

# THE DESTINATION IS WHERE I LIVE! RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF TOURISM IMPACTS

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to understand how residents perceive tourism impacts. Based on the review of the literature in the area of tourism, in particular with regard to its development and to the residents' perceptions and attitudes towards this phenomenon, we studied the case of the municipality of Loulé, a privileged area of the tourist destination Algarve. The study adopts the residents' point of view, a perspective still with much to explore when it comes to tourism. It analyses the relationship between variables such as the perception of social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts in people's personal lives and in the area of residence, type and frequency of contact with tourism, professional and economic dependence on tourism and demographic characteristics. The results show that although residents identify, as the literature suggests, negative impacts of tourism, in general, they also acknowledge the importance of the tourism development in their area of residence and in their personal lives. It is noted that residents perceive tourism impacts differently according to professional and economic dependence on tourism activity, the proximity of the place of residence to the main tourist area and the frequency and type of contact with tourism. Demographic factors are not the most significant in explaining the perception of tourism impacts. The results of the study reinforce the importance of considering the residents' perceptions vis-à-vis the tourism as a decisive factor in the sustainable development of tourism destinations, being thus residents one of the key stakeholders in the context of a holistic and integrated approach to tourism planning and development.

Keywords: Residents, Tourism, Perceptions, Tourism destinations

JEL Classification: O21, R10

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many consider tourism as an extraordinary means for developing a place. In many cases this is a viable and strategic way of renewal and creation of new local economic and social dynamics. In a context in which emerges the demand for new experiences and tourist areas, is truly important that local authorities responsible for developing territories are able to, simultaneously, satisfy the expectations of tourists and the residents' needs. However, despite the planning effort for a more sustainable development and an increased awareness for residents' perceptions and attitudes towards the tourism development in their place of residence, it remains that the perspective of residents is overlooked in favor of the common good and investors' interests.

There is a scientific and academic growing interest in studying the residents' attitudes and perceptions vis-à-vis tourism and the importance of these to heighten the attractiveness of destinations. However, there is still an immense field of study to explore regarding, on the one hand, the real influence of residents in tourist development and, on the other, the perception of influence of tourism on their lives. This paper explores this latter perspective, focusing on residents' perceptions, the influence of tourism on their personal lives and in the area of residence, identifying benefits and costs associated with tourism development. The literature review conducted in this study focuses in tourism development and in the residents' perceptions and attitudes. It emphasizes the perspectives of geography, psychology and sociology. This paper explores the main concepts and theories on the study of residents' perceptions of tourism. The main characteristics of the population and the territory considered for the case study, the municipality of Loulé, are briefly presented. The methodology adopted in the study and the main conclusions arising from the analysis of data obtained with the questionnaire application to a sample of Loulé residents are also described.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The study of tourism is increasingly associated with its multifaceted character and its multidisciplinary dimensions. In the context of this paper it is important to clarify, in particular, concepts related to tourism development, tourism destinations, residents' perceptions and attitudes, issues related to processes and social relations, especially between residents and tourists, the tourism impact on destinations and local communities, the processes of exchange and change, acculturation and lifestyles.

The tourism, more than any other social phenomenon, noticeably transforms places. These changes are faster and more pronounced than in areas where there is no tourism practice. Given this, it is important to understand how the residents perceive tourism phenomenon and how they recognise the importance of it in their lives. In fact, there is a controversy on how this development benefits people, regions and countries, and the very concept of development is strongly debated. On the one hand, public bodies try to create or improve the infrastructure and basic services such as education and health, to the local populations. On the other hand, the private sector, usually concerned with its own business and profit, often does not adopt a long-term preventive attitude of negative impacts. Nonprofit organizations usually dedicated to local development, especially in areas with low population density and socio-economic problems, assume an increasingly active role. Finally, we have residents more aware and increasingly concerned about the consequences of development in their lives. Although it is the group which endures the positive or negative consequences of tourist development, it is rarely involved in the planning and development process of its region. It then becomes necessary to understand the concept of development and apply it to the reality of the residents in tourism destinations and to their local and particular characteristics. In this context, the participation and the assessment of residents' perception of tourism impact can be useful for predicting and evaluating more complex impacts (Dean and Wu, 1979).

The literature suggests that tourism brings more benefits than disadvantages, both to tourism destinations and to residents, but in order to achieve a sustainable development it emphasizes the relevance of the participation of all stakeholders. This idea appears in the definition of the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2004), which states that the sustainable tourism development entails the environmental, economic and socio-cultural

aspects, and it takes a proper balance between these three dimensions to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Communities often envisage tourism as a way of improving their quality of life, thus they tend to encourage its development (Andereck *et al.*, 2005; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Lindberg *et al.*, 1997; Pizam, 1978; Uriely and Reichel, 2002). It is also recognised that the activity has negative impacts, such as lifestyle, cultural and environmental changes and most studies highlight differences in the resident's attitudes according to the level of development of tourism and with the type and frequency of relationship with tourism. As Pizam (1978) notices, there is evidence that a large amount of tourism activity leads to a negative attitude from residents towards tourism and tourists.

