Generic and specific tourism resources in the countryside of Guelmim-Kingdom of Morocco

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Abstract

Aim: Despite their differences, all social resource subfields place equal emphasis on the wealth created by the resource as material or immaterial goods inextricably linked to the specifics of the territory. Because of the specific nature of some tourism resources, it is only through a geo-system-resource analysis that the generic and specific resources can be determined, even at the commune level. The resource’s worth can be determined by analyzing how it transforms from its generic form into its specific application. Specific rural Guelmim province tourism attractions are highlighted here (south of Morocco). We aim to defend this transition’s significance by focusing on the actor who can influence this key step in marketing a tourism resource.

Methodology: The province of Guelmim in southern Morocco consists of 20 communes (18 rural and 2 urban) that serve as the basis for our study area’s geographical definition. To keep our research manageable, we focus on four rural communes: Assrir, Fask, Abaynou, and Amtedi. With all their peculiarities, the raw variety of resources can be traced through the qualitative analysis of comments from the surveyed actors. Institutional actors were consulted for this qualitative study, including tourism and culture delegates, municipal officials, the Regional Tourism Council, and tourism experts.

Findings: From this vantage point, the operator’s role is seen as a prism through which the unique characteristics of the resource are conceptualized in its historical and cultural representations, thereby highlighting the importance of the resource at the local territory.

Implications/Novel Contribution: This article describes the unique rural tourism opportunities in the southern Moroccan province of Guelmim.

Keywords: Resource generic, resource, specific, rural, actor, territory, tourism, Guelmim.

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INTRODUCTION

Various potentialities (material, immaterial, intentional, unintentional, relational, organizational, etc.) combine to form a specific resource, creating a spatial mosaic. It can work out well, leading to a stable territory formed by a harmonious combination, or it can be inconsistent and fail. Understanding the data in this way paves the way for developing novel, articulate, and environmentally sound territorial arrangements. As a matter of fact, new systems are born when latent resources are transformed into specific ones, and these systems are not always closely connected to the fabric of society (especially in developing countries). The change must align with a coordinated development strategy by the actors responsible for balancing and allocating territorial resources.

Here, we discuss how incorporating the values of the host society and sustainability measures into the process of mobilizing these resources is essential. This method integrates the help into the local economy while protecting the resource’s social and environmental values (Hazebrourcq, 1999; Herve & Bernard, 1997; Hirczak et al., 2008; de Lamarlière & Staszak, 2000; Lozato-Giotart & Balfet, 2004; Senil, Hirczak, & François, 2006).

Wealth is concentrated in the province’s rural areas thanks to the territory of Guelmim’s advanced development of generic and other specific resources. For this reason, we have the following inquiry: The inventory for Guelmim’s province needs to be either generic or particular. The answer to this question requires a return to the theoretical foundation of the resource, specifically its development from a basic concept to a differentiation of the species from the generic. We then characterize the unique features of these assets in the province’s rural areas.

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Finally, we defend our slant toward "the actor," who is partly responsible for transforming a resource from generic to specific, as the decisive factor in the distinction between generic and specific territorial resources.

**METHODOLOGY**

For the geographical determination of our study area, the province of Guelmim in the south of the Kingdom of Morocco is made up of 20 communes: 18 rural and 2 urban communes. Our research field is limited to 4 rural communes, which are Assrir, Fask, Abaynou, Amtedi. These rural communes generate more tourism resources. From interviews with local public, private and associative actors, we collected and analyzed important data relating to the tourism resources transformed from their generic to the specific state. The qualitative analysis of the comments collected from the actors surveyed traces the diversity of resources in their raw state despite their particularities. The qualitative approach engaged institutional actors such as delegations of tourism and culture, local authorities, Regional Tourism Council, and tourism professionals. The comments made and the results collected will be the raw material for analyzing the questions in our interview guide. Our surveys are based on an interview guide conducted with 51 local actors: 9 elected officials, 6 public actors, 7 associative actors, and 29 professionals (private actors). These actors intervene directly and indirectly at the regional, provincial and municipal levels in tourism activities.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Generic or Specific Resources: What are the Differences?**

