

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

DIMENSIONS AND CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS OF LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATION, COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND RURAL TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of creating natural protected areas is to ensure that the area, with all its attributes, is preserved for the benefit of present and future generations, including wildlife and species reproduction areas, the sustainability of ecological processes such as carbon, water and soil cycles, the protection of places of cultural importance (sacred sites), the creation of recreational areas through ecotourism and, at the same time, spaces for scientific research. Natural protected areas are geographically delimited zones designed to achieve specific conservation objectives in a broad sense. They are designated and regulated by government institutions and managed in different formats (Maldonado *et al.* 2020).

However, there are some factors that affect the fulfillment of the objectives of natural and cultural conservation and the sustainable use of the resources of the NPAs, and affect the transformation of the landscape, such as real estate pressure on ecosystems and the increase in the demand for resources such as soil, water resources, food and inputs for construction, which affects the deterioration of their environmental quality (Escobar *et al.*, 2018). But in addition, the processes of transformation of the territory affect physical-spatial elements such as the urban and social fabric, productive activities and ultimately the landscape, gradually minimizing the natural and cultural heritage, as these transformations are characterized by their speed, intensity and incidence in the transformation and change of the landscape (Escobar *et al.*, 2018).

The study of the landscape and the governance of protected areas allows us to learn about the elements and transformation of the physical space, as well as the intervention of multiple social actors in its management, conservation and use. Although numerous research studies have been developed that have made possible the creation and management of protected areas, focused on the in-depth knowledge of the biota, as well as alternatives for the use and management of natural resources (Ortega-Rubio, 2000), it is possible to propose new methodological approaches that allow the study of the landscape and its transformation, the intervention of diverse social actors and the development and impact generated by the tourist activity that takes place within protected areas.

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the research was to identify the thematic and methodological approaches that have been used for the analysis of landscape transformation, community governance and rural tourism in protected areas, with the purpose of proposing a methodological framework to understand the scope for environmental conservation and social welfare.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research was based on the critical review of the bibliographic collection, from the analysis of various theoretical and empirical works, both nationally and internationally, to identify the thematic orientation and methodological approaches used. Documents in Spanish and English were reviewed, from 2004 to 2020, in order to identify the objective, theoretical-methodological approaches and research instruments used, in order to know the scope of previous research and studies on landscape transformation, community governance and rural tourism.

A total of 56 contributions were identified on the established topics, of which 18 were selected due to their relevance for the conformation of a specific framework of analysis for NPAs, 10 of them in Mexico, referring to cases on NPAs, National Parks and Areas for the Protection of Flora and Fauna, In addition, 6 international studies were considered, of which Spain, Finland, Peru, Costa Rica and Colombia stand out, highlighting the importance of landscape transformation, collaborative tourism and good governance, and 2 related in general to the study of NPAs.

4. RESULTS

As a result of the documentary research, it was possible to identify three central dimensions and nine categories of analysis:

- Landscape transformation dimension: landscape is considered as the configuration of a territory, framed by the physical, environmental, social, economic, political, cultural and symbolic elements, dynamics and interrelationships. Therefore, this dimension makes it possible to explain how the landscape has been transformed, based on an aesthetic assessment, knowing the different causes, phenomena, perception and spatial analysis, in order to understand the transformations that have occurred. In this case, three categories

of analysis are considered with their respective criteria and modes of verification that will allow obtaining the information: aesthetic valuation, social perception, spatial analysis, and the spatial analysis of the landscape.

– Community governance dimension: refers to the process of recognition and collective participation, which favors decision-making and the aggregate benefit. It is based on the recognition of the importance of the intervention of various social actors, placing community actors at the center, as they are the owners of the territory and their forms of collective organization for the use of common goods. Therefore, the contributions that actors from the public, academic and social sectors can generate to favor decision making that generates benefits for local communities are recognized. Thus, the purpose of this dimension is to understand the relationship between the population and authorities with respect to participation and decision making on natural resources, for which three types of analysis categories are used: community processes, political and institutional dynamics, and collaboration with other actors.

– Rural tourism dimension: refers to the various recreational, sports, cultural, educational and research activities that take place in rural environments, where visitors are motivated by the natural and cultural wealth, diversifying productive activities and economic income for local communities. Therefore, this dimension addresses the relationship between rural tourism and the transformation of the landscape through various categories that allow us to understand how the different actors within the protected areas coexist with their environment through tourism activities, considering three categories of analysis: local organization, economic contributions and the use of natural resources.

On the other hand, for the formulation of a methodological strategy that contributes to the analysis of landscape transformation, community governance and rural tourism in protected areas, the procedural development is divided as follows: a) characterization of the unit of analysis; b) evaluation of aesthetic attributes of the landscape; c) territorial analysis based on landscape units; and d) social perception of landscape transformation and governance.

5. CONCLUSIONS

NPAs have emerged as an essential mechanism in environmental policy in several countries. They are considered as a place for the protection of plant and animal species, as well as territories and human spaces that for a long time have preserved traditions and cultures. They have become the main instrument for biodiversity conservation and today they are important in land management in most countries of the world, but they are also areas with great tourist activity, since they offer visitors recreational activities and benefit the communities that live within them.

The importance of natural protected areas is reflected through the direct benefits to the economy of the population located within them, as they enable the implementation of productive and recreational activities, the reduction of environmental externalities, such as pollution and soil loss, among others, as well as the provision of ecosystem services including climate regulation and regulation of the water cycle, which favor human welfare (Torres, *et al.*, 2015).

This methodological proposal, supported by the identified dimensions and categories of analysis, allows us to understand how the landscape has been transformed and how, based on community governance, the different institutions of the public sector, the private sector, civil society organizations, research centers and educational institutions, but particularly, how local actors collaborate for environmental conservation and the development of rural tourism in natural protected areas.

It is important to delineate frameworks of analysis that make it possible to study the landscape, community governance and rural tourism by identifying the territory, its landscape values and the different changes that have been observed in the territory. A synthetic framework to explain the landscape and its modifications, while at the same time enabling the consolidation of local forms of organization and promoting productive diversification within the protected areas.