



Tourist activity in Rio de Janeiro state

Actividad turística en el Estado de Río Janeiro

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Abstract

Tourism activity in Rio de Janeiro state goes on influenced by a diversity of landscapes, different topographic and climatic characteristics, and cultural differences within its territory. But any attempt to regionalize it, create typologies for it, and divide it into zones in the state faces a geographical diversity in its physical, economic, cultural and social dimensions. As to the landscapes in its visible facet, it is undeniable the multiplicity of its components, which form peculiar surroundings thanks to both the presence of diverse topographies and climatic, hydrographic, pedologic and geologic conditions. In these surroundings, different economic contexts and cultural and social relationships interact constantly with such elements. It is clear that tourism development in the state has strong links with its geographical profile; but we understand that it is necessary to recognize the tourist value of countryside areas and to promote tourism activity as way of supporting the economy of the state's municipalities. For that, we see as also necessary to think of public policies to support it.

Keywords: Rio de Janeiro; Tourism activity; Regionalization of tourist activities.

Resumen

La actividad turística en el estado de Río de Janeiro se ve influenciada por una diversidad de paisajes, diferentes características topográficas y climáticas, y diferencias culturales dentro de su territorio. Pero cualquier intento de regionalizarlo, crear tipologías para él y dividirlo en zonas en el estado enfrenta una diversidad geográfica en sus dimensiones física, económica, cultural y social. En cuanto a los paisajes en su faceta visible, es innegable la multiplicidad de sus componentes, que forman un entorno peculiar gracias a la presencia de diversas topografías y condiciones climáticas, hidrográficas, pedológicas y geológicas. En estos entornos, diferentes contextos económicos y

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relaciones culturales y sociales interactúan constantemente con dichos elementos. Está claro que el desarrollo del turismo en el estado tiene fuertes vínculos con su perfil geográfico; pero entendemos que es necesario reconocer el valor turístico de las áreas rurales y promover la actividad turística como una forma de apoyar la economía de los municipios del estado. Para eso, vemos que también es necesario pensar en políticas públicas para apoyarlo.

Palabras clave: Río de Janeiro. Actividad turística Regionalización de actividades turísticas.

Tourism activity in Rio de Janeiro state is currently influenced by an enormous diversity of landscapes, by different topographic and climatic characteristics, and by cultural differences. In addition, the state's relief is made up of diverse forms such as mountains, hills, and maritime/fluviat slopes that make soil occupation and use difficult. In the last decades, tourism became central to the economic development of some municipalities –and even of the state itself. This suggests it needs an assessment and a constant planning that consider the many possibilities of tourist practices, which emerge as potentialities that most of the times are concealed by its characteristics, whether because of cultural influences or natural ones– if not due to them both

Even so, Rio de Janeiro stands out nationally in tourism development, as the rates of tourists it receives prove it. Otherwise, it would not be listed as an entrance gate to foreigners and to Brazilian ones as well. Ribeiro (2003) highlights three conditionings influencing the development of tourist activity in the state: its natural or physic characteristics; historical elements of its cultural formation and economic activities; and the role transport plays.

In dealing with tourism activity in the state, major researchers and agents that foster it such as Embratur and TurisRio have made regional typologies (Ribeiro, 2003: -9) and characterizations of its municipalities. Besides, recent researches and studies carried out by NEGEF (a nucleus of studies on Rio de Janeiro geography) are elaborating classifications to define tourism areas within the state's territory. In this case, it would be subdivided as it follows.

- *Ecotourism*: development of ecotourism practices in the northeast.
- *Beach tourism and ecotourism*: above all in Angra dos Reis and Paraty municipalities.



