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ANALYSIS OF TRAVEL CONSUMPTION BY INHABITANTS OF THE COMMUNITY OF ROCINHA IN LIGHT OF HOLT'S TAXONOMY

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ABSTRACT: consumers from low-income communities, once discriminated against, are now increasingly present in tourism destinations, whether due to increased access to travel thanks to more competitive airfares, or to the increased income that these consumers now enjoy. Therefore, travel consumption can be seen as a phenomenon that goes beyond its merely utilitarian aspect of moving from one place to another for rest and relaxation. It is filled with symbolic aspects, which are often influential in the purchase decision. This work investigates these meanings in the consumption of travel by clients from the community of Rocinha, Brazil. Holt's metaphors were adopted as the theoretical framework and parameter for analysis of the meanings observed in the interviewees' discourses. These metaphors represent classifications of meanings of consumption seen from the perspectives of possible service-mediated interaction between people. The data collection was performed through 12 in-depth interviews with clients, followed by triangulation with two travel agents in Rocinha. The interviews were coded, then submitted to content analysis following Bardin's protocol. The study is qualitative, with an interpretative approach. Therefore, it does not seek to generalize its findings.

KEYWORDS: low-income consumers, meanings, travel, outbound tourism.

INTRODUCTION

This study sought to understand travel purchasing behavior among residents of the Brazilian community of Rocinha. The authors sought to analyze the meanings attributed by customers to the trips purchased. For this purpose, the authors used Holt's taxonomy (1995), which categorizes four types of meanings, called metaphors. These meanings refer to the symbolic benefits that consumption provides to its buyers in two ways. Firstly, through an experience, that favors a subjective and personal benefit of a psychological nature – this is the metaphor of consumption as experience, and secondly, as a benefit, that allows a person to self-affirm him/herself, and at the same time differentiate him/herself within a social group – this is the metaphor of consumption as integration. The other two metaphors relate to: benefits

that contribute to the sense of belonging to a particular group – the metaphor of consumption as classification, and finally, the benefit of consumption that allows the expression of individuals within a group in a space of socialization – the metaphor consumption as play.

In order to analyze the purchasing behavior of the inhabitants of Rocinha, the authors selected the oldest and most prestigious travel agency in the community, established 16 years previously. In-depth interviews were conducted with twelve of its clients. For source triangulation purposes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), two additional interviews were conducted with one of the partners of the selected agency, as well as with another competing travel agency. It is worth noting that in terms of qualitative methods, the use of several sources is recommended, both for the purpose of increasing the amplitude and depth of an analysis, and due to the possibility of validating the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The income of the respondents was not investigated, since the focus was to select only residents of Rocinha. It should be mentioned that community has seen an increase in trade and social ascension, which can be perceived through the further growth of trade, and the expansion and remodeling of housing units (Medeiros, 2007). From 2003 to 2013, there was a considerable increase in income among individuals from lower economic segments, with the inclusion of new consumers, not only changing the pyramid of Brazilian social stratification pyramid, but also generating changes in the consumption habits of these individuals (Neri, 2014). Rocinha arouses interest not only for its greatness in terms of geographic coverage and absolute population, but also due to its outstanding economic strength. According to the latest Census conducted by the Rio de Janeiro Municipality in 2010 (Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro, 2010a), the population of the community of Rocinha stood at 73,410 individuals and 6,145 companies (Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro, 2010b), showing its economic dynamism.

This study contributes from the theoretical point of view by adding research of a qualitative nature to the area of consumer behavior. Following the analysis, a description of consumption habits of the interviewees is presented, although these observations cannot be generalized due to the qualitative nature and

the limitation of the number of respondents. However, in terms of theoretical contribution, the authors propose the inclusion of a new typology for the meaning of consumption of travel products. From a practical point of view, this work can assist in the development of new marketing strategies that are more effective for companies in the area of tourism, being targeted towards a particular public.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Although the objective of the study is to analyze the consumption of individuals in the Rocinha community, the existing Brazilian academic literature on low-income consumption emphasizes aspects related to retail (Parente & Barki, 2005) and the purchasing process (Assad & Arruda, 2006). Recent Brazilian low-income consumer studies have shown the influence of vehicle acquisition (Lübeck, Fallavena, Santini, and Sampaio, 2014), the digital universe (da Silva Castro, 2012), the sophistication of consumption patterns of Brazilian households (Luppe, 2010), as well as other findings on low-income consumer behavior (Chauvel and Mattos, 2008).