The sustainable development of tourism and its relationship with the residents' attitudes is a topic of great interest to many authors (e. g. Allen *et al.*, 1988; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Carmichael, 2000; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Ko and Stewart, 2002; Lindberg and Johnson, 1997; Perdue *et al.*, 1987). Some of these authors refer themselves to the social exchange theory (Homans, 1961), recognizing that people evaluate the costs and benefits of establishing trade relations with others and that this fact is important in the residents/ tourists relationship. Taking into consideration the social exchange theory, and according to Turner (1986), residents who perceive the current or potential value of tourism believing that the costs associated with its development do not exceed the benefits, are more open to changes and endure better the necessary efforts to foster tourism development. Also Skidmore (1975) states that individuals engage in changes if the perceived benefits are greater than the costs and that they will put up with the development effort more effectively. The same situation is expressed by the model proposed by Jurowski (1994) which shows that the residents' attitude vis-à-vis tourism is influenced by economic, social and environmental perceived impacts. The author states that these perceptions are influenced by economic gain perceptions, the level of use of resources and the attitudes adopted by tourists towards environmental preservation.

Issues relating to the development of tourism destinations (Butler, 1980; Doxey, 1976; Perdue *et al.*, 1990) are frequently addressed in the literature. Butler (1980) describes the development of a tourism destination by identifying the steps that occur over time and to which he associates a number of different tourists seeking the same destination: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and stagnation. That idea is also expressed in Doxey's theory (1976). The author emphasizes the importance and the difference in the residents' attitudes according to the stage of development of the tourism destination. Doxey argues that the residents' attitudes tend to be more positive during the early stages, but become increasingly negative as the destination evolves into stagnation. However, Lepp (2006) warns that in destinations where there is no prior knowledge of tourism, it can be received with distrust, anxiety and fear, at an early stage. Dogan (1989) also alludes to the importance of the level of tourism development, when he says that among communities where tourism is in the initial stage the residents' attitude tend to be more homogeneous. The author states that as a destination matures, several adjustments arise and the success or failure of those adjustments influences the residents' attitudes emerging among them differentiated feelings.

In this study, the assessment of the perception of tourism impacts will be carried out taking into account the impacts more frequently studied in the literature about tourism (Akis *et al.*, 1996; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Jurowski, 1994), the social, the cultural, the economic and the environmental ones, according to the sustainable tourism development definition presented by the World Tourism Organization and aforementioned.

The literature suggests, as central and unanimously accepted ideas by many authors, that tourism is a way to improve communities' quality of life to the extent that, for example, it

creates employment opportunities, promotes the infrastructure and allows contacts with different cultures. However, it is also unanimously acknowledged the negative tourism impacts, such as increased traffic, crime or undesirable activities or changes in residents' lifestyle. Residents clearly perceive investment resultant from the tourism development and its advantages in terms of local economy, but at the same time, they acknowledge the increase in the cost of living (Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Andereck *et al.*, 2005; Ap and Crompton, 1993; Akis *et al.*, 1996; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Dyer, 2007; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Perdue *et al.*, 1987). In this context, several authors investigated these perceptions and based on Social Exchange Theory they explain residents' perceptions and differentiated attitudes vis-à-vis tourism (Ap, 1992; Jurowski, 1994; Lindberg *et al.*, 1997). For Jurowski *et al.* (1997: 3) "the analysis demonstrate that potential for economic gain, use of the tourism resources, ecocentric attitude, and attachment to the community, affect resident perception of the impacts and modify both directly and indirectly, resident support for tourism".

There are also important theoretical efforts to understand the residents' attitudes and their link to behaviour (Lepp, 2006). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). TRA is a tiered model, which states that the behaviour is influenced by the behavioural intention. In turn, the behavioural intention is influenced by attitudes and subjective norms, and both are influenced by beliefs.

The proximity of residence to the main tourist area is one of the factors studied recurrently in the literature and it is important to understand residents' attitudes and perceptions (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004; Lankford, 1997; Sheldon and Var, 1984; Sheldon and Abenoja, 2001). Belisle and Hoy (1980) identify positive and negative impacts perceived by residents, considering the hypothesis that perception varies according to the distance from place of residence to the tourist area and the socio-economic status. The authors conclude that, in effect, the distance influences significantly the perception of tourism impact, although, in all groups, residents recognise direct and indirect benefits of tourism. These authors point out, similarly to the idea abovementioned, that an early stage of tourism development may contribute to a positive attitude towards this phenomenon.

Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) also explored the effect of distance from tourist attractions on residents' attitudes and perceptions and propose a model based on Social Exchange Theory (based on cost assessment / perceived benefits and the state of local economy). The distance from the area of residence to the tourism attractions unveils a significant effect on how the costs and benefits are perceived and evaluated. The observed relationship reveals that those who live closer feel that an increase in the number of tourists can negatively impact their ability to use those same tourism attractions. For Lankford (1997) these are the residents who are more concerned with the possibility of increased traffic congestion, crime, garbage, noise and the cost of living.

The residents more sensitive to environmental issues and living closer to the tourist area seem to be more likely to support the tourism than those with similar environmental attitudes but living in a medium distance. Jurowski's (1994) study reveals that the ecocentric attitudes have a positive effect when it comes to endorse the cultural and historical tourism, but negative towards other forms of tourism. The results of the study of Sheldon and Var (1984) reinforces this theory, since it shows that residents who live in higher-density areas are more likely to have positive attitudes towards tourism, favouring this activity to the detriment of others.

The frequency of contact with tourists and working or not in the tourism sector and being economically dependent on it are two other relevant indicators to the understanding of the residents' attitudes and perceptions (Akis *et al.*, 1996; Sheldon and Var, 1984). The studies generally confirm the existence of a relationship between individuals' economic dependence

on tourism and their attitude (Brunt and Courtney, 1999; Pizam, 1978) showing that the ones working in tourism are more favourable to its development.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

In this research, which begins with a literature review and secondary data collection on the theme and territory under study, the adopted methodology is both of a qualitative and quantitative nature. Thus, in a first phase, exploratory research was conducted in the municipality of Loulé. The primary data collection used the method of triangulation, which permits the comparison of the information obtained through the application of three techniques. In this case, exploratory semi-structured interviews, participant observation and collection of documentation were used. Concurrently with the review of the literature, the exploratory phase was determinant for designing the questionnaire to be applied to residents of the municipality of Loulé.

