

# The governance of tourism at an international border: public policies and paradiplomacy in the context of the RILA

A governança do turismo em fronteira internacional: políticas públicas e paradiplomacia no contexto da RILA

*La gobernanza del turismo en la frontera internacional: políticas públicas y paradiplomacia en el contexto de Rila*

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**Abstract:** The Latin American Integration Route (RILA), also known as the Bioceanic Route, is an initiative with the potential to promote the development of the Brazil-Paraguay border zone. The creators of RILA aim, since the creation of the proposal in 2006 (which would be made official in 2015), to boost logistic activities, with the goal to increasing exports of commodities (grains, ores and meat) and, secondly, to boost regional tourism activity. In this sense, this article aims to analyze the potential and obstacles that involve the governance of tourism at the border between Brazil and Paraguay, specifically between the twin cities of Porto Murtinho (BR) and Carmelo Peralta (PY). Regarding the methodology, the present work configures a qualitative research, based on bibliographical and documentary approach, under an interdisciplinary perspective, anchored in the references of Tourism and Political Geography. The theoretical-empirical results correspond to the conceptual delimitation of what configures the governance of tourism in international border territories and the organization of the institutional matrix that will support the understanding of the organization of tourism and its governance in the researched territory. Furthermore, maps were created that demonstrate the intersection between the main tourism development policy in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul and the RILA.

**Keywords:** RILA; infrastructure; regional integration; border.

**Resumo:** A Rota de Integração Latino-Americana (RILA), também conhecida como Rota Bioceânica, é uma iniciativa com o potencial de promover o desenvolvimento da zona de fronteira Brasil-Paraguai. Os idealizadores da RILA objetivam, desde o surgimento da proposta em 2006 (que seria oficializada em 2015), impulsionar a atividade logística, com vistas a aumentar as exportações de *commodities* (grãos, minérios e carnes) e, em segundo lugar, potencializar a atividade turística regional. Nesse sentido, este artigo visou analisar as potencialidades e obstáculos que envolvem a governança do turismo na fronteira entre Brasil e Paraguai, especificamente nas cidades gêmeas de Porto Murtinho (BR) e Carmelo Peralta (PY). Em relação à metodologia, o presente trabalho configura uma pesquisa qualitativa, pautada em análise bibliográfica e documental, sob uma ótica interdisciplinar, ancorada nos referenciais do Turismo e da Geografia Política. Os resultados teórico-empíricos correspondem a delimitação conceitual do que se configura a governança do turismo em territórios de fronteira internacional e na organização da matriz institucional que dará subsídio à compreensão da organização do turismo e de sua governança no território pesquisado. De forma complementar, foram elaborados mapas que demonstram a intersecção entre a principal política de desenvolvimento do turismo em Mato Grosso do Sul e a RILA.

**Palavras-chave:** RILA; infraestrutura; integração regional. fronteira.

**Resumen:** La Ruta de la Integración Latinoamericana (RILA), también conocida como Ruta Bioceánica, es una iniciativa que tiene potencial para promover el desarrollo de la zona fronteriza Brasil-Paraguay. Los creadores de RILA han tenido como objetivo, desde la creación de la propuesta en 2006 (que se oficializaría en 2015), impulsar la actividad logística, con miras a incrementar las exportaciones de commodities (granos, minerales y carne) y, en segundo lugar, impulsar la actividad turística regional. En ese sentido, este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar las potencialidades y obstáculos que envuelven la gobernanza del turismo en la zona

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fronteriza entre Brasil y Paraguay, específicamente en las ciudades gemelas de Porto Murtinho (BR) y Carmelo Peralta (PY). En cuanto a la metodología, el presente trabajo configura una investigación cualitativa, basada en el análisis bibliográfico y documental, bajo una perspectiva interdisciplinaria, anclada en los referentes del Turismo y la Geografía Política. Los resultados teórico-empíricos corresponden a la delimitación conceptual de lo que configura la gobernanza del turismo en los territorios de frontera internacional y la organización de la matriz institucional que sustentará la comprensión de la organización del turismo y su gobernanza en el territorio investigado. Complementariamente, fueron elaborados mapas que evidencian la intersección entre la principal política de desarrollo turístico en Mato Grosso do Sul y la RILA.

**Palabras clave:** RILA; infraestructura; integración regional; frontera.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion of tourism on an international border is a theme that needs to be resumed and constantly updated in the academy, which also includes discussing the issue of governance of tourism in these territories. In the case of Brazil, the concern is justified because the country has many border territories (including 33 twin cities), in addition to the fact that 27% of the national territory is within the border strip, which has specific legislation and restrictions on land use and ownership- Art. 20, § 2 of the Federal Constitution of 1988, Law n. 6,634 of 1979 and Decree no. 85,064 of 1980 (amended by Decree n. 11,076 of 2022) (Brasil, 2010).

According to Almeida et al. 2021, border regions have the potential to expand relations between residents on different sides of the international boundary, with their cultures and private identities. In this sense, it should be noted that in South America, in recent years, some development initiatives have been directed at borders. This is the case of the Latin American Integration Route (RILA), created in 2006, but made official in 2015<sup>3</sup> (Barros *et al.*, 2020), which has been receiving great attention from the government of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul<sup>4</sup>, which even announced that the municipality of Porto Murtinho will be a multimodal logistics *hub* in RILA. This project will enhance the storage and flow of corn, soy and meat through waterways and roads, providing greater centrality to the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, which will be more connected with the Pacific and also with Paraguay, the northwest of Argentina and the north of Chile, favoring small and medium-sized companies access to the regional market (Mato Grosso do Sul, 2022).