- *Beach and rural tourism*: tourism practices related to going to the beaches and the development of activities linked to historical and rural elements in certain municipalities.
- *Beach tourism*: development of beach-going activities, which are remarkable by the presence of second domicile real state.
- *Mountain and sea tourism*: activities related to going to rural areas and beaches.
- *Mountain tourism*: divided into consolidated and non-consolidated activity, it encompasses mountainous municipalities where tourism activities relate to historical elements and to museums, churches, and farms; besides, activities dealing with hotel-fazenda,² fishing, and rural way of life are taking place in rural areas.
- *Mantiqueira Mountain tourism*: tourism in Mantiqueira Mountain is made of ecologic activities; since Itatiaia –the only municipality in this area– keeps a narrow relationship with Mantiqueira Mountain, its climate is permeated by amenities resulting from the altitude, which favors tourist activity.
- *Baixada Fluminense tourism*: although there is no tourist practice already consolidated in this area, it shows a great potential to the development of activities related to historical and cultural tourism within its municipalities.
- *Diversified tourism*: by joining Rio de Janeiro and Niterói municipalities, it forms a territory of intense tourism appeal and interest.
- *Coffee Valley tourism*: it stands out because of activities related to the memory of the coffee cycle in Brazil, including visiting historical farms and houses as well as having seasonal food and consuming products made in the farms

It is clear that tourism development in Rio de Janeiro state has strong links with its geographical profile. However, we understand it as an activity pertaining to modernity and to a consumerist society that more and more pervades different localities diversely to sell moments, places, and practices. That is why we point out the need of recognizing the value of countryside areas and promoting tourism as way of developing the economy of the state's municipalities. Doing so requires thinking of public policies to support it, though.

2 It is an old farm's main house turned into a hotel to lodge tourists interested in rural way of life.

Research procedures

Data considered analytically in this paper come from *Guia 4 Rodas* magazine and websites of Rio de Janeiro's municipalities' city halls; the search on the websites happened between October 20 and November 7, 2008. Other websites were searched as well, namely www.riocidade.com.br, www.turisbaixada.com.br, www.baixadafacil.com, www.ecoviagem.com.br, between March 8 and 11, 2009. This data survey aimed to outline a profile of what kind of tourist value or potential, municipalities perceive within their territories. *Guia 4 Rodas* magazine contains a tourism classification that we used later when crossing data coming from the websites. Searching on the Internet aimed to gather knowledge on how city halls, especially their tourism departments, perceive their attractions and infrastructure. The search for such information focused on accommodations, points of interest and, above all, the kind of tourism activity that takes place in the municipalities.

Based on the data gathered, the next step was to identify each municipality's fragilities, over-dimensioning and, most importantly, tourist potentialities. The success of this procedure is due to the empiric experience of advisors and fellows. Besides, the empirical knowledge resulting from field works and researches carried out by NEGEF (a nucleus of studies on Rio de Janeiro geography) in its ten years of activity was fundamental to the making of Table 1 below. The category denominated Tourist Areas –identified as prime label– represents a classification that defines comprehensively the type of tourism activity predominating in each municipality. Since it is clear that it is not homogenous and does not show the same intensity in all municipalities, a second category was required –secondary label– to characterize more precisely other tourist activities developed.



Table 1. Characterization of municipalities according to the type of tourism activity

MUNICIPALITIES	TOURIST AREAS	PRIME LABEL	SECONDARY LABEL
Niterói	Diversified tourism	Diversified	
Rio de Janeiro			
Aperibé	Ecotourism	Ecologic	
Bom Jesus do Itabapoana			
Cambuci			
Cardoso Moreira			
Italva			
Itaocara			
Itaperuna			Hydrothermal resort
Laje do Muriaé			
Miracema			
Natividade			Religious
Porciúncula			
Santo Antônio de Pádua			
São Fidélis			
São José de Ubá			
Varre-Sai			
Angra dos Reis	Beach tourism and ecotourism	Beach	Adventure, ecologic
Mangaratiba			Ecologic
Paraty			Historical, adventure, ecologic
Carapebus	Beach and rural tourism	Beach	
Campos dos Goytacazes			Historical, rural
Conceição de Macabu			Ecologic
Macaé			Historical, rural, ecologic, adventure
Quissamã			Historical, rural, ecologic
São Francisco de Itabapoana			Ecologic
São João da Barra			Historical, rural

