

TOURISM AND PUBLIC POLICY

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Abstract: *This paper addresses the connection between tourism and public policies from a descriptive and secondary data analysis perspective, aiming to contribute to a deeper reflection on issues of tourism in terms of concepts and statement of policies that should be adopted in various tourist areas. This article intends to deepen the various concepts of tourism and to address the public policies that should be adopted in tourist regions or countries, referring to the importance of public policies in the territories that have their main economic and social activity in the tourism sector. The reference to tourism as a development factor is based on evidence for the effectiveness of the sector for job creation and enormous potential for the recovery of disadvantaged areas. Some considerations about tourism policies in Portugal are presented.*

Keywords: *tourism, development, public policy and tourism policy*

1. Introduction

The sector of travel and tourism is considered one of the largest and most diverse economic activities in the world. Tourism is one of the world's major industries, attracting many economic benefits to destination regions (Webster and Ivanov, 2014). As tourism is a proactive activity which retains sustainable development for the future, it is seen by many governments as a great opportunity for economic development and a tool for building a more prosperous community. Tourism is an activity that has a multiplying effect capable of promoting the indirect development of other sectors, namely in the economic, social, territorial and patrimonial areas. It is a sector that is characterized by a process of adjustment and continuous transformation of the territories, although conditioned by the conjectural situations of risk, as well as by the high application and use of sophisticated tools and by changes in the behaviour patterns of potential tourists. In many societies tourism is seen as the primary sector of its economy, with a very significant weight in the Gross Domestic Product, and therefore, it is the largest employer of the active population of these tourist territories.

For these reasons and evidence, tourism can play a key role in the development of

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many regions and help communities escape the degree of backwardness and underdevelopment they often face in many parts of the world. In tourism, politics plays a fundamental role, as government action is necessary to redirect the tourist activity to obtain the desired final results and keep well defined goals, framed by a vision for the future.

2. The Concept of Tourism

The OMT (2003) defines tourism as a set of activities, but from the perspective of demand. From the supply point of view, tourism should also be considered as a set of activities underlying the economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political dimensions related to each other, resulting in a perception of quality of life for its users (tourists). Therefore, there is no single concept of tourism due to the complexity triggered by the integration of areas of inherent scientific knowledge, as well as the fact that there are no equal regions or territories with the same types of tourism products. Incidentally, Reisinger and Steiner (2006) point out that the concept has not yet managed consensus, since the authenticity of the concept is still lacking.

From a holistic perspective, tourism is located at the intersection of several domains of knowledge, which problematizes and enriches research in this area, namely those research studies that combine tourism life cycles and tourism processes. Tourism is an institution, since the ontological component (nature of being) is supported by Giddens's theory of structuring (1996), which defines the institution as an individual practice of improving social life in time and space. Tourism includes a huge diversity of knowledge that belongs to the various disciplines or subjects directly or indirectly linked to the tourism activities. According to Silva (2004), tourism should consider several domains of knowledge that can help interpret the object of study, solve problems and bring new contributions to the various scientific communities, such as marketing, psychology, sociology, economics, geography, history, spatial planning, political science.

Tourism is a mass phenomenon that causes geographic, economic, social and cultural changes, making a positive contribution to the trade balance of many countries or regions, being considered one of the most globalized activities, since the production and consumption of tourism services are set in a global perspective. This globalization of tourism results from the following factors: increased liberalization of world trade; incorporation of new technologies, such as information technology and telecommunications; horizontal and vertical integration of tourism companies; territorial diffusion of consumption; work flexibilization in the various productive sectors (Beni, 2003). Thus, in addition to being a major source of employment in many countries or regions, tourism encourages investment in infrastructure that benefits tourists and local residents themselves. At the same time, the revenues obtained through taxes generated by tourism are valuable for the various public administrations. Tourism is currently one of the most important phenomena from a political, economic, environmental and socio-cultural and territorial point of view. It has ceased to be just a synonym for leisure and has begun to play a role as a social agent in the societies in which it developed (Marujo, 2008).

According to Richards (1999) many authors argue that tourism is too complex to be explained in terms of a single motivation. For Sinclair (1998), tourism is a product composed of transportation, accommodation, catering, entertainment, natural resources, other facilities and services such as, shops and currency exchange. For this author, it is useful to consider that it is not an industry *per se*, but rather a collection of interrelated industries and markets located in both industrialized and developing countries.

Simpson (2010) and Massam (2002) have found that the literature shows a clear relationship between tourism, community, economic development and quality of life. Tourism can provide more jobs, better medical, educational and recreational services and simultaneously reduce negative reactions and perceptions (loss of peace and tranquillity), environmentally issues, use of drugs, among others.

