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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE TOURISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE AVAILABLE IN TWO SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE DATABASES

DESENVOLVIMENTO REGIONAL E TURISMO CRIATIVO: UM LEVANTAMENTO BIBLIOMÉTRICO DA LITERATURA DISPONÍVEL EM DUAS BASES DE DADOS DE LITERATURA CIENTÍFICA

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Abstract

This paper seeks to analyse the relationship between regional development and creative tourism. Based on a bibliometric survey made through the use of the Google Scholar and Academia.edu databases, its main aim is to report the correlations found in the literature regarding the concepts of development and creative tourism. The literature review follows the guidelines of Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003), with regards to the adoption of a framework for data collection. The research strategy used was as follows: i) making an inventory of all available data and the nature of the identified documents; ii) to identify the authors' approach to the highlighted relationship; and iii) checking the conceptual links between regional development and creative tourism presented in the documents found. The obtained results suggest that there are papers investigating the aforementioned relationship, however a necessary deeper study on the subject has not yet been done.

Keywords: Regional Development; Creative Tourism; Relationship between Development and Tourism.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa a relação entre desenvolvimento regional e o turismo criativo. A partir de um levantamento bibliométrico realizado nas bases de dados Google Scholar e Academia.edu, tem como objetivo principal identificar as relações encontradas na literatura entre os conceitos de desenvolvimento e os de turismo criativo. A revisão da literatura segue as orientações de Tranfield,

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Denyer e Smart (2003) no que diz respeito à adoção de um modelo de recolha de dados. A estratégia de pesquisa utilizada foi a seguinte: i) inventariar todos os dados disponíveis e a natureza dos documentos identificados; ii) identificar a abordagem dos autores quanto à relação enunciada; e iii) verificar os vínculos conceituais entre desenvolvimento regional e turismo criativo apresentados nos documentos encontrados. Os resultados obtidos sugerem que há artigos em que é investigada a relação acima mencionada, porém um estudo mais aprofundado sobre essa matéria continua por realizar.

Palavras-chave: Desenvolvimento Regional; Turismo Criativo; Relação entre Desenvolvimento e Turismo.

Introduction

This paper seeks to analyse the relationship between regional development and creative tourism based on a bibliographic survey carried out in two databases available to the scientific community. The databases chosen were Google Scholar and Academia.edu. The main aim of this research was to understand the adopted concept of development and its correlations with creative tourism.

It is relevant to look at the relationship which can be established between a territory's development and creative tourism as this segment of the tourism industry is experiencing a growth tendency worldwide (RICHARDS, 2018) and it is assumed to be a leveraging instrument for attaining sustainable economic and social development (GOODWIN, 2008). This has to do with culture, experience and the co-creation of valorisations, community participation and bringing tourists closer to the reality of their tourist destinations. Within this context, we thought it would be pertinent to systematize the literature on creative tourism in order to verify the assumed relationships with development, especially in regards to tourism destinations' development.

This research gains relevance in view of the information available on creative tourism, by looking at it as a tool to promote local development, emphasizing the role of community creativity in generating income and benefitting from local resources, both material and immaterial. This type of tourism is tendentiously opposed to a more conventional/traditional one when it comes to both the local stakeholders' roles and the tourists' experience, which explains its potential as a promoter of local/regional development.

Creative tourism acts through some kind of reality transformation process and establishes direct correlations with cultural, material and immaterial factors, by committing and involving local development agents - public and private - in the elaboration and implementation of cultural policies that attract creative tourists.

As mentioned earlier, this movement attributes culture and communities a key role in local development, even in the case of cities and sites which, from a traditional perspective, are not usually perceived as tourist destinations. It implies that cultural goods and services which incorporate meanings, histories, identities of the places and promote co-creation are now made available. This means providing tourists with creative experiences based on local culture, allowing tourists to learn from it and from the local people.

Creative tourism enables development by valuing what is local, by promoting a creative economy and by not reducing culture to the act of consuming products. This makes room for emancipation, autonomy, new experiences, solidarity, for establishing contact with traditions and for generating income through unconventional tourist itineraries. However, one could be left to wonder about the kind of development concept addressed in the reviewed literature and its correlation with creative tourism.

