

**TOURISM,  
ACCESSIBILITY AND  
SAFETY: RESTRICTING  
FACTORS FOR PEOPLE  
WITH DISABILITIES  
VISIT A TOURIST  
DESTINATION**

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*Carlos Alberto Lidizia Soares*

Universidade Federal Fluminense – UFF

*Luciana Rodrigues*

Universidade Federal Fluminense – UFF

*Jessica Siqueira Luiz*

Universidade Federal Fluminense- UFF

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3627-7629>

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**Abstract:** When choosing a tourist destination to visit, people consider both the motivating and limiting elements of that location. Among these factors, safety seems to be paramount in the decision of tourists, especially People with Disabilities (PWD). Therefore, through the use of qualitative methodology, with a theoretical-empirical approach, this work aimed to verify, through an opinion survey in a social network, which elements can restrict people with disabilities from going to a tourist destination. After evaluating the results, it was noticed that accessibility and public safety were pointed out as the most decisive when deciding whether or not to visit a certain destination.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Security, Accessibility, People with Disabilities.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the movement of people, it is a phenomenon that involves, above all, people (Barretto, Burgos & Frenkel, 2003).

Thus, the definition of the destination occurs through the perception of the motivating factors that positively stimulate tourist travel (Tomé Machado, 2012). According to Barretto et al (2003), the positive determining factors are: short distance, good means of transport, absence of violence and climatic disasters, receptivity of the population, security, good sanitary conditions, price policy, ease of movement.

However, limiting factors that negatively influence the choice of a location as a destination are also taken into account (Tomé Machado, 2012). Among the relevant factors, it must be understood that security is a prerequisite for tourists to decide to visit a territory, but the incidence of violent acts in a country has prevented regions with great potential to achieve greater economic and social development through tourism (Barahona, 2017). It is important to emphasize

that there are several types of violence: physical, psychological, sexual, among others.

The issue of tourism and insecurity that generates fear in people to travel has been little studied in the academic environment. To contribute to this theme, this article intends to reflect on how the public security factor, as well as security related to accessibility, can be restrictive or motivating elements for the visit of People with Disabilities (PWD) to a tourist destination.

## THEORETICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

Body travel comprises the largest movement of people across borders in all of history (Urry, 1990). Relations between societies on the planet are mediated by flows of tourists, as one place after another reconfigures itself as the recipient of these flows (Urry, 1990).

Therefore, according to Barker (2002), mentioned by Torre and Escobedo (2013), concern about crime and insecurity directly influences behavior, destination choice and tourist satisfaction. The occurrence of criminal acts in a tourist destination produces alarm in the potential visitor, who may cancel, postpone or choose alternative destinations that imply less risk.

Currently, public safety is one of the quality indicators that every tourist destination must offer to be competitive in a global market. However, it is important to highlight that the proximity between tourism and violence is far from being univocal. On the contrary, it is a relationship of a complex nature, in which both variables are interdependent. (Torre & Escobedo, 2013).

Williams (2003) states that the person with any type of disability, whether visual, auditory, physical or mental, is in a position of great vulnerability in relation to the individual without disabilities, and the asymmetry of power relations in the interaction between

both, which can be expanded if the person with a disability belongs to another risk group, for example, if they are a woman or a child.

For Schiebler et al (1996), cited in Torre and Escobedo (2013, p.3), the relationship between tourism and crime represents a new and sensitive topic of investigation in many destinations, as authorities resist measuring and possibly risking it. to reveal the level of crime due to the threat it represents for the future development of this activity in your locality.

Cohen and Felson (1979) have the Theory of Routine Activity (TAR), which gives a new concept of crime based on elements of opportunity and the absence of effective controls. For them, a routine activity is one that is recurrent (repeated) and predominant. The central proposal of the theory is the consideration of the criminal activity as a routine (illegal) activity that feeds on the routine (legal) activities of others (Torre & Escobedo, 2013).

According to Barker (2002, apud Torre & Escobedo, 2013), the geography and temporality of the “routine” actions of tourists determine the set of opportunities available to criminals. Tourism environments can create foci of crime opportunities, because of the constant flow of tourists and workers, as well as the increasing saturation and anonymity in places of accommodation, attractions and entertainment.

