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CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES FROM 2010 TO 2025

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes public tourism management in the state of Sergipe between 2010 and 2025, aiming to understand how policies, investments, governmental actions, and governance mechanisms contributed to tourism development and regional growth. The research acknowledges tourism as a strategic activity for job creation, income generation, and cultural enhancement, whose effectiveness, however, depends on planning, administrative continuity, and institutional capacity. Using a qualitative and documentary approach, the study examines official documents, national and state tourism programs, planning instruments, sectoral data, and theoretical references on public policy, sustainability, governance, and regional development. It also considers the perception of stakeholders involved in the sector, highlighting progress related to destination promotion, urban revitalization, and cultural heritage enhancement, as well as persistent challenges such as institutional fragility, policy discontinuity, and low regional integration. The findings indicate that, despite relevant initiatives, public tourism management in Sergipe still displays structural constraints that limit its effectiveness and its ability to foster sustainable development. The study concludes that strengthening tourism governance, consolidating long-term policies, improving professional training, and enhancing municipal cooperation are essential for tourism to become a strategic public policy for the state.

Keywords: Tourism; Public Management; Public Policy; Regional Development; Sergipe.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dream of mine to my son Luke, my driving force. To my daughter Emma, my safe harbor. You are my greatest treasures.

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."
(Proust, 1991, p. 67).

SUMMARY

LIST OF CHARTS AND TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CADASTUR – Registry of Tourist Service Providers
IGR – Regional Governance Body
MTur – Ministry of Tourism
UNWTO – World Tourism Organization
PNT – National Tourism Plan
PNQT – National Policy for Qualification in Tourism
PRT – Tourism Regionalization Program
PRODETUR/NE – Tourism Development Program in the Northeast
SEDEST – State Secretariat of Tourism of Sergipe
SETUR/SE – State Secretariat of Tourism of Sergipe
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Over recent decades, tourism has consolidated itself as one of the most significant sectors of the global economy, acting as one of the principal vectors of territorial dynamization, employment and income generation, strengthening of cultural identities, and promotion of social integration. According to global trends indicated by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023), tourism has shown a remarkable recovery following the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, reaffirming its strategic role in sustainable development and in building more resilient societies. In Brazil, this reality acquires distinctive characteristics, marked by a combination of natural wealth, cultural diversity, and structural challenges inherent to public policies aimed at tourism. Since the early 2000s, successive federal governments have implemented incentive, regulation, and promotion programs, such as the National Tourism Plan (PNT), the Tourism Regionalization Program, and the National PRODETUR, which sought to strengthen basic infrastructure, foster professional qualification, and promote the competitiveness of Brazilian destinations both nationally and internationally.

This scenario of transformation and appreciation of tourism policies also reached the state of Sergipe which, although the smallest in the country in territorial extension, presents an expressive set of natural, cultural, and historical assets that make it a destination with relevant potential in the Northeast. Between 2010 and 2025, the Sergipe government underwent different institutional configurations, administrative reorganizations, redefinitions of priorities, and variable investment cycles in the sector, reflecting both advances and limitations of a public policy still in the process of structuring. Interventions such as the requalification of the Atalaia Waterfront, revitalization of cultural spaces, promotion of the Historic Center of São Cristóvão inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, and strengthening of cultural events represented significant advances during the period. Nevertheless, challenges persist related to the interiorization of the activity, institutional fragility in many municipalities, dependence on external capital, and constant oscillation of administrative priorities due to political changes.

In this context, tourism in Sergipe assumes not only economic but also sociocultural and strategic importance. The activity generates employment and income, stimulates local entrepreneurship, strengthens artisanal production, contributes to the conservation of historical heritage, and encourages the creation of new productive arrangements. However, its effectiveness depends directly on the quality of public management, continuity of implemented policies, and institutional capacity of the bodies responsible for planning, executing, and evaluating programs and investments. Public tourism management, as argued by Cruz (2010) and Beni (2020), should be understood as a multidimensional process involving planning, governance, social participation, investments, professional training, and intersectoral articulation—elements that do not always develop in a balanced or integrated manner. In Sergipe, such dimensions take on distinct contours, influenced by local political dynamics, territorial inequalities, and the technical capacity of each administration.

The socioeconomic relevance of tourism as public policy becomes even more evident in Sergipe, where the economy exhibits strong dependence on traditional activities such as public administration, services, and industry. Economic diversification—a particularly urgent need in states with small territorial scale—finds in tourism a promising field to reduce regional inequalities, stimulate sustainable development, and strengthen productive chains linked to leisure, culture, gastronomy, handicrafts, and natural heritage. Broadly speaking, tourism has the potential to integrate local communities, expand the supply of professional opportunities, and consolidate new strategies of territorial valorization. Yet this potential remains partially explored when public policies are not implemented in a continuous and planned manner.

The rationale for this research is grounded in three essential dimensions. The academic justification lies in the gap in in-depth studies on public tourism management in Sergipe from a longitudinal perspective covering the period 2010 to 2025. Despite the accumulation of research on consolidated destinations in the Northeast—such as Bahia, Ceará, and Pernambuco—it is observed that Sergipe remains relatively marginalized in the national literature, even though it possesses singular characteristics regarding tourism potential, public policies, and territorial identity. The practical justification emerges from the need to provide technical support for managers, councils, and institutions involved with tourism, expanding access to reliable information that enables the formulation of more efficient, sustainable strategies consistent with regional challenges. Finally, the social justification is based on the importance of understanding the effects of tourism on people's lives, given that its expansion can generate positive impacts such as productive inclusion, cultural valorization, and increased income, but also challenges related to environmental sustainability, pressure on natural resources, and management of socio-territorial conflicts.

Given this scenario, the central research problem guiding this study consists in answering the following question: how did public tourism management in Sergipe, in the period from 2010 to 2025, contribute to the state's tourism and regional development, considering the formulation and implementation of policies, governance mechanisms, and the perceptions of different actors involved in the sector? This question encompasses the analysis of public policies, investments, forms of social participation, institutional capacity, structural challenges, and impacts perceived by the community and tourism agents, constituting a comprehensive and necessary approach to understand the evolution of tourism during the period.

The general objective of the research is to analyze public tourism management in Sergipe between 2010 and 2025, examining its policies, results, and effectiveness as an instrument of regional development. The specific objectives include: identifying and contextualizing state tourism policies implemented throughout the period; evaluating their effectiveness considering elements such as budget,

governance, planning, and tourism promotion; analyzing the perceptions of local actors—managers, entrepreneurs, workers, and community—regarding tourism impacts; identifying structural and conjunctural challenges that influence public sector management; and pointing out perspectives and recommendations to strengthen tourism as a strategic public policy.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters that dialogue with each other and structure the analytical trajectory of the research. Following this Introduction, **Chapter 1 – Literature Review** presents the theoretical references underpinning the study, bringing together discussions on public tourism policies, governance, regional development, social participation, and related studies that address national and international experiences. This chapter provides the conceptual basis necessary to interpret the processes examined throughout the work. The Literature Review, presented in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, was organized to ensure a comprehensive, critical, and coherent understanding of the main concepts, theories, and studies that support the analysis of public tourism management in Sergipe. Each section was structured to progressively build the theoretical support required for interpreting the results presented in Chapter 3, enabling the reader to recognize the scientific foundations upon which the work rests. Thus, the chapter is divided into four major thematic axes that interrelate and address—from fundamental concepts of tourism to related studies at national and international scope—offering a broad and consistent view of the field investigated.

The first section of the review, entitled "**Tourism and Regional Development,**" presents the essential concepts for understanding tourism as a social, economic, and territorial phenomenon. In this part, classical definitions of tourism, its structuring characteristics, and its relevance within the contemporary economy are discussed, engaging with authors such as Beni, Lohmann, Panosso Netto, Hall, and other seminal researchers. Moreover, this section explores tourism's role as an instrument of regional development, analyzing its capacity to generate employment and income, stimulate complementary activities, valorize local identities, and promote economic dynamization in territories with specific vocations. The debate on territorial development is associated with the Brazilian context, showing how tourism has been used as a strategy to reduce regional inequalities, especially in historically peripheral regions like the Northeast.

Next, the review delves into the section "**Public Tourism Policies,**" which constitutes a fundamental axis of the chapter, as it provides the theoretical basis necessary to understand the State's role in sector planning and management. This part discusses concepts of public policies, the policy cycle, instruments of governmental action, and specific characteristics of tourism policies. It explores national documents and programs such as the National Tourism Plan (PNT), the Tourism Regionalization Program, PRODETUR, and other federal initiatives that directly influenced Brazilian states between 2010 and 2025. Authors like Cruz, Beni, and Ansarah provide conceptual support to discuss the relationship

between State, market, and community in the formulation of public policies. This section also presents debates on the importance of institutionalization, administrative continuity, budget allocation, and evaluation of results—fundamental elements for analyzing public tourism management in Sergipe.

The third section of the chapter, called **"Governance, Planning, and Social Participation in Tourism,"** discusses the role of participatory bodies, collaborative networks, and mechanisms of shared management in strengthening public policies. Based on authors such as Bramwell, Lane, Dredge, Jenkins, and Hall, this part explores concepts such as tourism governance, decentralization, tourism councils, regional forums, governance instances, and management committees. It discusses how governance can promote greater efficiency and legitimacy in tourism policies by integrating different actors—public managers, entrepreneurs, workers, civil society organizations, and local communities. Themes such as social participation, the importance of integrated management among administrative spheres, and the need for territorial articulation for developing regional itineraries are also addressed. This section plays a central role in understanding the reality of Sergipe, marked by institutional fragilities and low integration among municipalities.

Subsequently, the review presents the section "Impacts of Tourism: Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Dimensions," which discusses the main positive and negative effects of tourism, based on studies assessing transformations in different territories worldwide. Economic impacts are analyzed, such as job creation, economic dynamization, and the strengthening of the service sector; sociocultural impacts, including heritage valorization, reinforcement of local identity, community tensions, and changes in residents' daily life; and environmental impacts tied to pressure on natural areas, ecosystem degradation, and the need for sustainable practices. This section directly dialogues with the analysis of local actors' perceptions presented in Chapter 3, as it provides the theoretical framework necessary to interpret how residents, entrepreneurs, and managers perceive the effects of tourism in Sergipe.

Another fundamental component is the section titled "Sustainability and Tourism," which deepens the debate on sustainable practices and responsible development. This part discusses concepts such as sustainable tourism, community-based tourism, ecotourism, responsible tourism, and environmental certifications. International models of sustainable destination management are presented, along with strategies adopted in different parts of the world to reduce negative impacts and promote tourism aligned with the UN's 2030 Agenda. This section is essential for grounding the discussion on the sector's challenges and perspectives in Sergipe, especially regarding management of natural areas, pressure on the waterfront, and the São Francisco River canyons.

The final section of the chapter corresponds to "**Related National and International Studies**," which examines research addressing public tourism policies in other Brazilian states and international

destinations. This part enables comparisons, identification of good practices, recognition of trends, and understanding of limitations common to tourism management. Successful experiences in the Northeast—such as regionalization policies in Ceará, cultural investments in Bahia, and interiorization programs in Rio Grande do Norte—are presented, as well as international studies investigating models of governance, sustainability, tourism promotion, and integrated management. This section broadens the theoretical repertoire of the research and offers parameters to interpret Sergipe's reality from a comparative perspective.

In this way, the Literature Review fulfills the function of constructing a robust theoretical panel that underpins all analyses carried out throughout the work. Each section contributes in a complementary manner to understanding the phenomenon investigated, from its conceptual bases to international comparisons, articulating debates on public policies, governance, sustainability, and social impacts. This theoretical set allows for a critical, contextualized, and multidimensional interpretation of public tourism management in Sergipe, ensuring scientific support for the conclusions presented in the research.

Chapter 2 – Methodology describes the methodological procedures adopted, justifying the qualitative and documentary approach used, in addition to detailing data collection and analysis techniques, criteria for selecting documents, interviews, and instruments used for critical interpretation of information.

Chapter 3 – Results and Discussion constitutes the analytical core of the dissertation. It presents and discusses, in depth, the primary findings of the research, distributed across four axes: (a) the overview of public tourism policies implemented in Sergipe between 2010 and 2025; (b) the evaluation of public management effectiveness, reflecting on its advances and limitations; (c) the perceptions of local actors regarding tourism impacts; and (d) the sector's challenges and perspectives for the coming years. By integrating documentary analysis, official data, actors' perceptions, and theoretical references, this chapter seeks to build a critical and consistent interpretation of tourism management in the state. Finally, **Chapter 4 – Final Considerations** presents the study's conclusions, highlighting theoretical and practical contributions, methodological limitations, and suggestions for future research and for the improvement of public tourism policies in Sergipe.

Thus, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the debate on the role of tourism as a public policy capable of promoting sustainable development, social inclusion, and cultural valorization, pointing out possible paths for strengthening public management and tourism governance in Sergipe, as well as consolidating tourism as a strategic policy for the state's future.

FOUNDATIONS OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Administration, in its broadest sense, is an element present in everyone's daily life. Any space where human coexistence occurs requires the art of managing for its organization to be effective. In this interstice, Public Management presents itself as an instrument of utmost importance for managing society.

Historical Context of Public Management

Public management, as a field of knowledge and administrative practice, presents a long historical trajectory that overlaps with the very formation of the State and with the different models of social, political, and economic organization that have marked humanity. In its origin, the administration of collective goods was associated with centralized political power in the figures of monarchs, tribal chiefs, and emperors, who exercised functions of command and coordination according to their own wills and interests. In this context, there was no clear separation between public and private patrimony, because the ruler was understood as the absolute holder of the community's goods and resources. According to Motta (2003), only from the formation of modern States in the 15th and 16th centuries, with the consolidation of national monarchies and the strengthening of bureaucracy, did the first signs of a more structured administrative apparatus arise, aimed at serving the collective and guided by norms and principles that would later give rise to public management as a science.

The advent of the modern State brought with it administrative centralization, marked by the creation of permanent and hierarchical bureaucratic structures. The bureaucratic model, subsequently systematized by Max Weber, became a reference for the organization of public administration, based on legal rationality, impersonality, hierarchy, and professionalization of civil servants (Weber, 1999). During this period, the idea was consolidated that public administration should function as a rational machine, with well-defined functions, separation between private and collective interests, and focus on compliance with laws and regulations. This model was essential to ensure predictability, stability, and continuity of state management, especially in societies undergoing transformation and growth.

However, the development of public management cannot be understood without considering the economic, social, and political movements that shaped different historical periods. During the 19th century, with the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism, States began to assume a more active role in regulating the economy and promoting basic public services. According to Nascimento (2017), it was during this period that public management began to articulate more clearly around social objectives, such as poverty reduction, expansion of education, and improvement of population living conditions. This movement was linked to the emergence of the liberal State which, although defending minimal governmental intervention, recognized the need for an efficient administrative apparatus to guarantee order, security, and protection of individual rights.

With the crisis of economic liberalism in the early 20th century, especially after the Great Depression of 1929, there was a significant transformation in the role of the State and, consequently, in public management. From the New Deal in the United States and the welfare policies adopted in Europe, the Welfare State was consolidated, in which public administration became responsible for a broad set of social policies, such as health, social security, education, and assistance. This model required a considerable expansion of bureaucracy and the creation of new mechanisms of planning, coordination, and evaluation. For Cavalcante (2017), this moment was crucial for establishing the notion that public management should serve economic and social development, going beyond mere regulation and assuming a central role in promoting collective well-being.

In Latin America and Brazil, the trajectory of public management assumed its own characteristics, strongly influenced by internal political and historical processes. For much of the 20th century, Brazilian public administration was marked by patrimonialist and clientelist practices, in which there was confusion between State interests and private interests of political and economic elites. Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1995) had already pointed to this cultural heritage by describing the "cordial man," whose personal logic permeated administrative organization and compromised the impersonality necessary for public service. In this sense, Brazil faced difficulties in consolidating a model of public management that was rational and guided by legal and institutional principles, coexisting with practices of favoritism and inefficiency.

The Federal Constitution of 1988 represented a fundamental milestone in the organization of Brazilian public administration. The constitutional text established basic principles for public management—legality, impersonality, morality, publicity, and efficiency—set out in Article 37, and reinforced the State's importance as the guarantor of social rights and promoter of broad public policies (Brazil, 1988). In addition, the Constitution opened space for social participation in public management, recognizing mechanisms of control and oversight by civil society, in line with democratic transformations experienced after the period of military dictatorship.

However, the end of the 20th century was also marked by the rise of the neoliberal ethos, which directly influenced public management practices in several countries, including Brazil. The movement known as New Public Management (NPM) sought to bring public administration closer to typical private-sector models, prioritizing efficiency, results, and accountability. According to Chaves (2019), this approach represented a partial rupture with traditional bureaucracy, introducing management instruments based on performance indicators, administrative decentralization, and focus on citizen-user satisfaction.

With Constitutional Amendment No. 19/98, Brazilian public management explicitly incorporated the principle of efficiency, reaffirming the commitment to administrative modernization and the quest for greater rationality in the use of public resources. This reform was inspired by the Master Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus, prepared in the 1990s, which sought to make the State more agile, less

costly, and more efficient (Bresser-Pereira, 1998). From that moment on, Brazilian public management began to incorporate managerial practices without abandoning constitutional principles, in an attempt to reconcile administrative efficiency and social responsibility.

In the 2000s and 2010s, the intensification of information and communication technologies represented another milestone in the evolution of public management. So-called electronic governance (e-gov) brought innovations in access to services, transparency, and social control. Vinhas (2022) notes that the use of digital platforms, big data, and government applications enabled greater interaction between State and citizens, expanding the visibility of public actions and strengthening democratic accountability. However, challenges such as digital exclusion, information security, and cultural resistance still limit the full utilization of these tools (De Oliveira Leite; Rezende, 2017).