Semi-structured exploratory interviews were conducted with opinion leaders, including the presidents of parish councils and non-profit associations, some local businesses and residents who perform these roles in the area under study. Not all the interviews were recorded on audio or video since many respondents were not comfortable with the situation. In those cases, a more casual conversation was conducted and the ideas presented were written down. Respondents were asked questions about tourism in general, about their relationship with the phenomenon, their expectations and perceived impact and about the advantages and/or disadvantages of tourism in personal terms and in the area of residence, taking into account the various types of impacts.

Participant observation, the other technique used in the exploratory phase, was held intermittently in the territory and in time. The choice of moments for observation stemmed from the intention, on the one hand, to observe the daily life of residents, and, on the other hand, to observe special situations in which contact between residents and tourists occurs and assumes noteworthy characteristics.

The third technique employed at this early stage was the collection of information on the site. It proved to be very useful since it allowed to reconcile the information obtained from the interviews and participant observation and to articulate it with the theoretical framework and secondary data.

The second phase of the research consisted of questionnaire designing, testing and application to a sample of 1049 residents of Portuguese nationality, with 18 years or more, in the eleven parishes of the County of Loulé, distributed by the three main areas of the Algarve region – Serra (the mountains), Barrocal (the region between the mountains and the coast) and Litoral (the coast). The stratified sampling was used on account of the disproportion in the littoral/interior distribution of the population and the different stages of tourism development in each region. As in many other studies, a five-point Likert scale was used. Residents were asked to respond by evaluating the level of importance and/or satisfaction with regard to certain factors presented.

Data analysis was performed using the SPSS statistical analysis program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 19) which allowed the characterization of the sample through the use of measures of location and dispersion (Pestana and Gageiro, 2003) and its subsequent presentation in tables or graphs. To compare the percentages of responses from respondents in relation to the indicators used for each variable, were taken into consideration frequencies, mode and the median, given the nature of ordinal variables used (Smith, 2010). In this context, some categories were grouped to enhance the perception of the level of agreement or disagreement.



The results of the exploratory research match the literature suggestions that there seems to be a consistently positive attitude regarding tourism development, a positive perception of tourism as a way to develop the area of residence, an increasing environmental awareness, especially towards scarce resources such as water, a greater ability to accept the tourism development when the residents do not negatively perceive tourism impact in their area, a positive assessment of the economic and social benefits of tourism, different perceptions according to the different levels of tourism development in the areas of residence, with the distance from the main tourist area in relation to the residence, with the incidence of contact with tourists, with tourism and economic dependence, with personal factors, such as number of years of residence, age or qualifications (Allen *et al.*, 1993; Andereck, 1995; Butler, 1980; Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Lankford, 1994; Lindberg and Johnson, 1997; Liu *et al.*, 1987; Maitheson and Wall, 1982; Pizam, 1978; Plog, 2001; Sheldon and Var, 1984; Smith, 1992; Weaver and Lawton, 2001).

#### **4.1. Sample Characterization**

A univariate analysis was performed taking into account gender, age, marital status, place of birth, the parish of residence, the number of years living on the place, educational qualifications, employment status, house ownership, average monthly household income, professional activity of the element that most contributes to the household income. A bivariate analysis was also carried out to determine the relationship between the respondents' characteristics and the frequency and type of contact with tourism.

It is possible to observe that the residents sample is almost equally divided between men (49.6%) and women (50.4%) aged 18 to 87 years (average age of 43.3 years). Most of the residents are married (64.7%), while 23.6% are single, 7.7% are divorced and 3.9% are widowed. Almost half of the residents (47.7%) have secondary or college or higher educational qualifications. In the sample, it is noteworthy the reduced number of illiterates (1.1%). Regarding employment, the majority of the respondents work (64.3%), whilst the proportion of pensioners is 14.6% and 9.9% are unemployed. Most residents work in the service sector, while 73.8% is related to the tourism sector and 73.6% to commerce. Of those interviewed, 71.8% own their home, 16.1% live in a rented house and 6.1% share a house. As for the household, 69.0% of respondents live with a spouse/partner, 34.3% with children under age 18 and 20.7% claim to have adult children still living at home; respondents' average monthly income ranges from €451 to €1 800 (66.6%) and only 3% of residents stated that they average monthly income exceeded the €3 600.

The majority of respondents were born outside the Algarve (38.3%), but the percentage of those who live in the parish where they were born is also high (34.1%). The number of years of residence in the parish range from 1 to 85 years, corresponding to an average of 28.3. The number of years of residence in the municipality reaches an average of 32.25 years. It is noteworthy that in the parishes of Loulé there are significant differences in the distribution of the population. The majority of residents live in Quarteira (27.3%), followed by São Clemente (24.3%), Almancil (14.9%) and São Sebastião (11.3%). These parishes are located on the coast (Quarteira and Almancil) or are urban parishes (São Clemente and São Sebastião). The remaining parishes represent less than 10,0% of residents and the parish of Ameixial represents only 1,0% of respondents.

When asked about the frequency of contact with tourists, in any of the situations presented (special events, work-related situations, situations of leisure and day-to-day situations), the majority of respondents admit a sporadic contact with tourists. Considering this frequency of sporadic contact, the situations that reveal a higher percentage of responses are the "special events" (59.0%) and the "leisure" situations (53.0%). About the contact

between residents and tourists in work-related situations, 32.9% of residents affirm never to contact with tourists and 15.6% admit daily contact.

