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The emergence of Resistance through Criticality: leisure and tourism in the Espinhaço Range Biosphere Reserve, Brazil

O Surgimento de Resistência através da Criticidade: lazer e turismo na Reserva de Biosfera da Serra do Espinhaço, Brasil

El Surgimiento de Resistencia a través de la Criticidad: ocio y turismo en la Reserva de Biosfera de la Serra do Espinhaço, Brasil

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Keywords:

Resistance;
Mining;
Socio-environmental conflicts;
Development;
Discourse Analysis;
Critical Tourism.

Abstract

Following the initial success of a sustainable tourism programme, the town of Conceição do Mato Dentro, located within the UNESCO Espinhaço Range Biosphere Reserve, in Brazil, changed remarkably after a large iron ore mining project was launched in 2006. Among the changes was the replacement of tourism with mining as the municipality's priority development policy. The town changed from a quiet and small rural town to a dusty and busy industrial site. Although the communities affected by the mine initially supported the mining project, this research identified emergent and growing dissatisfaction among them. A discourse analysis approach was employed to unveil the seeds of a resistance movement that has been emerging from the social practices to challenge the dominant modernization and neoliberal discourses of development represented by the mining project. It is argued that resistance can be traced back to both the advantages that the previous sustainable tourism programme brought and to the preservation of leisure sites that were previously used for socialization and amusement but are now either off-limits or have been destroyed. Such people are not seen here as 'host communities', but tourists. Tourism and leisure experiences performed by people affected by the mine generated a sense of community and solidarity, but its discontinuity had undermined the possibilities of criticism and resistance, as such values were misrepresented in the policy arenas that hosted the debates around the mining project. Despite its importance among community members, leisure has not been used to legitimize the resistance discourses against the mining project. Rather, the resistance speech focused on job creation and the expansion of wealth and income, thus weakening the possibilities of transforming the status quo.

Palavras-chave:

Resistência;
Mineração;
Conflitos socioambientais;
Desenvolvimento;
Análise de discursos;
Turismo crítico.

Resumo

Após vivenciar um programa de turismo sustentável relativamente bem sucedido, a cidade de Conceição do Mato Dentro, localizada dentro da Reserva de Biosfera da Serra do Espinhaço, mudou notavelmente após o lançamento de um grande projeto de mineração em 2006. Entre as mudanças, houve a substituição do turismo pela mineração como política de desenvolvimento prioritário do município. A cidade passou a ser um local industrial empoeirado e movimentado. Embora as comunidades afetadas pela mina tenham inicialmente apoiado o projeto de mineração, esta pesquisa identificou uma insatisfação emergente e crescente entre elas. Uma abordagem de análise do discurso foi empregada para revelar indícios

de um movimento de resistência que vem emergindo das práticas sociais para desafiar os discursos modernizadores dominantes de desenvolvimento representados pelo projeto mineração. Argumenta-se aqui esse movimento de resistência pode ser influenciado pelas vantagens que o programa anterior de turismo sustentável trouxe para a preservação de locais de lazer, usados para socialização e diversão, mas que agora estão com o acesso proibido ou foram destruídos. Neste artigo, essas pessoas não são vistas como 'comunidades receptoras', mas turistas. As experiências de lazer e turismo das pessoas afetadas pela mineração gerou senso de comunidade e solidariedade entre eles, mas a sua descontinuidade prejudicou as possibilidades de criticidade e resistência, já que estes valores não foram devidamente representados nas arenas políticas que abrigam os debates acerca do projeto mineração. Em vez disso, o movimento se concentra na criação de empregos e na expansão da riqueza e da renda, enfraquecendo, assim, as possibilidades de transformação do status quo.

Palabras clave:

Resistencia;
Minería;
Conflictos socioambientales;
Desarrollo;
Análisis del discurso;
Turismo crítico.

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Resumen

Después de vivir un programa de turismo sostenible relativamente exitoso, la ciudad de Conceição do Mato Dentro, ubicada dentro de la Reserva de Biosfera de la Sierra del Espinhaço, cambió notablemente tras el lanzamiento de un gran proyecto de minería en 2006. Entre los cambios, hubo la sustitución del turismo por la minería como política de desarrollo prioritario del municipio. La ciudad pasó a ser un local industrial polvoriento y movido. Aunque las comunidades afectadas por la mina inicialmente apoyaron el proyecto de minería, esta investigación identificó la insatisfacción emergente y creciente entre ellas. Un enfoque de análisis del discurso fue empleado para revelar indicios de un movimiento de resistencia que viene emergiendo de las prácticas sociales para desafiar los discursos modernizadores dominantes de desarrollo representados por el proyecto minero. Se argumenta aquí ese movimiento de resistencia puede ser influenciado por las ventajas que el programa anterior de turismo sostenible trajo para la preservación de lugares de ocio, usados para socialización y diversión, pero que ahora están como acceso prohibido o fueron destruidos. Estas personas no se ven aquí como "comunidades receptoras", sino como turistas. Las experiencias de turismo y ocio de las comunidades afectadas por el proyecto minero generó sentido de comunidad y solidaridad, pero su discontinuidad dificultó las posibilidades de crítica y resistencia, ya que esos valores no fueron debidamente representados en las arenas políticas donde ocurrieron los debates acerca del proyecto minero. A pesar de su importancia entre los miembros de la comunidad, el ocio no ha sido empleado para legitimar los discursos de resistencia al proyecto minero. En cambio, el movimiento se concentra en la creación de empleos y en la expansión de la riqueza y la renta, debilitando así las posibilidades de transformación del status quo.