In particular, the identified correlations between creative tourism and different development approaches (ways of referring to the term development are presented in order to understand the definitions attributed to it, in its regional and local derivations and its sustainability).

The paper is structured as follows: besides the introduction and the final remarks, there are three other sections. The first section refers to the presentation of the concepts of development and creative tourism, emphasizing approaches that are organized around the relationship between local development and sustainability. In the second section, we identify the tools, resources, strategies

and methodological criteria used on the data survey. Based on the established criteria, the third section presents and discusses the results obtained.

Theoretical references

Our favoured theoretical choices are those based on the concept of regional development proposed by Corrêa, Silveira and Kist (2019), who claim that there is a need to work on development formats that incorporate the regional economic, social and environmental issues. On the other hand, our approach to creative tourism is based on the definition presented by Richards (2018), bearing in mind the recent situation of creative tourism and its underlying diverse experiences available around the world. Therefore, by linking regional development and creative tourism, mediated by these definitions, we have chosen to focus on the set of studies that we have found in the previously mentioned databases.

With regards to development, the chosen approach takes on a concept that goes beyond economic growth and emphasises the need to attain sustainability and social welfare, in general (VEIGA, 2008; SACHS, 2004), which means respecting the individuals' lifestyle and communities' relationships (PIMENTA, 2014). Addressing development, nowadays, presupposes the incorporation of elements that include experiences of a social, cultural, political, symbolic and imaginary nature and, above all, it also presupposes a focus on the opportunities that the place can benefit from.

The meaning of the term "development" is connected to the idea of "evolutionary" stages within the patterns of an established social organization, where experiences do not fit outside this quadrant of social, cultural, political, symbolic, imaginary and, above all, economic relations.

From an etymological point of view, development refers to evolution and progress, as highlighted in its definition below:

(To Develop) - i) Act or effect of developing; ii) Growth or gradual expansion; iii) Gradual transition from a lower stage to a more advanced one; iv) Advance, progress; v) Extension, amplitude (...) (PIMENTA, 2014: 49 - translated by the authors).

Historically, the concept is tied to wealth, growth and the economic wealth of nations and, in some cases, to the death of the weakest (ADELMAN, 1972; SMITH, 1982 [1776]; SCHUMPETER, 1934; FURTADO, 2005). According to Godelier (2001), western society is characterized by the multiplication of those excluded from an economic system that, to remain competitive, must dry up businesses, reduce costs and increase work productivity. Consequently, the economy becomes the main source of exclusion of individuals.

Creative tourism presents configurations and specificities of various kinds, namely demographic, geographic, territorial, social, moral, symbolic, material and immaterial, ethical and bioethical. It is also closely related to the identity, diversity and biodiversity dimensions of territories. Therefore, it can be looked at as a front of action and a set of "creative" activities - tourist, tourism industry, handicraft, local community, development agents - endowed with the potential to promote other platforms and agents that may translate into sustainable economic and social development.

In a certain sense, creative tourism takes an approach whose goal is to benefit "(...) the economically poor (...) through the employment and development of micro businesses in crafts and food" (GOODWIN, 2008: 61), which requires pragmatic choices coming from outside the concept of economic growth and, thus, eliminating economic competition and the consequences of an individual-centered culture. Nevertheless, it is necessary to keep a constant watch on the issue and make sure that local lifestyles and traditional relationships are not devaluated.

Creative tourism allows for the engagement of different forms of organization other than those built on quite individualized sociocultural bases and that favour consumer-oriented practices, since their practices or principles are, mainly, focused on the community, sustainability, cooperation, trust, security, exchange, tradition, sense of belonging, co-participation and co-creation.

The relationship between development and creative tourism presupposes a break with the logic of conventional tourism and economic growth, almost like a pledge to create another social, cultural, environmental, subjective, symbolic and local organizational framework.