#### **4.2. Relationship with tourism**

An inferential oriented approach sought to assess the statistical significance of relationships between variables in the sample description. The analysis of the relationship between variables was performed by Pearson's Chi-square test of independence, which tests the null hypothesis of absence of a dependency relationship between two variables. In this paper stands out the studied relations which are statistically significant and, simultaneously, related to the main dimensions referred to in the literature and resulting from the exploratory research, including interviews with stakeholders.

With regard to the frequency and type of contact with tourists, all respondents of each age group claim to contact sporadically with tourists on special events (percentages above 60%). However, are the younger who say to contact often with tourists in this kind of events (responses of more than 13% for age groups up to age 44) and respondents in upper age groups (age 45 and over) present percentages of answers above 20% in the option relating to the non-existence of contact with tourists.

With regard to work-related situations, 31.2% of respondents from 25 to 34-year-old age group say to contact often with tourists. Among respondents aged 45 to 54, 29.4% admit doing so, as well as 28.2% of those who are in the age group of 35-44. It can be verified that are the older age groups who say never to contact with tourists (41.7% from 55 to 64-year-old age group, and 59.1% of respondents age 65 and over). Such high percentages of residents of these two age groups responding that never contact with tourism can be explained by the fact that most of these individuals are already retired and therefore have less contacts outside the familial environment or maybe because they do not work in tourism-related areas.

With regard to leisure situations, the highest percentage of responses focuses, for all age groups, in sporadic contact with tourists (61.4%). The percentage of respondents who never mention contact with tourists in these situations is 25.0% and only 13.6% say to contact frequently in leisure situations. These data can reveal that the residents' leisure situations are experienced with their families and friends, in an environment probably not attended by tourists. The residents' answers about contact with tourists in everyday situations are somehow distinct from those relating to leisure situations. Although, overall, the highest percentage (55.0%) is on the sporadic contact with tourists, only 17.6% refer never to contact daily with them. On the contrary, 27.1% admits a higher frequency of contact with tourists. However, it is to be noted that respondents in the age groups of 55-64 and age 65 and over, unlike other age groups, present higher percentages of responses on the option in which they assume never to contact with tourists (21.8% and 33.3% respectively).

The highest percentages of frequency of contact with tourists (over 30%) are in the 25 to 54-year-old age groups. This can be associated with the fact that these residents represent the active population and possibly for this reason, even in everyday situations, they contact more often with tourists due to a wider network of contacts, resulting from their professional activity.

The analysis of residents' frequency of contact with tourists in special events, taking into account the education level of the former, show that 79.8% of respondents with college or higher educational qualifications contact sporadically with tourists. This is also the option with higher percentages of response for residents with other educational levels (illiterate: 75.0%; elementary: 63.7%; secondary: 65.8%). In relation to work-related situations, only the illiterate have a high percentage of responses stating that they never contact with tourists (66.7%). For the remaining cases, residents refer to contact sporadically with tourists (47.8% for respondents with college or higher educational level; 43.4% with secondary or vocational

level and 40.2% with elementary education level). These data suggest that, effectively, the higher the educational level the higher is the contact with tourists in a work context. It is recognised that individuals with college or higher educational qualifications tend to work more in the tertiary sector and, therefore, it is natural to have more contact with tourists than individuals working in the primary or secondary sectors.

A high percentage of respondents with college or higher educational level (71.8%) recognise to contact sporadically with tourists in leisure situations, 63.4% of residents with secondary or vocational educational level and 54.0% of residents with elementary education choose this option to better express their relationship with the tourist. On the contrary, 50.0% of illiterates recognise never to contact with tourists in leisure situations and 41.7% say that they do it from time to time. Thus, there is more contact between residents and tourists on leisure situations for residents with college or higher qualifications, what suggests that the choices of these residents in terms of leisure and recreational activities are closer to the choices of tourists, and there is, therefore, a greater socio-cultural proximity.

As regards to the residents' contact with tourists in everyday situations, 34.2% of respondents with vocational or secondary educational level and 27.8% with college or higher education say to contact often with tourists. However, most respondents say they contact sporadically with tourists: 62.7% with college or higher education, 54.7% with elementary educational level and 51.2% with vocational or secondary educational level. This reinforces the previous data-crossing, noting that, in fact, higher qualifications tend to increase contact with tourists also in daily life, possibly because the everyday spaces are the same as the ones the tourists experience.

While crossing respondents' answers regarding the frequency of contact with tourists in special events, with their professional activity, it turns out that the highest values are associated with sporadic contact with tourists (Agriculture/fishing/industry, with 71.4%; Tourism with 65.6%; commerce with 61.6%, and Security and other services with 73.6%). Another aspect to highlight is that the second highest percentage is the option: frequent contact with tourists (26.2% of individuals who work in the primary or secondary sectors and 21.4% of those who work in tourism). However, among respondents who work in commerce, only 14.1% declare to contact with tourists on special events and 24.2% responded "never", followed by 17.0% of those working in security and other services.

With reference to contact with tourists in work-related situation the percentages of those who say that they do it frequently are: 73.8% of respondents who work in tourism, 46.5% of those who work in commerce and 35.7% of those who work in agriculture, fishing or industry. As expected, residents who have a tourism related-job or in areas directly associated with it, such as commerce, contact more often with tourists.