Concerning low-income Brazilian consumption studies in the area of tourism, it is worth citing Barreto and Bochi's (2002) quantitative and qualitative research of IBAM and DATA POPULAR (2005), and Bacha and Strehlau's (2009) study on low-income tourists. In addition, Malerba (2011) conducted a study to determine the profile of low-income road tourists visiting the city of São Paulo. It is worth noting that most of these studies are quantitative and descriptive in nature. Regarding interpretative studies on tourism consumption, that of Rocha (2014) stands out, as a study of the meanings attributed to sea cruises by low-income consumers.

LOW INCOME AND TOURISM CONSUMPTION

In extant Brazilian academic literature no studies were found that specifically investigated the nature of travel-related product consumption by residents of communities like Rocinha, through outbound travel agents. However, some

studies have touched on the theme by researching the rise of social classes (Neri, 2014), analyzing the consumption profile of low-income bands (Barreto and Bochi, 2002) and studying leisure among elderly and young people of lower social classes (Mattoso, Lima and Neves, 2011). These studies corroborate with Miller's (2001) statement that consumption can also be a way to reduce the hardships and sufferings of lower income citizens. Regarding inbound tourism, the favela, or slum has been associated with a form of 'voyeur tourism', in which tourists – generally foreigners, observe the daily life of these communities (Freire-Medeiros, 2007; Freire-Medeiros, 2008; Serson, & Pires, 2008; Freire-Medeiros, 2009).

Regarding the consumption of travel products, IBAM and DATAPOPULAR (2003) suggest that trips are an essential item for economically disadvantaged individuals. In their conception, travel is different from tourism; tourism is the designation for "long-term" travel, or travel to "special destinations", involving "disconnection from reality". Also according to the study, that public would have a more positive attitude towards life, understanding that it is possible to make their dream come true, thinking that 'someday, who knows, I'll do it'. In addition, according to the study, 70% of the respondents agreed with the following statement "one cannot live without traveling", and only 7% agreed with the statement that "traveling is throwing away money" (IBAM & DATAPOPULAR, 2005, p.23).

According to the interviewees, the ideal Brazilian destinations for tourism would be the 'Northeastern Beaches', the 'Pantanal', the 'Amazon' and the 'Serras Gaúchas'. This study also pointed out, as reasons for traveling, 'escaping from daily life' and the 'feeling of freedom'.

Another survey, conducted in the city of São Paulo by Bacha and Strehlau (2009) with low-income consumers, showed that only twenty-two percent (22%) had not traveled in the last three years, and fifty-five percent (55%) had made up to three trips in the same period. The interviewees had traveled mostly by car, accompanied by their families. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of their travels had lasted less than a week, while forty percent (40%) had lasted up to three days. The study also pointed to travel as a way of meeting the need to 'get

out of the daily routine' and 'strengthen ties of sociability'. The question of self-esteem, the valorization of the human being, and the search to fulfil one's dream, were also evidenced in this work.

Another study by Malerba (2011), also with low-income consumers, found that forty-eight percent (48%) of respondents pointed to price as the main factor in their choice of bus as the means of transportation. Seventeen percent (17%) indicated that road transportation is the only alternative form of travel, whether because the interviewees come from municipalities not served by airlines, or because they did not possess private cars. The other respondents mentioned other reasons for choosing buses as the means of transportation: comfort (12%), location of the terminal (8%), convenience of schedules (8%) and fear of flying (8%). The study showed that even with the popularization of air transport in Brazil; other reasons can also influence the decision for road transportation.

According to Medeiros (2007) and Neri et al. (2011), low income neighborhoods, such as Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro, encompass an economically robust market and 'quite diversified' trade. According to the last census data, there were 6,145 registered firms in the community of Rocinha, of which 72% were located outside of households (Rio de Janeiro City Hall, 2010b). The main customers of the surveyed firms were the community residents – sixty-seven percent (66.7%), followed by residents of neighboring areas (23.7%). This information corroborates with the statements of Parente and Barki (2006), that the proximity of the residence is an important factor in the choice of point of sale for that public.