Despite the great relevance of the theme for the economy and development of Mato Grosso do Sul and Brazil, relevant aspects to public and development policies for medium and long term are not so evident. In this way, the present work aims to contemplate such a demand. Initially, the text analyzes the issue of tourism governance in the international border. Next, the text analyzes the South American scenario of paradiplomacy in tourism, presenting the legal devices that involve the zones of border in South America, public policies on the border and the development of the tourism in the RILA. Finally, the article focuses on the border context and tourism policies in Mato Grosso do Sul, with a focus on the impacts arising from the RILA and on the paradiplomacy of the tourism in the state.

<sup>3</sup> On December 21, 2015, the Presidents of Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Paraguay signed the Declaration of Asunción, through which the Working Group was created, coordinated by the foreign ministries of the four countries with the purpose of carrying out technical studies and defining actions in favor of the implementation of the Bioceânico Highway Corridor Campo Grande-Porto Murtinho (Brazil)-Carmelo Peralta-Mariscal Estigarribia-Pozo Hondo, Mision La Paz-Tartagal-Jujuy-Salta (Argentina)-Paso de Sico-Paso de Jama-Antofagasta/Mejillones/Iquique (Chile).

<sup>4</sup> It was only in 2017 that the subject matured on the part of the government of Mato Grosso do Sul, which started to focus on the potentialities of implementing the Corridor for the state.

Regarding the methodology, this article is a qualitative research, with an exploratory methodology, based on bibliographic and documentary analysis from an interdisciplinary perspective involving Tourism and Political Geography, with a spatial cut corresponding to the zone of border between Brazil and Paraguay and a time frame covering the period between 1996 and 2023.

The article is enriched with thematic cartography elaborated with the ArcMap *software*, and the theoretical-empirical results correspond to the conceptual delimitation of what configures the governance of tourism in territories of international borders and, in the case in question, in the organization of the institutional matrix that will subsidize this governance.

## **2 TOURISM GOVERNANCE IN AN INTERNATIONAL BORDER AREA**

Tourism governance can be understood as a process in which actors cooperate and collaborate through the formation of networks in favor of the development of tourist activity. It is also a regulatory structure that promotes decentralized management for the competitiveness of a destination and is dependent on the historical trajectory of each place. It can take a different and agreed format according to the nature and needs of each situation and time. Furthermore, different authors have already dedicated themselves to study the concepts of governance for tourism (Zapata, 2009; Gonzáles, 2014) and others applied the concepts to analyze different realities (Bantim; Fratucci, 2019).

From the understanding of what tourism governance would be, it was questioned what would be the governance of tourism in the border zone. To answer this question, it is necessary to highlight some concepts. The border zone is made up of the border strips of countries borderline. In Brazil, the border strip is established by Art. 20, § 2 of the 1988 Federal Constitution as the 150 km wide strip, parallel to the international land boundary (Gadelha; Costa, 2005).

Although authors such as Buhring (2015), Grimson (2002) and Senhoras (2015) understand that the border zones form the extension of the space-place that encompasses all type of setbacks that occur in the relationship between two national states, Costa (2017) states that the border zones are no longer a mere space for expansion, having also converted into a space for exchange and cooperation.

A great reference in Political Geography, Raffestin (2005) points out that the frontier goes beyond a territorial physical aspect, not configuring a line, but rather one of the elements of biosocial communication that assumes a regulatory function. Thus, the expression of a dynamic balance that is not found only in the territorial system, but in all biosocial systems.

In the border zones, the reflexes of the legal systems of neighboring states are materialized. Such reflections are perceived more evidently in the so-called twin cities. The concept of twin cities was established by Ordinance No. 125, of March 21, 2014, from the former Ministry of National Integration. Currently, Brazil has 33 cities twins, located in nine states<sup>5</sup> (Brasil, 2022).

The cities of Porto Murtinho and Carmelo Peralta, classified as twin cities, which will soon be connected by a bridge over the Paraguay River, will have their interactions potentialized due to the dynamics of trade flows that will occur. Currently, the only contact between the municipalities

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<sup>5</sup> Mato Grosso do Sul is home to seven sets of twin cities on the borders with Bolivia and Paraguay: 1- Corumbá/Puerto Quijarro; 2- Porto Murtinho/Carmelo Peralta; 3- Bela Vista/Bella Vista Norte; 4 – Ponta Porã/Pedro Juan Caballero; 5- Coronel Sapucaia/Capitán Bado; 6- Paranhos/Ypejhú; 7 – Mundo Novo/Salto del Guairá/Guaíra-PR.

is by ferry. In that sense, one example of a similar scenario is that of São Borja, municipality of Rio Grande do Sul, twin city of Santo Tomé, located in the Argentine province of Corrientes.

The construction of a bridge over the Uruguay River, opened in 1997, allowed for the installation of the Unified Frontier (CUF). Such a governance space promoted the reduction of bureaucracy related to the inspection and circulation of cargo and vehicles and the improvement of service infrastructure (Carneiro; Camara, 2019). The example presented, if reproduced in Porto Murtinho and Carmelo Peralta, could make this border crossing one of the main gateways to Brazil by land (Boullón, 2002).

In this way, understanding the importance of governance structures for the development of territories, it is worth bringing up the singular issue of spaces for coordination and cooperation in an international border zone. In this sense, paradiplomacy occurs through actions by subnational governments at the international level. The term originated in the 1980s and its studies aimed at understanding regions with a high level of autonomy, such as Quebec, the Basque Country and Catalonia. In Brazil, studies on paradiplomacy have been developed within the scope of municipalities and MERCOSUR (Dias, 2011).

