



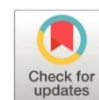


Territorial tourism management of natural spaces

Gestión turística territorial de espacios naturales

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Artículo de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica

Enviado: 05/04/2023

Revisado: 17/05/2023

Aceptado: 02/06/2023

Publicado: 05/07/2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33262/exploradordigital.v7i3.2608>

Cítese:

Espinosa Cuartas, M., Gutiérrez Leyva, J. E., Cruz Pérez, Y., & Carrasco Ruano, Y. T. (2023). Territorial tourism management of natural spaces. Explorador Digital, 7(3), 6-23. <https://doi.org/10.33262/exploradordigital.v7i3.2608>



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La revista es editada por la Editorial Ciencia Digital (Editorial de prestigio registrada en la Cámara Ecuatoriana de Libro con No de Afiliación 663) www.celibro.org.ec

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Palabras clave:

tourism, relation between actors, unprotected natural spaces, territorial tourism management, sustainability.

Keywords:

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Resumen

Introducción: la gestión turística territorial en espacios naturales ha tenido un enfoque hegemónico en aquellos territorios que cuentan con categorías de protección. Esto ignora el potencial que ofrecen los espacios naturales no protegidos para el desarrollo turístico territorial. A pesar de que los espacios naturales no protegidos cuentan con instituciones económicas, políticas y sociales, así como con recursos y atractivos para su desarrollo turístico, no existe un modelo o guía que dirija la relación entre los actores que los conforman. **Objetivos:** El propósito de la investigación fue enmarcar el contexto teórico de la gestión turística en espacios naturales. **Metodología:** La investigación requirió la revisión de numerosos artículos que tuvieron su centro en el turismo y la planeación del territorio, arribando a varios resultados. **Resultados:** Si bien la investigación científica sobre turismo y gestión territorial en espacios naturales es importante, aspectos relevantes pasan desapercibidos. Existe una falta de investigación científica y ejemplos prácticos de la gestión turística en espacios naturales no protegidos organizados y estructurados de manera que ayuden a crear valor a la comunidad y al sector turístico. **Conclusiones:** Los antecedentes teóricos proporcionados también permitieron identificar la necesaria vinculación de los actores sociales, económicos, políticos y ambientales en la planificación turística que constituyen la principal fuerza que impulsa y potencia el crecimiento y la sostenibilidad. **Área de estudio general:** Turismo. **Área de estudio específica:** Gestión de destinos turísticos.

Abstract

Introduction: territorial tourism management in natural spaces has had a hegemonic approach in those territories that have protection categories. This ignores the potential offered by unprotected natural spaces for territorial tourism development. Although unprotected natural spaces have economic, political, and social institutions, as well as resources and attractions for their tourism development, there is no model or guide that directs the relationship between the actors that make them up. **Objectives:** The purpose of the research was to frame the theoretical context of tourism management in natural spaces.

Methodology: The research required the review of numerous articles that had their center in tourism and land planning, arriving at several results. **Results:** Although scientific research on tourism and territorial management in natural spaces is important, relevant aspects go unnoticed. There is a lack of scientific research and practical examples of tourism management in unprotected natural areas organized and structured in a way that helps create value for the community and the tourism sector. **Conclusions:** The theoretical background provided also allowed to identify the necessary linkage of social, economic, political, and environmental actors in tourism planning that constitute the main force that drives and enhances growth and sustainability. **General area of study:** Tourism. **Specific study area:** Management of tourist destinations.

Introduction

Tourism is a spatial socioeconomic phenomenon with increasing impacts in the recent years. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2022) in 2019 the travel sector contributed significantly to the growth of the world economy, contributing total revenues of 1.46 trillion dollars, a growth of 4% compared to the previous year.

Simancas (2016) states that the planning and territorial management of tourism supposes a continuous process of reflection and action that allows establishing a strategic vision and an optimal model for a certain territorial area, in accordance with the interests of its physical, social, and economic structures. However, although the spaces as the supreme expression of the territory are produced using nature as raw material and are products of activities where the economy and technology are involved, they are both political products and strategic spaces.