Tourism can be defined from the perspectives of both demand and supply. Based on the demand side, one of the most well-known definitions is the definition given by the World Tourism Organization (WTO or OMT), which defines tourism as the set of activities practiced by individuals during their travels and accommodated in places outside their usual environment for a continuous period not exceeding one year, for leisure, business and other reasons (OMT, 1994; OMT, 1998; Ispas, 2010). From the supply perspective, one of the many definitions is that of Stephen Smith (1988), in which tourism is composed of an aggregate of business activities that directly or indirectly provide goods or services that support the leisure and business activities carried out by people outside their places of work and habitual residence. Tourism is an important pillar for the economy and development of many regions, since it provides the emergence of a group of very relevant activities; therefore, regional and local governments, interested in promoting local and regional development, perceive this sector as a strong driver for development.

Nowadays, the realities of tourism have faced profound changes in the affirmation of the development of this sector, as well as differentiated behaviours among tourists. Facing these realities, the various subjects of tourism intend to adapt to regional, national and international changes, trying to respond to these new challenges. In this respect, tourism has come across several realities in recent years which have influenced the sector. For Buhalis and Costa (2006), one of the central arguments is that the success of tourism is inextricably intertwined with the way the industry and the tourism system understand and incorporate the new trends that support its expansion. The key issue will be how to improve the quality of the offer, focusing on a diversity of products, which will enable tourists to live unique experiences, increasing the economic benefits of tourism growth by focusing more on the value of supply than on quantity itself. Another key issue is the introduction of new, well-organized and sustainable products that support regional development without threatening the long-term prosperity of the destination. The aim is to increase efficiency and to generate added value, while reducing the consumption of resources. The central idea will be to provide unique experiences to visitors, which make the difference in the product offer, keeping a large part of the revenue generated in the destination (Şandru and Nechita, 2017; Nechita et al., 2015).

3. The concept of Public Policies and Tourism Policies

According to OMT (1998), from the economic point of view, public intervention in the economy is justified by the existence of market failures, which explain, in particular, some of the most important problems that the tourism activities face. There are strategies focused on participation by local communities in tourism, decision-making and partnership with the private sector (Cooper, 2008).

Public policies are actions carried out by the public authorities, which aim at the common good and meet the needs of society, being oriented towards meeting public interests (Dias, 2003). According to Hall (2001, p. 26), public policy-making is "(...) a political activity and these are influenced by the economic, social and cultural characteristics of society, as well as by the formal structures of governments...". In this way, public policies concern what the government decides to do or not to do. It follows that public policies are the result of government (in)action as a deliberate choice.

The intervention of the public power is defended as a principle to ensure the harmonious development of tourism, in exchange for autonomous development (Krippendorf, 2002). This principle is based on the elaboration of specific public policies for tourism. The government has the task of providing the basic infrastructure to help the local community implement its tourism projects (Elliott, 2004). There is a consensus among researchers and scholars on the role of government in terms of infrastructure. However, the qualification of the sector divides the opinion of the authors, where many establish that this function is from the private sector. In this respect, the following public positions in the tourist management described by several authors in tourism are presented: (i) standardization of activity with the creation and approval of specific legislation; (ii) inspection, based on established laws; (iii) orientation for access to funds, as well as support for support programs; (iv) structuring of tourism and infrastructures (base, access, tourism); (v) planning and management of the activity; (vi) conducting and/or stimulating research; (vii) monitoring of impacts and (viii) tourism promotion and marketing of the destination; the function (ix) promotion of the qualification of the sector is the item of discord (Elliott, 2004).

In many tourist regions, governments have a legitimate interest in ensuring that certain standards of tourism competence and good conduct prevail in the marketplace. They need to solve problems and disputes that arise from the tourist activity. To better understand how government involvement affects the tourism industry, public sector actions can be classified into four broad categories: policy, planning, development, and regulation. In each of these areas, governments play a unique and vital role, either by facilitating or hindering the development of tourism. The tourism regulatory base, as well as guidelines, objectives, development strategies and promotion constitute the universe of public tourism policies, where decisions are made with the direct effect on a destination (Ritchie et al., 2002).

In tourism, politics plays a fundamental role because, for its development, actions by governments are necessary to redirect the tourist activity to obtain the desired final results and keep the goals well defined, taking into account a vision of the future. Solha (2006, p.92) states that "tourism policy should work both in stimulating and directly controlling the development of tourism, and should also be concerned with protecting

the interests of society". Public policies in tourism have to show a concern for the development of the sector and, at the same time, to improve the quality of life of the population. It should be understood, therefore, that tourism policy is the set of conditioning factors and basic guidelines that express the ways to reach the overall tourism objectives of the country (Beni 2001, p. 178). It is the responsibility of public agencies to determine priorities, create standards, administer resources and stimuli, as it determines the guidelines and provides the facilities.

