

Chapter 12

The Twilight of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) in the Tourism and Hospitality Industries: The Case of Argentina, South America

Maximiliano Emanuel Korstanje

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5149-1669>

University of Palermo, Argentina

ABSTRACT

The recent ecological crisis is wreaking havoc not only in the tourist system but also in the global trade. This point doubtless has occupied a central position in many academic circles and conferences. The future of tourism seems to be grim. Some voices have alerted on the urgency to adopt new sustainable forms of consumption and practices applied to the service industry while others have questioned the nature of the tourism industry dominated by an economic-centered paradigm. Recently, shared economy as well as the figure of corporate social responsibility (CSR) have played a leading role in the configuration of a new green tourism. This chapter focuses on some Argentinian study cases based on the application of CSR programs in the fields of tourism and hospitality.

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has become more complex than a buzzword in recent years. Sustainability is urgent for policymakers and professionals in the tourism and hospitality industries. As a consequence, scholars have hotly debated the role of sustainability in the future of tourism (Brammwell & Lane, 2011; Ivars-Baidal et al 2023). The current ecological crisis, without mentioning the recent COVID-19 pandemic, has negatively impacted the tourist system as never before (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Pham et al. 2021). Expressed in these terms, the problem of sustainability is mainly based on a type of incompatibility between profits and logic preservation. While tourism tends to expand, to gain further profits, the environment is ultimately degraded (Gossling 2000; Sharpley 2020). To what extent is tourism sustainable or not seems to be a question very hard to answer. In this context, some studies have focused their attention on the role played by corporate social responsibility (CSR) to achieve sustainable growth (Lund-Durlacher, 2015; Font & Lynes 2018). Coles, Fenclova & Dinan (2013) argue that CSR has been limited to a few cases or studies in the former decades but the interest in this field has been notably increased. CSR gravitates toward the terrain of governance and good practices in tourism. Despite the abundance of CSR literature in the global North, few studies have seen the light of publicity in Argentina. To fill the gap, the present book chapter centers effort in discussing the role and future of CSR for the tourism industry in Argentina. At the same time, it brings some reflection to what extent sustainable tourism is possible in the region.

DETACHING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CAPITALISM

Although philosophy and humanism avoided discussing the potential of CSR to better daily life, interesting philosophical discussions are mainly given in recent decades. This section offers a robust conceptual background to what extent CSR follows the ethical lines towards a safer and better society. Over the years, humanism never trusted that businesses can potentiate human performance. Most certainly, this imprint is based on the influence of French philosophy, which was systematically reluctant to the economic-based paradigms. This happens because economic gains, profits, and consumption have been historically ridiculed by classic philosophy. Economic profits have been depicted as the origins of eagerness and social injustice—in a whole part of classic philosophical texts originated in the Middle Ages- (Donohue, 2003; Heilbrunner 2011). Whatever the case may be, British and American philosophies (pragmatism above all) have incurred in pungent approaches that placed the topic into the foreground. As Dirk Matten & Jeremy Moon (2004) put it, CSR departs from

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