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1 INTRODUCTION

After the mining-related environmental disasters that took place in the state of Minas Gerais in 2015 (Fundão dam, Mariana) and 2019 (Feijão dam, Brumadinho), studies on how to resist such imposed modernization represented by mining enterprises became fundamental to inform policy-makers and social movements in the region. This article employs a discourse analysis approach to hear the voices of the people affected by a large mining project in the central region of Minas Gerais in order to unveil the potential role of leisure and tourism in the resistance movement against the mining enterprise.

Authors on tourism and communities have focused their work on how the productive chain of tourism can benefit the host communities (V. Medeiros, Macedo, Costa, & Dantas, 2010), community-based tourism as an alternative to the economy of protected sites (Botelho & Rodrigues, 2016), issues of participation (Gómez, Falcão, Cherem, & Silva, 2016; Minari & Rabinovici, 2014; Oliveira & Blos, 2012), the official bias towards a more globalized tourism despite the advantages of community-based tourism (Matos, Araújo, & Teixeira, 2013), and reflections upon the implementation of community-based tourism (Ferreira, 2014; Sampaio, Zechner, Henríquez, Coriolano, & Fernandes, 2014), showing that globalized tourism development tends to break social linkages within the host communities (Coriolano & Mendes, 2009). In such papers, community-based tourism is represented as a more sustainable alternative to traditional industries or globalized tourism. Authors mention also community-based tourism as a way of resistance against mainstream tourism development (Mendonça, Santos, Lopes, Andrade, & Moraes, 2017). Such articles explore the potential of host communities to benefit from the tourism activity in a more sustainable way, in terms of expansion of their wealth

and income. However, the potential of tourism that goes beyond the economy remains under-researched in the literature. We treat such communities as tourists, and acknowledge the benefits of visiting the tourist attractions in terms of a playful leisure experience.

The literature on tourism and mining has focused on a comparison of the industries' potential to economic development (Faria, Freitas Neto, & Ferreira, 2016), the potential of landscapes shaped by mining to tourism development and geoparks (Conlin & Jolliffe, 2010; de Paula & Castro, 2015; C. Medeiros, Gomes, & Nascimento, 2015; Nascimento, Gomes, & Brito, 2015; Pereira & Almeida, 2015), and tourism as an alternative to recover degraded areas (Collier & Scott, 2009; Perinotto & Queiroz, 2008; Soares & Silva, 2009). In turn, the literature on leisure has treated issues of resistance relating the term to women, femininity and motherhood (Green, 1998; S. Shaw, 2001; Wearing, 1990, 1998) and to people with disabilities (Jessup, Bundy, & Cornell, 2013), while some authors focused on the importance of play and fun to the permanence of resistance movements (Crossa, 2012). However, a critical perspective of the role of leisure and tourism in the resistance movements against large extractive industries' projects remains unexplored. We argue that such issues could be important assets to empower the resistance speech and promote a more communitarian way of life, as they are naturally critical towards the hegemonic modernization and neoliberal discourses of development that focus on accumulation and individualization.

This article aims at revealing the importance of leisure and tourism in the lives of people affected by the mine, and assesses how such values are represented in the speeches against the mine in the policy arenas that approved the environmental licenses to a large mining project, located in the town of Conceição do Mato Dentro (CMD) and neighbouring towns, in the central region of the state of Minas Gerais.

In the early 1990s an environmental movement emerged in the central region of the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, among students, athletes, and members of countercultural movements, to protect the Tabuleiro waterfall, the third highest waterfall in Brazil. After some entrepreneurs' attempts to start mass tourism undertakings in the area, the movement received support from local and regional elites and together they founded the non-governmental organization Society of the Friends of Tabuleiro (SAT). This organization managed to influence the local government and establish a legally protected site in the area within the municipality of CMD. The environmental movement continued to grow and in 2000 a leader of the movement was elected mayor of the town. A sustainable tourism programme was implemented. It achieved relative success and was recognized to be good sustainable development practice by the state government in the years that followed. Later, in 2005, the environmental movement reached its apogee, with the attraction of international support and establishment of the UNESCO Espinhaço Range Biosphere Reserve, which covers a larger area. However, in 2006, a large mining project was launched, attracting the interests of both regional elites and state government, thus displacing sustainable tourism from CMD's priority policies (Fazito, Scott, & Russell, 2016). In 2014, after an eight-year struggle marked by strong evidence of human rights violations (Fazito, 2013; MOVSAM et al., 2012), which are also shown in a video (Valle, 2009), the final environmental licence was granted, thus allowing the company to operate the iron ore mine. In 2016, after a sharp decrease in global iron ore prices, the mining company began to expand the mining project, which started a new environmental licensing process.