In contemporary times, public management faces the dilemma of balancing administrative efficiency, transparency, and citizen participation in a scenario marked by economic crises, social pressures, and rapid technological changes. Nascimento (2017) emphasizes that today's society is more demanding, valuing ethics, fiscal responsibility, and social justice, which imposes new performance standards on the State. Thus, public management needs to reinvent itself constantly, incorporating innovations while preserving democratic and constitutional principles.

In summary, the historical context of public management reveals a continuous evolution that accompanies humanity's political, social, and economic transformations. From a patrimonialist and centralized model, the trajectory moved to Weberian rational bureaucracy, the Welfare State, and, more recently, New Public Management and digital governance. Each phase brought advances and challenges, shaping a trajectory still under construction. In the Brazilian case, the consolidation of democracy, the realization of social rights, and technological modernization constitute the major axes that direct public management in the 21st century, reaffirming its essential role in promoting economic, social, and human development.

Concepts and Principles of Public Management

Public management constitutes an interdisciplinary field that integrates diverse theories, concepts, and practices oriented to the operation of the state apparatus. In essence, this area applies the principles of organization, planning, leadership, and control to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the execution of public services and implementation of governmental policies. It is an ongoing process of choices, in which available resources are directed toward collective objectives and social needs. Nascimento (2017) explains that management must be constantly improved so that, in the public sector, its function is to reduce inequalities, expand access to education, strengthen the economy, promote environmental

preservation, and foster culture. Thus, all administrative practice must be strategically oriented toward economic and social development (Nascimento, 2017, p. 7).

In this way, public management aims to achieve greater effectiveness in its processes, reducing social disparities and offering better services to the population. By effectively fulfilling its functions, it contributes to improving quality of life, promoting economic growth, and generating social advances in its context of action. For this to be possible, its performance must be guided by fundamental principles that orient the use and distribution of governmental resources, ensuring the proper functioning of institutions and protection of the collective interest. Among these principles are legality, impersonality, morality, publicity, and efficiency (Cavalcante, 2017).

As in other areas of management, public management must follow its own principles to ensure quality, safety, and efficiency. These foundations are provided in Article 37 of the Federal Constitution of 1988:

"Art. 37. The direct and indirect public administration of any of the Powers of the Union, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities shall obey the principles of legality, impersonality, morality, publicity and efficiency" (Brazil, 1988).

Beyond the constitutional principles, public administration also adopts others, such as proportionality, reasonableness, and legal certainty, which reinforce the idea that the State does not possess absolute power. Its entire performance must respect the legal framework and constitutional parameters.

Among the principles, legality is central, as it ensures that administration can only act when there is legal provision. The Federal Constitution, in Articles 5, II and 153, § 2, enshrines this principle. As Miranda (2008, p. 5) highlights, public administration cannot act against the law (*contra legem*), beyond the law (*praeter legem*), or outside its limits, but only according to the law (*secundum legem*). This reinforces that the State must submit to legal norms, with the law being sovereign over state power itself.

Another essential principle is impersonality, which ensures that public management acts in a neutral and impartial manner, avoiding favoritism or personal persecution. Administrative acts must always aim at the collective interest, and any deviations are attributed to the public body, not to the individual civil servant. The principle of morality establishes that administrative actions not only comply with the law but are also aligned with ethical values, justice, and equity. Miranda (2007, p. 6) observes that formally legal acts may be materially immoral when practiced with the intention of improperly harming or benefiting someone, constituting administrative misconduct.

The principle of publicity, in turn, imposes disclosure of administrative acts, except when secrecy is necessary, ensuring transparency and enabling greater social participation in oversight of public power. As Miranda (2008, p. 8) points out, the administrator is not the owner of public patrimony, but merely a

temporary manager who must render accounts to the collectivity. The principle of efficiency, incorporated by Constitutional Amendment No. 19/98, seeks to reconcile quality, economy of resources, and better results for society.

According to Barbosa (2011, p. 5), observing these principles is decisive for preventing practices such as resource diversion and illicit enrichment from becoming common and socially accepted. Therefore, it falls to the public manager to confront such conduct, prioritizing the collective interest over personal relationships and privileges.

Although public management and public administration possess similarities, relevant distinctions exist. Both are directed toward the common good, but public administration refers more to the execution of organizational processes, while public management incorporates new practices, many inspired by the private sector, in search of greater innovation, entrepreneurship, and renewal. Motta (2003) defines management as the practice of planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and controlling, while Chaves (2019) notes that public administration materializes in administrative management applied to state institutions. Morais (2009) complements by differentiating direct administration linked to the Union and ministries from indirect administration composed of autarchies, foundations, and public companies.

Thus, public management is broader and more modern, as it incorporates methods that aim not only at greater administrative efficiency but also at better quality in service delivery. For Nascimento (2017), its function is tied to the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies, always oriented toward collective well-being. In this sense, the public manager should rely on four pillars: planning, organization, direction, and control (Chaves, 2019). According to Garces and Silveira (2002), planning requires comprehensive knowledge of information; organization ensures proper operation; direction guides administration toward achieving goals; and control ensures continuous evaluation of services provided.

Nevertheless, modernization of public management also brought challenges. Cósio (2018) points out that adopting new administrative models requires greater social participation but still faces resistance both from state bureaucracy and civil society. Baptista (2010) adds that pressure for quality public services continues to be one of the main weaknesses of Brazilian administration. To face this reality, technological resources have become fundamental allies, as observed by Balbe (2010).

The digital era intensified the need for modernization, making technology essential for efficiency, transparency, and interaction between government and society. Nascimento (2017, p. 8) emphasizes that society began to value ethics, fiscal responsibility, and transparency, and information technologies expand citizen participation and social control mechanisms (accountability). Tools such as big data, mobile applications, digital services, and integrated management systems have already been incorporated, favoring greater efficiency and proximity between State and citizens (Vinhas, 2022).

Despite advances, challenges persist. De Oliveira Leite and Rezende (2017) highlight barriers such as information security, digital exclusion, and privacy, in addition to cultural and institutional resistance. For this reason, it is essential that managers are prepared to ensure adequate solutions and that these technologies are applied in consonance with constitutional principles.

In summary, contemporary public management combines classical foundations with technological innovation, promoting a more efficient, transparent, and citizen-centered administration. Although it faces barriers, it represents a concrete opportunity to improve public services, ensuring greater quality, effectiveness, and legitimacy in meeting society's needs.

Governance, Accountability, and Social Participation

The evolution of contemporary public management has been marked by the growing appreciation of concepts such as governance, accountability, and social participation. These elements, though distinct in their definitions and dimensions, constitute interdependent pillars for building a more efficient, democratic administration committed to the collective interest. Their relevance emerges from recognizing that the State—historically associated with bureaucratic and centralized practices—must respond to social demands more transparently, participatively, and results-oriented (Abrucio, 2007; Matias-Pereira, 2010).

The concept of public governance strengthens with administrative reforms driven by the New Public Management (NPM) movement, which introduced practices of efficiency, results control, and administrative decentralization. However, the notion of governance goes beyond a purely managerial logic, encompassing the capacity to coordinate multiple actors—state and non-state—in decision-making processes and policy implementation. Secchi (2009) highlights that public governance involves cooperation networks that include government, civil society, and market, breaking with the idea that the State alone is responsible for conducting the public sphere.

In this scenario, accountability becomes an indispensable mechanism to ensure that public managers are held responsible for their decisions from both technical and ethical standpoints. The concept may be understood in two main dimensions: vertical accountability, referring to control exercised by citizens through voting and social pressure; and horizontal accountability, carried out by oversight and control institutions, such as audit courts, public prosecutors, and legislative bodies (O'Donnell, 1998). For Bresser-Pereira (1998), accountability is not restricted to a set of formal instruments but represents the consolidation of a political culture of responsibility and transparency—fundamental for democratic consolidation.

Social participation, in turn, constitutes the basis of legitimacy of public management. Since the 1988 Constitution, Brazil has institutionally strengthened participatory mechanisms such as public policy councils, participatory budgeting, and national sectoral conferences. These instruments opened space for

different social segments to intervene directly in policy formulation and monitoring processes, expanding the democratization of the State (Gohn, 2011). Nevertheless, as Paes de Paula (2005) points out, social participation should not be seen merely as a complement to management but as part of a new public governance paradigm in which civil society becomes a protagonist.

The integration of governance, accountability, and social participation has been indicated as essential to address the dilemmas of public management in contexts marked by social inequalities, crises of institutional legitimacy, and increasing demands for transparency. Abrucio (2007) argues that governance only strengthens when accompanied by effective accountability mechanisms and consistent channels of social participation, preventing clientelist and patrimonialist practices from reproducing within the State.

However, practicing these principles still faces significant challenges. In many cases, participatory mechanisms end up being captured by political elites or interest groups, compromising representativeness (Avritzer, 2002). Similarly, accountability—though strengthened by normative and institutional advances—still suffers limitations when access to public information is not universalized, or when oversight bodies lack autonomy and resources to fully exercise their functions (Matias-Pereira, 2010).

Despite these obstacles, strengthening governance, accountability, and social participation constitutes a strategic agenda for consolidating democracy and improving public management. More than technical instruments, these principles represent normative values guiding the relationship between State and society. In a context of increasing complexity of public policies—with the presence of multiple actors and divergent interests—democratic governance based on transparency, responsibility, and participation appears as a path to building a more legitimate, responsive, and efficient State (Secchi, 2009; Marini; Martins, 2010).

Thus, contemporary public management, by incorporating these concepts, approaches a conception of administration oriented not only to administrative or economic results but also to promoting collective well-being, social justice, and consolidation of citizenship. The major challenge is to transform such principles into effective practices, preventing them from remaining mere normative ideals. To this end, it is essential to develop public policies that strengthen a culture of participation, expand government transparency, and consolidate mechanisms of political, administrative, and social responsibility. Only then will it be possible to move toward a truly democratic public management model in which governance, accountability, and social participation are not simply concepts but concrete realities structuring State functioning and life in society.

TOURISM AS PUBLIC POLICY

Tourism, as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, goes far beyond the limited understanding of a simple economic activity oriented toward leisure or consumption. It is a field that articulates cultural, social, economic, environmental, political, and symbolic dimensions, embedded in broad systems of social production and reproduction (Beni, 2006; Jafari, 2005). In this sense, understanding tourism as public policy entails recognizing its transversality, its capacity to produce structural impacts on societies, and its direct relationship with territorial dynamics, ways of life, and developmental processes.

Authors such as Hall (2004) and Jenkins (2000) reinforce that tourism is consolidated effectively only when integrated into a logic of long-term state planning, since its positive or negative externalities cannot be managed solely by the private sector. State intervention is indispensable for ensuring equity, sustainability, and protection of collective interests, especially in territories that are socially, culturally, or environmentally vulnerable.

From this understanding, tourism began to be the object of public policies more formally in the second half of the twentieth century, when governments and international organizations came to recognize its potential to dynamize economies, promote territorial cohesion, and strengthen countries' images on the global stage (UNWTO, 2001). Nevertheless, contemporary debate has advanced beyond this economistic view, highlighting the need for policies that consider host populations, traditional communities, cultural heritage, and natural ecosystems as central elements in decision-making processes (Bramwell; Lane, 2011).

In Brazil, this institutionalization process was late but significant. The 1988 Federal Constitution represented a milestone by including tourism as an activity relevant to national socio-economic development and by establishing shared competencies among the Union, states, and municipalities. From the 1990s onward—particularly with the creation of the Ministry of Tourism in 2003—the country began to structure a national policy with clearer guidelines, integrating planning, regulation, professional qualification, and regionalization (Brasil, 2003). This movement was consolidated with successive National Tourism Plans (PNTs), which established targets related to increasing tourist flows, enhancing competitiveness, sustainable development, and social inclusion.

The policy of tourism regionalization, officially initiated in 2004, represents one of the most paradigmatic changes in national policy. By recognizing territory as a structuring element, the Tourism Regionalization Program broke with centralized models and invested in collaborative intermunicipal arrangements, strengthening regional identities and promoting integrated actions (Cruz, 2010; Dias, 2008). According to Ansarah (2002), this policy also helped expand social participation, since it brought decision-making closer to local communities and social actors previously excluded from planning processes.

However, building public tourism policy requires much more than normative instruments. It requires governance, institutional capacity, intersectoral articulation, and strategic vision. Bramwell and Lane (2011), in discussing collaborative governance, argue that inclusive decision-making processes—based on negotiation and cooperation among public authorities, private initiative, and civil society—are essential to ensuring that tourism develops in a balanced, respectful manner. This perspective converges with Elinor Ostrom's (1990) reflections, which emphasize the importance of collective management of common-pool resources—also applicable to tourism in the management of cultural and natural heritage.

Furthermore, tourism as public policy must dialogue with global sustainability agendas. The Agenda 21 for Tourism—published by UNWTO and UNEP—and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDGs 8, 11, 12, and 14, underscore that tourism should be an instrument of development that is socially just, environmentally responsible, and economically viable. This implies policies that promote biodiversity conservation, valorization of local cultures, combating labor exploitation, and reducing inequalities (UNWTO, 2015).

Authors such as Sachs (2002) and Sen (2000) contribute to this discussion by relating development to freedom, equity, and justice. Tourism, when guided by consistent public policies, can serve as a channel to expand human capabilities, generate opportunities, and strengthen community protagonism. Conversely, when abandoned to market logic, it tends to reproduce inequalities, expropriate territories, and render cultural practices invisible, as Barretto (2003) and Urry (1996) caution.

Another fundamental aspect concerns professional qualification and innovation—dimensions frequently highlighted in official documents and academic research. Lohmann and Panosso Netto (2012) emphasize that contemporary tourism demands technical skills and socio-emotional competencies that far exceed customer service. Smart destinations, digital platforms, big data, market intelligence, and sustainability are elements that must be incorporated into public policies, lest the country lose global competitiveness. Thus, public tourism policies must include mechanisms for continuous capacity building, encouragement of scientific research, investments in technology, and incentives for innovation.

It is also important to underscore the role of public policies in strengthening cultural identities and promoting heritage. Santos (2012) asserts that tourism can function as a "vector of cultural resistance," provided it is oriented by policies that protect traditional communities, popular cultures, and local narratives. In this sense, social participation is indispensable: residents, community leaders, artisans, Indigenous peoples, Quilombolas, and other groups must be active agents in tourism planning, not merely spectators of processes that transform their territories.

From a critical standpoint, authors like Harvey (2005) and Lefebvre (1991) offer important reflections on the commodification of space and the right to the city. Applying these concepts to tourism reveals that public policies must avoid "touristification" practices that expel residents, raise the cost of

living, and transform living territories into products for consumption. The city, heritage, and territory must be understood as social spaces, not merely commodities.

Accordingly, public tourism management—when guided by transparency, social participation, responsibility, and equity—contributes not only to job and income generation but also to strengthening local identities, preserving cultural and natural heritage, and consolidating balanced, sustainable development. Tourism as public policy, therefore, is configured as a fundamental strategy for integrated territorial development in Brazil, integrating economic, cultural, social, and environmental dimensions, and recognizing the central role of communities in the decision-making process.

Tourism

Tourism is configured as a field of knowledge that, by nature, possesses a multidimensional, multisectoral, and multidisciplinary character. It is a socio-cultural phenomenon investigated by diverse areas that generally produce distinct—though often restrictive—definitions due to the absence of more consolidated interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives. The areas that predominate in tourism studies tend to analyze the phenomenon primarily through an economic lens, relegating its socio-cultural dimensions to the background. Consequently, it is common to find conceptions of development that, in practice, correspond only to economic growth, thereby reinforcing inequalities in resource distribution; conceptions of job creation that translate into cheap labor oriented toward investors' interests while disregarding local communities' knowledge; interpretations of wealth and poverty based exclusively on financial indicators without considering quality of life or access to and preservation of natural and cultural resources; and a notion of tourism exploitation that, in many cases, implies territorial expropriation. Faced with so many problematic interpretations, it becomes necessary to revisit certain parameters—including the very use of the term sustainability, as Godoy (2015) highlights:

> The concept of sustainability, which appears in the "Conceptual Frameworks of Tourism" (BRASIL. MTur, 2007)—an official document of the Ministry of Tourism and originating from the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987)—refers to the capacity to "meet the needs of the current generation without compromising resources for the satisfaction of future generations" (p. 10). It further indicates that tourism, in order to acquire a sustainable awareness, must be "planned and guided so as to involve the tourist in issues related to the conservation of the resources that constitute the heritage." (p. 10). According to these propositions, some controversies can already be identified if we compare official discourse with certain existing practices. (Godoy, 2015, online).

In this way, the presence of two broad fields of investigation in tourism becomes evident: one—majoritarian—directed at the business universe, emphasizing commercialization of tourism products, corporate strategies, sector legislation, and management processes; and another—still under development—focused on travelers' perceptions and the social impacts that tourism provokes (Tribe,

1997). Von Schullern (apud Ascanio, 2010) also underscores the existence of two antagonistic stances within tourism research. The first understands tourism as a source of wealth generation and, consequently, a promoter of well-being in receiving destinations, analyzed predominantly from an economic perspective. In this approach, it is macroeconomic well-being, and tourism is essentially viewed as an activity. In contrast, there is a phenomenological approach that highlights critical aspects such as rising cost of living for residents and other ethical issues related to the tourism presence. This line already points to concerns regarding the negative effects of tourism on local communities.

These two ways of interpreting tourism reflect power relations that shape its practices. The social construction of tourism tends to align itself with a hegemonic model oriented toward the "business world," supported by an official memory (Pollak, 1989) or national memory (Halbwachs, 2006), reinforced by UNWTO and other institutions with nation-building characteristics. In this process, a conception of tourism development aligned with corporate interests is consolidated. It is, however, equally necessary to recognize the so-called subterranean memories (Pollak, 1989), that is, marginalized social groups with less influence in decision-making who therefore remain invisible in tourism policies and official discourses. It is precisely these subjects—linked to subterranean memories—who should gain protagonism in tourism initiatives when seeking socially equitable development.