MUNICIPALITIES	TOURIST AREAS	PRIME LABE	SECONDARY LABEL
Araruama	Beach tourism	Beach	
Armação dos Búzios			Ecologic, adventure
Arraial do Cabo			Ecologic
Cabo Frio			Historical, ecologic
Iguaba Grande			
Maricá			
Rio das Ostras			
São Pedro da Aldeia			
Saquarema			
Cachoeiras de Macacu	Mountain and sea tourism	Beach and ecologic	Rural, adventure
Casimiro de Abreu			Adventure
Rio Bonito			
Silva Jardim			
Tanguá			
Belford Roxo	Baixada Fluminense tourism	Historical/ cultural	
Duque de Caxias			Ecologic
Guapimirim			
Itaboraí			Religious
Itaguaí			Ecologic
Japeri			
Magé			
Mesquita			
Nilópolis			
Nova Iguaçu			Ecologic
Paracambi			
Queimados			
São Gonçalo			
São João de Meriti			
Seropédica			



MUNICIPALITIES	TOURIST AREAS	PRIME LABEL	SECONDARY LABEL
Bom Jardim	Non-consolidated mountain tourism	Ecologic	
Cantagalo			Rural
Carmo			
Cordeiro			
Duas Barras			Historical, rural
Macuco			Rural
Santa Maria Madalena			
São José do Vale do Rio Preto			
São Sebastião do Alto			
Sapucaia			
Sumidouro			Adventure
Trajano de Moraes			
Itatiaia	Mantiqueira Mountain tourism	Ecologic	Rural, adventure
Miguel Pereira	Consolidated mountain tourism	Ecologic	Rural
Nova Friburgo			Rural, adventure
Paty do Alferes			Rural
Petrópolis			Rural, adventure, historical
Teresópolis			Rural, adventure

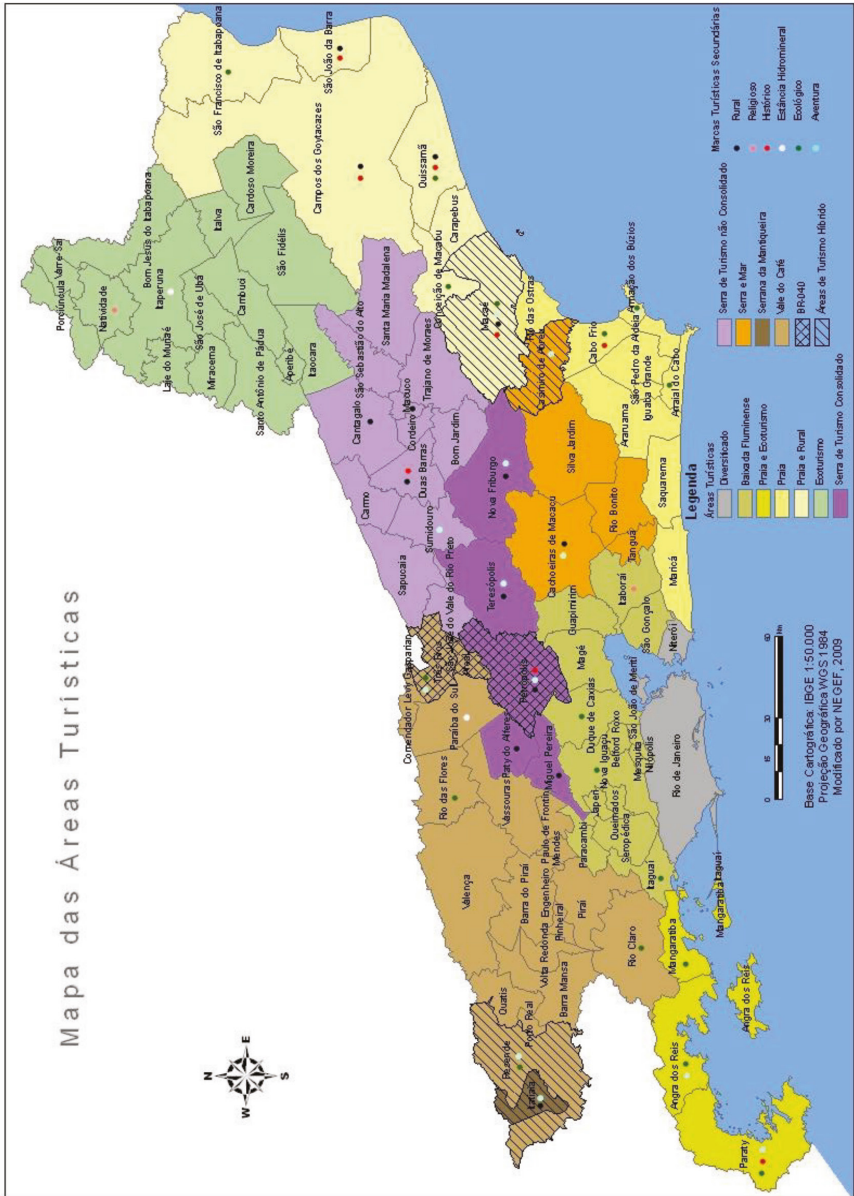
MUNICIPALITIES	TOURIST AREAS	PRIME LABE	SECONDARY LABEL
Areal	Coffee valley	Historical, rural	
Barra do Pirai			
Barra Mansa			
Comendador Levy Gasparian			
Engenheiro Paulo de Frontin			
Mendes			
Paraíba do Sul			Hydrothermal resort
Pinheiral			
Pirai			
Porto Real			
Quatis			
Resende			Ecologic, adventure
Rio Claro			Ecologic
Rio das Flores			Ecologic
Três Rios			Ecologic, adventure
Valença			
Vassouras			
Volta Redonda			