Regarding the tourist profile as a potential victim of a crime, only Allen (1999) and Barker (2000) presented literature related to this problem. Little progress has been made in the study of victim characteristics, as well as the differences between tourists and residents as victims (Torre & Escobedo, 2013). For Murphy (2002, apud Torre & Escobedo, 2013), there are empirical studies that explain some important differences in the routine behavior of tourists and residents. These walk faster, are

more alert, make more frequent and longer stops. Tourists, on the other hand, walk more slowly, with fewer stops and more fleeting, and are less prepared.

According to Torre and Escobedo (2013), among the characteristics of tourists that make them vulnerable to crime are: i) their origin (indigenous or foreign); ii) type of mobility; iii) age; iv) gender; v) ethnicity; vi) hosting, among others. Thus, from the characteristic of mobility that can make a person vulnerable to violence and crime, as well as to other elements that put their safety at risk, especially for People with Disabilities, the guiding question of this work arises: “Regarding On the topic of tourism and safety, what restrictive factors would prevent a Person with Disabilities from visiting a particular tourist destination?”

For that, it was necessary preliminarily to go in search of a theoretical foundation on People with Disabilities, since from the facilities to the services, everything constitutes barriers to be overcome by them, since they are rarely adapted to their needs. They are constantly faced with professionals who are unprepared for the preferential and personalized service of the different types of disabilities that these people present. Some of these even ignore their needs. In addition, the fact that places are not adapted to them causes them embarrassment, as they are often carried on their laps or are injured when colliding with an obstacle.

For a better understanding, we turned to the literature that defines the deficiencies, according to article 3, of Federal Decree number: 3,298 (Brazil, 1999):

I - disability - any loss or abnormality of a psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function that generates incapacity to perform an activity, within the standard considered normal for the human being;

II - permanent disability - one that occurred or stabilized for a period of time sufficient to not allow recovery or be likely to change,

despite new treatments;

III - incapacity - an effective and accentuated reduction in the capacity for social integration, with the need for equipment, adaptations, means or special resources so that the person with a disability can receive or transmit information necessary for their personal well-being and the performance of their duties. or activity to be exercised (Brazil, 1999).

The later legislation, Decree number: 5,296 (Brazil, 2004), in article 4, considers the person with a disability to fall into the following categories:

I - physical disability - complete or partial alteration of one or more segments of the human body, causing impairment of physical function, presenting in the form of paraplegia, paraparesis, monoplegia, monoparesis, quadriplegia, tetraparesis, triplegia, tripareisia, hemiplegia, hemiparesis, ostomy, amputation or absence of a limb, cerebral palsy, dwarfism, limbs with congenital or acquired deformity, except for aesthetic deformities and those that do not produce difficulties in performing functions;

II - hearing impairment - bilateral, partial or total loss of forty-one decibels (dB) or more, measured by audiogram at frequencies of 500HZ, 1000HZ, 2000Hz and 3000Hz;

III - visual impairment - blindness, in which visual acuity is equal to or less than 0.05 in the best eye, with the best optical correction; low vision, which means visual acuity between 0.3 and 0.05 in the best eye, with the best optical correction; cases in which the sum of the visual field measurement in both eyes is equal to or less than 60o; or the simultaneous occurrence of any of the foregoing conditions;

IV - mental disability - significantly lower than average intellectual functioning, with manifestation before the age of eighteen and limitations associated with two or more areas of adaptive skills, such as:

a) the communication;

b) personal care;

c) social skills;

d) use of community resources;

e) health and safety;

f) academic skills;

g) leisure;

h) work;

V - multiple disabilities – association of two or more disabilities (Brazil, 2004).

According to the United Nations (UN), with data from 2011, 1 billion people live with a disability, this means one in seven people in the world (UN, 2016). In this context, the Census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2010) states that Brazil has approximately 45 million or 23.9% of people who report having visual, hearing, motor and mental/intellectual disabilities.

In view of this, accessibility is a fundamental factor for People with Disabilities to be able to have safe and autonomous mobility and, consequently, to be available to travel. Accessibility, by law, number: 13,146 of 2015, known as the Statute of Persons with Disabilities (Brazil, 2015), is conceptualized as follows:

Accessibility is the possibility and condition of reach for the use, with safety and autonomy, of spaces, furniture, urban equipment, buildings, transport, information and communication, including their systems and technologies, as well as other services and facilities open to the public, in public use or private collective use, both in urban and rural areas, by people with disabilities or reduced mobility (Brazil, 2015).