Scientific practices in tourism must be guided by ethical principles so that knowledge production contributes to reducing inequalities and avoids what Morin (2005) calls generalized irresponsibility—a situation in which science, driven by hyperspecialization, serves the interests of technobureaucratic institutions without previously considering its social impact. In tourism, hyperspecialization becomes even more problematic due to the phenomenon's complexity, which cannot be interpreted through rigid fragmentations or isolated perspectives. Thus, it is necessary to transcend the Cartesian paradigm in tourism studies, recognizing tourism as a non-disciplinary field (Moesch, 2002) or even as an indiscipline (Tribe, 1997). In this way, tourism knowledge production can be consolidated based on transversality.

Figure 1 – The transdisciplinary construction of the tourism knowledge field.
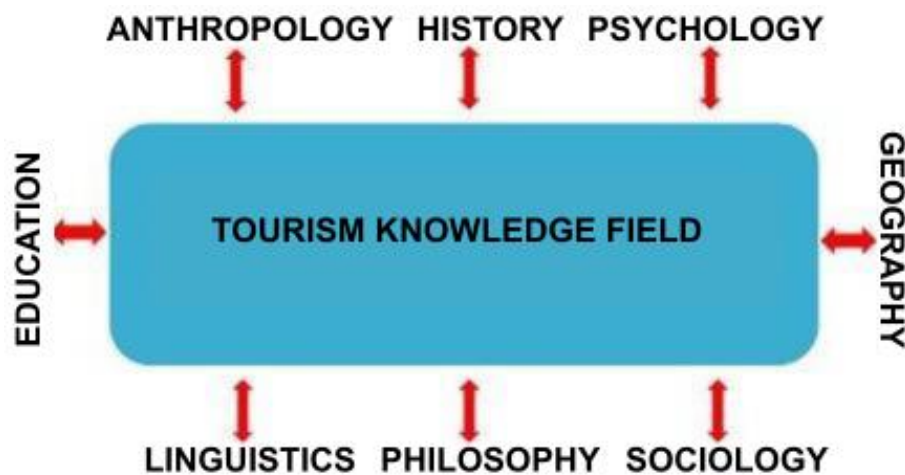
Source: Araújo, R. S. G.; Godoy, K. E (2016).

In the main core, Tourism as an area of knowledge begins to receive contributions from different disciplines and related fields that intersect it transversally. From this expanded interaction, new forms of knowledge emerge, interwoven to the point that it becomes difficult to delimit where each begins or ends. Traditional areas, in turn, may also be strengthened and renewed through reflections and knowledge produced in this transversality characteristic of the tourism phenomenon. Many phenomena arouse simultaneous interest across various areas, facilitating this interweaving. In Tourism, one element that permeates its multiple concepts is the act of "traveling." Whether in market-related research or socio-cultural studies, travel is always constitutive of tourism. Ascanio (2010) even attempted to characterize Tourism as a Social Science of Travel—an attempt not consolidated, given that not every trip is configured as tourism, although every tourism practice involves displacement. Different areas—disciplinary or otherwise—also take travel as an object of study or analytical instrument. Anthropology, for example, focuses on the interactions and cultural exchanges brought about by encounters between travelers and local populations; Geography debates displacements and their spatial implications; History explores records left by travelers—diaries, photographs—and considers diverse motivations to travel, which are not always associated with tourism, such as migration, participation in wars, or professional relocations, the latter widely discussed in the tourism field.

Initially, tourist trips were understood as those oriented toward leisure, undertaken in free time. However, new segmentations became consolidated, as in business tourism, in which certain professional trips are incorporated due to their occasional nature and experiential dimension, given that the traveler experiences cultural practices distinct from those of their place of origin—gastronomy, social norms, linguistic expressions, music, landscapes, religiosity, and transport systems, among others. Understanding the destination's cultural context can even influence negotiation processes. The term tourism is

historically situated and refers to travels arising from transformations of industrial society—marked by the rigid separation between work time and non-work time and the intensification of production and consumption relations, in which almost everything acquires market value, including leisure and access to culture. In this sense, Horkheimer and Adorno (1997, p. 175) affirm that "the products of the culture industry can be certain of being jovially consumed, even in a state of distraction." Thus, trips become means of energizing the economy within capitalist logic, and tourism gains centrality by treating culture as merchandise.

Scientific and technological advances in information, communication, and transport fields spurred the emergence of a society marked by mobility. Within capitalism, however, this mobility coexists with deep inequalities that are often hidden by apparent globalized "accessibility," which, in practice, is not realized for everyone. Elliott and Urry (2010), from a sociological perspective—even though this discussion is traditionally within geography and urbanism—analyze so-called mobile lives, considering aspects such as the ability to move, available resources, time and opportunities, as well as distinct modes of traveling: embodied movements, physical circulation of objects, imaginary travel, virtual travel, and communicative travel. These types do not occur separately; they are continually connected through transversality and intertwine at various moments. In Tourism, embodied displacement is the most relevant, as it involves people who travel for various reasons, many recognized as tourism—such as leisure, visiting relatives, and certain professional trips.

Based on Bourdieu's (2007) concept of social distinction, Elliott and Urry (2010) highlight an elite that enjoys the privileges of mobility provided by mobile-life logic, while the mobility of some depends on the immobility of others. In tourism, although certain destinations receive visitors from various parts of the world, local workers will hardly have the means to visit those tourists' countries of origin; and, in those same places of origin, other workers maintain the infrastructure that makes such displacements possible. Thus, even with tourism's significant global growth in recent decades, the predominant model—market-based and grounded in social distinction—remains inaccessible to a large portion of the population, becoming, therefore, a social problem. To deepen understanding of tourism as a socio-cultural phenomenon, it is necessary to reflect on concepts such as Social Tourism and Cultural Tourism, analyzing critically the extent to which they correspond to the processual conception of tourism as a phenomenon or to the propositional conception of tourism as an activity.

As an object of study, tourism possesses conceptual definitions dating back to the early twentieth century. One of the first was developed in 1910 by Austrian economist Herman von Schullard, cited by Andrade (1995, pp. 32–33), who understood tourism as the sum of operations—chiefly economic—related to the entry, stay, and movement of foreigners across different territories. In the same perspective,

Picard (apud Andrade, 1995, p. 33) emphasized that tourism's main function was attracting foreign currency to receiving countries, highlighting the sector's economic impact, especially in hospitality.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, apud Ignarra, 2001, p. 23) defined tourism as displacements outside one's habitual residence for a period exceeding 24 hours and less than 60 days, provided they are not motivated by economic reasons. Subsequently, broader concepts emerged—such as Marhiot's (apud Jachinoski, 1975, p. 4), who describes tourism as a set of principles governing leisure or utility trips, involving both the traveler's actions and those of people who receive and facilitate the traveler's movement.

In the same vein, Andrade (1995, p. 38) defined tourism structurally as a complex of activities and services linked to transport, lodging, food, circulation of tourism products, cultural practices, visits, leisure, and entertainment. Complementarily, Lickorish and Jenkins (2000, p. 53)—again citing UNWTO—describe tourism as the set of activities undertaken by people traveling to places different from their residence, for a period shorter than one year, for leisure, business, or other purposes, encompassing both overnight tourists and same-day visitors.

Wahab's (1991) analysis adds three essential elements to the tourism phenomenon: the human being, as the subject of experience; space, represented by the places visited; and time, consumed during trips and stays. Castelli (1990), meanwhile, emphasizes that understanding tourism requires a historical reading of trips motivated by diverse interests—economic, military, cultural, religious, or health-related.

At the international level, the UN—cited by Ignarra (2001, p. 25)—defines a tourist as anyone who remains in a place different from their habitual residence for more than 24 hours and up to six months, for recreational, cultural, family, or business purposes, provided there is no migratory intent. This understanding shows that tourism is intrinsically linked to travel and human displacement. Historically, tourism practice intensified with commercial exchanges among peoples, but only gained contours of a mass phenomenon in the contemporary period (Andrade, 1995). [Gestão Púb...10 a 2025. | Word]

The *Grand Tour*, undertaken by young English aristocrats in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, exemplifies this phenomenon. These trips of cultural and social character conferred status upon participants and were recognized as a primitive form of tourism (Andrade, 1995). Trigo (1995) adds that organized tourism was consolidated with technological advances of the Industrial Revolution, which provided transport and leisure conditions to a new bourgeoisie with time and resources to travel. In 1841, Thomas Cook organized the first escorted trip, bringing together 570 people—a landmark of collective tourism (Barreto, 1991).

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed significant advances in transport—such as trains and ships—that expanded mobility. In North America, Yellowstone National Park was created in 1872, considered the world's first national park, marking tourism's connection with

appreciation of nature. However, the two World Wars interrupted the activity's growth, which only consolidated as a mass phenomenon after 1945, favored by technological advances, improved communications, and the acquisition of social rights such as paid vacations (Acerenza, 1984).

The 1960s and 1970s marked the expansion of international tourism, with the emergence of package tours and charter flights, leading to unprecedented massification (Magalhães, 2002). Today, tourism is one of the largest global economic activities, generating employment, income, and foreign currency, in addition to playing a central role in cultural valorization and social development (Ruschmann, 1997).

In Brazil, tourism has historical roots dating back to the colonial period. According to Ignarra (2001), the arrival of the Portuguese court in 1808 spurred urban development in Rio de Janeiro and fostered hospitality. The sector's modernizing began in the twentieth century with the inauguration of major hotels and creation of the Brazilian Tourism Society, the forerunner of Touring Club do Brasil. In the 1960s, the founding of the Brazilian Tourism Company (EMBRATUR) represented an institutional milestone, assuming the function of regulating and promoting the sector on a national scale.

Tourism as a driver of socio-economic development

In recent decades, tourism has consolidated itself as one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy, assuming a strategic role in generating income, jobs, and foreign currency. According to UNWTO (2022), even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the activity accounted for around 10% of global GDP, and one in every ten jobs worldwide was directly or indirectly related to the sector. This performance evidences tourism's multiplier effect, capable of invigorating different productive chains— from lodging and transport to gastronomy, commerce, culture, and local handicrafts (Beni, 2006; Ignarra, 2001).

In Brazil—a country endowed with great natural and cultural diversity—tourism has particular relevance as a driver of socio-economic development. Recent estimates from the Ministry of Tourism (Brasil, 2023) indicate that the sector was responsible for generating more than 2.7 million direct jobs in 2022, in addition to positively affecting complementary activities linked to the creative economy, handicraft production, and agribusiness. This transversality reinforces the understanding that tourism should be conceived not merely as a leisure activity but as a strategic policy for regional development (Cruz, 2000).

One of the central aspects of tourism's contribution to socio-economic development is its potential for social inclusion. Ruschmann (1997) emphasizes that tourism—when planned sustainably—contributes to valorizing local communities, promoting job and income generation in places traditionally marginalized from major economic flows. Similarly, Ansarah (2002) highlights that the activity allows the

integration of small entrepreneurs, artisans, and informal workers into the productive chain, broadening opportunities for social mobility.

Beyond direct economic impact, tourism plays a fundamental role in energizing urban and rural spaces. Investments in tourism infrastructure—such as transport, sanitation, energy, and communication—benefit not only visitors but also residents, promoting improvements in quality of life (Beni, 2006). This positive effect is especially relevant in small and medium municipalities where tourism can represent a viable alternative to dependence on historically dominant agricultural or extractive activities.

Nevertheless, for tourism to truly serve as a driver of socio-economic development, it is imperative that it be conducted from a planning and governance perspective. As Hall (2004) notes, well-structured public policies are fundamental to ensure that economic benefits are accompanied by environmental preservation and cultural valorization. In this sense, the National Tourism Plan—in its various editions—has sought to align sector growth with principles of sustainability and social inclusion, although it still faces challenges regarding continuity and effectiveness of its goals (Brasil, 2018).

Another important element to consider is tourism's capacity to strengthen local identities and promote cultural exchanges. For Trigo (1995), tourism cannot be reduced to a simple commodification of spaces and cultures; rather, it must be understood as an opportunity to valorize traditions, memories, and social practices. This process, in addition to reinforcing communities' sense of belonging, expands the symbolic and cultural capital of regions, favoring endogenous development.

There are, however, criticisms that point to risks related to tourism massification and its appropriation by large economic groups that often concentrate benefits and generate negative impacts such as urban gentrification and environmental degradation (Barreto, 1991; Ruschmann, 1997). Thus, the challenge confronting public management and the private sector is to find a balance between economic exploitation and social and environmental sustainability, ensuring that tourism fulfills its function as a development driver without compromising future generations' resources.

Therefore, tourism proves to be a strategic activity for socio-economic development, especially in developing countries such as Brazil, where it has potential to diversify the economy, promote social inclusion, and strengthen culture. However, its success depends on adopting integrated public policies, promoting participatory governance, and committing to sustainable practices that guarantee equitable distribution of benefits among tourists, local communities, and economic agents.

Planning and sustainable management of tourism

Although tourism is recognized as one of the most strategic activities for nations' economic, social, and cultural growth, it is also directly associated with significant impacts on the environment and

the communities that host it. For that reason, it is indispensable that its expansion be accompanied by planning and sustainable management to ensure that the benefits generated by the activity are maintained over the long term without compromising the natural and cultural resources necessary for future generations. As UNWTO (2001) stresses, sustainable tourism must balance the needs of visitors, the business sector, and local communities, preserving destinations' environmental and cultural integrity.

In Brazil, this discussion gained greater prominence from the 1990s onward, when global sustainability debates—especially after Rio-92—influenced public policies and governmental programs. Since then, initiatives such as the *Tourism Regionalization Program* have sought to decentralize the activity, integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions (Brasil, 2004). This movement marked an effort to align Brazilian tourism with international guidelines, expanding its relevance as public policy geared toward sustainable development.

Tourism planning with a sustainability focus should be seen as a continuous process involving diagnosis, strategy definition, monitoring, and evaluation. Beni (2006) warns that the absence of planning can result in predatory practices, with benefits concentrated in large enterprises and cultural de-characterization of host communities. Thus, social participation and articulation among public authorities, the private sector, and civil society are fundamental to ensuring the activity's long-term viability.

Ruschmann (1997) adds that sustainable tourism should be understood not merely as an environmentally correct response but also as a development model capable of promoting improvements in host populations' quality of life. According to the author, tourism investments must prioritize conservation of natural and cultural heritage while expanding employment and income-generation opportunities. This perspective reinforces the need to balance economic growth and socio-environmental preservation.

In the same vein, Hall (2004) argues that sustainability in tourism requires integrated public policies with clear guidelines for land use, conservation of natural areas, and regulation of business activity. For the author, one of the greatest obstacles to consolidating sustainable tourism in Brazil has been the fragmentation of actions and policy discontinuity, reinforcing the urgency of strengthened institutions and long-term strategies.

Another relevant aspect relates to monitoring and measuring the activity's impacts. UNWTO (2005) stresses that using specific indicators and monitoring systems is fundamental to identify distortions and proactively correct problems. In this regard, environmental certifications, quality seals, and international standards such as ISO 14001 have been applied as tools to guarantee sector sustainability (Barreto, 1991).

Debate on sustainable tourism has also been highlighted in international fora. In 2017, the United Nations—through UNESCO—declared that year the *International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development*, reinforcing the activity's strategic role in the global economy (UNESCO, 2017). Studies

such as Kanni's (2002) show that the concept of sustainable tourism began to be investigated in the 1960s; however, it was only in the 1990s—with Agenda 21 and UNWTO's actions—that it gained wider dissemination. UNWTO's (1995) definition presents sustainable tourism as environmentally supportable, economically viable, and socially just, requiring harmonious integration with natural, cultural, and human environments.

Several authors have deepened this concept. For Beni (2002), sustainable tourism entails maximizing the distribution of economic benefits while ensuring safety conditions for tourism service provision. The *World Travel and Tourism Council* (2012) understands sustainable tourism as that which maintains economic viability, respects the environment, and acts in a socially responsible manner, benefiting both visitors and local residents. The Ministry of Tourism (2016) adds that it is an activity that responds to tourists' needs without neglecting socio-economic demands of receiving regions while preserving their natural and cultural heritage.

Swarbrooke (2000) reinforces that sustainable tourism must satisfy the needs of visitors and local communities without compromising future generations' capacity to meet their own needs. Complementarily, Gastal and Moesch (2004) indicate four central challenges in this perspective: understanding how tourists interact with natural environments; identifying communities' dependence on the activity; assessing social and environmental impacts; and implementing mechanisms to manage these impacts.

When poorly planned, tourism can generate adverse environmental and social effects. César-Dachary (1996) observes that tourism is a complex economic activity whose impacts extend across physical, biological, and socio-economic dimensions. Ruschmann (1997) points to environmental damage such as air and water pollution, as well as noise degradation, while Dias (2005) debunks the idea of tourism as an "industry without chimneys," highlighting that it can be as harmful as polluting industries— and often within shorter timeframes. Nevertheless, tourism also brings relevant benefits, as noted by Masina (2002) and Swarbrooke (2000), who recognize both positive and negative effects depending on how the activity is managed.

In this scenario, Dalla'agnol (2012) emphasizes that although tourism can generate significant gains for cities and regions, when disarticulated, it can provoke negative externalities that exceed destinations' limits. To reduce these risks, Saarinen (2006) relates the origin of sustainable tourism to academic interest in negative impacts as early as the 1960s, whereas Körössy (2008) highlights its consolidation in 1995 at the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Lanzarote.

