



Redes. Revista do Desenvolvimento Regional

ISSN: 1414-7106

ISSN: 1982-6745

revistaredes@unisc.br

Universidade de Santa Cruz do Sul

Brasil

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Community-based tourism: experiences in small localities
Redes. Revista do Desenvolvimento Regional, vol. 27, 2022, January-December
Universidade de Santa Cruz do Sul
Santa Cruz do Sul, Brasil

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17058/redes.v27i.15441>

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Community-based tourism: experiences in small localities

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Abstract

The objective of the research was to contribute to the reflections on the scope of community-based tourism (CBT) for the development of small localities considering their social dimension. Population dispersion, the decrease in the supply of jobs and essential local services, the loss of local heritage, among other problems, awakens in local communities the need and interest in seeking development alternatives such as tourism. However, it is observed that most of the resources and tourist attractions, although located in these small localities, are not enough to maintain the flow of tourists that is just passing through and disperses to medium and large cities. This context raises, then, reflections on what benefits remain for small localities interested in working with tourism. In this way, we sought to question whether the CTB contributes to the development of small localities considering its social dimension? What do existing experiences reveal? The study is a bibliographic review and, as a methodological procedure, a survey and analysis of the literature on community-based tourism and related topics were used to carry out the research. Subsequently, CBT experiences were identified in small localities in Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico, which allowed us to reflect on the limits and possibilities of this model to face the challenges existing in small localities. As a result, it was observed that CBT can be a way out of socio-spatial challenges, but it alone is not capable of reversing all problems. It is necessary to monitor and analyze the experiences constantly.

Keywords: Community-based tourism. Development. Small localities. CBT experiences. Community heritage.

Turismo de base comunitária: experiências em pequenas localidades

Resumo

O objetivo da pesquisa foi contribuir com as reflexões acerca dos alcances do turismo de base comunitária (TBC) para o desenvolvimento de pequenas localidades quanto à sua dimensão social. A dispersão populacional, a diminuição na oferta de empregos e de serviços locais essenciais, a perda do patrimônio local, entre outros problemas, desperta nas comunidades locais a necessidade e interesse em buscar alternativas de desenvolvimento como a atividade turística. Porém, observa-se que grande parte dos recursos e atrativos turísticos, embora

localizados nessas pequenas localidades, não são suficientes para manter o fluxo de turistas que está apenas de passagem e, se dispersa para as médias e grandes cidades. Esse contexto levanta, então, reflexões sobre quais os benefícios que ficam para as pequenas localidades interessadas em trabalhar com o turismo. Dessa forma, buscou-se problematizar sobre se o TBC contribui para o desenvolvimento de pequenas localidades considerando a sua dimensão social? O que revelam as experiências existentes? O estudo se trata de revisão bibliográfica e, como procedimento metodológico utilizou-se para a execução da pesquisa levantamento e análise da literatura sobre o turismo de base comunitária e temas correlatos. Posteriormente foram identificadas experiências de TBC em pequenas localidades no Brasil, Equador e México que permitiram refletir sobre os limites e possibilidades desse modelo para o enfrentamento dos desafios existentes nas pequenas localidades. Como resultados observou-se que o TBC pode ser uma saída para os desafios socioespaciais, mas ele sozinho não é capaz de reverter todos os problemas. É necessário acompanhar e analisar as experiências constantemente.

Palavras-chave: Turismo de base comunitária. Desenvolvimento. Pequenas localidades. Experiências de TBC. Patrimônio comunitário.

Turismo comunitario: experiencias en pequeñas localidades

Resumen

El objetivo de la investigación fue contribuir a las reflexiones sobre el alcance del turismo comunitario (TBC) para el desarrollo de pequeñas localidades en términos de su dimensión social. La dispersión de la población, la disminución de la oferta de trabajo y los servicios locales esenciales, la pérdida del patrimonio local, entre otros problemas, despierta en las comunidades locales la necesidad y el interés de buscar alternativas de desarrollo como el turismo. Sin embargo, se observa que una gran parte de los recursos y atracciones turísticas, si bien se encuentran en estas pequeñas localidades, no son suficientes para mantener el flujo de turistas que está de paso y se dispersa a ciudades medianas y grandes. Este contexto, entonces, plantea reflexiones sobre los beneficios que quedan para las pequeñas localidades interesadas en trabajar con el turismo. De esta manera, ¿buscamos problematizar cómo el turismo comunitario contribuye al desarrollo de pequeñas localidades considerando su dimensión social? ¿Qué revelan las experiencias existentes? Para llevar a cabo la investigación, se recopiló y analizó la literatura sobre turismo comunitario y temas relacionados. Posteriormente, el trabajo identificó experiencias de turismo comunitario en pequeñas localidades en Brasil, Ecuador y México que nos permitieron reflexionar sobre los límites y las posibilidades del turismo comunitario para enfrentar los desafíos que existen en pequeñas localidades. Como resultado, se observó que el turismo comunitario es una forma de enfrentar los desafíos socioespaciales, pero por sí solo no puede revertir todos los problemas. Es necesario monitorear y analizar constantemente las experiencias.

Palabras-clave: Turismo comunitario. Desarrollo. Pequeñas localidades. Experiencias de turismo comunitario. Patrimonio comunitario.

1 Introduction

After decades of mass tourism, a search was made for “another type of tourism”. In this context, alternatives were presented and discussed that respect tourist destinations, their natural, economic and sociocultural environment, which would bring much more positive than negative results. Then, in the mid-1970s and 1980s, segments such as ecotourism emerged, prioritizing the conservation of natural environments and the local communities that reside in them (PIRES, 2002).