An obstacle to the implementation of regional development policies based on creative tourism is the way that managers, within development institutions and agencies, tend to look at it, since they base their actions on the logic of economic growth. On the other hand, the literature reviewed points out difficulties in implementing this type of strategies, since local communities can fail to understand the potential contribution to local development of creative tourism or they may not give them their due importance.

Building on a development platform that favours a regional development with adherence to the guidelines of creative tourism implies elaborations that go beyond the idea of economic growth. It is necessary to keep in mind that development is a concept and a strategy closely connected to sustainability, local culture, history, politics and economy, which entails the setting of symmetries and vertical hierarchies in the distribution of material and immaterial earnings obtained through exchanges. It implies respecting community values, cultural patterns and interpersonal relationships. These elements provide meaning to things present in dimensions such as rurality, tradition and community ties that are inherent to this societal development approach. The current common concept of progress seems to have ‘thrown away’ these values and ties.

Within the theoretical context presented, we have decided to carry out a study that analyses the relationship, which can be found in the literature under analysis, between regional development and creative tourism. Additionally, we will focus on the theoretical-conceptual links that are established with the field of knowledge called “development”.

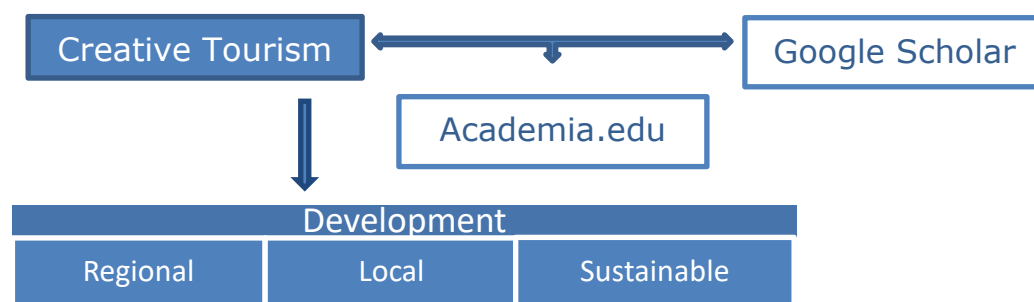
Methodology

From a methodological point of view, we have decided to follow Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003) in what regards the adoption of a data collection framework in order to gather scientific literature on the relationship between creative tourism and regional development. For that, we made use of the papers published in journals and other academic documents available on the Google Scholar and Academia.edu databases. The strategy used was the following: i) making an inventory of all the data available and of the nature of the documents; ii) deciding on how to approach the particular issue we intended to focus on; and iii) adopting specific criteria for conducting the analysis of the documents found.

Regarding the use of the "Google Scholar" and "Academia.edu" databases, they were seen as a way of establishing a connection with Richards' study (2015) on the literature published on creative tourism. In the aforementioned report, the researcher (RICHARDS, 2015) produced an inventory on literature released in the Google Scholar and Academia.edu databases, between 1990 and 2015.

We chose to collect data on the last 10 years of publications, from 2009 to 2019, following Richards' (2015) claim that 2009 was the year in which there was a significant increase in publications on the subject. As mentioned, the aim was to identify the elements that make up the basis for the concept of creative tourism and, then, establish the connection with the concept of development - regional, local and sustainable (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Research path adopted



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The analysis criteria were based on the following: first, identification of what creative tourism means according to the definitions and arguments established within the research field; second, categorization of the concepts which may correlate with the strategies to be implemented within creative tourism; third, assessment of the eventual correlation between the concept of creative tourism and the derived strategies of regional or local development, and its sustainability.

It is worth mentioning that the papers selected allowed us to map the meanings of the concept of “creative tourism”, which relates to the following terms: “development”, “regional development”, “local development” and “sustainable development”. To achieve this, we have considered the following:

- i) Identification of the journal’s main scientific areas and the authors’ scientific research domains;
- ii) Building a definition of creative tourism and its connection with other basic socioeconomic concepts, considering the keywords used in the papers;
- iii) An inventory of possible meanings of the keywords used and the set of correlations established with creative tourism and their developmental derivations, keeping in mind the scientific field of the research in question;
- iv) Ideas that allowed the grouping and classifying of the intentionality of the products analyzed;
- v) The coherence between definitions of creative tourism used and the concept of development. This research strategy not only guided the way in which data search on the object of study was conducted - creative tourism and regional development - but it also allowed us to establish the key parameters for verifying the use of development and sustainability concepts.

