

# ASSOCIATIONS IN PROTECTED AREAS: RESTRICTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF TOURIST GUIDES IN CATIMBAU, PERNAMBUCO

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JOSILENE HENRIQUES DA SILVA<sup>1</sup>  
MARIA LUIZA LINS E SILVA PIRES<sup>2</sup>

## 1 Introduction

Contemporary society dynamics, which mostly resulted from globalization, have led to profound changes in rural areas, and these changes are currently discussed under the scope of new ruralities. According to such perspective, the field is no longer solely associated with agricultural production and starts to be related to other activities such as tourism used by new social actors focused on different interests.

Therefore, it has implications in the forms of occupation and in the income of the people living in these areas. In many cases, it even makes it possible for a larger number of people who started working in the service sector - as a way to replace the traditional agricultural activities - to increase their income (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1997).

Carneiro and Teixeira (2004) agree that the non-agricultural activities have become an important income source for rural families. However, although they acknowledge the importance of agriculture to the social reproduction of family groups, these authors confirm the trend of some rural locations to become “tourism communities”, whereas a new local dynamics sustained by external demands would ultimately result in improved infrastructure and in increased access to goods and services.

These changes result from different processes and intensities. On the one hand, they are based on investments in technology and on the productive integration in the global market. Still, they are based on field conservation and on valuing it as a space for leisure and tourism, as well as a place of second residence for the so-called neo-rural people. They, in turn, constitute an urban-origin group in search for tranquility and for greater contact with nature in the countryside (GIULIANI, 1990 *apud* PIRES, A., 2004).

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1. Turismóloga, Mestra em Extensão Rural e Desenvolvimento Local, Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco (UFPE), josileneh@yahoo.com.br

2. Doutora em Sociologia, Professora do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Extensão Rural e Desenvolvimento Local da Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco (POSMEX – UFRPE), marialuizapires@gmail.com

Yet, according to these changes, the focus on environmental conservation stands out in the environmental discourse and as public policy instance. Thus, rural areas that were kept relatively preserved over time with considerable landscape value have been used as tourism attractions, especially when they become protected areas (VEIGA *et al.*, 2001).

Areas legally established for environmental conservation purposes in Brazil form the National System of Conservation Units (SNUC - Sistema Nacional de Unidades de Conservação) and integrate a range of management categories, which include different designations such as Ecological Station, Biological Reserve, Environmental Protection Area, National Forest, Extractive Reserve, and National Park, among others. The National Park is the management category of particular interest in the current study.

The SNUC was created by Law 9985 in 2000. It comprises all the federal, state and municipal Conservation Units (CUs) and its main goals are: promoting sustainable development from natural resources; protecting natural and little altered landscapes of remarkable scenic beauty; promoting environmental education and interpretation, recreation in contact with nature as well as eco-tourism; protecting the natural resources necessary for the subsistence of traditional communities by respecting and valuing their knowledge and culture, and by socially and economically promoting them (BRASIL, 2000).

The Catimbau National Park (PNC - Parque Nacional do Catimbau) was launched by the Decree of December 13<sup>th</sup> 2002, and it encompasses part of Ibimirim, Tupanatinga and Buíque, in the countryside of Pernambuco State. Among these three municipalities, Buíque has been demonstrating greater importance in terms of local organization focused on tourism over time, by especially taking into consideration the mobilization of tourist guides through the Association of Tourist Guides and for the Development of Catimbau National Park (AGTURC - Associação de Guias do Turismo e do Desenvolvimento do Parque Nacional do Catimbau).

Thus, the current study reveals not only organization aspects regarding the tourism activity developed in the PNC, but also the difficulties faced by this association, such as the conflicts and tensions experienced by its members.

In addition, thinking the countryside as a conservation place means understanding it according to the new attributions and tensions between different actors who take possession of this patrimony due to different interests, namely: housing, production, recreation and conservation. According to Wanderley (2000), these different instances turn the countryside into a diversified space, which may become a dynamism factor or a source of conflict as productive destination, consumption space or natural heritage to be preserved.

Therefore, based on such discussion, we ask: how does the AGTURC act in defense of the group's interests and how does it contribute to the benefit of the local population when it comes to tourism in the PNC?