Therefore, dealing with accessibility means eliminating barriers, which are classified as follows, under the law, number: 13.146/2015:

(i) urban barriers: those existing on roads and in public and private spaces open to the public or for collective use;

(ii) architectural barriers: those existing in public and private buildings;

(iii) barriers in transport: those existing in transport systems and means;

(iv) barriers in communications and information: any obstacle, obstacle, attitude or behavior that makes it difficult or impossible to express or receive messages and information through communication and information technology systems;

(v) attitudinal barriers: attitudes or behaviors that prevent or impair the social participation of people with disabilities on equal terms and opportunities with other people;

(vi) technological barriers: those that make it difficult or prevent people with disabilities from accessing technologies (Brazil, 2015).

In addition to the aforementioned legislation, in the country, the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (ABNT) regulates criteria and parameters for different topics to be observed, among them Accessibility. Therefore, NBR9050 (ABNT, 2015) deals with accessibility to buildings, furniture, spaces and urban equipment, also reaching tourist facilities, in view of the concept of Universal Design. This concept proposes:

architecture and design more centered on the human being and its diversity. Establishes criteria for buildings, internal and urban environments and products to serve a greater number of users, regardless of their physical characteristics, abilities and age group, favoring human biodiversity and providing better ergonomics for everyone. Thus, aiming at some principles: equitable use; flexible use; simple and intuitive use; easily perceived information; fault tolerance; low physical effort; dimension and space for approximation and use (ABNT NBR9050, 2015).

According to a survey by the Accessible Tourism Program of the Ministry of Tourism

on the profile of the disabled tourist, among other reasons, one of the reasons for people with disabilities to travel is a feeling of overcoming, freedom and autonomy that the act of traveling arouses in them (Brazil, 2013). Furthermore, the study showed that during the planning phase of a trip, PWDs consider the following factors:

(i) Destination and length of stay;

(ii) Means of transport to reach the destination (and return from it) and their costs;

(iii) Public transport conditions in the city to be visited;

(iv) Hotels (availability of places, number of adapted rooms, accessibility, daily rates);

(v) Tourist attractions (what exists in the city, how to reach these points, is there accessibility, interpreters, Braille, etc);

(vi) Local commerce, level of accessibility and prices;

(vii) Site security (level of violence and risks to physical security);

(viii) Tourist routes to be carried out (Brazil, 2013).

Regarding the means of accommodation, this research revealed that the availability of adapted rooms is a major problem experienced by tourists with disabilities. To prove this, another study carried out by Soares et al. (2018) reported that, for example, the elevator appears only for hotel apartments. Hostels and inns do not have this item referenced. On the other hand, the item ramp appears expressively in this type of accommodation. The same goes for hotels and a little less for flats. As for the toilets, in hostels and inns, there are no adapted toilets in most establishments. But it is clear that hotels have a much more complete and adequate structure for bathrooms. In short, hotels and flats are more accessible from the point of view of external routes, while hostels



and pensions are totally outside the minimum standards required by the regulations, as they invest in low-cost adaptations. Still on the concept of universal use and based on the ABNT 9050/2015 standard, this is recurrent in apartments and hotel chains (Soares et al., 2018)

For this reason, it is extremely important to know the types of disabilities and their needs so that adaptive measures can be taken to receive the public that has them.

## METHODOLOGY

This article emerged as an initial development of a university project, in which the relationship between tourism and people with disabilities was studied. Therefore, this work aimed to verify, through an opinion poll in a social network, which elements can restrict people with disabilities from going to a tourist destination.

For this purpose, a qualitative methodology was used, with a theoretical-empirical approach. Therefore, firstly, a survey of the theoretical framework was carried out, followed by an opinion poll with people with various disabilities, who responded to a questioning in groups of PCD in a social network, during the month of August 2018. From the perception of these people, it was possible to arrive at the results of the sample.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To obtain empirical data, an opinion survey was carried out, specifically with the public of People with Disabilities on the social network Facebook, through groups and PCD friends. An open question to this public was established on the theme "Tourism and Safety", with the following question: "What would prevent you from visiting a particular tourist destination, in relation to your safety?". A certain number of respondents had been reached, following the thought of Panosso

Netto (2005) cited by Tomé Machado (2012, p.51) who states: "a qualitative and humanist research is interested in the deepening of the answers obtained and not in the number of questionnaires". applied". Figure 1 shows the post in one of the social network groups.