However, the more effective participation of communities in this new model of tourist activity was not observed, and the role of communities in the planning and management of tourism in the locations where they occur was on the agenda.

In this scenario, community-based tourism (CBT) emerges as a management model that understands as essential the role of communities in the planning, management and execution of tourist activity in the locations where these communities are present. In this sense, the CBT seeks a new development model based on human and social development (MIELKE; PEGAS, 2013). This is because tourism is not just a capitalist economic activity, but also a tool for marginalized groups that use it to have a voice. Tourism, as a human and social activity, allows the meeting between the local community and tourists, promoting the exchange of experiences among the most diverse cultures and the knowledge among them (GRIM; SAMPAIO, 2013).

The search for a new development model arises as a response to the contradictions of the current economic model, where inequalities are created and reinforced, with richer and poorer regions in which “Local development is a response to the productive restructuring that places development uneven in a context of winner and loser regions” (ENDLICH, 2007, p. 11).

It is inevitable to highlight that the reality of small localities with resources and/or tourist attractions, in some cases, is below the development captured by medium and large cities. This is because the flow of tourists that passes through these small localities does not always remain for a long time, due to the scarce or even non-existent infrastructure, causing it to go to the larger centers. Therefore, it is relevant to reflect on the real benefits that remain for small localities and their communities in this scenario.

Alves (2018) states that destinations in small towns, due to the lack of infrastructure, end up being advertised as attractions for larger cities “Cities with small demographics, when integrated into regional tourist itineraries, receive excursions that last a few hours and leave few financial results”. Even if the small municipalities have attractions, the hotel structure and other tourist services are concentrated in larger centers” (ALVES, 2018, 261).

Small towns and their communities are marginalized from the central circuit of tourist activity. CBT is one of the ways out for these locations and their communities to face these challenges through the process of creating their own way of planning, managing and offering the tourist activity to tourists and interested visitors. Based on these reflections, we sought to question: does the CBT contribute to the development of small localities considering its social dimension? What do existing experiences reveal?

To address the research problem, experiences in Brazil and abroad were carried out and analyzed. This article is the result of a research developed by the authors within the scope of the postgraduate program in Geography at the State University of Maringá (UEM). We sought to understand in greater detail community-based tourism and its characteristics in small localities and their communities. For the development of the work, as methodological procedures adopted, a bibliographic review was carried out with a survey of the literature on the subject of CBT. Subsequently, CBT experiences were selected from the literature that could contribute to the understanding of how communities appropriate CBT and what are

their possible contributions and results for small localities. In order to survey the experiences, it was necessary to search for research that addressed them in scientific articles, and the websites of the communities themselves and/or partner institutions were accessed to identify general and more specific data related to the tourism that occurs in the place. This look at other geographic spaces aims to expand knowledge about the CBT so that it is possible to analyze in later works the reality of the State of Paraná, which consists of the broader territorial scope of research.

This work presents the Agua Blanca community in Ecuador; the community of Prainha do Canto Verde in the municipality of Beberibe in Ceará; the Associação Acolhida na Colônia in the States of Santa Catarina, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and to put an end to the experience of Pueblos Mágicos in Mexico. The work is divided into two chapters. The first one addresses the theoretical discussions about CBT and the second presents the experiences of small localities and their communities with CBT.

2 Community-based tourism: general considerations

After decades of mass tourism, “another type of tourism” was sought. In this context, alternatives were presented and debated that respect tourist destinations, their natural, economic and sociocultural environment and that would bring much more positive than negative results. Tourist segments emerged in the mid-1970s and 1980s that prioritized the conservation of natural environments and respect for the economy and culture of local communities (PIRES, 2002). The emergence of these new segments sought to leave behind only the economic imperative, incorporating other dimensions, bringing with it new concepts of tourism such as: solidarity tourism, intercultural tourism, nature tourism, durable tourism, proximity tourism, slow travel, among others (ZAOUL, 2009).

It is important to emphasize that the emergence of situated tourism, in the search for local empowerment, was based on the discussions that were established on economic growth and human and social development. In this context, the demand for less predatory tourism was not detached from this larger scenario. In this way, two social groups were relevant to exert pressure in favor of a sustainable development that sought changes in this predatory tourism: the demand of tourists interested and concerned with the local communities and their territories and the local communities themselves.

Destinations and communities begin to demand alternatives as they suffer from the increasing number of tourists who were not concerned with the quality of local life. Community-based tourism enters the agenda as a way to change the scenario of degradation and segregation of local communities. The need to fight poverty and strengthen the community heritage (natural and sociocultural) observed in the CBT a form of development different from the current model. On this topic, Giampiccoli and Kalis (2012) when discussing the reality of CBT in a South African location pointed out that the

[...] CBT development also has the capacity to alter socio-economic conditions, as for example in the case of new elaborations of the concept of hospitality and should therefore be seen as a form of the autonomous cultural evolution. Moreover, given that CBT entails equal power relations

and cooperative work, it has the capacity to facilitate or act as a countermeasure against unequal power relations and 'big men' within local communities (Giampiccoli; Kalis, 2012, p.174).

In addition to the local communities, gradually, a demand of tourists becomes interested in this activity committed to local diversity and authenticity. As reflected by Zaoul (2009), about situated tourism, mass tourism ends up contradictorily with the desire for mutual discovery that is placed as a source for the motivation of the actors involved in tourism. By commercializing the authenticity of the relationship between tourist, host and resident, he makes it artificial and the escape of tourist groups from this artificiality gains more and more substance because "The journey becomes a cage and gives the impression that spatial mobility is culturally immobile, as everything is organized in such a way that the encounter with the other appears to be a simulacrum" (ZAOUL, 2009, p.59).