For Morea (2020), the production of space cannot be attributed to an individual, a group or an entity; it is the result of social superstructures, which demand their spaces and their ordering according to specific requirements. The production of space must be understood as the result of all social practice, through multiple factors, actors and institutions that intervene. For this reason, territorial management models are a tool and a necessity in territorial tourism management, as a way of organizing the values and competencies of its actors in the sustainability of the territory, in the case that it occupies for the articulation of tourism activity. with the rest of those involved.

According to Cruz and Gutierrez (2019) the importance of the territory for the development of tourism is decisive, as it stands as a platform that supports the tourist space, and they state that the use of natural spaces is a reality. in current times, always articulating its actors.

Although there are spaces whose characteristics and categories of a high degree of preservation, imply the existence of a regulatory framework that leads and directs the socioeconomic relations that take place in them; many natural spaces with high tourist potential remain that are not managed from an integral perspective with the joint participation of the actors that compound them.

Local actors constitute an aspect to be considered in the analysis of territorial tourism management, especially in rural areas, where they tend to acquire greater relevance and impact as important components of territorial development. On this, Martínez et al. (2018) refer to the actors as the group of institutions or individuals socially linked to each other whose actions and decision-making have a direct impact on the dynamics of the environment or the community where they are inserted.

Jungsberg et al. (2020) establish the role played by local actors in the development of tourism innovation projects in different rural communities. The exposed evidence corroborates the interest in the study of the actors and their relationships with territorial tourism management, seen as links in a chain, from a comprehensive and sustainable perspective.

International practice has shown that, among the diversity of natural spaces with potential for the development of tourist activity, they are the protected natural spaces in which there is the most experience. However, the natural space without protection categories is very wide and diverse and contains multiple resources and attractions where it is possible to manage tourism and thus contribute to territorial development in a more sustainable way. The administrators of these territories, in general, are not linked to the tourist activity, and tourism professionals can hardly be found in the management of these territories.

According to Cruz & Gutierrez (2019), the scientific production and reality of territorial tourism management does not expose an organizational form of articulation of actors in the generation of value and implementation of territorial sustainability for unprotected natural spaces (UNS). Consequently, the application of tourism management tools has not yet become significant in the territorial management of these spaces. On the other hand, the strategic articulations between the administrators that can contribute to a more sustainable and diverse use of the land, still does not translate into greater economic, social, and ecological profitability.

To incorporate more natural spaces with potential to the tourist offers of a country, it is necessary to work on the problem of territorial tourism management. Previous investigations expose the need for a territorial tourism management model for the relationship of actors in the UNS.

Methodology

The investigation was framed in the period of January 2022, being postponed until November of the same year. It had as a reference the practical and theoretical experience derived from the research of the Student Scientific Working Group (GTCE) "Tourism, Biodiversity and Territory" (TURbiot), of the Faculty of Tourism of the University of Havana since 2018. The results and research background were partially or totally presented at national and international scientific meetings and gatherings.

The research has a qualitative and exploratory methodological approach, characterized by the bibliographic review of the available research regarding the research topic. Its purpose was to justify the use of variables for the relationship of actors in territorial tourism management in natural spaces, defining the positions on the subject based on the problem. The conceptual bases of the pillars of territorial tourism management were studied, the actors of the territorial tourism system as a transversal element in the relationships present in the management of the territories. In turn, the main models of territorial tourism management and their application in natural spaces were exposed.

Results

Fundamentals of territorial tourism management

According to the World Economic Forum, the world is facing a crisis aggravated by consumption models of societies and economies that are becoming increasingly unsustainable. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that the businesses, organizations, and institutions that channel economic and social development must aim at objectives and actions that reward benefits without lacerating, in their path, the sustainability and resilience of the territories where they operate (Stern et al., 2022).

