

Nature Tourism, Nature-Based Tourism or Ecotourism? Reflections and contributions on a constantly debated theme¹

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Abstract

This paper aims to broaden the understanding on the term “Turismo de natureza” (Nature Tourism), which has been used in different ways and verify the hypothesis that it comes from the concept in English of “nature-based tourism”. From this perspective, to better understand this concept, we made a bibliographic review that could introduce and conceptualize this incipient topic. We concluded that the term “Nature Tourism” is actually used from the same perspective by Brazilian, Spanish, Portuguese and Cuban authors, that is, the perspective of “nature-based tourism”. Thus, based on the reading and interpretation of the bibliographic background, we discussed concepts of Nature Tourism, nature-based tourism, as well as the inclusion of ecotourism into such perspectives. We believe thinking, reflecting and proposing discussions on touristic segments is the role of tourism courses. Considering the existence of many questions, enquiries and especially practices that contradict conceptual references, we present a different perspective on the concept of Nature Tourism.

Keywords: Nature tourism; Segment; Pragmatism of application; Hierarchization.

Resumo

Turismo de Natureza ou na Natureza ou Ecoturismo? Reflexões e contribuições sobre um tema em constante debate

O artigo tem como objetivo ampliar o olhar sobre o termo “Turismo de Natureza”, que tem sido utilizado de maneiras distintas, e verificar a hipótese de que na realidade é uma derivação do termo “*nature-based tourism*”, do inglês, ou “turismo na natureza”. Nesse sentido, a fim de entender o conceito de Turismo de Natureza, optou-se por elaborar uma pesquisa bibliográfica que pudesse estruturar e conceituar de maneira clara o assunto ainda incipiente. Constatou-se que de fato o termo “turismo de natureza” utilizado por autores brasileiros, espanhóis, portugueses e cubanos está relacionado à perspectiva do turismo na natureza (*nature-based tourism*). Nesse sentido, com base na leitura e interpretação do referencial bibliográfico, procura-se dar um posicionamento aqui em relação aos conceitos de Turismo de Natureza, turismo de natureza, turismo na natureza, bem como à inserção ou não do ecoturismo nessas perspectivas. Acredita-se que é dever da academia pensar, refletir e propor discussões relacionadas aos segmentos turísticos.

1. Article presented at the Forum Abratur 17, in Recife, PE, from June 7 to 9, 2017. It was chosen as one of the best articles of the event.
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Justamente pelo fato de existirem tantas dúvidas, questionamentos e, sobretudo, práticas que não condizem com o aporte conceitual, apresenta-se uma perspectiva diferente para o conceito de Turismo de Natureza.

Palavras-chave: Turismo de natureza; Segmento; Pragmatismo de aplicação; Hierarquização.

Resumen

¿Turismo de naturaleza, turismo en la naturaleza o ecoturismo? Reflexiones y contribuciones sobre un tema en constante debate

Este artículo tiene por objetivo ampliar la mirada sobre el término “Turismo de Naturaleza”, que se ha utilizado de diferentes formas, y constatar la hipótesis de que dicho término en realidad es un derivado de otro término “*nature-based tourism*” del inglés, o “turismo en la naturaleza”. Con la finalidad de comprender el concepto de Turismo de Naturaleza, se optó por elaborar una investigación bibliográfica que pudiese estructurar y conceptualizar ese tema aún incipiente. Se constató que de hecho el término “turismo de naturaleza” utilizado por autores brasileños, españoles, portugueses y cubanos está vinculado a la perspectiva del turismo en la naturaleza (*nature-based tourism*). En este sentido, con base en la lectura y análisis del marco bibliográfico se busca establecer una perspectiva con relación a los conceptos Turismo de Naturaleza, turismo en la naturaleza, así como a la inserción o no del ecoturismo en esas perspectivas. Se cree que la academia debe pensar, reflexionar y plantear discusiones relacionadas a los segmentos turísticos. Justamente por haber tantas dudas, cuestionamientos y, sobre todo, por las prácticas que no condicen con la contribución conceptual, se presenta una perspectiva diferente del concepto Turismo de Naturaleza.

Palabras clave: Turismo de naturaleza; Segmento; Pragmatismo de aplicación; Jerarquización.

INTRODUCTION

The motivation to address the concept of “Nature Tourism” emerged from a broader research that seeks to understand Nature Tourism and its cross-border relations in the Pantanal of Corumbá (MS, Brazil), Puerto Suárez and Puerto Quijarro (Santa Cruz, Bolivia), focusing on the analysis of the landscape.