Figure 2 depicts in detail the opinion poll inviting group members to participate.

After approximately two weeks, in which the survey was posted in different groups, some participations and responses were obtained, as shown in table 1.

Thus, the result indicates that for People with Disabilities, the limiting factor that appears in the first place to visit a tourist destination is the absence or little architectural accessibility. In this case, they mainly mention the deficient accessibility of the paving of streets and sidewalks, public transport, lighting and, in particular, bathrooms. Some even mentioned that certain natural attractions, such as trails and waterfalls, are impractical to be accessed by PWD and others pointed to the communication and information barrier as obstacles to tourist activities.

In second place is the public security element related to violence, making them afraid of being victims of robberies and crimes, due to their reduced mobility condition, and they may become more susceptible to being attacked and robbed, without being able to defend themselves.

Regarding the second restrictive element pointed out by the research, understood here as Public Safety, the UN declares that People with Disabilities are more likely to be victims of rape or violence, according to a 2004 study in the United Kingdom, and are less likely to be victims of rape or violence. to receive police intervention, legal protection or preventive care (UN, 2004). Reinforcing this statement, in Brazil, Gomes et al. (2015) published an article in which they report:

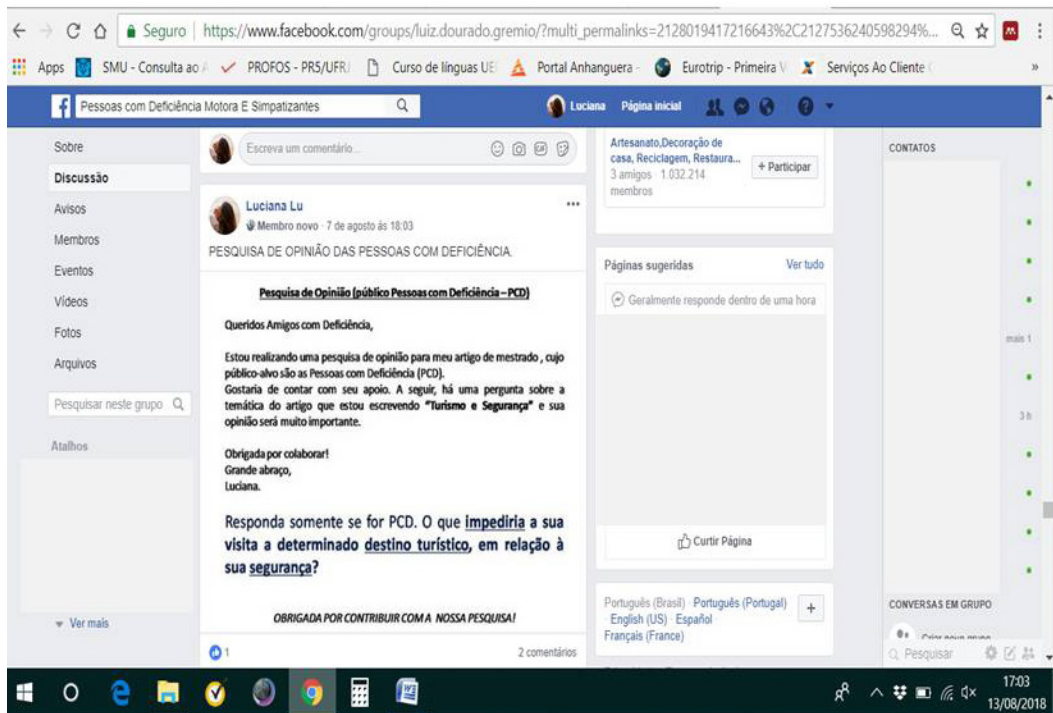


Figure 1. Opinion poll on Facebook.

Source: Own elaboration (2018).

