just a quite different street from all others because, instead of houses clinging to the ground, there are moored yachts of all flags in a constant movement of arrivals, departures and often returns. (Fraga, 1996)



Figure 8: The street of the marina (Source: Portal Açores, 2005).

Regardless Horta is situated at 1684 km from the nearest European capital (Lisbon), is in this small island city where one of the 50 most known and famous bars in the world is, according to the opinion of Newsweek - Peter Café Sport.



Figure 9: Peter Café Sport, Horta (Source: Portal Açores, 2005).

This bar opened its doors in 1918 and has since served as a meeting point for thousands of yachtsmen who pass by Horta for some time to regain strength after crossing the Atlantic. Located at the Vasco da Gama Street, it is just a few meters from the marina. The ambience is unique, felt and lived as a union of many people, many languages and cultures who pass by and feel that there, in that small town, even if just for some moments, you are in the center of the world. As a matter of fact, it is a land mark of great value.



Figure 10: Inside of Peter Café Sport (Source: Life-trips, 2007).

“From currency exchange establishment to poste restante, from yacht club to information bureau, from weather forecast delegation to charity institution, from tourist attraction to international visiting room, “Peter” is not just another café, but a world famous institution.” (Espaço Magazine n. ° 3, October 1980).

In the 50s of last century and with the passage of the crews from the Portuguese Navy vessels, began a tradition that endures to the present day, which is leaving their record in the harbor walls. With the construction of the marina, the number of cruise boats that passed the Azores and more particularly on Faial grew every year. In their sometimes dangerous crossings, has been stressing the idea or superstition that those who leave recorded in the wharf the allusion to this passage, would be benefited by the providence and no harm would happen. These paintings are a sort of an outdoor marina museum, which will be renewed at the whim of the imagination of the yachtsmen that pass through it. Some of these paintings have been perpetuated through photographs that are then exposed in commercial spaces of the city, or even in the Horta Museum.



Figure 11: Paintings done by yachtsmen (Source: Life-trips, 2007).

In 2010, according to the Data available from the Regional Statistics Service, the marina of Horta was the structure that more boats and yachtsmen received in the context of the Azores archipelago.

As can be seen in Table 1, in 2010 were admitted to the marina of Horta 1096 yachts and 4198 yachtsmen. This marina obtained 33.1% of boats, moored in the Azores and 36.9% of yachtsmen. There are no results for Corvo Island, the smallest in population and surface.

Table 1: Number and percentage of yachts and of yachtsmen that arrived to each island of Azores in 2010 (Source: Created from SREA).

Year 2010	Boats	Yachtsmen	Boats %	Yachtsmen %
Santa Maria	234	593	7,1	5,2
São Miguel	546	1707	16,5	15,0
Terceira	717	2026	21,7	17,8
Graciosa	97	382	2,9	3,4
São Jorge	380	1789	11,5	15,7
Pico	56	153	1,7	1,3
Faial	1096	4198	33,1	36,9
Flores	185	532	5,6	4,7
Corvo	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Total Azores	3311	11380	100	100

We conducted a questionnaire survey among 100 Horta residents in which we wanted to know their perception about the importance of tourism as a promoter for local development. We wanted to know as well, what changes occurred on the island in recent times, which ones had more impact in the Faial island development and those ones which still should occur. By questioning the importance of tourism for local development, 71 respondents reported being Very important and 27 respondents reported to be Important (Figure 12).

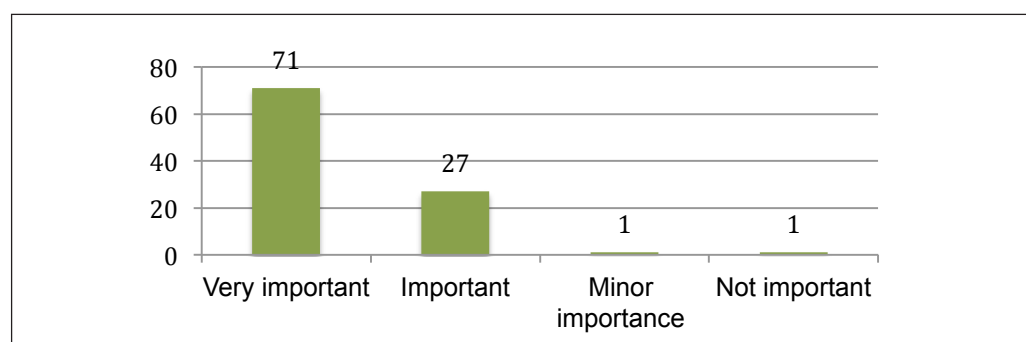


Figure 12: Importance of tourism to the local development (Source: Silveira, 2009).