The literature points out that in developing countries CBT has a tendency to establish itself in rural areas and that the focus of research is mostly on CBT in rural areas of poor countries (GIAMPICCOLI; KALIS, 2012). This is because the CBT emerges as a possible way out of the poverty of the communities in these locations. Maldonado (2009) addressed this issue, when discussing CBT in Latin America, which began to be observed in the continent in the mid-1980s. There are many factors that, according to the author, gave rise to these activities such as those of an economic nature, social, cultural and political.

For Maldonado (2009), one of the causes of the emergence of CBT in Latin America is the constant pressure of the world market on local communities (especially indigenous and rural ones) and their heritage. These pressures arise due to the growing trend towards the use of these natural and sociocultural heritages. Maldonado (2009) goes on to mention three more factors. The second of them is characterized by the economic and labor needs of communities in search of alleviating their situation of chronic poverty. The third factor is related to the role of small and micro-enterprises in local development and in the diversification of the tourist offer that becomes more dynamic with the CBT. The fourth factor is closely linked to the political struggles of indigenous and rural movements that use CBT as a tool for maintaining and preserving their territories and identities in the face of the advance of capital and the homogenization promoted by the globalization that advances over them. These factors were observed in the Latin American experience, however, it can be observed in the literature that these same factors appear to a greater or lesser degree in other CBT experiences around the world.

By establishing relationships with tourists, adopting CBT as a tool for planning the activity in their territories, local communities offer their community heritage in a more organized and responsible way, unlike the experiences of mass and predatory tourism. As community heritage Maldonado (2009, p. 29, our translation) comprises "[...] the entire set of values, beliefs, knowledge, practices, techniques, skills, instruments and artifacts, places and representations, lands and territories, as well as all types of tangible and intangible manifestations existing in a people." It is, therefore, through this whole set that the local community manifests its way of life that comprises its own identity, its relationship with the natural environment (MALDONADO, 2009).

It is the community heritage that forms the basis of the offer of community-based tourism, understood as

[...] any form of business organization based on the ownership and sustainable self-management of community heritage resources, in accordance with practices of cooperation and equity at work and in the distribution of benefits generated by the provision of tourist services. The distinctive feature of community tourism is its human and cultural dimension, that is, anthropological, with the aim of encouraging dialogue between equals and quality intercultural encounters with our visitors, with a view to getting to know and learn from their respective ways of life (MALDONADO, 2009, p. 31, our translation).

It is necessary to emphasize that for the author the community enterprise is part of the social economy that does not have the purpose of profit, but rather to provide livelihoods for its members, seek the equal distribution of benefits and value the community patrimony. Community-based tourism, in the discussions that seek its understanding, for which there is still no well-established theoretical-conceptual consensus, presents the empowerment of the local community as a central characteristic. It is based on local protagonism that equity is sought, as well as the appreciation and management of natural and socio-cultural heritage, the exchange of mutual experiences always based on a social and solidarity economy.

In this perspective, many researchers on the subject point to community-based tourism as a model for planning and managing tourism in small locations, with communities as the basis for the pursuit of local development. Being a planning and management model, CBT does not fit as a tourism segment. Due to its characteristics, this model can be confused as a segment when it is also used as a marketing tool. This is because the CBT principles draw more and more attention to a tourist demand interested in carrying out trips that provide an exchange of experiences with the local community.

For Bursztyn (2005) the central point of CBT is the equitable tourism model that places the local population at the heart of the planning, implementation and monitoring of the activity. As it is not a specific segment of tourism, these experiences can be found in the countryside or in the city and offered to different interest groups. In this way, the CBT can be organized into ecotourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, among other segments that are based on the role of the community in the planning and management of the activity.

Reinforcing these ideas about CBT, in an attempt to understand it better, the concept of the NGO WWF (World Wildlife Fund - International) on the subject is presented. WWF addresses CBT in communities residing in natural environments and addresses this model specifically in the Ecotourism segment. For the NGO community-based ecotourism is a form of tourism in which the local community has substantial control and is involved in its development and management where most of the benefits remain in the locality (WWF, 2001).

Relevant emphasis is made by the NGO when addressing what is understood by the community that will plan local tourism and states that "How the community is defined will depend on the social and institutional structures of the area concerned,

but the definition implies some kind of collective responsibility and approval by representative bodies” (WWF, 2001, p. 2). In this sense, each experience and reality has the freedom to define, according to its unique local characteristics, the extent of the community and to whom it is limited, remembering that in many places, especially those inhabited by indigenous people, there are collective rights over resources and territories. Another consideration of the NGO in its guidelines for the CBT is that despite all the collective effort, individual initiatives cannot be excluded or reduced because “community-based ecotourism should therefore foster sustainable use and collective responsibility. However, it must also embrace individual initiatives within the community” (WWF, 2001, p. 2). It is understood, in this sense, that individual initiatives are relevant for maintaining community cohesion, while individual ideas and actions are valued and respected.

In addition to the community-based ecotourism perspective, it is also possible to think of other segments that focus on the experience of the local base that involve the community. Tapia and Trujillo (2016) develop the theme on community rural tourism (CRT) in Ecuador, a theme that can also be observed in Maldonado (2009) but with a focus on all of Latin America. Tapia and Trujillo (2016) also understand that the TRC puts at the center the role of the community and the appreciation of its heritage, adding the idea that it is necessary for the tourist to experience an experience for the awareness related to the importance of this appreciation. In this way, tourism, which is a social activity, transforms its passive bases “[...] as the tourist transitions from a simple spectator to an active participant in the tourist experience, achieving greater satisfaction of their purposes in a more direct relationship with the community” (TAPIA; TRUJILLO, 2016, p. 85, our translation).