Based on the reading of authors such as Silva (2006), Eichenberg (2013), Eichenberg e Silva (2013, 2015), Lima, Silva and Eichenberg (2015), Martins, Silva and Boin (2016), who had already been working with the subject, we observed that deepening the studies on this theme is necessary.

We believe that there is a conceptual problem, considering that the term “ecotourism” has been used indiscriminately. Thus we think it is necessary to find a new term that express what actually happens in the market and considering what is studied in the university. Salvati (2002) claims that the market, government, academy and environmentalists disagree on the real meaning of ecotourism.

The definition of ecotourism has solidified principles concerning environmental ethics, effective experience with nature, benefits to the local community, environmental conservation, impact minimization, environmental awareness by tourists, among other aspects. In other words, ecotourism definition is more restrictive than we usually think.

We decided to make a bibliographic review that could clearly structure and conceptualize Nature Tourism to finally understand this incipient subject. In addition to the bibliographical survey, we interviewed experienced researchers to better comprehend the conceptual problem under discussion (Gil, 2008). The information was systematized in two levels.

The first level involved the search for secondary data related to the theme using keywords in Portuguese such as *turismo de natureza* (nature tourism) and *paisagem* (landscape). The data were collected from the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) database, *Publicações de Turismo* website and using an alert created via Google Scholar. We also searched Sistema de Información de la Investigación Científica en Turismo and Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações.

The second level involved reading the materials obtained and the selection of those that were pertinent to the theme considering quality, importance, currentness and correlation with the proposed objectives. The materials cited other pertinent authors who were used in the data collection.

Moreover, we emailed some of the researchers who published articles using the term *turismo de natureza* or *turismo de natureza* to verify the hypothesis that the term may actually be a derivation of the term “nature-based tourism”¹. This hypothesis arose from previous definitions given to the subject and references cited in articles of authors such as Eagles (2001) and Kline (2001).

We also found other meanings completely different from the understanding of Nature Tourism proposed in this article. Since we deal with equal terms with different meanings, we will use “Nature Tourism” (capitalized initials) for the proposed concept and “nature tourism” (lowercase initials) to treat the other authors who also used it, but with another meaning.

Thus, we observed a positioning regarding Nature Tourism, nature tourism, nature-based tourism concepts, as well as the inclusion (or not) of ecotourism in these perspectives based on reading and interpretation of bibliographical reference written by Portuguese, Spanish, Cuban and Brazilian authors.

We believe that is important to broaden and deepen the analysis of the subject, understanding the difference between ecotourism and Nature Tourism – especially because not all activities in natural areas can be called ecotourism.

NATURE-BASED TOURISM, NATURE TOURISM OR ECOTOURISM?

In this article, we did not consider aspects related to market segmentation, criteria used or the way in which segments or typologies are created and how this is reflected in the organization of tourism products.

In addition to addressing other interesting aspects of the theme in other studies (Ansarah, 2005; Panosso Netto & Ansarah, 2009), Ansarah and Panosso Netto (2010) present an overview of the international and national visions on the subject². Barretto and Rejowski (2009) addressed epistemological

1. In some articles this derivation is evident since the authors themselves mention it. In these cases, we understood that was not necessary to confirm the hypothesis with the authors.

2. Barretto (1995); Mota (2001); Vaz (1999) and Dencker (1998) figures among the Brazilian authors who have a national vision on this subject.

aspects about market segmentation, and Costa (2006) also provides a broad theoretical framework on the subject by analyzing the Brazilian tourist offer and proposing possibilities for the segmentation of the international consumer market. On the topic, Silva (2006) defines terms such as “market segment”, “tourist typologies” and “tourist products” – elements also related to the object of our work.

This article, on the other hand, does not propose a review on ecotourism. Pires (2002, 2005), Ceballos-Lascuráin (1996), Fennel (2002), Brazil (1994), among other authors, have deeply analyzed the theme. The considerations brought by Pulido (2005) regarding this subject are also interesting. We aim at addressing the concept of Nature Tourism considering that there is no consensus on it. Barretto and Rejowski (2009) state that it is the role of the Academy to systematize the types of tourism.

For Francisco da Silva (2013), the terminology is diversified and there is no consensus on the terms (Capdepón, 2013; Gómez & Martínez, 2009; Céspedes, Gómez & Becerra, 2009; Pedroso, 2012; Silva, 2013; Silva, 2015). Silva (2015) affirms that further theoretical discussion on the term is necessary, identifying the types of activity developed in nature, how the interaction with nature occurs and the impacts caused by tourist activity.

