

Cluster and Governance: Perception of Tourism Stakeholders in the City of Tangier

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study the nature of the relationship between the cooperation of tourism actors in the form of a cluster and good territorial governance, through, first, the presentation of a literature review that deals with the different facets of this issue, and secondly, an exploratory qualitative study with tourism stakeholders in the city of Tangier, in order to assess the perception of stakeholders on the role that the tourism cluster could play as much as a territorial governance structure of the tourism sector of the city of Tangier.

Keywords: Cluster, tourism, territory, governance, cooperation

Introduction

The tourism cluster is the networking of all the tourism stakeholders in a territory, in other words, the tourism cluster is the organization of all the tourism stakeholders in a given territory, around a clear and solid structure where each stakeholder is well aware of their role, their rights and their obligations. Cooperation that is vertical and/or horizontal while giving the notion of competition a sense of coordination. "The cluster adds value to the initial location (resources/endowments) and makes players more cooperative and interactive. It helps the destination, understood as an innovative economic system, to move from the notion of tourist space to that of tourist destination, which reinforces the attractiveness of the destination. (Fabry Nathalie, Zeghni Sylvain, 2012).

The cluster is also a governance structure, because within a tourism cluster, governance implies that the actors determine, implement and evaluate the rules of their interactions (Beritelli; Bieger and Laesser, 2007).

This paper attempts to study the nature of the relationship between the cooperation of tourism actors in the form of a cluster and good territorial governance. Through an exploratory qualitative study with tourism stakeholders in the city of Tangier, we assessed the perception of stakeholders on the role that the tourism cluster could play as much as a territorial governance structure of the tourism sector in the city of Tangier.

1- Literature review

1-1 Tourism Cluster

The networking of economic actors seems like a new concept, but it is actually very old. It was created by Alfred Marshall in 1890, under the name of *Industrial District*, with the very first district in the world "Lancashire", and then after many years in oblivion, the concept was brought back to the scene by several researchers and economists in more or less different contexts and under new names (see Table 1: growth pole, Italian district, GREMI, Cluster, SPL, etc.), and with the main objective of improving the competitiveness of companies grouped together according to geographical proximity and/or organized, as Gaschet and Lacour (2007) specify: "each of these paradigms [clusters, industrial districts or LPS] has developed its own instruments, refined its specific concepts derived from an often similar original philosophy: externalities, economy of agglomeration, centrality and polycentrism, partnership and networks, globalized competition and territorial anchoring, cooperation, co-production, solidarity, trust and identical loyalty.

	Collaboration is first desired by the actors themselves	Collaboration is recognized and reinforced by the public powers
The partners are all companies	<p>Industrial districts Alfred Marshall (1890)</p> <p>Third Italy (districts) Becatini (1992)</p>	<p>Local production systems (SPL) The Planning Delegation territory and regional action (DATAR, 1998))</p> <p>Studied by: Courlet (2001), Pecker (2008; 2005), Grossetti (2004)</p>
The partners are various organizations: companies, universities, etc.	<p>Environment innovator GREMI Aydalot (1986))</p> <p>Clusters Michael Porter (1990)</p>	<p>Pole of development Perroux (1955)</p> <p>Competitiveness clusters (DIACT) Interministerial delegation to planning and competitiveness territories 2004</p>

Table 1: the different forms of inter-organizational collaboration, source: Author

The cluster concept was subsequently adopted and adapted in several other sectors, particularly the tourism sector, a sector which has its own specificities and involves several heterogeneous stakeholders, who participate directly, indirectly or even induced in the tourist activity in a territory.

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According to Elise Durey (2016) the tourism cluster "concentrates, at the scale of a tourist destination, companies and actors from different tourist sectors (hosts, accommodation service providers, sites and museums, transporters, incoming agencies, marketing and territorial reception agents, cultural actors, etc. Together, they agree on a common strategic vision to meet the challenges and develop the competitiveness of tourism in their territory".

