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The International, Regional and Local Interaction in the Promotion of Cultural Tourism in Mozambique

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the tourist promotion of the cultural and natural heritage in Mozambique, one of Africa's poorest countries, whose strategy for the reduction of poverty highlights the role of tourism in supporting territorial development and implementing the Millennium/Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nation plan to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. The country has produced a national strategy for the development of tourism that is based on the integration at the national level of international and regional policies implemented through the territorial action of several subjects working at the local level. Among them, regional and international Ngos, that play an important role in promoting actions aimed at capacity-building, advocacy, empowerment.

This strategy makes of Mozambique a very interesting example of the rescaling process in tourism development that guides the political agenda of both the international tourist organizations and the national governments.

Keywords: Mozambique; Tourist Development; Poverty Reduction; National Policies; International Cooperation

L'articolo analizza la promozione turistica del patrimonio culturale e naturale del Mozambico, uno dei paesi più poveri dell'Africa, la cui strategia nazionale per la riduzione della povertà individua nel turismo uno strumento di sviluppo territoriale e di realizzazione degli Obiettivi del Millennio e dei successivi Obiettivi dello Sviluppo Sostenibile, il piano delle Nazioni Unite che aspira a eliminare la povertà, proteggere il pianeta e assicurare benessere per tutti. Il paese ha prodotto una strategia nazionale per lo sviluppo del turismo che si basa sull'integrazione a livello nazionale di politiche

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internazionali e regionali, che vengono implementate attraverso l'azione territoriale di diversi soggetti che lavorano al livello locale, tra cui principalmente Ong regionali e internazionali, le quali svolgono un ruolo molto importante nella promozione di azioni finalizzate a raggiungere gli obiettivi di capacity-building, advocacy ed empowerment. Questa strategia fa del Mozambico un esempio estremamente interessante del processo di transcalarità nello sviluppo turistico, che guida l'agenda politica sia delle organizzazioni turistiche internazioanli sia dei governi nazionali.

Keywords: Mozambico; Sviluppo Turistico; Riduzione della Povertà; Politiche Nazionali; Cooperazione Internazionale

Introduction

The protection of the cultural and natural heritage of the African countries has been recognised as an important feature of tourist and human development by several international subjects, all of which play a significant role in directing the national policies of the continent's nations.

The paper discusses the development of tourism in one of Africa's poorest countries, Mozambique, that rates 180th in the 2015 Human Development list of the United Nations. The tourist exploitation of its natural and cultural resources may play a vital role in helping in the reduction of poverty, and the country has thus produced several policies to promote this sector, focusing on the creation of a network of international, regional and local partners. The paper will first describe very briefly the history of tourist development in Mozambique, comparing its actual performances with those of the African continent, and then it will discuss more deeply the above-mentioned national policies. Finally, the role of international cooperation in the making of the national tourist sector will be analysed, focusing on the multiple-level strategy that has been put in place.

1. Tourist development in Mozambique

1.1 *The country socio-economic performances*

In the past 20 years, Mozambique has experienced a constant economic growth (even if the World Bank estimates only a 3.6% growth in 2016). However, a similar growth in the living conditions of the resident population has not been achieved yet: poverty indicators, in fact, have reduced only by 4% between 2003 and 2009 and the territorial distribution of poverty has remained unchanged (World Bank, 2016). In 2015, the country ranked 180th in the list of Human Development Index, with a life expectancy of 50.3 years, literacy rate at 56% and a per capita income of US\$ 1,123 a year. 44.1% of the country population experiences multidimensional poverty and 54.7% lives below the national poverty line, with a widespread malnourishment and a strong presence of malaria and HIV (UNDP, 2015). The country, moreover, ranks 128th in respect to the access to improved water, and 119th for improved sanitation (World Bank, 2016).

1.2 *Latest tourist performances of Africa*

Figures from the World Tourist Organisation show that in 2015 the two top African tourist destinations were located in the northern part of the continent, being Morocco

(19% of total arrivals and 18.2% of tourist receipts) and Egypt (17.1% and 11.2%), followed by South Africa (16.7% and 24.9%) (UNWTO, 2016).