In short, paradiplomacy can be understood as the set of forces existing in a border strip, with horizontal forces being those endogenous and vertical forces being the actions of diplomacy by the central government for the region. Horizontal forces can be promoted by local public and/or private actors, on the tourist supply or demand side, for example. When these forces are triggered by public power, we have subnational paradiplomacy and when triggered by the private sector, business paradiplomacy (Senhoras, 2015).

Diplomacy (actions of central power, ministries and development agencies) and also paradiplomatic actions have enormous relevance in border areas. This is because, according to Senhoras (2015), they consist of planned or voluntary actions promoted by a plurality of decentralized actors, which, in a more effective way, are able to adjust to the needs of the border zone. In the case of twin cities, this is even more relevant, given the intense and frequent relationships between their inhabitants. In this way, the governance of tourism in border areas is configured as tourist paradiplomacy as long as it takes place at an international level, whether between private, public or mixed entities (councils, consortia, conventions, associations, forums etc.).

In turn, for Banzatto (2015) paradiplomacy would only happen between subnational entities (public entities) with foreign public and/or private entities. It would consist of the involvement of non-central governments in the field of international relations through contacts with foreign public and private entities, aiming at cultural, social and economic promotion or another dimension that is outside their competence. It should be noted that the State does not leave the scene or remains inert, with only an insertion of other actors, such as subnational governments, for the development of actions. In this sense, Prado (2013) understands that these governments are contemplated within international relations as important actors in terms of international cooperation and regional integration, currently with a growing participation of provinces, states, regions, *länders*, cantons, counties and departments in this field.

Governance does not take into account whether the actors are classified as international subjects, since it does not belong to the category of Positive Law and is not subject to precepts and established norms, being a form of action in international relations that goes beyond Positive International Law. And even though there is an apparent confrontation, this does not persist, because participation in processes and discussions does not presuppose personality or even

international legal capacity as required by the normative precepts of International Law, leaving subnational actors restricted to collaboration in cooperation projects and not in the elaboration of norms. Thus, it is governance that gives access and legitimacy to non-state actors within international relations (Araújo, 2012; Farias; Reis, 2016; Hofman, 2011).

According to Neves (2010), Rei, Setzer and Cunha (2012) paradiplomacy occurs within the scope of global governance. Other actors are added to it in addition to those who already act within the norms of International Law, such as subnational governments. Their actions can create opportunities for public policies beyond their territorial limits, through cooperation with states or regions, based on international events and/or participation in transnational networks.

According to Acosta and Brenes (2014), discussing paradiplomatic governance in the border zone means thinking about the territorial scales or levels of analysis and the problems that require resolution in that particular territory, starting with the problems and then designing governance. Furthermore, Rodrigues (2009) states that it is not a question of establishing supranational, national and cross-border scales, but rather of situating the problems around which cooperation will be established and then establishing the relevant scales. For example, the municipal international agenda can represent an important instrument of democratic governance. This is because the international networks of municipalities configure spaces for exchange and cooperation.

### **3 THE SOUTH AMERICAN SCENARIO OF PARADIPLMACY IN TOURISM**

Due to its borders with virtually all South American countries, except Ecuador and Chile, in Brazil there is a need to implement internationalization policies at the municipal level in numerous areas, with tourism being the one capable of enhancing cross-border local development projects (Dias, 2011).

In this sense, it is worth highlighting the Mercocities Network, created in 1995, a non-profit entity with a structure capable of favoring the participation of cities in MERCOSUR. In 2018, the Mercocities Network, through the Tourism Thematic Unit<sup>6</sup> (UTT), prepared a plan for tourism with the aim of projecting and executing it between 2019 and 2021, based on the premise that the tourism sector is one of the largest generators of wealth, in addition to opening up space for participation in decision-making and promoting gender policies in corporate decisions, in addition to guaranteeing the legal protection of women in tourism employment, supporting female leadership in companies in the sector (Mercociudades, 2019). Still within the scope of MERCOSUR, the FCCR (Consultative Forum of Municipalities, Federated States, Provinces and Departments of MERCOSUR) has also carried out actions to promote the tourism sector.

In recent years, the states of the southern region of Brazil have registered important examples of paradiplomacy, such as the actions developed in the cross-border region of the Missions, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, through the Economic Federation Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay (FEBAP), a non-governmental institution dedicated to the promotion of regional development, covering the northwest of Rio Grande do Sul, the Argentine provinces of Misiones and Corrientes and the Paraguayan department of Itapúa. Through the mobilization of public and private entities, FEBAP seeks new alternatives to local development and tourism has been one of the solutions seen.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information: <https://mercociudades.org.br>

The fact that the cross-border region in question encompasses three national States opens up opportunities, but also creates obstacles. FEBAP has been seeking, for 3 decades, ways for a prosperous cooperation for the region's population, especially in relation to transport and communications, the environment, infrastructure, cultural exchange, tourism and education, through paradiplomacy (Nogueira; Jasper; Segovia, 2015).

Among the existing local development strategies, Allis, Paula and Raszl (2015) also advocate encouraging shopping tourism on Brazil's borders, with the scope of certain programs and public policies based on the creation of duty-free stores (the so-called "Free Trade Law" shops, Law No. 12,723 of 2012, regulated by Normative Instruction 2075/2022 of the Federal Revenue Service). In turn, Silva (2020) understands that there is great potential for opportunities in combining shopping and business tourism.