Within the broad spectrum of the multidisciplinary margin that comprises the tourism system, management is an aspect that has a direct impact on the development of the sector. Authors such as Rasoolimanesh et al. (2020), establish that the valuable economic and natural resources and their limited presence make their assertive management essential as a key factor for success.

The term management is one that has become hegemonic hand in hand with administrative conceptions of social, institutional, or organizational processes. Drucker (2012), affirm that management comprises an integral action, understood as a work and

organization process in which different views, perspectives and efforts are coordinated, to advance effectively and efficiently towards the achievement of organizational objectives.

Management supposes a series of management skills that, together, direct the development of organizations towards obtaining benefits, whether social, economic, or strategic, over a certain period (Kaplan, 2017). The role of management is emphasized as an element of constructive collaboration between the goals of an organization and the set of processes and actors that it involves.

External factors, including the territory in which an organization is located, are a determining component of management. Territory relates to the idea of domination or management within a given space, intricately linked to public power at all its scales of analysis. However, over the years, other approaches point to the development of the concept towards a more active role, which gives it greater flexibility and complexity (Cuervo, 2012).

According to Raffestin (1993) the territory constitutes the combination of the natural physical environment and the ordered or anthropic environment, which includes the people who appropriate it. To this end, it asserts that the territory is the space for social relations and power, it is the spatial expression of appropriation of the resources and services that are contained in the spaces, mediated by the State.

In this regard, Segura and López (2011) distinguish the concepts "space" and "territory". The first of them refers to the geographical support where socioeconomic activities take place, characterized by its homogeneity. Instead, the territory includes the heterogeneity and complexity of the real world, its specific environmental characteristics, the social actors and their mobilization around different strategies and projects. The notion of territory explicitly manifests the existence of a social, political, and economic organization that orders space.

The territory represents the meeting place of commercial relations and forms of social regulation, which determine diverse ways of organizing production and different capacities for product innovation. The territories then become the scene of human and natural relations framed in the geographical environment. In this regard, Fernández et al. (2017) point out the need to implement territorial governance mechanisms that allow territorial management from an integral perspective with a holistic dynamic.

Tourism is based on the territory where the offer is specified. It is on this premise that said economic activity must be managed, to preserve its resources and achieve benefits and shared value through the coordinated action of the elements that make up the tourism system. Territorial tourism management is the basis of tourism development in receiving

destinations, hand in hand with innovation and intrinsically combining economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

Actors of the territorial tourism system

Bertoncello (2002) affirms that the territorial studies of tourism have divided their analysis into two fundamental aspects, the first, emphasizing its potential for destinations and host communities, as a catalyst for the socioeconomic empowerment of the territories. The second aspect, with a more critical criterion about the negative impacts of said activity.

In the tourist model developed by Leiper (1979), three geographical elements identified as generating region (issuing market), transit route and destination region are indicated. Bertoncello (2002) agrees with the author and points out a definition of tourist territory quite like Leiper's representation, conceptualizing it as the articulation of specific forms of the place of origin, destination, and transit.

Ojeda & Kieffer (2020) state that the study of tourism from a geographical perspective implies a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Ojeda & Kieffer (2020) explain that the geographic focus does not have to be reduced to a regional analysis, but instead must consider the relationship between society, identity, environment, and cultural heritage in a world that is changing, increasingly globalized. It is therefore an analysis of changes in the territoriality of the tourist destination.

Lopes et al (2022), conclude that the relationship between geography and tourism relies, fundamentally, on the fact that tourist activity cannot be conceived without considering a spatial manifestation, which means that, consequently, it is not possible to understand the significance of tourism without first identifying its territorial impacts.

The approaches allow to define that the tourism system necessarily entails the existence of the territory, and in turn, the development of tourism in the tourist territory causes the "touristification" of the territory, which is manifested in social, economic, cultural, and environmental relations (Ojeda & Kieffer, 2020).

McCall (2016) argues that the territories are made up of numerous actors and are charged with polycentrism, with no actor prevailing over the rest. Territorial development, at any level, must be governed by the assertive articulation between its actors to responsibly manage its resources, create jobs and stimulate territorial economic development.