It is necessary to reinforce that CBT does not only occur in the countryside in environments with more preserved natural areas, as in community-based ecotourism, or with more agricultural characteristics, as in rural community tourism, but also occurs in cities. We can mention here, as an example, the CBT that takes place in the favelas of São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, which reinforce the importance of the place of resistance of these communities and their local culture. About this Mano, Meyer and Fratucci (2017) build reflections from the touristification process of the favelas considered as a place of observation of poverty. The authors discuss the effects of CBT in the Santa Marta favela in Rio de Janeiro. As the cases of CBT that occur in the countryside such as ecotourism and rural tourism, it is observed that in the cities the CBT has the same principles and, in the specific case of the Santa Marta favela, the researchers were able to identify that tourism has become more socially compromised. However, Mano, Meyer and Fratucci (2017) emphasize that the dynamics between tourists, hosts and residents are constantly modified, because they themselves change, requiring monitoring and advancement in research on CBT because “[...] amount of studies on such experiences in urban environments such as slums, just as there are few studies whose central theme is the protagonism of residents in local tourism initiatives.” (MANO; MEYER; FRATUCCI, 2017, p. 433, our translation).

Understanding the brief context that led to the appropriation of local communities on the CBT and its main characteristics, the work of Castro and Pinto (2013) stands out here, who focused on the task of analyzing the theoretical-conceptual framework already built on the theme to tie the fundamental points that

are presented. The authors understand that CBT is a cross-cutting theme and, therefore, from the surveys carried out, four major dimensions were highlighted, which were the most addressed by the authors, namely: economic, social, cultural and environmental.

In the economic dimension, it can be observed, as raised by the authors, that the categories that appeared most in the conceptual productions on the subject were: Self-management; Cooperativism; Collective Benefits; Associativism; Development of Productive Arrangements and Solidarity Economy. Regarding the social dimension, the following were mentioned: Social protagonism; empowerment; Share capital; Participative management; Strengthening of community organization. In terms of the cultural dimension, the following prevailed: Cultural reaffirmation; Cultural valorization; Interculturality; Exchange of experiences; Feeling of belonging. Finally, in the environmental dimension, the following were addressed: Minimization of environmental impacts; Strengthening of nature conservation actions; Respect for conservation rules; Recovery of degraded areas; Sustainable management of natural resources; Use of renewable energies (CASTRO; PINTO, 2013).

Such characteristics attributed to CBT evidently do not apply jointly and with always positive results in the experiments as they are pointed out in the theory. However, observing the possibilities in the dimensions presented as self-management work based on a solidary economy; such as community empowerment; the cultural reaffirmation and the possibility of self-management of its natural resources makes it clear why communities are interested in working with CBT and tourists in living such experiences based on this model.

3 The experiences of community-based tourism in small localities: the cases in Ecuador, Brazil and Mexico

Community-based tourism in the Agua Blanca community, Ecuador

Ecuador is one of the precursor countries of CBT in Latin America and a positive example for tourism. This scenario was established due to the struggles promoted by the communities and cooperative organizations in search of the establishment of legislation, public policies and organizations for the development of tourism as a tool to strengthen local communities. For Ruiz *et al* (2008) the idea of “community” has a strong expression in the lives of Ecuadorians related to the entire scenario that makes up the peasant indigenous political struggle. Communities are legally determined in the country. Therefore, Ecuador has advanced in the discussions on community-based tourism, adding academic analyzes to their own community experiences, which go far beyond the legal definition and scientific debate.

The forms of exploitation of indigenous peoples and their subordination to the capitalism established in the country led to changes in the territorial configuration of these peoples. From the 1930s onwards, Ecuadorian communities began to be formally constituted and sought to restore the original connection with their territories (RUIZ *et al*, 2008). Indigenous communities in Ecuador are currently part of the political-administrative organization of the State, therefore, the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador recognizes the communes as a form of

ancestral organization of these peoples who have sovereignty over their territory and their culture. The communes own community assets and make decisions about them based on the Assemblies constituted by the comuneros and comuneras that annually elect the Council, which is the collegiate body of government and administration (RUIZ *et al*, 2008). In this way, CBT in Ecuador takes place on the basis of this already existing organization of indigenous communities.

CBT activities began in the 1980s and, as already pointed out by Maldonado (2009), its emergence was the result of the political struggles of local communities for their territories and culture. Currently, CBT in Ecuador is managed by four communes: Salango; Las Tunas; el Pital and Agua Blanca. The country also has national organizations that meet the demands of experiences such as the Federación Plurinacional de Turismo Comunitario del Ecuador (FEPTCE) (BRAVO, 2019).

Comuna Agua Blanca is the precursor community of CBT activities. It is located on the coast of the Province of Manabí, Cantón Puerto López Parroquia Machalilla in the heart of the Machalilla National Park. In 1979, after the bankruptcy of the Agua Blanca hacienda, the State incorporated the area into the Machalilla National Park. With the change, the places that survived from logging for charcoal production, hunting and raising goats were deprived of their means of survival, which at that time became incompatible with the area of environmental protection (RODAS; DONOSO; SANMARTÍN, 2015).

