

Sustainable Tourism as a Strategy for Generating Employment and Income in the Local Economy

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Abstract

The study addresses and deepens the debate on which are the best choices of sustainable strategic public policies to promote income and employment generation in economically depressed local economies and unattractive in attracting investments. In this context, public actions and strategies to stimulate the development of sustainable tourism are a promising path, as long as they are thought of as a regionalized process. The success of these policies largely depends on the integration and cooperation between tourist regions. However, failures in the coordination of actions, low understanding of local managers of the micro and macroeconomic scenario make more articulated and consequently more effective actions difficult. The study through a descriptive research of qualitative analysis and making use of content analysis addresses ways to ensure the promotion of sustainable growth of local economies. Sustainable tourism depends on improving regional governance, articulation and integration between territories, reliability and transparency in the management of data collection and sharing for satisfactory decision-making in the strategies of public policies for regional development of tourism.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Public Policies, Decision Making, Tourism Management.

1. Introduction

Sustainable regional tourism as a strategy for proposing public policies for local economic development, has been gaining space on the agenda of public managers and in academia as a research topic. Sustainability should not be restricted to just one aspect, but to a comprehensive system that aims at equity between economic, environmental and social systems. In 2021, the State University of Rio Grande do Sul, in online activities, to interact with sectors of society and attend academic studies that reward practical application activities, proposed a cycle of virtual conferences with guest speakers from the public sector, from the initiative private and higher education institutions. The central theme of the events was sustainable tourism as an alternative for social, economic, cultural development and in line with environmental balance as part of regional governance planning. The objective here is to describe the perceptions of the lecturers in relation to the issue of regional sustainable tourism.

The 21st century Brazil is going through an experience of decentralization, as well as for the strengthening of the decision-making capacity of the subnational government instances [1]; [2]. The new Brazilian scenario, focused on the perspective of modernity, requires integrated strategies for territorial development and the mobilization of actors' initiatives around a collective project. Governance in tourist regions plays an important role. The development of sustainable tourism, today, needs to rely on the relationship between the public and private sectors [3].

This requires building relationships of trust, dialogue, reciprocity, social empowerment and knowledge. For its realization with freedom, in the perception of Bourdieu [4], it is necessary to internalize the exteriority and the exteriorization of the interiority. It is necessary, therefore, an interface between the structures of the "habitus" and the structures constituted by the public power, thus enabling the being a citizen. The management of territories, with the active participation of governance, can have a better alignment of

demands with public policies and in meeting the expectations of citizen society.

Regional governance in the dialogue of sustainable tourism development

The role of governance as articulators between society and the public sector enables empathy, approximation and alignment of interests for the benefit of the common good. Regional governance is used to refer to initiatives or actions that express the capacity of a territorially organized society to manage public affairs based on the joint and cooperative involvement of social, economic and institutional actors [5].

Regions, territories and/or organizations have been rethinking and restructuring their resources and relationships, in order to achieve new standards of social, cultural, economic and environmental behavior. Public and private institutions can, at certain times, become important in the ability to articulate and organize interests or agreements signed in favor of regional development. For Dallabrida [5] (2000) and Dallabrida; Becker [6], the articulations inherent to regional governance include all processes, with the objective of diagnosing the reality, defining priorities, planning actions and determining how financial, material and human resources should be allocated.

The dynamization of potentials requires overcoming challenges, in favor of regional development, to transform into elements capable of leveraging the development desired by all. It is not enough, for example, to guarantee property and contracts [7]. Institutions are able to shape and order interactions between individuals, producing relatively stable patterns in the operation of the economic system. Systems are driven by behavioral changes, market diversification, technologies changing the way they analyze data and manage knowledge, results and impacts on territories.

Seen from this angle, it is up to regional governance to find direct and indirect ways to simultaneously boost two systems, which can be called public (I) and private (II) that end up mutually reinforcing themselves (Figure 1).

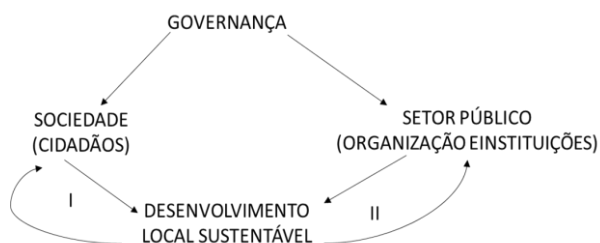


Figure 1- Governance System. Source: authors, 2022

That said, sustainable local development, in addition to being a desirable objective to be achieved, it, in some way, can generate the leverage of both society's objectives (common good) and the dynamics and effectiveness of public sector organizations and institutions. Regional governance can also be a mechanism for socializing costs and privatizing gains for regional development [8].