The forceful imposition of dominant development discourses surrounding traditional societies tends to be followed by violence (Escobar, 1995) and, in the case of CMD, material and discursive violence have fostered the emergence of a resistance movement among the communities affected by the mine, with the support of non-governmental organizations, researchers, journalists, and politicians. Attempts to impose the mining project have been challenged by this resistance movement through the emergence of a critical rationality based on the reality of social practices, rather than on abstraction of the—sometimes manipulated—instrumental, economic and/or scientific rationalities that underpin the reports and studies presented in the main policy arena where environmental impacts and licenses are discussed: the Environmental Policy Council meetings (Fazito, Scott, & Russell, 2016). A focal issue here is that tourism and leisure have played an important role in this context.

This article employs a discourse analysis approach to assess documents, speeches, and actors' interviews in order to describe the role of leisure and tourism in the resistance movement against the mining project.

2 TOURISM AND LEISURE AS TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL FORCES

Tourism is indeed an important economic force, given that it is mentioned in the introductions of most articles on the topic and that it is advertised by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2009). The hegemonic academic literature and governmental actions for tourism hold the view that tourism is an industry (Bianchi, 2009; Franklin & Crang, 2001; Hannam & Knox, 2010) capable of both modernizing sites where conventional industrialization has not yet reached and contributing to the expansion of income and wealth in industrialized sites (Fazito, 2015). However, Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) argues that the dominance of this market-driven view of tourism has been expanded by the neoliberal ideology that has dominated the global political-economic system over the last decades, and that this view hinders the possibilities for tourism to be seen as a social force that can promote people's well-being, foster environmental education, and even promote peace. This article advocates that tourism can also be a social force of resistance against human rights violations. Moreover, it is argued here that the transformative side of tourism, as a social force capable of challenging the hegemonic modernization development discourses, is stressed when its leisure perspective is emphasized (Fazito, Rodrigues, & Nascimento, 2017). For instance, after the establishment of the mine in CMD, tourist flow and tourist expenses increased considerably (mostly related to the mining project) in the region. However, the social and environmental impacts caused by this 'economic development' demands viewers to acknowledge that there is distance between what happens to the region and a more civilized society. In terms of leisure, however, the mining project caused the destruction (or denial) of tourist sites, which contributed to breaking the social linkages of the community members, and caused indignation among them. While the destruction of social linkages demobilised the community to fight against what was happening, indignation has led some of them to build up a resistance movement against the mining project. We understand the families affected by the mine not as 'host communities' to benefit from the economic development led by tourism, but as tourists, who benefit from playful enriched leisure experiences in tourist sites located in the region.

Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that "[e]veryone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay". This statement contains an obvious link between leisure and tourism. However, the dominant view of tourism is that of business, as discussed above. But are business and leisure two antagonist terms? In order to expand on this analysis, it is interesting to develop the concept of leisure.

Shaw and Williams (1994) summarize the academic discussion on the conceptualization of leisure into three definitions:

Leisure is free time people have from obligations. (This has been criticized because it does not differentiate the time free from work and free time to enjoy leisure.)

Leisure is the time when leisure activities are undertaken. (This has been criticized as it assumes a false objectivity, since activities such as gardening may be regarded either as leisure or obligation, and it is also difficult to apply this definition to unemployed and retired people (Roberts 1999 in Haworth & Veal, 2005).

Leisure is an attitude of mind, the way people perceive activities, which yield personal satisfaction. (This has been criticized as being misleading, as there are socially constructed boundaries to individual choices, based on social position, expectation, and socialization.)

Kleiber (1999, p. 3) defines leisure as 'the combination of free time and the expectation of preferred experience', which, he explains, goes beyond discretion and lack of obligation and includes the absence of worry and a sense of opportunity and possibility. For Kleiber, it is possible to regard work as leisure—a 'labour of love' (p. 4). Marcellino's (2006) conceptualization of leisure differs from Kleiber's view. For Marcellino, it can be defined in terms of time—the time free to enjoy leisure—and attitude—an expectation of pleasure. However, for some people work is pleasant, but for the great majority of the industrial societies work is toil, a burden people carry just because they are obliged to, as they need remuneration. Despite the fact that some authors defend the possibility for work to be leisure, leisure and business belong to different realms.

The perception of tourism in terms of its economic gains is the perspective of business, while viewing tourism as a leisure phenomenon expands its values in terms of the lived experience, enriched cultural encounters,

and its educational and social potential. Does tourism involve business? Yes, of course, but an analysis of tourism centred only on its ability to expand income and wealth is a shallow one and neglects the most interesting values of this phenomenon. Business is to be busy. Leisure is related to relative freedoms of the agent, which create conditions for the emergence of critical discourses (S. Shaw, 2001; Wearing, 1998) and resistance in tourism contexts (Moufakkir & Reisinger, 2013). The hegemony of this business-driven view causes tourism research to be 'stale, tired, repetitive and lifeless' (Franklin & Crang, 2001, p. 5).

For Krippendorf (1989), the business dominance of tourism has caused it to be dehumanized. For him tourism can be a place of experiences and learning, a means of human enrichment, a stimulus for a better reality and a better society (Krippendorf, 1999). The next section explores these possibilities of tourism to increase learning, criticality, and resistance.