Note: prime label refers to an area more expressive in some municipalities than in others.
Organized by NEGEF, 2008.

The mapping of the tourism labels (Map 1) indicates some areas where tourist practice is hybrid. Some municipalities are classified as having distinct tourism areas but whose activities take place within it in similar ways. Hybrid spaces are greatly distinguished as areas where different characteristics coexist but with one of them predominating over the others. However, neglecting the presence of aspects of a given tourism label would mean to exclude an important and real component of our analysis. As an example, let us consider the municipalities of Itatiaia and Resende. The former is characterized by particular nature features related to Mantiqueira Mountain’s amenities; but its historical formation does not relate to the other municipalities making up the so-called Coffee Valley.



Map 1. Tourism areas in Rio de Janeiro state
 IBGE's cartographic database — organized by NEGEF, 2009



The presence of diversified tourism areas (Rio de Janeiro and Niterói municipalities) stands out in the mapping as well. They were given such denomination because of diverse services, infrastructure, and tourist attractions inherited from privileged natural features and from a process of metropolization that culminated in the formation of Rio de Janeiro city, which plays a historical role as political, cultural, and economic center in the state. Niterói stands out complementing the role of Rio de Janeiro, especially due to its past as the former capital before Rio de Janeiro and Guanabara became just one state in 1975.

We consider that Rio de Janeiro state has a great variety of possibilities to the development of tourism activity, whether because of its high-praised natural landscapes and its historical, cultural patrimony or because of more recent modalities as ecotourism and adventure tourism. Of course, it is not consolidated in a relevant part of the state; in many municipalities, it is still sub-developed or non-developed at all due to the lack of transport, accommodation, and leisure infrastructure. That is why we call these areas tourist potentialities and why one of the aims of this paper is to elaborate suggestions that help tourism activity to reach a higher degree of development.

Tourism areas in Rio de Janeiro state

Ecotourism

The area defined as ecotourism encompasses the following municipalities: Aperibé, Bom Jesus do Itabapoana, Cambuci, Cardoso Moreira, Italva, Itaocara, Laje do Muriaé, Miracema, Natividade, Porciúncula, Santo Antônio de Pádua, São Fidélis, São José de Ubá, and Varre-Sai. Their main economic activities are farming –above all, milk production– and coffee cultivation. Nowadays, tourism contributes less to gross domestic product. This work highlights ecotourism as prime label because of waterfalls and hills, which abound and make easy adventure sport activities related to the natural patrimony; as secondary label, it highlights hydrothermal resort and historical tourism.

