

# National Policy of Tourism in Brazil: From Municipalisation to Regionalization

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The decade of 1980 has been a time of changes to the world and also in Brazil. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the globalization are phenomena which marked the late 20th century. Brazil was part of this scenario as it went through structural changes, including Real Plan, which brought stability along with the possibility of growth and development. Tourism is enveloped by neoliberalism as a way of attracting investments, investors, better infrastructures, and changing the country's image. As far as Brazilian public policies of tourism are concerned, there are two points that constitute the objective of this present work: to analyze the national Program of Municipalisation of Tourism (PMNT) and the Program of Regionalization of Tourism (PRT) considering the context of post-democratization in Brazil and its influences on the organization of national tourism. This analysis has been focused on the content of constitutional documents which have oriented tourism public policy, as well as authors who investigate this theme. From a conceptual map, the relations between political context and the moment when documents were elaborated have been built up. By the end of this work it will be possible to point out the prevalence of the neoliberal model, along with the interest of market agents over Brazilian touristic context.

*Keywords:* Brazil, municipalisation, public policy, regionalization, tourism

## **Brief History of Tourism Policies in Brazil**

Although the first Public Policy of Tourism in Brazil has been instituted by Decree-Law N. 55/66 of November 18, 1966 (Cruz, 2000), the authors Silveira, Paixão, and Cobos (2006) understood that this “does not mean there had not been previous federal policies for this activity” (p. 122), once other legal diplomas as well as agreements and actions to organize tourism had been taken before 1966, despite the absence of specific documents for tourism.

Tourism, for instance, became part of the Department of Press and Propaganda (DIP), during Vargas Dictatorship, by means of the Division of Tourism in 1939, which was supposed to organize and control internal and external touristic services, as well as propaganda abroad (Goulart, 1990; Santos Filho, 2008).

Subsequently, tourism has been bound to several bodies of federal public power until the creation of National System of Tourism em 1966 by Decree-Law 55/66 which instituted the Brazilian Company of Tourism—EMBRATUR, nowadays, an Institute and not a company anymore; and the National Council of

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Tourism—CNTUR. From 1966 to 1992, although many actions have been taken, no other policy has been established by legal diplomas until the homologation of Decree-Law 448 of February 14, 1992.

Within the redemocratization scenario, the neoliberal model has gained grounds in Brazil since 1986 and Brazilian tourism management went through some significant institutional and structural changes, such as the transference of EMBRATUR headquarters from Rio de Janeiro to Brasília, the emptying of its technical body, the extinction of CNTUR and the transformation of EMBRATUR into an institute. With president Collor’s impeachment in 1992, as vice-president Itamar Franco took power, again tourism management became part of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Tourism.

The national policy of tourism, homologated by Decree-Law 448 of February 14, 1992, was initiated during Fernando Henrique Government, when Brazil went through several changes caused by Real Plan between 1993 and 1994. With it, the economy was stabilized, and privatizations of services previously rendered by the State took place because of neoliberalism. Tourism became a priority and had as one of its macrostrategies the allocation of infrastructures necessary to its own development and also the development of the country.

Therefore, National Policy of Tourism—PNT (1996-1999) was conducted by both neoliberal logic of investment attraction and the speech of society participation. The Program of Municipalisation of Tourism—PNMT and the PNT included the speech of sustainability and sustainable development, influenced by ECO-92 which had been held in Rio de Janeiro.

In 2003 Ministry of Tourism was created—MTUR and the National Plan of Tourism 2003-2007 were implanted. The Program of Regionalization of Tourism—PRT, integrated National Plan of Tourism 2003-2007 and 2007-2010 has been distinguished for continuing the strategies of spatial planning implemented since municipalisation of tourism, once the spatial logic of tourism starts in the city and overflows to the region, attributing to tourism a meaning of key-element for regional development.

Table 1  
*Summary of Programs*

| Characteristic                | PNMT   | PRT  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Territorial comprehensiveness | City   | Region   |
| Principles                    | Sustainability, empowerment, decentralization, partnership, mobilization       | Decentralization, integration, participation, environmental, economic, sociocultural sustainability  |
| Stage of governance           | Municipal  | Regional   |
| Social agents                 | Public power, private initiative, non-governmental organizations and community | Public power, private initiative, non-governmental organizations and community   |
| Methodology                   | Metaplan and Zopp—participative approach                                       | Participative  |
| Management                    | Decentralized  | Decentralized  |
| Workshops                     | Sensibilization, empowerment and planning                                      | Sensibilization, mobilization, institutionalization of stage of governance, elaboration of strategic plan of regional touristic development, implementation of plan, system of touristic information, promotion and support to commercialization, system of monitoring and evaluation of program |

Note. Source: Trentin, 2010.