The transfer of the concept of the industrial sector towards that of tourism was not an easy mission, neither for the researchers nor for the practitioners, by the heterogeneity of the actors of tourism and the divergence of their interests, one must also take into account the complexity of the meaning of the tourist product: a product which is not mobile and requires to be consumed in situ by the tourist who in turn engages in voluntary mobility; the tourist becomes, each time he buys a service, a co-producer of the tourist service. Contrary to industrial logic, the place of consumption is different from the place of residence of the consumer (tourist). Tourism stakeholders must therefore be close to the tourist attractor. "The tourism

cluster, for its part, is based on a very strong specificity linked to the nature of the tourism sector and to that of the tourist product which is an assembly product where the tourist is a co-producer but not a resident" (Fabry Nathalie, Zeghni Sylvain, 2012).

The literature review on tourism clusters confirms and explains the difficulties that researchers have encountered in moving the concept from the industry sector, where it was first created, to the tourism sector, especially with increasingly numerous works today which deal with the different facets of this transfer: from the comparison between destination and district by Anne-Mette Hjalager (2000), the projection and analysis of the concept of the tourism cluster in specific territories according to different contexts with the work of Ewen Michael (2003) on the case of tourism micro clusters in Australia, to work that has sought to analyze existing tourism clusters, following territorial policies initiated by governments or by tourism professionals. tourism with the work of Marie Eve Férérol (2013) on the case of the Goazen tourism cluster in the Basque country and the work of Nathalie Fabry (2013) on the case of the Val d'Europe tourism cluster. Other works have tried to approach the concept within a theoretical framework, such as those of Philippe Violier (2014) and Cécile Clergeau (2016).

The specificities of the tourism sector (Table 2) have prevented researchers from analyzing and understanding the concept of the tourism cluster from all angles, with complementary works that treat the concept according to different approaches and contexts, and which implicitly or explicitly underlined that the tourism cluster is a powerful tool for tourism development based on sustainability, innovation and governance. Researchers who have unanimously affirmed that the tourism cluster is a relevant tool for the development of the tourist attractiveness of the territories.

	Cluster	
	Industrial sector	Tourism sector
Product	Can be delivered worldwide	Consumable on site
Client	No participation in production	Co-producer
Actors	Homogeneous	Heterogeneous
Production method	Method Mass production	Custom production
Stakeholder size	Similar SME	Major differences SME SMI GE
Relationship with the territory	Moderately rooted	Very rooted
Links between actors	Vertical or horizontal	Diagonal
Relationship between Market	Market	non-market actors

Table 2: Specificities of the tourism sector, Sources

1.2. Tourism cluster and governance

According to Fabry Nathalie and Zeghni Sylvain, (2012) "The tourism cluster calls for the choice of a flexible mixed governance where the stakeholders impose themselves and disappear according to the context. It is a question of asking whether at each stage of its evolution, the cluster has the governance that corresponds to it".

The cluster is also a governance structure, because within a tourism cluster, governance implies that the actors determine, implement and evaluate the rules of their interactions (Beritelli; Bieger and Laesser, 2007).

However, from the moment the territory is not only a passive receptacle but is a co-producer of the attractiveness of a tourist destination, it becomes a stakeholder and governance - in the sense of "regulation of relations between different units (Ehlinger et al., 2007, 1) – must then be considered through the prism of the role and interactions between stakeholders. The number of actors, their methods of entering and leaving the cluster, the frequency and duration of their relations, the degree of homogeneity between the actors, their capacity for learning and their access to information, determine the potential success of the cluster. If the question of the governance of tourism clusters is still too little explored by the theoretical literature, that of

local governance is more so and can serve as a basis for our reflection (Fabry, Spindler and Zeghni, 2010). According to Bosquet and Mothe (2009, 413), governance is "necessary to create a collective dynamic between actors who are heterogeneous, asymmetrical, and often lacking in resources and capacities for interaction". For their part, Colletis-Wahl and Pecqueur (2001) define local governance as a "process of building compatibility between different institutional proximities, uniting actors (economic, institutional, social, etc.) who are geographically close, with a view to solving a problem productive or, more broadly, to carry out a local development project".