THE INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVE OF CONSUMPTION

In the 1980s, a new research approach emerged, providing an alternative to the dominant positivist model in the area of consumer research - 'Consumer Culture Theory' (CCT). It brought a qualitative approach through its 'interpretative' techniques. Consumption is viewed as a socially constructed and culturally protected phenomenon. CCT addresses aspects of how individuals actively create and transform the symbolic meanings of advertisements, brands, goods

or services, in order to express their personal and social particularities (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

In a seminal perspective on consumer studies, Veblen (1988) argued that the motive behind property is emulation, i.e. to imitate the other. In industrial societies, possession of wealth conferred honor, and because of its nature, man would not conform to the general increase of wealth of his community. According to this author, their individual needs always reflect the desire to surpass others, with the purpose of ostentation. In post-industrial societies, authors such as Bourdieu (1987), Douglas and Isherwood (2004) and McCracken (2007) pointed to a direct relationship between consumption, culture and social values. Consumption, from their perspective, helps to define the culture and individual values in a society. Moreover, it assigns meanings to goods and services. The significance of products and services extrapolates its utility and commercial values, generating confirmation of the transmissible nature of significance. Consumer goods, therefore, carry and convey cultural significance (Douglas & Isherwood, 2004; Sahlins, 2003).

The works of McCracken (2007) and Belk (1988) were milestones in consumer behavior. McCracken (2007) perceived the constant transits between meanings, absorbed from the culturally constituted world and subsequently transferred to a consumption good or service. Then meanings are absorbed from the object and transferred to an individual consumer. Therefore, cultural meanings transit through three places: the culturally constituted world, the consumer good (or service) and finally the individual consumer. (McCracken, 2007). Belk (1988) corroborates with McCracken's (2003) stating that possessions have a temporal sense of relating to our past, which McCracken (2003) calls the 'patina effect'. It relates to possessions that can also express meanings connected to our memories and feelings. Examples of these meanings would be travel souvenirs or a photo-album that make a travel experience tangible, a toy that brings back memories of our childhood, or a piece of furniture inherited from a relative, causing us to remember our roots. Goods that are part of our 'extended-self' offer a personal archive, like a museum, which reflects history and changes in life (Belk, 1988). Therefore, for these two authors, consumption goes well beyond satisfying needs. In reality, it provides meanings for life.

PRESENTATION OF HOLT'S (1995) METAPHORS (OR MEANINGS OF CONSUMPTION)

Holt (1995) framed consumption meanings into four types, or metaphors. The author used two measures of analysis, the purpose of consumption - autotelic or instrumental, and the structure of action - objective or interpersonal. The end product or service help understand the purpose of consumption. When the end is in itself, it would be autotelic. Even if the good was an instrument to obtaining other purposes, it would be instrumental. The other measure of analysis encompasses the degree of involvement of individuals with products or services, which may be simply through personal involvement with the object; or when interaction occurs with other people, the good or service becomes the interpersonal liaison piece. While contrasting these possibilities of measures, four metaphors appear in this context: 'consumption as experience' - autotelic and objective, 'consumption as integration' - instrumental and objective, 'consumption as play' - autotelic and interpersonal and 'consumption as classification' - instrumental and interpersonal.

CONSUMPTION AS EXPERIENCE

Holt's (1995) metaphors served as the basis for several consumer studies. We highlight studies to show the symbolic aspects of cell phone consumption (Fitzgerald and Drennan, 2003), the behavior of Japanese tourists (Krag, 2014), acculturation practices (Cruz and Buchanan-Oliver, 2015) tourism of war sites (Lisle, 2000, MacCarthy, 2016, Iles, 2008), performative work in tourism (Bærenholdt and Jensen 2009) and nostalgia in tourism (Fairley and Gammon, 2005).

The literature of 'consumption as experience' denotes the hedonic and subjective character between the consumer and his object of consumption, and focuses on the psychological aspects (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). These seminal authors searched the "multisensory facets", fantasies, and emotions linked to consumption. Other authors emphasize "profane and sacred" aspects (Belk, Walendorf and Sherry, 1989). The sacred is connected to places, time,

tangible and intangible objects, people and experiences. "Sacred" places can be seen in "temples of consumption", such as shops or malls. With regard to time, there are the rituals of consumption, which take place during Christmas, New Year's and Easter holidays. The authors emphasize the use of special clothes, food and specific songs.