3 COMMONS, RESISTANCE AND CRITICAL RATIONALITIES

Shaw (2001) argues that the idea of resistance brings the focus to the political nature of leisure. She expands on the often-subjective analysis of leisure as resistance to incorporate collective interests. Resistance within leisure emerges when actors influence others to resist. For Foucault, where there is power, there is resistance (Foucault, 1978). In this sense, people can resist oppression by acquiring and sharing the knowledge/power that emerges from their leisure experiences. Indeed, the nature of the human relations seems to be more cooperative than competitive (Ostrom, 1990). However, different from Ostrom's ideas, the solution does not rely on common property resources through public-private partnerships. For Dardot and Laval (2017), this hybridization of 'public-private' has generated a new concept of power—the governance—that created fuzzy boundaries between public and private property. Large corporations and oligopolies deny the sharing of the resources through the support of governments that are submissive to the logic of the market. Access to emancipating services, such as health care, education, and leisure have become more difficult, while the disempowerment of labour and civil associations has driven the society towards a less politicized one. Dardot and Laval (2017) exemplify the 'revolution of the commons' with the activity of *hackers*, which is based on passion and freedom, and not on obligation. Therefore, it is a result of breaking the borders between work and leisure. The hacking activity, rather than a moment of loneliness and passivity becomes a collective action.

As Harvey (2011, p. 106) states, "[l]eft unregulated, individualized capital accumulation perpetually threatens to destroy the two basic common property resources that undergird all forms of production: the laborer and the land". However, the struggle of the oppressed has expanded from the places of production to the urban spaces, flows of exchange and circulation, consumption practices, educational systems and research, and leisure experiences (Dardot & Laval, 2017).

The ancient Greek term for leisure was *Scholé*, which is the root of the English word 'school'¹. The school of Aristotle Lyceum was related to the term *peripatetic*, as a reference to the tour masters and pupils used to take around a beautiful grove in order to learn and exchange knowledge. Knowledge, for the ancient Greeks, was something that appeared only in leisure (De Grazia, 1973). Marcellino (2008, 2010) argues that leisure has a dual educative aspect: leisure as a means of education—its potential ability to contribute to the personal and social development of individuals—and as an object of education—to educate for leisure, or to educate for a better use of free time. Following that, Pinto (2008) states:

Access to leisure, as one of the social rights promulgated by the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, implies the education of citizens who can identify and experience the diversified opportunities that are available in everyday time and space, with the capacity to understand and reframe them, conscious of their importance in their lives and of the contradictions that limit their full experience. (Pinto, 2008, p. 45–46)²

The author refers to Paulo Freire's (1973, 1996) concept of 'conscientization', as the process through which people acquire critical consciousness. This process is described as the body that acts coherent to what it thinks, feels and says, when exercising the freedom to dream, to choose and participate in what is needed to achieve what is desired. Real participation requires that people are capable of criticize the context in which

¹ De Grazia (1973) and the Online Etymology Dictionary: <http://www.etymonline.com>, accessed on 8th July 2012.

² Author's translation.

he/she is inserted. For Pinto (2008), education that provides 'autonomy' to the subject, as proposed by Freire, must be applied in leisure. For Freire (1996), 'conscientization' is the path toward freedom, since it is based on the acquisition of critical consciousness and the achievement of autonomy. 'Conscientization' and autonomy empower people to resist oppression (Freire, 1996). The action of social movements is opposed to relations of domination. An important and cheap form of oppression is precisely to keep people alienated, numb, for instance, by consumerism. The oppressed, when conscious and free, can reframe development.

Marcellino (2006) discusses 'conscientization' in terms of activity and passivity in leisure. He defines as 'active', leisure with consciousness and context awareness. For Marcellino (1983), the real path toward a better use of free time, and the distribution and occupation of this time conflicts with the logic of the modernization discourses of development, wherein leisure is classified as a product or service to be consumed. Accordingly, the dominant discourses of tourism only view leisure by their business potential. This article champions that tourism, when viewed as active leisure, can propose a fruitful challenge to the dominant tourism modernization and neoliberal discourses.

As previously discussed, people living in tourist areas are mostly viewed as 'host communities', who can increase income and wealth through tourism activity. This article has a different viewpoint: we see them as tourists, using the tourist attractions and leisure sites located in the region where they live in their free time. The dominance of a business-driven view of tourism reduces the possibilities of identifying personal and social values from these experiences (Hultsman, 1995). However, tourism is an important transformative social force (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Viewing tourism as a leisure phenomenon helps shed light on the aspects of it that are hidden in the hegemonic discourses. In the case of the people affected by the mining project in the Espinhaço Range Biosphere Reserve, such dominant discourses undermine the ability tourism experiences have to promote place attachment, social connections, and criticality.

This paper identifies the origins of dissatisfaction among the communities affected by the mining project and describes a growing resistance movement, which is becoming an important obstacle to the imposition of the modernization and neoliberal discourses of development in the town. Moreover, this article describes the important role of tourism and leisure in resisting the imposition of modernization. The next section explores the methodology employed in this study.