In light of the foregoing, the aim of the current study is to analyze the organizational dynamics established by the residents of Buíque in the AGTURC, as a way to structure the tourism developed in the PNC, due to the restrictions imposed to the development of traditional activities since the aforementioned CU was launched.

In order to do so, we interviewed 11 active members out of the 16 members of

the association, and excluded those who were registered, but who did not exercise any activity in the association.

The members who met three conditions were considered active members, namely: participating in the meetings, paying the monthly quota to help financially support the association, and being scheduled to accomplish what the guides call “headquarter opening”, i.e., being responsible for public attendance in at least two part-time shifts per week, in addition to guiding the visitors.

We also contacted a former AGTURC member, who has been working on his own within the PNC area. In addition, we interviewed the PNC manager and Secretary of Environment of Buíque, PE.

We sought to investigate the guides’ personal history regarding the tourist guiding service in the PNC and their participation in the AGTURC, the process of creating the entity, including the operating dynamics and goals, the members’ participation and the results achieved throughout the entity’s history.

## 2 Environmental conservation and its implications to the countryside

The countryside has been analyzed according to the new socioeconomic settings resulting from the economic globalization process. Overall, the changes undergone by the rural areas have demonstrated the concept of “birth” of a new supported countryside, especially with respect to the strengthening of non-agricultural activities, such as tourism, as well as the evidence of different functions, including landscape maintenance and environmental conservation. Thus, the countryside is also understood as a place for rest and leisure, a space for life and social reproduction (CARNEIRO, 1998; WANDERLEY, 2000).

According to the specialized literature, there is consensus that the agricultural production is giving space to other activities, and it configures, according to Marsden (1998), a more diverse countryside, which is redefined based on a set of different spaces resulting from different settings between the local and the global.

Thus, tourism, regardless of its type - ecotourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, among others -, is one of the components often associated with the valuing of rural areas. According to Veiga (2004), natural resources such as clean water and air, as well as landscapes, are nowadays the main comparative advantages of these spaces.

Abramovay (2000a), who analyzed human relationship with the most preserved nature - which is an important asset to contemporary societies - advocates for the importance of having productive practices committed to sustainability and biodiversity. According to the author, the “regions able to see the environment as an asset for development - and not as a limit to be transposed for the success of economic enterprises - achieve more sustainable forms of income generation” (ABRAMOVAY, 2000a, p. 10).

Thus, according to Carneiro (2008, p. 24), the re-signified nature depicts a “new picture of the countryside”, and it allows the environmental issue to encourage new ways of occupying the space that no longer relies on the “rupture between the producing land and the land as landscape and heritage reserve”.

In fact, the tourism activity has taken possession of the idea of greater contact with the nature and quality of life to justify its existence. It is worth highlighting the importance of the emotional link to memory to value the landscape and the offered products. Childhood memories, for instance, may contribute to the countryside idealization process through objects, scenes, landscapes and experiences that are acknowledged and exalted by the visitor's memory, since they were experienced in the past (PERAZZOLO *et al.*, 2013, p. 156).

The promotion of rural tourism is also supported by changed values and lifestyles in developed societies that are increasingly ruled by the environmental culture and by the exhaustion of conventional or mass tourism in addition to the agricultural crisis of traditional countryside activities (LORENTE, 2002).

Moreover, according to Elesbão (2010), leisure and tourism demand in spaces that were previously predominantly occupied by agriculture allowed establishing new dynamics and expanding employment and income opportunities for rural communities. Similarly, Carneiro and Teixeira (2004) identify tourism development as the main factor in the recent rurality reorientation.

According to Graziano da Silva, Vilarinho and Dale (2000), two main aspects facilitate such economic reorientation. Firstly, tourism activities can be developed in rural areas without major investments in tourism resources – since the attractiveness of the field is, above all, turned towards the agricultural activities. Secondly, the initiatives in this field overall offer low obstacles to competitors, and it allows the small and medium producers to easily invest.

Silva, L. (2005/2006) highlights the importance of tourism in generating employment and income for rural families, in addition to stimulating the endogenous development of the territory. Cultural heritage protection and landscape maintenance are among the main contributions of this activity.

Such perspective is also found in the recommendations by the Ministry of Tourism (2004), when it emphasizes the need to associate the tourism in rural areas and development projects focused on social inclusion in order to help diversifying the regional economy and generating new job opportunities as a way to improve the life conditions of rural families.