The searches were conducted in Portuguese and English, during September and October 2019. The keyword ‘Creative Tourism’ was used to survey the publications available on the chosen databases. Filters were also used to add the following keywords: development; regional development; local development; and sustainable development.

Furthermore, we ought to mention that the search conducted in the databases was based on the reading of the titles, abstracts and keywords of all papers related to creative tourism, within the above-mentioned criteria.

Looking at the results, it is worth pointing out that the subject “creative tourism” resulted in many “products” – papers, dissertations, projects, tour guides, MBA reports, ATLAS reports, undergraduate studies and travel guides. A further step was used to restrict the literature review to articles available in indexed scientific journals.

In the section titled ‘Results and Discussion’ we will present the number of papers collected, but we can already add that, in what regards the researched theme, we found 18 papers that established a direct relationship between creative tourism and development - regional, local and sustainable – as evidenced in their titles, abstracts and keywords.

From the selected material, one could get a glimpse of the intellectual process of building a creative tourism concept and its potential relationships with development. In other words, we have looked at the plurality of development and sustainability definitions used, both as a whole and separately. This allowed us to get a mapping of the intellectual production present in the investigated databases. We believe this can be a valid contribution towards future studies in which creative tourism and regional, local and sustainable development are addressed simultaneously.

Results and discussion

The discussion undertaken privileges the distinction between economic growth and development presented in the literature surveyed, while recognizing the emphasis put on the economic issue in the theoretical-conceptual debate on development, but adding to it social and sustainable dimensions.

It is from this starting point that we look to research conducted in the field of creative tourism linked to the development issue, which brings us to the subject of inequality in the wealth distribution process and to the search for understanding its causes. As highlighted from the beginning of this paper, our focus is on the regional and the local, even if creative tourism begins by being shown as a product or an activity addressed to the conventional market (that is, the corporate and consumer markets).

From the papers reviewed, we have concluded that the definition of creative tourism was established by Greg Richards and Crispin Raymond (2000). Accordingly, it is claimed that creative tourism is the tourist segment which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in learning experiences typical to their chosen destinations.

From a historical perspective, the aforementioned authors (RICHARDS; RAYMOND, 2000) point out that the construction of this thematic field was based on research carried out in regions of Europe in the late 1990s. The proposal includes: opportunities for personal creative development; a

co-creative relationship between tourists and hosts; and the realization of creative activities in the destination. These elements emerged in the papers as the basis of the definition.

In the Google Scholar and Academia.edu databases, we found 679 papers and publications related to creative tourism. Many of the materials found on Google Scholar were replicated in Academia.edu, which required extra care in their systematization and selection. Consequently, a comparative reading of the titles, abstracts and keywords of the documents available in both databases was performed.

Table 1 was created to map the definition of creative tourism and establish any correlations found with development, its implementation at a regional and local level and sustainability. In the same table we have identified what the authors of this new research field understand as being creative tourism. To do so, we focused on: i) the use of words that make up the subject's meanings; and ii) the visualization of the cohesiveness of the constitutive ideas on the subject.