We see the elements that make up the natural and historical patrimony as attractions able to foster the development of tourism activity in these areas. We point out ecotourism as their prime label because one finds



out in certain municipalities as Porciúncula many options of leisure such as trails, mountain bike, mountain climbing, rappel, rafting, and canoeing (water sports take advantage of the expressive number of waterfalls). Besides being an important secondary label, hydrothermal resorts, especially in Santo Antônio de Pádua and Itaperuna's district of Raposo, represent the amenities peculiar to the state's countryside, where historical and rural tourism stand out due to colonial buildings and coffee farms (coffee cultivation reached its peak in the first decades of the last century). Varre-Sai municipality shows the strong influence of its Italian colony, which is noticeable in grape and jaboticaba wines. Finally, as a potential to tourism practices we highlight some events that have local attractiveness such as Festa de Nossa Senhora da Natividade and Folia de Reis in Itaocara and Santo Antônio de Pádua municipalities.

Although current tourism activity is still incipient within these municipalities, it is important to point out its main labels, its attractions linked to the historical and natural patrimony as well as its events to raise government interest in making investments in infrastructure, above all to improve roads to make access by vehicles easy and fast, since bad roads are a problem affecting severely the integration of this area with more populated regions of the state.

Beach tourism and ecotourism

The area named beach tourism and ecotourism includes Angra dos Reis, Paraty, and Mangaratiba municipalities. It was given this definition not only because of the strong presence of hills and sea but also because its municipalities are rich in nature elements such as beaches, islands, waterfalls, caves, and abundant and diverse green areas.

Although there are elements related to the historical patrimony, beaches are the prime label due to the importance nature has in this tourist area. In this case, tourism is a geographic experience whose essential component is the landscape; in other words, landscapes as tourist attractions emerge as the main demand. The set that beaches and green form makes up a scenario where activities such as boat rides, trails, diving, and trekking take place, all them being activities involving adventure and ecologic tourism. Besides natural elements, historical patrimony has a strong influence on the development of tourism, since the area has vestiges representative



of Brazilian colonial period like churches, houses, monuments, and ruins, which attracts tourists.

Because of natural and cultural richness of the region, tourism is an important agent to give more dynamics to selling and service business, especially lodging and food; it is the main local economic activity in the three municipalities, for it generates more income, which is proved by the relevant partaking of service, transport, and communication business in gross domestic product.

Beach and rural tourism

The area called beach and rural tourism is made up by the municipalities of Carapebus, Campos do Goytacazes, Conceição de Macabu, Macaé, Quissamã, São Francisco do Itabapoana, and São João da Barra. It stands out because of tourist activity in rural spaces related to traditional agriculture practices from the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries. Rural tourism has grown in importance and emerges as a way of raising the value of this area, above all of its historical and cultural patrimony. Besides, there are tourism practices related to nature thanks to a vast coast with beautiful beaches and green areas which offer appropriate conditions to develop adventure tourism and ecotourism.

Traditional agriculture practices leave its footprints in this space. It is marks whose origins trace to its cultural and historical past, such as colonial style houses and churches – Quissamã House being an example in Quissamã municipality. The contrasting natural landscapes of Mar Mountain scarps and Campista Plain offer conditions to adventure tourism and ecotourism, as in Sana, a Macaé's district. In addition, beaches such Carapebus in Carapebus, Barra do Furado in Quissamã and Cavaleiros and Pecado in Macaé exemplify well how diverse the possibilities of tourism related to leisure can be.

That said, tourism not only proves to be an important economic activity in the abovementioned area but also can be intensified by taking advantage of natural landscapes and architectonic, historical and cultural heritage. In times of socioeconomic flexibilization of labor and production means, tourist activity based on historical, cultural and natural patrimony represents great opportunities for the municipalities to make a stable income in the short, medium and long term.



Beach tourism

The area called beach tourism is formed by Araruama, Armação dos Búzios, Arraial do Cabo, Cabo Frio, Iguaba Grande, Maricá, Rio das Ostras, São Pedro da Aldeia, and Saquarema municipalities. Its prime label is tourist practice linked to coast regions. Varying tourism activities in this area requires its municipalities to promote its secondary labels such cultural, rural and ecologic ones. A way of doing it could be recurring to points of interest like beach landscapes, restingas, and lakes. Its coastal environment is so attractive in tourist terms that the area of government surrounding it is known as Costa do Sol (sun coast). Practices such as diving, submarine fishing, boat rides, sailing, and windsurf are remarkable. Exploring secondary labels like historical and cultural potential of ruins, churches and chapels, practices related to rural way of life, and hotéis-fazenda could be a way of not only reducing the dependence on sun and sea tourism but also of making them interact with other modalities so that to diversify local economy.