Bertoncello (2002), presents the social approach to tourism, highlighting the participation in said activity of elements such as the tourist, the community, members of society that occupy specific roles, act according to interests and from various places of power. The tourism system, as an open system, includes the interrelationships between these actors

with the territory and the economic activity itself, affecting the competitiveness of the tourist product.

Gutierrez et al. (2005), explain that the actors are individuals or groups that have interest in the decisions that an administrative entity is taking. They include any individual or group involved, interested, or affected (positively or negatively) by territorial resources and their uses. It is a comprehensive approach that helps to understand the magnitude of the relationships established at the local level; however, it excludes economic and administrative entities from this category.

Fernández et al (2018) argue that the local actor is the one whose action system coincides with the local action system, and whose activity contributes to unfolding the existing potentialities in the local society. Alonso (2004) adds that the actors are all the people, organisms, and organizations whose action takes place or affects local exchange relations.

In turn, Alonso (2004) distinguishes in this concept various categories according to the relationships and the level of belonging to the local community:

- Strictly local actors: These are actors whose action takes place entirely within the local action system and therefore reproduces itself through local social relations. Outside of those relationships, they lose their identity and disappear as actors.
- Partially local actors: Their participation as actors transcends the system of local relationships. They are businesspeople or merchants who exchange inputs and products with non-local market agents, they can also be political or social leaders, personalities from science, culture and sports whose sphere of action goes beyond the limits of the locality.
- Non-local actors that participate in local activity: Refers to external actors that conduct activities in the locality through branches, agencies, or annexes. The place of decision is external, consequently, its local representatives have restricted their capacity of action. Examples of this are the industries and businesses that have a branch in the town and the local representations of national and provincial state agencies.
- Actors in the locality with difficulties in reproducing their daily life: Includes those who lack the necessary resources to satisfy their basic needs (food, clothing, housing, health). Their belonging to the locality is linked to the possibilities that it offers them. They are the protagonists of internal migration processes.

It is appropriate to point out that these categories establish the level of relationship and involvement of the actors with their respective localities. In this regard, it should be added that the importance of these actors comes from their interrelationship. On this statement,

Alonso (2004) highlights the need for the "logic of actors", that is, the strategic role of the ways of thinking and behaving collectively. This implies a rational structure, coherence between its objectives, interpretations, strategies, and practices.

In this continuous dynamic in which the territorial tourism system is involved, it is necessary to point out the importance of the actors in the development of territories with a tourist vocation. Segura and López (2011) add that the articulation of the actors at the different territorial levels is an element that has been poorly investigated and necessary when projecting territorial development.

The involvement of stakeholders in the community planning process is a necessity, especially when it comes to the tourist use of its resources. When a community has a management responsibility, it feels involved and understands the benefits that will be derived from a sustainable management of the tourist activity (Gutierrez et al., 2005).

Experience has shown that true development is a process of activation and channeling of social forces, progress in associative capacity, exercise of initiative and inventiveness. Therefore, it is considered a social and cultural process, and only secondarily economic. Development occurs when an energy is manifested in society, capable of channeling, in a convergent way, forces that were latent or dispersed.

Considering the approaches of the authors, the actors are indissoluble elements of the territorial system, as well as the rest of the components, they are interrelated in a dynamic that generates impacts, whether positive or negative for the community where they are inserted. The actors include any legal entity that has an active participation in the administration of the territory, this ranges from its residents, visitors, public and private organizations, government entities and representations in the territory. The way in which this constructive collaboration is managed is representative for the possibilities of territorial development, regardless of its vocation.

Peculiarities of the system and the tourist actors of unprotected natural spaces

The relationship of actors in tourist territories acquires a special connotation. Tourism is a transformative activity of the spaces where it develops, having a direct influence, as a consumer, producer, and transformer in the receiving communities. This relationship is configured by the actors who are directly part of the tourism value chain and have the capacity to intervene and modify the territorial reality (Rodríguez and Fernández, 2009).

