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# URBAN MICROCLUSTERS AND TOURISM GOVERNANCE IN SALVADOR/BA

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## ABSTRACT

The research that led to this article sought to analyze under what conditions the concept of tourism cluster could be applied in setting up a governance and development model for the activity in the city of Salvador, Bahia. Third leisure destination and the first capital of Brazil, Salvador has lost competitiveness to other cities in the northeast of Brazil much due to not having a governance system capable of establishing clear objectives and strategies for the destination. Starting from a broad literature review on the implementation of tourism and urban models of productive agglomerations, we performed a historical and cultural city zoning identifying a set of 6 microclusters that, by their identity aspects, were likely to be constitute a proposal for territorial organization of tourism in the city. Through field research, the feasibility of this proposal was tested, verifying the existence of the necessary conditions for the implementation of the suggested model, the research interviewed 32 experts linked to touristic trade and, based on a sampling error of 5%, 415 residents and 398 businesses in the areas studied. It was concluded that, with respect to the characteristics that define a tourist microcluster, starting by the local and limited geographical scope, the proposed sub-areas presented to respondents was supported by the opinion of the majority of them, that the neighborhoods have some kind of similarity with yours, and therefore, have an identity that unites them, forming a region with its own characteristics. The stock of intangible capital is unevenly distributed and the disparity of this indicator among the regions surveyed suggests that the difficulties in implementing local governance systems will also be unevenly distributed. Trade relations, as well as all network relationships are fragile or non-existent. There is not a sufficient level of diversification to ensure full compliance with the needs of tourists in these sub-areas, notably with regard to the possibility of accommodation and entertainment and infrastructural deficiencies are felt by all. Given all that has been pointed out, it is concluded that there is much to do to be successful the proposed regionalization of the city and its division into urban microclusters, as proposed. Creating tours and creative cultural itineraries territorially delimited, as suggested here, in a participatory manner, involving community residents and local businesses in their design and operation, however, can be a useful starting point.

**Keywords:** Microclusters, Salvador, Turismo

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The research that originated this article aimed to analyze the feasibility of implementing a tourism cluster model as an alternative governance and territorial configuration of the activity in the city of Salvador / BA.

In the 1990s, the concept of cluster was spread out in academia, from Michael Porter studies, related to the notion of competitiveness of nations as derived from the competitiveness of companies operating in the country, located in defined geographic concentrations within that territory and sharing in groups, the positive externalities resulting from agglomeration economies. With close and indissoluble bond to the concept that was analyzed under which conditions it can be applied appropriately to the tourism activity and, if so, if the "tourism cluster" - that is, a group of companies which have tourism as nuclear activity - correspond to the structure and configuration of a tourism governance and development model,.

Since the middle of last decade, the planning and management model of tourism in Bahia and Salvador has been characterized by a lack of clarity in the choice of goals and a dispersed directing actions, almost always punctual and fragmented. Under these conditions, the planning of tourism development and the social and economic contribution that tourism can add to the state and its capital, proved to be disconnected and underutilized.

In 2002, work began on the experience of a shared planning and management model of tourism between the government and the private sector, with the installation of Culture, Tourism and Entertainment Cluster of Bahia, which did not take off. A number of reasons contributed to the failure of this initiative. The main one was the lack of a focus in their planning as well in their actions, coupled with the lack of an effective governance system, structured between agents that have integrated their configuration. Another decisive reason for this, and that is directly related to what is discussed in this text, was the territorial scope originally allocated to the cluster since, in order for this initiative to succeed, it is essential to implement a reduction factor in scale and scope, outlining the structures and processes involved: working with a well-defined geographic area and limited in size; defining the market by segmenting and definition niche / sub-segments related to each other; and presenting a trade offer specialized according to the actual demand segmentation, and therefore also an enclosed offer (SILVA; SPINOLA, 2012).

