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## **ABSTRACT**

The rising demand for new destinations, for different cultures and realities, the search for authentic heritage, and the need for real and genuine experiences is setting the course for the development of tourism in the future. A tourism destination where a strong image is associated with the cultural heritage can display forms of culture interpretation and communicate symbolisms that activate the minds of tourists awakening them to the historical and cultural specificities of territories.

Coastal tourism in rural areas, as a diverse territory of peculiar features that combines sea culture and tradition with the simplicity and genuineness of the sparsely-populated territories can be strongly stimulated by a unique and transversal communication and interpretation culture, promoting a new image of the territory.

The aim of this study is to understand how cultural tourism can contribute to the leveraging of development opportunities for this territory (rural coastal) based on new forms of governance and spatial planning, and whether these can contribute effectively to its development and to, consequently, reduce the effects of seasonality.

The study that we intend to/will develop is based on the model of development of coastal tourism in rural areas proposed by Ramos (2014), which coupled with the knowledge and study of cultural heritage sites through questionnaires and interviews, can might respond to our question and serve as a valuable input to the knowledge and development of this type of tourism.

Cultural heritage, as a center for the representation and promotion of cultures, allows for a richer human experience and an inspiring source of knowledge and perpetuation of traditions. It constitutes, in our view, a strong contribution to the development of the rural coastal territories.

**Key Words:** Coastal tourism in rural areas, cultural tourism, destination management, information and communication technologies, territory, travel motivation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The sustainable development of locations that offer creative tourism alternatives, new programs, diversified and innovative supply that answer the needs of the tourist must be pillars of modern tourism. Innovation of the tourism supply can be key to the success of projects and initiatives, specially in regions where tourism is mainly sun and sea.

It's indispensable to create bridges between coastal and rural tourism, relieving tensions from areas of mass tourism, essentially in times of intense demand, and creating new programs which ally existing attractions in coastal and adjacent rural areas through combined programs that may, through innovation, extract more visitors throughout the year.

In this way, information and communication technologies can play an important role developing solutions related to new tourist necessities and promoting accessible tourism for all (people with disabilities, families, the elderly, etc.) (InvestInCotedAzur, 2014).

Assuming that new forms of governance are the foundations of destinations development strategies, it is understood that this alliance between the exploration of the coastal and rural territory and the existing cultural heritage may be a positive enabling factor of the development of these territories.

### **Characterization of the rural coastal territory**

Coastal tourism in rural areas needs the comprehension of the decision-makers, to allow them to draw up innovative planning strategies, creating complementary networks between coastal and rural areas. Sustainability and strategic planning could be the guarantee for creation and enhancement of new development leverages, based on the sustenance of rural and cultural tourism zones.

From our point of view this concept could be guarantee for creating new and diversified forms of tourism and tourism promotion of a specific region leveraging the demographic enhancement and reducing the financial dependency on sun and sea products, characteristic of these regions.

It is necessary however, that these changes encourage the optimization of resources, improvement of infrastructures and synergies between parties allowing the development and promotion of coordinated and audacious joint plans. The creation of new supply, new products, reinventing existing coastal zones, endowing them with new infrastructures, concepts and tourists motivators all through the year should be

present in this complementarity between coastal and rural zones. The promotion of sustainability, customer satisfaction with defining products, wealth generating products, and products which stimulate return to the destination are essential factors for the development of a successful tourism strategy.

Using the model of coastal tourism in rural areas (Ramos, 2014) as a strategic concept in which encompassed territorial planning is based on new forms of governance, network politics and partnerships will enable the creation of synergies through the use of new marketing tools, technological tools and integrated an sustainable planning tools in accordance with strategic development projects from each of the covered rural area, proving essential to analyze the potential and existing dynamics in each of the territories.

Butler (1982) identifies the various phases in the life cycle theory of tourism areas and how to encompass them in coastal and rural destinations. According to this concept it is possible to ascertain in which distinctive stage of its life cycle the coastal destination is, usually somewhere between the development and consolidation stage, while the adjacent rural is still, generally, at a very incipient state of development.

These regions need to be capacitated to create economic environmental and social development synergies through innovation and adaptation to new markets.

This adaptation could promote the development of new local economies in rural areas, guaranteeing the preservation of existing resources. Promoting local development is a guarantee for preservation of traditional cultural heritage resources and a dynamizing factor for turning territories into centers of tourist attraction, answering to the demand for a varied market and new products based on experiences and participated activities.

