

Chapter 11

Portugality as Heritage and Touristic Resource in New Jersey (United States of America)

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ABSTRACT

Due to its dimension, cultural matrix, and its roots in the diverse regions worldwide, Lusitanian communities may enhance dynamics of tourism development in such globalization. Indeed, Portugality is present in the distinct ethnic neighborhoods of strong concentration of the Lusitanian population the North American territory as it in the state of New Jersey, where approximately 72,000 Portuguese people of live (data from 2012). This community presents in the local landscape a concentration of architectural, economic, and cultural elements. Such landscape elements may be explored and valued by local community and also by all the tourism stakeholders of both sides of Atlantic for the development of a particular type of tourism such as ethnocultural. Defining touristic resource, as well as special and identity singularities, the present work aims to demonstrate how diaspora may have an ultimate role in the arrival and development of touristic products for both lusophones and lusophiles communities.

INTRODUCTION

In a globalized world, tourist fluxes have intensified considerably in recent decades. Urban ethnic tourism associated with the numerous diasporas scattered across the planet is a type of tourism in increasing expansion. This kind of tourism is easily observed in the different ethnic neighborhoods around the world's large cosmopolitan cities. Portugality projects Portuguese culture and identity outside Portugal by means of television broadcast and by the internet. However, portugality greatest ambassadors are fundamentally the Portuguese and their descendants who comprise the countless communities dispersed in the host countries. In this chapter, we can understand how this important diaspora with its own lifestyle,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-6701-2.ch011

identity and culture, which was established over a century ago in the New Jersey region, knew how to build a *sui generis* cultural heritage in the local landscape. This heritage, if well used and disseminated, may contribute to the development of tourist products for the growing flows of travelers from Portugal and Europe as well as for the North American community and other Portuguese communities living in North America and that visit the nearby New York City.

Background

The evaluation and interpretation of tourism as a sociocultural phenomenon is complex, since the attractiveness of a territory for tourism purposes involves a multiplicity of natural and anthropic elements.

The perception of linking together both tourism and diaspora in academic terms is relatively recent. In this sense Tim Coles and Dallen Timothy (2004:16-17) pointed the first convergences of several academic studies by establishing five types of connections between tourism and diaspora: i) the trip to the diaspora's homeland and roots (identity, genealogical or commonly cultural tourism); ii) visit between members of other diaspora places; iii) visit by members of the country to living places in the diaspora (highlighting commemorative local festivities and architectural heritage¹); iv) visit to places and routes of diaspora that have become monuments / symbolic sites / pilgrimages of diverse diasporas (such as Ellis Island in New York or Nazi death camps in Europe); and finally v) the diaspora-oriented vacation regions (Catskill Mountain for American Jews on the east coast for example).

The tourist resource as a natural, artificial attraction or as human activity is capable of inspiring the movement of people, allowing the occupation of their free time or even meeting the needs related to their stay in a certain community. Tourism is based on resources, natural or otherwise, natural elements or human activities, which cause the displacement of people without the purpose of performing a paid activity or meet the needs arising from a displacement (Cunha, Abrantes, 2013:165). According to these authors, the tourist activity only takes place when there are certain attractions, called tourist resources that originate the displacement of people or satisfy the necessities resulting from this displacement. Thus, resources form the basis of tourism development because they determine the attraction of a country or region and define its tourism potential.

Vitor de Sousa has shown how the sense of portugality, described since the dictatorship period, has changed during time until the concept of lusophony – a wide post-colonial state model. For this author, portugality is a “special feeling by Portugal”, a “personal affection with Portugal” or even “the well-being concerning with Portugal” (Sousa, 2015:479).

Recently, Gilberto Fernandes (2019) also describes the fixation of Portuguese communities in USA and Canada, and thus refers that the cultural/ethnic elements production, such as the (i) language teaching, (ii) the radio diffusion in Portuguese language, (iii) philharmonic and folkloric creation, also have benefit with Salazar dictatorship propaganda. The author also explains how diaspora culture often conflicted with the dictatorship regimen both by radio diffusion and press.

The broader current concept of portugality as a manifestation and promotion of Portuguese roots and identities outside the national territory, now empty of an original connotation associated with the New State regime, is more than ever understood in a more dynamic acceptance of the term that also embraces a certain Portuguese lifestyle full of a set of practices and experiences that fully mark the diaspora reception spaces (Castro, Diogo, 2015: 939). Portugal, therefore, functions as a vector of geocultural attractiveness for tourism purposes.

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