Considering those characteristics, it has been observed that it's possible to deploy territorial configurations that value the historical and cultural resources, with innovative policies and strategies, and a territorial and endogenous basis for planning. These settings, called microclusters or Tourism Local Productive Arrangements (APLs) would enable the promotion of social inclusion through the generation of income and employment and, ultimately, a local development process.

These settings apply also to urban and micro-regional centers of a city like Salvador, which the mentioned research sought to analyze and propose. Therefore, it was necessary to make a tourist zoning of the city, historical and cultural background, devising the capital of Bahia as a set of microclusters or tourism APL - urban districts, structured and networked together, each one corresponding to a subarea of Salvador, integrated into a system of governance and public tourism policies and modeling.

This article then presents the outline of a proposal to organize the city in microclusters, which was developed in the broader context of the mentioned research and analyze its viability according to political, economic, social and cultural assumptions needed for its implementation.

## **2. URBAN MICROCLUSTERS AND GOVERNANCE: APPLICATION TO TOURISM IN SALVADOR**

According to Albagli and Britto (2003, p.3), local clusters "[...] are territorial agglomerations of political, economic and social agents, focused on a specific set of economic activities and which have linkages and interdependencies." According to them, the territorial dimension

[...] Is specific focus of analysis and political action by defining the space where productive, innovative and cooperative processes take place, such as a county or area of a municipality; group of municipalities; micro-region; set of micro-regions, among others. The proximity or geographic concentration, leading to share visions and values economic, social and cultural dynamism is the local source, as well as diversity and competitive advantage over other regions (ALBAGLI;. BRITTO 2003: 3, emphasis added).

Considering a city of great spatial dimension, like Salvador, one can think of productive clusters located in contiguous subsets (set of neighborhoods), urban setting microclusters composed of identity aspects of historical, cultural and socio-economic nature.

Domínguez Rodríguez introduces the tourist microcluster term. For the author, the application of Mashallian theory of industrial districts to tourism "sector" drives the work with the notion of tourist districts, defined as tourist destinations, where the concentration of tourist companies is a characteristic element.

[...] Although the various components of the tourist service can be developed by different companies (hotels, restaurants, transportation companies, animation companies ...) at least [they] must be located in a limited geographical space [delimited and not overly broad], so that the customer can move from one company to another without having to waste their leisure time (scarce) in such offsets (RODRIGUEZ DOMINGUEZ, 2001, p. 306, emphasis added).

Due to the heterogeneity that characterizes the companies that act in tourist destinations, customer motivations (tourists), natural resources exploited by tourism, etc. "[...] Working with scattered territorial areas [overly broad] and little homogeneous [...] difficult to identify precise diagnosis of the tourist " sector" [...]" (RODRIGUEZ DOMÍNGUEZ, 2001, p. 307, emphasis added).

In the case of the various components of the tourist service and the set of companies direct and indirectly related with his final delivery to the consumer (tourist) that are located in an urban center of the size of Salvador, they will be related therefore to a microcluster or APL - urban districts.

As important, however, as the competitive advantage given by natural attributes, location or sector, is the social proximity that allows a form of coordination between actors able to enhance the total environment in which they operate and therefore to convert it into the basis for innovative ventures. This proximity assumes direct social relations among actors, emphasizing the territory and the networks that connect different segments of a given community.

Thus, the organizational skills inherent in microcluster can be defined as the ability of the urban region to get the support of all participants involved in the growth of the production together, in order to create conditions for its sustainable development. This aspect, at the multifaceted type of organizational tourism conformation, assumes high level of relevance. The establishment and consolidation of social and institutional ties that encourage cooperation between microcluster agents shall lead, ultimately, to the concept of governance (BERG; BRAUN; Winden, 2002). According Lastres and Cassiolato (2005), in the context of APL refers to governance

[...] Different modes of coordination, intervention and participation in decision-making processes of the different actors - State, at various levels, businesses, citizens and workers, NGOs etc .; and various activities involving the organization of production and marketing flows as well as the process of generation, dissemination and use of knowledge (LASTRES; CASSIOLATO, 2005, p. 13).