This study considers the definition of governance as a reform strategy to strengthen civil society institutions and make governments more open, accountable, transparent and democratic. A central element of governance is the question of how it funds, organizes and distributes relevant information in the region so that systems (I and II) can enable adequate and effective decision-making.

When tourism is focused on promoting sustainable development, it is also important to map, analyze and make available data and information that migrate from the macro system, as these external elements to the systems are fundamental, both for designing the "tourist product for a territory and for as the form of action of regional governance", also the relevance of economic and social data that are part of a set to achieve a desired tourist environment.

The concern is important because tourism causes a multiplier effect on the regional economy and experiences in tourism influence regional social, cultural, economic and environmental behaviors. The tourism economy has shown significant growth in Brazil. In 2019, revenue was R\$ 136.7 billion, which represents the highest recorded in the last four years, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism [9], as well as the generation of new job vacancies.

In 2020, the impacts reached global economies and social relations due to COVID-19. Tourism was one of the most affected segments, but it is what has been presenting one of the most significant reactions, on issues such as the ability to reinvent itself and results for the improvement of the regional economy and as a sector with the capacity to influence the recovery of social relations and establishment of collaborative partnerships. Tourist attractions, with an important role in the recovery of the emotional health of visitors and those visited, after the long period of social isolation, the role of governance is being rediscovered as an inducer of relations between the public and private sectors and organized civil society for the regional development of tourism.

In this case, the relevance lies in evaluating and measuring the importance of the regions' ability to articulate with tourist activities for the management of relations between society and government, thus allowing to know the relevance of the behavior and participation of these relations in the development of tourism in a sustainable.

Tourism as an indicator of sustainable public policies for a recovery in depressed local economies after COVID-19

The tourism sector before the Coronavirus Sars-CoV-2 had been showing global growth projections estimated at around 3% and 4% for the year 2020. With the restrictions on social interaction and leisure travel in order to contain the advance of the pandemic, they caused a 97% drop in the movement of international tourists in March and April 2020 compared to 2019, data released by da World Tourism Organization [10]. Data on the tourism economy in Brazil reached R\$ 2.2 billion in business losses [11].

The year 2020 signaled good estimates for the resumption of the growth of tourist activities in Brazil and for other countries, after the beginning of a controlled form of vaccination of the population and the use of masks and public control in events or reopenings of commerce and tourism. However, the month of March 2020, still the decision-making of public managers, was to "close" and "stay at home". The sectors that started a slow recovery, feel the reflection of the decision in the financial aspect and in the motivation to continue with their activities. The recommendations of local governments to comply with social isolation and the closure of companies as one of the possible measures to contain the advance of the pandemic had repercussions on national and international travel.

In view of these measures, it is clear that tourism in all its segments was one of the sectors most affected by COVID-19, bearing the burden of the side effects of the measures to contain contamination among people. According to Gössling; Scott; Hall [12] the model of social isolation imposed to contain COVID-19 caused a US\$ 320 billion in international tourism revenue [10]. In Brazil, the results were no different from the rest of the planet, government powers adopted normative measures to integrate the public policy to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, implemented in the top down model, causing a final drop in the development and growth of the economy tourism throughout the national territory.

Consequently, the reflection on local economies becomes one of uncertainty and calamity in which the actors of society externalize a state of impotence in the face of undemocratic facts and measures, but justified by their rulers as necessary actions for life. So the question remains, what is the price of life? Restriction and confinement measures during the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus Sars-CoV-2 can cause chaos in local economies and anomalies in social life. This can be worrying in the elaboration of public policies, as well as evaluating the deliberate power for public agents in the exercise of their functions in the management of the State and the capacity of the institutions in the intervention of the decisions and/or in the articulations with the spheres of power to corroborate or contradict extreme measures in the conduct of a territory.

Public policies that promote and guide decision-making for the development of tourism in Brazil are mainly the responsibility of the private sector, civil society and the third sector, through democratic actions [13]. However, in the pandemic period, with the justification that required agile and effective decision-making, it did not always include the participation of society. For its wide approval and adherence and for many to be complied with, it required extreme measures such as the imposition of fines and imprisonment for non-compliance by establishments or ordinary citizens. This finds support in article 136 of the Federal Constitution of 1988 [14], encouraging coordination between the federated entities, vertically and horizontally.