The State should act as a link between all levels of government, private initiative and community, to coordinate actions related to tourism (Magalhães, 2001). Place branding can be used as an example on how public-private partnership creates platforms for cooperation with positive outputs for tourism (Nechita, 2015). Public managers have the role of being the catalysts and promoters of tourism, integration of all sectors and social actors, for the development of tourism.

The growth of tourism, particularly that of a region, has as its main determinants the existence and formation of social capital. The creation and strengthening of social capital involves the existence of initiatives coming from public power (Lechner, 2000). Based on this assumption, the main function of the government is to implement consistent, mobilizing public policies that allow the public to interact with the communities.

According to Firmino (2007), no tourist destination can have high attractiveness, high competitiveness and high sustainability if its main players do not operate in a systemic perspective. It means that it is the public power to regulate systems in tune with the private sector. The World Tourism Organization considers that tourism policy should be a part of a country's overall economic policy and that it is embodied in formal declarations such as laws and official documents or statements, but that they can also be "...informal and undeclared, being identified from the patterns or tendencies of governmental action "(OMT 2003, p.193). Policy is a set of actions calculated to achieve objectives, or general directions for tourism planning and management based on identified needs within market constraints and resources (Beni 2006, p.91). Policies are specific guidelines for the management of tourism, covering many operational aspects of the activity. Collaborative institutions and frameworks are essential for ensuring participation of all interested parties in order to have a sustainable development of tourism (Candrea et al., 2017). In addition to the creation of the institutions, efforts are needed in order to increase the local stakeholders' awareness regarding the importance of sustainable tourism development (Albu et al., 2016).

According to Fennel (2002, p. 131), tourism policies encompass a broad spectrum of concerns about the implementation of tourism programs around the world, including social, ecological and economic relationships. In addition, many discussions have involved the idea of regulation as a means of gaining a stronger element of control in the formatting and implementation of products. The lack of tourism planning can be said to be the cause of the disordered growth of the activity, causing the benefits to be eclipsed by the harmful effects. Thus, for a rational planning of tourism, public policies must be the result of careful planning that originates tourism plans, programs or projects. There is a widespread belief that tourism can be the "lifeline" of a local

economy. Although it presents a dynamic character and a contemporary tendency of growth, it is important to relativize the exaggerated gains due to the probable losses, as the environmental and social degradations, justifying the necessity of measures that guide the tourist development of the localities.

Fennel (2002, p.135) states that the trend of policy-making for the 21st century goes beyond conventional discussions related to marketing, promotion, tax incentives, and transportation, but more general and broader issues need to be addressed. However, according to the author, the political class and the populations have shown that there is maturation in the format of decisions that involve the tourist discussions, going beyond the mere attraction of tourists and the implementation of the necessary infrastructure.

Public policies lead to desired end results and define the most appropriate methods to achieve them. For example, the government could influence a policy of greater economic growth through tourism development, creating generous tax incentives for entrepreneurs linked to the sector. Public policies aim to provide guidance by addressing issues that are central to any initiative to develop and sustain tourism. These policies embody objectives and strategies that the government has adopted in relation to tourism, economic development, employment and political relations or, more likely, a combination of these and other areas. As policies provide guidance for tourism, policymaking is probably the most important. This allows questions of planning and tourism sustainability. In this way "development can not only be economic and quantitative, but must also respect the values and quality of life of the host communities, the quality of the environment (principle of sustainable development) and natural resources, and the satisfaction of visitors (Vieira, 2007).

Let us assume that public investment produces two types of effects on private investment: a crowding-out effect, since public investment requires the state to resort to more funding via taxes or via financial markets, making life difficult for private investors; or a crowding-in effect, because the conditions generated by public investment can be better used by the private sector, which thus has more incentives to invest.

4. Public Policies in Tourism in the Portuguese State

The public policies in tourism on the Portuguese territory have been different over the years, because they depend a lot on the Government's programs of the Republic that are paid by the electors of four in a year, that is, they depend a lot on the political orientations of the parties that lead governance in each mandate.

4.1. The National Strategic Tourism Plan (PENT)

One of the tourist instruments that was created in 2007 is called the National Strategic Plan for Tourism, under the Resolution of the Council of Ministers nº 53/2017 of April 4. In this plan, tourism was referred to as an economic activity that promotes the quality of life of the Portuguese, territorial cohesion and national identity beyond the inductive effect in a significant set of activities related to it, such as civil construction, and transport itself.

The PENT defined as major strategic objectives, increasing the contribution of tourism to national the Gross Domestic Product and qualified employment and the dynamism of domestic tourism, considered as crucial elements for improving the quality of life.

In view of the complexity of the tourist activity, this requires a strategic plan that still has the purpose of articulating tourism with other areas that are also decisive for the progress of Portugal, namely, land planning, environment, health, sports, infrastructures and air transport.