Pires and others (2011, p.38) understands that the territorial governance concepts result

[...]of the strategies of collective actors who engage to coordinate actions that allow solving local and regional problems arising from the agglomeration, specialization or territorial specification as well as environmental problems [...]. Arises from a particular local context - a municipality, a network of municipalities or a region [sub-areas of a large city - set of

neighborhoods] - where local actors and institutions that represent them relate to conceive, beyond the institutional environment. (Emphasis added).

In this sense, it is clear the relationship between tourism governance system and the structure of business networking installed in tourist destinations, even with local dimension, given the cohesion of the social and productive links indispensable to the development of an urban tourist center, taking the example of Salvador. Tourist activity is an activity of companies that should work and communicate in a network basis with each other, since they all cater to tourists. For the production - tourist consumption happens with maximum efficiency and quality, it is necessary that companies operate in interaction. Given this need, the heterogeneity of the tourism conglomerate and activities that support it, sets tourism services such as network services.

A tourism policy, modeled as cluster policy, and the articulation of tourism services network, emphasizes the territorial dimension of the tourism development process. Given this emphasis, it is analyzed in this paper the feasibility of adopting a tourism governance system in Salvador, characterized by the use of productive resources locally based. In this sense, it highlights the importance of tourism regionalization process for the city of Salvador, in which the construction of tourist circuits, integrating creative cultural routes, could be articulated with a territorial governance format.

Such circuits would consist of microclusters - sets of contiguous and integrated-neighborhoods, linked by their historic, cultural and natural heritage and socio-economic activities. "The tours come as a specific format of tourism, taking into account the physical, geographical, economic and sociocultural attributes of an area in an integrated and systemic view" (PIRES et al., 2011, p. 119). They are designed to allow the city, through tourism, "maximize economic benefits (growth) and sociocultural (development) arising with the flow of people" (Pires et al., 2011, p. 125).

According to Pires and others (2011), tour operators can be understood as spatial circuits of production, "because they involve activities, companies and regulatory authorities in various streams "(PIRES et al., 2011, p. 125). In turn, the creative cultural routes, integrated with tours, "establish culture as the urban space qualifier, promoting the democratization of its access and the recovery of local identity, through cultural heritage valorization actions, integrating it to the urban landscape "(MICHELETI;. SANTIAGO, 2014, p 1), in order to qualify the connections between the neighborhoods of a microcluster in between Salvador microclusters.

The fundamental idea of the tourism regionalization of Salvador is to transform much of its degraded territory, from a social perspective and stagnant, from an economic optical into a productive territory, through the redemption, encouragement and creation of tourist territories, creative, dynamic and competitive.

### **3. PROPOSED TOURIST REGIONALIZATION TO SALVADOR**

The proposed regionalization aimed to observe in concrete territorial plans, the existence or absence of the considered key factors for the growth of microclusters in Salvador, as systematized by Rodríguez-Domínguez (2001) and Boisier (2000, cited HADDAD , 2001).

The proposed regionalization started identifying identity elements from a historical, cultural or social nature, which can give the selected areas the character of tourist region through what Lozato-Giotart (1990 cited by VERA REBOLLO 2011, p. 85) understands how an area of characteristics more or less homogeneous, with certain density of tourist visits and, above all, with an image that characterizes it and identifies it [...]. The sharing of homogeneous characteristics must define a collective image [cultural] and commercially worthy.

From the exposed guidelines, six tourist regions were defined:

#### **Region 1 - First Settlement**

Districts involved: Barra, Ondina and Rio Vermelho (Orla and Vasco da Gama - including Tororo dike).

Primary identity elements: occupation process of the city's coastline by the first donee Francisco Pereira Coutinho, founder of Pereira Vila and, before him, by Diogo Alvares Correa, Caramuru, who entered the Tupinambá tribe that inhabited the current neighborhood of Rio Vermelho .