Authors such as Frangialli (1999) reinforce that when developed on sustainable bases, tourism can reduce negative impacts and amplify social, economic, and environmental benefits. UNWTO (2003) reaffirms this view by indicating that sustainable tourism promotes quality of life for local populations,

enhances visitors' experiences, and protects the environment visited. This perspective is also shared by Medlik (1996), Seabra (2012), and Munck et al. (2013), who advocate integration of ecological, cultural, economic, and political dimensions.

Finally, sustainability in tourism should not be treated as an abstract concept but rather as a concrete practice grounded in principles such as respect for legislation, cultural preservation, environmental conservation, social equity, and participatory management (Brazilian Council for Sustainable Tourism, 2017). UNWTO (2001) adds that sustainable tourism should seek improvement in local quality of life, offer excellent experiences to tourists, and guarantee responsible economic profitability. Along these lines, UNEP (2005) highlights the importance of continuous monitoring and adjustment processes to ensure the activity's viability in the present and future.

Thus, sustainable tourism represents an essential development model capable of reconciling environmental conservation, cultural valorization, and socio-economic growth. Its effectiveness, however, depends on careful planning, integration among public policies, and shared commitment among governments, the private sector, and society.

National Tourism Policies

The National Tourism Plan (PNT) 2024–2027 stands out as a strategic initiative of the Federal Government of Brazil, aimed at consolidating tourism as a key driver of the country's sustainable, inclusive, and competitive development. This document reflects the sector's resilience in the face of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, while seeking to regain Brazil's competitiveness on the international stage—particularly vis-à-vis neighboring South American countries. Among the plan's pillars are cooperation and regionalization, strategies that decentralize tourism actions and enable states and municipalities to participate actively in tourism planning and management. This approach recognizes the need to tailor policies to regional specificities, thereby promoting equitable and sustainable development. Regionalization leverages local resources and strengthens community autonomy, ensuring that tourism activities generate direct benefits for the population.

Sustainability constitutes another core axis of the plan, proposing practices geared toward the preservation of Brazil's natural and cultural resources and aligned with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for responsible and conscientious tourism. In this framework, sustainability is understood holistically—encompassing environmental, social, and economic dimensions—valorizing cultural diversity and fostering respect for host communities. The PNT 2024–2027 also emphasizes innovation and digital transformation, underscoring the importance of adapting tourism to emerging technologies and shifts in consumer preferences, with travelers increasingly seeking personalized, connected experiences. The

implementation of smart tourist destinations, which employ technology to enhance visitor experience and service efficiency, is a central proposal under this axis.

Among the plan's specific objectives are increasing the volume of domestic travel, attracting international tourists, and generating employment in the sector. To this end, ambitious targets are set—such as raising to 400 the number of tourism municipalities recognized on the Brazilian Tourism Map and achieving 8.1 million in revenue generated by international visitors by 2027. In parallel, promotion and support for commercialization aim to ensure broad dissemination and accessibility of national tourism products, through programs that encourage both domestic tourism and the attraction of international visitors, thereby enhancing Brazil's competitiveness as a destination.

Brazil's national tourism policies—structured through strategic instruments such as the PNT—have evolved over recent decades, with emphasis on decentralization, sustainability, and professional qualification. Launched in 2004, the Tourism Regionalization Program organizes tourism municipalities into regions according to their vocations and potentialities, promoting coordinated action among different levels of government and civil society, while respecting each locality's cultural, social, and economic specificities. The National Policy for Tourism Qualification (PNQT), implemented by the Ministry of Tourism, seeks to improve service quality by training professionals across the spectrum—from basic education to destination management—with a focus on social inclusion and reducing regional inequalities.

Implementing these policies requires coordination among the sector's diverse actors, including federal, state, and municipal governments, the private sector, educational institutions, and civil society organizations. Effective participation by these actors is essential to ensure actions are suited to local realities and that results remain sustainable in the long term. In sum, Brazil's national tourism policies aim to develop the sector in an integrated and sustainable manner, valorizing regional specificities and investing in professional qualification. They reflect the country's commitment to transforming tourism into an activity capable of generating employment, income, and social inclusion, thereby contributing to the economic and cultural development of Brazil's various regions.

With the aim of synthesizing the principal instruments, guidelines, and programs that compose Brazil's national tourism policies, it is pertinent to present a demonstrative table organizing the structural elements of the National Tourism Plan 2024–2027 and the complementary actions undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism. This systematized visualization facilitates understanding of the logic guiding activity planning, highlighting the integration among sustainability, regionalization, innovation, and professional qualification. Furthermore, the table makes it possible to observe the articulation among strategic targets, conceptual foundations, and actors involved in implementing public policies, reinforcing tourism's multidimensional nature as a field of development.

Table 1 – Summary of Programs, Axes, and Targets of the National Tourism Policy (PNT 2024–2027)

Axis / Program	Description	Main Objectives	Responsible / References
National Tourism Plan (PNT) 2024–2027	Federal strategic instrument guiding actions for Brazilian tourism in the 2024–2027 period.	• Consolidate tourism as a driver of sustainable and inclusive development; • Recover competitiveness post-pandemic.	Brazil (2023; 2024)
Cooperation and Regionalization	Organization of tourism into regions, valorizing local vocations and decentralizing management.	• Strengthen participation by states and municipalities; • Promote balanced, sustainable development; • Expand autonomy of host communities.	Brazil (2024)
Sustainability	Integration of social, environmental, and economic principles into tourism policies, aligned with the 2030 Agenda.	• Preserve natural and cultural heritage; • Encourage responsible, conscientious tourism; • Valorize diversity and local communities.	Brazil (2023)
Innovation and Digital Transformation	Promotion of smart tourist destinations and use of technologies to enhance the tourism experience.	• Modernize tourism services; • Adapt the sector to new consumption profiles; • Expand personalized experiences.	Brazil (2024)
Targets of the PNT 2024–2027	Strategic targets for expansion and consolidation of national tourism.	• Increase to 400 the number of tourism municipalities on the Brazilian Tourism Map; • Reach 8.1 million in international revenue by 2027; • Boost domestic travel and job creation.	Brazil (2024)
Tourism Regionalization Program (2004)	Structuring the Brazilian tourism territory into regions according to local potential.	• Encourage integrated planning; • Respect sociocultural and environmental specificities.	Brazil (2024)
National Policy for Tourism Qualification (PNQT)	Strategy for training and upskilling professionals in the tourism sector.	• Raise service quality; • Promote social inclusion; • Reduce regional inequalities.	Ministry of Tourism; Brazil (2024)
Institutional Articulation	Integration among different public and private actors in policy implementation.	• Ensure actions suited to local realities; • Promote long-term sustainable results.	Federal Government; states and municipalities; civil society

Source: Author's elaboration (2025).

From the table above, it becomes evident that national tourism policies are articulated through axes that directly engage with the sector's contemporary challenges. The emphasis on regionalization demonstrates the government's concern with decentralizing decision-making, recognizing that diverse territorial realities require specific, participatory strategies. Likewise, the centrality of sustainability and innovation signals a forward-looking vision that seeks to balance economic growth, environmental preservation, and cultural valorization—aligning with global trends and the expectations of an increasingly conscientious and connected tourist.

It is also evident that professional qualification and institutional articulation play a decisive role in consolidating public policies, given that the effectiveness of actions depends directly on the technical capacity of the agents involved and on cooperation among the various levels of government. Thus, the integration of the programs and targets of the PNT 2024–2027 reaffirms the State's commitment to promoting tourism that not only generates employment and income but also contributes to strengthening local identity, reducing regional inequalities, and creating sustainable and inclusive experiences for visitors and host communities.

TOURISM AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Tourism has consolidated, in recent decades, as one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy, assuming strategic relevance for regional development, especially in territories with natural, historical, and cultural potential. In the Brazilian context, this activity not only drives job and income generation but also fosters economic diversification, expands infrastructure, and strengthens local identity. According to Beni (2006), tourism is configured as an integrated system whose dynamics directly affect territorial organization, transforming spaces and creating new productive arrangements. Thus, understanding its role in local development requires analyzing the multiple impacts—economic, social, cultural, and environmental—that arise from the articulation among public, private, and community actors.

Tourism's role in local development manifests, first and foremost, through its capacity to activate small-scale economies, valorizing endogenous resources and creating opportunities in areas previously marginalized from major economic flows. As Cruz (2000) points out, tourism promotes capital circulation in peripheral regions by stimulating the supply of services—such as lodging, food, transportation, leisure, and commerce. Moreover, the sector encourages the professionalization of the workforce and the expansion of urban infrastructure, essential elements for strengthening municipal autonomy. For Oliveira (2011), tourism assumes a strategic character by boosting complementary productive chains and contributing to sustainable development when grounded in integrated planning and management policies. In the Brazilian Northeast—a region historically marked by socioeconomic inequalities—tourism has

proven to be an important alternative for territorial transformation. Since the 1990s in particular, northeastern states have experienced a growth process based on the valorization of their natural and cultural attributes. According to data from the Ministry of Tourism (2023), destinations such as Salvador, Porto de Galinhas, Maceió, Fortaleza, Natal, and São Luís have recorded constant expansion in service offerings and visitor flows, consolidating themselves as national and international hubs.

Among the region's successful experiences, the **Costa dos Coqueiros Hub** in Bahia stands out, driven by the Northeast Tourism Development Program (Prodetur). This program enabled investments in sanitation, urbanization, roads, and professional qualification, favoring the growth of locales such as Praia do Forte and Costa do Sauípe (Barbosa, 2010). Another emblematic case is the **Ceará coastline**, which implemented infrastructure policies and tourism marketing that elevated Fortaleza to the status of a regional hub, stimulating sun-and-sea tourism and fostering development in municipalities like Cumbuco and Jericoacoara (Dantas; Sousa, 2014). In Pernambuco, the success of Porto de Galinhas illustrates the role of public-private articulation in tourism structuring, combining investments in hotel facilities, environmental preservation, and international promotion (Silveira, 2017). These experiences demonstrate that, when there is sustainable planning and participation by local actors, tourism can function as a vector of socioeconomic development and cultural valorization.

However, tourism outcomes are not homogeneous across Brazil's regions. Interregional comparisons reveal significant differences in infrastructure, management capacity, professional qualification, and the level of public policy articulation. While the Northeast stands out for its strong cultural and environmental attractiveness, the Southeast and South possess competitive advantages linked to consolidated infrastructure, higher air connectivity, and a more robust domestic market (Rabahy, 2003). According to Cruz (2010), the Southeast—especially cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo—brings together a broader diversity of tourism segments, including business, events, and cultural tourism, which confers greater economic resilience. The South, with its tradition of community and cooperative organization, shows good results in rural tourism and wine tourism, especially in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina (Tomazzoni, 2007). By comparison, the Northeast, although highly competitive in sun-and-sea tourism, still faces structural challenges such as unequal distribution of investments and the socioeconomic vulnerability of part of the population residing in tourist zones.

Even so, the Northeast advances in competitiveness through strategies of diversification, sustainable enterprises, and valorization of local culture—elements that have strengthened its regional economy. For Beni (2020), successful tourism development requires participatory governance, long-term planning, and integration with environmental preservation policies—factors that are essential for regions like the Northeast to sustain continuous growth without compromising their natural resources and identities.

Thus, tourism—when guided by sustainable policies and collaborative management—plays a fundamental role in regional development. Successful experiences in the Northeast and comparisons with other regions of the country show that the sector can catalyze socioeconomic transformations, provided there are adequate investments, community participation, professional qualification, and a long-term strategic vision. In this way, tourism is not limited to the promotion of destinations, but constitutes a structuring tool for strengthening the economy, social inclusion, and cultural valorization in Brazilian territories.

To more clearly understand how tourism is articulated with regional development in Brazil—especially in the Northeast—it is relevant to synthesize the principal elements composing this relationship. Although the tourism sector involves economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions, the way these aspects materialize varies significantly across territories, depending on factors such as available infrastructure, management capacity, public and private investments, and community participation. The comparative presentation below organizes the key points discussed in the text, enabling visualization of how tourism operates in local development, how successful experiences stand out in the Northeast, and what differences are observed when comparing Brazil's regions. The table thus serves to provide an integrated reading, highlighting convergences, specificities, and challenges that permeate tourism activity in the country.

Table 2 – Convergences, Divergences, and Challenges in the Perception of Local Actors about Tourism in Sergipe

Aspects	Role of Tourism in Local Development	Successful Experiences in the Northeast	Inter-Regional Comparisons
Economic Impacts	Job creation, increased income, expansion of commerce and services; strengthening of local productive chains.	Growth of hubs such as Porto de Galinhas (PE), Costa do Sauípe/Praia do Forte (BA), Jericoacoara and Cumbuco (CE), with regional economic dynamization.	Southeast and South present greater diversification (business, events, wine tourism), while the Northeast is strong in sun-and-sea tourism.
Infrastructure	Encourages improvements in transportation, basic sanitation, urbanization, and public services.	PRODETUR investments modernized airports, roads, sanitation, and tourist facilities.	The Southeast has more consolidated infrastructure; the Northeast has been reducing deficits but still faces internal inequalities.
Sociocultural Aspects	Cultural valorization, strengthening of local identity, preservation of heritage.	Promotion of regional culture (music, cuisine, popular festivities) attracting national and international tourists.	The South stands out for rural and community-based tourism; the Northeast for cultural authenticity; the Southeast for segment diversity.
Planning and Governance	Need for integrated management among government, private sector, and community.	Successful cases involve public-private partnerships, strategic marketing, and land-use planning.	Differences among regions are explained by management capacity and the level of institutional articulation.
Challenges	Environmental sustainability, professional qualification, and equitable income distribution.	Urban and environmental pressures in coastal areas; seasonality; regional inequalities.	The Northeast still faces greater socioeconomic vulnerability; the Southeast and South have greater economic stability.

Source: Author's elaboration (2025).

Based on the analysis presented in the table, it is evident that tourism plays a strategic role in regional development by generating economic dynamization, promoting sociocultural valorization, and inducing improvements in local infrastructure. In the Northeast, these contributions are particularly expressive due to the set of successful experiences that demonstrate how planning policies, structural investments, and public-private partnerships can transform territories and broaden opportunities for the population. However, interregional comparison reveals disparities that must be considered in the formulation of more balanced and sustainable policies. The predominance of specific segments—such as sun-and-sea in the Northeast, business in the Southeast, and rural tourism in the South—reinforces that each region exhibits distinct vocations, requiring strategies adapted to its socioeconomic and cultural characteristics. Therefore, reading the table helps reinforce the idea that tourism, when planned in an integrated and sustainable manner, constitutes a relevant vector for regional development, but demands attention to persistent challenges such as professional qualification, environmental sustainability, and the reduction of territorial inequalities.

TOURISM IN SERGIPE

Sergipe, Brazil's smallest state in territorial area, surprises with the diversity of its landscapes, cultural richness, and tourism potential. As defined by the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2001), tourism comprises "activities that people carry out during trips to places different from their usual surroundings," and it is in this context that the state positions itself, offering unique experiences ranging from the coast to the hinterland. Its capital, Aracaju, stands out for its urban organization, cuisine based on seafood, and proximity to important historical sites such as São Cristóvão, the fourth-oldest city in Brazil and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The state's tourism policy is coordinated by the Secretaria de Estado do Turismo (SETUR/SE), which, according to its guidance booklet, is responsible for "planning, coordinating, fostering, and supervising the development of Tourism at the state level" (SETUR, p. 12), in articulation with the Ministry of Tourism and the municipalities. This alignment occurs through the Programa de Regionalização do Turismo (PRT), which organizes Sergipe into five tourism hubs—Velho Chico, Tabuleiros, Serras Sergipanas, Costa dos Coqueirais, and Sertão das Águas. According to the document, these hubs group together "municipalities that share similar characteristics and/or complement aspects related to historical, cultural, economic, and geographic identity" (p. 6), fostering shared management through Regional Governance Bodies (IGRs).

The Costa dos Coqueirais, for example, encompasses municipalities such as Aracaju, Barra dos Coqueiros, and Estância, with an emphasis on sun-and-sea tourism. The Velho Chico Hub underscores the importance of the São Francisco River, with municipalities like Canindé de São Francisco, home to the famous Xingó Canyon, an attraction of international relevance. Inland, the Serras Sergipanas and Sertão das Águas hubs offer options for rural and adventure tourism, while the Tabuleiros Hub blends cultural expressions and archaeological sites.

Adherence to the Brazilian Tourism Map has been strategic for planning and attracting investments. As per MTur Ordinance No. 41/2021, cited in the references, municipalities must meet criteria such as the existence of an "agency or entity responsible for the tourism portfolio" and an "active Municipal Tourism Council" (p. 16) to participate. In parallel, the formalization of services through **CADASTUR**—a system that seeks to "promote the organization, formalization, and legalization of tourism service providers in Brazil" (p. 21)—is a priority.

Thus, with a strategy based on regionalization, participatory governance, and the valorization of local singularities, Sergipe has consolidated itself as a destination with significant growth potential within Brazil's tourism landscape, combining economic development with the preservation of its natural and cultural heritage.

Tourism Potential of the State

The configuration of tourism in Sergipe as a strategic economic activity is directly linked to the way its territory has been organized and planned. The choice of regionalization, dividing the state into tourism hubs, constitutes the basis for understanding its multiple potentialities. As detailed in Rodrigues (2014), the state was segmented into five distinct hubs: Costa dos Coqueirais, Velho Chico, Serras Sergipanas, Tabuleiros, and Sertão das Águas. This division finds support in the state's historical territorial organization, which, since the colonial period, has been structured around well-defined geographic and economic axes (Mendonça; Silva, 2021). The creation of these hubs is grounded in the concepts of region and territory, understood as geographic spaces of interaction between humans and environments, which give rise to various forms of social organization and society–nature relations (Coriolano et al., 2009, p. 84).