It should be mentioned the occurrence of second domicile phenomenon in connection with the urbanization process, especially after the consolidation of urban infrastructure like power, pavement, and water and sewerage systems, even though it shows some precariousness. In addition, tourism activity is heterogeneous in the region; certain municipalities like Armação de Búzios are characterized by a predominantly elitist activity; other such as Cabo Frio, Arraial do Cabo, and Saquarema, among other, are marked by the presence of masses' tourism.

Mountain and sea tourism

Tourism is a phenomenon aimed at the space consumption by the appropriation of diverse elements, for example: natural, historical, cultural and rural ones. In the case of mountain and sea, such appropriation results from the particular physical and natural features of Cachoeiras de Macacu, Casimiro de Abreu, Rio Bonito, Silva Jardim, and Tanguá municipalities, since there are coastal and mountainous environments in them. These characteristics point out as prime label the activities related to beach tourism and ecotourism

Since there are, however, other mechanisms marking the process of evolution and formation of the region, new secondary labels emerge, an



example being tourist activities related to adventure and rural way of life, because of the predominance of farming activities. These new tourism modalities explore nature, historical sites, and cultural features differently. Waterfalls and cascades are an important attraction to adventure, ecologic and beach tourism, even if it is for visual appreciation only.

The historical and cultural perspective is represented by churches, chapels, ruins, railway stations, and old houses. But tourist activity in this area lacks public policies to make it develop, that is, to better spaces of displacement, communication means, and lodging. Today, tourism is a basic component of mountain and sea region's economy, for it helps making domestic output increase with a certain insertion of local population.

Consolidated mountain tourism

The area called consolidated mountain tourism includes the following municipalities: Petrópolis, Teresópolis, Nova Friburgo, Miguel Pereira, and Paty do Alferes, where tourism activity relates to the rural and, mainly, ecologic type. If less representative, rural tourism is important to the locality because it raises the value of countryside in maintaining the elements making up the identity of rural areas. Points of interest comprise historical buildings, especially Cristal Palace, Quitandinha, and Imperial Museum, which date back to the second reign period, when Portuguese Royal family use to stay constantly in Petrópolis municipality. In the other municipalities there are churches, museums, hotéis-fazenda, and municipal, state and national parks like Órgãos Mountain's.

The area focused on here is Teresópolis and Friburgo municipalities, which are linked by the highway RJ-130, whose paving process finished in 1970s. It is where the so-called TERE-FRI tourist circuit happens, contributing a series of urban manifestations that has changed rural dynamics to the point of making it an interesting clue to understand how complex Rio de Janeiro territory is. These activities are very important to those municipalities, for it moves a great amount of money through restaurant and hotel nets, besides offering an alternate way of small farmers facing decrease in their income from the farming output making a living.



Non-consolidated mountain tourism

Non-consolidated mountain tourism is the area involving the following municipalities: Bom Jardim, Cantagalo, Carmo, Cordeiro, Duas Barras, Macuco, Santa Maria Madalena, São José do Vale do Rio Preto, São Sebastião do Alto, Sapucaia, Sumidouro, and Trajano de Moraes. Its denomination derives from the fact that tourist activities are not full developed when compared to the area of consolidated mountain tourism. Its prime label relates to ecologic tourism due to the massive presence of Atlantic Forest. But secondarily it attracts visitors interested in adventure, historical and rural tourism (farming activities marked this region's historical evolution).

Tourist attractions include natural elements such as waterfalls, trails, belvederes, and parks, which offer options like swimming and walking. Maintaining these activities certainly requires preserving such natural richness, as it happens at Cambucás' municipal ecologic reserve. Adventure tourism is represented by three climbing, trekking, and canoeing; while historical and cultural tourism includes visiting museums, monuments, and old buildings (chapels, churches, and houses). Rural tourism is developed through hotéis-fazenda, stud farms, and agricultural fairs.