4 RESEARCH APPROACH: FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Boaventura de Souza Santos (2002, 2004) argues that the current hegemonic way of producing knowledge is a legacy of the Enlightenment, which is focused on a positivist philosophical tradition that neglects contextualized knowledge of traditional, local people, who are viewed as 'inferior', 'backward', 'unproductive'. However, he argues that the knowledge produced from the social practices of the global south—which he calls 'epistemologies of the south'—is crucial to deepening our understanding and enriching our analysis of social realities.

Tourism is a very complex phenomenon, and this complexity makes it difficult to approach using static models. Instead, an analysis of tourism requires a method that allows its dynamic and complex characteristics to be acknowledged and problematized. The engagement with post-structural theory and discourse analysis has provided analysts with a more suitable tool to examine tourism.

The key element in the discourse analysis approach is a recognition that struggles over meanings can lead to social change, and in this sense, shape reality. For Escobar (1996, p. 46), 'discourse is the process through which social reality inevitably comes into being'.

There are many types of discourse analysis, but most of them are rooted in social constructivism (Hajer, 1995; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Sharp & Richardson, 2001). For Burr (1995, p. 3–5), there are four aspects that characterize these approaches: 1) A critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge; 2) Historical and cultural specificity; 3) A belief that knowledge is sustained by social processes; and 4) That knowledge and political action go together. For Feindt and Oels (2005, p. 163), 'discourse analysis problematizes what conventional policy analysts take for granted: the linguistic, identity and knowledge base of policy making'. Discourse analysis, therefore, focuses on the aspects of a social context that are either ignored, taken for granted or assumed to be constant by conventional development models.

Discourse, from a Foucauldian perspective, is something inseparable from praxis. Foucauldian discourse analysis focuses on regimes of practice, not institutions, theories, or ideologies. Discursive practice is a historically and culturally contextualized set of rules for producing and organizing knowledge. Foucault tried to analyse discourses in the dimension of their exteriority. It is not to investigate 'the laws of construction of discourse, but its condition of existence; ... To relate the discourse not to a thought, mind or subject, but to the practical field in which it is deployed' (Foucault, 1991, p. 60–61). The Foucauldian discourse analysis understands discourses not just as words, but as actions; i.e. it is not just to say something, but to do something, within a historical and political institutional context (Peet & Watts, 1996).

For Sharp and Richardson (2001), the policy literature acknowledges that the various discourse analysis approaches share a common concern: to expose inequalities of power as a means of achieving social change. The concept of power in Foucault is perhaps what makes his approach so adequate to study resistance movements. Foucault's view of power was not only negative; he also considered it to be a force that can lead to change (Cheong & Miller, 2000; Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002).

The Foucauldian approach holds a decentred understanding of power, rather than an idea of power centralized in institutions. Discourses surrounding this approach contain internal rules that shape people's actions and existence. Power, therefore, is not an exercise of an institution, but is defined relationally. The Foucauldian perspective sees the mechanisms of power as producers of knowledge. The different types of knowledge produced generate a confrontation of information that influence people's behaviour. Knowledge, therefore, fosters and reinforces the exercise of power.

This research employed a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis approach to unveil the role of leisure and tourism in generating indignation among members of the communities affected by the project and, subsequently, their role in forming the resistance movement. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 41 stakeholders (families affected by the mine, community leaders, policy-makers, politicians, journalists, environmental activists, and consultants), a thorough analysis of documents and the recordings and reports from the State Environmental Policy Council meetings that approved the environmental licenses and the public meetings of the resistance movement REASA (Network of Socio-environmental Watch).

This paper explores the role of leisure and tourism in a resistance movement against a mining project in a rural tourist site, located in the Espinhaço Range Biosphere Reserve, Brazil. The case study is contextualized in the next section.

5 CASE STUDY OF CONCEIÇÃO DO MATO DENTRO

According to the 2010 Census³, Conceição do Mato Dentro (CMD) had a population of 17,908 inhabitants, of which 12,269 (68.51%) were located in urban areas and 5,639 (31.49%), in rural areas. It is located in the central region of the state of Minas Gerais, in the Southeast Brazil, and covers an area of 1,726,829 Km².