Charismatic leaders, saints, or even pets can be regarded as "sacred". Already the destination category still within the "profane and sacred" aspects fits, especially in the pursuit of well-deserved vacations, where the only obligation is to experience gastronomic pleasures, relax, and connect with friends and family.

Brazilian consumer studies depict the 'hedonic consumption' of low-income tourism (Castilhos, 2007) and supermarket shopping (Parente, Barki and Kato, 2005).

'Consumption as integration', however, deals with how consumers create meanings and manipulate them through a variety of consumer practices. Belk (1988) explains that consumption serves to generate identities, and even confers an 'extended-self'. Maclaran and Brown (2005) report the symbolic appropriation of sites, which may be shopping centers or department stores. Often, when these establishments change their configuration, they leave consumers helpless, since they have lost part of their identity.

CONSUMPTION AS INTEGRATION

The metaphor 'consumption as integration' is evidenced in the existing Brazilian academic literature on low-income consumers, through the studies of Araujo, Vanzellotti and Levy (2012), regarding beloved objects of young people. The loss of identity also appears in extant Brazilian academic literature in Mattoso and Rocha (2009), as the fear of 'having a bad credit record'. In addition, several brands are perceived by low-income consumers as position identifiers (Chauvel and Suarez, 2009; Livramento, Hor-Meyll and Pessôa, 2011).

CONSUMPTION AS CLASSIFICATION

In the metaphor 'consumption as classification', the cultural aspects and meanings of goods promote a symbolic labeling of individuals. The distinction

might be caused by the possession of goods as well as by the mode of consumption of certain products. Access to certain goods or services denotes economic, cultural and social capital of consumers (Bourdieu, 2011, Veblen, 1988). Luxury and taste are full of meanings, and can be social markers. This type of metaphor was demonstrated in the study of Rocha, Martins, Pacheco and Goes (2011) on the consumption of mobile phones by low-income youths. Besides the instrumental aspects, these objects have a symbolic meaning of distinction and acceptance in the adult world.

CONSUMPTION AS PLAY

Consumption as play is represented by collective experiences of consumption, such as watching sports games. The meanings may have to do with communion and socialization (Arnould and Price, 1993; Holt, 1995). Rocha (2014) evidenced this type of meaning among the interviewees who participated in a sea-cruise. According to the author, those are services to be enjoyed accompanied by someone. Although the participants were not familiar with the other people on the cruise, the author identified the role of drinking as a means of leading to a 'contagious behavior' of interpersonal interaction, for role-play and dancing during the cruise-ship parties.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This is an exploratory work of a qualitative nature, and as such, it does not seek to make generalizations. In terms of research protocol, it follows the recommendations of Flick (2009), Denzin & Lincoln (2005). In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 customers of a travel agency based in Rocinha, aiming at understanding the interviewees' point of view. In Rocinha, two other travel agencies were identified. In both cases, there was similarity with regard to the customer segment of the market and their consumption behavior, although in the third agency there were no sales of road tickets or bus charters. Given the similarity of the three agencies found, and because the agency studied has been operating for more than 16 years, it was preferred to focus the interviews efforts on customers of the older agency, this being a choice based on their

typicality. Two additional interviews with one of the owners of the chosen agency and one of the competitors, served as a form of source triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), which indicates the authors' concern with the validation of the findings. The researchers also used observation of the environment and functioning of the agencies, and made field notes that complemented the information collected through interviews.

The researchers followed the recommendations of Atkinson & Flint (2001) and Denzin & Lincoln (2005), whereby the sampling process should end when the search for new interviewees reaches theoretical saturation. Therefore, no new contacts were added after reaching 12 interviewees, as the reports had become very similar. At this point, the information provided by the interviewees had little novelty to add the material already collected, without significant relevance for the improvement of theoretical reflection. The repetition found by the researchers related to the holiday destinations – the Northeastern region of Brazil, and the travel shopping behavior, reported by the interviewees. It is worth emphasizing that the saturation point of the interviews does not depend directly on the theoretical reference used by the researchers, but rather on the research objectives, the level of depth to be explored and the homogeneity of the population interviewed.