As a whole, Africa welcomed 53.3 million arrivals in 2015 (4.5% of the total international arrivals) and received US\$ 33.1 billion (2.6% of the global market share) (UNWTO, 2016). Both data show a small decline in respect to the previous years, when Africa had experienced a continuous growth in both tourist arrivals and receipt, probably as a consequence of the increase of new visitors from emerging economies in Asia, Central and Eastern Europe (AfDB, 2015). As a matter of fact, in 2014, despite the Ebola crisis – that led to cancellation and a decrease in arrivals, but also spread the idea of insane territories – Africa's tourist arrivals had increased by 200,000 units over the previous year, with Morocco, Egypt, South Africa, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe as the five most visited African destinations. Algeria, Mozambique, and Kenya showed significant increases and were estimated to figure as the top most visited African countries in the near future (AfDB, 2015).

1.3 History of tourism in Mozambique and its latest tourist performances

Before independence (1975), Mozambique was an important tourist destination, with 400,000 tourist arrivals in 1973, mainly from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Portugal. The number declined significantly during the independence and the civil war, and only after the 1992 peace agreement, Mozambique was able to restore its accommodation infrastructures (mainly campsites and self catering) in Maputo and in the nearby area, such as Ponta de Ouro, Bilene and Inhambane. Both the built and natural heritage suffered greatly during the independence and civil war, but today the government is trying to restore it; in particular, since the beginning of the 21st century, a programme was launched to increase the population of wild animals in natural areas, and to improve both the travel and accommodation infrastructures.

With 2,770 Km of coasts, a tropical climate with an average temperature of 23°C in the North and 26°C in the South, both natural and cultural diversity, the country has an enormous potential for tourist development. The Northern region, known as “the tourism jewel” hosts the Quirimba archipelago, the lake Nyassa and Ilha de Moçambique – the country's only World Heritage Site; the Centre offers both the coastal resources of Beira and the wilderness of the Gorongosa National Park; the Southern region orbits around Maputo and the nearby coasts, where 50% of the total tourist infrastructures and 65% of the country beds are located (Hoguane, 2007).

In 2015, Mozambique received 1,552,000 tourists (-6.6% in respect to the previous year) accounting for 2.6% of the total arrivals of Africa, earning US\$ 193 billion, 0.6% of the total international tourist receipts of the Continent (UNWTO, 2016). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, in 2014 tourism generated in the country 710,500 working positions (6% of total employment), of which 262,500 direct jobs (2.2% of total employment of Mozambique), mainly in hotels, travel agents, airlines, restaurant and leisure industries connected to the satisfaction of tourists. It is

estimated that, by 2025, the sector of travel and tourism will provide 940,000 jobs, 5.9% of total employment, of which 358,000 direct jobs (WTTC, 2015).

However, the political turmoil following the 2014 presidential election will probably create a negative image of the destination, which might affect the arrival of tourists in the next years.

2. National tourist policies

2.1 The Plano estratégico para o desenvolvimento do turismo em Moçambique 2004-2013

Despite the possible negative social drawbacks on the local communities already highlighted by Harrison (1992), tourism is increasingly recognised by the international organizations as the most viable and sustainable economic development option for least developed countries, and one of the main sources of foreign exchange earnings, while playing a key role in poverty reduction (WTO, 2002).

To achieve these goals, in 2004 Mozambique has promulgated a tourist policy called the Plano estratégico para o desenvolvimento do turismo em Moçambique (Strategic plan for the development of tourism in Mozambique), for the years 2004-2013. A very ambitious plan, aiming at reaching 4 million visitors by 2025, by becoming “the most exotic tourist destination in Africa” (Rep. Moçambique, 2004, p. 50), improving the promotion in the rich markets of Europe and North America.

Becoming a global tourist destination will contribute to the creation of employment, economic growth and poverty reduction, while conserving the national biological diversity and the cultural values. Tourism development will have to be implemented through a sustainable approach and will have to be integrated in the general politics of the country, supporting the involvement of the local communities in tourism development, training human resources and creating consciousness on the importance of tourism and the national natural and cultural heritage (Rep. Moçambique, 2004).

The Plano focuses on ecotourism, maritime tourism, cultural tourism and the observation of flora and fauna, and it has identified three main areas of intervention: the Priority areas for the tourist investment (APITs); the Conservation areas (AC) and the Transfrontier conservation areas (ACTFs); the Tourist routes (República de Moçambique, 2014). Among these, conservation and transfrontier areas – where the observation of flora and fauna is the main tourist attraction – are those capable of attracting the largest tourist investments.

Three sub-types of Priority areas are recognised: areas already existing as tourist destinations; areas that experience limited development despite being already promoted as tourist destinations; and several emerging destinations, as the image below explains (República de Moçambique, 2006).