Although tourism is less developed in this region than in other parts of the state, it has a great potential to increase tourist activity. Of course, doing so demands public policies to raise the value of its main characteristics, foster the economic development by generating jobs and training workforce aiming at local population and increase the quality of life.

Mantiqueira mountain tourism

Tourism activity in the area called Mantiqueira mountain tourism is mainly the ecologic one. This region is made up of one municipality, Itatiaia, which keeps a close relationship with Mantiqueira Mountain. Due to this fact, its climate is permeated by amenities coming from altitude, favoring tourist activity; in addition, there is Itatiaia National Park, a conservation park which opens a restricted portion of its territory to tourist practices. As the historical formation of this area has strong links to the so-called Coffee Valley, it shows many locations closely related to farming and agriculture that allow pointing out rural tourism as secondary label.

As major modalities in this area, ecotourism and rural tourism shows different appropriations of nature and rural historical patrimony. From the



ecologic point of view, Mantiqueira Mountain tourism area has advantageous sites as waterfalls –for leisure’s and water sports’ activities–, Agulhas Negras and Prateleiras peaks –for escalating practices–, and Itatiaia National Park. From the rural perspective, sites of interest include elements of space dynamics such as historical museums and coffee farms, besides farming everyday activities like soil cultivation and fertilization, which tourists have been reviving.

Nowadays, tourism increases continuously in Mantiqueira Mountain area as a central economic factor to the local development; along with other activities, it makes economy more dynamic. However, it is important to conserve its natural and historical patrimonies, for tourist modalities prevailing take advantages precisely from nature and history elements. It means that public policies must focus on these points, especially through betterment of ways of reaching them and of local infrastructure.

Baixada Fluminense tourism

Baixada Fluminense tourism area encompasses the following municipalities: Magé, Duque de Caxias, Nova Iguaçu, São João de Meriti, Paracambi, Japeri, Seropédica, Queimados, Belford Roxo, Nilópolis, São Gonçalo, Itaboraí, Guapimirim, Itaguaí, and Mesquita. In these municipalities, major economic activities are industry, commercial business and farming.

Although tourist activity is not consolidated in this area, it has a great potential to be. This research highlights historical/cultural tourism as prime label, whose points of interest are factories, churches, and culture centers that offer conditions to activities like visiting local patrimony. As secondary label it can be pointed out religious and ecologic tourist practices. Religious tourism relates to a great number of churches, which are able to attract devotees and people interested in, for example, architectonic features of its buildings. Ecologic tourism can take advantage of natural landscape of many municipalities where rivers, walking trails, and waterfalls abound –all surrounded by the Atlantic forest. The attractions include biologic reserves– as Tinguá Biologic Reserve in Nova Iguaçu –and parks– like Park of Caneca Fina Mountain and famous National Park of Órgãos Mountain, both in Guapimirim. These areas require tourism activities which respect their ends – preserving nature. In other words, tourist



should appreciate natural beauties of these sites but respecting the environmental laws.

Since tourism activity is not consolidated in Baixada Fluminense area, it does not have an impact on local gross domestic product and on economic dynamics. But consolidating it in this area requires government to be conscious of its potential to raise the value of its attractions, foster events, and encourage local population. In other words, it requires investing in lodging, food, and access infrastructure to give more visibility to the municipalities, stimulate local development, and create new job opportunities.

Diversified tourism

Diversified tourism area, as this paper puts it, differs from other ones abovementioned (for example, mountain and sea tourism) because it does not express itself by prime labels, not even by secondary ones. It includes Rio de Janeiro and Niterói municipalities, forming a territory of great tourist appeal and interest. It presents diverse mechanisms propelling tourism activity thanks to its infrastructure and attractions resulting from a process of metropolization and privileged natural characteristics.

Rio de Janeiro municipality express itself as a tourist pole already consolidated both nationally and internationally. Its relevance is such that it has built its own tourist identity. Nowadays, it leads the receptive tourism activity in Brazil and concentrates tourist equipment and services in a state scale.