The frequency of contact with tourists in leisure situations in relation to the various areas of activity show that 54.1% of respondents who work in tourism, contact sporadically with tourists, whilst 32.8% do it frequently. Only 13.1% of those individuals assume never to contact with tourists. On the contrary, in other areas of activity, the number of those who never interact with tourists is substantially higher. Actually, that is the case of individuals who work in the primary and secondary sectors (35.7%), 27.3% of those who work in commerce and 21.2% of residents who work in other services. It should be noted, however, that in all professional activities the answer "sporadically" has the highest percentages. In professional activities associated to tourism a higher percentage is observed (32.8%).

With regard to everyday situations, 63.9% of residents who have a tourism related-job admit to frequently contact tourists and 26.2% say that they do it sporadically. The percentages of respondents who work in commerce are more balanced among those who claim to contact with tourists frequently (45.5%) and sporadically (44.4%). On the contrary, respondents who work in agriculture/fishing/industry or on security and other services,

57.1% and 58.6% respectively, say that they contact sporadically with tourists. One can clearly associate a greater contact between residents and tourists in everyday situations among those working in the tourism sector or in areas directly related to tourism, such as commerce.

### 4.3. Perceptions on tourism impact

One of the most important steps in this research is to identify indicators to measure each variable and its relation with the residents' perception of tourism impacts. The variables and indicators used in this study are presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Variables and indicators of research**

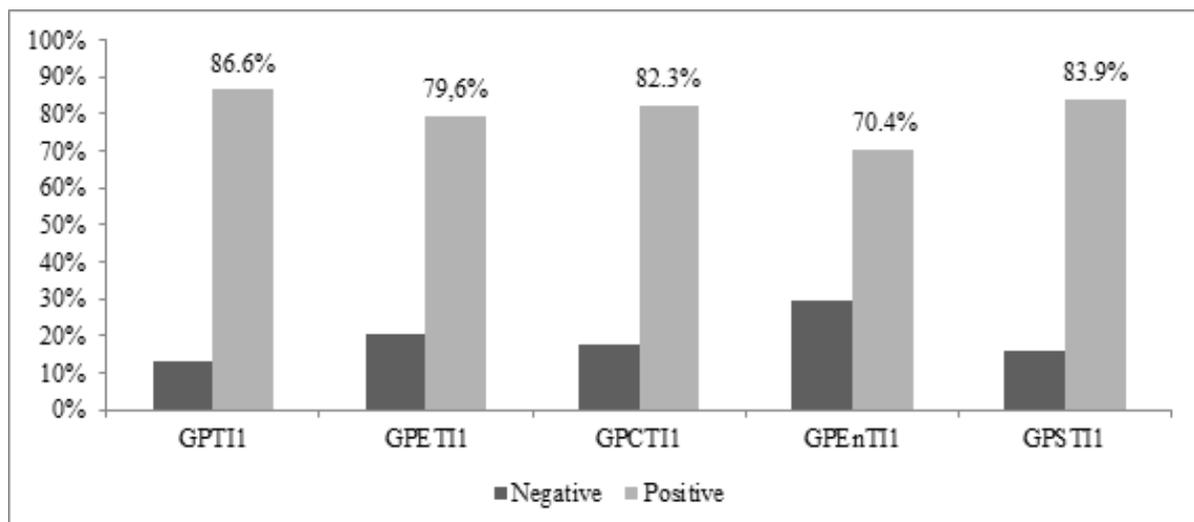
<b>Variable: Global Perception of Tourism Impacts</b>	<b>Variable: Perception of Environmental Tourism Impacts (EnTI)</b>
GPTI1 – Global perception of tourism impacts	EnTIp1 – Restriction of the number of free access areas
GPETI1 – Global perception of economic tourism impacts	EnTIp2 – Outdoor life promotion
GPSTI1 – Global perception of social tourism impacts	EnTIp3 – Increase in environmental concerns
GPCTI1 – Global perception of cultural tourism impacts	EnTIr1 – Contribution for the area embellishment
GPEntI1 – Global perception of environmental tourism impacts	EnTIr2 – Contribution to environmental preservation
<b>Variable: Perception of Economic Tourism Impacts (ETI)</b>	EnTIr3 – Increase in traffic problems
ETIp1 – Increase in income	EnTIr4 – Destruction of ecosystems
ETIp2 – Improvement in living standards	EnTIr5 – Increase in pollution
ETIr1 – Increase in employment opportunities	<b>Perception of Cultural Tourism Impacts (CTI)</b>
ETIr2 – Increase in investment and entrepreneurship	CTIp1 – Increase of knowledge of other cultures
ETIr3 – Increase of cost of living	CTIp2 – Increase of knowledge of local culture
ETIr4 – Increase of fees and taxes	CTIp3 – Development of language skills
ETIr5 - Difficulty in developing other economic activities	CTIp4 – Motivation to study more and/or improve occupational skills
<b>Variable: Perception of Social Tourism Impacts (STI)</b>	CTIr1 – Increase in services availability and cultural activities
STIp1 – Increase of chances to interact with different people	CTIr2 – Increase in residents' demand for cultural activities
STIp2 – Lifestyle changes	CTIr3 – Increase of residents' knowledge of other cultures
STIp3 – Strengthening of social ties within the community	CTIr4 – Local identity assertion
STIp4 – Increase of sense of pride for the community	CTIr5 – Local tradition changes
STIp5 – Increase of sense of community belonging	CTIr6 – Community values changes
STIp6 - Decrease of tranquillity	CTIr7 – Contribution to heritage preservation and promotion
STIr1 – Improvement of infrastructures	
STIr2 – Increase in services availability	
STIr3 – Increase in recreational activities offer	
STIr4 – Increase of residents' demand for recreational activities	
STIr5 – Improvement of public security	
STIr6 – Increase of residents' participation in local level decisions	
STIr7 – Increase in the sense of pride and community belonging	
STIr8 – Residents' lifestyle changes	
STIr9 – Increase of residents' demand for training	
STIr10 – Increase of illegal activities	