Pulido (2005) believes that, in addition to the scarce literature on the subject, there are different conceptions in different countries that generate conceptual confusion and, consequently, several terms such as green tourism, nature tourism, tourism in protected natural spaces, ecotourism, ecological tourism, agritourism, adventure tourism, “active” tourism, alternative tourism, sustainable tourism, soft tourism and environmental impact tourism. Despite the conceptual differences, sometimes these terms are used as synonyms. Oliveira and Tomazzoni (2015) also concluded that there are several concepts about tourism practiced in natural areas and that some authors include the aforementioned concepts. The terms share some general concepts – especially as they are an alternative to mass tourism – but are not synonyms (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996). For Charlei da Silva (2006), the use of them as synonyms is a misunderstanding.

The terms “nature-based tourism”, “nature tourism”, and “tourism in natural spaces” are also treated as distinct concepts. Ecotourism is often considered a typology or modality within the scope of these terms. These different perspectives also motivated our investigation and inspired the title of the article.

Although there is no consensus regarding the meaning of the terms, as previously reported, we observed that some authors are not concerned about defining it, or perhaps do not understand that defining the concept is necessary (Abellán, 2010; Pérez, Guerrero, González, Pérez & Caballero, 2014). These authors assume the subject as something already discussed and consolidated. For Pedroso (2012, p. 61), “in the state of art, there is still a great ambiguity in the distinction of [Nature Tourism] when comparing with other forms of tourism using natural resources, considering there are different currents of thought.”

During the readings of several articles, we observed that the terms *turismo de natureza* or *turismo de naturaleza* (nature tourism) were associated with conservationist values, concern with the local community in its relation with tourism, interest or need to connect with nature and also a direct relationship

with protected natural spaces, which is the position of the policy of Portugal³. In this sense, the hypothesis that these terms were used from the perspective of nature-based tourism arose, being confirmed by the authors themselves in the e-mails.

Silva (2017, personal communication) was enlightening in reaffirming that there is an internationally high semantic confusion around nature tourism, and that we could clarify it as follows:

- “Nature-based tourism” is equivalent, in Portuguese, to *turismo na natureza*. This concept comprehends all activities that have their action and heritage based on natural resources, not considering if their practice is more or less sustainable.
- Ecotourism: the sustainable nature-based tourism, which seeks greater interaction with nature and, based on this concern in minimizing impacts, also considers the importance of interpretation, education and appreciation of local communities.

Specifically regarding Portugal, Silva (2017, personal communication) further clarifies that:

There is a current, which has prevailed in Portugal, which joins the two and calls it *turismo de natureza* [nature tourism], creating a huge confusion, since “de” and “na” [*turismo na natureza*] are terms that do not create a perception of difference for most people, creating a miscommunication in the message. In Portugal, the legislation associated with natural parks should have adopted the term ecotourism, but opting for “de natureza” [“of nature”] is losing the opportunity to be better communicated and perceived. For most people “nature tourism” and “nature-based tourism” are the same thing, but as in the planning instruments in Portugal “Turismo de natureza” [Nature Tourism] is a synonym of “turismo sustentável na natureza” [sustainable nature tourism], which is, on the other hand, synonymous with “Ecotourism”. This is a big confusion that I have been criticizing.

Another issue that one cannot forget is the way nature is seen over the time, which also reflects in the way in which tourism practices involving nature occur. Olafsdottir (2013), Sousa (2014) and Silva (2006) deepened the question –. in short, nature-based tourism is based on the “design” of nature for various tourist activities (Olafsdottir, 2013).

The definition of Silva (2013, p. 165) seems appropriate for the purposes of this article:

Nature-based tourism comprehends any type of tourism that consists in visiting predominantly natural territories to enjoy and delight in nature, or to practice activities and experiences directly related to natural resources.

3. Portugal has the Programa Nacional de Turismo de Natureza (National Nature Tourism Program, Portugal, 1998), and nature tourism is also one of the ten strategic products for the development of tourism in the country (THR, 2006).

For Nyaupane, Morais and Graefe (2004, p. 540), “nature-based tourism is defined as tourism primarily concerned with the direct enjoyment of some relatively undisturbed phenomenon of nature”. Due to the objectives and available space of this article, citing several definitions on the term will not be possible. Oliveira and Tomazzoni (2015) present a review on the subject, and Silva (2013) gives an interesting picture with several definitions.