To sustain the tourist development of these areas, the Plano has established three different forms of action. The first one, the Project Ancora do Turismo involves the APITs in the regions of Gaza, Inhambane, Maputo, Nampula and Zambezia, and is

operated in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation to stimulate the growth of tourism through local initiatives aimed at the creation of accommodation infrastructures, while lobbying to remove the administrative barriers that constrain private investments in the sector. Only four projects have been realized (Inatur, 2013; de Araujo, 2009b). The second one, the Project Planos do turismo, focuses on the AC/ACTFs in the regions of Gaza, Inhambane, Maputo, Manica, Niassa, Sofala and Tete and has so far received much international attention, particularly for the role of transfrontier conservation areas in stimulating peace keeping at a regional level. The third, the Project Arco Norte, is a 3-year project developed in the northern regions (Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa), with the collaboration of USAID, to attract tourists and investors and to promote the conservation of nature (Inatur, 2013; de Araujo, 2009a). Only three such projects have actually been launched.

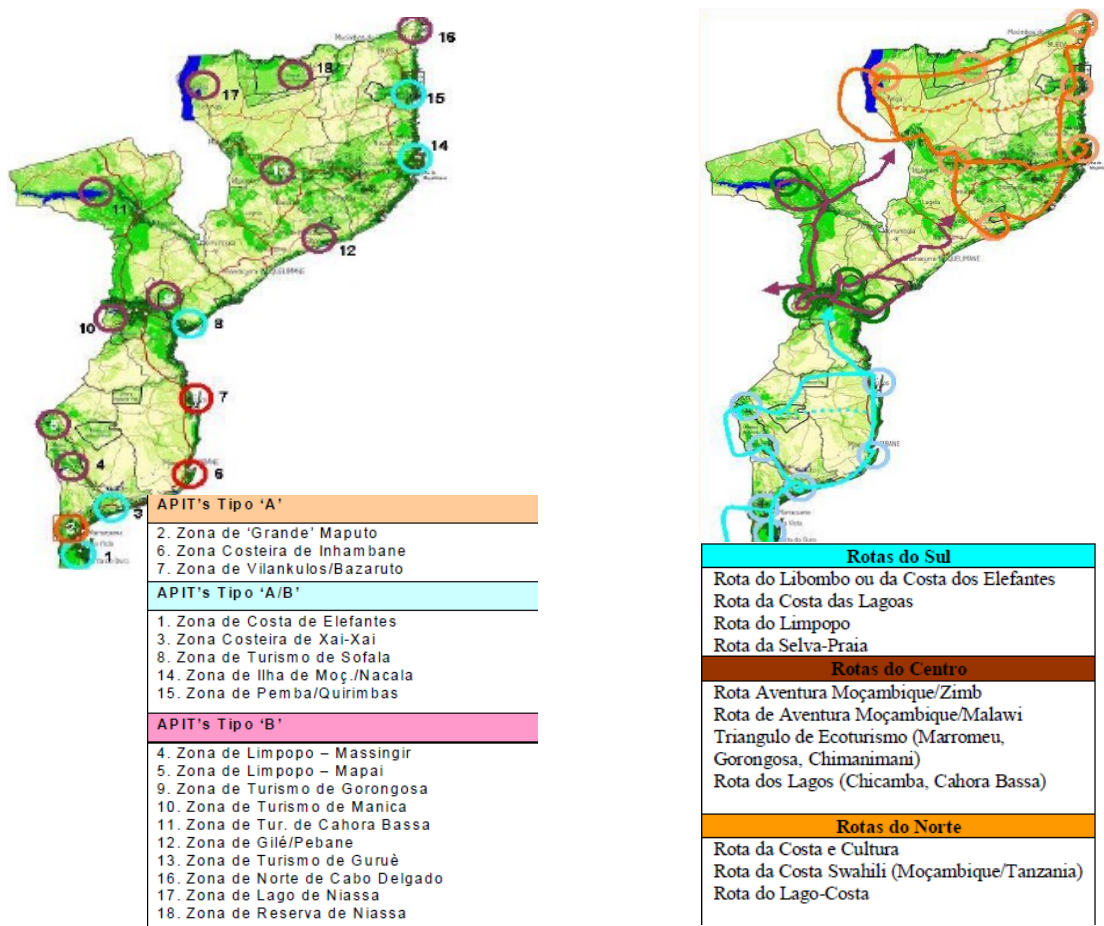


Figure 1: Types of Priority areas in Mozambique

Source: República de Moçambique, Ministério do turismo (2006). *Estrategia nacional de marketing turistico 2006-2013*. Maputo. http://www.cplp.org/Files/Billeder/turismo/_Estrategiade-Marketing-do-Mitur2.pdf (retrieved on 11/11/2015)

