

Turismo e participação social no contexto do Circuito Turístico Serras de Ibitipoca, Minas Gerais

Tourism and social participation in the context of the Circuito Turístico Serras de Ibitipoca, Minas Gerais

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RESUMO: No âmbito das políticas públicas de turismo no Brasil, uma importante questão que emerge é como responder ao compromisso de participação social frente ao desenvolvimento do turismo. Tendo em vista a necessidade de se avançar em novas reflexões sobre os desafios da participação social no âmbito do turismo, o presente artigo teve como objetivo analisar em que medida a participação, um dos princípios norteadores do Programa de Regionalização do Turismo, se efetiva no contexto do Circuito Turístico Serras de Ibitipoca, Minas Gerais. Trata-se de um estudo de caso fundamentado em uma abordagem interdisciplinar, a partir de análise qualitativa, baseada em pesquisa bibliográfica e documental; pesquisa de campo composta por entrevistas semiestruturadas; e, análise de conteúdo. Os principais resultados revelaram que apesar do tema participação social ser ressaltado nas políticas públicas de turismo, os discursos veiculados estão distanciados das práticas efetivas. A política pública de regionalização do turismo é implementada em Minas Gerais por meio das Instâncias de Governança Regionais denominadas Circuitos Turísticos. No entanto, sob a ótica de análise da participação social, verificou-

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se que, no Circuito Turístico Serras de Ibitipoca, existem diversos desafios para a efetivação de uma gestão participativa e descentralizada tal como proposto pela política, refletindo em uma baixa participação. Aponta-se, portanto, a necessidade de mudanças nos processos que levem ao aumento da participação dos atores locais, o que envolve a governança e pressupõe um processo educativo que vise sensibilizar e conscientizar a partir da realidade local.

Palavras-chave: Turismo; Participação Social; Políticas Públicas de Turismo; Desenvolvimento Local

ABSTRACT: Within the context of the tourism public policies in Brazil, an important question that emerges is how to answer to the commitment to social participation in the face of tourism development. In order to advance on new reflections on the challenges of social participation in the field of tourism, this article aimed to analyze how the participation occurs, since it is one of the guiding principles of the Tourism Regionalization Program, if it is effective in the context of the Circuito Turístico Serras de Ibitipoca, Minas Gerais, Brazil. This is a case study based on an interdisciplinary approach, based on qualitative analysis, bibliographic and documentary research; field research composed of semi-structured interviews; and, content analysis. The main results revealed that although the theme of social participation is highlighted in tourism public policies, the speeches are far away from the effective practices. The public policy of tourism regionalization is implemented in Minas Gerais through the Regional Governance Instances known as Circuitos Turísticos (Tourist Circuits). However, from the perspective of social participation analysis, it was found that, within the Circuito Turístico Serras de Ibitipoca (Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit), there are several challenges for the implementation of a participatory and decentralized management as proposed by the policy, reflecting a low participation. Therefore, there is a need for changes in the processes that lead to an increase in the participation of local actors, which involves governance and requires an educational process that aims to sensitize and raise awareness based on the local reality.

Keywords: Tourism; Social Participation; Tourism Public Policies; Local Development.

1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a complex sociocultural phenomenon that encompasses economic, social, cultural, environmental and political dimensions. Defending the viability of developing tourism on a sustainable basis, aiming at the common good and improving the quality of life of the local population implies placing social participation at the heart of the debate.

For Hô (2006), development finds its founding impulse in the needs and aspirations of individuals as collectivities, in the ends they propose and in the projects that make them real. In this sense, the author points out social participation as a premise for any development project. According to Irving (2018), successful experiences of social participation can play a significant role in changing the mentality of the actors involved, in terms of co-responsibility and the exercise of citizenship, essential to the effective development of human societies.

However, participation is essential for achieving development in accordance with local dynamics, reality and specificities. Such participation is pointed out in the discourse of public tourism policies (PRT 2007; PNT 2007/2010; PNT 2013/2016; PNT 2018/2022). Nevertheless, how is this participation effective at the local level?

Created in 2004, as a tourism management strategy in the country, the Tourism Regionalization Program (PRT) became the main policy program adopted in the National Tourism Plan (PNT) having as principles decentralization, integration, participation and environmental sustainability, sociocultural and economic (BRASIL, 2007). In Minas Gerais, regionalization was consolidated through Circuitos Turísticos (Touristic Circuits) that have the common objective of developing tourism in an integrated manner (MINAS GERAIS, 2014).