Secondary identity elements: Candomblé and its manifestations, through the sculptures of Tororo dike, the terraces of Vasco da Gama and Iemanjá Party.

From all identified elements, whether they are important historical facts, that somehow contributed and contribute to the creation and strengthening of an identity, or cultural and social aspects that define and explain the characteristics of a particular group, it can be given to the area which constitutes the First Settlement region, considering the exposed criteria, the character of tourist region.

#### **Region 2 - Salvador Colonial and expansion of the planned city**

Districts involved: Victoria, Pelourinho, St. Antônio and Comercio (from Contorno slope to Sao Joaquim fair).

Primary identity elements: the core establishment of the walled city, planned to take the role of capital of the colony and its expansion in the nineteenth century towards the Corredor da Vitória. The central core, known as Historical Centre, will be addressed in the two side ends: Cidade Alta (Upper City), with the original administrative function, and Cidade Baixa (Lower City), with the supply port function.

Secondary identity elements: the expansion of the city's economy, from a large warehouse of region products to a financial and commercial center.

The region "Colonial Salvador and expansion of the planned city" underwent golden and decay periods, currently consolidating it into a space rich in history, with structures that express the culture of Salvador authentically. Its streets, sidewalks, houses, churches and squares serve as proof of the city's development and changes that occurred in that period.

### **Region 3 - Ribeira of Galleons**

Districts involved: Ribeira, Bonfim, Montserrat and Boa Viagem.

Primary identity elements - neighborhoods of Itapagipe peninsula, ancient settlement area, from the sixteenth century with the construction of the Church of Montserrat. Originally a fishing village and place used for repair of the galleons of the Crown. Besides the church, it has two other important monuments: Fort of Montserrat and Bonfim Church.

Secondary identity elements - the Bay of Todos os Santos, its vessels and quiet water beaches; the routine of a little Brazilian town with chairs besides their doors; the Relief Works of Irmã Dulce, whose miracles are being investigated by Vaticano in a canonical process.

In a brief stroll along the beaches of Ribeira of Galleons region, you can see that the place remains the same. Its identity is precisely marked by old buildings, the calm and warm waters, but mostly by customs, rites, rhythms and traditions

### **Region 4 – Caminhos da Liberdade (Ways of Freedom)**

Districts involved: Pirajá, Lapinha, Liberdade and Curuzu.

Primary identity elements - crucial area in the episode of the independence of Bahia, united by the path taken by the victorious troops of Lima e Silva (appointing to the main avenue of Liberdade) and the battle of Pirajá.

Secondary identity elements - neighborhoods characterized by harboring an important Afro-descendant population and its internationally renowned cultural events.

It is commonly said that Salvador is the city with the largest black population outside Africa. The Caminhos da Liberdade region would then be the largest territory of African roots outside its continent. Right or wrong, the fact is that the identity of this region is dominated by customs, beliefs and rituals of the African descendants, preserving the legacy of a past of pain and resistance.

### **Region 5 - Suburban Railway**

Districts involved: Paripe, Lobato, Plataforma, Itacaranha, Escada, Praia Grande, Periperi and Coutos.

Primary identity: a railway that connects the entire suburban area, natural landscapes and the subnormal occupation, in addition to São Bartolomeu Park.



Secondary identity elements: The historical importance of neighborhood Plataform (landing place of the Dutch troops in the seventeenth century), the Church of Nossa Senhora da Escada, 1536 (according to Cid Teixeira, one of only three original buildings of the Tomé de Sousa period) and the drilling of the first oil well in Brazil.

The Suburban Railway region builds its identity in a contradictory process of historical and cultural wealth and socio-economic weaknesses, added to the difficulties of access to input and output products, people and information. The history of Salvador development passes through the suburb directly by petroleum, railway and industrialization, and its rescue becomes essential for the local identity consolidation.