Source: Own work

For a better visualization of respondents' answers, the obtained results are displayed in graphics and, when appropriate, some of the response categories are grouped. In the question about the global perceptions of tourism impacts were grouped the negative levels ("very negative" and "somewhat negative") and positive levels ("positive," "very positive" and "extremely positive"). For the remaining questions related to perception of tourism impacts, were grouped the levels of disagreement ("totally disagree" and "disagree") and the levels of agreement ("agree" and "totally agree"). In this research, the indicators used to study the residents' perception refer to the study of the global tourism impacts and to economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts in general and, in detail, on a personal level and in the area of residence.

Figure 2 illustrates the respondents' answers regarding the perception of tourism impacts at a global level (GPTI1) and regarding the economic (GPETI1), cultural (GPCTI1), environmental (GPEnTI1) and social (GPSTI1) impacts, also in a global way. As shown, the residents' perception is very positive at all levels. However, it can be noted a less positive perception regarding the environmental tourism impacts. The research has shown that the percentage of those who consider the overall impact of tourism positive, very positive or extremely positive reaches the 86.6%. This fact reveals that the vast majority of respondents positively perceive the tourism impacts.

**Figure 2: Global, economic, social, cultural and environmental tourism impact perceptions**



Source: Own work from SPSS software

The results of the global perception of economic tourism impact (table 2) show that 45.5% of residents consider this impact positive, followed by 22.5% who consider that the impact is very positive and 11.6% who say that it is an extremely positive impact. Only 20.4% of respondents have a negative perspective vis-à-vis the economic tourism impacts, while 79.6% perceive them positively.

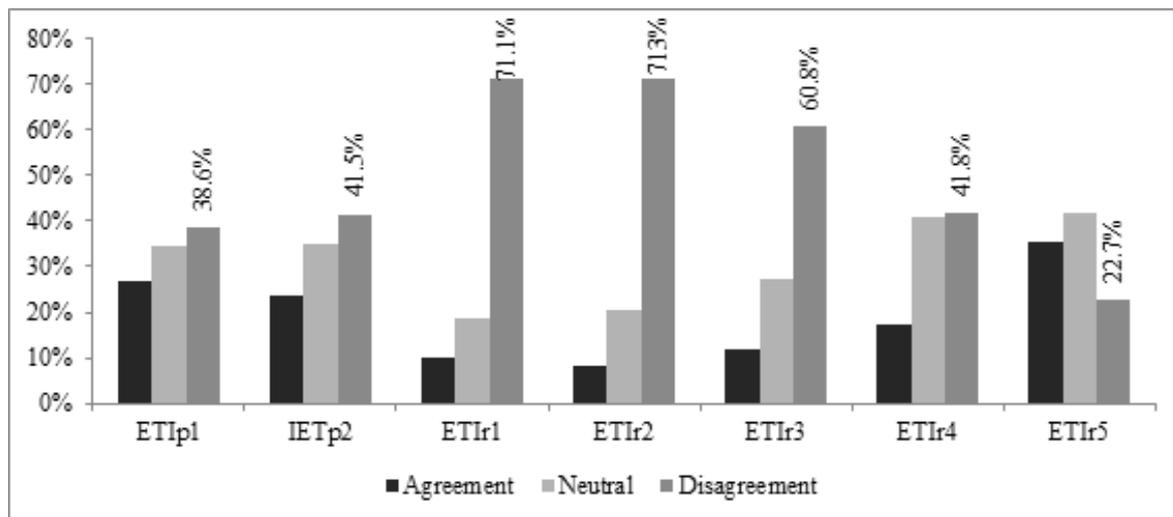
**Table 2: Global economic perception of tourism impact**

Very negative (1)	Somewhat negative (2)	Positive (3)	Very positive (4)	Extremely positive (5)	Total %	Mode	Median
3.1%	17.3%	45.5%	22.5%	11.6%	100	3	3

Source: Own work from SPSS software

The level of agreement expressed by the interviewees in relation to economic tourism impacts (Figure 3), on a personal level, is less than that the one presented in relation to the area of residence. However, the ETIr5 indicator, related to the difficulty of the development of other economic activities, with only 22.70% agreement, indicates that residents do not consider tourism as an obstacle to the development of other economic activities. The indicators with the highest levels of agreement are those related to the area of residence. 71.30% of residents recognise the potential effect of increased investment in tourism and entrepreneurship and 71.10% agree with the idea that tourism represents an increased employment opportunity and 60.80% admit that this activity increases the cost of living.

Figure 3: Aggregated percentages related to the perception of economic tourism impacts



Source: Own work from SPSS software

The results (table 3) show that only 1.8% of respondents perceive the tourist development in cultural terms as “very negative”. This indicates that the perception of negative cultural tourism impact is not very relevant. Most residents (54.8%) consider positive the development of tourism, 19.9% identify it as very positive and 7.6% as extremely positive. This high percentage of positive cultural perceptions (82.3%), contrasts with the low percentage of negative opinions (17.6%).