There is no single form of territorial governance but rather several options, depending on the relative positions of the public and private sectors and, in particular, the presence of a leading company with variable margins of action. "The tourism cluster calls for the choice of a flexible mixed governance where the stakeholders impose themselves and disappear according to the context. It is a question of asking whether at each stage of its evolution, the cluster has the governance that corresponds to it. (Fabry Nathalie, Zeghni Sylvain, 2012).

For Chabault (2007) the concept of governance therefore leads us to distinguish two types of inter-organizational relationships: a first type of relationship concerns the links of cooperation and a second type of link which supports the coordination of collective actions, "it is necessary to organize inter-organizational relations and coordinate the activities of heterogeneous actors, whose logics of action and systems of representation differ from each other" Chabault (2007). The heterogeneity of actors and the divergence of their interests refer to the establishment of a governance structure to coordinate collective action (Provan and Kenis, 2008). Mendez and Messeghem (2009) state that "the establishment of relationships and the development of effective and truly productive cooperation between such different actors cannot be decreed". Partnerships require institutional support to align objectives and create common frames of reference, in other words, to go beyond geographical proximity, and develop institutional proximity, i.e. to share a set of representations (Bellet, Colletis and Lung, 1993). Moreover, territorial action does not make a network emerge spontaneously and reinforces the need for a governance structure (Gomez, 2009). The cluster therefore necessarily needs cooperation and also coordination between the organisations. For Porter (1990b), a cluster is vulnerable when a large number of firms that compose it do not have a global strategy.

According to Cécile Clergeau and Philippe Violier (2013), governance is "a politico-administrative body which defines rules and a decision-making process, which attributes and delimits legal, regulatory or economic competences and which has a power of intervention which legitimizes public action. ". For Patrick Le Galés (2004), it is a "process of coordinating the action of social groups and institutions intended to achieve collectively discussed and defined goals". Governance is thus a means of coordinating and harmonizing the interactions that arise from the proximity between different actors in order to ensure the cohesion of the network and achieve a common goal. According to Corinne Cerveaux (2013), the roles of each actor must be explained.

Governance is therefore responsible for defining the strategy to be followed for the entire territorialized network. The cluster must therefore have governance "as a means of ensuring the steering of the network and the consistency of the projects of the various partners" (Ehlinger, Perret and Chabaud, 2007). The role of a governance structure therefore consists in bringing together the actors and ensuring the coordination of collective actions. The cluster is then the best solution, because it allows the actors to maintain formal and informal relations.

2. Research methodology

In order to better understand the contributions of the tourism cluster as a governance structure for a better tourist attractiveness of a territory, an exploratory qualitative study was carried out.

Among the five qualitative methods presented by Creswell (2006), (Narrative Ethnography, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Case Study), we opted for the case study method that Yin (2003) defines as "an empirical investigation that studies a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined", which offers a variety of views from participants, and uses multiple data collection techniques.

should be translated into concerted actions; act_9 affirms that: "first of all, for a better attractiveness of the city, all the actors will have to take part in the installation of a strategy of promotion in adequacy with our means, a strategy which answers the prospects of the actors and translate it pragmatically into group actions in a clean and clear process"; act_12 adds: "a tourism cluster would put an end to the role of spectator played by most of the city's tourism players, and would certainly encourage them to resume their status as active players, concerned about the future of their city of establishment. "

3-2 Assessment

The tourism stakeholders interviewed in the city of Tangier link attractiveness to the collective and continuous evaluation of the city's tourism strategy and its various phases of implementation, with the possibility of course correction at any time; act_prv_15 affirms that: "the evaluation of our actions and the evolution of our strategy must be done collectively on an ongoing basis, we want to always stay up to date with the progress of things"; act_prv_13 adds: "we no longer want an intermediary to find out what is going on with us, we want to follow developments in the sector in our city with the naked eye, a cluster would certainly be a solid support at this level".