### **Region 6 - Orla Norte (North Shore)**

Districts involved: Amaralina, Pituba, Costa Azul, Armação, Boca do Rio, Patamares, Pituaçu, Piata, Placaford, Itapoan and Stella Maris.

Primary identity elements: the ocean shore with its famous beaches.

Secondary identity elements: the modern city and its residential neighborhoods.

The sets of neighborhoods that make up each of the six tourist "regions" presented in the form of productive clusters - microclusters - offer potential for creating tours and creative cultural routes, with complementary nature, being thus a possible starting point for the structuring of a territorial governance model for the city. This possibility, however, depends on a number of other factors, as seen in this text, occurring in Salvador what will be analyzed in the following section.

## **4. ANALYSIS**

This research assumes that tourism in Salvador lacks a governance system aimed at the tourism development of the city, which allows expansion and support for its competitiveness. As a contribution, this text proposed to increase the proximity in the management and administration of Salvador tourism through an integrated process of municipal decentralization, both of resources and skills. Therefore, regarding the territorial aspect, one of the suggestions proposed was the city regionalization, by grouping their neighborhoods, consolidating their action capacity, which would guide through identity elements of historical and cultural basis .

The conjunction of the tourist regions proposed to Salvador with existing administrative regions and institutionalized by the municipal administration, or the boroughs instituted by the current government of the municipality, would set a number of urban districts, "a new local government structure of the city defined under the cultural and historical criteria, but also geographical and urban, and of course politics "(HALL OF LISBON, 2009, p. 31). Considering the governance system for tourism development in Salvador, these urban districts can be understood as the microclusters covered in this text, adding to other criteria in defining their space and identity settings.

This "territorial arrangement", however, requires institutional leadership which led the research that underlies this text to realize that, although more appropriate, this solution also faces great difficulties to promote the expected results. Taking the contribution of Boisier (cited HADDAD, 2001, p. 53), so that microclusters proposed by this paper can effectively contribute to the development of the city, meeting a capacity of social and political organization, is still far from being achieved .

To identify whether these conditions are present in the microclusters proposed there were interviewed, in Salvador, 415 residents, 398 businesses, and 32 specialists in the trade, public tourism management and academia. Samples of residents and businesses were defined based on a sampling error of 5%. The research universe of residents was constituted by the neighborhood population inserted in specified regions, based on the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2001). The questionnaires occurred at random, taking into account the amounts determined by the calculated samples. The research universe of companies consisted of formal enterprises of all sizes and sectors of the economy established in the surveyed areas. Based on these parameters, it was obtained the data underlying the assessment in respect of residents and businesses, as presented below.

Regarding the level of coordination / participation of people from these subareas in associations and / or networks of cooperation is very low. It does not constitute a divergent outcome with respect to the everyday behavior of the Salvador population, characterized by individualism and the immediacy of its actions. Only 17.8% of respondents said they belong or have a member of your household who participate in some community organization. The most common form of association among those who claimed to belong to a local group, are the "religious or spiritual groups" with 45% of answers, which shows the importance of the churches in the community organization of the city. Only 3% of respondents claimed participating in some neighborhood committee, as do groups and community organizations focused on health (2%) and education (1%). Among the entrepreneurs, the majority (90.6%) did not participate in meetings with other companies in town (or district) and claimed being unaware of the existence of associations or entities of any kind, representing them.

It is known that the community education level is a major determinant of its ability to mobilize and self-management. However, the survey of residents showed that the education of residents of tourist regions proposed is very low, with cases, such as the region 3 (Ribeira of Galleons), where only 4.2% of residents enrolled in higher education and 50 % of respondents have no more than elementary school. The great disparity of this indicator among the regions surveyed suggests that the difficulties in implementing local governance systems will be unevenly distributed. At the same time, with regard to professional qualifications, it was perceived on the part of entrepreneurs, a lack of willingness to invest in training of its employees and certain amateurism in the adopted management practices.