The horizontal coordination of public policies, in the perception of Souza [15] in the case of Brazil, is the political and bureaucratic organizations and actors that act in the same governmental sphere. The vertical are the actors, institutions that act at different levels of the same public policy from its formulation to its implementation. The important thing is to note that public policies propose some criteria from their conception to their evaluation, such as: a) it is concerned with the way issues and problems are defined, constructed and placed on the political agenda; b) it is a intentional action that has a goal as an end goal; and c) an ongoing process that involves formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation [16].

Public policy for a conscious resumption of sustainable tourism needs to be proposed based on the demands and realities of local communities. It is necessary to consider their identities and particularities in cultural, environmental and gastronomic attractions to enchant and seek the rehabilitation of their depressed economies and also of depressed humans in the search for overcoming the emotional and social traumas caused by the braking of social life. Public policy for tourism effectively needs to be innovative, agile, collaborative. For this, the State needs to provide infrastructure and measures that guarantee its sustainability (Figure 2).

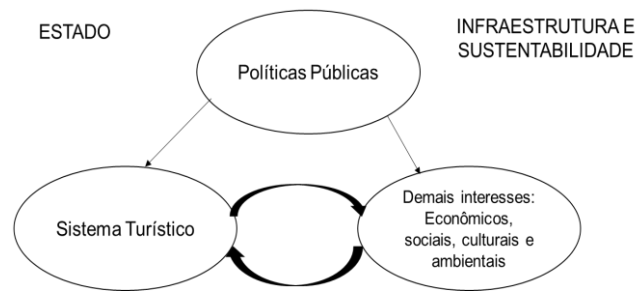


Figure 2: The tourist system and the connection with sectors of the State's functioning.

Source: authors, 2022.

These questions are fundamental: a) role of the State; b) technical system for other sectors. The State's role is to guarantee the effectiveness of the application of public policies in all local sectors, through the availability of infrastructure, assistance and taking care of legal regulations to enable conditions to enable the sustainable development of society's initiatives as a whole. The second issue is that the results of the tourism system impact and are impacted directly and indirectly with the results of the other economic, social, cultural and environmental sectors in the region.

2. Methodology

The study consists of a descriptive research of qualitative analysis, based on bibliographic references and reports of speakers participating in web conference events, promoted by the State University of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (UERGS) as a university extension activity. Topics of current relevance were addressed, such as: a) the role of regional tourism governance; b) environmental sustainability; c) public policies; post-COVID-19 process innovation. The forum was the promotion of sustainable tourism in post-pandemic tourist regions.

Data analysis was performed using the audio transcription software google drive for content analysis [17]. Descriptive research is equivalent to the use of data surveys that characterize speculative hypotheses that do not specify causal relationships [18]. There were 03 meetings in 2021, broadcast on the facebook.com/PGPD/UERGS channel, with the theme "Sustainable Rural Tourism as a Public Policy for Regional Development" and for each of the meetings a theme was defined, which were respectively: a) Sustainable Tourism and Regional Governance in the Public Management Agenda; b) Development of Tourism in Balance with the Environment; and c) Sustainable Tourism in the Promotion of the Local Economy.

The themes chosen took into account the moment when social life and economic relations were challenged to seek urgent alternatives to maintain their flow of movement. The choices of strategy managers, for this new beginning or new beginning, may cause side effects mainly to the environment.

Faced with uncertainties, society seeks information and alternatives to make its choices and seek strategies that direct it to a new desired future. In the analysis and discussion, the re-reading of the speeches of the speakers and mediators is presented to identify the points that will establish new connections for the alignment of strategies for planning the development of territories with sustainability.

3. Analysis and Discussion

Sustainability and tourism connect people and territories that imply the choice of actions that can change the context and objectives for economic development and overturn paradigms in social behavior due to movements. In this sense, Kahneman [19] says that "...we are automatically looking for the possibility that the environment has changed". People are looking for something that seems new to them to justify the side effects of the losses that are justified or economically compensated. Kahneman [19] points out that people easily see patterns where they do not exist.

Here are the phonetic symbols chosen for content analysis [20]. In sequence, it shows the reference that best suits the speaker's speech and the empirical interpretation based on the scenarios of the regions presented as examples in the resumption of tourism.

Analysis of the speeches of the speakers who participated in the meetings brought a speech of enthusiasm and encouragement for a resumption of business, seeking to correct some actions in a planning that comes with concerns and reservations in relation to environmental issues and social relations. They speak of a new time that the consumer appeal for natural products and a greater contact with nature.