Still on shopping tourism, in the Midwest region of Brazil, in Mato Grosso do Sul, on the border with Paraguay, the cities of Ponta Porã (Brazil) and Pedro Juan Caballero (Paraguay) have received many tourists attracted, above all, by the Paraguayan duty-free shops. In the case of Porto Murtinho (Brazil) and Carmelo Peralta (Paraguay), this trade lacks a municipal<sup>7</sup> law regulating the installation of duty-free shops. However, it is worth remembering that the national laws of the South American countries directed to the border areas are heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory, a fact that constitutes an obstacle to local development.

It is important to point out that in South America, the laws regarding borders vary from country to country. Considering them as areas of national security, some States adopt specific legislation on this portion of the territory, while others do not establish any differentiation for them. In Brazil, the 150 km strip parallel to the international terrestrial limit is managed according to three provisions, already mentioned (Law 6634 of 1979, Decree 85064 of 1980 and Art. 20, § 2 of the Federal Constitution of 1988). The National Defense Council (CDN) is the body that establishes the guidelines regarding the use and ownership of soil in this portion of the national territory. Prior control assignments were assigned to the CDN in the border strip, which include: forms of settlement and land concession, investments in infrastructure, installation of means of communication, installation of airfields, construction of bridges and limits to industrialization (Borba, 2013).

Among the government initiatives for Brazil's border strip, the Program for the Promotion of the Development of the Border Strip (PDFF), created in 1999 and reformulated in 2003, deserves special mention. Its booklet, published in 2009, is still, the main document on the economic, demographic and geographic context of Brazil's border strip. The PDFF, which was discontinued in 2011, differs from traditional public policies aimed at the border, which most often involve initiatives related only to security and defense.

It is important to emphasize that, in the last three decades, public frontier policies in Brazil have been marked by discontinuity, in addition to having been implemented in an uncoordinated manner and by different actors. Between 2004 and 2010, there were editions of the International Seminar on Frontier Tourism (FRONTUR), proposed by the federal government through the Ministry of Tourism. Taking place in several cities in the North, Central and South arches, the initiative promoted debate and sought proposals to boost tourism (Allis; Paula; Raszl, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Ordinance of the Ministry of Finance n. 307/2014, in its art. 6, item I and paragraph 2, imposes the need for an approved Municipal Law that allows the installation of so-called duty-free stores (free shops) in the territory of the border municipality and that this is considered a twin city (Allis; Paula; Raszl, 2015).

From 2016, IPEA (Research Institute of Applied Economics), together with DIRUR/IPEA (Regional, Urban and Environmental Studies and Policies Board), began to prepare studies through workshops on the borders of Brazil, with the objective of raising questions and promoting discussions for the execution of the initiatives for the borders. IPEA has generated data that can provide public policies aimed at development, integration, cross-border mobility and cross-border local arrangements (IPEA, 2017).

Actions along the borders of Brazil have repercussions beyond the national territory. Although the federal government is a signatory to the agreements aimed at the border strip, Article 30, item I of the 1988 Federal Constitution provides that “it is incumbent upon the municipalities: I – to legislate on matters of local interest”. Likewise, the coordination of joint actions with neighboring countries maximizes their potential in favor of border communities and Brazil has a series of mechanisms and bilateral agreements aimed at developing border areas that can be better used (Brasil, 2010).

Regarding cooperation actions at the border, Decree n. 6,017 of 2007 deserves attention, in which its article 3, items IX and XII, addresses tourism and local and regional development through public consortia. Although Brazilian legislation does not contemplate the participation of municipalities from other countries in the figure of the consortium, the public consortium of municipalities that are in border areas can be of great value for economic development, infrastructure, public safety and tourism. It counts on the participation of subnational governments in international action through paradiplomacy and allows the grouping of several municipalities, providing better results in cooperation negotiations at the international level (Granato, 2015).

Among the existing municipal consortia, it is worth mentioning the Intermunicipal Consortium of frontiers (CIF), created in 2009, which emerged due to problems shared by different municipalities in the states of Paraná and Santa Catarina, in the so-called Tri Fronteira<sup>8</sup>. In the CIF there are development axes, whose projects aim to improve the action of the municipalities in a joint way, which are linked to health, education, tourism and regional development and are intended to provide the well-being of border workers and the growth of the region (CIF, 2009). A tourism axis project was the Integration Environmental Tourist Park, which covers three municipalities (Dionísio Cerqueira, Barracão and Bernardo de Irigoyen) and has another municipality at the end of the border (Bom Jesus do Sul), promoting the commercial and cultural touristic sector.

The CIF can be considered an example of paradiplomacy as a vector for promoting regional development, especially regarding tourism. Paradiplomacy, according to Fernandes and Ribeiro (2015), has the potential to act as a public policy with the aim of revolutionizing regional development. In this perspective, decentralized cooperation demonstrates innovation for local governments, especially border governments, which seek to act at the international level. Likewise, the Working Group on Border Tourism, carried out by the National Confederation of Commerce in Goods, Services and Tourism, states that tourism developed on the border is relevant from an economic point of view (CNC, 2019).

For the CNC (2020) it is of paramount importance to regulate the border territory for tourism to be successful, leading to safe and responsible tourism development. A clear regulatory framework and an adequate institutional environment must be established.

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<sup>8</sup> The Tri Fronteira is made up of the municipalities of Barracão and Bom Jesus do Sul, in Paraná, Dionísio Cerqueira, in Santa Catarina and the Argentine municipality of Bernardo de Irigoyen, province of Misiones (the latter participates unofficially in the initiative, given the jurisdictional limitation).