The generic resource exists here and elsewhere. It does not allow the differentiation of a territory. It is transferable and easily detectable, like the presence of raw materials, natural resources present to the same degree of importance in several territories. It takes several forms: immobilized and/or unskilled labor, stagnant liquid capital that is not used, or available information that is not interpreted in a particular context (Camagni, Maillat, & Matteaccioli, 2004; Nasser, 2020).

The specific resource is virtual, non-transferable, identified only in the place where it was born, collective and appears after the original combination of local skills. It depends on the pooling of skills and on the interaction between the actors to activate it. First, they introduce actor’s strategies organized around them and treat it as a complex project topic that requires reflection and collaboration. Actors judge a specific resource when they find such a resource non-reproductive in other territories or reproduced only in part. This is apprehended with a certain awareness of its market value. Then, the specific resource requires the organization of information to guide the behavior of actors at the local level. And finally, it results from an accumulation of knowledge and collective culture (Boujrouf, 2014).

As an input, for each process of knowledge construction, the process of transformation of generic resources combines the cultural and the technical with the specific. It participates in a production process where its value is linked to the market and price. However, some generic products can turn into specific resources when presented as unique. To illustrate this transformation, a product produced or owned by a family for its own use can become a commercial product if it is marketed or introduced into a knowledge building process such as local food products (Pierre Campagne, 2014; Dissart, 2012).

**The Transformation of the Specific Resource into a Generic Resource**

The generic resource is generally mobilized everywhere by factors of production. However, the specific resource is constructed solely based on a set of actors linked to a determined and specific place that is not identical to other places. Indeed, "resources constitute endogenous resources built over the long term. In this sense, they are similar to territorial heritage" (Landel & Senil, 2009). The specific resources identified contribute to the dynamics of the territory. Outside the commercial framework of the resource (economic aspect), we also cite the local socio-cultural dynamic as a territorial use and identity as a part of the community’s history. Therefore “the resource has a dual economic and moral dimension. The first is part of a system of use or exchange value, while the second relates to ethics, culture, collective history” (Landel & Senil, 2009).

The passage from the generic resource to the specific and activated resource implies a transformation from potential to active (generic) and from generic to specific. It is about the realization of the inventory "available resources,” their activated in development projects, and their specific aspect of the resource. Indeed, such activation
takes two forms: a pre-existing potential generic resource and a specific virtual resource (Landel & Senil, 2009). The first form exhausts its source through the market; as a second form, the activation of the resource is done within the framework of a process actors’ commitment to the success of input of the resource in its activation and its concrete mobilization in projects.

Generally speaking, the process of transformation for the generic resource, which can be reproduced everywhere, is based on the changes in the market selling prices. But, the specific resource keeps its specific aspect into the attachment to its territory. However, it becomes a risk when there are similar products elsewhere (Luangsa-Art, 2016; Nasser, 2018; Noyer, Raoul, & Pailliart, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Inventory of Generic and Specific Resources

The reality on the field underlines the richness of rural areas in terms of tourism resources for rural tourism development. The variety of resources between generic and specific does not exclude the presence of high added value resources not yet exploited. During the interviews, in the field of studies, the dynamics around material resources more than immaterial one or the mobilization of immaterial resources linked in the presence only of the material resources. So the mobilization of resources is not just a simple mobilization of their specific or generic category (Camagni et al., 2004; Edensor, 2001). It is also an irreversible reality in situated local development. It is not only based on the dynamics of the actors but also on the intrinsic concretization of the resource in projects that represents their territorial particularities. In this regard, generic resources are more dominant in the proposals of interviewed actors. Such a reality justifies the observation, always reported, that the region is in a state of construction of its specific resources.