Also acting as a reengineering agent for an existing destination, this approach translates the beneficial effects of tourism development for the resident populations, allowing development of new experiences, new products and participative experiences. Thusly, promoting local development takes a major role in the regional sustainable economic growth. The development model of coastal tourism in rural areas is based on “ models as strategic management for tourism, which according to Costa et al. (2014) focus on “the effective and efficient management of resources associated with the necessity to assure means of economically, environmentally and socially sustainable growth and development and have originated models which, attempt to associate parts of rational systemic and product models with philosophy and a strategic view of the future”. The model previously cited was initially conceived to emphasize that the planning and management of a destination should be put in place taking into consideration a careful evaluation of the internal and external conditions of a tourism destination (Mill & Morrison, 1985). Its innovation resides in the link between tourism in coastal and rural areas and how, together, they can generate new forms of development for coastal areas which need to be reinvented in terms of their management and to use new methodologies, enabling them to contribute to that reengineering. Their proximity to adjacent rural areas allows them to consequently make use of this reengineering as a form of sustainability for their locations, contributing to the development of new networks that can be the pillar for the development of regions.

For this it is necessary that destinations organize their supply based on the newly created products through partnerships between the private and public sectors, adapting the new forms of governance to the characteristics of the region.

### **Historical and cultural particularities of coastal and rural territories**

The coastal population studied in this research is mostly of a rural nature, their houses are constructed with poor materials; however they are usually very elegantly built, elaborately designed and very attractive. Fishing is traditionally embedded in these peoples' traditions, be it for sport or as a means of livelihood, making it the basis for some of the main local gastronomic delicacies.

The existence of mills, for example is a characteristic of this rural coastal landscape, and is tied to the permanent supply of water circulating in streams that allows the population to transfer cereals for personal consumption.

We based this documental research on an article by Fazenda et al. (2007) and characterized the main elements that comprise the region as showing characteristics of rural and coastal areas alike. Within the natural elements which comprise this type of region we identified beaches, commonly rich in natural and environmental resources, forests and traditionally rural and subsistence cultures.

As cultural elements we were able to identify folklore, theatre, maritime museums, pilgrimages along with various and diversified concerts from town to town.

In sports, the identified elements are characterized by niche markets either in nautical sports, (surf, kite surf, rowing and others) or bird watching and plants as a tourism activity.

When it comes to historical and heritage elements we had no difficulty finding century old buildings with traditional and religious elements, many of which portraying traditional culture such as life at sea, influenced by the strong fishing industry in that area.

Also visible was a significant variety of gastronomic delicacies most of which tied to the sea but also to agriculture (influenced by the cultural and geographical proximity with rural life). In these locations the great variety of local delicacies sold in restaurants shows how even the most recent restaurant strives to maintain traditional recipes alive which have been passing from generation to generation.

### **Cultural heritages' contribution to the development of rural coastal territory.**

Heritage is part of the memory and identity of a community. Prats (1997) defined heritage as social construct, conceived by someone for certain ends, which means it could be historically altered according to new criteria or interests. This symbolic nature and its capacity to symbolically represent an identity are the reasons why so many resources are mobilized to conserve it.

Alcantud (2003) states that the relationship between heritage and memory is fundamentally symbolic, seeing as our societies do not support destruction, the end of things and of individuals, searching numerous means of prolonging their social existence.

Cultural heritage bases its importance on being a bond between peoples, their history and their land. Incarnating the symbolic cultural identity of a destination is often key to understanding other cultures.

Often it contributes to the reestablishment of understandings between civilizations and cultures, and even contributed to maintaining and reestablishing the peace between peoples. The preservation process must be the foundation for the relationship held between heritage and the evolving context, on the way in which the local community is related and the meaning and historical context which the ethnographic object possesses. This process of recovering traces, uses and costs to reconstruct and (re)signify heritage, is supported on the direct observation and ascertainment on the existence of a whole significant group of transmitted legacy (such as crafts, professions, craftsmanship, music, dance and other ethnic and cultural elements), be it through manifestations of daily life, which express values and actions established in an inherit time and space of a community (Beni, 2001).

A tourism destination with a strong image associated to cultural heritage exhibits means of cultural interpretation and methods of communicating its identity with a meaningfulness to which tourists will not be indifferent . In light of the challenges set by globalization, cultural heritage appears as a sought after answer for tourism destinations, cultural witnesses and local community heritage promoting authentic appropriation (Lopes, 2014), drawing qualitative changes, answering mandatory worldwide integration models, allowing to associate heritage to cultural tourism.