#### 4 THE BORDER CONTEXT AND TOURISM POLICIES IN MS

In Mato Grosso do Sul, in 2011, it was established Decree n. 13.303, resulting from technical workshops, with the aim of structuring the Regional Center for Integration of the Border Strip (NFMS)<sup>9</sup>. Another attempt to encourage the development of the border strip was the launch of the Border Strip Development and Integration Plan (PDIF/MS)<sup>10</sup> in 2012, under the management of the former SEPROTUR (Secretariat of Production and Tourism of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul). The Plan was compiled by the Summary Document of the Regional Development Plan (PDRMS 2030) (SEMAGRO, 2012).

However, throughout its existence, the Nucleus has functioned precariously (since 2013 there is no record of activities on the official website), and it has already been linked to the Secretariat for the Environment, Economic Development and Production and Family Agriculture (SEMAGRO) and in 2023 it was at the State Secretariat for the Environment, Development, Science, Technology and Innovation (SEMADESC).

Despite its problems, based on the Border Strip Development and Integration Plan (PDIF/MS), it was possible to visualize the high degree of permeability on the borders of Mato Grosso do Sul with Bolivia and Paraguay through actors who do not always have common interests and, in some cases, even diverge, which results in social, economic, sanitary and environmental problems. However, the peculiarities of these borders allow economic complementarity and strategic integration that can generate local benefits and market expansion (Mato Grosso do Sul, 2012).

Still in relation to public policies for the border, in Mato Grosso do Sul, Decree n. 14,090/2014 instituted the Fomentar Fronteiras program with tax benefits. In the same way, there is already on the Paraguayan side the Maquila Law, which allows Brazilian companies to settle in that country with the intention of carrying out the total or partial development of production. In 2018, eleven municipalities in Mato Grosso do Sul were part of Fomentar Fronteiras (Antônio João, Aral Moreira, Bela Vista, Caracol, Coronel Sapucaia, Japorã, Mundo Novo, Paranhos, Ponta Porã, Porto Murtinho and Sete Quedas) (Mato Grosso do Sul, 2018). In 2018, the “MS-Paraguay Business Meeting” was held, whose purpose was to present Fomentar Fronteiras to the business class and demonstrate that there are negotiations on the import of products that are industrialized in Paraguay in municipalities bordering Mato Grosso do Sul (SEMADESC, 2018).

About tourism policies in the state, the responsible body is the Tourism Foundation (FUNDTUR). Also in 2018, the Legislative Assembly of Mato Grosso do Sul approved a bill that regulates the State Tourism System (SET-MS), supporting state public policies in the tourism sector and the State Tourism Plan (Passos, 2018). In 2022, the new Strategic Tourism Map of MS 2023-2027 was launched, with three axes of action: improvement of the tourist offer, promotion and commercialization and strengthening of the governance of the destination (FUNDTUR MS, 2022).

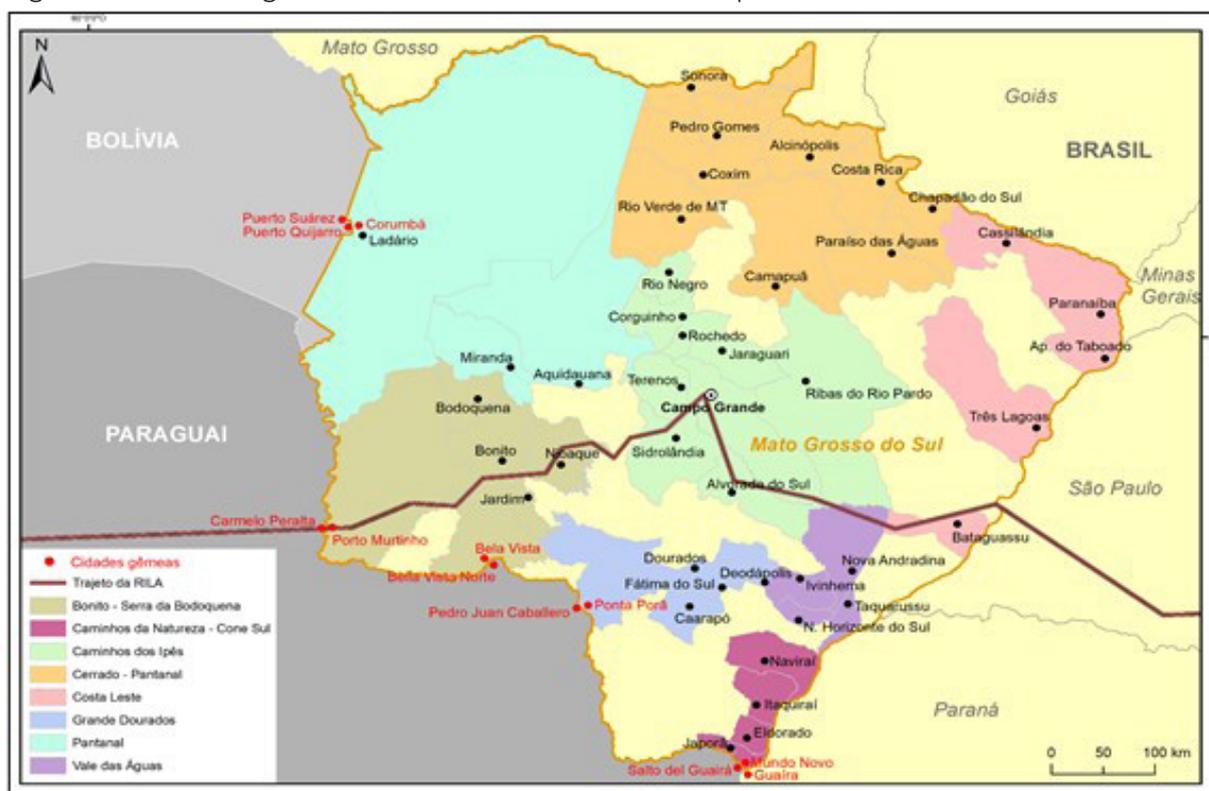
One of the public policies carried out in Mato Grosso do Sul that included border territories was the Tourism Regionalization Program (PRT), created in 2004, as a result of the National Tourism Policy (Law n. 11.771 [Brasil, 2008]). The program aims to strengthen the actions of the Ministry

<sup>9</sup> For more information: <https://www.semadesc.ms.gov.br/nucleo-de-fronteira-do-ms/>.