The generic resources cited by the actors interviewed are in a number of 7 categories: According to the resort, the Abaynou thermal resource has a flow rate of over 300 tons per hour. After the evacuation of the swimming pool waters, these waters were to be exploited for the irrigating of the agricultural lands of the oasis;

- **Natural heritage**: The seasonal waterfalls of Wadi Maqtaa Sfaa, Wadi Assaka at Targa Wassay, which contains traveling birds, and the dam on Wadi Assaka and green spaces constitute a generous offer in terms of natural wealth;
- **Prehistoric and archaeological resources**: The ancient cemeteries and the archaeological site of the ancient city of Noun Lama are not exploited as tourist sites because of the lack of information about this medieval city;
- **Old architectures and their intangible values**: Old medina and residences, heritage know-how, history of communes and famous families, chat rates and traditional mills over 200 years old offer opportunities for the exploitation of tourism resources;
- **Oasis**: The agricultural heritage in the distribution of water, the organization of the oasis ecosystem, and the history of the oases represent the aspects of the exploitation of the oasis;
- **Handicrafts**: A variety of raw materials and crafted items;
- **Local products**: (Dates, olive oil, Argan oil, aromatic and medicinal plants, honey, couscous, etc.), their non-exploitation is due to the absence of support, funding, and organization in cooperatives connecting between material and immaterial value.

The Basket of Goods: A Reason to Transform the Resource

The basket of goods is the set of complementary goods linked to a territorial resource. The tourist as a consumer discovers the cultural, heritage or other particularity of this basket. Therefore, the basket of goods and services is presented as a project to promote rural systems in their particularities and their territorial markers. They are called upon to carry out projects taking advantage of all the opportunities of their territory (local products, local know-how, networks, exchanges, organizations, etc.). Such apprehension of a local product within the framework of a partnership revolves around two aspects: the fragility of the territory and its particularity (Hirczak et al., 2008; Lozato-Giortart & Balfet, 2004).

The basket in the province is made up of three components, namely:

- **Private goods and services specific to the province**: they are attached to their territory, and they share...
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territorial particularity. For example, the Hassani culture is attached to its territorial belonging to the southern provinces. It is particular because this culture is also associated with Amazigh culture in the province of Guelmim.

- **Specific demand:** it depends on the value of the offer and the trust established between the territory of supply and the demand. It is expressed by consumption linked to reputation, quality, and control of the territory of its customs. The oasis-ocean destination that the province represents is one particularity among others in the Atlantic Sahara destination. The Saharan oasis ecosystem, associated with the seaside resort of Plage Blanche, is a specific feature of local tourism.

- **Collective goods:** Collective goods go beyond the municipal administrative space in the case of cooperation between tourism professionals of many communes in tourism circuits. The waterfalls and the sand dunes in Fask and the oasis space of Asrir are introduced in the tourism circuits organized in both rural communes.

Human resources are highlighted in the statements of interviewed actors. According to certain interpretations of the situation of available resources, the human factor is very present in their remarks, even if we are targeting the material and immaterial resources linked to tourism. Personal skills resources such as the initiative of visits by personalities and journalists are also crucial tourism resources for local actors. The cognitive resource of local actors is very important (Capone, 2015; Cayla & Duval, 2013; Crozier & Freidberg, 1992; Nasser, 2018). According to them, personal skills must be mobilized as much as natural or financial resources.

**Specific Resources: A Local Actors Decision**

Despite the diversity of tourism resources in the fields of our research, the choice of increased resources against others reduced explains the intentions of local actors or their dysfunction in the mobilization of tourist resources. For example, the Southern Oases Program of the Southern Agency has focused on the protection and enhancement of oasis spaces. The presence of foreign partners such as UNDP United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has somehow excluded resources to highlight others since the main features of the program affect the oases in the conservation of its ecosystem and the promotion of local products in the oases.