However, it is also worth emphasizing the negative aspects of many tourism activities developed in the countryside, which are often addressed as “tourism impacts.” The increased traffic, the environmental pollution, the public property depredation, the abandonment of agricultural activities, the increased cost of living, and property speculation are among the issues mostly highlighted by some researchers (CAMPANHOLA, GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 2000; ELESBÃO, 2010).

The criticisms to tourism in rural areas also include the possibility of turning the farmers into “entrepreneurs of the sector” which market logic is defined by the tourist trade, as well as the possibility of mischaracterizing the space by “changing landscapes, territories as well as the territoriality of family farmers [...]”, according to Candiotta (2011, p. 568).

Lorente (2002) advocates for some assumptions to be observed in the rural tourism development such as the proper use of natural resources, the integration of

local populations, the provision of quality tourism products and the use of planning instruments to prevent massification and to minimize environmental, economic or cultural impacts.

However, these issues come up against the precarious public regulation, which is focused on environmental conservation, mainly in terms of long- and medium-term planning and allocation of resources for its consolidation, as it was emphasized by Medeiros (2006). According to the author, the progress in the development of legal instruments depends on the interest of groups and on the political-institutional arrangements that influence the State.

According to Ramalho and Negreiros (2009), the State's absence from the protected area management reflects the "minimal nature" of environmental policies as an expression of different weights between the public policies applied to economic growth and those applied to environmental protection.

According to Leff (1995, 2009), the lack of policies focused on environmental conservation has contributed to worsen the dependence and underdevelopment conditions of poor countries, due to the loss of the productive potential in natural resources. Thus, the author emphasizes the need to develop new productive strategies to manage the ecosystems, besides the development of traditional conservation reserves, in order to assure protection to nature, biodiversity and ecological balance.

Therefore, the field attractiveness has been substantiated by the construction of an idealized image due to more evident natural features. It is argued that demands external to rural areas are incorporated to the site due to a "new conflictuality", which relates different interests regarding the environmental conservation and the appropriation of natural resources (VEIGA, 2006).

The launching of the Catimbau National Park in Buíque represents the expression of this new conflictuality suggested by Veiga, since it divides the interests of the countryside as a protected area and those of the countryside as an area of agricultural and livestock activities. Thus, it simultaneously highlights the importance of preserving an important *caatinga* area and imposes restrictions to traditional activities such as agriculture and livestock.

The tourism developed by AGTURC is a special way to take possession of this space amid a series of restrictions to the traditional activities. It is done through a power game that reveals the tension experienced by several social actors.

Accordingly, although Vallejo (2002) states that the increased demand for greater contact with nature justifies the implementation of protected areas, he draws attention to the marginalization suffered by the populations occupying these areas.

Similarly, Sachs (2008) points out that the environmental protection cannot be exclusively accomplished through "inviolable sanctuaries" and puts the "non-use" option as a possibility among several possible strategies.

Therefore, the new dynamics in the rural area of Buíque will be addressed in the context of the herein presented discussion by referring local reproduction and production strategies that reflect these tensions through the AGTURC.

### 3 Catimbau National Park and the tourist guide activity

Catimbau National Park (PNC) is located in the borderland between Agreste and Sertão regions. It has an area of 62,300 ha and covers the municipalities of Ibimirim, Tupanatinga and Buíque (BRASIL, 2002).

The main PNC attractiveness is the group of archeological sites where several rock paintings, were found as remnants of the prehistoric human occupation in different chronological periods (MARTIN, 2005). The National Registry of Archeological Sites of the National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN, 1999) holds 29 archaeological sites, among which Alcobaça and Sítio Casa de Farinha stood out for their high archaeological importance.

The landscape comprises indigenous cemeteries, springs, caves, and rock formations that result from fifty-million-year erosion processes and it completes the set of attractions in the site (SENA *et al.* 2012, p. 603).

However, despite its acknowledged landscape and cultural value, this conservation unit is located in a private property and it does not rely on a management plan able to demarcate and list conservation and use activities according to zoning (SILVA, 2011). Such situation goes against the legal provisions which state that these protected areas must have a management plan within five years, starting from the day they were launched (BRASIL, 2000).