<sup>10</sup> The PDIF/MS has as a guideline the support to local productive arrangements (APLs), professional qualification, training in project management and entrepreneurship, the expansion of institutional guarantees and property rights as a strategy to accelerate development in the border strip and support for productive articulation with neighboring countries (Mato Grosso do Sul, 2012).

of Tourism in all Brazilian states, regions and municipalities, encouraging the decentralization of tourism production and management. The PRT is based on the fact that, even if a city does not have a tourist vocation, it can benefit in some way from the development of tourism in its region (Tatim, 2020). Figure 1 presents the MS Tourism Strategic Map, highlighting the eight regions, but innovates by combining the line of the Latin American Integration Route (RILA) and by identifying the twin cities in these regions.

Figure 1 – Tourist regions of Mato Grosso do Sul with emphasis on twin cities



Source: Carneiro (2023)<sup>11</sup>.

Four of the eight tourist regions comprise cities that are on the border line. Of the seven twin cities of Mato Grosso do Sul, four already have a tourist flow related to fishing or shopping tourism (Corumbá, Ponta Porã, Porto Murtinho and Mundo Novo) and five of them are on the MS tourist map. Each region has a tourism governance body (IGR) responsible for discussing the development of local tourism. The municipality of Porto Murtinho is located in Bonito-Serra da Bodoquena tourist region and has the Municipal Tourism Council. It is noteworthy that both the Council and the IGR to which the city is linked can be places where paradiplomatic actions are carried out.

The existence of plans and documents that identify weaknesses and potentialities of tourism in the territory, may inspire specific paradiplomatic agreements with Carmelo Peralta, or even another city in Paraguay, through subnational entities of both countries. However, the paradiplomatic possibility does not exempt the government of Mato Grosso do Sul nor the Paraguayan government, specifically the Department of Alto Paraguay, from discussing

<sup>11</sup> Map created with ArcMap software, specifically for this article.

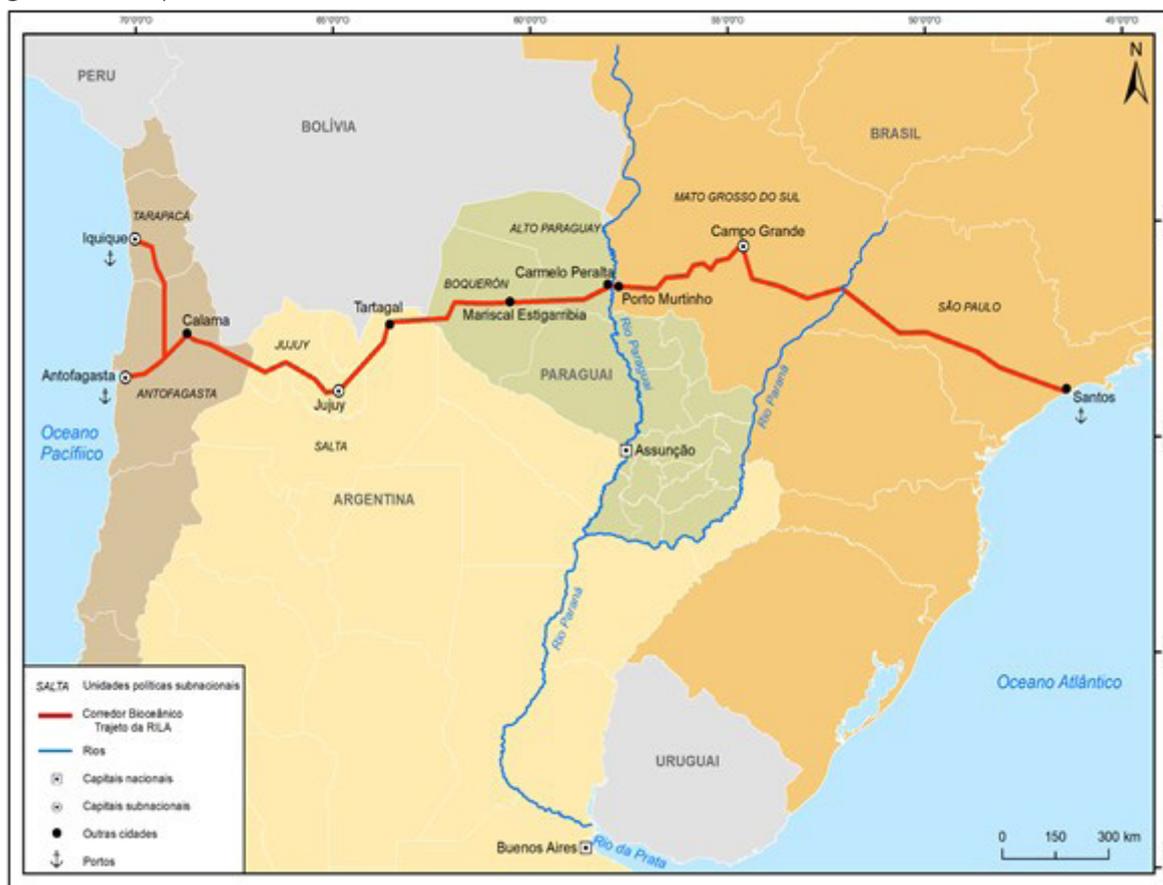
and elaborating, with the participation of all entities in the border territory, specific tourism development policies for the border zone. Furthermore, it is important to verify possible shadowing of public, private and mixed bodies in their roles and planning with regard to actions aimed at the border. In addition, a virtual environment is essential in which information on rules, laws, policies, plans and programs for the border is gathered, as well as existing institutional arrangements, their contacts and electronic addresses. Which would be in line with the perspective of Smart Tourist Destinations (Instituto Valenciano de Tecnologias Turísticas [INVAT.TUR], 2020).