Considering the relative scenario of national policy of tourism, this article aims at analyzing The PNMT as

well as the PRT (see Table 1), taking into consideration the context of post-democratization in Brazil and its influences on the organization of national tourism, in order to answer the following question: What have been difficulties and limitations found in structuring programs of tourism in the 90's and the early 21st century?

### **National PMT**

Within the redemocratization scenario in the country, following orientations of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the PNMT was structured under National Secretary of Tourism and Services of Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Tourism during Itamar Franco government (1992-1994), and institutionalized by MICT Ordinance 130 of March 30, 1994.

According to PNMT coordinator, the analysis and reflection on the terrible quality of Brazilian tourism services pointed out, at that time, the need of a decentralization process for the sector's management. In her words:

This is the time for the challenge. To gather people of every city to discuss tourism and try, through a specific methodology of participative approach sensibilizes them so that they might be lovers of tourism phenomenon. (EMBRATUR, 2002, p. 8)

It can be pointed out that the implicit speech was of inversion of senses in decision processes of Brazilian tourism management: federal sense would go out—while municipal sense would come in— federal.

Given that only in the scale of local communities it is possible to establish a more active, effective, and participative level once the proximity of citizens with local leaders is much bigger, PNMT presented itself as a “vigorous answer to this need of awareness, encourage, and capacity of several agents—public and private—which compound the structure of the city” (EMBRATUR, 2002, p. 46). For this purpose, the program sought to enable local multipliers to recognize the importance of tourism for the social economic development of their cities, having always been a point of reference the “need of conciliation between economic growth with the preservation of natural, historical and cultural patrimony, encouraging participation in their communities in the management of their own resources” (EMBRATUR, 2002, p. 46).

During president Fernando Henrique Cardoso mandates, PNMT consolidated itself as a government strategic program, articulator of several national actors such as Banco do Brasil, SEBRAE, Caixa Econômica Federal, among others. Based on five guiding principles—decentralization, sustainability, partnerships, mobilization, and empowerment—PNMT was created to “stimulate touristic development of cities, based on economic, social, environmental, cultural and political sustainability” (EMBRATUR, 2002, p. 80), searching to draw attention of local communities to possibilities and opportunities the development of the sector might bring them.

The general objective of PNMT was the promotion and development of sustainable tourism in Brazilian cities, from awareness and sensibilization of communities to the importance of tourism, decentralization of management actions, and incentive to local co-management, strengthening of relations between local public power and segments of organized civil society and elevation of quality levels, efficiency of local touristic products and services. To this end, EMBRATUR was supposed to share technical, operational, and managerial conditions for planning and management of tourism in the cities (Fratucci, 2008).

PNMT characterized itself as a program of decentralization of tourism management without direct financial funding. Cities were not obliged to join in the program and when they did it, received only allocation of technology and information,

with a series of participative planning workshops, based on techniques of group dynamics which mixed several methods, among them the method Metaplan and ZOPP. (p. 165)

In structural terms, the program was organized in three consecutive phases, which tried to give to Brazilian cities conditions for a new organization of the local tourists system, supported on the constitution of Tourism Municipal Councils and Tourism Municipal Funds. The councils should be consultative and equitably compounded of public sector, organized civil society, and private sector representatives.

### Contributions and Difficulties

The implantation of PNMT in 1,081 Brazilian cities has made possible the involvement and the training of 27,483 through 1,107 workshops of several levels (see Table 2). In eight years of effective work (1995-2002), the program generated a significant change in Brazilian tourism management, mainly when looking at the involvement and participation of many social agents. The country left a condition of public policies extremely centralized and verticalized to a situation of involvement and participation of agents interested in the development of tourism in their cities.

Table 2

#### *PNMT Workshops, Done Between 1995 and 2001*

| Workshops                 | 1995 | 1996  | 1997  | 1998  | 1999  | 2000  | 2001  | Total  |
|---------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| First phase               | 28   | 46    | 42    | 39    | 53    | 47    | 34    | 289    |
| Second phase              | -    | 27    | 30    | 36    | 49    | 38    | 36    | 216    |
| Third phase               | -    | -     | 03    | 06    | 42    | 46    | 72    | 169    |
| Community                 | -    | 01    | 11    | 27    | 39    | 47    | 59    | 184    |
| Nucleus of craftsmanship  | -    | -     | -     | 02    | 05    | 09    | 13    | 29     |
| Indigenous villages       | -    | -     | -     | 01    | 03    | -     | 01    | 05     |
| Environmental awareness   | -    | -     | -     | 01    | 14    | 06    | 07    | 28     |
| Best age                  | -    | -     | -     | -     | 02    | 05    | 06    | 13     |
| Coordination and planning | 05   | 02    | 07    | 06    | 05    | 05    | 08    | 38     |
| Partners                  | -    | -     | -     | 12    | 11    | 07    | 09    | 39     |
| Universities              | -    | 01    | -     | 01    | 05    | 09    | 28    | 44     |
| Others                    | -    | -     | -     | 08    | -     | 17    | 28    | 53     |
| Total                     | 33   | 77    | 93    | 139   | 228   | 236   | 301   | 1.107  |
| People enabled            | 970  | 1.540 | 2.325 | 3.525 | 5.700 | 5.900 | 7.523 | 27.483 |