The average duration of the interviews was 55 minutes; the interviews were conducted at various locations, such as a restaurant near the agency, the homes of some of the interviewees, and even the agency waiting room. The researchers recorded all interviews on a tablet and subsequently transcribed them. The data collection took place between July, 26th and September 26th of 2014. The content of the discourses was analyzed according to the Holt's (1995) taxonomy of meanings. The analysis of interview content followed Bardin's (2006) protocol, as well as the recommendations of Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy (1988) for qualitative studies.

As a limitation of the method, the collection is restricted to the year 2014. However, given the evolution of the economic crisis in recent years, the public surveyed may have undergone changes regarding the consumption of tourism products.

According to what was reported to the researchers by the travel agents, the vast majority of their customers are of Northeastern origin and buy air tickets to visit relatives in their cities or states of origin. The profile of the 12 interviewees selected is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of the respondents

Number	1	2	3	4
Initials	A.C.	C.S.	D.C.	F.J.
Age (years)	39	69	33	49
Occupation	Maid	Merchant	Deliveryman	Maid
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Female
Marital Status	Married	Married	Married	Widow
Neighborhood	Rocinha	Rocinha	Rocinha	Rocinha
Number	5	6	7	8
Initials	M.J.O.	S.P.M.	M.S.A.	P.M.
Age (years)	26	40	34	32
Occupation	Merchant	Mototaxi	Shop Clerk	Ticket Clerk
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Male
Marital Status	Married	Married	Single	Married
Neighborhood	Rocinha	Rocinha	Rocinha	Rocinha
Number	9	10	11	12
Initials	F.B.	E.A.F.	L.C.	F.R.B.C.
Age (years)	48	45	43	27
Occupation	Barman	Waiter	Carpenter	Mototaxi
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male
Marital Status	Married	Married	Married	Single
Neighborhood	Rocinha	Rocinha	Rocinha	Rocinha

Of the clients interviewed, seven reported that they would travel to the states of Ceará, Paraíba, Piauí, Pernambuco and Maranhão. As to the means of transport, 10 reported traveling by plane, and of these, six would use a combination of air and road, since their final destination is not served by airports. They would have to fly to a capital city and take a bus from there. The remaining two respondents would only use road transportation.

The average travel time of the respondents ranged from 8 to 14 days for half of respondents, and from 15 to 30 days for the other half. A relative accompanied most respondents while travelling, and most travelled to visit relatives once a year. Barreto and Bochi (2002) state that 80% of low-income families would save the resources needed for travelling by putting money aside

each month; this practice corroborates with the profile of the respondents. Therefore, the interviewees considered spending on vacations and travel as essential expenses.

TRIANGULATION OF INTERVIEWS WITH TRAVEL AGENTS

To increase validity of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), the researchers performed triangulation of sources with two travel agents. The travel agent whose customers were selected for interview reported that their firm was formed 18 years ago and began operating informally in 1994. He mentioned having three travel agencies established in partnership with two other family members. The main agency is located in Rocinha, and the other two in the community of Rio das Pedras. The entrepreneur reports that he did not receive any kind of training related to tourism or business administration. His business trajectory was typical of entrepreneurs driven by opportunities derived from the demands of the communities' inhabitants. All this took place alongside the increase in income of the local inhabitants:

At this time, there was practically nobody but my own agency here. However, after some time, many people saw [my business growing] and opened their own. At one point there were six travel agencies [operating] here in Rocinha. Three of them have recently shut their doors. Nowadays there is competition in our business; [before] we were the only ones in this area. My brother used to say, and I say the same thing, that I have no competitor. I'm the kind of guy that is always looking for the cheapest ticket. I'll tell the customer to come back later today or come back tomorrow, sometimes there's a difference of R\$200 to R\$300 from one day to the next. In this way, I gain the confidence of my customers (Travel Agent 1, August 2, 2014).

The travel agent sells a large volume of bus and air tickets. He reports starting selling air tickets when prices dropped due to the creation of Gol Airlines in 2001. The company introduced the "low-cost, low tariff" business model to the Brazilian market, as the entrepreneur attests:

(...) with the entrance of Gol, (sic) it began selling tickets for R\$39, R\$59, R\$79, and the other [airways] began to drop their prices too, it became cheap ... Ten years ago [in 2004] we were so busy that you couldn't even get into the

waiting room here. Airline ticket sales are higher in Rocinha and bus ticket sales are higher in the Rio das Pedras. Here, as it is South Zone, which is much sought after, I sell to people from the South Zone of Rio, São Cristóvão and even Jacarepaguá. (Travel Agent 1, August 2, 2014).