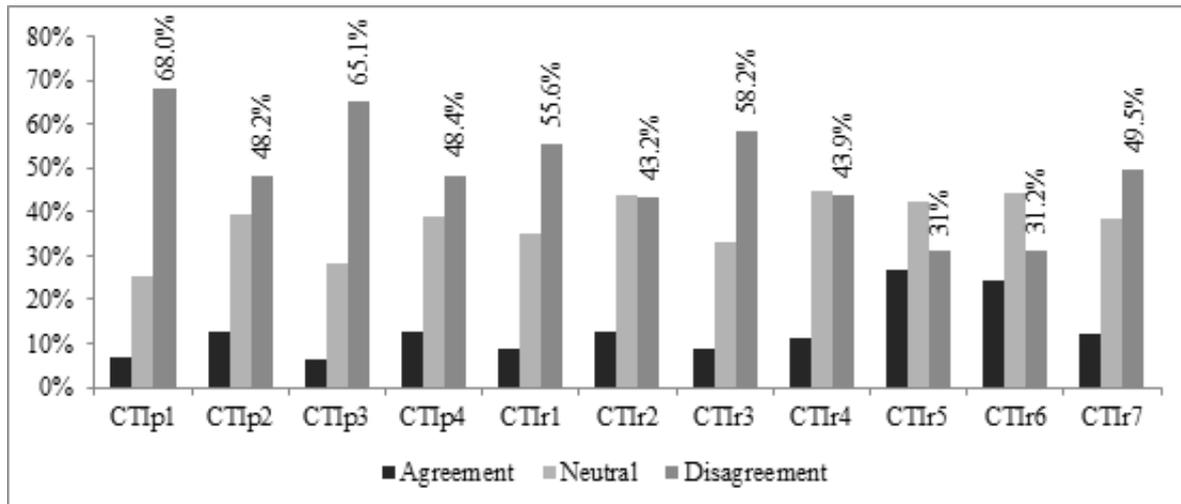
Table 3: Global cultural perception of tourism impact

Very negative (1)	Somewhat negative (2)	Positive (3)	Very positive (4)	Extremely positive (5)	Total %	Mode	Median
1.8%	15.8%	54.8%	19.9%	7.6%	100	3	3

Source: Own work from SPSS software

It can be observed (Figure 4) that the highest levels of disagreement are those relating to change of values and traditions, showing that residents do not consider the cultural changes that occur where they live. The agreement associated with the perception of positive cultural impact can be observed, especially on a personal level and, in particular, the knowledge of other cultures (68.0%) and the improvement of language skills (65.10%).

Figure 4: Perception of cultural tourism impacts



Source: Own work from SPSS software

The responses associated with the perception of environmental impacts (table 4) show that 54.8% of residents consider positively tourism development. However, 26.0% claim that this factor is somewhat negative. Thus, despite 70.4% of the total consider that tourism development is positive, very positive or extremely positive for the environment, 29.6% perceive it negatively, which can reveal the sensitivity of residents to environmental factors.

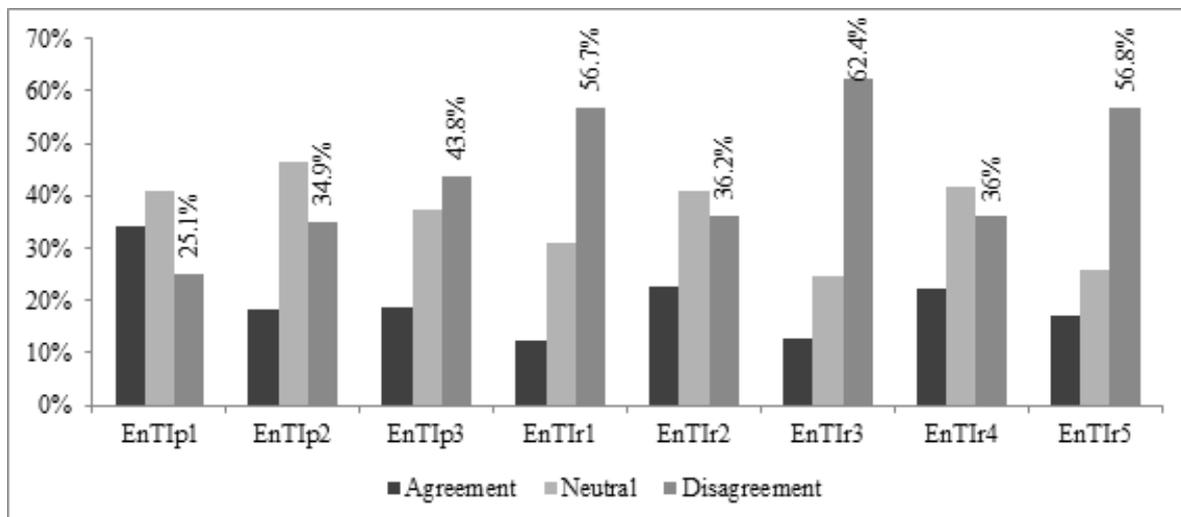
Table 4 – Global environmental perception of tourism impact

Very negative (1)	Somewhat negative (2)	Positive (3)	Very positive (4)	Extremely positive (5)	Total %	Mode	Median
3.6%	26.0%	54.8%	11.2%	4.4%	100	3	3

Source: Own work from SPSS software

Figure 5 clearly illustrates the differences in positive and negative perceptions of tourism development in its relationship with the environment.

Figure 5: Perception of environmental tourism impacts



Source: Own work from SPSS software

The indicator related to the global perception of social impacts reveals a concentration of responses in the “positive” level (56.6%). Only 2.2% of the residents considered tourism very negative (table 5).