The commune of Fask, not considered an oasis zone, contains a panoply of natural resources such as waterfalls, rock carvings, dunes, etc. Still, it is not registered in tourism resource development projects. In short, the stakes of the actors, the programs of the national or foreign partners, the will of the representatives of the commune have their say in the decision towards resource making (Boujrouf & Tebaa, 2011; Jamani, 2008; Lamy, 1996). The resources available in our field of study compared to those communicated in the documents of the Tourism Delegation and collaborative program opens a great parenthesis to an analysis of the disparities between the intentionality of the actors at different levels: region, province, and municipality. They choose the resources considered adequate for their projects while marginalizing other resources. This explains the scarcity of the resources cited in their program in the face of an incredible abundance of tourism resources on the sites visited.

**Between Generic Resources and Specific Resources: What Interest for Rural Areas of the Province?**

In the table below, we have collected the characteristics of the territorial tourism resources of our study area. As a researcher, it is about our conception of exploiting the resource. From our interviews with local actors, we found that priorities in choosing which resources to mobilize might not be about access to the resource. It is a question of its introduction into commune projects or the demand for this resource attractiveness. In the table below, we have designed our personal reflection on the inventory of resources in their specific or generic state.
Table 1: The inventory of resources specific and generic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Studies</th>
<th>Generic Tourism Resources Activated</th>
<th>Potential Tourism Resources Specific</th>
<th>Tourist Resources Specific</th>
<th>Tourism Resources Activated</th>
<th>Resources Basket of Goods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assir</td>
<td>Local products, oasis, crafts, eco-museum</td>
<td>Cultural resources</td>
<td>The medieval Noun Lama town</td>
<td>Labeled local product, oasis landscapes</td>
<td>Rural and oasis tourism, Wellness tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abaynou</td>
<td>Thermal resource</td>
<td>Local product, Oasis landscape</td>
<td>Thermal resource</td>
<td>Thermal resource</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Oases, gorges, waterfalls, rock carvings, architectures</td>
<td>Historical and natural heritage</td>
<td>History of granaries and their old articles</td>
<td>Landscape heritage</td>
<td>Culture and nature tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flask</td>
<td>Sand dunes, rock carvings, waterfalls</td>
<td>Local products, thermal resources, draining galleries (khat-tarates)</td>
<td>Natural heritage</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
<td>Tourism circuit with the commune of Asrir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, the resource metamorphoses from its state of the raw patent resource to a new one that is more active and concrete. As soon as the resource is recognized in the projects of the actors, it is transformed to become active in a territorial project as a potentiality of action. In any case, the study of the territorial resource of the province has more vocation to reveal the specific: non-reproductively (Bramwell, 1994; Sharpley & Telfer, 2014; Botti, Peypoch, & Solonandrasana, 2008).

CONCLUSION

From the various aspects, the resources in the province of Guelmim find more particular importance in the intangible value derived from the exploitation of material resources. Ancient architectures like Agadir, Ksour and others are not exploited in material and immaterial values. From this observation, the operator’s role in the local dimension of the links between the resource and the territory is seen as a prism from the definition of which the specificity of the resource is conceived in its historical and cultural representativeness.

The problem is, therefore what allows local actors, with their collective action process, to reveal the resources of their territory in its broadest sense for the implementation of tourism projects. However, the revelation does not always have lucrative ends in economic activities, the exploitation also targets the restoration and the rebirth of a forgotten heritage. Tourism activity is a collective recognition of the socioeconomic and cultural interest of the targeted resource. The evolution of the resource concept is a passage from simple natural or human data to a key factor of the spatial bifacial: territorial components (physical data) and human (social relations).

The passage from the generic resource to the specific resource valorizes the central role of the local actors; it encourages them to find answers to the following questions: what resources are mobilized and to be mobilized in territorial projects for tourism purposes? What projects are involved for what resources? Is it an implementation of a pre-established development model or to be established in specific local environments and contexts?

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