The existing trinomial between the actors, the territory and tourism are highlighted, as a starting point to understand the depth of their relationship and the impact of each of its components on the territorial tourism system. Moscoso (2013) underlines the existence of four actors with the capacity to influence and configure the territory: the local community, the public sector, the private sector, and visitors. Although the latter are not

part of the territory, the power of symbolic appropriation that they exercise in that space is significant.

The local development of a territory is given by the assertive articulation of its different components or fields: symbolic, social, infrastructural, human, environmental, patrimonial, and financial. Each of these elements maintain relationships of interdependence, which, as a complex system, cause impacts that depend on the constructive collaboration generated between them.

Territorial development is an endogenous process that occurs in a territory, associated with the cooperation and integration of knowledge, collective skills and social relations between the different actors and fields (Carvahlo and Guzmán, 2011). The purpose of this process is to satisfy the needs of the actors involved: visitors, the public and private sector, and the local community.

Territorial competence is given in the integration capacity of the fields of the territory in terms of innovation, specialization, history, culture, population, and identity. In tourism terms, the development capacity of a territory is related to the willingness of the actors to establish relationships between them, getting involved in a joint and coordinated way in improving its conditions, the more consistent the relationships, the greater the territorial tourism development.

Pérez (2022) formulates that local development cannot exist without the proper use of local resources, pursuing sustainable human development before economic growth. In this way, it warns of the decisive role of the actors in the territory to maintain a fluid dialogue, which allows them to establish consensus, generate a shared vision of the territory and manage resources.

Regarding this, Cruz & Gutierrez (2019) point out the tourism management of UNS as an opportunity for economic and social growth, both locally and nationally. The authors visualize the UNS as the part of the natural and cultural heritage of a country that is outside of any category of protected area, susceptible to sustainable management that generates direct and indirect benefits to socioeconomic development, and that its resources configure a specific defined vocation.

Taking this concept into account, it is possible to use UNS for tourism if the territory has the necessary resources for the development of said economic activity. Thus, Cruz & Gutierrez (2019) highlight the role of local actors in the tourism management of the UNS, being these the ones who articulate tourism ventures and many of the products that generate visitor flows between the issuing market and the receptive destination. In the same way, since these UNS lack a well-defined regulatory framework to guide their

tourism management, it is from the articulation of their actors and the rational use of their resources that territorial development can be achieved.

Territorial tourism management models and their applications to natural spaces

Territorial tourism management models have covered a large part of the scientific literature on tourism development. This statement is based on the simplicity of their relationships, which allows the visualization of their interdependencies and their better understanding by researchers. Regarding the application of tourism development models, Llupart et al. (2019) consider that they should present a methodology that guarantees sustainable tourism, through a process of planning and organizing work, conducting a diagnosis of the territory, and conducting an in-depth study. to obtain the best strategies to apply them at the local level and favor the development of the community.

Regarding territorial tourism management models, Moscoso (2013) presents two of significant impact in the scientific literature summarized in table 1.

Tabla 1

Tourism development models

Development models	Characteristics
Spontaneous development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No guidance nor orientation • Irrational use of resources • Overchargeness of territory
Autonomous development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a local perspective • Slow tourism development • Tourism is a mean of development, not the finality

Source: Taken from Moscoso (2013, p. 11)

Those indicated are far from being similar, while spontaneous development lacks planning and adequate management, the autonomous development model is based on controlled growth and the rational use of controlled resources for tourism development as means of growing the territory. and its components. Added to this is the need for a management model that allows maximizing environmental, social, and economic benefits, without losing sight of the needs of the stakeholders.

Cordero (2003) presents three generic development models that group those previously exposed:

1. Enclave model: The participation of transnational capital predominates. It is an exogenous model where obtaining economic benefits predominates over social, cultural, and environmental aspects.
2. Local participation model: Strong presence of the community and local business. It arises from the territorial reality of the host community and seeks to meet their needs in the first instance.
3. Combined model: Combination of the local and enclave participation models.