In this sense, we believe it is pertinent to verify how the authors who use *turismo de natureza* or *turismo de natureza* in the perspective of both nature tourism or nature-based tourism, how they define such terms, and what typologies involves the term. Chart 1 presents definitions and derivations of the term “nature tourism”. The terms *turismo de natureza* or *tourism of natureza*, equivalent to “nature tourism” or “Nature-based tourism”, from the presentation of this Chart on, will be treated as “nature-based tourism”, to avoid conflict with the term “Nature Tourism” proposed in the article. This is reflected in the column “term in source language”:

Chart 1 – Definitions and derivations of nature tourism in different perspectives

Author	Term in source language	Concept	Tourist typologies
Abellán (2011)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	Integrates the natural heritage (fauna, habitat, landscapes, geological characteristics), allows the practice of sports in nature and enables the knowledge in parks and protected areas without degrading or exhausting resources, presenting itself as a growing trend. Equivalent to “nature-based tourism” and, in Portuguese, to <i>turismo na natureza</i> (Abellán, personal communication, Dec 23rd, 2016).	Ecotourism, nautical and underwater activities, hiking.
Gómez and Martínez (2009)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	The definition is linked to ecotourism and includes pedagogic and interpretation aspects of nature; it is organized in small groups; focus on minimizing negative impacts. The term puts in the foreground the values related to sustainable tourism to preserve nature (G. Gómez Ceballos, personal communication, Jan 3rd, 2017).	Ecotourism, hiking and other itineraries including river and sea transportation.
Céspedes, Gómez and Becerra (2009)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	The authors’ definition is based on Kline (2001), who uses the term “nature-based tourism” and focus on conservationism, with minimal impacts etc. The authors use the keyword <i>turismo na natureza</i> .	Hiking trails, bird watching, flora and fauna observation, visit to volcanoes and sport fishing.

(continues...)

Chart 1 – Continuation

Author	Term in source language	Concept	Tourist typologies
Pulido (2005)	<i>Turismo de naturaleza</i>	Nature tourism is associated with a touristic practice in destinations with a strong natural component (mostly protected natural areas) considering the natural values of the environment and its conservation and, consequently, the return to the local community. This author's definition coincides with the <i>Plan de Impulso del turismo de naturaleza en España</i> : "aquel que tiene como principales motivaciones la realización de actividades recreativas y de esparcimiento, la interpretación y/o conocimiento de la naturaleza, con diferente grado de profundidad y la práctica de actividades deportivas con diferente intensidad física y riesgo que usen expresamente los recursos naturales de forma específica, sin degradarlos o agotarlos" (Pulido, 2005, p. 174). Equivalent to "nature-based tourism" and, in Portuguese, to <i>turismo na natureza</i> . Pulido Fernández, personal communication, Dec 20th, 2016).	Ecotourism, adventure tourism in Brazil
Capdepón (2013)	<i>Turismo de naturaleza</i>	The term is used in the perspective of protected natural areas, and the author considers this term more appropriate than ecotourism, since it helps the understanding and conservation of the natural environment. It is also a synonym of the term nature-based tourism or, in Portuguese, <i>turismo na natureza</i> (M. Capdepón Frías, personal communication, Feb 4th, 2017).	–
Galvão (2004)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	"Nature tourism can be classified as any tourism in a natural space, whether on a beach or countryside, regardless whether this tourism is based on conservation and minimal impact, or if it is a conventional mass tourism and based only in commercial interests" (Galvão, 2004, p. 18)	Adventure tourism in Brazil
Gorni and Dreher (2010)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	Although the article ignores the conceptual aspects – it analyzes how intersectoral partnerships can contribute to the competitiveness of organizations in nature tourism – we opted to cite it. The term is linked to environmental conservation, but makes clear that the use of natural resources is not always sensible and sustainable.	Sports such as motocross and rafting.

(continues...)

Chart 1 – Continuation

Author	Term in source language	Concept	Tourist typologies
Jasso and Abellán (2015)	<i>Turismo de naturaleza</i>	The term derives from an alternative tourism and is defined as travels with the purpose of performing recreational activities in direct contact with nature and related cultural experiences, with an attitude and commitment to know, respect, enjoy and participate in the conservation of natural and cultural resources.	Ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure.
McKercher (2002)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	For the author, the term encompasses ecotourism, adventure tourism, educational tourism and other types of experiences allowed by alternative and outdoor tourism. For the author, it is a broader term, which has lost its meaning with the exacerbated marketing that affects the credibility of ecotourism. It is equivalent to the term nature-based tourism or, in Portuguese, <i>turismo na natureza</i> (B. McKercher, personal communication, Dec 28, 2016).	Ecotourism, responsible tourism, educational, sustainable, adventure, among other forms of alternative and outdoor tourism. The author emphasizes that many of these activities are usually treated or labeled as ecotourism.
Pedroso (2012)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	The term is linked to environmental awareness and a model of sustainable development and related to protected areas. It is based on Portuguese legislation and is a synonym of nature-based tourism.	The focus of the research are organizations that can be defined according to the following typologies: tourism in the rural area; houses of nature; and environmental animation and ecotourism.
Pelegrín (2014a, 2014b)	<i>Turismo de Naturaleza</i>	For the author, nature tourism is a new product complementary to the traditional destinations of sun and beach. The concept is related to protected natural areas or protected natural areas and to increased environmental awareness. However, the author points out that not all tourists are aware they are in a protected location. Equivalent to “nature-based tourism” and, in Portuguese, to <i>turismo na natureza</i> (G. A. B. Pelegrín, personal communication, Dec 23, 2016).	Adventure and sports tourism (hiking, cycle touring, aquatic activities and others) and ecotourism (the author also divides it in ornithological and photographic).