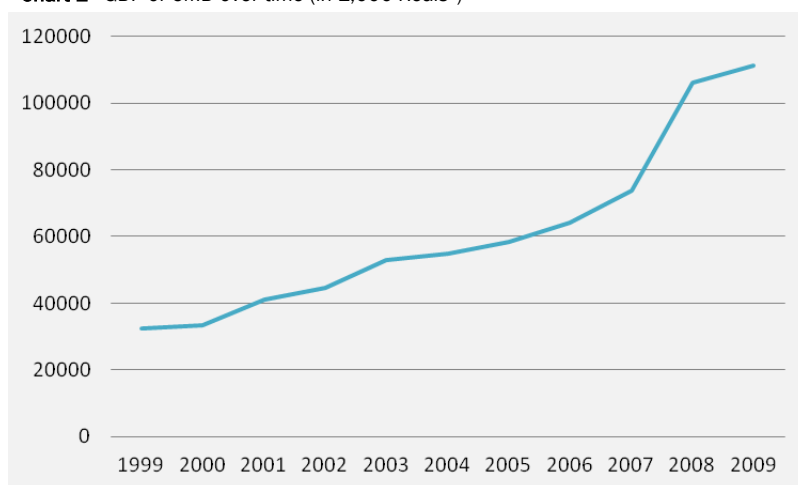
The history of CMD can be traced back to the early 18th century when the first deposits of gold were discovered and a town was settled around the mining sites. When the gold ores were exhausted, the town became isolated and less developed than the neighbouring municipalities (Becker, 2009). However, the lack of economic development in CMD helped maintain its old colonial buildings and preserve its natural landscapes and cultural traditions, which nowadays represent the tourist potential of the town. Tourism has entered the agenda of the local government in the early 1990s, as a means to modernize the town, when the local administration started to create access infrastructure to the waterfalls as a means to attract investors. At the same time, an environmental movement emerged to protect the Tabuleiro waterfall from the increasing number of tourists and real estate speculation. The movement was supported by local and regional elites. In 1998 the movement was institutionalized through the non-governmental organization Society of the Friends of Tabuleiro (SAT), which later played an important role in approving environmental licenses for the mining project. In 2000, a leader of the movement became mayor. Adopting sustainable tourism as a development priority, CMD became an important ecotourism destination in the state of Minas Gerais. It is interesting to

³ <http://www.ibge.gov.br/cidadesat/topwindow.htm?1>, accessed in 22 July 2012.

understand how tourism influenced the economy of CMD. Chart 1 shows the evolution of CMD's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Growth of the municipal GDP since 1999 is a result of the successful ecotourism policy, which can be explained by the increase in the number of accommodation companies from 4 to 27 between 2000 and 2006, according to the Commercial Association of CMD, and the service-based economic profile⁴. However, the sudden boom, after 2007, is related to another process: the early installation stages of the mining project, which is currently the largest in the Espinhaço Range Biosphere Reserve. It is composed of a mine, an electricity transmission line, a pipeline to transport iron ore to the state of Rio de Janeiro, and a port. Tourism was displaced from the regional priority development policies in 2008, when the project's previous license (environmental viability)⁵ was approved (Becker & Pereira, 2011; Fazito, 2013). In 2014, the mining project received a full environmental licence to operate and, in 2016, the mining company launched a proposal to expand the mine.

Chart 1 - GDP of CMD over time (in 1,000 Reais⁶)



Source: Adapted from IBGE- Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

6 EMERGING RESISTANCE AND THE ROLE OF LEISURE

At a public meeting on April 17, 2012, organized by the Minas Gerais Public Prosecutor's Office, the Prosecutor stated that human rights violations are a result of the fragmentation strategy in the environmental licensing process, which is a common practice in Brazil in order to benefit mining companies. According to the Prosecutor, the human rights violations in CMD are related to the negotiations between company and affected families about their relocation. The human rights violations committed by the mining company are detailed in a document signed by the resistance movement and include: a lack of water supply, denied access to public feeder roads, pollution of water springs, damaged houses from the traffic of heavy equipment, and the spread of dust, among others (see MOVSAM et al., 2012).

The environmental licensing process for the mining Project in CMD was biased towards the interests of the global private sector, with clear support from the state (Becker & Pereira, 2011). The consequences have been a lack of transparency and non-fulfilment of agreed upon mitigating actions, which have resulted in undermining the very characteristics that made CDM an attractive tourist site. While mining and tourism

⁴ Data can be checked in <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/mg/conceicao-do-mato-dentro/panorama>, accessed on 11th February, 2019.

⁵ The Resolution 237 of the National Council of Environment (Brasil, 1997) regulates that the environmental licensing process in Brazil is divided into three stages: the Previous License that attests to the project's environmental feasibility, the Installation License that permits installation according to a set of environmental control measures and other mitigating actions, and the Operation License that allows the industry to operate. This occurs after checking whether the agreed upon environmental control measures and mitigating actions laid out in the previous phases, as well as the ones for the operation phase, have actually been met.

⁶ Brazilian Currency

might be strange bedfellows, there could be potential for them to coexist. However, the manner in which the mine was implemented in CMD, with evidences of human rights violation, has made it very difficult for enriched leisure-oriented and environmentally sound views of tourism to coexist. This corroborates the view of Dardot and Laval (2017) of the fuzzy boundaries between private and public interests that dominate the contemporary societies and create a world of individualization and inequalities.

A resistance movement emerged in CMD to pressure the mining company to meet its obligations to the town. No one talks about stopping the mine anymore. It is already embedded in the reality of CMD. Nevertheless, this resistance movement is trying to influence future actions to be more transparent. After 2014, CMD's local administration was restructured and the different departments of the Public Prosecutor's Office started to act with synergy, trying to balance the process. The frequent public meetings promoted by the Public Prosecutor's Office have given community members a place to make their voices heard.