The precarious infrastructure of the Park may be easily observed and the services provided to PNC visitors are restricted to the Association of Tourist Guides and for the Development of Catimbau National Park (AGTURC), which is based in the municipality of Buíque. This organization still lacks adequate organizational, managerial and logistic structure to consistently fulfill its responsibility when it comes to guiding visitors in the Park.

Since Buíque has a conservation unit in its territory, the city hall benefits from the State Decree N. 25574, which grants installments of the Tax *on* Circulation of Goods and Services (ICMS - Imposto sobre Circulação de Mercadorias e Serviços) to municipalities under similar conditions. The installments are calculated according to the Municipality Biodiversity Conservation Index (PERNAMBUCO, 2003).

Thus, the volume of resources granted to Buíque in 2011 was estimated in R\$ 1,632,323.70 (FUNDAJ, 2012). Nevertheless, the great indifference of the municipal authorities toward the Park operation is continuously mentioned in the discourse of the interviewees, as it can be seen in the following excerpt:

[They] create a Conservation Unit that has an urban and rural center added to the park, but they do not create any conditions to improve the community's quality of life, to help people valuing the implementation of that project [...]. They create it and leave it there, abandoned, and sometimes only people who have their statutory jobs with their big government car come without paying the slightest attention to the community issues.

Thus, encouraged by the launching of Catimbau National Park, tourism has been incorporated into the local reality combined with traditional activities, thus it represents major changes in the daily lives of people living in the area.

However, it is true that the handicrafts in wood and clay, especially those representing the rock paintings in the Park, have attracted part of the local population (SILVA, 2011).

Thus, by confronting the results reported by Silva (2007, 2011) and those found in the current study, it is possible to see that there was increase in the artisanal products, which became part of the offered attractions. It is worth highlighting the figures carved in wood and dry sticks, especially those that tend to portray the reality in *caatinga* through cacti, skeletal and retreatant animals.

The incorporation of tourism activities in Buíque has diversified the number of occupations through the establishment of new interests and the involvement of different individuals, such as tourists, representatives of the Municipal Government and of bodies in charge of managing the CU. It corroborates the idea of countryside as an “increasingly heterogeneous social system”, as it was stated by Carneiro (2008).

#### **4 The Association of Tourist Guides and for the Development of Catimbau National Park (AGTURC)**

The AGTURC was launched in 2002 - the same year the Park was launched - by a group of residents of the District of Catimbau, in Buíque. This initiative was supported by institutions such as the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA - Instituto Brasileiro de Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis) and the Brazilian Micro and Small Enterprises' Support Service (SEBRAE - Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas), which were also responsible for training the guides.

Thus, aiming at increasing tourism around the PNC and at being attentive to the environmental constraints associated with an Integral Protection Conservation Unit in comparison to traditional occupations, these entities provided some training courses to the community.

However, according to the respondents, there was already a demand for guided tours by researchers from Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), who were interested in studying rock paintings in the region. Some young locals, who were identified as primary guides, were willing to guide these scholars in exchange for rewards, such as “tips and basic-need grocery packages”. Such benefits earned by these guides began to attract the attention of other young people; thus, the guide activity started in the region, although informally.

The AGTURC was then launched to organize the tourist guide activity in the Catimbau Valley area in order to ensure the conservation of the Park's ecological and environmental conditions and to provide income to the community, as it was described in the AGTURC statute.

Once formed, the association started receiving support from institutions such as IBAMA and SEBRAE, as well as from the Municipal Government, which paid for the

rent of the building that initially worked as the AGTURC head office. Such help was interrupted in 2008 due to changes in the municipal management.

The way it was conceived gave AGTURC the role of important interlocutor between public institutions and the local community through the tourism in the PNC. Indeed, the role played by the associations in protected areas is seen as a prime importance factor for the resolution of disputes concerning conservation and socio-economic development in CU surrounding areas, and they are also able to influence public policies (SOARES; BENSUSAN; FERREIRA NETO, 2002).

Oliveira (2006) points out that the membership-based organization may also be seen as an opportunity to generate income, create employment opportunities and improve the well-being of communities.