(continues...)

Chart 1 – Continuation

Author	Term in source language	Concept	Tourist typologies
Pérez et al. (2014)	<i>Turismo de Naturaleza</i>	<p>The authors are not concerned in defining the term. They probably assume it as already consolidated or that do not need conclusions. However, it is clear the derivation of the term in English-nature-based tourism, hypothesis confirmed by Pérez (V. Pérez, personal communication, Jan 24th, 2017).</p> <p>The authors affirm that the segment is prioritized by the Ministry of Tourism in Cuba, based on the country's potential for the development of this typology, in addition to the global concern with the environment and the need to diversify the main product – sun and beach.</p>	–
Silva (2006)	<i>Turismo de natureza.</i>	For the author, nature tourism “does not deny the existence of environmental impacts and considers that the basis of tourist motivation and the displacement of the tourist flows of the sending to the receiving areas occur predominantly based on environmental aspects. The socio-cultural aspects and tourist arrangements of the receiving areas work as a complement, helping their practice and development. This tourist segment includes tourist typologies that use, directly or indirectly, nature, consuming it as a market product” (Silva, 2006, p. 86).	Rural, equestrian, nautical and contemplation tourism.
Silva (2013)	<i>Turismo na natureza and turismo de natureza</i>	Although the author approaches nature-based tourism, sometimes using the term “nature tourism”, making clear the overlap of terms and, as previously discussed, he states that in Portugal nature tourism is used in the perspective of nature-based tourism (F. A. dos S. Silva, personal communication, Jan 30rd, 2017).	Ecotourism; active tourism (physical activities in nature, but also involving other products such as cultural, rural or community tourism), adventure and sport tourism (competitive activities related to physical condition, escape, or recreational and involves both the active participation and passive participation as a spectator).

(continues...)

Chart 1 – Continuation

Author	Term in source language	Concept	Tourist typologies
Silva (2015)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	It uses nature tourism and ecotourism as equivalent to name tourism in natural areas.	All types of tourism that can occur in nature: adventure tourism, rural, ecotourism (P. V. da Silva, personal communication, Feb 2nd, 2017).
Soldateli (2005)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	It mostly includes all the tourist segments and practices that have as a point of interest the natural environment. It generates impacts on various elements of natural systems by making use of attractions and spaces.	Ecotourism and adventure tourism. The author presents several types from the physical environment (air, earth and water).
Sousa (2014)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	A term related to a tendency of people to seek excitement and distancing from mass tourism. It encompasses several activities in spaces such as protected areas, mountains, gardens and others, times (holidays, weekends) and environments (land, air and water), especially practices of observation, enjoyment and interpretation of nature. The author states that nature tourism is not always a synonym of conservation and minimal negative impacts.	Ecotourism, adventure tourism. Focus on three types that have great affinity with nature tourism for the author: ecotourism, garden tourism and pedestrian tour.
Viana and Nascimento (2009)	<i>Turismo de natureza</i>	The term is associated with a more conservationist vision and later used in the context of tourist attraction (Viana & Nascimento, 2016). It is a “Umbrella tourism”, encompassing different activities. Their definition is based on McKercher (2002) and Eagles (2001). Derived from nature-based tourism (M. A. L. Nascimento, personal communication, Dec 23rd, 2016).	Ecotourism, geotourism and adventure tourism.

Source – idealized and elaborated by Martins (2018)

The Chart above shows that there is no consensus between the terms and that the same term is used in different ways. Generally, *turismo de natureza* or *turismo*

de natureza is associated with conservationist values, relationship with the local community and direct relationship with protected natural areas.

By analyzing the Chart, we observe that nature-based tourism is the broadest term, which agglutinates other terms such as ecotourism, adventure tourism and rural tourism (cited by most authors), as well as other typologies such as sport tourism, geotourism and nautical tourism.