The rationales for defending the mine can be challenged by the experiences of everyday life. For example, in a State Council of Environmental Policy (COPAM) meeting, a technician explained the result of a water quality study in Minas Gerais, showing that it has not changed much in the area affected by the mine. It was promptly rebutted by a community member: 'If you want, I can show you a water source in my community. Water was transparent, now we cannot see the bottom of the stream.'⁷ Regarding the idea that the mine would expand and distribute income, another community member stated at a public meeting on April 17, 2012:

No one buys my products in the market because they know my land is poisoned by the company. I used to earn 2500 reais⁸ a month, and now I cannot make 500 reais. I had to take my children out of school... Water is poisoned in my land. Chickens are dead, pigs are dead, and cows and steers are sick. (Public Meeting, April 17, 2012)

In the same public meeting, a local farmer rose two bottles of water: one representing the clean water of the past and the other containing polluted water collected from the stream that cuts his plot of land.

The actions described above show economic and scientific rationales starting to be challenged by local knowledge. This is the empirical contextualized knowledge that has been neglected by the dominant ways of producing knowledge, but that is fundamental to enriching our understanding of social realities and proposing a challenge to the hegemonic discourses of development, as discussed by Santos (2002, 2004). These examples contribute to what Santos has named 'epistemologies of the south'.

Empowered by community mobilization, support from universities, activist organizations, and the Public Prosecutor, the resistance movement has slowly become an important player in policy arenas where CMD development decisions are made. In Foucauldian terms, knowledge/power grows from interactions among affected or interested people and from social practices and experiences to promote change, to deconstruct the dominant ways of governing development, to build a more communitarian life and to fight oppression.

This article identifies that one of the most important triggers of the resistance movement was the destruction of leisure sites by the mine. These sites were places for amusement and socialization. In the region, these leisure sites were highly represented by the water streams and springs that people used for leisure. According to a private study (Diversus, 2011), besides playing football and watching TV, swimming, fishing, trekking, and contemplation of nature are among the most important leisure activities for the people of CMD. It is important to note that these leisure activities have been directly impacted by the mining project. Leisure sites and experiences (or lack thereof) have become an important issue of concern among the members of the resistance movement. Tourism, viewed as leisure, not business, is embedded within this resistance talk, and underpins the development of critical rationalities, which may in time challenge the dominant views of development centred on income and wealth expansion. In a public meeting organized by the Public Prosecutor's Office, on April 17, 2012, a member of one affected community stated:

Water is not just to drink or to produce. In Conceição [CMD], the natural sources were the places where we had fun; where we met our friends, where we met other people. Water is directly related to our social life.

⁷ This passage was transcribed and translated by the author from the audio recording of the COPAM meeting 49.

⁸ Brazilian currency

Tourism, in the above statement, diverges from the realm of work and business—legitimized by economic and instrumental rationalities—and finds its roots in leisure and joy, legitimized by the contextualized social practices of everyday life, performed by the communities affected by the mine. People used to leave their homes and their jobs to go to the waterfalls, river streams, and lakes for no reason other than to enjoy them. Tourism, viewed as leisure, becomes important in the development process because it recovers the affection that people have for their land and environment, causing them to defend their places and communities. The social force of tourism—its transformative potential as an enriched experience—is the result of an exchange of experiences among community members as well as between local people and outsiders, i.e., travellers who visit the leisure sites to get to know and enjoy such local experiences, rather than to impose their values upon the sites. From the local knowledge developed in social practices, a critical rationality emerges to challenge the dominant discourses of development. Tourism and leisure play an important role in the development of these critical rationalities in CMD. Table 1 shows the views of tourism and its outcomes in terms of development.

Table 1 - Views of Tourism and its Development Outcomes

View	Value	Discourse of development	Outcome
Business	Income expansion	Hegemonic modernization	Maintenance of the status quo
Leisure	Enriched experience	Alternative/critical	Critical towards the status quo

Natural sites were not the only thing that was destroyed. Interviews with resettled families have shown that activities such as praying, visiting and receiving friends at home, and playing cards have become impossible after the resettlement, as people moved to random places, far from friends and former neighbours and too close to unknown people, thus causing social linkages to be destroyed. This is illustrated in the words of an old man:

Family members used to come visit us from the capital Belo Horizonte, to enjoy the river, to fish, eat fresh fruits, swim, just to relax. It's over now! No one ever came again after I was resettled. (Interview 38, 25/2/2016)

The reasons for these people to no longer receive visitors range from the destruction of the places and the old way of living to lack of safety in the sites. A community leader discouraged us to visit the Salão de Pedras (a local site people used to go to at night to see the moon) because he was afraid of us getting robbed. Such fear of the city and lack of places to go, public transport, things to do, and people to meet have driven families to stay at home and watch TV. An old woman complained about her loneliness: “I loved to pray *novena*⁹ with my friends, but now it is too difficult to visit them, as they live too far and there is no transport” (Interview 36, 25/02/2016). Another woman, a young mother, forbids her child to play outside the house: “Drugs are everywhere now, trucks are running fast in these narrow roads, there is violence everywhere. I know that keeping a child at home the whole day watching TV is not good, but I don’t want to find him dead on some road” (Interview 35, 24/02/2016). Individualization of people, promotion of loneliness, and the destruction of social linkages are among the neoliberal values that undermine the possibilities of a communitarian life and generates a depoliticized society (Dardot & Laval, 2017). The image of public spaces as dangerous—drugs, traffic, violence—is, then, an asset of the neoliberal agenda: a necessary expansion of ‘fear’ among people.