*Note.* Source: EMBRATUR, 2002, p. 111.

It can be pointed out that PNMT drew attention of cities to possibilities that tourism development might represent to local economies, mainly with regard to possibilities of implantation of an endogenous model of touristic development, focused on local characteristics and potentialities without shooting themselves to exogenous agents and projects. The involvement of local social agents in the processes of tourist development management brought a new awareness of tourism itself, both for the population in general and in the local political representatives, who started to treat the sector with a more professional and less distorted view.

The program promoted, not without some imperfections, a deep change in the way tourism sector was managed by several spheres of public power. The quest for articulation of a systemic vision through institutionalization of tourism city councils brought private initiative, civil organizations, and the community itself to take part in strategic discussions of the sector, and can be understood as a profound and consistent

structural change of course. In our view, it was a procedural change and not a pragmatism one which instilled new postures in public and private managers of Brazilian tourism, once it led them to think of tourism as a strategic sector which demands professional management and recognition of the need or involvement from other social agents, particularly the population of touristic destinations (Fratucci, 2006).

One of the difficulties in the process of tourism management municipalisation was related to its scale of acting. PNMT imposed a municipal scale for its actions, considering that political/administrative limits of Brazilian cities would be a more adequate spatial cutting for the definition and implantation of the sector development policies. During the process, this scale of acting proved itself to be wrong, once tourism, both from the point of view of social/spatial phenomena and economic activity is not restricted to city frontiers.

The PNMT implantation process encouraged city managers to perceive they would have more chances of success if they worked along with their neighbor cities. Because of this, the first movements, targeted to establish councils and regional tourism consortiums started to appear, as in the cases of Serra Gaúcha cities (Rio Grande do Sul) and the region of Agulhas Negras (Rio de Janeiro); these movements, initially spontaneous, were absorbed by the following government through the PRT.

In broad terms, PNMT propitiated, even with some limitations, the beginning of a public management of tourism professionalization process, and also of companies and workers of the sector. Aware of possibilities touristic development could represent to their business and with direct help from System S (SESC-SENAC-SEBRAE), a series of actions and projects focused on the formation, empowerment, and qualification of labor directly involved in the sector has been articulated, sustained by resources from Fonda de Amparo ao Trabalhador (FAT) (Fund of Protection to the Worker).

In the specific case of public management, mayors' newly elected became concerned about appointing professionals directly related with the sector for the function of direction of city tourism, from businessmen to bachelors in tourism. This movement generated the proliferation of competitive tenders aiming at hiring bachelors in tourism for departments and municipal companies of tourism, increasing the labor market for these professionals.

Moreover, the institutionalization of city tourism participative management became articulated from the creation of tourism city councils instituted by municipal laws and gender parity between representatives of public power, private initiative and organized civil society. This process implied in strengthening of associations and class entities and in the constitution of others that until then were not formalized, which resulted in strengthening of city tourist trade, with more effective participation in tourism public policies. Even today, many of these councils are constituted and functioning, giving more sustainability for tourists processes of development in their cities.

Another contribution we can indicate of PNMT was the "discovery" of new tourist destinations for Brazilian interior, stimulated by national policy and the possibility of insertion into tourism networks. The indication that cities with touristic potential should perform inventories of touristic offer, aiming at constituting an updated database on their tourist attractions, their equipments and touristic services led some municipalities to see tourism as a viable economic sector to their territories.

### **The PRT**

When president Lula took office, Brazilian tourism management was restructured with the creation of Tourism Ministry and the redefinition of EMBRATUR functions. Focused on reduction of regional inequalities,

central point of Lula's government, the Tourism National Plan 2003-2007 proposed a view of the future which foresaw tourism in Brazil diversely structured, culturally, and geographically.