This same idea is also brought by Ceballos-Lascuráin, based on Farrel and Runyan (1991 apud Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996). According to the author, it would be “more exclusively purposeful and focused on the enhancement or maintenance of natural systems”.

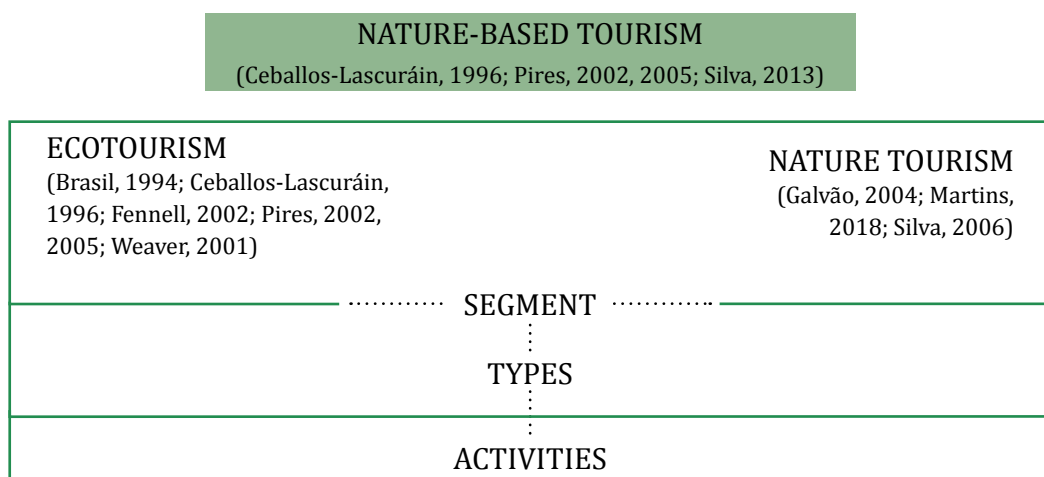
Pires (2005) recalls that ecotourism emerges from the moment when environmentalists recognize nature-based tourism. The term incorporates concepts guided by principles related to the paradigm of sustainable development.

From the recognition that ecotourism implied, first of all, the option for natural environments and authentic cultural manifestations, but also the affirmation of the assumptions of environmental responsibility, of conservationist commitment and involvement of local populations, a conceptual basis based on a set of ideas embodied in what is currently widespread as principles, components or characteristics of ecotourism has been consolidated. (Pires, 2005, p. 484)

Gómez and Martínez (2009) emphasize that the conception of ecotourism is different in the vision of the market – called by them of tour operators – in their marketing programs and in the vision of the academy when they clearly differentiate ecotourism as a modality of nature-based tourism. Regarding the market practice, Soldateli (2005, p. 518) states that “the expression ‘ecotourism’ has a strong commercial appeal and, consciously or not, is mostly sold without conceptual correspondence between the product or service offered and its theoretical definition”. Therefore, the author chooses to use the term “nature tourism”.

From this clarification and the readings, the Chart elaborated, e-mails received and discussions via the research group, we established the first model on the subject, as shown by the Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Hierarchization of the dynamics and conception of tourism



Source – Elaborated by the authors

We emphasize that in Figure 1 the term “Nature Tourism” includes tourist practices that do not follow the perspective of conservation, environmental awareness and, therefore, should not be treated as ecotourism. Such activities are provided by the market, which is the great fomenter of product design, and would be included by Nature Tourism. In other words, there is a clear distance between what we understand about nature tourism and ecotourism.

Thus, Figure 1 refers to some hierarchies. Nature-based tourism would be at the base of this whole process and directly related to the landscape. From the nature-based tourism derive the segments of Nature Tourism and ecotourism (in opposite directions due to different principles, motivations and realities). From these segments, there would be another hierarchy, related to tourist typologies and, in the last level, to tourist activities. This hierarchy also agrees with the definition of Ceballos-Lascuráin (1996), for whom nature-based tourism is directly related to the need for natural resources relatively untouched including landscapes, topography, water resources, vegetation and wildlife.

Nature-based tourism, as the basis of the model, is also supported by Nyaupane, Morais and Graefe (2004). For the authors, the various activities based on nature vary greatly and can tend to ecotourism or to nature tourism depending on the place and the objective. Nature-based tourism, for Weiler and Davis (1993), consists of trips with the direct objective of enjoying the nature (slightly altered phenomena). Ceballos-Lascuráin (1996) mentions that nature tourism is directly dependent on relatively poorly developed natural resources, including water resources, vegetation, topography and landscapes, even considering that the use by tourists may not be sensible and balanced. Nature-based tourism includes ecotourism, which is a rapidly growing sector and has already demonstrated that can be an incentive for conservation.