Regarding the tourist potential of the region, it should be noted that in Porto Murtinho there is evidence of well-established fishing tourism and the municipality also has historical and cultural attractions, having been the stage of some historical events of the Triple Alliance War and the Constitutionalist Revolution from 1932, housing old architectural constructions and historic monuments. Another growing tourist bias in the municipality is the observation of wildlife, especially birdwatching, in view of the great diversity of fauna in the region (Mamede; Silva; Bourlegart, 2021). Such aspects are exposed on the city hall website, which promotes a city with a good hotel network, gastronomic variety, ecotourism itineraries, fishing tourism and tours with historical-cultural itineraries.

Another action that has assumed the contours of public policy refers to the RILA or Bioceânico Corridor. Connecting Campo Grande to the ports of northern Chile, the Bioceânico Road Corridor is one of the supporting elements of the RILA. It began to gain momentum after the second expedition composed of businessmen from Mato Grosso do Sul and members of the public authorities, between August and September 2017 - four years after the first expedition (Asato *et al.* 2019). In December 2021, the presidents of Paraguay and Brazil laid the cornerstone of RILA's main work - the bridge between the cities of Porto Murtinho and Carmelo Peralta.

Previously, in 2015, through the Declaration of Asunción, the presidents of Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Paraguay formed a working group aimed at creating a corridor that will connect Santos to the ports of northern Chile. Planning was the responsibility of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of each country, which, through five working groups, began to develop actions with local governments, the private sector, central governments and universities (Almeida *et al.*, 2021). Figure 2 depicts the path of the corridor road, which will cover 2,396 km and will connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, passing through Porto Murtinho and Carmelo Peralta.

Figure 2 – Map of the Bioceanic route



Source: Carneiro (2023)<sup>12</sup>.

It should be noted that state action is essential to provide guidelines for structured and organized public policies that can promote and foster production chains, generating employment and income for thousands of people. In this sense, the RILA, in addition to connecting four South American countries, still aims to reduce the time for moving cargo, offer better logistics conditions, as well as increase the competitiveness of exports to Asia, opening new doors to regional trade, fostering tourism and encouraging greater integration between the peoples of these countries. Over time, different governments in Mato Grosso do Sul and also the federal government have planned a connection between Mato Grosso do Sul and the Pacific (Almeida *et al.*, 2021) and RILA is in a position to achieve these objectives, as it will be part of tourist itineraries of the countries involved, although today the infrastructure along the future highway is neither sufficient nor adequate for this movement.

However, with the creation of the need there is the possibility of new undertakings. In addition, other researchers reinforce the need to implement coordination mechanisms and official systematic information for tourism at specific points in the corridor, in order to guarantee competitiveness in the exploration of the tourist market (Pusch Wilk; Fittipaldi Gonçalves; Andrade Asato, 2021).

Regarding the market, there are challenges to the creation of a tourist route and the establishment of sustainable territories. Tourism as a productive model is not based only on its

<sup>12</sup> Map created with ArcMap software, specifically for this article.

economic dimension, it is also linked to the development of territories marked by social and power relations. In any case, the activity can offer real contributions to participatory management processes, reduction of inequalities, protagonism and social emancipation, meeting the aspirations and needs of different social groups, valuing cultural heritage and enhancing the transformations necessary for territorial sustainability (Mamede; Silva; Bourlegart, 2021).

To help in understanding this web of relationships that coexist in the territory in question, as well as in the perception of the potential for paradiplomatic activities, two tables were prepared. Chart 1 presents the institutional environment and Chart 2 the governance instances. This institutional matrix (environment and arrangement) can be used as a guideline to guide the development of paradiplomatic actions within the scope of tourism governance in an international border territory.

Table 1 – Institutional environment for tourism governance in border territories

<b>Institutional environment (laws, policies, plans, programs and projects) in favor of paradiplomacy for tourism governance</b>
Art.30, item I of the Federal Constitution/88, which says: “Art. 30. It is incumbent upon the Municipalities: I – to legislate on matters of local interest”.
Restructuring Proposal for the Border Strip Development Program/Ministry of National Integration, Secretariat for Regional Programs, Border Strip Development Program – 2005.
Border Strip Development Promotion Program (PDF) – 2009. Ministry of National Integration.
National Tourism Policy (Law n. 11.771/2008).
Decree n. 13.303, of november 22, 2011. Establishes the Regional Center for Integration of the Border Strip of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul.
Law of “free shops” n. 12.723/2012 (regulated by Normative Instruction 2075/2022 of the Federal Revenue Service).
Border Strip Development and Integration Plan – PDIF/MS (2012).
Decree n.14.090/2014 that established the Fomentar Fronteiras Program.
Decree n. 8903, of November 16, 2016 – Establishes the Integrated Border Protection Program and organizes the work of administration units.
Pluriannual Plan for the period 2020/2023.
Tourism Regionalization Program – PRT (2003-2022)
Latin American Integration Route (RILA)
MS Tourism Law (2018)
Manual for State Border Centers (2020)
MS 2020 Technical Report.