4.2. Tourism Strategy 2017

This strategy is the benchmark for tourism in Portugal in the next decade and was approved by Council of Ministers Resolution 134/2017 of September 27. The elaboration of the Strategy was the responsibility of the State, with the contributions of the various agents involved in tourism and in the Portuguese society itself. It is a shared long-term strategy for Tourism in Portugal, which aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide a 10-year strategic frame of reference for national tourism;
- Ensure stability and commitment on strategic options for national tourism;
- Promote integration of sectoral policies;
- Generate a continuous articulation between the various agents of Tourism;
- Act with strategic sense at present and in the short / medium term.

For the elaboration of the Tourism Strategy 2017, focus groups were conducted at the international level, whose objective was to listen to the tour operators and travel agents who commercialize the Portuguese tourism offer, as well as other relevant agents of the main international markets. The public participation process comprised a focus group and bilateral meetings in some of the main emitting markets, in order to listen to those who commercialize and communicate Portuguese tourism. These meetings took place on 5 strategic markets: Spain, France, Germany, United Kingdom and Brazil, involving more than 80 participants.

Under the motto "What are the 5 main challenges for Tourism in Portugal in the next 10 years?", online public participation and the involvement in defining the challenges of the Tourism Strategy 2027 were encouraged. According to the answers, the 5 main challenges identified by the participants were:

- Combating Seasonality - allow the tourist influx to Portugal to be more homogenous throughout the year, avoiding weak periods;
- Valuation of Heritage and Culture - further enhance the built heritage and stimulate more cultural activities, aiming at a greater diversity of supply;
- Deconcentration of Demand - create new tourist products in areas of Portugal with less tourist influx and building more accommodation units, avoiding excessive concentration in the Algarve, Lisbon and Porto;
- Qualification and valorization of Human Resources - assign more skills to people working in tourism activities so that the quality of the offer is better;
- Stimulus to Innovation and Entrepreneurship - to provide investors with new types of hotel accommodation, diversifying the offer and innovating in terms of tourism products, capturing other market niches.

Public Consultation and Communication

The whole process of public consultation was widely communicated and disseminated through different means, allowing and generating a remarkable involvement of society. The general guidelines of the Tourism Strategy 2027 were presented to the social partners at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Dialogue on May 12, 2016. The Tourism Strategy 2027 was also presented at the Assembly of the Republic in the framework of the Working Group Committee on Economy, Innovation and Public Works.

The Strategic Tourism Laboratories / public sessions (a total of 1400 participants) of the Tourism Strategy 2027 took place in all regions of the country, with the aim to:

- i) Obtain contributions and recommendations
- ii) Analyse the main tourism indicators of each region
- iii) Discuss the strategic priorities for the regional and national tourism.

Public consultations have been taken place at the level of the following entities: Counties; Ecclesiastical Entities; Associations of Municipalities; Business Associations; Confederations of Business Associations; Higher education institutions; Citizens; Unions linked to the sector.

5. Conclusion

Encompassing the area of knowledge in this sector in recent years, tourism has undergone very significant changes in relation to its operationalization, in terms of diversity of supply, as well as the diversification and concepts of uniqueness that have arisen in many countries of the world. In fact, in tourism, the question of competitiveness arises with great acuity in a world that has definitely become globalized.

It can be seen that the public sector has played a dynamic role in tourist activities, mainly in the construction of basic infrastructure and support equipment, aiming at the development and growth of this sector in the various tourism territories. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of territorial managers (governments and local authorities) to draw up strategic plans for tourism through specific public policies for the sector.

The private sector is also essential in the affirmation of tourism, since it offers a large part of services and activities related to tourism, namely at the level of the subsectors that make up the value chain of this sector. The entrepreneurs through their investments on the territory will dynamize the sector of tourism at local, regional and national scale. It should be noted that public policies are fundamental in any territory geared to tourism, namely, the political strategies to adopt for tourism development and the defence of tourism products and resources that sustain the tourism phenomenon. Beni (2002, p.80) sums up by saying that "politics is the course of action calculated to achieve specific goals. [...] and policies are specific guidelines for the permanent management of tourism, covering the countless operational aspects of the activity".

It is the responsibility of public managers to determine priorities, create development models aimed at the short, medium and long term, and hotel entrepreneurs have the responsibility of creating the accommodation network. Social and environmental awareness has also become more important in the discourse of politicians, and even in society at large. There is a strong public awareness of sociocultural problems and the environment today.

Portugal has had two important moments in tourism public policies, the first occurred in April 2007, when the National Strategic Tourism Plan was created by the Government, and in 2017, with the elaboration of the 2017 Tourism Strategy. Together they have had the purpose of thinking about tourism in a global way, aiming at a period of 10 years.

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