One of the main challenges to tourism development and destination management are the heritage resource planning, as well as policies and politics' practices, because they directly contribute to territorial development specially supporting the decision making process and the creation of new public management policies for the development and appreciation of cultural heritage. New tendencies point towards a tourism industry more motivated to cultural consumption, experimentation and promoting emotions and feelings that lead to the "appreciation of authenticity" (Lopes, 2012). This said the tourism industry must contemplate this tendency and contribute to the development of a cultural contacts matrix to maximize the socioeconomic benefits tourism destinations assume in the implementation of public policies and governance procedures which comprise a line of local necessities and global demands, resulting in a greater awareness of tourism practices in terms of tourism planning, and organizational strategies, including sustainability concerns. This said, discussing the participation of local communities in the planning and development of a tourism destinations is of great interest because it will instigate new management models and the development of tourism in a given region and in this sense cultural heritage is increasingly important in face of the appropriating and agglutinating consumption of experiences and skills simultaneously authentic and global, of society which anguish towards falsity stimulates the search for authenticity (MacCannell, 1999), thusly contributing to the development of territories.

## **Methodology**

The collection of data through questionnaire allowed us to relate to previously announced theoretical principles. In this research we used scientific techniques, resorting to quantitative methods and aiming to confirm results, measure them and proceed to the analysis of reliable content.

In order to answer the objective of this research paper, the inquired population was defined as “public who has participated in tourism activities in a area of a rural beach at least once” and the questionnaire was validated by 86 answers (considered valid), in a universe of 103 answers. The questions were divided in homogeneous groups attributed on a five point Likert scale, distributed between not important and very important.

In another group of questions the inquired were asked to select between various factors which could influence their choice of these territories. In order to analyze the results of the questionnaire we used the statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS) and EXCEL to test the presented hypotheses. The use of these auxiliary statistic tools allowed us to draw conclusions for “a broader dominion of where these elements came from” (Pestana et. al., 1998)

### **New means of governance and planning which boosted cultural tourism in a rural coastal zone.**

By analyzing the replies to our questionnaires, and with this research, we were able to confirm that there are opportunities to develop a rural coastal territory based on new forms of governance and territorial planning allied to the study of cultural heritage of these regions. This survey was answered mainly by individuals aged between 31-45 years old (48%), with higher learning degrees (60%), employed (by the public and private sector 51%). 50% of the inquired considered cultural and historical locations (cultural and natural heritage) as an important or very important factor in the choice of a destination. 69% of these consider cultural tourism activities, of recreation or leisure as important. Nautical activities (47%) and night life activities (28%) were rated with low levels of importance or medium importance. Furthermore, 33% of the inquired considered the existence of ethnographies and museums related to the sea as a relatively important or important factor (26%); however on this question it was noted that 21% considered this factor of little importance in choosing rural coastal destinations when going on holidays. According to the inquired, the activities mostly looked for in a destination are traditions and cultural reenactments, together with animation, emphasizing both of them as important and very important. This analysis gives special focus to what the inquired consider important when visiting a coastal rural location. When given the choice, the enquired are prominent in affirming that what most influences their choice of destination is, in relative terms, the existence of traditional regional products (71,5%), the rural space by itself (52%) and the new touristic supply in rural areas (48,56%), rating these elements as very important or important.

Through this analysis it is important to understand how the significance given to the management of these spaces (public and private) could be an important contribution to the development of these coastal rural spaces. Indeed, it allowed us to determine whether a dedicated form of governance (giving special attention to this relationship) could generate a differentiating factor for those who visit these locations.

And we obtained from our answers that 35 % considered this important and 14% very important, translated as almost half of the enquired considered its importance in the top end of our scale. This leads us to believe that the implementation of new forms of governance for these territories is of great importance. Considering the attributed importance of cultural facts during a visit to a given coastal and rural region relatively to other facts and the introduction of new forms of governance as very important facts, we conclude that cultural tourism in a coastal region as a key leaver for new forms of governance and planning.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

This research comes to answer our initial quest to understand how cultural tourism contributes to leverage the development of rural coastal territories, based on new forms of governance and spatial planning, which would enable the soften of strong seasonality and create new opportunities for the entire region. cultural tourism is relevant as a development factor of coastal tourism in rural areas and fundamental as a guarantee of attracting new opportunities and activities for these areas. it can also contribute to the its dynamic development in a sustainable way, reducing the high economic, social and environmental impacts and seasonality in coastal areas, if and when, well planned in terms of economic sustainability, social and environmental impacts, and by introducing new forms of governance and innovation, which include information and communication technologies. and finally, we conclude that coastal tourism in rural zones is a guarantor of tourism development of coastal areas and adjacent rural areas, while cultural heritage can be a strong inductor based on new forms of governance.

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