Public and private actors need to be aligned and also work and plan collaboratively, rethink, think in order to continue. In the words of the Tourism Director of the city of Porto Alegre, "tourism needs to be planned in balance with the environment". According to Cruz [21], planning must involve the largest number of actors, to obtain public policies aimed at social inclusion and as a result tourism is sustainable.

Entrepreneurs Hilbig and Assunção, guest speakers from the private sector, have already been introducing measures that provide care for the environment in environmental education actions, waste treatment, and reforestation residues. The two entrepreneurs perceive it as an initiative of environmental and social responsibility and also as a differential in the market competitiveness associated with their brands in a model of operating in the tourist market. Hilbig said: "sailing with the white swan is an opportunity to bring people closer to the river and for them to look at the city from the river". Assunção reports that: "the hikes transform the lives of hikers and the communities we visit on foot".

This shows the importance of tourist activity. In addition to promoting economic development for localities, it has the ability to make changes, as it is important that all social actors are aware of any changes. Even though it is an economy with less negative impacts, it can cause undesired results. So, what can promote good results and minimize undesirable impacts on communities is to maintain dialogue and involvement of local actors for planning and proposing public policies for sustainable tourism in all its dimensions.

In the universe studied here, municipal and regional governance can play an important role in articulating the spheres of the public sector and bringing the local community closer to businessmen and entrepreneurs. The role of governance, in a tourist region, is still an action under construction in what to exercise, do, its responsibilities and duties according to current legislation [22]. The IGRs (Regional Governance Institutions) serve to institutionalize the organization of common interest groups and can be private, public or even public-private partnerships. The model of this organization should meet the needs of each region involved and have an understanding of which is the most appropriate.

Regional governance in the perception of Snel (regional public manager of tourism in the State of Rio

Grande do Sul) asks: “How are the governance bodies planned and what are their responsibilities towards the region”? In this sense, Snel (facebook.com/PGPD/UERGS, 2021) says that tourism needs planning and structuring and governance. On the other hand, the former president of the Municipal Tourism Council - Lajeado and Mentor in projects for the development of regional tourism during his explanation, on the facebook.com/PGPD/UERGS channel (2021), expresses that the governance of regional tourism it must be constituted by the set of affiliated municipalities and with regional similarities, with joint actions in favor of regional tourism. And, continuing his speech, he emphasizes that the IGRs need to have an effective role as an articulator between public and private actors, proposing projects of common interest to the region represented.

It emphasizes that “IGRs need to strive for good communication and transparency in their regional action and with other entities of the federation so that a regional plan for sustainable tourism can be established.” In this line, Dallabrida [5] understands that regional governance can reflect the ability of a region to organize itself territorially, managing public affairs of common interest with the joint and cooperative involvement of social, economic and institutional actors in a given region.

Regional governance, in its role of communicating and interacting regionally and exchanging actions with the federative system, can point to new directions for a local economy, for processes of engagement, sharing and social cooperation. Therefore, if regional governance manages to be aligned with the territory and institutionalized with clear criteria that reinforce the whole, it can act as a mechanism to think about public policy strategies for the sustainable development of depressed or stagnant local economies and, in the face of a democratic social environment, find effective actions.

The moments that the webinars took place (facebook.com/PGPD/UERGS, 2021) with the presence of public managers and private enterprise enterprises, were an opportunity to expose experiences and expectations for a new moment in which the planet seeks answers and aspires to write a new history in the arena of social interaction, economic relations and the use of natural resources. In the speech of all the speakers, there was unanimity regarding the following questions: a) “Can we do it differently now?”; and b) “Sustainability has countless possibilities to manage innovative businesses with meaning for current and future generations”.

In view of what has been presented and discussed, public actors need to fulfill the role of integrators and promoters of a sustainable and innovative tourism development process, so that other sectors of society desire and articulate themselves in an associative and participatory way in tourism planning, enabling further improvements in local and regional economies.

4. Final considerations

The pandemic, the devaluation of the national currency and the growing interest in active tourism (the sum of tourism focused on sports and nature activities) have consolidated the tourism sector as a promising way to promote employment, income and economic development in depressed local economies. However, investing in this field of activity will require a coordinated effort by local public and private agents to improve

governance mechanisms and professional training, in the revitalization of public and private areas, in addition to the quantitative and qualitative increase in tourism services and products.

Finally, it should be noted that achieving this objective will depend on the improvement of regional governance, ensuring articulation and integration between territories, contributing to reliability and transparency in the management of data collection and sharing for satisfactory decision-making in strategies of public policies for regional development of tourism.

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