Thus, in addition to the physically present nautical tourism in Faial and especially in the city of Horta, it constitutes both an urban living space and an inclusive space representation for local population. In fact, the residents realize the marina and the sailors as key elements of its territory and a qualifying factor for social and economic enhancement.

In recent years the most important investment occurred in the territory, according to population, with 29 responses, was the increasing of the marina capacity from 120 to 300 vessels, in 2002 (Figure 13). The construction of two large hotel units, obtained the second highest frequency with 24 responses, followed by the construction of the new high school.

In fourth place, an also related to transport structure: the Horta airport increase passenger and cargo terminal (14 replies).

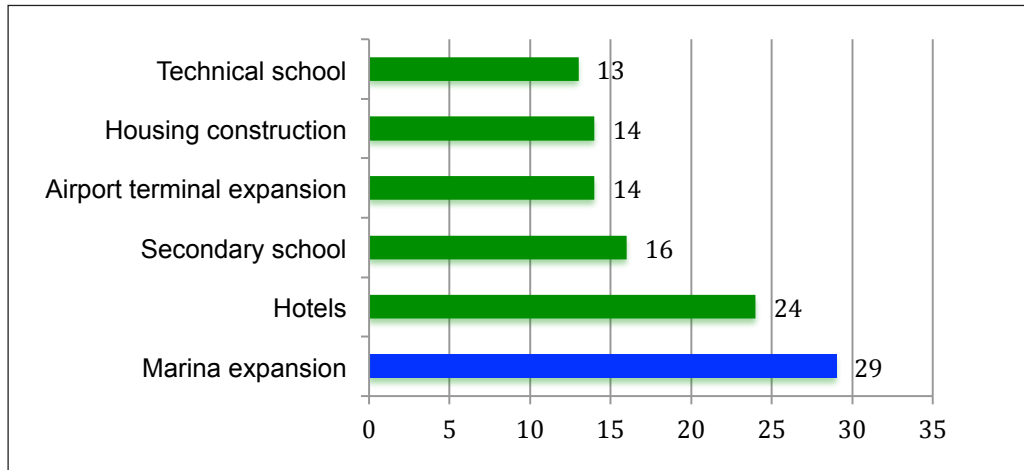


Figure 13: Most important investments over the past ten years (Source: Silveira, 2009).

The population considered as priorities to the future investment in infrastructure and services, which has direct support to the population itself as an increased shopping and more and better ways of surface transportations (Figure 14). This analysis makes it clear that a series of investments that promote quality of life for local people is needed which would result in the provision of a tourist destination with better conditions for receiving visitors. Also better local services associated with leisure needs of local residents, sailors working as a customer base increased, with high levels of expenditure/day, important for the decision to invest in the city.