Natural space management models acquire a special connotation. Considering the limited presence of valuable natural resources for the territory, the models focus on territorial development from an approach oriented towards the sustainability of these resources. Oleśniewicz et al. (2020) analyze the importance of managing natural spaces from the perspective of rational use of their resources.

Bálsamo (2018) states that management models applied to natural spaces are an adequate way to increase productivity in various territories where, despite their strengths, they are not under optimal use by their managers. After addressing the investigations related to the study and management of natural spaces, those concerning protected natural spaces prevail.

Cruz & Gutierrez (2019) represent territorial tourism management in the context of unprotected natural spaces management through two similar triangles with their vertices pointing to three components: the actors in these territories, their management, and flow of visitors. At the center of this representation are the unprotected natural spaces.

Through this resource, the authors establish the relationships between the territory in question (UNS) and the components that support their management, which are: visitor flows, management of spaces and actors. Among these, it establishes connectors where it symbolizes the dynamics of the territorial tourism system in these spaces. The actors are the ones who manage the unprotected natural spaces, and it is through their initiative, entrepreneurship that they achieve a sustainable management of the UNS, creating tourist products that generate visitor flows, leading to a greater satisfaction of the needs of the local community and the management actors.

The representation of these relationships by Cruz & Gutierrez (2019) responds to a model with a complex and systemic approach, where each of the components does not act independently, but with the rest, causing impacts on territorial tourism management of the UNS.

Characteristics of territorial tourism management in unprotected natural spaces

The territorial tourism management of the UNS has been evaded by the studies referring to the models of management of natural spaces. Previous studies on management models

for natural spaces, do not consider the inherent properties that shape the management of UNS. According to Cruz and Gutierrez (2019), natural spaces include protected areas that have unique and/or relevant characteristics for the government or society, a quality that makes it manageable under certain rules and laws that protect their resources by controlling the economic and social activities that are conducted in the territory.

Cruz and Gutierrez (2019) warn of the disproportionality that exists in the accounting of natural spaces, according to their category of protected natural spaces and UNS, the latter lacking a model that regulates and manages economic activity and community in the territory. Despite the differences between them, both are natural spaces, with resources that must be used and managed to optimize the standard of living of the communities where they are located.

These characteristics and indicators that typify the territorial tourist management of natural spaces, are attributable to the UNS, which are also a platform for economic, social, and environmental relations for the development of tourist activity. Cruz & Gutierrez (2019) state the similarities and differences between natural protected areas and UNS, based on the three indicators initially mentioned and shown in table 2.

Table 2

Comparisson between natural protected areas and unprotected natural spaces

Dimension	Similarities	Differences
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources • Attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystems • Ecological functions
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services • Defined vocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value • Management
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colective benefits • Social and corporative responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interests • Uses

Source: Gutierrez (2020, p. 38)

Like the natural protected areas, the UNS have resources, attractions, and a defined vocation, and can be used for tourism. However, the UNS lack a management model from which to develop this activity. Thus, territorial tourism management in the UNS is determined by the interrelation of properties and characteristics of an economic, social, environmental and administrative nature, which cause certain economic, social and environmental impacts and contribute to the sustainable development of the territory,

which originates from the actors involved in it, specifically from the community as the central axis of local development.

Conclusions

- Research provided by academia on land and tourism management has centered its attention on protected natural areas, leaving way behind the study and investigation correspondent to unprotected natural spaces, despite the many uses and resources these spaces withhold.
- There is a lack of scientific research and practical examples of tourism management on unprotected natural spaces organized and structured in a way that it helps creating value to the community and the tourist sector.
- Linkage between the actors or agents that compose the territory or tourist destination is a must have element to improve and develop tourism activity in any destination. The results and quality of this management will rely on how well these relationships between actors are driven.

Conflict of interest

Authors must declare whether there is a conflict of interest in relation to the submitted article.

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