After conflicts, the government adopted a more collaborative approach with the community and began to share with them the rights and responsibilities of the preservation area, previously seen by the locals as an agent of negative change in their lives and now understood as part of their heritage. This occurred with greater intensity when in the 1980s, archaeological research in the area adopted a participatory methodology with local residents who began to have the activity as a source of income and a tool for understanding their historical and cultural heritage. In this process, the local community perceived tourism as a way of strengthening heritage and an alternative for the maintenance of life in the locality. Local tourism contributed to the reduction of population dispersion and even provided the return of some individuals. Currently, the community relies on the cooperation of external bodies (governmental and non-governmental) that work collaboratively for its development (RODAS; DONOSO; SANMARTÍN, 2015).

The commune of Agua Blanca is made up of the Manteño ethnic group with more than 86 families (AGUA BLANCA, (s/d). Its economy is based on subsistence agriculture, commercial livestock, production of wild fruits, construction, guidance in the National Park and community tourism (RUIZ *et al*, 2008). The community's main attractions are the Agua Blanca archaeological site, the museum and the lagoon that has sulfurous waters and which gave rise to the name of the community. handicrafts from the mainland culture and other tours in the surroundings of the community. The tourist will find accommodation and food facilities on site. The activity guidance service is provided only by community guides (AGUA BLANCA, (s/d).

Bravo (2019) understands the community's potential as its strategic location on the coast of Ecuador (in the National Park and close to Puerto López with its famous Playa de Los Frailes); their ancestral culture; associative and cooperative work; managers' experience in community tourism; the diversification of tourist activities; local leaders and their management capacity; between others. As limiting

points, the author cites the disarticulation between community leaders and actors from external institutions; insufficient training programs; insufficient funding to improve local tourism; presence of nearby hotel chains (which make it more difficult for tourists to stay in the community); limited state support; between others.

The community of Prainha do Canto Verde in the municipality of Beberibe in Ceará

Among all the CBT experiences in Brazil, the case of Prainha do Canto Verde was the one that stood out the most due to the whole context that involved the decision-making of the locals in working with tourism. Prainha do Canto Verde was one of the emblematic cases that showed how CBT is a local development tool for the communities that appropriate it. In this way, CBT is an instrument of local power and a possible way out to face some of the challenges of small localities with the change in the current development model.

Prainha do Canto Verde is located in the municipality of Beberibe, in the State of Ceará, 85 km from the capital Fortaleza. The municipality has an estimated population of 53,573 people (IBGE, 2019). The community of Prainha emerged in the mid-1860s when migrants arrived in the locality in search of an alternative income and settled in the place through fishing (MENDONÇA; IRVING, 2004).

Prainha do Canto Verde became relevant in the experiences of community-based tourism, since in 1979 the process of struggle for land against land grabbers and real estate agents began. This struggle organized the community and led to the creation in 1989 of a Residents' Association (MENDONÇA; IRVING, 2004). In 2006, the Association ultimately won the lawsuit against Imobiliária Henrique Jorge and, in January 2007, it opened a public consultation process with residents on the creation of an Extractive Reserve (Resex) as a way of occupying the inherited site (MENDONÇA, 2009).

From 1993 and 1994, the Association gathered residents to discuss the establishment of tourism in the community. This occurred because the disorderly advance of tourism on the coast of Ceará was observed without the participation of local communities. In addition, the community also understood the tourist potential of Prainha do Canto Verde.

In this way, the first Tourism Workshop was held in 1994 and the Local Tourism Council was created. It was in this context that the residents identified two types of tourism: "Turismo dos Barão" and "Nosso Turismo". The Community understood that the first was linked to external agents and the negative results left in the community and the second dealt with the protagonism of the community and the positive results that remain in the locality (MENDONÇA, 2009).

Within this scenario, in 1995, the Tourism Council became a community cooperative called Coopecantur. The cooperative was divided into seven work groups to better meet the existing demands, which were: inn, stallholders, cook and lunch ladies, tour and trail guides, excursions and tours, crafts and interns (MENDONÇA, 2009).

In the same context, the Social Fund was established. At the end of each annual management, the Social Fund allocates 20% of tourism operations to the Residents' Association, which defines how the money should be spent in the locality. The other 80% goes to the Reserve Fund, which makes loans to cooperative members

to improve or open new businesses and, “with the aim of providing the necessary improvements for tourism (infrastructure, equipment and training of manpower)” (MENDONÇA, 2009, p. 294, our translation).

Prainha currently has attractions linked to the natural and cultural heritage of the community. The traditions of the “People of the Sea”, as they are known, are part of the local tourism with its jangadeiros and labyrinths (PRAINHA DO CANTO VERDE, s/d). It is important to emphasize that despite deciding to adopt tourism as another economic activity, fishing remains the main activity, not least because “the artisanal fishing carried out by the jangadeiros is covered in rituals and symbolic aspects and in the land where manual work takes place”. crafts such as embroidery, labyrinths, lace, in addition to small subsistence plantations.” (MENDONÇA, 2009, p. 295, our translation).

Prainha do Canto Verde works with its attractions, equipment and tourist demand in order to equitably distribute responsibilities and rights among residents who work directly or indirectly with tourists. The community has accommodation, food equipment, services and structure for events, it has a winery where local artisanal production gathers for sale to tourists and offers activities such as trails to get to know the place (PRAINHA DO CANTO VERDE, s/d).

Accommodation is organized in the homes of the residents who rent rooms for tourists. One of the examples of accommodation, according to information on the Prainha do Canto Verde website, is the Pousada Refúgio da Paz da Dona Mirtes, who worked as a health agent in the community and had eight children living with her. Over the years, her children have been leaving the house, leaving the rooms empty. Mirtes saw the opportunity to open her home to receive tourists and today there is a suite that accommodates up to four people; three double bedrooms for up to four people with fridge and stove and an apartment with full kitchen (PRAINHA DO CANTO VERDE, s/d).