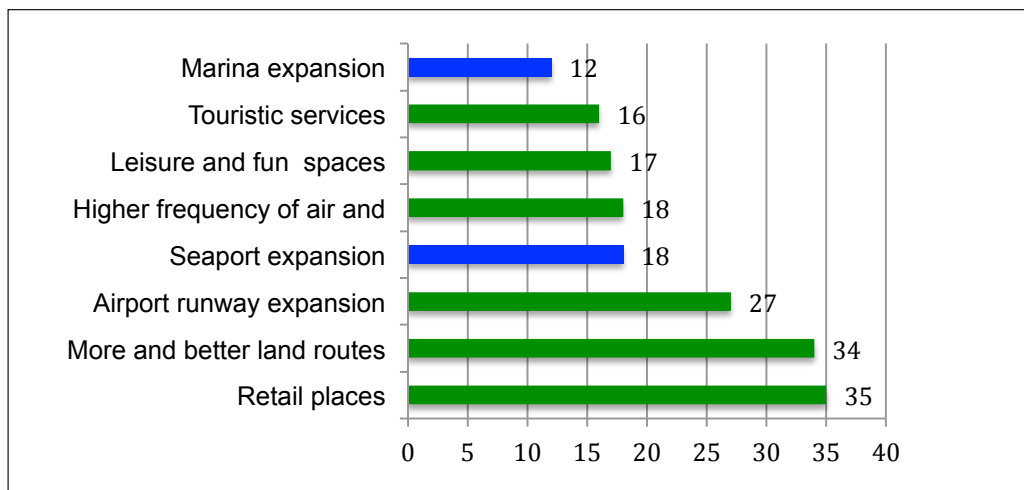


Figure 14: Most important investments that must occur in the future (Source: Silveira, 2009).

In the third position as being important, the expansion of the airport runway to improve the conditions of landing of large aircraft in adverse weather conditions. The connection to the sea surges through the appointment of the expansion of commercial seaport (18 responses) and a further expansion of the marina (12 responses).

Was asked what factors promote more tourism in the island. The following is the list according to decreasing order of importance:

1. Nature/Landscape
2. Marina
3. Sea proximity
4. External air connections
5. Hotels
6. Sea Week Festival
7. Publicity in outside channels and events
8. Urban heritage
9. Sport activities
10. Climate
11. Historical tradition of people passing off the island

The unique landscape of the Azorean islands and of Faial, in this case, was named the main factor. Second is the marina, either as a port of arrival of tourists throughout the year, and itself as a factor of attraction for tourists arriving by air or by sea through the commercial port. Three additional factors include the sea as the key to tourism: Proximity to the sea, i.e. the fact that is a small island, the Sea Week (a festival that already runs for more than 30 years and has nationally and internationally recognition levels) and finally, sports activities, especially nautical competitions, sponsored by the nautical club.

Conclusions

The marina of Horta was built because there was already an historical context as a support for a strong relationship with the ocean, as well as a mean of internationalization. Throughout the history of Faial, the sea has always been a means of connection to the world. The island lived through the economy of the whaling industry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, encouraged by the passage of North American whaling vessels that came to Horta to recruit workers and to obtain supplies. Also since the late nineteenth century and until 1969, Horta was the headquarter of telegraph companies from four countries, incurring the coming of workers and making the city and the island a link center of the submarine cables between Europe and North America. Between the 30's and the 50's of the twentieth century, the Bay of Horta was the point of ditching seaplanes that connected the continents of Europe, America and Africa allowing the passage of thousands of passengers in this city.

However, the history alone is not sufficient to create a core and a shape of a structure or location, as has this port. If after the building had not passed a continuing inter-relationship between the city and the marina, today would be just a complementary structure and not the city center as it is at the present. Factors such as Peter Café Sport, the nautical club, the paintings in the walls, the bay of Horta, with the ideal nature of shelter for vessels and its associated beauty, were crucial. In September 2012 the Bay of Horta will be part of the group of the most beautiful bays in the world (World Bays).

It is clear the importance that the marina has for the local population. Generalist investment has been continued and a priority until the present day, as well as the continuing desire to grow in size and reference, as examined in the conducted surveys.

The marina of Horta is, and how it relates Fraga, (1996) a city street, in the sense that anyone can access it, live and experience it like any other point of the city. The difference is that this street is where the first contacts of the local population with the yachtsmen there are made.

Invitation!

“It is when the shadow of the city extends through the bay, the sun reflects in red colour at the windows of the Pico island houses and the wind seems to have stopped breathing, mirroring the sea, that the magic of the port is revealed.

It was July of 1985 and the Marina, almost finished and still desert, was a wild wharf of dark concrete trying to get to the City and the World. Sitting at the northern end of its pier a guy strumming his guitar, which involved an embrace of Andalusian jealousy. It was Patrick Burke who played Francisco Tárrega, “Los Recuerdos de la Alhambra”, and the notes, by the silence of the evening, echoed by the empty Marina to the yachts in the world in a call, briefly agreed to come to tie it. “ (Fraga, 1996)

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