We understand that this model is important considering the conflicts in the definition of nature tourism and ecotourism, in addition to the issues related to the market that, as exposed, excessively uses the term “ecotourism”, often transforming the term in a brand and forgetting intrinsic philosophy and principles. Sousa (2014, p. 22), which also uses the term nature tourism as an equivalent to nature-based tourism, clearly expresses this difference:

The great difference between Ecotourism and Nature Tourism is that the latter does not always have the conservation and educational values of the natural and cultural heritage of the tourist communities as primary or secondary intentions, while Ecotourism is, for several authors, the one that is more sustainable than the other practices of [Nature Tourism]. This is evidenced by the very principles of Ecotourism expressed in its definition.

The terms Ecotourism and Nature Tourism are equivalent in many articles (Sousa, 2014). Capdepón, based on Vera, Rodríguez and Capdepón (2011 apud Capdepón, 2013), states that “el **turismo de naturaleza** es el concepto que presenta un carácter más globalizador al asociarse con la condición geográfica de los espacios naturales, aunque en la literatura, los medios de comunicación y así también en el mercado turístico, se observa el predominio del término

ecoturismo” (p. 116, author’s emphasis). For Ceballos-Lascuráin (1996), ecotourism is a specific category of nature-based tourism.

For Pires (2005), nature-based tourism is the ecotourism matrix. Fernández (2016, personal communication) also considers that nature-based tourism is a more generic term than ecotourism. In contrast, Silva (2013, p. 168) points out: “Ecotourism presents itself as a form of responsible, low impact nature-based tourism, which involves the interpretation of the environment and promotes benefits for it and local populations”. There is a consensus that ecotourism is a wider tourism segment – in this case, nature-based tourism. For Fennell (2002, p. 46), “there is a certain merit in linking ecotourism to nature-based tourism due to the impressive variety of interests involved in the latter.”

We emphasize this is not only a semantic discussion, but rather a discussion on the space in which the activity occurs, based essentially in nature. The distance between ecotourism and Nature Tourism occurs as a consequence of the different form and use of the main activity.

NATURE TOURISM: LANDSCAPE AS THE MAIN ATTRACTION

The definition of Nature Tourism presented in this article is related to the understanding of landscape as one of the great – if not the main – responsible for the touristic activity in nature (Lohmann & Panosso Netto, 2008). Tourism also transforms the landscape and its main components: physical, biological (fauna and flora) and anthropic.

We may find tourists aware and concerned about nature, but this is not a guarantee. This finding motivated the study on Nature Tourism as a segment. For Silva (2006), this term is still rarely used, but it is best suited to express the activities performed in nature with no concern about conservation, preservation and other principles of ecotourism. The studies of this author were motivated by some inquiries such as: what name or classification should be given to this segment? What typologies would be associated? How classify it if the impacts generated by the activity are far from the conservationist and preservationist proposals?

Our concept of Nature Tourism is based on the characteristics of the site, the market and the profile of the individual.

Thus, we understood that Nature Tourism is all tourism in environments with landscape as their main attraction. It happens regardless the existence of formal structures and is essentially moved by market interests, without an environmental and social concern. In this perspective, Nature Tourism motivates itself by the locus of nature (risk, rest, leisure or return to the origins) and not necessarily occurring in protected areas. The environment characteristic is one of the central elements, considering the importance of the landscape, its forms and functions that materialize in scenic beauty or in the geosystem.

In the Geosystem there is the combination of ecological potential, which involves climate, hydrology and geomorphology, biological exploration, including fauna,

flora and soil, and anthropic action, which is represented by social, economic and cultural manifestations of society. In this sense, the Geosystem is understood as a “stage”, in which the interrelation society-nature can be observed, mapped, read and understood. (Vale, 2012, p. 104)

In this sense, Silva (2006) states that:

Nature tourism is considered a segment of tourism market that aggregates tourist typologies, whose products come primarily from preserved natural environments or are directly correlated to them, which maintain certain dynamic balance due to the low presence of environmental impacts. It corresponds to a market segment that overvalues the contact and the interrelationship with nature, in a counter-point with the urban aspect, with perception and realization of experiences that would be unconventional in urban areas. Nature tourism causes environmental impact regardless the intensity of tourist flow, which often compromises, over time, the quality of the tourist product offered. (Silva, 2006, p. 86)

The definitions above are very different from those brought by the authors in Chart 1, who mostly use the term in the perspective of *turismo na natureza* or nature-based tourism, relating it to some elements: integration of natural heritage, concern in not degrading or affecting natural resources, environmental awareness and, finally, the implications with the natural values of the environment, often reflected in attitudes. In some cases, they include pedagogical aspects and interpretation of nature.