Therefore, bearing in mind the importance of advancing in new reflections on the challenges in participatory tourism management, this article aimed to analyze the extent to which participation, one of the guiding principles of the PRT, takes place within the scope of the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit.

This is a case study reasoned in an interdisciplinary approach, stemmed from qualitative analysis, based on bibliographical and documentary research. A field research was carried out, consisting of semi-structured interviews, and the results obtained from content analysis.

To advance the proposed objective, the article was structured in five sections. This introduction seeks to contextualize the issue in focus. The second section aims to theoretically reflect on tourism, development and social participation. The third section describes the methodological procedures of the research. Then, the results and analysis of social participation in the context of the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit are presented. The fifth and last section presents the final considerations of the proposed analysis.

2 TOURISM, DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Tourism is a complex sociocultural phenomenon. It represents a practice of great importance in the socioeconomic context of various locations, a sufficient condition to awaken interest in its development in the various governments. However, tourism should not be understood as the only tool capable of solving the socioeconomic problems of any given territory, but “as one [more] of the levers that can boost regional and local development” (CRUZ, 2002, p. 43).

The potential to produce positive effects is used as a justification for investments in projects and formulation of tourism incentive policies. It is highlighted the generation of employment and income, the development of services and infrastructure, the conservation and enhancement of the environment and the historical and cultural heritage.

Nonetheless, inadequate tourism planning and development mitigate this capacity and intensify its negative effects. When the development of tourism is not planned and discussed sufficiently by the community, cultural traditions may be mischaracterized, replacement of old productive activities in the locality, changes in the environment, changes in the way of life of residents, conflicts, among others.

According to Irving (2006), one of the great challenges is still the ‘collective action’ and the understanding of social participation as an ethical guarantee of sustainability in projects for the conservation of renewable resources and/or development. Sachs (2004) emphasizes the need to revisit the idea of development, that is, to make it more operational.

However, it is emphasized that development should not be confused with economic growth, as it often does not change the local reality, does not reduce poverty, does not reduce inequalities and does not aim at improving the population’s quality of life.

In the context of policies, the logic of rationality and the market often stands out over the logic of the real needs of the population. According to Irving (2018, p. 63),

the needs of a society are not restricted to the demands of an economic order. The various political, social, cultural and environmental dimensions also represent essential axes of the process. In this sense, the commitment to social participation in decision-making processes is a prerequisite for development, as only society itself is capable of identifying its needs.

Santos (2005, p.45) corroborates by stating that the conception that simplifies and interprets development as growth ends up implying the marginalization of other social, economic and political objectives, such as participation in decision-making and the equitable distribution of the fruits of development.

It is important to emphasize that development refers to a reality that is complex and dynamic, constituting a diversity of patterns and social paths and reaffirming the peculiarities of a given society (IRVING, 2018). Thus, regions that follow an imitative

pattern do not realize that they need to seek their development based on their history, culture and their own resources (SACHS, 1998).

From this perspective, development requires local leadership. For Sen (2000), the main means and the main purpose of development is to enable the expansion of the freedom of individuals so that they can find better living conditions, being able to act on factors that are not in accordance with a dignified and quality life.

Such an approach has as its basic premise the importance of human freedom and the encouragement of the individual's agent condition as an active subject of change and not only as a passive recipient of benefits. However, the author emphasizes that there is a complementarity between the condition of individual agent and social provisions, where freedom is limited by social, political and economic opportunities, to which the individual had access (SEN, 2000).

Development must start from the communities' latent needs, in the search for alternatives that provide improvements in all areas – economic, social, cultural, environmental – and create conditions and opportunities for the local population to effectively participate in this process.

Pinheiro, Maracajá and Chim-Miki (2020) point out that it is through social participation in the decision process that a society defines its true needs and points out its peculiarities so that the conduct of the development process is compatible with local characteristics. The authors highlight the need for a local institutional arrangement that manages the development process of the tourism sector, considering the knowledge of the population.