Table 1: Words and supporting ideas used to define Creative Tourism

| Words | Supporting ideas |
|---|--|
| CREATIVE | CREATIVE TOURISM |
| Tourism; Culture; Economy; Industry; Innovation; Planning; Cluster; Business | Tourism alternative emphasizing the role of culture and creativity |
| Development; Change; Social; Local; Sustainability; Supply; Dynamics; Alternative; Product; Potential; Management | Implementation of creative industries endowed of potential to transform local economies and give them sustainability |
| Creativity; Art; Co-creation; Experiences; Affectivity; Hospitality; Emotion; Sensations; Knowledge | Co-creative relationships and psycho-affective links between residents and tourists and commitment of residents towards the tourism industry |
| Territories; Cities; Spaces; Community; Popular; Destination; Route; Image; Rural; Identity; Heritage; Material; Immaterial; Traditions | Tourism based on the exchange of experiences, using non-standard procedures, networks and routes, in support of the destination's attributes |
| Participation; Collective; Organization; Simplicity | Activities performed in the context of democratic societies, able to generate income and cultural values |
| Gastronomy; Entertainment; Leisure; Ecotourism; Food; Know-how; Doing; Intangible heritage | Use of resources which allow the tourist to participate in creative experiences |

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on abstracts, keywords and titles of the papers/publications reviewed.

As previously mentioned, Table 1 provides an overview of what the literature calls creative tourism, as well as a reference to its pertinence, derivations and possible links with development. It also allows us to claim that many of the words and ideas associated to the notion of "creative" or "creativity" are linked to economy, tourist, tourism, industry, city, community, culture, space, 'doing' and 'knowing'. These associations apply to the theoretical-conceptual claims of the area of knowledge that we call regional development.

The creative tourism formats the value of the "expendable" elements of modern industrial societies, essentially those of economic nature, such as handicrafts, knowledge, artifacts, arts, artists, cuisine (gastronomy) and traditions perpetuated in popular, rural and community practices and activities. This knowledge may help in setting development strategies which go beyond economic growth, based on regional, local and sustainable approaches. This is where the strong potential correlation between creative tourism and development comes from.

When looking at the connection between the term "development" or "local" or "regional" or "sustainable" and "creative tourism", we could conclude that the publications are almost non-existent. This finding has to do with the amount of publications on creative tourism and the intentionality added to the concept. As mentioned before, from a total of 679 papers or documents of another nature on the subject, we found 450 on the Google Scholar database and 229 in Academia.edu. Out of this total, 45 papers were closely linked to our research subject or used the word "development" in their title, abstract or keywords.

After reading those 45 articles – in order to grasp the concept of development in its relationship with creative tourism, and the relationship of creative tourism with the regional and

local levels and with sustainability - a considerable number of the reviewed documents was discarded. The reason why that happened was because the link between creative tourism and the chosen theoretical or empirical arguments, even if they used words like “Regional Development”, “Local Development” or “Sustainable Development”, was not clear or explicit.

After that filtering process, we were left with 18 papers, whose title, abstract or keywords established a direct relationship between creative tourism and development - regional, local and sustainable. This specific approach allowed us to understand what the authors meant by “development”, as well as any established connections.

The repeated use of the word development within the scope of the papers on creative tourism was characterized as being a product that connects tourism, the tourist and the tourist experience to the place and, consequently, it can promote economic, social and sustainable development due to its dynamics. This potential is not researched enough in the reviewed literature, namely in terms of its impacts on local/regional development.

To establish the link between the keywords and ideas that define what creative tourism is (See Table 1 above) and the effects on regional development - planning policies, activities, actions, execution and assessments that show the economic and social impacts and the sustainable effects resulting from the valorization of traditions, places and collective forms of wealth distribution (CORRÊA; SILVEIRA; KIST, 2019) - we have raised a set of structuring ideas from the definitions of creative tourism used in the papers analyzed which have a close affinity with the concept of regional development we follow throughout this paper.

In order to further analyze this possible closer link between regional development and creative tourism, we have assumed four categories (based on the definition of creative tourism used) that should be highlighted:

- 1- Tourism as a way to meet the basic needs of fragile communities and rural territories;
- 2- Leverage for creative segments: industry; economy; tourist; tourism; city; community; culture; etc.;
- 3- Relevant role in local development due to favouring a creative environment, investing in local culture and in local production systems, setting up cultural companies and valuing cultural services;
- 4- Connections between cultural and creative tourism envisaging to promote sustainable development.

The concepts listed above have a connection with regional development but they do not provide clear information on the processes of implementing creative tourism, namely, they do not assess the economic impacts, the social transformations occurred and local sustainability. This gap can be researched following an interdisciplinary approach by appealing to the contribution of scientific areas like the social sciences, economics, management, geography, tourism, engineering, accounting and history.