However, some of the authors subsidies and support the proposal presented in this article. For Gorni and Dreher (2010), the use of natural resources is not always sensible and sustainable. Pulido (2005) understands nature-based tourism as a broad and generic term that admits any tourist practice in an area with a strong natural component. The author makes clear that the demand is not homogeneous since there are people with values related to nature, and other people for whom the trip is related to a green or ecological fashion and is an artificial necessity generated by marketing.

Fennell is more severe in his words, based on the ideas of Farquharson (1982 Apud Fennell, 2002). The author, regarding a specific example, says ecotourism is a dream that has been totally diluted by falling into the clutches of a mega-enterprise, and also adds that “the word [ecotourism] changes color as a chameleon” (Fennell, 2002, p. 11) and transformed itself into a marketing expression for tourism entrepreneurs. For Silva (2006, p. 84), the concept suffers “an etymological distortion and, as so many others involving environmental issues, was appropriated by the market, specifically the tourist, and went on to serve as a basis for economic gains and marketing strategies.”

Pelegri n (2014a) emphasized that not all tourists are aware of the environment where they are in. The author states that nature-based tourism is not always a synonym of conservation and minimal negative impacts. According to McKercher (2002), the term is more comprehensive and loses less with the exacerbated marketing that affects and harms ecotourism activities. Soldateli (2005) recognizes the impacts caused on various elements of natural systems considering that the segment uses attractions and spaces.

In summary, “Nature Tourism” is considered the most appropriate term to represent the activities performed in natural spaces (protected or not), motivated by the aspects of nature (aiming at resting, returning to origins, contemplating and/or performing activities that generate adrenaline and risk, or only activities performed in nature) and that certainly generate some sort of impacts – environmental and social – that are not always perceived or considered by tourists and the market. In addition, the concept is also directly associated with market interests. The geosystem characteristics are believed to be directly related to the possibilities of the development of Nature Tourism and, consequently, to the typologies associated with it (Martins, 2018).

Silva (2013) also supports our proposal concerning the understanding about nature-based tourism and the determination of a clear conceptual definition of the degree of comprehensiveness and overlap with other products.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The literature on the subject must think, reflect and propose discussions concerning the tourist segments. Due to many doubts, questions and, above all, practices that do not match the conceptual contribution, we understand the importance of Nature Tourism in the perspective presented – a perspective that proposes a model with some hierarchies. Nature tourism would be the agglutinator of other segments such as ecotourism and Nature Tourism. Para Pires (2002, p. 138).

Nature-based tourism, in addition to express a type of tourism directly dependent on the presence of a natural environment for its development, has a comprehensive meaning that includes different types of tourism – ecotourism, for example – under its focus.

Being a large category, it includes several activities with different approaches to nature.

Ecotourism obligatorily involves the conservationist principles, always considering sustainability (and, in this sense, with environmental, social and economic aspects), and should include aspects related to education or interpretation of the environment to preserve natural areas in which it happens.

The concept of Nature Tourism presented is related to the characteristics of the site, the profile of the individual and the market, which is the great inducer in the product design. Some places and activities between ecotourism and Nature Tourism are not so clear mainly due to the practice of tourist trade.

The idea is to propose and reflect on a more appropriate term that represents non-compliant activities or that do not meet the principles, philosophies and purposes in the concept of ecotourism. This term that can be used by the market, government, researchers and others involved with the tourism activity, including the attempt to reduce the misconceptions related to the dissemination of ecotourism as a trend or as a “spectacular way to paint tourism green” (Hintze, 2010, p. 1). According to the author, the discourse and market practices are incoherent.

Pointing a concept such as Nature Tourism “involves denying many of the current conceptions, especially those used by the market” as stated by Silva (2006, p. 79). Considering the literature is not concrete and generates discrepancies between conceptions and approaches, the discussion can and must be broadened.

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Patrícia Cristina Statella Martins: formulation of the research problem and objectives, development of the theoretical proposition, conduction of the bibliographical review, choice of methods, data collection, data analysis, elaboration of tables, graphs and figures, critical manuscript review, writing of the manuscript, standardization according to RTA.

Charlei Aparecido da Silva: definition of the research problem and objectives; development of the theoretical proposition; choice of methods; data analysis; development of tables, graphs, and figures; critical review of the manuscript; writing of the manuscript.