Endres and Pakman (2019) add that since the redemocratization processes that took place in various parts of the world, the orientation for institutional changes that would allow greater social participation in the implementation of public policies has become urgent. For the authors, it is a trajectory that tends to go from centralized actions to more decentralized and participatory structures and mechanisms, from a situation that privileges big capital to one that enables the expansion of local and endogenous values.

For Sachs, participation occupies a lot of space in the discourse on development. However, the reality

often manifests the imposition of strategies elaborated at the central level. Rehabilitation of the inverse approach, which privileges initiatives from below, must be provided, especially with regard to the identification of the real needs of the population and the hierarchy of emergencies. Therefore, the capacity of populations to take responsibility for a good part of the decisions that concern them should be strengthened (SACHS, 1995, p.48).

In this context, it becomes necessary to apprehend new forms of organization and participation in the midst of diversified relationships with the management of democracy, the strengthening of citizenship and the pursuit of common goals. This process involves governance and assumes decentralization policies, co-management

experiences, establishment of councils and implementation of participation mechanisms.

Endres and Pakman (2019) cite as an example the variety of participation spaces such as forums, councils and committees. They emphasize that these experiences contribute to the exercise of participation and can transform the regional and local reality. It is believed that providing opportunities for communities to effectively participate in activities aimed at local development means providing conditions for them to mobilize their own potential, become social agents rather than passive subjects and start to manage the activities that affect their lives (SANTOS; AVILA, 2017).

In the sphere of tourism, the question that emerges is which tourism model is aimed for and which planning measures could ensure a new conception based on the valuation and perception of the place as a focal point for new initiatives (IRVING, 2003). In this sense, Irving (1999) states that it is necessary to build an endogenous model of tourism development, capable of daring in innovation and assimilating the commitment of engagement of the local social actor, as a focal point for sustainability; which requires the development of methodologies capable of dealing with subjectivity and not just centered on rationality. However, it emphasizes the importance of the protagonists of the destinations being subjects and not objects of the process.

2.1 PARTICIPATION AND REDEFINITION OF DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

There are several points of view on the topic of participation, as well as the uses it can have. For Bordenave (2013, p. 14) “the enumeration of the contributions of participation could lead to a purely instrumental concept, with the danger of seeing in it something to be directed, manipulated or explored regarding its results”. It is therefore necessary to detach from this approach to participation and analyze it as a process capable of generating a new dynamic of social organization and involvement in issues relating to the common good.

For Loureiro, Marcus and Franca (2003), participation can be defined as a “social process that generates the interaction between different social actors in the definition of common space and collective destiny”. Defending participation in these processes is to recognize the ability of individuals to build their own paths and intervene in their realities. Therefore, the commitment to social participation can represent an important possibility of replacing traditional models that are centralized and disconnected from local realities (IRVING, 2003).

Participation is being part, taking part or having part. Nevertheless, it is possible to be a part without taking part, and that is the difference “between passive participation and active participation, the distance between the inert citizen and the engaged citizen” (BORDENAVE, 2013, p. 22). For Bordenave (2013), participation does not consist in the passive reception of benefits from society, but in the active intervention in its construction. Thus, it assumes the character of a transforming collective process. It refers to social protagonism, solidarity, and, together with the decentralization of

decisions, it shows itself as the most suitable way to face the serious and complex problems of developing countries.

The same author emphasizes that it is possible to speak of micro and macro participation processes. The citizen, in addition to participating at a micro level in the family, school, work, community, associations, among others, also participates at a macro level when intervening in the social, economic and political struggles of his time. It is in micro-participation that participatory praxis and education for participation develop and expand (BORDENAVE, 2013).

In this perspective, Góis (2005, p. 150) emphasizes that participation implies “that the person influenced by the historical-social conditions and situations that in general affect him materially and/or existentially, decides to participate in socially significant activities in the place where he lives. ”. For Bordenave (2013) it is in the community that democratic relations are best structured.

However, Bordenave (2013) states that participation is not a content that can be transmitted, but a mindset and behavior consistent with it; it is a collective and not an individual experience. Exercising participation implies changing a culture of passivity and dependence, a process that takes time. Therefore, participation needs to be built, encouraged, remade and recreated.

Demo (2001) emphasizes that for the full exercise of citizenship it is necessary that the community is educated for the action of participation, knowing its rights and duties from the

notion of social subject, not social object, the notion of rights and duties, especially fundamental ones such as human rights, the notion of democracy as a form of socioeconomic and political organization, the notion of freedom, equality, community (DEMO, 2001, p. 52-53).