### **Pesquisa de Opinião (público Pessoas com Deficiência – PCD)**

**Queridos Amigos com Deficiência,**

**Estou realizando uma pesquisa de opinião para meu artigo de mestrado , cujo público-alvo são as Pessoas com Deficiência (PCD).**

**Gostaria de contar com seu apoio. A seguir, há uma pergunta sobre a temática do artigo que estou escrevendo “Turismo e Segurança” e sua opinião será muito importante.**

**Obrigada por colaborar!**

**Grande abraço,  
Luciana.**

**Responda somente se for PCD. O que impediria a sua visita a determinado destino turístico, em relação à sua segurança?**

***OBRIGADA POR CONTRIBUIR COM A NOSSA PESQUISA!***

Figure 2. Survey details.

Source: Own elaboration (2018).

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWD) GROUP (Espírito Santo, Brazil)

Respondent 1: "Place for easy access for my ticket and to be able to walk safely because I walk slowly and limp."

GROUP PEOPLE WITH MOTOR DISABILITIES AND SUPPORTERS

Respondent 2: "Yes. Security often makes me think about not going somewhere to distance myself from violence."

UNION GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (UPCD)

Respondent 3: "For starters, have you noticed the travel buses that have these symbols? Have you seen how we are transported inside? Only then it's not safe anymore, you don't know if you're going to fall on the way in or on the way out; I say this because I've been through it, and we still run the risk of arriving at the place and the structure we need is zero, and a trip that would be to relax, enjoy, end up in an Indian program."

PERSON WITH DISABILITIES GROUP

Respondent 4: "Fear of being robbed and not being able to run or defend myself."

Respondent 5: "I believe that one of the problems is the poor construction of accessibility, such as the ramps, which simply remove the steps in many places and so there is a very sharp angle, causing frequent falls."

Respondent 6: "In my case, what would prevent me would only be accessibility."

Respondent 7: "If you do not have accessibility and adapted bathroom."

Respondent 8: "Accessibility".

Respondent 9: "I have a lot of difficulty balancing in some places, so activities such as trails, at heights, or on paths with many obstacles are practically impossible."

Respondent 10: "Lack of accessibility."

Respondent 11: "An adequate bathroom. Actually a bathroom... for example: if I need to empty my ostomy bag and I'm hiking, how can I go to a bathroom? In this case, I don't do the trail."

Respondent 12: "Security and accessibility."

Respondent 13: "If it is a violent region with no accessibility, but especially if it is a violent region."

Respondent 14: "Places without access, without security regarding physical integrity."

Respondent 15: "Places without accessibility that put my physical integrity at risk, I do not go to."

Respondent 16: "Suitable bathroom for my conditions."

Respondent 17: "As my disability is an ileostomy, I have never had limits about anything. On very long trails I need to take 3 times, more water than a person with bowels, once I drank the whole group's water because I didn't foresee that. Bathroom I turn around. If you can't rinse the bag, just drain it, which is what people from abroad do on a daily basis. The most difficult thing is to empty the bag in river or sea. External water pressure does not let the contents out. Once I got out of the river and went behind a tree to empty my bag. Switching is smooth. Shoot and trade anywhere. But when it's not a proper bathroom and I can't shower, as soon as I get home I change it again. Even if it's only 2 hours later. I think the only thing I wouldn't do would be something that required a lot of strength related to weight, mountaineering, for example. But then it's not tourism, right? It's a more extreme sport."

Respondent 18: "Accessibility and someone who can describe to me what the vision cannot handle."



STUDENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S COURSE IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (UFF)

Respondent 19: "Precarious architectural accessibility conditions. For those with physical disabilities, for example, walking around downtown Rio de Janeiro is an ordeal. Potholed streets, missing or poorly located ramps, etc. The issue of urban lighting is also important to highlight."

EFFICIENT DISABLED GROUP

Respondent 20: "A very important article for us who are physically disabled. Many of these places are unsafe and not accessible. You go to a hotel, for example, and you don't have a room with bathrooms adapted for taking a shower, for example."

Respondent 21: "What would prevent me from visiting a particular tourist destination is the lack of accessibility."

Respondent 22: "Answering the question, regarding security, nothing; but in terms of accessibility, yes, it would stop me."

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION DIVISION (SENSIBILIZA - UFF)

Respondent 23: "What prevents and bothers me the most is the lack of physical and architectural accessibility: ramps, elevators and/or vertical platforms. There are also no adapted bathrooms with a changing table for the elderly and people with disabilities in buildings – public or private."