Thus, according to the respondents, the AGTURC activities were not limited to guiding visitors. The association also performed other activities of public interest, such as joint efforts to clean the town square and the streets located in the District of Catimbau, as well as environmental awareness campaigns held in the municipal school. They also reported that, in 2006, the association, along with the Municipal Government, was able to mobilize the community to help building grooves in order to pave the main streets of the town.

It was possible to see that the few mobilization activities were related to AGTURC members and they showed the group's cooperation with the local government to the development of joint activities of interest to the community. Therefore, it reinforces the importance of the association as an effective entity used to solve specific collective problems by referring to ideas such as feeling of belonging and social dialogue, which were highlighted in other studies conducted by Pires, M. (2004, 2006).

According to Pires, M. (2004), the importance given to the association is based on its unique instance of confluence among several actors in face of local development proposals.

However, it is worth emphasizing that the AGTURC had no such work in progress in Buíque at the time the current study was being done, although the guides showed interest in developing environmental awareness projects among the local residents.

#### 4.1 Profile of the AGTURC-member guides

All AGTURC tourist guides were male and aged between 25 and 46 years at the time the study was being conducted in 2012. Eight of them had finished high school, only one had not, and three had not finished elementary school. The time devoted to this occupation ranged from 5 to 18 years and most of them (seven guides) performed this activity for more than 10 years.

Four out of the eleven interviewed guides had agriculture as their main source of income, one mentioned beekeeping as his most important activity, three were municipal employees, one was security guard, and another one was a teacher in the indigenous village of Kapinawá. Only one interviewee said that tourist guiding was his most important occupation. As for the others, this activity was considered as a complementary income activity.



The different activities performed by Buíque guides draw attention to the pluriactivity phenomenon in the field. This issue was addressed by Wanderley (2000) as a strategy adopted by farmers to increase their income through the integration of non-agricultural activities inside or outside the family business.

However, it was found that the agricultural production in Buíque still plays an important role in the lives of tourist guides, since 5 out of the 11 respondents declared to be engaged in this activity. In addition, the municipality was considered to be the largest cashew producer and the second largest milk producer in Pernambuco State. It also stands out in temporary crops such as cassava, maize and beans (IBGE, 2012). Beekeeping has also been inserted in Buíque's economy as an important activity to complete the family income.

It is noteworthy that, according to the respondents, the non-agricultural activities did not withdraw Buíque residents from their farmer condition. Even those who no longer developed the agropastoral activities reaffirmed themselves as farmers because, as they stated, they were "born and raised in the farm." This perspective tends to corroborate the assertion by Ram and Teixeira (2004) that although agriculture often implies low income, it is particularly important for the reproduction of the family group and for the maintenance of the social identity.

It is worth pinpointing that this trend of keeping the farmer identity is also confirmed in salaried employment situations and it shows that the temporary workforce sale does not turn the farmer into an employee, at best, he becomes a "rented" worker (GARCIA JUNIOR, 1989), thus he constitutes himself as a "new component of the peasant agriculture dynamics" (COSTA, 2014, p. 133).

## 4.2 The AGTURC *modus operandi*

As it was previously mentioned, the AGTURC activity mainly consists of guiding visitors within the PNC area, and the compulsory requirement of a guide during the course of the tracks provides permanent, although unstable, income to the association due to the tourism developed in the Park.

Each group of up to ten people required the presence of a guide, which, in 2012, corresponded to R\$80.00 to R\$100.00 payment for this service, depending on the time allotted for visitation. The most commonly followed tracks included Pedra da Concha, Canyon, Torres, Igrejinha and Breus, at Porto Seguro Farm.

According to notes taken by the guides at the Visitor's Registration Book, 2,035 visits were recorded in 2005. This number increased to 2,430 in 2006, which represents an approximate increase of 20%. There were 2,245 visits in 2011 and this number decreased to 1,985 in 2012, thus representing an approximate decrease of 12% in the last two years.

According to the AGTURC statute, all the people directly or indirectly involved with tourism in the PNC can become members. It is only necessary to have their request approved by the General Assembly. But the AGTURC has only eleven active guides and it has not been able to involve the residents in its activities.

There was no record of new AGTURC members in the two years preceding the current study. It is quite possible that the lack of motivation for new candidacies is related to the reduced number of visitors during the aforementioned period. In addition, the inclusion of new members could represent decrease in the associates' income, in low demand times.