In this sense, Bordenave (2013) adds that participation can be considered one of the fundamental aspects of personal and collective development. It enables the individual to have autonomy and perception of the social problems experienced, making them aware of their role as protagonists to compose a critical analysis of the local social reality. Thus, participating means sharing responsibilities in the collective construction of a process that aims to strengthen civil society to build paths that point to a new social reality, changes in adverse contexts and social transformation (GOHN, 2008).

The commitment to social participation is the central element in the new paradigm of development of human societies (IRVING, 2018). In the context of tourism planning and management, the effective participation of local communities is essential. It is knowledgeable and experiences its immediate reality, being able to identify problems and needs, evaluate alternatives, develop strategies and seek solutions to identified problems, suggesting ways to improve the quality of life and strengthen the local culture.

As a central instrument to promote social participation in tourism development, the MTUR (2007) proposed a decentralized and participatory public management model promoting Regional Governance Instances. These are understood as democratizing instances of the management process, a way to incorporate the demands of a participatory democratic nature in the management of tourism.

3 METHODOLOGY

For the development of the work, a qualitative approach was adopted. For Minayo (2009), qualitative research answers very particular questions, at a level of reality that cannot or should not be quantified, as its object of study can hardly be translated into numbers and quantitative indicators.

The method used to develop this research was the case study. This procedure “is similar to focusing on an experiment that is sought to be understood through interviews, observations, use of databases and documents” (MINAYO, 2008, p.164). In order to meet the proposed objective, the work was divided into three phases: bibliographical and documentary research; field research based on semi-structured interview; and content analysis.

The first stage of the research consisted of a bibliographical survey on the topic of tourism, public policies for tourism, development and social participation, aiming to build the theoretical support of the study. In the context of the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit, a documentary survey was carried out with the Association of the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit, Lima Duarte Tourism Secretariat, Minas Gerais Tourism Secretariat (SETES) and the Ministry of Tourism. This phase allowed the collection of secondary data and to diagnose the research field.

The second stage of the research consisted of fieldwork. For data collection, the interview was used as an instrument. Minayo (2009) considers them as “conversations with a purpose”, which aims to build pertinent information with the research object. The interviews were of the semi-structured type, allowing the interviewees to talk more broadly about the topic in question without getting caught up in the formulated question (MINAYO, 2009). Twelve interviews were conducted, in person and by email, from January 2014 to March 2015, based on an interview script. Codes were used to identify the interviewed subjects.

The subjects included in this research are directly related to tourism and, more specifically, to the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit, who are representatives of the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit Association, the State Forestry Institute, the Minas Gerais Tourism Office General and MTUR. It is important to highlight, as a limitation of the present study, the difficulty of contacting representatives of the Tourism secretariats or departments of the municipalities belonging to the Circuit. However, the field data allowed us to establish an axis of reflection on participation in the context of the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit.

Finally, in order to systematize and analyze the data, content analysis was used. Due to the type of work proposed, the selected modality of content analysis was thematic analysis. For this modality, the central concept is the theme, which can be graphically presented through a word, a sentence, an abstract (MINAYO, 2009). As guiding axes, the following themes were used, which were analyzed based on the reports of the research subjects: tourism and the development process; social participation; and challenges in the context of the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE SERRAS DE IBITIPOCA TOURIST CIRCUIT