As for the food and beverage service at the venue, the website offers the Sol e Mar restaurant where the owners work with a shared table “where guests meet and end up exchanging their travel experiences and sharing different cultures. The owners have moments of conversation and information about the history of the community.” (PRAINHA DO CANTO VERDE, undated, our translation). There is also a group of cooks made up of women who are part of the Association. This group has already attended several cooking courses offered by Sebrae and other institutions and currently they are the ones who prepare the dishes served at local events with the typical foods of the region.

However, it is important to point out that among all the services and products offered, the one that most draws the attention of the demand for the Prainha community is actually the history and local hospitality. The tourist is motivated to know the Residents' Association, the way of life and the entire history of struggle of the locals. Knowing the natural and produced attractions by the community is in the background (MENDONÇA, 2009).

The Association “Acolhida na Colônia”

The case of Projeto Acolhida na Colônia can be said to be the first formal project of major proportions in Brazil, which brings together more than one

municipality working with the community-based management model in tourism. The project became a model of tourism development in small localities with the role of local communities.

As Fortunato and Teixeira (2011) explain, the Acolhida na Colônia Project began with the production of organic food by farmers in the Encostas da Serra Geral region in Santa Catarina. Organic production was based on a context of searching for alternatives to maintain families in the countryside in a complex scenario of facing numerous difficulties imposed on them. In 1996, the Association of Ecological Farmers of Encostas da Serra Geral (Agrego) was created with a total of twelve associated families.

There was a very expressive territorial development process in the region that added a greater number of families, implemented small agro-industries, created a rural credit cooperative, among other initiatives. The production of organic food and the entire context involved in production began to attract the interest of farmers, technicians and consumers in getting to know the producing families and their respective properties. The flow directed to the region generated discussions about the possibility of working with the tourism activity (GUZZATTI; SAMPAIO; CORIOLANO, 2013).

It is in this context that families began to mobilize and defined agrotourism as a tourist segment to be adopted. Agritourism was chosen because of its characteristics linked to the property and the peasant family that receives the tourist within its establishment where there is intense interaction of tourists with the peasant way of life and production (FORTUNATO; TEIRXEIRA, 2011).

In 1999, the Associação Acolhida na Colônia was founded, which, by decision of its members, became part of the French association Accueil Paysan. This fact occurred because the objectives between the two associations converged and, due to the vast experience of the French association that could help in many ways the Acolhida na Colônia Project. In this sense, it is relevant to contextualize that the Accueil Paysan association was created in 1901 to seek to overcome problems experienced in the countryside by peasant farmers interested in working with agrotourism to recover local self-esteem, generate employment and income, dynamize rural communities and establish new social bonds between countryside and city (GUZZATTI; SAMPAIO; CORIOLANO, 2013). The association is a network formed by farmers and rural actors committed to the peasant woman and to sustainable, fair and solidary tourism (ACCUEIL PAYSAN, s/d).

Also committed to these goals, the Acolhida na Colônia association is currently present in 24 municipalities in Santa Catarina, one municipality in the State of Rio de Janeiro (Casemiro de Abreu) and a district in the State of São Paulo (Paralheiros). Currently, according to information on the association's website, 94 properties are involved in the community-based tourism experience (ACOLHIDA NA COLÔNIA, s/d). According to data from 2013, the Acolhida na Colônia Project already had the participation of more than 170 families (GUZZATTI; SAMPAIO; CORIOLANO, 2013).

After surveys carried out on the municipalities that are part of the association, it was identified that the experience is divided into ten destinations and tourist experiences to offer tourists activities related to agrotourism. These regions are: a) Santa Catarina (Encantos do Quiriri; Encostas da Serra Geral; Grande Florianópolis; Regional de Ibirama; Regional de Ituporanga; Serra Catarinense; Serra do Rio do

Rastro; Vale dos Imigrantes), b) Rio de Janeiro (Casemiro de Abreu), c) São Paulo (Acolhendo em Paraleiros) (ACOLHIDA NA COLÔNIA, s/d).

The association maintains partnerships with universities, associations, Sebrae, tourism organizations, among other institutions (FORTUNATO; TEIXEIRA, 2011), which reinforces the need and importance of partnerships for the survival and success of CBT experiences. Acolhida na Colônia, since its inception, has already been awarded for its work, among them the Highlight award from the Ministry of Agrarian Development (2002); the Millennium Development Goals award promoted by the UN (2005); National Reference Destination in Rural Tourism promoted by the Ministry of Tourism (2007); Ashoka Social Entrepreneurs Fellowship Award (2007) (ACOLHIDA NA COLÔNIA, s/d).

According to Guzzatti (2013), Acolhida na Colônia has its own methodology that serves families from the implementation of agrotourism on their properties to promotion, as well as attracting investment and associative work. In this context, before starting work with the Acolhida na Colônia logo, the properties undergo a certification process.

In another study developed by Guzzatti (2010), the author shows that the positive aspects of the cooperation experience were the generation of work and income for the local population; impact on farmers' self-esteem; creation of new utilities for idle facilities on the property; promoting the exchange of experiences between tourists and locals; attracting the interest of younger individuals; publicizing the locations that are part of the association and facilitating the raising of public and private resources; contribution to the increase in municipal tax collection. Among the negative points Guzzatti (2010) cites the loss of importance of agricultural activity (when tourism should only be an alternative according to the principles of agrotourism and CBT); the presence of malicious people who cause inconvenience to the places; the sometimes precarious infrastructure of the municipality that affects the Project's image and the incompatibility of interests between agrotourism and activities in the region that generate conflict of interests.