The Costa dos Coqueirais Hub is the most expressive in terms of established tourist flow, bringing together municipalities such as Aracaju, Barra dos Coqueiros, São Cristóvão, and Estância. Its main anchor is sun-and-sea tourism, with emphasis on Orla da Atalaia in Aracaju and the beaches of Barra dos Coqueiros. However, its potential extends significantly beyond the coastline. The presence of São Cristóvão, the fourth-oldest city in Brazil, with its listed historic center, and of Laranjeiras, with its valuable Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage, adds historical and cultural dimensions to this hub, thereby substantially enriching the tourism offer. As Silva (2012) points out, segmentation within the hub is fundamental, as it allows for the creation of thematic itineraries ranging from seaside leisure to historical and religious tourism. This organization of the tourism supply in the federative units seeks to enable the generation of segmented products, called itineraries, and the feasibility of their commercialization (Silva, 2012, p. 105).

Handicrafts are consolidated as another fundamental pillar of the hub's potentialities, with the renda filé lacework from Barra dos Coqueiros cited as an emblematic product of local culture (Rodrigues, 2014). The valorization of this type of material cultural expression is in perfect alignment with the conception of community-based tourism. This tourism model, as described by Coriolano (2008), emerges precisely as a counterpoint to the so-called resort tourism and mega-developments, seeking to prevent outside entrepreneurs from dominating communities. In this sense, local communities—especially fishing communities—are not merely a passive backdrop, but central actors and protagonists in building an authentic and meaningful tourism experience. Community-based tourism is that in which communities, in associative form, organize local productive arrangements, maintaining effective control over the land and the economic activities associated with tourism exploitation (Coriolano, 2008, p. 7).

The Velho Chico Hub takes the São Francisco River as its principal reference and unifying element. The Velho Chico transcends the condition of a mere water body to become a cultural, historical,

and scenic element of strong appeal and identity. Activities such as catamaran tours, sport fishing, and observing the river's meeting with the sea in Brejo Grande represent some of the most significant attractions. The materialization of this potential required investments in support infrastructure, such as the construction of piers in strategic locations like Terra Caída and Porto do Cavalo, works carried out within the Northeast Tourism Development Program (PRODETUR/NE) (Coelho, Costa, Vilela, 2008). This hub clearly exemplifies how a monumental natural resource can be properly structured for tourism, generating income and opportunities for riverine populations and sustainably fostering the local economy.

The interior hubs, notably Serras Sergipanas and Sertão das Águas, present significant potential—still largely to be explored—for ecotourism and adventure tourism. Characterized by more rugged reliefs, waterfalls, caves, and a striking, genuine sertanejo culture, these territories offer a tourism experience diametrically opposed to that lived on the coast. The very existence of these diversified hubs demonstrates Sergipe's remarkable capacity to offer a representative, varied sample of typical Northeastern biomes and landscapes, all contained within a geographically small territory. This territorial compactness, far from being a limitation, becomes an important comparative advantage, as it allows visitors to experience different and contrasting offerings with relatively short internal displacements, optimizing their time and broadening their range of experiences in the state.

Gastronomy constitutes a guiding thread that permeates and integrates all the tourism hubs. Predominantly based on fresh seafood along the coast and on typical, hearty dishes from the hinterland in the interior, Sergipe's cuisine is an attraction in itself, capable of singularizing the visitor's experience. The valorization of local gastronomy is recognized as a key element for sustainable tourism, as it mobilizes an entire local productive chain—from the farmer and the artisanal fisher to the small family-run restaurant—simultaneously strengthening the economy and the cultural identity of the place. This aspect connects with the idea that tourism, when well planned, can reinforce pre-existing economic activities, such as fishing and agriculture, making them more sustainable (Coriolano, 2008, p. 9).

Sergipe's tourism potential, therefore, does not reside solely in the sum of its isolated attractions, but in the rich tapestry formed by the integration among its natural resources, its tangible and intangible historical and cultural heritage, and the strength of its communities. The built heritage of historic cities, the vitality of popular cultural manifestations, the diversity of natural landscapes, and the authenticity of the communal life of fishers and sertanejo populations form a coherent and appealing whole. The challenge, as aptly posed by Ramos (2010) apud Rodrigues (2014), lies in overcoming the view of regionalization as a mere grouping of similar peculiarities and advancing toward the construction of effective processes of collaboration and identification among public agents, the private sector, and local communities. The full and successful materialization of this diversified potential depends fundamentally on continuous, participatory strategic planning capable of efficiently articulating supply and demand and,

above all, ensuring that the socioeconomic benefits generated by tourism are democratically shared among all actors involved, especially local populations.

The conception of place is fundamental in the analysis of communities, as it reveals the local existence of phenomena in both the physical space and the social space, conferring essence, meaning, and transcendence, for it is locally that we situate ourselves and it is locally that things happen (Maldonado, 1993, p. 34, apud Coriolano, 2008, p. 10). This notion applies entirely to Sergipe, where each hub and tourism territory carries its own essence, profound meaning for its population, and a transcendence that can be shared with visitors through a well-guided tourism experience. Understanding this local dynamic is, therefore, the first step toward transforming latent potentialities into real and sustainable wealth for the state.

State and Municipal Public Policies (2010–2025)

The framework of public policies for tourism in Sergipe during the period from 2010 to 2025 demonstrates a conceptual and practical evolution, marked by the transition from punctual interventions to an attempt at integrated and regionalized planning. The basis of this process was adherence to the Tourism Regionalization Program, an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism that sought to organize the national tourism supply by dividing state territories into hubs with similar characteristics.

In Sergipe, this strategy resulted in the creation of five tourism hubs—Costa dos Coqueirais, Velho Chico, Serras Sergipanas, Tabuleiros, and Sertão das Águas—and eight development territories, with the Grande Aracaju Territory encompassing the municipality of Barra dos Coqueiros (Governo de Sergipe, Sedetec e Emsetur, 2009). As Silva (2012) explains, segmentation was incorporated into the National Tourism Policy as a way of organizing and integrating the tourism supply within the federative units in order to enable the generation of segmented products, called itineraries, and the feasibility of their commercialization (p. 105). The proposal to regionalize territories and tourism products is supported by the concepts of region and territory, understood as geographic spaces of interaction between humans and environments, giving rise to various forms of social organization and society–nature relations (Coriolano et al., 2009, p. 84).

Within the scope of state public policies, Law No. 8,373, of December 20, 2017, represents a regulatory milestone by addressing the exercise of the Tourist Guide profession in the state of Sergipe. This legislation not only establishes professional categories—Regional Guide, National Guide, International Guide, and Attraction Guide—but also imposes the obligation to hire a Regional Guide for activities involving the reception and accompaniment of tourists in the state. As set forth in Art. 4, "the presence of a Regional Tourist Guide, qualified in the State of Sergipe," is mandatory on local itineraries, a measure aimed at improving the quality of the tourism experience and fostering local employability.

The planning process, as defined by Petrocchi (2009), begins with an integral perception of the destination's present moment and its surroundings. Critical factors to which the destination needs to adapt—or that it should seek to modify—are identified. Next, future aims are defined through the formulation of objectives. After that come studies and suggestions of paths to reach these objectives, through the choice of strategies (p. 17). The execution of these strategies depended heavily on external investments, notably those arising from successive phases of the Northeast Tourism Development Program (PRODETUR/NE).

PRODETUR/NE was configured as the principal financial driver for the materialization of state public policies during the period. Its basic objective, according to the Banco do Nordeste (2005), was to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the Brazilian Northeast through the development of tourism activity. Specifically, the Program encompassed public-sector initiatives in basic infrastructure and institutional development aimed both at improving the living conditions of the beneficiary populations and at attracting private-sector investments linked to tourism (p. 5). In the first phase of the program, the area corresponding to Aracaju/São Cristóvão encompassed Aracaju, Barra dos Coqueiros, Santo Amaro das Brotas, São Cristóvão, and Mosqueiro (Banco do Nordeste, 2005). The investments were substantial and directed toward priority axes. In the Costa dos Coqueirais Hub, for example, resources of US$ 8,208,901 were applied to sanitation in Aracaju, US$ 11,516,845 to water supply, and US$ 10,448,497 to transportation, including the implementation of road sections, construction of bridges and piers, and duplication of coastal avenues (Coelho; Costa; Vilela, 2012).

An emblematic case of intervention in the period was the urbanization of the Orla da Atalaia Nova, in Barra dos Coqueiros, with a total investment of R$ 5,265,562.05, funded 21% by state resources and 79% by federal resources, through an agreement with the Ministry of Tourism (G1, 2012). Works of this type, classified as tourism infrastructure, had the stated purpose not only of improving the visitor experience but also of enhancing residents' quality of life, thus aligning, in theory, with the premises of sustainable tourism.

In parallel, investments in Aracaju's historic center and in the restoration of municipal markets, such as Albano Franco and Thales Ferraz, with amounts exceeding US$ 2 million for each action, aimed to requalify urban spaces of great cultural and commercial significance (Coelho; Costa; Vilela, 2008). These actions reflected a recognition—albeit incipient—that tourism requires specific technical infrastructure that is usually implemented directly by the state or supported by the state through tourism planning (Dreher et al., 2010, apud Palafóz e Santos, 2023).

However, the effectiveness of these policies at the municipal level proved irregular and often limited by a series of factors. Rodrigues's (2014) research in the municipality of Barra dos Coqueiros revealed a scenario of institutional fragility, where the Municipal Secretariat for Tourism, Industry, and

Commerce displayed notable lack of awareness regarding the investments made in the hub to which the municipality belongs. When asked about investments carried out by the municipal secretariat, the manager's response was telling: "na verdade, eu acho que pela Secretaria da Barra quase nada" ("in fact, I think that through the Barra Secretariat, almost nothing") (Rodrigues, 2014, p. 49). This lack of awareness also extended to actions by the state and federal governments, with the manager unable to cite specific investments—except for the Orla da Atalaia Nova—and displaying uncertainty about other possible support. This lack of articulation and communication among levels of government compromises policy effectiveness, creating a disconnect between macro-level planning and micro-level execution.

The absence of consistent local tourism planning emerges as a direct consequence of this fragility. The same study found that Barra dos Coqueiros did not possess data on tourism demand, did not have a formally structured tourism product, and that its promotion actions were limited to social media pages with reduced and outdated information (Rodrigues, 2014). This reality starkly contrasts with the view that local initiatives lead new strategies for tourism development and reconversion of the traditional model, with local authorities holding many of the key competencies for implementing policies toward sustainable development (Cerdan, 2010, p. 96). The absence of local diagnostics and decentralized planning prevents municipalities from leveraging opportunities created by state and federal policies, rendering them mere recipients of works without the capacity to manage the impacts and potentialities of tourism in their territory.

Regarding the prospective period, up to 2025, the guidelines suggest continuity in the pursuit of infrastructure investments and promotion, with discourse increasingly aligned to sustainability and social inclusion. The expectation—expressed in the Bahian context but applicable to Sergipe—is that the state prepare itself to serve the tourism segment with quality, which requires joint efforts by the public and private sectors to find solutions to current problems (Palafóz e Santos, 2023, p. 34).

The expected success of community development policies—and, by extension, of tourism—is for the population at large (and not just subgroups), profoundly altering the conditions of underdevelopment of communities (Carmo, 1999, p. 80, apud Coriolano, 2008, p. 12). The materialization of this principle within Sergipe's tourism policies, ensuring that benefits are indeed socialized, remains the major challenge to be addressed on the 2025 horizon, demanding more robust governance and more effective social participation in the construction and management of tourism in the state.

Structural and Institutional Bottlenecks

The trajectory of tourism development in Sergipe, despite its potential and the investments made, is marked by a series of structural and institutional obstacles that limit its capacity to consolidate itself as a sustainable and inclusive economic activity. These bottlenecks permeate everything from the sphere of

planning to the execution and management of resources, reflecting broader contradictions inherent to the way tourism is appropriated by capital. Martins (1999) warns that the expanded reproduction of capital implies the expanded reproduction of the contradictions that its movement incorporates and engenders (p. 29).

In Sergipe, such contradictions are manifested in the disconnect between large investments and local realities. One of the most critical impediments lies in fragile governance and institutional disarticulation.

Rodrigues's (2014) empirical research in the municipality of Barra dos Coqueiros exposed a reality in which municipal managers responsible for tourism demonstrated notable lack of awareness regarding investments carried out in the tourism hub to which the municipality belongs. This scenario is reflected as well in the application of specific state legislation, such as Law No. 8,373/2017, which regulates the guiding profession in the state but whose effective implementation at the municipal level encounters the same difficulties of institutional articulation. The situation is aggravated by the lack of effective coordination within the Grande Aracaju Territory and within the Costa dos Coqueirais Hub, which prevents information and the benefits of investments from being fully known and utilized at the local level.

Community action does not dispense with private initiative or public participation in the formation of partnerships with the public and private sectors in community development projects (Carmo, 1999, p. 80, apud Coriolano, 2008). Nevertheless, the absence of such partnerships and of an integrated vision among the federative entities severely weakens the effectiveness of public policies.

Another bottleneck with profound repercussions is the lack of consistent and participatory local tourism planning. Many municipalities, as found in Barra dos Coqueiros, do not possess updated diagnostics of tourism demand, have not developed formally structured tourism products, and have not established specific public policies for the sector. Law No. 8,373/2017, in its Art. 7, establishes the obligation of prior booking through a local agency for companies from other states—a rule that requires municipal planning to be effectively leveraged as a mechanism for inducing local development. As observed by Rodrigues (2014), the municipality studied did not integrate any tourism itinerary, despite belonging to a consolidated hub. This lack of planning results in a disorganized and poorly competitive tourism supply.

Petrocchi (2009) emphasizes that the planning process must continuously monitor and evaluate its own performance, constituting the control function that turns the tourism plan into a living instrument (p. 17). The reality of many Sergipe municipalities, however, falls short of this ideal, with plans being static documents—or even nonexistent. This planning gap prevents municipalities from preparing to receive

visitors in a dignified and professional manner, as advocated by community-based tourism (Coriolano, 2008), keeping them in a position of dependence and reactivity.

Insufficient and poorly maintained basic infrastructure represents a significant material barrier. Although PRODETUR/NE channeled substantial resources into sanitation, water supply, and transportation, such interventions often proved insufficient to meet overall demand or faced subsequent maintenance issues. The absence of adequate specific technical infrastructure, which is generally implemented directly by the state or supported by the state through tourism planning (Dreher et al., 2010, apud Palafóz e Santos, 2023), limits the quality of the tourism experience and the attraction of larger private investments. Problems such as precarious sanitation, deficient tourism signage, and insufficient accessibility in public and private facilities are common in various destinations in the state's interior, discouraging more demanding tourists with greater purchasing power.

In the field of commercialization and promotion, bottlenecks are also evident. Weak promotion and commercialization of destinations are observed even in those belonging to consolidated tourism hubs. Rodrigues (2014) found that the Sergipe tourism website, at the time of his research, did not present direct reference to the municipality of Barra dos Coqueiros, and the Ministry of Tourism's website provided reduced or nonexistent information on Sergipe destinations beyond Aracaju. This media invisibility hinders the attraction of significant and diversified visitor flows.

The lack of a strong state tourism brand and of effective digital marketing strategies relegates many attractions to a peripheral position in the competitive national tourism market. To reproduce itself, tourism follows the logic of capital, "when a few appropriate spaces and the resources contained therein, presenting them as attractions transformed into commodities" (Coriolano, 2016, p. 268, apud Palafóz e Santos, 2023). Without a commercialization strategy that contemplates small enterprises and communities, the exclusionary logic of capital tends to perpetuate itself.

Low technical capacity among local managers and entrepreneurs constitutes an obstacle of institutional and human nature. Many municipal tourism secretariats are not staffed by professionals with specific training in the field, which limits their capacity to draft projects, secure funding, and efficiently manage tourism facilities. This deficiency extends to understanding and applying legal instruments, such as Law No. 8,373/2017, whose enforcement and full utilization depend on qualified municipal technical staff.

This scenario contributes to a vicious cycle of low institutional capacity and discontinuous policies, subject to change with each political administration. Capacity building is a fundamental element of the principle of self-sustainability, in which processes of economic and sociospatial transformation must be susceptible to community management, maintenance, and control (Carmo, 1999, p. 80, apud

Coriolano, 2008). Without investment in human capital, it becomes practically unfeasible to build truly community-based and sustainable tourism.

Lastly, but no less important, is the limited social participation in tourism planning and management processes. Local communities—holders of territorial knowledge and traditional know-how—are often treated as mere spectators of changes imposed from the outside in. Rodrigues (2014) warns that the population has been treated as a mere spectator of local and regional changes for/by tourism. It is notable that even in state laws, such as Law No. 8,373/2017, which in its Art. 10 ensures a permanent seat for the tourist guide on the State Tourism Council, the participation of local communities in broader decision-making processes remains limited. This exclusion from decision-making generates distance between the population and tourism activity, potentially leading to cultural mischaracterization and socio-environmental conflicts.

Coriolano (2008) had already highlighted that tourism, in communities, has been a risky activity, sometimes disruptive to traditional activities and not always producing satisfactory results (p. 6). Failure to observe the principle of participation, which requires deep involvement by the resident population in the construction process that can thus be considered development (Carmo, 1999, p. 80, apud Coriolano, 2008), is perhaps the greatest institutional bottleneck, as it prevents tourism from becoming a vector of endogenous development and of strengthening local identities. Overcoming these complex and interlinked obstacles requires, therefore, not only more investments, but a profound change in the governance model, prioritizing integration, long-term planning, capacity building, and, above all, the active voice of communities.