3-2 Clear roles, rights and obligations displayed

The tourism actors interviewed insist on the fact that the tourist attractiveness of the city should be based on group work with clear roles, clearly displayed rights and obligations; act_9 affirms: "we cannot move forward if we do not know our limits, each of us must have a role in the process of attractiveness, a clear and precise role"; act_5 adds: "no one should be neglected, all actors are important, all actors must have clear roles that respect their positions in the city's tourist value chain"; according to act_3: "a role hides behind a responsibility that must be respected and honoured"; act_6 adds: "we have always been accused of being solely responsible for the tourist attractiveness of the city, the tourism cluster would put things in order and make all the actors responsible, for the failure or the success, each actor should honor his commitment.

3-3 Decision making

The tourism stakeholders interviewed in the city of Tangier question the decision-making process currently applied in the various tourism actions undertaken in their city, and count on the cluster concept to improve this process, which is so important for development. the attractiveness of the city; according to act_4: "we have suffered a lot and for many years from being away from decision-making in our sector, we do not know who, when or how decisions are made, and we have always been surprised by misplaced decision coming out of nowhere; I hope with a cluster, it will stop, we cannot build a real attractiveness of the city on isolated decisions".

To sum up, we affirm that the tourism actors of the city of Tangier understand the multiple advantages of networking in the form of a cluster and mark in bold that the tourism cluster would play the role of a relevant tool at the level of:

- **The establishment of a reliable and flexible governance structure** through concerted management of tourist activities, understood, accepted and verified by all actors, a governance that will evolve with the evolution of the cluster;
- **The establishment of a system for evaluating the progress** of projects launched by the cluster;
- **It relies on real clarity and transparency in the practices** of cluster members with clear roles, rights and obligations displayed;
- **The establishment of a credible space** with simple, measurable, attainable, achievable objectives, within a known time frame and in reference to the available means.
- **The establishment of a climate of trust**, which is an element that is missing in the relations between the various tourism stakeholders interviewed at the current state, and which they hope to achieve with the creation of a cluster; act_5 affirms: "trust is the key to any form of cooperation".
- **Improving the decision-making process.**

In the end, the actors highlight the need for a unifying actor, a key actor, capable of bringing together and generating all the necessary forces essential to the development of the cluster, and they insist on the choice of hoteliers to take this responsibility of triggering and to steer the cluster, given the key position they

occupy in the city's tourism value chain; according to act_2: "we really need a federating player in the cluster, capable of attracting other players and steering the cluster, a player directly linked to the tourist activity, for me hoteliers are the best placed to this mission".

Conclusion

This study appears to present theoretical, empirical and managerial contributions.

On the theoretical level, we have proposed a conceptual framework to verify the hypotheses of the impact of the tourism cluster on territorial attractiveness.

From an empirical point of view, this study presents two contributions, the first contribution concerns certain essential elements for the success of a networking of tourism actors; the tourism cluster according to this study should be able to create: a climate of trust, integrated governance, and a credible space for cooperation, thus this study has brought to light the notion of a unifying actor who is a key actor, capable of bring together and generate all the necessary forces essential to the development of the cluster. This study has clearly shown the importance of these notions, which are still marginalized in the literature review that we consulted.

The second contribution concerns the interdependence of the three dimensions (extracted from the literature) of the role of the tourism cluster to achieve dynamic and sustainable attractiveness, namely, the dimension linked to innovation, the dimension linked to governance and the dimension related to sustainable development, the literature review has shed light on different dimensions without putting the link between them.

At the managerial level, our research highlights the main perceptions and expectations of the actors by prioritizing them, which can guide decision-makers and tourism managers on the axes guaranteeing a better attractiveness of their tourist territory. This study has therefore made it possible to identify interesting avenues for the creation of an efficient tourism cluster, adapted to the specificities and context of the city of Tangier.

Like any research work, this one has some limits mainly, there is the problem of external validity of the research in the sense that our interest focused on a limited number of tourism actors. Also, the results from this qualitative study cannot be generalized to the parent population.

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