Community heritage as a spectacle in tourism: the case of the Pueblos Mágicos Program in Mexico

After approaching community-based tourism in Ecuador and Brazil, we move on to this topic to present the Mexican experience, however, in a perspective that leads us to observe, through its description, specificities of a tourism that is not placed as a tool for strengthening of the community heritage, but as another form of commodification.

According to Rodríguez, Pulido-Fernández and Herrera (2017), the Mexican Tourism Department (SECTUR) in seeking greater competitiveness through the diversification of tourist products, which were more focused on the sun and beach segment, created the Pueblos Program in 2001. Magicians of Mexico. According to information on the Sectur website (2019), 121 Pueblos Mágicos are currently part of the program. The program seeks to revalue this group of populations that have always been in the collective imagination and represent new alternatives for national and foreign tourists. Therefore, the program seeks to decentralize the tourist flow from larger cities to small localities close to them.

Pueblos Mágicos is a tourist development program for locations that organize economic, social and environmental actions with the aim of improving the living conditions of a tourist location (SECTUR, 2014). Upon being included in the program, pueblos receive their certification and the right to use the Pueblo Mágico seal. So, the referred program is a tourism promotion policy in small localities, as evaluated by Rodríguez, Pulido-Fernández and Herrera (2017). For Sectur (2019) a Pueblo Mágico is considered to be the location that has preserved its historical and cultural heritage, possessing the national identity.

According to Levi (2015) to have access to the Program's resources (ranging from works to renovate facades to basic sanitation works and investments in security) it is necessary to be a pueblo. In this sense, increasingly, small localities moved to be part of the program with the objective of bringing improvements such as job and income generation, necessary infrastructure works, among other benefits.

However, the author was intrigued by the fact that one of the states with the greatest cultural wealth, like Oaxaca, in 2015, had only one pueblo in the program. On the other hand, other pueblos that do not have such unique heritage elements, according to Levi (2015), are part of it due to the good influence of their power groups in Mexican politics. For the author, the program, in some situations, tends to simulate and transform the heritage of the communities of these small localities into a spectacle without them actually participating in the process. In this context, participating or not in the program is sometimes more related to the power of private agents and political influence than to the relevance of the community heritage of small localities.

Also following this line of reflection, López (2009) analyzes the situation of the Pueblo Mágico de Tequila in the State of Jalisco. Historically, the local community produced a fermented beverage with the blue agave plant, which later began to be commercially produced on a larger scale. The insertion of the Tequila pueblo occurs due to this ancestral community heritage that was built around the production of the drink, but which is currently in the hands of private companies. The author states that the heritage of the community of this location is marketed only by these private companies, through tourism, mediated by the discourse of local strengthening.

According to López (2009) Tequila underwent a revitalization in its urban landscape. Investments were made for the expansion of restaurants and hotel chains that allowed tourists to stay longer in the locality, which is 60 kilometers from Guadalajara. What is observed is the marginal role that was relegated to the local community that is not part of the group of entrepreneurs involved with the tequilera industry. The mention of the heritage of the local indigenous community is only in the stories about the production of the drink by the tour guides. Furthermore, when leaving the “magical” center of the city, transformed after entering the program, it is possible to observe the permanence of the traditional community in the periphery facing problems of basic sanitation, violence, among others.

The local community on the island of San Miguel de Cozumel is also another example of the transformation of community heritage into a spectacle commercialized by tourism. The island is located east of the Yucatan Peninsula in southwestern Mexico and is part of the State of Quintana Roo in the Caribbean Sea. On tourism on the island Rodrigues (2015) points out that the population of San Miguel de Cozumel went from less than ten thousand inhabitants in 1950 to more

than seventy thousand in the first decades of this century after the explosion of mass tourism in the place. The author states that the most noble areas for tourism were transferred by the State to the private sector and the local population was increasingly displaced to less valued areas.

As one of the pueblos of the Pueblos Mágicos Program Rodríguez (2014) states that only the community heritage remained in the locality as a simulation and spectacle for tourists on this island that is focused on receiving visitors from cruise ships. In this location it is possible to find local women dressed in the huipil Maya welcoming tourists and entertaining them while they have their breakfast and then exchange the majestic huipil maya for the hotel's cleaning equipment and clothes.

Levi (2018) notes in his research that an image of the "Mexican pueblito" is increasingly simulated. Small localities, afraid of being left out of the tourist circuit and, from its benefits, make up their heritage replicating an image said to be authentic in the center of the country. This often ends up displacing activities and people that are part of the landscape and social life of the community. Many of the vendors in the central squares of this locality have been there, in their local fairs and markets, for three or four generations. For the author, the Program ends up becoming a franchise that is repeated until exhaustion throughout the country, reducing its cultural wealth. In this sense, for Levi (2018) the existence of communities is useful as long as it is exotic, colorful and marketable, that is, its protagonism is not at stake, but only its image as a tourist product.

It is important to emphasize that it was not intended here to question the benefits already brought by the program to the communities of the small localities served, a fact evident in many experiences. However, an attempt was made to look beyond its positive points. It was observed how tourism can appropriate small localities and their communities, transforming them only into products to be consumed when using their community heritage. It was noticed that the community patrimony only serves as a decoy for consumption without the involvement and protagonism of the communities that are on the sidelines of the process.

4 Final remarks

The work sought to understand community-based tourism and how this management model has developed in communities in small locations. For this, four experiences of communities that adopted the CBT as a management model of the tourist activity were presented.

The experience of Agua Blanca in Ecuador was selected because of the historical context of struggle of indigenous peasant communities in the country and the pioneering role that Ecuador presents in CBT experiences. Significant progress has been made in Ecuador in the formalization of specific legislation, public policies and bodies for the treatment of CBT, although further progress is still needed.