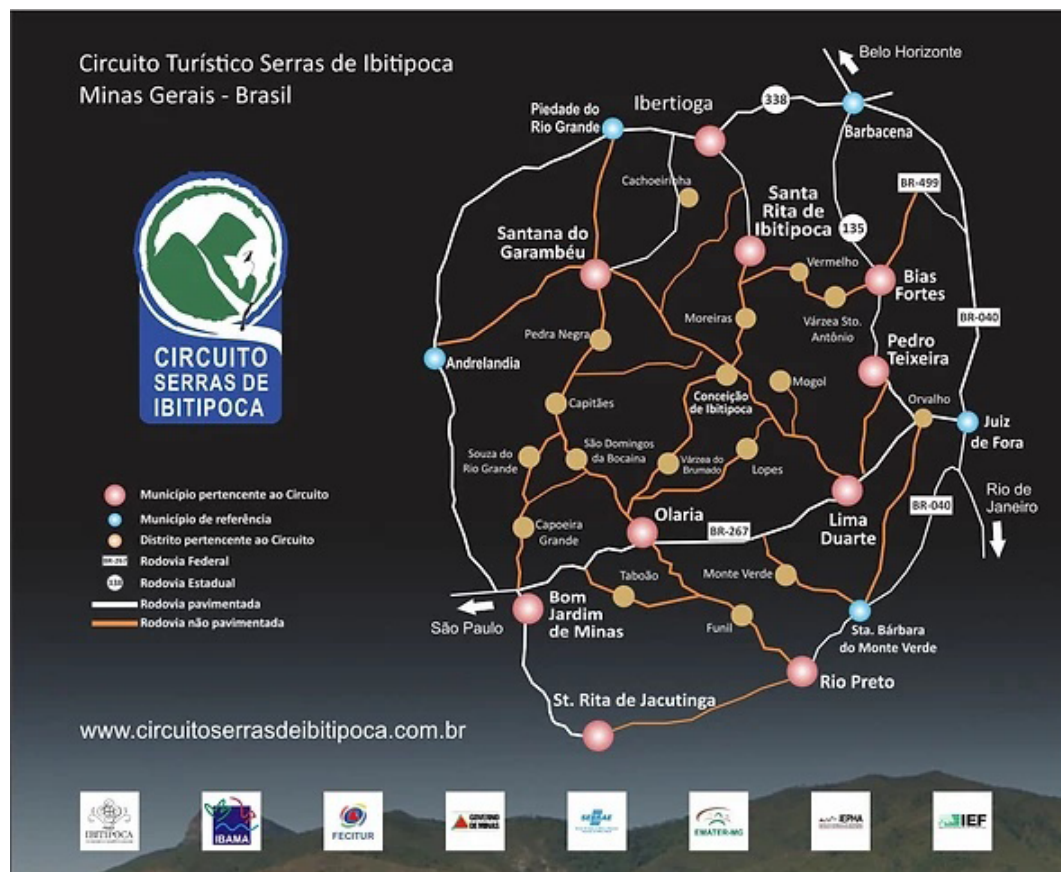
This article does not intend to describe the trajectory of public policy for tourism in Brazil due to the need to delimit the discussion around the proposed problem. However, it is important to highlight that, in 2004, the MTUR adopted regionalization as a guideline for the development of tourism in the country, implementing the PRT throughout the national territory.

The PRT is the reference political-territorial ordering model for all MTUR actions. Among the proposed objectives, it aims to promote dialogue, discussion and participatory decision-making among actors involved in the development of regional tourism, in addition to promoting articulation and integration of local and regional actors (BRASIL, 2013). The National Tourism Plan 2018-2022 presents as one of its guidelines the strengthening of the regionalization of tourism (BRASIL, 2018).

In Minas Gerais, regionalization was consolidated through Tourist Circuits that have the common objective of developing tourism in an integrated manner (MINAS GERAIS, 2014). The Minas Gerais Tourist Circuits are Regional Governance Instances and are the main interlocutor of the municipal governments with the state and federal government, guiding and coordinating, in partnership with the Municipal Councils, the execution of the tourism policy with the local production chain (MINAS GERAL, 2020). For the development of this research, the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit was adopted as a case study.

The Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit was recognized as a Regional Governance Instance by Setur in 2006. It is located in the Zona da Mata Mineira, in the Serra da Mantiqueira, and is formed by the municipalities of Bias Fortes, Bom Jardim de Minas, Ibertioga, Lima Duarte, Pedro Teixeira, Rio Preto, Santa Rita de Ibitipoca, Santa Rita de Jacutinga, Santana of Garambéu and Olaria.

FIGURE 1: SERRAS DE IBITIPOCA TOURIST CIRCUIT MAP



SOURCE: Serras de Ibitipoca Circuit, 2020

The Circuit is characterized by its natural beauty consisting of waterfalls, mountain ranges and rich biodiversity. Its main attraction is the Ibitipoca State Park, located in the city of Lima Duarte. But tourist attractions are not restricted to the park. All municipalities that make up the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit have waterfalls, caves and curious rock formations. The Circuit also has peculiar characteristics and specificities typical of a Minas Gerais region, such as cuisine, handicrafts and religious festivals. It is a region surrounded by history, with its villages, towns and chapels.