There is usually a strong connection between the use of the word “development” and the processes of launching or enhancing the tourism industry in municipalities (that is, in local environments). Those authors’ purpose was not to outline systematic and rigorous concerns about the dimensions that establish a closer dialogue with the general problem of the development process, even though they do show some concern regarding the potential effects on the economy, society and sustainability (at a regional or local levels) of the referred strategies.

The relationship between development and creative tourism brings to the fore important elements that deserve to be investigated, since we are not faced with an “area of interest” that is exclusively placed in the theoretical field of tourism or in the fields of development, sustainability, regional economics or the social sciences, in general. This complexity is evident when we look at the scientific focuses of the journals, the privileged objects of research and the keywords and aims of the papers analysed, and even when we check the areas of education of the authors. When analysing the papers, we concluded that the authors came from the following scientific areas: Management (5); Agrarian Sciences (1); Economics (2); Economics and Management of Tourism Companies (5); Management and Tourism (2); Studies of tourism (3). The focus of the journals were as follows: Business and Economics (1), Economics (2), Regional Studies (10), Local Economic Development (1), Management and Retail (1), Tourism (1) and Urban Culture (1).

Accordingly, it was possible to conclude that the research on the relationship between regional development and creative tourism presupposes the adoption of interdisciplinary

approaches. However, in establishing the dialogue between areas, one cannot lose sight of their specificities and singular concerns.

The central issue regarding this relationship (regional development and creative tourism) is that the willingness to structure (or develop) a creative tourism product (as opposed to conventional tourism products) should be based on the tourist's co-participation and subjective experience, in the role of communities and in valuing local traditions. This demands the assessment of the impacts of creative tourism on regional development, which is different from what has been done so far, that is, assuming development as an implicit element or expectable consequence of the consolidation of creative tourism practices and activities.

We would like to emphasize that the papers analyzed - or their proposed focus lines - are not directly concerned with development or any related constitutive field of knowledge. This way, even though there is unity in the definition of creative tourism, made evident in the clustering of ideas used to classify objectives and intentionality, there is no deeper research, and conceptual or empirical reflections that treat development as a central issue in this intellectual production.

As far as the issue of development is concerned, economic, social and environmental discussions about regional and local boundaries are limited to the generic use of the word 'development' or to the impacts on the distribution of income, local culture and wealth. Furthermore, in a few cases, impacts of a social and environmental nature are mentioned.

Studies conducted by Goodwin (2008), Richards (2018), Santagata and Bertacchini (2011), Solima and Minguzzi (2014), Lima and Silva (2017), Dias, Patuleia and Dutschke (2019), Henriques and Moreira (2019) and Bezerra and Correira (2019), just to mention a few, carry in their core the "belief" that experiences in creative tourism can lead to development and sustainability. The hypothetical beneficiaries of that development are, mostly, local communities, rural areas and spaces considered unable to host traditional formats of tourism.

Within the context studied, there is little empirical basis, field research, numbers, speeches and data which can actually refute or ratify the stated claims. Creative tourism's agenda refers to development in the sense of building a product (NUNES; SOUSA, 2019).

This agenda presents a collection of statements that incorporate connections to the territory, cohesion of the territory, competitiveness, networks of relations between actors, either economic or cultural - material and immaterial singularities, public policies, resources for the exploitation of affections and co-creative experiences, the so-called creativity. However, those statements do not specify what might be regional, local and sustainable development, as they are viewed as a linguistic resource that naturally correlates with creative tourism since the early definition of this "product". In particular, there are two dimensions that synthesize the academic products (papers) analyzed:

- (i) The terms used are not available as a category of analysis - creative tourism and development - nor based on a process of gathering consistent data (although creative tourism is committed to the preservation of natural, cultural, historical scenarios and traditions that allow for competitiveness and local development);
- (ii) Development is neither treated as a central element for understanding and measuring the socioeconomic and socio-organizational impacts of on-site cultural activities nor in describing the role of the actors and the territory's framework - political, social, cultural, symbolic, identity - placed within the scope of production or of the conditions necessary to foster a creative atmosphere.