DISABLED, ELDERLY AND FAMILY GROUP (ARARAQUARA - SP, BRAZIL)

Respondent 24: "For me, these are places where the walk is very irregular or I have to climb certain attractions, like waterfalls, I don't have enough firmness in my left lower limb."

GROUP THE VOICE OF HAIR CHAIRMEN

Respondent 25: "The lack of accessibility and lack of information about the tourist destination would prevent me from planning a visit to this place".

Table 1. Opinion poll responses.

Source: Own elaboration (2018).

One of the problems encountered was related to the social invisibility of this violence in Brazil, since official and reliable data related to the subject are still scarce, which prevents the knowledge of the real dimension. Thus, if the violation is not recognized or reported, invisibility is perpetuated (Gomes et al., 2015, p.4.)

As for the vulnerability of PWD, Gomes et al. (2015, p.5) cite Kane (2008):

In fact, vulnerability is not a “characteristic”, but a phenomenon related to the way people with disabilities are understood and treated. In this sense, it is likely that some deficiencies are interpreted as making a person more “vulnerable” and an “easier” target for violent acts. What is essential here, as in many other areas related to violence and disability, and even for people who do not have any disability, is to ensure that people have autonomy, knowledge and the means to protect themselves (Kane, 2008).

In Brazil, so far, no specific data and statistics have been produced in relation to violence against Persons with Disabilities. It is known, however, that the practice is always associated with social, cultural and economic factors of the community that sees disability as something negative (Maio & Gugel, 2009). In view of this, the Committee on Public Security and Combating Organized Crime of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil approved a proposal that obliges the public power to annually prepare statistics on violence against people with disabilities (Siqueira, 2017). Although there is still a lack of officially recorded data, PWDs are able to feel their exposure to deficient public security in their daily lives.

The result of the opinion poll reveals this. It can be concluded that the little or absence of public security is an impediment for People with Disabilities, who consider themselves more vulnerable to violence, which makes them, for protective measures, avoid leaving their homes to visit tourist places, thus contributing to the low enjoyment of tourism by this public in the attractions.

All this creates a paradox with laws that protect the rights of Persons with Disabilities, such as Law number:

13,146, Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Statute of Persons with Disabilities) which in its Chapter II, article 8, deals with on equality and non-discrimination:

It is the duty of the State, society and the family to ensure, as a matter of priority, the realization of rights relating to life, health, sexuality, paternity and maternity, food, housing, education, professionalization, work, social security, habilitation and rehabilitation, transport, **accessibility**, culture, sport, **tourism**, leisure, information, communication, scientific and technological advances, dignity, respect, freedom, family and community life, among others arising from the Federal Constitution, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol and the laws and other norms that guarantee their personal, social and economic well-being (Brazil, 2015, emphasis added).

In view of this, the question remains as to when people with disabilities will continue to ignore their rights, including those to enjoy tourism with accessibility and safety, as verified in this article through their testimonies.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In Brazil, the Major Law, the Federal Constitution of 1988, in its article 5, assures all citizens: “all are equal before the law, without distinction of any nature, guaranteeing Brazilians and foreigners residing in the country the right to inviolability of the right to life, liberty, equality, security and property, in the following terms” (Brazil, 1988). And yet, it declares in its item XV: “it is free to move within the national territory in time of peace, and any person, under the terms of the law, may enter, remain or leave it with their goods” (Brazil, 1988).

However, an antagonism between legislation and real life can be demonstrated, since mobility in terms of accessibility and public safety seems to hamper the rights of many people to come and go, especially

people with disabilities. Such travel limitation is reflected in the deprivation of PWDs from visiting tourist destinations, thus not promoting the diversity of the visiting public.

This limiting situation could be observed in the statements of people with disabilities, through an opinion survey, carried out through the social network Facebook. Through this research instrument, they reported that there are factors that restrict them to make tourist visits in relation to their safety, mainly pointing to the poor accessibility and insufficient public security, which produces events of violence and crime, as they feel exposed as to their protection and physical integrity.

Therefore, this work sought to contribute to the importance of thinking about tourism, accessibility and safety at the same time, in order to provide people with or without disabilities the equal opportunity to have tourist experiences in a safe way.

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