Subject A, when reflecting on the tourism development process within the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit, highlights as a positive aspect “the arrival of more resources, money for the region”. However, it is important to emphasize that the generation of employment and income, often highlighted as a benefit, can mean inequality and exclusion for the local population, opposing the discourse usually presented on the distribution of socioeconomic benefits and social inclusion.

In the context of the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit, subject B highlights that the role of the Tourist Circuit is to encourage the collective participation of actors

involved in the development of tourism, aiming at a participatory construction that prioritizes collective benefit over private interest. According to the MTur in the document Introduction to the Regionalization of Tourism (BRASIL, 2007, p. 31), participation would be, above all, a process of building citizenship.

full participation will only take place in an atmosphere of respect for diversity and in the consensus of proposals, so as to include all interests. What we mean is that local knowledge and wisdom, skills and experiences, culture and its practices must be heard and considered.

Therefore, theoretically, participation is ensured in official documents. However, subject C reports that it often does not happen in practice. The respondent mentions the hiring of consulting companies that are often not committed to the development of tourism, but to making the municipality receive ICMS¹.

Irving (2018) emphasizes that participatory processes are often put into practice just to meet some project safeguards or to comply with conditions for their financing. Thus, when regional, economic, sociocultural and environmental peculiarities are neglected in the design of tourism projects, disastrous consequences result, both in relation to economic results and the sociocultural and environmental impacts on tourist locations (IRVING, 2018).

According to some interviewees, one of the main reasons why municipalities participate in the Touristic Circuit is the Touristic ICMS. According to subject D, for the municipality, “receive the Touristic ICMS, one of the criteria that is worth more is for it to have a signed covenant and a financial agreement with the Circuit”. Subject E states that “with the ICMS Turístico, the municipalities become more active”. From such reports, it is highlighted that this can be considered a mechanism for inducing and aligning public policies.

Subject F highlights the role of Municipal Tourism Councils (COMTUR's) as an instrument of participation. However, these councils have not yet taken effect in all the municipalities in the Circuit. According to him, in the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit, councils began “to be formed in two, three years now, so not all municipalities have councils”. This fact hinders the effective participation and integration of the municipality in the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit.

However, in 2018, MTur Ordinance No. 192 established that in order to integrate the Brazilian Tourism Map, tourist regions must comply with some criteria, including proof of the existence of a responsible Regional Governance Body (council, forum, committee, association) for its management. As for the municipalities, the Ordinance points out that in order to integrate a Touristic Region in the Map, the municipality

1 The Touristic ICMS (Tax on the Circulation of Goods and Services) acts as a motivator and catalyst for actions, aiming to stimulate the formatting/implementation of municipal programs and projects aimed at sustainable tourism development, especially those related to tourism policies of the State and Federal Governments (MINAS GERAIS, 2014).

must, among other criteria, prove the existence of an active Municipal Tourism Council.

For Pinheiro, Maracajá and Chim-Miki (2020), the analysis of spaces for discussion and decision-making, such as the Tourism Councils, are vital. According to the authors, these initiatives need to be established at the local level and participation must be preceded by local empowerment, through the construction and dissemination of knowledge.

According to Fratucci (2009), the articulation of two or more surrounding municipalities in a tourist region is only possible to occur consistently, if each one of them already has its local structure minimally organized. For the author,

the regional articulation needs to be preceded by a municipal articulation process, according to an endogenous process initiated at the local scale. Failure to comply with this point is directly related to the continuity of the center's decision-making power, that is, decentralization is managed by the State and not as a result of consistent and lasting endogenous participatory processes. (...) which can motivate or discourage the action and participation of local agents (FRATUCCI, 2009, p. 406).

In this perspective, the idea is taken up that if the development of these regions does not start from an integrated and participative management, the proposed strategy will only serve for exogenous political and administrative planning.

Sachs (2004) highlights the need to create spaces for the exercise of direct democracy, in the form of local development forums that evolve towards forming councils. For the author, these spaces can be understood as a way to empower communities so that they assume an active and creative role in the design of their future.