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2023.

Table 2 – Institutional arrangements linked to tourism governance in border territories

<b>Institutional arrangements linked to the governance of tourism in border territories</b>
Unified Border Center (CUF).
MERCOSUR
FCCR – Consultative Forum of Municipalities, Federated States, Provinces and Departments of MERCOSUR.

### **Institutional arrangements linked to the governance of tourism in border territories**

The Global Network of United Cities and Local Governments (UCGL).
Latin American Federation of Cities.
Mercocities Network through the Tourism Thematic Unit (UTT).
FEBAP – Economic Federation of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay
Intermunicipal Border Consortium (CIF).
CNC – National Confederation of Commerce – Working Group on Border Tourism.
UNWTO – World Tourism Organization.
International Seminar on Border Tourism – FRONTUR.
DIRUR (Board of Regional, Urban and Environmental Studies and Policies.
National Defense Council (CDN).
MS Border Nucleus (2012).
UniRila group of the University Network of the Latin American Integration Route, created in 2016, and coordinated by universities in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul and universities in Argentina, Chile and Paraguay.
Latin American Integration Route (RILA).
Secretary of State for Environment, Development, Science, Technology and Innovation – SEMADESC
MS Tourism Foundation – (FUNDTUR).
State Tourism Board of Mato Grosso do Sul (SET).
Regional Governance Instances (IGR) of regions with international border municipalities (Pantanal; Bonito-Serra da Bodoquena, Grande Dourados, Caminhos da Natureza).
Municipal Tourism Councils (COMTURS) of the municipalities that make up the border strips.
Forum of Subnational Territories of the Capricorn Bioceanic Corridor May and November 2022 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) in partnership with the State Government, the International Parliamentary Front of the Bioceanic Corridor and the Association of Municipalities of Mato Grosso do Sul-Geral – Assomasul)
Parliamentary Front for Monitoring the Implementation of the Bioceânica Route – ACT N. 004/2023 – Board of Directors. Official Gazette Aems n. 2383 Campo Grande-MS, thursday, february 23.

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2023.

From the analysis of the tables above, it appears that Mato Grosso do Sul has a favorable situation for the institutional environment (laws, programs and projects) to act in favor of paradiplomacy. Likewise, there are institutional arrangements that can support and highlight paradiplomacy, especially those linked to the Bioceânico Corridor. Subnational governments, private initiative (logistics, transport and cargo) and universities (UNIRILA)<sup>13</sup> have been dedicated to institutional integration, but the lack of continuity of actions and the deficient integration between public and private agencies and civil society constitute, still, a strategic weakness. Pinho de Almeida *et al.* (2021) also reinforce the challenge of thinking and acting bilaterally in areas

<sup>13</sup> UniRila is made up of the Universities that make up the CRIE-MS (Council of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of Mato Grosso do Sul). They are: State University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UEMS), Dom Bosco Catholic University (UCDB), Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), Federal University of Grande Dourados (UFGD), Anhanguera University/Uniderp and Federal Institute of Mato Grosso do Sul (IFMS). In addition to the CRIE-MS Universities, the National University of Jujuy and the National University of Salta, in Argentina, are also part of the Network; Universidad de Antofagasta and Universidad Católica del Norte de Chile, both in Chile; and the National University of Asunción, from Paraguay (Maciel *et al.*, 2019, p. 1).

other than tourism and its public policies, such as: employment, education, social assistance and health.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this article was to contemplate a gap related to the governance of tourism in an international border, in the Latin American Integration Route (RILA), with a spatial cut covering the twin cities of Porto Murtinho and Carmelo Peralta. Nevertheless, the results found can be replicated in other municipalities in Mato Grosso do Sul. Initially, the text analyzed tourism governance and its main conceptual characteristics. Subsequently, the concept of tourism governance at an international border was worked on. Next, the legal devices concerning the border zones were listed. In the last section, the article addressed public policies for tourism in the border context of Mato Grosso do Sul.

The results indicated that there is an institutional context (laws, policies, bodies) referring to border issues. However, this is marked by discontinuity and, sometimes, by the lack of institutional alignment. Thus, it would be essential for ministries, institutions, governments and public bodies to coordinate their initiatives and policies related to the border. A point to be highlighted is the fact that the Ministries of Tourism and Regional Development do not jointly plan the development of tourism on the border and do not incorporate the border strip of neighboring countries in their projects.

The lack of integration between ministries or between secretariats in the states located on the border, as well as the absence of a database with information about tourism and the border, are obstacles to specific public policies for the development of these territories. It should also be noted that developing tourism is a strategy to be taken into account by official bodies. This requires updated databases, legislation gathered and available on a single website, fostering dialogue between research centers specialized in borders, specific funding notices for research in these regions and the improvement of transport logistics (offer of flights, bus lines, roads and support equipment for tourists who use the car).

Regarding the RILA, although this is a project led by the agribusiness and logistics sectors, it has the potential to boost tourist activity as a transfer corridor, taking advantage of the transport infrastructure, the support equipment that will be installed along of the highway and the cultural potential of the different surrounding communities along the route. Finally, it is important to emphasize that this work does not end here, given the difficulty arising from the lack of information available on official websites. It is a first effort that could be improved in further research.

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