The heterogeneity of attractions in its territory is represented by a large –and non-homogenous– coastal area, which includes famous beaches (Copacabana and Itacoatiara being good examples), lagoons, islands, and Guanabara Bay; other natural attractions are Pedra da Gávea, Costão de Itacoatiara, parks (such as Pedra Branca State Park and City Park), forests (as Tijuca's and Tiririca's), gardens (like Jardim Botânico), and fields. In addition, there are celebratory festivities (like Révillion) and folkloric and cultural manifestations of international recognition like carnival. Some sites exemplify its historical and cultural richness: forts (such as Copacabana's and Santa Cruz's), churches (as Candelária's and São Lourenço dos Índios'), museums (like Fine Arts National Museum and Contemporary Art Museum), culture centers (for example, Banco do Brasil Cultural Center), theaters (Rio de Janeiro Municipal Theater and Niterói Municipal Theater being good examples), palaces (for instance, Tiradentes'), libraries



(like National Library) and even certain monuments (such as Pracinhas' and Niemeyer Way). Other peculiarities include the spread of sports (like Jornalista Mário Filho stadium, also known as Maracanã), business (geographically represented by the headquarters of important governmental and private corporations).

Such diversity of aspects is articulated in a complementary way; there is no hierarchy of prime and secondary labels as in other tourist areas focused on this paper. As a consolidated phenomenon, diversified tourism interacts constantly with local economy due to the spread of services; therefore, once the economic development is strongly linked to tourism and relies very much on the service sector, tourist activity plays a central role in making such sector more dynamic. Besides, it is in full development and being managed and stimulated by municipal, state, and federal administrative forces.

Coffee Valley tourism

The area called Coffee Valley tourism encompasses the following municipalities: Rio Claro, Piraí, Barra do Piraí, Valença, Rio das Flores, Paraíba do Sul, Resende, Volta Redonda, Barra Mansa, Pinheiral, Porto Real, Quatis, Mendes, Engenheiro Paulo de Fontin, Vassouras, Comendador Levy Gasparian, Três Rios and Areal, where tourist activity related to the coffee cycle stands out.

Landscapes' historical elements in this tourist area stem from economic activities developed during the last centuries and constitute the strength of different tourism modalities. These elements are present in footprints left in the landscape, which is revalued due to the tourism activity, because it goes on bringing back the memory coffee cycle in Brazil. Tourist practices relate to visiting farms and historical houses as well as having seasonal food and consuming products made in the farms. Among the activities hotels offer is visiting pigsties and vegetable-gardens, riding ponies, fishing, walking, and touring to some more opulent farms' houses.

Viewed as "the Seresta capital" thanks to its active musical tradition, Conservatória district is endowed with relevant tourist infrastructure, which includes pousadas, restaurants, and six small music museums – all them representative of new functions ascribed to past historical houses that make up the district nucleus.



Municipalities from this tourist area seek to overcome the hardships resulting from the end of the old economic activity. Therefore, besides tourism related to history and rural landscape –prime labels–, there are activities linked to ecologic and adventure tourism as well as hydro-mineral resorts.

Preliminary considerations

Any attempt at regionalizing, creating typologies, and dividing tourism into zones in Rio de Janeiro state faces a geographical diversity in its physical, economic, cultural and social dimensions. As for the landscapes –its visible facet–, it is indisputable the multitude of its components, which result in peculiar surroundings due to the presence of diverse topographies and climatic, hydrographic, pedologic and geologic conditions. Such elements interact constantly with different economic contexts and cultural and social relationships.

Because tourism attracts investment and capital flows, creates employment, and generates income, besides changing the space, it has been seen as a relevant factor to make the state's economy develop. As Ribeiro (2003) asserts, changes are influenced by three conditionings: being one physical or natural, other historical and economical, and a third related to the role transports play. To such author, roads were –and still are– crucial to the expansion of tourism within the state, above all after the 1970s, when some important ways were built –Presidente Costa e Silva bridge and Rio Santos highway– being two examples –and others were turned into dual-lane roads– for example, Presidente Dutra and Washington Luís highways.

In short, tourism develops in the state being supported by the combination of these factors and permeates economic, social, cultural and political contexts. In each municipality, such inter-relationship constitutes distinct realities, which are open to be understood more comprehensively if one takes into account the contexts on which they are built in multiple scales.



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