The Brazilian experiences were also selected, among several identified, due to the struggle characteristics of the communities of small localities related to the permanence on the land for the production and reproduction of life in their territories, either in the Caiçara territory of Beberibe in Prainha do Canto Verde or in the field, in the communities of the Acolhida na Colônia Project. The experience of the Pueblos Mágicos in Mexico was presented in the work so that it was possible to

observe that the CBT, even posing as another tool to strengthen these communities, can be misappropriated and be another form of commodification of community heritage.

With the surveys and discussions carried out, it was possible to understand that the CBT is a tourism management model appropriated by communities in small locations that can be worked by any segment of the tourism sector such as rural tourism, ecotourism, among others. We have seen that many of the experiences emerged in less developed countries because of their communities that are looking for another tool to fight poverty and for their territories, a place of production and reproduction of their community heritage.

In the case of the Ecuador experience, we identified specificities about the context of indigenous communities and how this context provided the basis for CBT in the country. We observed that the Agua Blanca community, after appropriating its heritage again, through archaeological excavations, and losing its source of work and income due to conflicts with the National Park, observed in community-based tourism a way of maintaining and strengthening its way of life and production.

In this context, it reflects on the issue of CBT as a way out used by the local community of a situation of life and production incompatible with their ancestry, which was imposed by the domination of their territory. Timber extraction and charcoal production were not economic activities that were part of the local heritage. The creation of the National Park and the process of including the community in the archaeological excavations changed the source of local income and, much more than that, the perspective on its own history. By reconnecting with its origins, the local community began to value its attributes and use tourism as an economic activity compatible with its objectives. It is possible to observe, in this sense, that the CBT contributes, in several ways, to the appropriation of space by the communities that make use of it. There are still limiting points of CBT in the community, but it is possible to observe it as a tool for development.

Regarding the Brazilian cases, Prainha do Canto Verde showed us how collective and cooperative work in a small town can be a factor of resistance. The collective work prevented real estate speculation from appropriating that territory and expelling the entire community. As an alternative to complement the main occupation, which is fishing, the community adopts tourism, but based on the CBT management model, which was placed as a differentiated tool from the predatory tourism that the community observed in nearby experiences in neighboring communities.

Regarding the Associação Acolhida na Colônia, we were interested in the organizational capacity of peasant farmers in adopting collaborative models as a way to maintain themselves in the countryside. This experience, as well as the previous ones, draw attention to two points that are believed to be fundamental in this discussion. The collective work of communities and their organization into associations and cooperatives indicates that CBT can contribute to improving sociability. As positive points of the experiences, collective organization, the interest of young people in the community patrimony, the return of individuals to their place of origin, among others, which make us reflect on the strengthening of the feeling of belonging to that community were cited. This fact reinforces that the collective and collaborative work also based on the CBT is encouraging the community to rebuild

and/or strengthen the pleasure of living together, through the division of responsibilities, establishing trust and sharing positive results. It is understood that the issue of improving the sociability of communities through CBT deserves further study.

The case of Mexico gave us the opportunity to address that even though CBT is a tool used as a resistance factor for many communities, it is still possible to find cases that go against this process. In many places, the idea of tourism based on the culture of local communities only serves as a decoy for unsuspecting or even conscious tourists who intend to get to know the local culture, but who, however, only witness a simulation of that culture. The community in these locations serves as a spectacle for the tourist and is not at the center of local protagonism. Small localities seek to improve the quality of life of their communities, but end up being excluded from the process by other interest groups.

Regarding the positive experiences, it became evident that there was a previous basis for the adoption of tourism as an economic and social activity. The communities were already organized through Associations, or other pre-existing forms of organization, which may indicate the need for a certain organization already strengthened to deal with an additional activity. It was also observed that in all cases the communities needed external support to advance the establishment of CBT in their localities.

Despite all the advances, it is possible to observe existing gaps that prevent further progress in experiences with CBT, among them: tourism moving from an alternative activity to a main activity; conflicts of interest within the community and with external agents; problems with the advance of real estate speculation; problems with the advance of mass tourism and its services and equipment; still timid support from the State; difficulties with improving the local structure, training the community to work with tourism, among others.

In the case of Mexico, with the Pueblos Mágicos Program, it was still possible to observe the local community and its heritage, in these small localities, as an object of consumption for the tourist, that is, the simulation of the local culture and its spectacularization. In this sense, it is essential to question what is intended to be resolved when it is proposed to develop tourism in a given location. This is because the answer to this question can generate numerous developments taking into account the differences existing in each territory. When it comes to small localities and, added to them, the life contained in them, the answer is complex and unfinished, after all, it is not just about economic growth, but seeking to guarantee the maintenance and evolution of the way of life and production that are specific to these communities. locations. In this sense, if we seek to solve the socio-spatial challenges faced by these small localities, the CBT seems to be one of the most appropriate responses, currently, to this question.

It is necessary, however, to emphasize that despite its positive effects in the small localities where it occurs, CBT needs to be constantly monitored and analyzed regarding its meanings and results. After all, its consequences depend on the social actors involved (local community, tourists, institutions) who walk in a symbiosis, altering the results as they advance tourism in these spaces. These reflections leave gaps for future research that is interested in observing in greater depth the

difficulties faced by small localities and their communities when working with tourism and investigating how CBT can contribute to development.

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Submitted in: 15/12/2020

Approved in: 03/05/2022

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Writing – Review and Editing: Angela Maria Endlich / Juliana Carolina Teixeira

Funding sources: None.