


Chapter 11

Tourism, Emigration, and Cooperation: A Strategy for Growth and Sustainable Development in a Community of Portuguese–Speaking Member States

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ABSTRACT

This chapter argues that tourism activities, emigration, and cooperation projects can spur growth and sustainable development in rural areas, in general, helping to reduce the existing asymmetries of development, phenomenon that reaches Portugal and other Member States of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Member States (CPLP). The results of a study developed in Portugal evidence that the potential return of a segment of Portuguese emigrants, settled around the world, can contribute to growth and sustainable tourism development in rural areas of Portugal. In this scope, the existence of a Portuguese-speaking cultural heritage allied to the CPLP Strategic Tourism Cooperation Plan can also have a critical role in growth and sustainable development in CPLP.

INTRODUCTION

The state of the art of tourism economic literature reveals that studies carried out in developing countries and rural areas evidence that tourism expenditure creates

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more employment and income than any other sector of the economy, as well as generate and maintain employment in other sectors of the economy that support or provide tourism visitors and businesses. In this scope, in countries or regions where economic development is a priority the return of emigrants can contribute significantly to tourism growth and sustainable development. According with Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, emigrants can be a source of external innovation through transfer of financial and social capital, as well as knowledge and professional experience. In this scope, the results of a study developed in Portugal evidence that Portuguese emigrants, with ages of 29-39 years old and with a house in a rural area, have greater propensity to return, invest and have a job in the area of tourism in Portugal, as well as have more training and professional experience in this area.

The phenomenon of emigration motivated by the improvement of living conditions also affects all Portuguese-speaking Member States, either as countries of destination, as countries of origin, or even in the dual origin and destination condition (see CPLP, 2011). Contextually, the existence of a Portuguese-speaking cultural heritage and its relationship with direct investment abroad and migration flows also lead us to argue that tourism development, through cooperation projects, can function as a strategy for growth and sustainable development in Community of Portuguese-Speaking Member States (CPLP). Thus, this chapter aims to argue that tourism, emigration and cooperation can impact positively on growth and sustainable development in rural areas of CPLP.

TOURISM AS A STRATEGY TO GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In order to argue that tourism can contribute to growth and sustainable development of rural areas (or low density areas), should be highlighted that these areas have several problems related with economic decline, large increase in unemployment, emigration, desertification, adverse impacts of the restructuring of agriculture and the loss of cultural identity (see for example Cavaco, 2003; Labrianidis et al., 2003; Sharpley & Vass, 2006). Contextually, according with metadata of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Portuguese Statistical Institute, rural areas are those with a population of 2000 inhabitants or less. Considering that it is not the purpose of this study to differentiate typologies from rural areas, but to identify all rural areas, it is argued in this study that economic growth is fundamental to the sustainable development of these territories. In this scope, several authors have argued that rural space is no longer confined only to agricultural activities and land use, but also extends to multisectoral activities (see for example Diniz, 1999;

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