The institutional fragility identified by Rodrigues (2014) in the municipality of Barra dos Coqueiros does not constitute an isolated case but rather the manifestation of a recurring pattern in Sergipe's tourism management. The disconnect between substantial investments carried out through PRODETUR/NE—which, according to Coelho, Costa, and Vilela (2008), surpassed US$ 30 million in basic infrastructure in the Costa dos Coqueirais Hub alone—and municipal absorption and management capacity evidences a critical gap in the governance model. This gap is reflected in the difficulty of implementing important legal instruments, such as Law No. 8,373/2017, which, despite clearly establishing tourist guides' duties, lacks uniform enforcement in interior municipalities.

The insufficiency of local planning, already diagnosed by Petrocchi (2009) as one of the critical factors for the success of tourism destinations, is aggravated by the administrative discontinuity characteristic of municipal mandates. Tourism planning—which should be a "living instrument" of continuous monitoring and evaluation (Petrocchi, 2009, p. 17)—often amounts to static documents, when they exist at all. This reality starkly contrasts with Ramos's (2010) vision that tourism regionalization

must analyze "processes of collaboration and identification among agents" in a continuous and integrated manner.

The lack of adequate infrastructure, even after heavy investments, points to problems in the planning and maintenance phases. Dreher et al. (2010), apud Palafóz and Santos (2023), had already warned that specific technical infrastructure for tourism "is generally implemented directly by the state or supported by the state"; however, the long-term sustainability of these facilities depends on local management capacity. Works such as the urbanization of the Orla da Atalaia Nova in Barra dos Coqueiros, which consumed R$ 5.2 million according to G1 (2012), face maintenance challenges that compromise their longevity and efficacy as tourism attractions.

In the field of commercialization, bottlenecks persist despite potentialities. The "weak promotion and commercialization of destinations" (Rodrigues, 2014) keeps many Sergipe attractions invisible in the national tourism market. This reality is particularly paradoxical considering the richness and diversity of attractions described by Silva (2012) in the Costa dos Coqueirais Hub, ranging from sun-and-sea tourism to historical and cultural tourism in São Cristóvão and Laranjeiras.

Insufficient technical training emerges as a cross-cutting obstacle that impacts all other bottlenecks. The absence of professionals with specific training in municipal tourism secretariats limits not only project development and resource acquisition but also comprehension and application of legal instruments such as Law No. 8,373/2017. As Coriolano (2008) points out, capacity building is essential for processes of economic and sociospatial transformation to be "susceptible to community management, maintenance, and control" (Carmo, 1999, p. 80, apud Coriolano, 2008).

Finally, limited social participation in decision-making processes perpetuates an exogenous model of tourism development. Rodrigues (2014) found that the population of Barra dos Coqueircos was a "mere spectator of local changes," a scenario that undermines the principle of participation, considered by Carmo (1999) as essential for any process of authentic community development. This exclusion from decision-making not only weakens the political sustainability of tourism projects but also represents a waste of social capital and of the traditional knowledge of local communities—elements fundamental to building tourism that is truly authentic and sustainable.

INNOVATION AND TRENDS IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Contemporary tourism management requires constant adaptation to new technologies, shifts in consumer behavior, and the pursuit of more sustainable development models.

A central trend is digital transformation. The guidance booklet highlights the importance of the "Tourism Information System" (p. 14) as one of the modules of the Regionalization Program. Today, this materializes in the use of data platforms to create Smart Tourist Destinations. For Sergipe, this would

mean integrating data on tourist flows, the supply of services registered in CADASTUR, and visitor perceptions into a single dashboard, enabling public managers and Regional Governance Bodies (IGRs) to make evidence-based decisions and to optimize the tourist experience from trip planning through to its completion.

Another pillar is the strong emphasis on sustainability and experience-based tourism. Tourists increasingly seek authenticity, connection with the local community, and responsible environmental practices. Sergipe's tourism hubs—such as Velho Chico and Serras Sergipanas—have enormous potential to develop community-based tourism, ecotourism, and the valorization of local gastronomy. Innovating, in this case, means creating thematic itineraries (already envisaged in the "Tourism Itinerary" module) that integrate natural and cultural attractions with a network of local businesses, ensuring that tourism income is effectively redistributed—one of the primary objectives of the activity, as highlighted in the booklet (p. 4).

Personalization and digital marketing have also become indispensable. Travel agencies and public managers must be present on the digital channels where tourists plan their trips, using segmentation tools to promote destinations more assertively. Producing video content for social media and offering 360º virtual tours of the São Francisco Canyons or the historic center of São Cristóvão are examples of innovations that can capture the attention of new audiences.

Finally, innovation in management entails strengthening networked collaboration. The Regional Governance Bodies (IGRs)—cited as instruments of "shared management" (p. 5)—can evolve into open-innovation forums, connecting the public sector, CADASTUR-registered companies, universities, and startups to co-create solutions to specific local tourism challenges such as mobility, signage, and package commercialization. In this way, Sergipe can not only keep pace with trends but also position itself as a pioneering state in modern, innovative, and collaborative tourism management in the Northeast.

Use of Technology and Territorial Marketing

The incorporation of digital technologies and sophisticated territorial marketing strategies represents an indispensable frontier for contemporary tourism management, especially in contexts such as Sergipe and Bahia, where there is a significant gap between existing potential and the capacity for dissemination and commercialization. The reality of municipalities like Barra dos Coqueiros, where Rodrigues (2014) found that promotion was limited to social media pages with reduced and outdated information, serves as a clear diagnosis of the need for innovation.

This situation is aggravated by the finding that, in 2013, the official Sergipe tourism website did not present direct reference to the municipality, and the Ministry of Tourism's website provided equally scarce—if not nonexistent—information on destinations outside the capital Aracaju.

This scenario of digital invisibility constitutes a formidable obstacle at a time when, as global trends indicate, electronic media are used at high scale to obtain destination information, potentially influencing tourists' choices and the number of overnight stays. Territorial marketing, therefore, ceases to be a mere promotional tool to become the core of a competitive strategy. It must be understood as a continuous process of constructing and communicating a place's identity, making use of digital channels to reach specific target audiences effectively and measurably.

The detailed data on the tourist profile in Bahia, collected by SETUR-BA in 2022, offer valuable empirical grounding for intelligent, data-driven territorial marketing strategies. The survey revealed, for example, that the 25–31 age group concentrates the largest share of international tourists (30.7%), while domestic tourists are concentrated in the 32–40 age group (23.7%). Information of this kind is crucial for market segmentation, enabling the creation of advertising messages, itineraries, and customized experiences that speak directly to the expectations and behaviors of each group.

Knowing that average per-capita/day spending is surprisingly similar between domestic tourists (R$ 108.9) and international tourists (R$ 118.0), but that total spending by international tourists is significantly higher due to longer stays, directs marketing efforts toward extending length of stay for all visitors. The finding that 75.5% of international tourists report going to the beach as their main activity, while 42.1% seek visits to cities and monuments of historical interest, and 31.0% attend traditional markets and fairs, indicates the possibility of creating thematic packages and itineraries that combine these interests, promoting a more integrated and diversified view of the destination.

The creation and commercialization of tourism itineraries, as Silva (2012) already advocated when discussing segmentation in the Costa dos Coqueirais Hub, can be radically enhanced by digital tools. Silva (2012) stated that segmentation was incorporated into the National Tourism Policy through the Tourism Regionalization Program as a way of organizing and integrating the tourism supply within federative units to enable the generation of segmented products, called itineraries, and the feasibility of their commercialization (p. 105). In the current context, such commercialization can be carried out through specialized online platforms, mobile apps offering audio guides and interactive maps, and integrated booking systems that connect tourists directly with small local entrepreneurs.

This technological approach enables a departure from the generic sun-and-sea promotion model toward a niche offering capable of attracting, for example, tourists interested in community-based tourism. As Coriolano (2008) describes, community-based tourism is that in which communities, in associative form, organize local productive arrangements. Technology can be the missing link for these arrangements to gain scale and visibility, through virtual marketplaces that sell authentic experiences of community-based tourism—the renda filé lacework of Barra dos Coqueirais or catamaran tours on the Velho Chico—directly to a global audience.

The very notion of place, so central to tourism, is re-signified by technology. Maldonado (1993), apud Coriolano (2008), had already stressed that the notion of place is fundamental to analyzing communities, as it reveals the local existence of phenomena in both physical and social space, conferring essence, meaning, and transcendence (p. 10). Geolocation tools, augmented reality, and digital storytelling allow that essence and meaning to be communicated immersively, enriching the visitor's experience before, during, and after the trip.

Intelligent territorial marketing, therefore, is not limited to selling a destination; it tells a story, builds a narrative that valorizes the place's unique attributes, its culture, its people, and its history, as recorded in tourism inventories and integrated development plans, such as PDITS. Overcoming the challenge of seasonality, another historical bottleneck, can also be tackled with revenue-management tools and targeted campaigns for periods of low demand, leveraging data on tourists' origins.

The fact that Bahia is a predominantly receiving state, with 54.4% of domestic tourists coming from the state itself, indicates an opportunity for "local tourism" campaigns and "long-weekend" promotions, using mass communication channels and social media to stimulate internal travel. Ultimately, the strategic use of technology and territorial marketing is imperative to transforming tourism potentials—so abundant in Sergipe and Bahia—into real competitive advantages, ensuring that destinations not only attract visitors but build enduring, mutually beneficial relationships with them.

Intelligent and Sustainable Tourism

The evolution of the concept of sustainability in tourism culminates in the notion of intelligent tourism, which integrates efficient resource management through technological innovation with a non-negotiable commitment to social equity and environmental preservation. This trend resonates deeply with lessons drawn from community-based tourism experiences and critiques of mass tourism models. Community-based tourism, as defined by Coriolano (2008), emerges as a counterpoint to so-called resort tourism and mega-developments, and as a way to prevent outside entrepreneurs from dominating communities (p. 4).

This model is, in essence, a precursor of intelligent and sustainable tourism, since it prioritizes local control, cultural valorization, and the fairer distribution of economic benefits. In it, sustainability is not a marketing appendage but the operational foundation. Community tourism activities are associated with other economic activities, through initiatives that strengthen agriculture, fishing, and handicrafts, making these pre-existing activities more sustainable (Coriolano, 2008, p. 9). Truly intelligent tourism amplifies this logic by employing low-cost technology to monitor the carrying capacity of natural attractions, promote energy efficiency in family-run inns, and trace the origin of inputs used in local gastronomy—ensuring traceability and valorizing regional producers.

In the Sergipe context, state legislation already formally incorporates this vision of environmental co-responsibility by setting out, in detail, the duties of the Tourist Guide as an active agent of sustainability. Art. 8 establishes the following duties of the Tourist Guide:

> [   ]VI – promote local culture, handicrafts, gastronomy, June festivities and other local festivities, art, and regional historical heritage;
> VII – prevent littering in visited places, collect any waste found, and ensure its proper final destination;
> VIII – raise tourists' awareness regarding environmental protection norms and the importance of sustainable development; (Sergipe, 2017).

This legal provision transforms the professional into a mobile environmental educator, assigning functions that range from promoting local culture to informal oversight against littering and active visitor awareness-raising. Thus, the state's legal framework already anticipates the role of a key agent for the practical implementation of sustainable tourism.

The principles of community development, outlined by Carmo (1999), provide the ethical and operational backbone for sustainable tourism. Principles such as self-sustainability—which advocates that processes of economic and socio-spatial transformation must be susceptible to community management, maintenance, and control—and participation—which requires deep involvement by the resident population—are foundational to any initiative that aims to be intelligent and sustainable (Carmo, 1999, p. 80, apud Coriolano, 2008).

An intelligent tourism model, therefore, is one managed with and for the community, using digital tools to facilitate collective decision-making, accountability, and transparent communication among all actors. The philosophy of community work—which seeks only the security of what is necessary for a dignified life, tranquility in social relations, and the feeling of participating creatively in what happens (Dowbor, 1998, p. 9, apud Coriolano, 2008)—finds in sustainable tourism a fertile field for its realization, provided technology is placed at the service of these values and not of mere accumulation.

The necessary conciliation between tourism activity and environmental conservation, often strained in conventional models, is one of the pillars of sustainable tourism. The work of Palafóz and Santos (2023), based on the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2020), makes this duality explicit: tourism can both promote the preservation and conservation of natural resources through policies and practices of sustainable tourism and pose a threat to biodiversity and fragile ecosystems due to the pressures of disordered tourism.

Intelligent territorial management, supported by geographic information systems and remote sensing, can help prevent these negative impacts, by zoning areas of intensive use and defining conservation corridors, akin to the management of protected areas already signaled by Coriolano (2008) as one of the causes embraced by community-based tourism. Environmental awareness-raising, also

highlighted in the same table as a need, can be enhanced by apps that gamify sustainable practices, rewarding tourists for reducing waste, using non-polluting transport, or consuming local products.

The critique that globalized tourism at times exploits the labor force of men and women—underpaying them and imposing heavy working hours (Coriolano, 2008, p. 8)—points to the social dimension of sustainability, which intelligent tourism cannot ignore. A truly sustainable model must guarantee decent working conditions, valorize traditional knowledge, and protect vulnerable groups, such as children and adolescents, whose exploitation in the international tourism sector was sharply criticized by Castells (1999).

In this context, technology can serve as a transparency tool, through platforms that certify enterprises adopting fair labor and fair-trade practices, enabling tourists to make conscious choices. Intelligent and sustainable tourism, therefore, is not a mere terminological update but a fundamental strategic reorientation. It represents the convergence between aspirations for fairer, more participatory local development—as expressed in community-based tourism—and the possibilities opened by technological innovation to operationalize sustainability principles efficiently, transparently, and inclusively, ensuring that tourism fulfills its potential as a vector of environmental conservation and improvement in the quality of life for resident populations.

New Models of Governance and Public–Private Cooperation

Overcoming the historical bottlenecks that hinder the full development of tourism in states such as Sergipe and Bahia inevitably requires the adoption of new governance models that transcend fragmented public action and foster robust, permanent cooperation arrangements among the State, the private sector, and organized civil society. Rodrigues (2014)'s forceful critique of the lack of articulation in the Grande Aracaju Territory and in the Costa dos Coqueirais Hub—where municipal managers showed little awareness of investments carried out in their own region—exposes the limitations of centralized, weakly collaborative governance.

This scenario calls for a restructuring of tourism management aligned with Ramos (2010)'s view, according to which regionalization should not be seen merely as the "nexus of similar peculiarities," but should analyze "processes of collaboration and identification among agents," comprehensively encompassing the public sector, the private sector, the third sector, and local communities. This broadened vision of networked governance is the antidote to institutional disarticulation and the key to building a shared strategic outlook for tourism development.

The principles of community development, as formulated by Carmo (1999), already contained the seed of this new governance. The principle of cooperation establishes that community action does not dispense with private initiative or public participation; rather, partnerships between the public and private

sectors are formed within community development projects (Carmo, 1999, p. 80, apud Coriolano, 2008). In practice, this would materialize in the creation of intermunicipal consortia for managing tourism hubs, where municipalities, the local tourism trade, community associations, and educational institutions could act cohesively in planning, financing, and executing projects. The integrated management of productive arrangements, which become community-based, facilitates addressing challenges, as observed by Coriolano (2008) in the context of community-based tourism. A governance model grounded in this logic could collectively manage complex issues such as tourism signage along a route crossing several municipalities, joint commercialization of packages, or the implementation of a single system for monitoring service quality.

As Dreher et al. (2010), apud Palafóz and Santos (2023), point out, actions in tourism lack institutionalized governance of the activity, capable of defining them and implementing them with legitimacy. In this context, the State must play a role in regulating the activity, mediating conflicts, organizing, and regularizing land use. Rather than being the sole executor, the State acts as an inducer, facilitator, and guarantor of fair play, creating an environment conducive to both large private investments (resorts) and small family businesses to flourish in an orderly manner, aligned with the collective interest. The massive infrastructure investments carried out by PRODETUR/NE, documented by the Banco do Nordeste (2005), demonstrate the public sector's capability to leverage resources and implement structural works. However, modern governance demands that such works be conceived and maintained participatorily, avoiding what occurred in Barra dos Coqueiros, where the population, according to Rodrigues (2014), was a mere spectator of local changes.

Public–Private Cooperation (PPC) emerges as a fundamental instrument to make this governance feasible, especially given limited public resources. PPC can take various forms, from partnerships for constructing and operating tourism facilities (such as visitor centers or scenic overlooks) to management contracts for operating services like cleaning and security of urbanized waterfronts. Crucially, these arrangements must be transparent, technically sound, and oriented by a clear definition of social, environmental, and economic performance goals. The principle of universality, set forth by Carmo (1999)—which asserts that expected success must be for the population as a whole (and not just subgroups)—should serve as the compass for such partnerships (Carmo, 1999, p. 80, apud Coriolano, 2008).

Innovative governance is therefore not an end in itself, but a means to achieve tourism that effectively transforms underdevelopment conditions in communities, better distributes the results of social labor, and upholds community values, as aspired to by Coriolano (2008) in the definition of community-based tourism. Building these new arrangements is undoubtedly complex and demands a

persistent effort of dialogue and trust-building, but it is the most promising path to confer resilience, efficiency, and social legitimacy to tourism management in the contemporary scenario.

The successful implementation of these new governance models depends critically on establishing effective monitoring and evaluation systems. Petrocchi (2009) emphasizes that the planning process must incorporate the control function, which turns the tourism plan into a "living instrument" (p. 17). In the context of collaborative governance, this control should be exercised jointly, with the active participation of all actors involved—from the public sector to local communities.

International experience, documented by the World Tourism Organization (2022), shows that the most successful destinations are those able to institutionalize permanent mechanisms for result evaluation and course correction. In the Sergipe context, the creation of regional tourism observatories, linked to Regional Governance Bodies (IGRs), could provide the data and indicators required for evidence-based management. This approach would allow, for example, for more accurate measurement of the socioeconomic return of investments made by PRODETUR/NE, and the reorientation of resources to where they are most needed (Coelho; Costa; Vilela, 2008).