**Table 5: Global social perception of tourism impact**

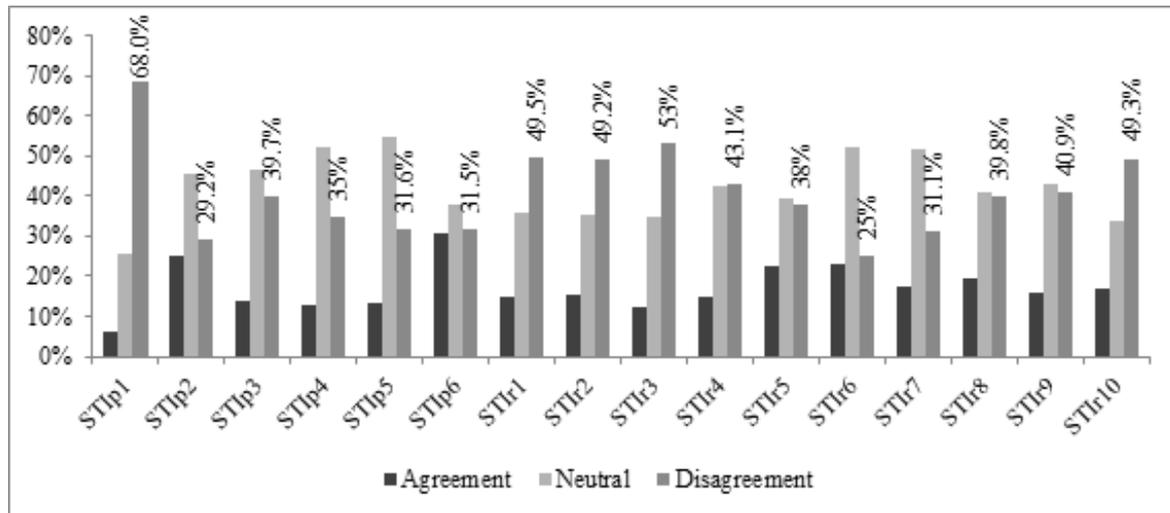
Very negative (1)	Somewhat negative (2)	Positive (3)	Very positive (4)	Extremely positive (5)	Total %	Mode	Median
2.2%	13.8%	56.6%	19.9%	7.4%	100	3	3

Source: Own work from SPSS software

The indicators related to the perception of the social tourism impacts (Figure 6) reveals on the personal level that 68.60% of residents agree with the assertion that tourism increases the chances of interaction with different people (STIp1). At the level of the region, the indicator that presents a higher percentage (53.0%) of answers is the one associated with the positive effect of tourism on the residents' participation in local level decision-making (STIr6).

The analysis of the residents' responses about the social tourism impacts on the personal level and in the area of residence reveals that the lowest percentages are associated to disagreement. In relation to agreement, STIp1 (68.6%), STIr3 (53.0%), STIr1 (49.5%), STIr10 (49.3%) and STIr2 (49.2%) correspond to indicators related to the increase of the possibilities of interact with different people, strengthening of social ties within the community, improvement of infrastructure, increase of illegal activities and increase in services availability. In this context, we highlight the importance of the indicator STIr10 (increase of illegal activities), which shows that almost half of the residents admit that this factor is associated with the tourism development, and they recognise it as a negative impact.

**Figure 6: Perception of social tourism impacts on a personal level and in the area of residence**



Source: Own work from SPSS software

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The research has concluded that there is a widespread positive feeling towards tourism and its development. Nevertheless, some of the stakeholders contacted recognise the existence of

negative impacts in different fields and areas. It stands out, in particular, the concern with environmental issues, mainly in the interior regions, the increased sensitivity with regard to social issues, mainly observed in coastal zones and the noteworthy appraisal, globally and throughout the territory, of the positive tourism impacts in economic and social terms.

Regarding the global perception of tourism impacts, the data analysis of results from the application of the questionnaire confirmed that residents consider positive the tourism impact, both globally and in economic, social, cultural and environmental terms. This positive trend in terms of global assessment is verified in relation to most residents, regardless of their age, education, profession or place of residence. However, it was also possible to note differences in perception in relation to these various types of impacts and regarding a personal assessment or in terms of the residence area, particularly with regard to some socio-demographic characteristics such as education, professional activity, income and, in particular, the relationship with tourism in special events and leisure situations or in work-related or day-to-day situations. Respondents working in tourism or commerce perceive more clearly the positive consequences of tourism though also acknowledging negative impacts. Globally, it was also possible to verify a link between the level of education and a positive perception of tourism. Residents with higher incomes also tend to perceive more positively tourism.

With regard to the links associated to the global perception of economic, social, cultural and environmental tourism impacts the results revealed, for all kinds of impact, a direct and positive influence on the global perception of tourism impacts. It turns out, however, that the overall perception of economic tourism impacts reveal much higher response rates, followed by the global perception of cultural impacts, the global perception of social impacts, and, finally, the global perception of environmental impacts.

The research has also concluded that residents recognise the influence of economic, social, cultural and environmental tourism impacts, in personal terms and in the area of residence, although the values are lower in the responses associated with the perception of cultural tourism impacts in the area of residence and the influence of the environmental tourism impacts, in personal terms.

The research contributes to a better understanding of the elements that characterise the residents' perception of tourism impacts in general and in their life. The results obtained can be an important contribution to the development of a tourism destination and for present and potential investors in tourism in the region under study. This research reinforces the importance of considering the residents' perspective when defining a development strategy of the territories and, in particular, of tourism development, not only creating shared moments of reflection, to which residents are already called to participate in, but also effectively considering their contributions in the process of tourism planning.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was partially financed by FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology.

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