There is no cooperation without confidence and without sharing goals. A worrying indicator raised by this research is the low level of trust that respondents nourish by their neighbors. Using the Likert scale, one can see that 60.2% of them do not trust most of the people who live in their community; only 5% said they rely on "local government"; 7% in the "state government" and 14% in "associations", which hinders the implementation of any short-term participatory governance structure. The institution "school" in the figure of teachers, appears as the only unifying element possible in any current mobilizing action, as it is referred to as the agent with the greatest influence on the daily lives of communities.

Distrust leads to passivity and this trait of community life was demonstrated when 76% of residents surveyed said they had not met once in the past year, to claim some benefit to their neighborhood, because they believe that the government does not take into account their concerns. Those same citizens believe that there is a great inactivity on the part of public administration (87%) which, according to them, does not perform any action aimed to stimulate trade and the neighborhood economy. In what refers to the cohesion or sense of identity to the community in which they live, 49% (just under half) of respondents consider themselves close to their neighbors, although a significant portion considers that there are important differences between members of the community.

All these features, common not only to the residents and businesses of the surveyed subareas, but, in general, residents of the city, make insignificant the synergy of these potential capital microclusters.

Regarding the characteristics that define a tourist microcluster, starting by local and limited geographical scope, the proposed sub-areas presented to respondents was supported by the opinion of the majority, that the neighborhoods have some kind of similarity with theirs and, therefore, carry an identity that unites them. In most cases, this response was positive for more than one district, which also denotes the perception on the part of residents, of the existence of groups of places that share a common identity, forming regions with its own characteristics.

Trade relations, as well as all network relations are fragile or non-existent, as already mentioned. Allied to this factor, the level of services diversification to ensure full compliance with the needs of tourists in these sub-areas is not enough, notably regarding the possibility of accommodation and entertainment. Although most respondents entrepreneurs consider incoming tourism revenue as "very important", there is a large concentration of these businesses in the segment of bars, restaurants and commerce in general.

The infrastructure conditions are not satisfactory either, in all the surveyed sub-areas, notably with regard to public safety. To the question of the degree of violence of the location (neighborhood) in which respondents live, 57.8% of them consider their place of residence as a violent one, as well as a belief that the growth of violence rates has been very high. The infrastructural

shortcomings are felt by all, but have an important geographical component, since the respondents have different levels of dissatisfaction, depending on how touristic are the sub-areas where they are located, as the government's actions appear to this group as concentrated within the city, serving certain interests. However, most of the responding companies told they did not notice any kind of outside interference, and that, for them, the development of tourism is a spontaneous phenomenon.

Finally, the offer features that date back to a different image, known in tourism as a single original offer, are not recognized by residents and local business owners, especially those that are located in less touristic areas, such as the Liberdade area. Overall, the recognition of this potential by the same residents was uneven, with 40.3% of them believing that there is nothing that can describe their neighborhood as a touristic one. This is another aspect that raises more in-depth discussions regarding the consolidation of proposed regions or even about the creation of new ones, in view of the great potential of the city. But one thing is fundamental: that of Salvador tourism administration recognizes the monotony of the established product and the lack of a proactive trade, capable of creating new and creative tours and cultural routes. The competitiveness of the destination depends heavily on this factor.

In the face of all that has been pointed out, there is much to accomplish in order to successfully implement the city's regionalization proposed and to adopt its division into urban microclusters as a basis for a system of governance in support of Salvador tourism development. Creating tours and creative cultural routes delimited territorially, as suggested here, in a participatory manner, involving community residents and local business owners in their design and operation, may be an interesting starting point. It is known that this is not a short-term process, but recent results of tourism in Salvador leave no doubt that a sort of critical actions should be taken in order to change the governance and structuring of this important activity.

The current administration of the municipal government, with the creation of boroughs and proactive consultancy among city residents about the needs and difficulties they face in the neighborhoods where they live, among other actions, are signals of progress towards the analysis and proposals identified here as fundamental needs for a more competitive and developed activity in Salvador.

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