Despite some success, the implementation of these projects has shown that the country has still to face several great challenges in order to create an integrated tourist system, such as the empowerment of the local population and the protection of the

natural heritage. First, Mozambique will have to promote a diversified use of the national resources, attract both public and private investments, reduce the leakages effect, develop the tourist and economic skills of the local communities involved in tourism, and promote the participation of all the tourist stakeholders to the process. Secondly, the empowerment of the local population can only be achieved when the locals are granted secure ownership of the resources that they are involved in managing for tourist purposes. In this respect, several foreign Ngos help the local population in asking for the right to use the land, known as a DUAT, “direito de uso e aproveitamento da terra”. To support the attention towards land ownership, in 2003, the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee has recognized it as one of the key features for the future implementation of each international cooperation project. Thirdly, the country will have to develop greater environmental consciousness to exploit sustainably the natural resources, and promote climate change adaptation plans to manage them, in order to avoid that environmental depletion decreases the potential tourist attractiveness and worsens the living condition of the local population, reducing their access to food (Houguane, 2007).

2.2 The Estrategia nacional de marketing turistico 2006-2013

In support of the Plano estrategico 2004-2013, in 2006 the Government of Mozambique promulgated the Estrategia nacional de marketing turistico 2006-2013, aimed at promoting competitiveness by removing the main weaknesses of the sector, contributing to the creation of employment, poverty reduction and protection of the national biological and cultural diversity (República de Moçambique, 2006).

The Estrategia has supported the production of new marketing leaflets and a new 2.0 tourist Website in Portuguese and English (<http://www.visitmozambique.net/pt>), and the promotion of the country at international exhibitions as a destination for both classic and niche (sport, adventure, etc) tourism, in order to become more and more attractive to international tourists. Moreover, the Estrategia recognises the importance of creating regional tourist promotional networks and of training the local communities in order to help them start small enterprises (República de Moçambique, 2006).

Tourist places in least developed countries are exposed to the tourist destination life cycle just like any other tourist destination, and to avoid the risk of being neglected once they become unfashionable – turning into sad tropical tourist slums (de Kadt, 1980) – they need to plan carefully their marketing strategies. However, lacking money, technology and human capital, they need international investments, but most of them are not attractive to financial bodies, due to their structural weakness (Cleverdon, 2002). International cooperation is thus their main source of fundings (as in the case of the implementation of Mozambique’s tourist policies), with their actions connected to two main goals: funding or implementing fund-generating strategies, and advocacy for several causes. Among these the inclusion of tourism in the national programmes, the participation of the local communities and the most disadvantaged groups in the tourist decision-making process – and their empowerment –, the training

of the local population to build the national human capital, and the support to the creation of local-run tourist activities.

3. Regional and international cooperation in tourism as a multiple-scale process

Cooperation partnerships highlight how tourism development in the country is a multiple-scale process, in which the national level intertwines with the regional (SADC, AU) and international (WB, IUCN, UNESCO, National agencies, Ngos) level, to create a network of territorial actions at the local scale.

3.1 International level

Among the international partners operating in Mozambique, the World Bank plays a vital role, supporting the national tourist policy through funding and fund-raising campaigns. In 2014, through the International Development Association (World Bank, 2014), it sustained the implementation of the Conservation Areas for Biodiversity and Development Project (known as Mozbio), while in 2012, through the International Finance Corporation, it supported the Ancora do turismo projects, helping financiers investing in it (International Finance Corporation, World Bank, 2012).

At a continental level, UNESCO's Action Plan 2012-2017 for the African Region sets five objectives aimed at improving the state of conservation and representation of the African Heritage, both cultural and natural, by effective risk management, increased community involvement and direct economic benefits to local communities (UNESCO, 2012). The Action Plan aims at promoting advocacy and capacity building activities, according to the guidelines of the World Heritage capacity building strategy (UNESCO, 2012).

3.1 Regional level

At the regional level, several organizations work on the promotion of tourism. Among these, the African Union, with its Ministerial Working Group on the Long-Term Tourism Development Strategy in Africa (African Union Agenda 2063), supports joint tourist marketing, including packaging and promotion of cross-border tourism attractions. It also promotes common projects for infrastructure development and investment in hotels, airport, roads, ports; it sustains capacity building initiatives for people working in the tourism industry; and works to remove tourism visa constraints (African Union, 2014).