Collaborative governance therefore does not consist merely of creating new structures, but of a profound transformation of the public culture of tourism management. As Ramos (2010) observes, it is a matter of overcoming the view of regionalization as the mere "nexus of similar peculiarities" to build effective "processes of collaboration and identification among agents." This transformation, while complex and demanding "historical patience," is the necessary condition for Sergipe to convert its remarkable tourism potential, detailed by Silva (2012) and Rodrigues (2014), into sustainable economic development that is, in fact, inclusive.

RELATED STUDIES

National and international research on tourism and regional development highlights the complexity of this field of study, characterized by multidisciplinary approaches and a diversity of methodologies employed. In the international arena, authors such as Dredge and Jenkins (2011) emphasize that tourism must be understood as a territorial phenomenon that articulates economic, social, and political dimensions, directly influencing patterns of spatial occupation and the organization of local communities. The global literature also underscores the role of integrated planning and collaborative governance as fundamental elements for the activity's sustainability, as discussed by Bramwell and Lane (2011), who analyze experiences of participatory management in European tourist destinations.

In the national context, Brazilian research has advanced significantly by analyzing tourism as a tool for local and regional development, especially in areas where the activity plays a strategic role in job creation, income generation, and economic dynamization. Authors such as Beni (2006; 2020) and Cruz

(2010) investigate interactions among public policies, infrastructure, cultural identity, and territorial competitiveness, noting that tourism in Brazil faces challenges related to unequal distribution of investments, weaknesses in public management, and the need for professional qualification. Regional studies—particularly in the Northeast—examine the impact of programs such as PRODETUR and the effects of coastal tourism on land-use planning (Dantas; Sousa, 2014; Silveira, 2017), contributing to a more in-depth understanding of regional development dynamics.

Despite these advances, theoretical and methodological gaps persist and deserve attention. One of the principal gaps concerns the absence of integrated analytical models that link tourism, public policies, governance, and sustainability—especially in regions with limited availability of systematized data. As Hall (2019) and Sharpley (2020) point out, part of the academic output remains concentrated in descriptive approaches, with limited use of robust quantitative methods or interregional comparative analyses capable of revealing structural patterns. In Brazil, the lack of consolidated time series and the fragmentation of institutional data constrain the capacity to evaluate the real long-term impacts of tourism policies.

Another relevant gap is the limited integration between academic studies and public management practices. Researchers such as Lohmann and Panosso Netto (2012) argue that many Brazilian tourism plans lack solid scientific grounding, which hinders the implementation of efficient and sustainable strategies. Furthermore, there is a deficit of studies that examine, in depth, community participation in tourism management—especially in territories historically affected by social inequality and land concentration.

Thus, the analysis of related studies reveals that, although there is a substantial body of research on tourism and regional development, there remains room for theoretical and methodological expansion, particularly regarding policy evaluation, measurement of socioeconomic impacts, and the incorporation of interdisciplinary approaches that consider environmental, cultural, and social aspects in an integrated manner. These gaps reinforce the need for new studies that contribute to strengthening tourism management in Brazil and to building more inclusive and sustainable models of territorial development.

The methodology adopted in this study was structured to ensure coherence with the object of investigation, the research problem, and the proposed objectives. To understand public tourism management in Sergipe between 2010 and 2025, it was necessary to employ methods that would allow for the analysis of historical processes, the evaluation of implemented public policies, the identification of perceptions among involved actors, and the interpretation of complex phenomena related to governance, tourism planning, and regional development. Accordingly, the research is characterized by a qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory nature, articulating procedures that make it possible to examine both the formal aspects of policies and their practical and symbolic repercussions.

The choice of a qualitative approach stems from the need to investigate interpretive and subjective dimensions related to tourism as a public policy—an arena that involves multiple actors, interests, and narratives. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research enables an understanding of meanings attributed by people to their experiences and social interactions, which is essential for analyzing the perceptions of managers, workers, residents, and businesspeople engaged in tourism processes. In addition, the qualitative dimension allows for an in-depth examination of documents, plans, legislation, and governmental strategies, interpreting them within their respective contexts. The research is also descriptive, insofar as it seeks to detail and systematically present the public tourism policies implemented in Sergipe between 2010 and 2025, as well as their institutional structures, management instruments, advances, and limitations. According to Gil (2017), descriptive studies aim to record and analyze the characteristics of phenomena and the relationships established among variables, without necessarily manipulating them. In this work, that characteristic manifests in the description of governmental actions, investments made, governance mechanisms, and the perceptions of social actors.

Its exploratory character is justified by the need to broaden understanding of public tourism management in Sergipe—a theme still insufficiently examined in the national academic literature. Exploratory studies, as Yin (2015) argues, are appropriate when the phenomenon under investigation is little known or when prior research is scarce, enabling new elements and understandings to emerge throughout the investigative process. In this sense, the study sought to map dispersed information, organize historical data, and compare different administrative periods, thereby contributing to expanding existing knowledge on the topic.

The temporal scope from 2010 to 2025 was defined in light of significant transformations in Sergipe's tourism policy, as well as structural changes in state management. This period encompasses different governments, alterations in administrative organization, updates to state tourism plans, and impacts from external events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which directly influenced the sector's dynamics. The temporal delimitation enables observation of trends, ruptures, and continuities over fifteen years, offering a broad longitudinal view.

Data collection techniques involved multiple complementary procedures: document analysis, interviews, and questionnaires. Document analysis allowed the examination of laws, decrees, state tourism plans, management reports, official documents from the Ministry of Tourism, regional diagnostics, institutional materials, and publications from international organizations such as UNESCO and the UNWTO. Bryman (2012) emphasizes that institutional documents are valuable sources for understanding the internal logic of public policies and the trajectory of their implementation.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with strategic sector actors, including state and municipal public managers, representatives of the tourism trade, community leaders, and professionals directly involved in tourism activity. This interview format allows relevant themes to be explored in depth while ensuring flexibility for particular interpretations and perceptions to emerge—essential for understanding the real functioning of the policies analyzed.

Questionnaires were employed to capture perceptions among workers and residents of regions directly affected by tourism activity, providing a broader panorama of the social reception of public policies. Although qualitative in nature, the questionnaires included closed questions with perception scales, enabling subsequent descriptive statistical treatment.

Analytical procedures combined descriptive statistics and content analysis. Descriptive statistics were applied to the questionnaire responses, facilitating the organization of frequencies, means, percentages, and comparative categories that helped identify perception trends. Content analysis, following Bardin (2011), was used to interpret interviews, documents, and institutional texts, seeking to identify thematic categories, recurring discourses, contradictions, and symbolic elements present in the actors' narratives. Triangulation of these analyses helped enhance the robustness of the results and avoid interpretive biases, favoring a broader and deeper understanding of tourism management during the analyzed period.

Ethical considerations were an essential part of the methodological process. All interviews and questionnaires followed research ethics principles, respecting voluntariness, informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, the nature of the research, the use of collected information, and their right to withdraw at any time. Sensitive data and participant identification were safeguarded, ensuring anonymity and compliance with prevailing ethical standards.

Like any research, this study also presents limitations. The first concerns the availability and quality of official documents, given that some policies were not fully recorded or did not have updated reports over the period. A second limitation refers to difficulties in accessing certain managers or representatives of the tourism trade, which restricted the breadth of interviews in some municipalities. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted the sector's dynamics and access to strategic

agents, complicating in situ observations at certain moments of the research. Another possible limitation is the subjectivity inherent to qualitative interpretation, despite triangulation efforts to ensure scientific rigor. Even so, these limitations do not compromise the study's validity; rather, they indicate paths for future research.

Thus, the adopted methodology enabled the phenomenon to be understood in a broad, in-depth, and contextualized manner, integrating documentary, statistical, and narrative perspectives. This combination ensured a consistent analysis of public tourism management in Sergipe between 2010 and 2025 and substantiated the results and discussions presented in the subsequent chapters.

OVERVIEW OF TOURISM POLICIES IN SERGIPE (2010–2025)

The period between 2010 and 2025 in Sergipe is characterized by a set of institutional, strategic, and operational transformations that shaped the state's public tourism policies. These policies oscillated between moments of expansion, administrative reorganization, investments in infrastructure, and periods of retrenchment or stagnation—impacted both by national economic conditions and by fiscal, political, and institutional limitations. Analysis of this landscape reveals a trajectory marked by efforts to strengthen tourism as a vector of regional economic development, although persistent challenges related to governance, continuity of actions, and articulation among different levels of government and the private sector remain evident.

From 2010 to 2014, Sergipe experienced a more robust investment cycle, bolstered by Brazil's macroeconomic stability and the continuity of federal programs supporting tourism, such as PRODETUR and the Tourism Regionalization Program. During this period, the state government prioritized expanding tourism infrastructure, undertaking urban requalification works along the Atalaia waterfront, improvements at the Santa Maria Airport, tourism signage, and investments in the Rota do Sertão, the Rota dos Cânions, and the southern seaboard of Sergipe. As noted by Santos and Pereira (2015), state policy during this period sought to articulate tourism and regional development by encouraging municipal integration and diversification of the tourism offering, thus seeking to overcome the historic concentration in the capital, Aracaju.

Starting in 2015, however, a significant inflection can be observed. The national economic crisis directly affected the state's investment capacity, reducing the budget allocated to tourism and impacting the execution of infrastructure programs. Strategic planning became more limited and fragmented, with greater dependence on federal guidelines and specific agreements. Moreover, national political instability reverberated at the state level, leading to discontinuity in some projects and frequent replacement of technical personnel in management and promotion areas. According to Cruz (2018), recurring administrative changes compromise the implementation of long-term policies and hinder the institutionalization of public governance practices.

Between 2018 and 2020, the state made efforts to resume professionalization of tourism management, spurred by restructuring of the Secretaria de Turismo and partnerships with the tourism trade. Initiatives such as the development of municipal tourism master plans, updating the Brazilian Tourism Map, strengthening integrated routes (e.g., Caminhos da Serra de Itabaiana and Caminhos do Cangaço), and professional training actions were reintroduced. Yet the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022) brought an abrupt rupture in the sector, causing activity to halt, sharp declines in tourist flows, and deep financial retrenchment. As highlighted by the Ministry of Tourism (2022), Sergipe—like other

northeastern states—had to adopt emergency measures, such as subsidies, tax relief, domestic tourism campaigns, and health protocols, prioritizing job retention and the survival of small enterprises.

From 2022 onward, with gradual economic recovery and reorganization of Brazil's tourism sector, Sergipe began a new cycle of restructuring. The expansion of tourism marketing campaigns, greater presence at national and international fairs, and consolidation of the brand "Sergipe é o País do Forró" as a strategy of cultural identity and tourism promotion stand out. Policies from 2023 to 2025 have focused particularly on strengthening regional integration with Alagoas, Bahia, and Pernambuco, increasing tourist flows via air and road, and attracting new investments for the southern coast (such as expansion of infrastructure at Praia do Abaís and Praia do Saco) and for development territories in the hinterland (e.g., Canindé de São Francisco) and the Serra de Itabaiana.

In this more recent period, the state has also invested in modernizing cultural attractions such as the Museu da Gente Sergipana, the Historic Center of São Cristóvão (recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the Archaeology Museum in Laranjeiras, and the revitalization of public spaces in the capital. These interventions have strengthened cultural and educational tourism, expanding the diversification of Sergipe's tourism offering. Studies by Silva and Albuquerque (2024) indicate that Sergipe's cultural diversity—including traditional festivities, cuisine, and popular expressions—represents a competitive differential that remains underexplored by public policies.

In terms of management and governance, Sergipe has advanced in some instruments, such as the State Tourism Council, the State Tourism Plan, and regional forums, although these spaces still face challenges related to effective participation, continuity of actions, and municipal technical capacity. Smaller municipalities—especially in the hinterland and agreste—struggle to formulate their own tourism policies, relying on infrequent state actions or on isolated private sector initiatives. This territorial inequality is one of the main challenges highlighted in the tourism and development literature (Beni, 2020; Rabahy, 2003; Tomazzoni, 2007) and is particularly evident in Sergipe.

On the other hand, the 2010–2025 period also shows continuity of structural problems, such as limitations in collecting and systematizing tourism data, scarcity of performance indicators, low workforce qualification, and fragility in intersectoral articulation. These factors hinder policy monitoring and the formulation of long-term strategies, as noted by Rabahy (2003) and in recent MTur reports (2023). Such gaps compromise the state's competitiveness and prevent tourism from fully reaching its potential as a vector of sustainable socioeconomic development.

In conclusion, analysis of Sergipe's tourism policy landscape reveals important advances—especially during periods of greater political and economic stability—but also persistent weaknesses related to administrative continuity, institutional articulation, and dependence on federal investments. The trajectory from 2010 to 2025 demonstrates that, although the state has strong cultural, natural, and

historical tourism potential, its realization depends on consolidating a more integrated, technical, and sustainable management model capable of overcoming structural challenges and promoting greater territorial balance.

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Assessing the effectiveness of public tourism management in Sergipe from 2010 to 2025 requires integrated analysis of several structuring elements—such as strategic planning, institutional capacity, administrative continuity, intergovernmental coordination, social participation, investments, and tangible results in regional development. The tourism public policy literature emphasizes that effectiveness is directly related to the coherence among objectives, governance instruments, and observed territorial impacts (Cruz, 2010; Hall, 2019). In Sergipe's case, a scenario marked by punctual advances and discontinuities is observed, revealing both potentialities and persistent weaknesses in the management process.

The first relevant dimension concerns planning. Although the state prepared different versions of the State Tourism Plan (2010, 2015, 2020, and 2023), execution was often limited by budgetary constraints, political oscillations, and lack of administrative continuity. As Beni (2020) and Rabahy (2003) observe, absence of long-term planning and ruptures between administrations undermine the capacity to implement structuring actions, generating fragmentation in public policies. In Sergipe, this manifests in difficulties consolidating large regional projects, updating tourism inventories, and reducing dependence on federal resources.

The second dimension concerns institutional capacity. The Secretariat of Tourism underwent different phases of administrative reorganization, often associated with changes in leadership and weakening of specialized technical teams. The literature indicates that qualified public cadres are decisive for sector efficiency—particularly regarding the use of indicators, preparation of diagnostics, and management of agreements (Lohmann; Panosso Netto, 2012). In Sergipe, the production of systematized statistical data on tourism flows, employment, and income remains limited, hindering impact assessment and the structuring of evidence-based policies.

The third dimension concerns governance and articulation among actors. Although the state has a State Tourism Council and participatory regional forums, operation is irregular, with uneven participation by municipalities and the private sector. As Bramwell and Lane (2011) argue, the effectiveness of these councils depends on dialogue capacity, shared responsibilities, and collaborative networks. In Sergipe, despite efforts to integrate municipalities such as Aracaju, Canindé de São Francisco, Estância, Laranjeiras, and São Cristóvão into integrated routes, coordination and alignment among state and municipal levels still face difficulties.

The fourth dimension refers to budget execution. State investments in tourism fluctuated significantly over the period analyzed, with marked reductions between 2015 and 2020 due to the national economic crisis and state fiscal constraints. Studies such as Dantas and Sousa (2014) indicate that continuous financing is essential for consolidating projects in infrastructure, professional training, and tourism promotion. In Sergipe, lack of regular investment contributed to project stagnation and vulnerability of local initiatives, particularly in smaller municipalities.

Conversely, important advances should be acknowledged. Between 2018 and 2025, expansion of tourism marketing campaigns, modernization of urban infrastructure along the Atalaia waterfront, revitalization of São Cristóvão's Historic Center, and updating the Brazilian Tourism Map reveal an effort to strategically reposition the state. The growing presence of Sergipe at national and international fairs and consolidation of the "Sergipe – O País do Forró" brand reinforce local cultural identity as a relevant tourism asset. Research such as Silva and Albuquerque (2024) confirms that cultural tourism is among the segments with greatest expansion potential, and Sergipe has made visible advances in this realm.

Nevertheless, management effectiveness continues to be compromised by regional inequalities: while Aracaju concentrates most tourism facilities, municipalities in the interior and the southern coast face difficulties in developing their own projects due to lack of resources, qualification, and technical support. This reality confirms what Beni (2020) and Dredge and Jenkins (2011) highlight as a key obstacle to sustainable tourism development: concentration of investments and absence of territorialized policies.

Thus, in assessing effectiveness of public tourism management in Sergipe (2010–2025), it is clear that the state advanced in certain aspects—such as tourism promotion, urban requalification, and strengthening of cultural identity—but still faces significant structural challenges related to governance, administrative continuity, data production, and equitable distribution of investments. To achieve greater effectiveness, it is necessary to consolidate long-term strategies, qualify technical teams, and strengthen inter-municipal cooperation, ensuring that tourism is understood as a transversal activity and a driver of sustainable regional development.

Table 3 – Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Public Tourism Management in Sergipe (2010–2025)

Dimension	Identified Advances	Persistent Limitations
Planning	Preparation of State Plans; integration with federal policies	Low continuity; lack of monitoring and indicators
Technical Capacity	Qualified teams at certain moments	Leadership turnover; lack of institutionalization
Governance	Existence of councils and regional forums	Irregular participation; low inter-municipal articulation
Budget	Periods of robust investment	Strong dependence on federal resources; fluctuations
Tourism Promotion	Strengthening of the Sergipe brand; presence at fairs	Lack of impact measurement; limited segmentation
Interiorization	Development of some routes	Large territorial disparities; fragility of smaller municipalities

Source: Author's elaboration (2025).