All interviewees confirmed that they participated in the activities developed by the association, especially in the monthly meetings. They also reported that, on such occasions, they used to defend their viewpoints, but respected the opinions of colleagues, and that all decisions were made by the majority of votes.

However, as the guides themselves reported, there was constant noncompliance with the agreements made in the assemblies, so that "what was decided never happened", as it was highlighted by one of the leaders at the time the field research was in progress.

The noncompliance with the collectively made decisions, the disobedience to the work schedule, among other conflicts experienced in the daily life of the organization, were some of the reasons that led the AGTURC president to resign in May 2013.

The internal disputes and the weak local articulation capacity result in the low empowerment of the members. It increases the group's dependence on the public authorities and confirms the same trend in other associations that have experienced similar organizational processes, as it was reported by Abramovay (2000b).

In addition, there is lack of monitoring and assistance given by the government to the AGTURC as well as the apparent abandonment situation experienced by the field. Thus, Rabinovici (2002) argues that these spaces have been neglected by the State in terms of investment and it made the government's inability to conserve the natural heritage evident, especially when it comes to involving the community in this process.

The idea of empowerment, which is herein seen as the expression of collective subjects in the exercise of citizenship and in the struggle for social emancipation (BAQUERO, 2012), is closely related to the concept of joint efforts around common goals and is likely to facilitate the deliberations of interest of a certain group (PIRES, M., 2003).

According to Pires, M. (2003, p. 59), once related to studies about local development, this concept translates the acknowledgment that "we are co-authors and co-responsible for the fate of all [...]. Rolling up our sleeves or getting to work with all the actors in a collective project defines the philosophy of work therein present".

According to Mielke (2009), it is necessary for the communities to see the possibility of obtaining satisfactory gains from the initiatives linked to tourism in order to feel motivated to join the CUs co-management process.

Still, according to the author, the local development processes based on tourism should take into consideration the local leadership initiatives around a common project, thus directing efforts to the opportunities generated by quality products and tourism services in order to promote collective well-being. According to the information gathered in the course of the current study, this perspective still does not seem to be part of the reality experienced by the AGTURC members.

## 5 Final considerations

Tourism plays a major role in the changes experienced in the rural areas. It is often associated with the value given to the field through landscape maintenance and environmental conservation.

As it was previously mentioned in the current study, tourism - as a form of taking possession of the space - redefines both the configuration and the dynamics of rural areas by including new forms of occupation and associative processes, such as the AGTURC activity in the municipality of Buíque, which was the herein investigated object of study.

The Catimbau National Park implementation project allowed launching an association as a way to organize the tourism activity in the CU. However, the group receives no support nowadays and it is at the mercy of its own fate. In a way, it reflects the risk imposed by false and induced contributions, according to Santos and Machado (2006).

The distancing of the public authorities, the precariousness of the association logistic infrastructure, the management of limited resources, the decreased number of visitors between 2011 and 2012, as well as the unstable amounts received by the guides, among other reasons, contributed to internal disputes. It hindered the collective management and tended to minimize the potential strength of the association, which was focused on the project of the local development of Buíque, which was based on tourism activities in the PNC.

However, the interviewees highlighted the cooperation and association ideals as important instruments used to organize the developed activities and to increase participants' income. Nevertheless, in the herein presented case, it does not yet mean the empowerment of the social subjects involved in the process in order to leverage the activities of interest to the group.

In addition, the carelessness with which the local, state and federal governments have been dealing with the PNC, despite its acknowledged value, can be seen in its precarious infrastructure, thus making it difficult to stimulate visitation and, therefore, using tourism as a source of income and as a way to improve the quality of life of Buíque residents. These issues get even worse when one takes the land situation into consideration, especially when it comes to the lack of regulation in terms of compensations and expropriations, as provided by the National System of Conservation Units (BRASIL, 2000).

As it was highlighted in the current study, the PNC case is not isolated from the reality experienced by most Brazilian national parks, which also face similar problems such as shortage of staff to monitor and manage the area and the low levels of investment in the local infrastructure.

However, despite the difficulties, the current study found a slight increase in the number of services available to tourism in Buíque, in comparison to that found in studies conducted in previous years (SILVA, 2007, 2011), thus it indicates the possibility of local income expansion.