The intellectual production investigated cannot be perceived as a representation of the academic publishing as a whole on creative tourism and development. Instead, it should be considered as a fragment of it made available by the Google Scholar and Academia.edu databases. Therefore, it highlights the need for future research that goes beyond the accreditation of a tourism product, the idea of an alternative tourism potential, the empowerment of communities and places, and the need for addressing the economic, cultural, environmental and symbolic sustainability of territories.

In other words, in order to establish a research field within the scope of creative tourism that encompasses regional development issues, it is pertinent to privilege research objects related to regional/local development, as well as to make efforts in the search for explanations (referrals or solutions) of an economic and social nature and commit to the sustainability of the territories.

Final remarks

Within the aim of this paper (looking at the relationship between creative tourism and development based on what has been published on the subject), we have found that the issue of “development” is not adequately addressed by the research on creative tourism, even by those authors that claim a willingness to establish that connection. Therefore, there is room for undertaking further research on the development impacts of creative tourism.

It is pertinent to emphasize that the set of scientific papers found in the Google Scholar and Academia.edu databases presents the issue of development in relation to creative tourism, but does not approach it with the necessary depth. The links between creative tourism and development highlighted by the authors deserve some further research when it comes to development concepts, data, pillars and conceptions as to demonstrate their effective economic, cultural, social, sustainable, regional and local impacts. Additionally, based on the characterization of the impacts on development, they also need to show its symmetrical and horizontal character, by granting the community the main role, along with that conceded to traditions and to rural environments, as enounced in the definition of creative tourism.

In terms of potential, creative tourism does seem to have the potential to act as a promoter of regional, local and sustainable development, given its roots (culture; tradition; local; material, intangible heritage and natural resources; training; experience; emotions; co-creation; co-participation; among others) and its structural scope (leading role given to the communities; valorization of the material and immaterial culture of places; associative, collective and community work; production control by the producer). Additionally, culture and creative tourism carry a set of elements within the scope of “creativity” that can and should be explored. Nevertheless, even though creative tourism is recognized as a potential instrument for regional development, there are practically no efforts that go beyond the consolidation of a specific tourism product.

In this paper, we have highlighted an aspect that may justify future research, specifically the relationship between regional development and creative tourism. Clearly, the tangible impacts that creative tourism may have at the local or regional levels should be assessed. In this regard, it is necessary to adopt a careful and systematic analysis of the ways development agents act, whether they are from the State or from the market. This is the only way to establish policies that favour the implementation of creative tourism along the lines of its original definition and aims.

There is also a need to verify whether these policies form (value and privilege) an alternative model of tourism that gives a leading role and autonomy to local communities, through co-creation and the exchange of experiences with visitors.

Bearing this in mind, and due to the potential relationships between development and creative tourism, we see this issue as a promising field of investigation, whose investment is likely to inspire public policies for sustainable regional and local development and, above all, foster economic relations that go beyond the structures of power, exclusion and “empty consumption” of two precious goods: tourism and culture.

The epistemological vigilance that is required for the undertaking of this route includes creating methodological tools that prove to be capable of “capturing” the dynamics of regional, local and sustainable development, and that are, at the same time, immune to social and economic logics, which have led to the conventional forms of tourism.

The research performed is somewhat limited because it relies on two scientific databases, Google Scholar and Academia.edu. Further investigation should use other large scientific databases, namely Scopus and Web of Science, even though we are aware that most of the papers used are included in all of them. Therefore, a significant change in the results is not expected.

These dimensions allow creative tourism to open a promising and meaningful path for studies whose aim is regional development and addressing existing concerns with local, social, and economic aspects, as well as sustainability.

Finally, we believe that the researchers involved in furthering the dialogue between the areas of regional development and creative tourism need to find pathways using their own areas of knowledge as starting points, in order to find consistent alternatives to the conventional forms of tourism and development, which are based solely on economic growth.

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