In order to reach such view of the future, PNT proposed a new model of development based on two structuring points: partnership and decentralized management. Decentralized management was proposed in the new configuration of superstructure of national tourism that, at a strategic level—federal—presented the Ministry of Tourism as a cohesive body, assisted by National Council of Tourism (supported by 10 thematic chambers) and Fórum de Secretários Estaduais de Turismo (Forum of State Secretaries of Tourism).

At intermediate level—states—partnerships with state departments and representatives of all tourism sectors materialized in forums and state councils of tourism whose mission is to identify problems and elaborate proposals and suggestions for the development of the sector with demands derived from regional consortiums of cities and municipal councils/committees of tourism (Fratucci, 2008).

This model of decentralized management reflected itself in the latest goal established by PNT, of “increasing Brazilian tourists offer, developing at least three products of quality in each state of the federation and federal district” (MTUR, 2003, p. 17), developed in the macroprogram of infrastructure, by Program of Development Regional of Tourism and in the macroprogram of Touristic Offer, by Program of Development of Tourism Integrated Route (PDTIR). Both programs had their spatial cutting based on the concept of region as geographic space, which presents similar characteristics and potentialities and works in an integrated way (Brasil, 2004) and searched, by structuring and optimisation of regional productive chains, to stimulate the creation of new diversified touristic products, supported by local cultural characteristics and other motivating factors of demand, besides the traditional “sun and beach”.

By their characteristics, PRT was lifted up to category of structuring and transversal program and to all actions previewed by PNT. Its proposal, established by decentralized actions was focused on partnerships, in which cities, states, and organized civil society would play the fundamental role in the development during their phases. Strategically, the program was structured from three specific political guidelines: coordinated management, integrated and participative planning and promotion and support to commercialization (Brasil, 2004).

Initially, in the mapping which was done in 2004, 219 touristic regions were identified, involving 3,203 cities. In 2006, after a reviewing work, 200 touristic regions were reached, contemplating 3,819 cities, indicating 396 touristic itineraries for national market (149 regions and 1,027 cities), where only 87 were destined to be structured in order to reach the pattern of quality required by the international market, involving 116 touristic regions, composed by 474 cities (Brasil, 2007b).

The strategy of regionalization brought a differentiated perspective for Brazilian tourism, within a proposal of participative management for processes of structuring, promotion, and commercialization of touristic itineraries, as one can see in the PRT opening text of technical notes:

Regionalizing is not only an act of gathering cities with relative proximity and similarities. It is to build a democratic, harmonic and participative environment between public power, private initiative, third sector and community. It is to promote intersectorial integration and cooperation, with a view to synergy in the joint acting between all involved with, direct or indirectly, the touristic activity of certain location. (Brasil, 2007a, p. 10)

One of PRT central objectives has been the devolution of the Brazilian tourist offer, nowadays localized predominantly in the coast, stimulating the interiorization of the activity and the inclusion of new destinations

in routes already commercialized. In this new view, focuses mainly on economic goals of the plan, 65 destinations, able to induce regional development, were selected by Ministry of Tourism along with departments and state councils of tourism in order to be worked as priority until 2010. Such strategy was destined to endow selected destinations of model conditions to the demands of external market. According to MTUR, development inductor destinations are:

Those that have basic and touristic infrastructure and qualified attractions, characterized by receptor nucleus and/or touristic flows distributor, that is, those capable of attracting and/or distributing significant number of tourists to their surroundings and enliven the territory economy where it is inserted. (Brasil, 2007a, p. 3)

Among 87 touristic routes previously selected, these 65 destinations (in other words, cities) were chosen by criteria of “evaluations and appraisements of International Touristic Marketing Plan—Watercolor Plan, of National Touristic Marketing Plan—Colors of Brazil Plan, besides other studies and investigations about investments of federal government and about potentialities of these destinations” (Brasil, 2007a, p. 52) in their vast majority, elaborated by Observatório de Inovação do Turismo da Fundação Getúlio Vargas (Observatory of Tourism Innovation of Getúlio Vargas Foundation), Rio de Janeiro (Brasil, 2008).

### **Contributions and Difficulties**

Although their proposals were targeted for creation of regional tourist products and suggested the involvement of nearly all social agents involved with tourism, PRT did not achieve the expected results, signaling that lack of interaction between those agents is still significant. Regional products should be result of organization of agents involved. For this purpose, it is necessary that these interactions may develop into dynamic and complementary interrelations which will compound the touristic organization/system of every region involved.

The articulation difficulty of this regional organization of social agents involved proved itself to be one of the most critical points for the success of effective implantation of PRT goals in the country, which demanded from MTUR team a review of their methodologies and a new move in actions of articulation and sensibilization of social agents from regions classified as touristic.