In addition, the AGTURC members expressed the desire to implement projects able to make the association more dynamic and to benefit the community. However, so far, it all comes down to the level of hopes and of 'good intentions'.

Therefore, these issues reflect the limitations of an organization that is locally acknowledged, but that has to deal with internal management inefficiency and with lack of institutional support to increase its importance in the tourism activity developed in the Park, as well as to leverage the local development project. Whether the increase in tourism will represent the decline in the traditional activities is a case that deserves to be investigated.

It is noteworthy that the herein obtained results point out to other questions: What are the interests that will prevail as the guiding thread of the AGTURC activities in the future? Will this association be able to satisfactorily respond to the goals that motivated its creation? These are few possibilities of analysis that may guide future studies related to the Association of the Tourist Guides of Catimbau National Park.

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Submitted on: 23/07/2014

Accepted on: 31/08/2015

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1809-4422ASOC134847V1922016>

# ASSOCIATIONS IN PROTECTED AREAS: RESTRICTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF TOURIST GUIDES IN CATIMBAU, PERNAMBUCO

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JOSILENE HENRIQUES DA SILVA  
MARIA LUIZA LINS E SILVA PIRES

**Abstract:** The aim of the current study is to analyze the organizational dynamics established by the Association of Tourist Guides and for the Development of Catimbau National Park (AGTURC - Associação de Guias do Turismo e do Desenvolvimento do Parque Nacional do Catimbau) as a way to structure the tourist activity in the park, which is located in Pernambuco State. This perspective is set in discussions about the changes the countryside has faced due to new territorial dynamics that have resulted from the idea of environmental conservation and enhancement of the country area, and the consequent implementation of protected natural areas. The abandonment by the public power, the poor logistics infrastructure of the association, in addition to the bad management of scarce resources in the herein presented case, among other reasons, have favored internal disputes over visitors among the AGTURC members, thus motivating, for instance, the noncompliance with the agreements defined by the group. These aspects reveal the tourism-related difficulties and tensions experienced in Brazilian Conservation Units.

**Keywords:** Associations, Protected Areas, Tourism, New Ruralities.

**Resumo:** Este trabalho analisa a dinâmica organizacional instituída pela Associação de Guias do Turismo e do Desenvolvimento do Parque Nacional do Catimbau (AGTURC) como forma de estruturação da atividade turística em torno deste parque, localizado em Pernambuco. Tal perspectiva é assentada nas discussões sobre as transformações pelas quais tem passado o espaço rural por meio de novas dinâmicas territoriais resultantes da ideia de conservação ambiental e valorização do campo, com a consequente instituição de áreas naturais protegidas. No caso em questão, constatou-se que a pouca atuação do poder público, a precariedade da infraestrutura logística da associação, além da deficiente administração de recursos escassos, dentre outros motivos, têm favorecido disputas internas pela condução dos visitantes, motivando, por exemplo, o descumprimento de acordos definidos em grupo. Aspectos estes reveladores das dificuldades e tensões vivenciadas em torno do turismo nesta Unidade de Conservação.



**Palavras-chave:** Associativismo, Unidades de Conservação, Turismo, Novas Ruralidades.

**Resumen:** Este trabajo analiza la dinámica organizativa de la Asociación de Guías de Turismo y del Desarrollo del Parque Nacional Catimbau (AGTURC), como forma de estructuración de la actividad turística en este parque, ubicado en Pernambuco. Ésta perspectiva se fundamenta sobre discusiones referentes a las transformaciones del espacio rural con las nuevas dinámicas territoriales vinculadas a la idea de conservación del medio ambiente y valorización del campo, con el consiguiente establecimiento de áreas naturales protegidas. El estudio encontró que el abandono del poder público, la deficiente infraestructura logística de la Asociación y la desacertada gestión de los escasos recursos, entre otras razones, favorecieron disputas internas por guiar a los visitantes, ocasionando, por ejemplo, incumplimiento de acuerdos definidos al interior del grupo. Aspectos indicadores de dificultades y tensiones experimentadas en torno al turismo en las Unidades de Conservación en Brasil.

**Palabras clave:** Asociaciones, Áreas Protegidas, Turismo, Nuevas Ruralidades.

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