Table 4 – Overall Assessment of the Effectiveness of Public Tourism Management in Sergipe

Criterion	Assessment	Justification
Administrative Continuity	Low	Frequent changes in leadership and priorities
Institutional Capacity	Moderate	Existence of qualified technicians, yet structural instability
Budget Efficiency	Moderate	Advances during certain periods, retrenchment in others
Governance	Moderate/Low	Uneven participation and limited regional integration
Tourism Promotion	High/Moderate	Strong strategies, but limited monitoring
Results in the Territory	Moderate	Impacts more concentrated in the capital

Source: Author's elaboration (2025).

PERCEPTION OF LOCAL ACTORS REGARDING TOURISM IMPACTS

Analyzing perceptions of local actors about tourism impacts is essential to understand public policy effectiveness and the level of social acceptance of tourism activities in the regions studied. Tourism—while a complex socio-territorial phenomenon—directly and indirectly affects resident communities, entrepreneurs, sector workers, public managers, community organizations, and representatives of the tourism trade. Thus, understanding how these groups perceive tourism, its benefits, and its problems provides essential elements for sustainable planning, participatory management, and identification of gaps between institutional discourse and territorial realities. In Sergipe, the perception of local actors presents nuances related to regional characteristics, unequal distribution of investments, and

the socioeconomic transformations that occurred between 2010 and 2025. Research conducted in Brazilian tourism destinations indicates that perceptions vary according to the degree of community participation in decision-making, employment generation, infrastructure quality, and the practice of government transparency (Gursoy; Nunkoo, 2016). In Sergipe, these perceptions are similarly influenced by tourism's role in the state economy, destination visibility, and asymmetries between the capital and the interior.

Perceptions of Economic Impacts

Actors linked to the tourism trade—such as entrepreneurs, guides, travel agents, and restaurant and hotel owners—tend to present more positive perceptions of tourism's economic impacts. In their evaluations, the sector represents opportunities for income generation, increased demand for services, and stability for certain market niches. This perception aligns with studies by Beni (2006; 2020), which highlight tourism as an economic catalyst for small and medium-sized enterprises.

In Aracaju, the concentration of hotels, gastronomic facilities, and leisure venues leads entrepreneurs to perceive tourism as a driver of growth and national visibility for the state. The Atalaia waterfront, the Orlinha do Bairro Industrial, and cultural events strengthened between 2018 and 2025 (such as the Encontro Cultural de Laranjeiras and June festivities) are frequently cited by local actors as initiatives that energize the economy.

By contrast, actors in interior municipalities—such as Canindé de São Francisco, Pacatuba, Estância, or Poço Redondo—present more ambivalent perceptions. In these contexts, tourism is recognized as an economic potential but not as a consolidated reality. Infrastructure, continuous promotion, and state support are lacking—generating frustration among local entrepreneurs. This absence of constant investments confirms national studies pointing to limitations in the interiorization of tourism in Brazil (Cruz, 2010; Dantas; Sousa, 2014), thereby generating perceptions of territorial inequality.

Perceptions of Sociocultural Impacts

Tourism's sociocultural impacts are perceived differently across population segments. Actors linked to culture—artisans, folk groups, musicians, and cultural producers—tend to value tourism as a space for maintenance, dissemination, and survival of local traditions. The World Heritage title granted to the historic center of São Cristóvão reinforced cultural identity and amplified local pride, as highlighted by studies by Silva and Albuquerque (2024).

However, part of the community expresses concern over "spectacularization" of culture—that is, the excessive use of traditions as tourism products disconnected from their original meanings. This critique appears in the literature on cultural tourism (Hall, 2019; Richards, 2007), which warns of loss of

authenticity due to the commodification of identity expressions. In Sergipe, this tension is perceptible in traditional events reconfigured to meet external expectations, sometimes generating friction between tradition and modernity.

Another relevant point concerns changes in the daily lives of resident communities. While some perceive tourism as an opportunity to valorize the territory, others point to higher cost of living, intensified urban flows, and altered social dynamics, especially in neighborhoods near Aracaju's waterfront. This perception confirms analyses by Gursoy and Rutherford (2014), which identify both positive and negative social impacts resulting from tourism.

Perceptions of Environmental Impacts

Perception of environmental impacts is among the most sensitive areas. Actors such as fishers, environmentalists, and residents of natural areas express concerns about:

- increased pressure on coastal ecosystems;
- improper solid waste disposal;
- disordered expansion of construction in sensitive areas;
- degradation of mangroves and rivers due to intensified tourism activity.

These perceptions are reinforced by environmental studies on Sergipe's coastal region (Oliveira; Melo, 2019) and echo international research showing that coastal destinations are particularly vulnerable to uncontrolled tourism (Sharpley, 2020).

In contrast, public managers often present a more optimistic view of environmental impacts, arguing that many problems stem from older settlements, lack of environmental education, or absence of sanitation infrastructure. Yet this discrepancy between official and community perceptions can generate governance conflicts.

Perceptions of Public Management

Perhaps the most significant element in local actors' perceptions is the evaluation of public management. Most interviewees in regional studies (Santos; Pereira, 2015; Silva; Albuquerque, 2024) pointed to:

- lack of administrative continuity;
- absence of inter-municipal articulation;
- scarcity of investments;
- fragile mechanisms for social participation;
- scarcity of transparent information.

Entrepreneurs claim that destination promotion is insufficient during many periods and that the state exhibits visibility only seasonally. Residents of tourism-dependent cities feel that their participation is limited in public decision-making processes.

Public managers, on the other hand, argue that the pandemic, the 2015–2020 fiscal crisis, and dependence on federal resources hamper full execution of policies. This difference in perceptions confirms tourism governance literature (Bramwell; Lane, 2011), which emphasizes that transparent communication between government and community is essential to avoid mistrust and promote shared responsibility.

Table 3 – Convergences and Divergences in Local Actors' Perceptions of Tourism Impacts

Category	Identified Perceptions	Description / Interpretation
Positive Convergences	Job and income generation	Actors from the trade, workers, and the community recognize that tourism energizes the economy and creates opportunities.
	Strengthening of cultural identity	Cultural manifestations, traditional festivities, and historical heritage gain visibility through tourism.
	Infrastructure improvements	Urban works and requalification of public spaces are perceived as direct results of tourism.
	Increased visibility of the state	Campaigns, events, and greater visitor presence reinforce Sergipe's image as a tourism destination.
Negative Convergences	Strong concentration in Aracaju	Perception of territorial inequality and insufficient interiorization of tourism policies.
	Discontinuity of public policies	Changes in administrations interrupt projects and hamper planning.
	Interior municipalities underserved	Lack of investments, technical support, and tourism promotion outside the capital.
	Lack of sustainable planning	Concerns over environmental impacts and improper use of natural resources.
	Low participation of local actors	Residents, artisans, entrepreneurs, and workers feel little heard in public decisions.
Divergences	Assessment of tourism promotion	Businesspeople consider promotion efficient; residents view it as insufficient.
	Perception of governance	Managers claim there is articulation; communities identify fragility in decision-making.
	Issue of seasonality	Workers perceive insecurity due to temporary contracts; businesspeople see seasonality as inherent to the sector.

Source: Author's elaboration (2025).

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR THE SECTOR

      Between 2010 and 2025, the tourism sector in Sergipe faces a complex set of structural challenges that limit its full development as a strategic activity within the state's economy and as a vector of socio-territorial inclusion. The literature notes that the effectiveness of tourism public policies depends on administrative continuity, robust governance, adequate infrastructure, professional qualification, social participation, and regular investments in promotion and innovation (Cruz, 2010; Beni, 2020; Hall, 2019). In Sergipe, however, these elements appear fragmented and unevenly distributed across the territory, resulting in punctual advances that remain insufficient to fully consolidate the state within Brazil's tourism landscape. Administrative discontinuity is perceived as one of the most significant obstacles. Frequent changes in government entail priority shifts, structural reorganizations, replacement of technical teams, and disruption of ongoing projects. This cycle compromises implementation of long-term policies and prevents initiated programs from being monitored or concluded adequately—a phenomenon observed intensely in studies on tourism in Brazil (Cruz, 2018; Feldmann, 2022). Without institutional continuity, actions lose coherence and fail to produce lasting results. The absence of systematic monitoring and performance indicators exacerbates this situation, making objective evaluation of policy impacts difficult and hampering identification of needs and opportunities (Rabahy, 2003; Hall, 2019). Another structural challenge relates to fragile tourism governance and low social participation. Although Sergipe has councils and regional forums, operation is not always effective. Irregular meetings, low representation of workers, local communities, and small entrepreneurs, and technical limitations in many municipalities result in weakly inclusive governance, often merely symbolic, in the sense described by Bramwell and Lane (2011). This fragility generates asymmetries in decision-making and reproduces historic inequalities, maintaining centralization of actions in Aracaju and hindering interiorization of tourism. Many municipalities lack tourism master plans, qualified teams, and territorial management instruments, which compromises participation in state bodies and reduces their capacity to secure funding, develop projects, or integrate regional routes (Dredge; Jenkins, 2011).

      Tourism and logistics infrastructure also stand out as one of the most critical points. Despite localized advances—such as urban requalifications along the Atalaia waterfront, improvements to the Historic Center of São Cristóvão, and punctual interventions in coastal areas—significant gaps persist in tourism signage, accessibility, public transportation, access roads, diversification of lodging supply, and air connectivity. As Dredge and Jenkins (2011) argue, destinations with limited infrastructure have compromised competitiveness—particularly in Sergipe's interior regions. The low supply of flights, for instance, restricts national tourism reach and practically precludes international markets, reducing competitiveness vis-à-vis neighboring northeastern states. In the realm of professional training, the sector faces additional challenges. Despite initiatives by institutions such as SENAC, SEBRAE, and the

Ministry of Tourism, workforce qualification remains insufficient to meet the demands of an increasingly segmented and competitive market (Lohmann; Panosso Netto, 2012). Seasonality intensifies labor instability, especially for temporary workers, who view the sector with concern and uncertainty, while entrepreneurs tend to consider seasonality an inherent aspect of tourism—differences that reveal the need for more inclusive policies and mechanisms that ensure labor rights and stability (Gursoy; Nunkoo, 2016). Moreover, environmental challenges add further complexity. When not planned sustainably, tourism can cause significant negative impacts, especially in coastal and protected areas. Issues such as coastal erosion, river pollution, mangrove degradation, increased solid waste, and pressure on sensitive ecosystems are noticeable across different regions of Sergipe (Oliveira; Melo, 2019). These impacts underscore the urgency of adopting territorial planning policies, management plans, public-use regulation, and environmental education strategies, aligned with international sustainability guidelines highlighted by Sharpley (2020).

In tourism promotion, Sergipe faces stiff competition from more consolidated northeastern states such as Bahia, Ceará, and Pernambuco. Despite recent advances, promotion still lacks continuity, measurement of results, audience segmentation, and integration between state and municipal campaigns. Richards (2007) stresses that destinations failing to invest systematically in marketing tend to remain "invisible" in the global tourism market—reinforcing the need for Sergipe to qualify its promotional strategies and strengthen its identity as a cultural, natural, and gastronomic destination. Despite these challenges, prospects for the sector are significant—provided there are strategic investments, administrative continuity, and strengthened governance. Interiorization of tourism emerges as a major opportunity—allowing municipalities like Canindé de São Francisco, Estância, Laranjeiras, and Poço Redondo to develop tourism products aligned with natural and cultural potentials. Cultural tourism also presents strong potential, especially through the Historic Center of São Cristóvão (recognized by UNESCO in 2010) and museums such as the Museu da Gente Sergipana, which help to construct identity narratives and attract visitors interested in heritage and history. Nature and adventure tourism, driven by the São Francisco Canyons and conservation units, represents another opportunity for expansion—particularly given global trends favoring outdoor experiences and ecotourism (Sharpley, 2020).

Public–private partnerships can foster investments in infrastructure, tourism facilities, and modernization of the lodging network, while sector digitalization—with digital marketing tools, booking platforms, and smart signage—can expand destination reach and modernize visitor experience. Finally, building participatory, decentralized governance appears as a pivotal pillar for the future of Sergipe's tourism. Active inclusion of communities, workers, entrepreneurs, and municipal managers in decision-making processes increases policy legitimacy and strengthens social commitment to sustainable development. In this sense, strengthening institutional articulation, creating participation mechanisms,

and ensuring continuity of public policies become essential for Sergipe to transform its tourism potential into an effective driver of regional development.

This research aimed to analyze public tourism management in Sergipe over the period from 2010 to 2025, examining its evolution, challenges, results, and the perceptions of the different actors involved in the sector. This time frame made it possible to observe significant transformations in policies, administrative structures, promotion strategies, governance mechanisms, and investments targeted at tourism development. The discussions presented throughout this work show that, although tourism is officially recognized as a socioeconomic vector, it still faces structural limitations to fully consolidate itself as a strategic public policy in the state.

The synthesis of results reveals a scenario marked by punctual advances, but also by persistent fragilities. In the field of planning, Sergipe produced important documents—such as state plans and incentive programs—yet their execution proved irregular, hindered above all by administrative discontinuity. Frequent changes in government led to institutional reorganizations, project interruptions, and redefinition of priorities, circumstances that compromised the consolidation of medium- and long-term policies. In addition, it was observed that systematic monitoring of actions is lacking, performance indicators are scarce, and updated diagnostics capable of guiding decision-making are difficult to produce.

Another noteworthy result concerns tourism governance. Despite the legal existence of councils and participatory bodies, their practices were not always effective. Various municipalities presented difficulties integrating into regional forums, whether due to technical limitations or the absence of specialized teams. This institutional fragility was reflected in the reduced interiorization of public policies and in the concentration of investments in specific areas—particularly the capital. In parallel, the low participation of communities and small entrepreneurs in decision-making processes indicates that, over the period, governance mechanisms were not able to promote sufficiently inclusive management.

With respect to tourism infrastructure, the results point to advances—such as urban requalification in Aracaju and punctual interventions in cultural and natural destinations. Nevertheless, gaps remain in signage, accessibility, logistics, air connectivity, and diversification of lodging supply, especially outside the capital. These constraints limit the state's competitiveness and make it difficult to achieve balanced development among the coastal, hinterland, and historic regions. Deficient infrastructure, associated with weak inter-municipal integration, compromises the articulation of regional routes and the sustainable expansion of tourism.

The perceptions of local actors reinforce this analysis. Entrepreneurs, managers, workers, and residents recognize tourism's socioeconomic importance, highlighting its potential to generate employment, valorize heritage, and strengthen Sergipe's cultural identity. However, they also point to dissatisfaction regarding the lack of continuity in public policies, the insufficiency of investments, and the inequality between the capital and the interior. Community actors and seasonal workers expressed

concerns about environmental impacts, urban pressures, and labor instability, while public managers emphasized financial and institutional limitations as barriers to full policy execution.

Considering these results, it is possible to answer the research problem that guided the study: to what extent did public tourism management in Sergipe, between 2010 and 2025, contribute to the state's tourism and regional development? The conclusion is that, although there have been important advances—especially in tourism promotion, urban requalification, and the consolidation of cultural attractions—public management exhibited significant limitations that prevented tourism from fully realizing its potential as a tool for regional development. The contribution of public management was, therefore, partial, since progress occurred in a fragmented and unequal manner, without continuous planning and without governance sufficiently robust to sustain actions over time.

The academic contributions of this research are relevant, as they expand knowledge about public tourism policies in states that are less studied—such as Sergipe—and offer a detailed analysis of a long period marked by political and institutional variations. The study also contributes theoretically by dialoguing with authors in tourism, governance, and planning, showing how classical concepts apply to specific regional contexts. From a methodological standpoint, the work demonstrates the importance of longitudinal analyses, which allow trends, ruptures, and continuities to be observed over time, offering a more robust panorama than studies focused on short time frames.

Practical contributions likewise stand out. The results can serve as a reference for public managers, municipal technicians, tourism councils, entrepreneurs, and training institutions, enabling identification of bottlenecks, potentialities, and possible pathways for improving public policies. The analysis of local actors' perceptions, for instance, can support actions in participatory governance, social inclusion, tourism education, strengthening entrepreneurship, and building more integrated and coherent development strategies. The diagnosis of infrastructure and logistics fragilities can guide investment projects, while identification of territorial inequalities reinforces the need for policies specifically designed for interiorization.

In light of the findings, several strategic guidelines are recommended for public managers. First, it is essential to ensure administrative continuity, avoiding drastic changes to institutional structures with each administration. Institutionalization of plans, councils, committees, and indicators should be permanent, ensuring stability of actions. Second, governance must be strengthened by broadening the participation of local actors, encouraging the creation of structured municipal councils, and promoting inter-municipal articulation. Third, tourism infrastructure investments should be distributed more evenly, with special attention to the interior, mobility, accessibility, and connectivity. In addition, professional qualification actions should be continuous, targeting front-line workers and managers responsible for planning and implementing policies. Finally, tourism promotion should be expanded based on segmented

digital strategies, integrated between the state and municipalities, and should foster the sustainable development of cultural, natural, and gastronomic products.

As for suggestions for future research, comparative studies between Sergipe and other northeastern states are recommended, enabling identification of good practices and management models applicable to the Sergipe context. Further inquiry into the perceptions of traditional communities, environmental impacts of tourism, and interiorization strategies is also suggested. Research on the tourism economy can help more precisely measure sector effects on income generation, employment, and local development. Studies on collaborative governance and social participation may offer new directions for improving public tourism management. Finally, research integrating tourism, sustainability, and technological innovation can aid in constructing more modern policies aligned with global market transformations.

Thus, it is concluded that, although tourism in Sergipe exhibited significant advances during the analyzed period, there remains a long path for the sector to be recognized as an articulated strategy of regional development. With continuous planning, solid governance, adequate investments, and democratic participation by the various actors involved, tourism has the potential to contribute significantly to the state's economic, social, and cultural future.

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