In the interviews, leisure and tourism (the lack of) assumed a prominent role in community members speeches, together with lack of water and pollution. However, in resistance talks, they are viewed as less important issues. The politicized speech classifies amusement and joy as silliness, demonstrating the image of leisure as indolence and laziness in modern societies (Lafargue, 1999). Despite the demonstrated role of leisure and tourism as crucial triggers of resistance and generators of indignation, the modernization and neoliberal discourses have put leisure and tourism aside in the development discourse, unless they are able to produce wealth and income. As previously stated, tourism and leisure are explored in their less important potential by the hegemonic discourses of development, however their transformative ability as a social force that educates and generates criticality among people to build up a better life can be easily identified in the

⁹ Christian religious ritual composed of a series of prayers and other liturgical practices for nine days to achieve a divine grace.

words of the families, in their indignation. Nevertheless, in the political debates that underpin mining in CMD, the sustainable tourism rhetoric assumed a very conservative modernization discourse, both from the entrepreneurs ('The occupation rates, tourist flow and expenses have increased in CMD since the implantation of the mine') as well as from the resistance talk ('our economy should be based on tourism, which offers a better-quality job than mining'). This paper champions that such an enriched view of leisure and tourism should play a more important role in the resistance talk if the movement really wants to transform the status quo, given that it clearly emerged from the social practices of the families affected by the mine (epistemologies of the south).

7 CONCLUSION

This article explored the role of leisure and tourism in the resistance movement against neoliberal imposed modernization, through the case of a huge mining project in the town of Conceição do Mato Dentro, located in the Espinhaço Range Biosphere Reserve, Brazil. It employed a Foucauldian discourse analysis to unveil the transformative manifestations of power, which from a Foucauldian perspective empower people and can promote change. Crucial here is that the communities affected by the mining project are not viewed as 'host communities' to benefit from the economic development promoted through tourism, but we see them as tourists: people who visit the tourist sites located in the region and could benefit from such enriched playful leisure experiences, in terms of place attachment, socialization, criticality/context awareness, and joy. Thus, this article identified an enriched view of tourism and leisure that has emerged and triggered the establishment of a resistance movement against the mining project. The hegemonic perception of tourism is that of an industry, however this shallow view undermines the enriched experience that the tourism phenomenon can represent (Hultsman, 1995). Tourism is a social force, an enriched cultural experience, and it has the potential to produce critical education. In order to shed light on this other realm of tourism, it is necessary to view it as an aspect of leisure, with its educational possibilities (Marcellino, 2008, 2010), its potential to contribute to the acquisition of individual consciousness and autonomy (Freire, 1973, 1996; Pinto, 2008) and its transformative social force (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Jessup et al., 2013; S. Shaw, 2001).

The communities affected by the mining project in CMD have recently mentioned the public places where they used to meet to enjoy life, which were natural sites where access has been denied and which have become polluted or destroyed after the implementation of the mine. Tourism, viewed as leisure, can be a critical rationality that has emerged from the social practices of everyday life to challenge the dominant discourses of development and the scientific and economic rationalities that have been manipulated to favour the mining company, and the expansion of wealth and income, i.e., the hegemonic modernization and neoliberal discourses of development.

An important finding of this paper is that despite this enriched view of leisure and tourism, which clearly emerges as an important element of indignation from the speeches of the families affected by the mining project, it is not mirrored in the resistance talk that represents them in the political arenas where local development and mining are being debated. Rather, both sides—entrepreneurs and the resistance movement—assume conservative modernization discourses. It is argued here that this enriched view of tourism and leisure that has emerged from the social practices of the affected communities should play a more important role in the resistance talk, if the goal is to challenge the status quo.

Represented by neoliberal modernization discourses, the status quo requires social linkages to be broken, community life to be destroyed together with solidarity, criticality, and other values of civilization. Everything should be replaced by competition, passive leisure, and consumerism (Dardot & Laval, 2017). Tourism studies and practice have been dominated by a business, uncritical, and lifeless view. This article intends to respond to the Critical Tourism agenda and identifies a potential of tourism to construct solidarity, community life, and civilization. It explored its potential as generator of indignation, criticality, and resistance against the mining project among those who were directly or indirectly affected by the project. Specifically, it has described the destruction of leisure sites, places where local people and outsiders used to visit for amusement and joy, not only as a side effect of the mining project, but as a needed asset for the long-term establishment of the neoliberal project.

It is interesting to understand how power emerges through the outrage of communities and can enable change. If indignation is the fuel of this resistance movement, a very important medium has been the Internet and social media. Issues of CMD have spilled over to social movements all over Brazil through virtual networks, such as the Forum CMD¹⁰, films uploaded to websites, and online 'blog' discussions. The role of social media in the case of CMD is an important topic that deserves further study. These new arenas of discussion that have allowed the communities of CMD to state their problems have made the process much more transparent.

The case study of CMD is an ongoing one, and therefore it is important that academic researchers continue to accompany the process, tell the story, and produce new knowledge from this critical case.

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¹⁰ Founded in 2006, Forum CMD is the evolution of a study group to discuss the implementation of the mine towards a resistance movement.

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