Important actions are also carried out by the SADC, the Southern African Development Community. As a whole, in 2014 it received 24.2 million international tourists (2.1% of

global share) and US\$ 16.7 million in tourist receipt (1.3% of global market, but 46.1% of the African tourist market) (Retosa, 2015), generating a direct contribution of US\$ 20.6 billion (3.0% of total GDP) in the region; it also created 2,436,000 jobs, 3.1% of the total employment in the area (WTTC, 2015)

Several actions aimed at achieving the development of tourism in the SADC were started already in the 1990s, focusing on international cooperation as a key to sustain promotion, fundraising and training. At the time, it became clear that tourism would benefit greatly from regional integration, helping at the same time increasing foreign exchange earnings in the countries of the area, creating employment and sustaining rural/urban development (Ghimire, 2001). In 1998 the SADC's Protocol on the development of Tourism was signed, establishing a set of joint actions to promote tourism within the Community, as a vehicle to achieve sustainable social and economic development (SADC, 1998). Moreover, in 1996 the Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa (RETOSA) was created, to "develop effective and impactful tourism initiatives in the SADC region in order to make Southern Africa a regional destination of choice by 2027", while implementing the overall development of people.

Among the actions promoted by SADC, the creation of transfrontier conservation areas is considered as particularly important, being aimed not only at increasing tourist revenues and sustainable development, but also at promoting a peace culture in the area (SADC, 2012a).

However, within the SADC several limits may be highlighted, such as the existence of central-periphery dynamics that tend to favour South Africa,¹ and the presence of very strong regional tourist flows usually associated to lower spending capacity. Moreover, commitment to tourist development actions tends to remain at the level of political discourse, with no real implementation of regional strategies, associated to little investment to meet the needs of intraregional tourists.

3.3 Local level

Ngos – both major international organization and very small local ones – operate at the local level with very specific projects, being, often, the main actors involved in the fund-raising, advocacy, empowerment and capacity building process to grant the participation of the local communities in the management of their cultural and natural resources. They promote the realization of small-scale projects based on the development of sustainable tourist practices, often connected to environmental/cultural conservation, and, more recently, on the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation practices as well, in connection to tourism and to the management of the very fragile natural heritage of the country. Their action is vital for Mozambique, not only to achieve the realization of the national policy for tourism development, but mainly to reach the Millennium/Sustainable Development goals and a long term improvement of the Mozambicans' living conditions.

Conclusion

Mozambique has a great potential for the development of cultural and natural tourism but is constrained by several weaknesses such as land rights, low human resources, scarce infrastructures, insufficient marketing, etc. International cooperation is a vital (and often the only possible) tool in this process, helping with advocacy actions and establishing partnerships with other international cooperation stakeholders that contribute to the realization of the primary goal of eradicating poverty. According to the latest WTO figures (WTO, 2012), least developed countries should promote a doublefold approach towards tourist development, aiming at increasing the size and the performance of their tourist sector as a whole, while widening the proportion of spending in the sector that reaches the poor, promoting their participation in the decision-making process and in the share of the revenues.

Mozambique has accepted this challenge and is trying to fulfill the goal through the multiple-scale approach here described. Despite the process being too recent to be evaluated, apparently the country's strategies are helping in the mission of developing tourism while improving the local communities living conditions, together with their land-access rights, and their acquisition of tourist and managerial know-how.

However, the presence of South Africa in the region still creates core-periphery dynamics, while the political turmoil in Mozambique following the 2014 presidential elections contributes to undermining the (fragile) tourist image of the country in the global market. For these reasons, a strong marketing campaign will have to be planned if the goal of 4 million tourists by 2025 (expressed in the 2004 Plano estratégico para o desenvolvimento do turismo em Moçambique) has to be achieved.

Finally, the success of the policies here described is inexorably connected to the parallel engagement of Mozambique, and its cooperating partners, in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, a key issue in a country endowed with more than 2000 Km of coastlines, whose survival is desperately connected both to the survival of the local residents and their traditional activities, but also to tourism.

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¹ The hegemonic role of South Africa within the SADC is well documented and does not relate exclusively to tourism, but some authors report that the issue is being addressed by several development strategies (SADC, 2012b; Vanheukelom, Bertetlsmann-Scott, 2016). However, according to Retosa (2015), in 2014 nearly 60% of all tourist arrivals in the region were directed towards South Africa, followed by Tanzania (11.6%), Mauritius (8.5%), Angola (7.3%) and Zimbabwe (5.3%). Mozambique received only 1.5% of all tourist flows of the area.