Another issue pointed out by two of the interviewees was the political issue, that is, according to them, incipient participation is often related to the issue of representatives of these municipalities being nominated and not elected to represent the municipality in public policy. In this sense, these people are part of it because they were nominated and this “being part” is completely different from a person who joins out of willingness to collaborate and contribute, that is, who “takes part”. On the other hand, some interviewees highlighted that the Circuit's strong point is precisely the counterpoint of a weak participation, that is, it is the involvement of people who are participating because they are involved with the work.

According to the respondent, participation is more effective in municipalities that have greater tourist visitation. Interviewee C agrees, stating that “in Ibitipoca it is happening more, so the residents there believe more in tourism”. On the other hand, municipalities that do not have much visitation, having a greater movement at the time of the main festivals, have a weaker participation. Emmendoerfer, Silva, Emmendoerfer and Fonseca (2007) state that the heterogeneity between the municipalities that are part of a Tourist Circuit can compromise development due to the different “weight” that tourism exerts on economies, causing the necessary actions for the activity progress to often be relegated to the background.

Given the reports, it was possible to observe that non-participation may not be the result of lack of interest, but of lack of knowledge and disbelief in relation to public policy, which prevents effective participation. For Bordenave (2013), participation is more genuine and productive when the group knows itself well and is well informed about what happens inside and outside of itself, implying a continuous process of knowledge creation by the group both about itself and about its environment.

Respondents were unanimous regarding the need for changes to obtain greater participation from local social actors. However, to foster participation, citizenship must be rescued through an educational process. Education should be seen as a process that contributes to empowering the individual to a critical view of reality and a conscious performance in the social space, it being necessary “that the social dynamics be known and that citizen engagement is possible in it, based on recognition of his condition of social subject” (IRVING, 2018, p. 60).

Some of the interviewees took a position on what could be done to obtain greater participation from the local population in the context of public tourism policies. This opinion can be summarized in the speech of subject C: “it is to strengthen the presence of the actors and that the proposals of these actors are considered and that the actors themselves understand this policy”. Public policies find legitimacy and effectiveness precisely in this commitment to the common good, through meetings and dialogue with people to understand their demands. Therefore, they must aim to “do with” and not “for” people (Sawaya, 2007).

Nevertheless, within the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit, participation has not yet been effectively consolidated. It is necessary both the strengthening of social participation, as well as the articulation between the different actors that make up the Circuit.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In short, it was possible to perceive, within the scope of the Serras de Ibitipoca Tourist Circuit, that in practice social participation has not yet been consolidated, presenting, for this purpose, several challenges. Not all municipalities effectively participate in the Circuit, this issue is justified by the institutional weakness at the municipal level; political issues; heterogeneity between municipalities; difficulty in dialogue and articulation; lack of knowledge and discredit in relation to public policy. Therefore, there was a need to foster and strengthen social participation from the perspective of policies built “with” local actors and not “for” them. This process implies planning based on social participation and the specificities of each location.

Despite the importance of the theme of social participation being highlighted in current public policies, concrete advances in this regard are limited. Transforming the theoretical debate into everyday actions in terms of building citizenship and also of government action in tourism planning is not a simple obstacle to be overcome (IRVING, 2018).

But it is necessary to learn new forms of participation, fostering citizenship and the search for common goals. An educational process that aims to raise awareness and awareness based on the local reality is needed, in order to strengthen participatory processes aimed at the development of tourism and the locality as a whole. Tourism is not free from risks or threats, however, the community must know about them and discuss them in order to safeguard their interests and minimize unwanted effects. From this perspective, it is intended that the participation of subjects do not stay limited to the symbolic and the discourses, but reach the real level.

It is considered, therefore, that development should start from guidelines in which it presupposes the participation of the local population as subjects of the process, providing them with knowledge about themselves that equips them for a critical analysis of their reality and for the permanent search for solutions. In this way, they will be able to act as protagonists in the process, presenting expectations of changes in adverse contexts, construction of new realities and social transformation.

However, despite being able to shed light and serve for a future deepening of studies on the relationship between tourism, development and social participation, it is noteworthy that this study has limitations for the sample covered due to the difficulty of accessing the different actors that make up the Circuit, which entails the result of the analysis.

Nonetheless, it encourages the development of works that address a pertinent, current and extremely important theme. With this, it indicates the need to carry out further research aimed at reflecting on ways to make the process of participation effective in the context of Governance Instances.

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