Following a reigning trend in the country, PRT works for the installation of regional governance stages which may enable the establishment of endogenous and competitive spatial development processes. According to sociologist Tânia Zapata, consultant of MTUR, this model of development arises as a “strategy built by local actors, from an identity” through an “intentional process of provoking change, searching the spatial development with more equity, participation and sustainability”, having as central axis the human being (Zapata, 2008).

We should highlight that, in PRT official documents, the term “governance” is understood as “the ability to administrate or, more specifically, as the ability governments have to create conditions to respond to society demands” (Brasil, 2007a, p. 16), which somehow keeps the centralized management in public power, even when “this ability of managing presupposes a participative administration that involves local populations in the elaboration, monitoring and, in some cases, execution of public policies” (Brasil, 2007a, p. 16).

Specifically for PRT, “the regional governance stage is an organization with the participation of public power and private actors of cities components of touristic regions, with the role of coordinating the program on a regional basis” (Brasil, 2007a, p. 16).

We can also point out the concern of the ministry with the issue of articulation including several social agents of tourism in cities, reinforcing our proposition that actions focused on consolidation of regions or regional touristic routes put through the scale of the city, our smallest political-administrative cell. In that same direction and aiming at stimulating local and regional articulations, the actions of MTUR have been focused on the support and incentive for the formation of new organizational structures of local and regional tourists development management. The technical dossier III, specifically, is intended to orient social agents to the institutionalization of regional governance stages, in the format of consortiums or regional tourism councils (MTUR, 2003).

Broadening the issue, other of technical dossiers mentioned, the one of number XII, is dedicated to the theme of network formation and “presents some of the principles and working methods of Networks so that the several actors spread by touristic regions may, in compliance with their needs and desires, develop projects or Network processes in a decentralized and autonomous way” (MTUR, 2003, p. 10).

What can be observed in this moment is that the rupture with the strategies proposed by PNMT until 2002, on behalf of an exclusive regionalized model has proven itself to be a political misunderstanding. In order to resolve this misunderstanding, one notes a renewal in the preparation processes of cities with the greatest potential, both in their management aspects and in the formatting of competitive touristic products.

The networks, the stages, and regional products arrangements should be anchored in stages of municipal management which make possible the articulation in regional scale. Without the organization and preparation of cities, arrangements, and regional networks will not have a chance to structuring themselves in a competitive manner, considering that it is the administrative level of the city which establishes laws and basic norms to their development.

The creation of products and regional tourists routes is becoming to be an excellent option for the construction of competitive tourist destinations in the country, capable of generating wider multiplier effects in all regions where they are inserted. However, their formalization and constitution necessarily includes the local and municipal scale. We cannot have touristic regions (in other words, regional touristic products and routes) with the cities within them not being minimally organized and structured in the local tourists sector management.

### **Conclusions**

Redemocratization of the country was fundamental to Brazilian tourism, since it made possible the reconstruction of tourism bases, both in spatial and participative approach and has been an instrument to enable instruct citizens to have effective participation in political decisions.

Although PNMT has strongly contributed to the dissemination of the dialogue on tourism and the need of its professionalization with a view to municipal development, it has not been enough to stimulate the organization of the city's tourism as a whole. Many Brazilian towns have gone through intense transformations in their tourism government bodies, from improvement in structures and human resources to new manager profile. However, these efforts have been hindered by structural and even historical problems related to the low participation level and involvement of citizens with processes of tourism sector management. The disarray of several groups of social actors involved with tourism has hampered the consolidation of town councils and tourism municipal funds.

These consolidation difficulties of objectives and goals for PNMT have been passed on to PRT. The

regionalization program assumed that Brazilian cities with tourism potential already had their local management duly organized and structured, which did not reflect the true picture. The organization of social actors in regional scale, including public power, private enterprise, representative of non-profit organizations, and the community in general, seen as a natural path to consolidation of development processes structured in tourism has failed because of the disarticulation of those social actors in cities local scale. Regional articulation only gains strength when cities of the region are minimally structured in their territories.

It is important to note that both in PNMT and PRT, public policies on tourism are aimed only at considering market agents' interests. The dominance of the neoliberal mode of production makes almost all development policies, including those based on tourism sector favor market agents to the detriment of interests and demands of other social groups involved with the sector. Particularly populations of recipient areas will hardly be benefited, let alone getting involved in decision-making processes over their territories. Not even the interests of public agents (governments) are observed, once in order to facilitate the attraction of new investments the state let go of its fund-raising rights, supervision, and regulation, by granting a series of incentives and releasing several credit facilities. For the rest of social agents involved with tourism there is only a secondary role left, almost marginal, and the almost always negative impacts that touristic activity generates where it sets in.

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