The three branches of the travel agency are legally registered and operate with online ticketing systems. For airline tickets, they use the airlines' own reservation systems, as well as flight consolidator tools. For the sale of bus tickets, they use the system of the Itapemirim bus company. The entrepreneur also mentions the importance of the Brazilian Northeastern population of Rocinha as the focus of his clientele. According to him, also a Northeasterner, there is a certain "confidence" of the fellow citizens. Regarding the clients' profile, the entrepreneur mentions: "most of my customers are Rocinha residents, who have come from Ceará and Paraíba. They buy tickets to visit their relatives in the Northeast". (Travel Agent 1, August 2, 2014).

The other travel agent interviewed by the researchers claims that his agency is a branch of a network present only in low-income neighborhoods. The owners specialized in opening travel agencies to sell air tickets to inhabitants of the communities of Beira Rio, Muzema (Recreio), Rocinha and Pingo D'Água (Santa Cruz), always setting up the businesses using their own capital. According to one of the executives, ninety-five percent (95%) of their clientele are from Ceará, following the same profile as the customers of 'Travel Agent 1'. According to his report, "everyone who buys tickets here go on a vacation trip to visit relatives". Although the owners are from Rio de Janeiro, Paraná, and came from another business sector, they set up travel agencies focused only on communities, linked to the CUFA [Unique Favela Central]. They also reported that they learned the trade by practice, with no specific training, similar to Travel Agent 1. When asked about their clientele, they mentioned that these consist mainly of inhabitants of Rocinha.

ANALYSIS OF MEANINGS - CONSUMPTION AS EXPERIENCE

The hedonic nature of 'consumption as experience' and the 'multisensory facets', fantasies and emotions linked to the consumption of tourism products

(Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982) were present in the interviewees' reports. "Occupational" and "sacred" aspects of vacation were also evidenced in the discourses, following the ideas of Belk, Walendorf and Sherry (1989). The report of "like to walk along rivers and farms" can also be associated with the "sacred" elements of both the rural nature of the Northeastern hinterland and the 'typical foods and fun', as shown below:

I travel twice a year to Teresina. My wife goes to São Luis once a year to visit her parents (sic). I usually stay 10 days, I going to walk along rivers and farms, go to forró [rural dances], drink beer. My parents live 20 minutes from the center of Teresina. (Interviewee 3)

The "sacred" is connected to places, time, tangible and intangible objects, people and experiences. The "sacred" sites were also observed as nostalgic aspects of the "return to their original land". The rituals of consumption of typical Northeastern food and relaxation denote hedonic aspects of holiday travel, as evidenced by several reports of customers, among them:

Every year I travel to Recife, I go with my wife, to see my parents. From there I sometimes go by car to Campina Grande or João Pessoa, to see the São João Festival or to some beach nearby. (Interviewee 5).

I travel every year with my son to visit my parents, but I have not travelled the last two years. I going to Teresina and my father picks me up at the airport. From there I go to Maranhão, the city of Pedreira. My priority is to visit my mother. I have a sight problem, I only have 20% of my sight, I stopped working because I kept cutting myself, I have five serious sight problems. My husband practically takes me onto the plane and my father picks me up at the airport. In October, I am going alone for the first time, my 14 year-old son is studying and he will not be able to go with me. I'm going to spend 15 days there. (Interviewee 7).

I have lived in Rocinha for more than 10 years, but I was born in Duque de Caxias. It is rarer for me to travel; I have only been twice to visit my relatives there. I usually buy the ticket for my parents to come from the Northeast to Rio when I take a vacation. (Interviewee 8).

I've lived in Rocinha for almost 30 years. I always buy from this travel agent and the return ticket with his brother. I've been a client of the agency since it opened. Every year I go to Ipú to visit my in-laws and

uncles. It is about 400 kilometers from Fortaleza. My wife's family is from a town about 20 kilometers from Ipú. I spent almost 14 years without going to the Northeast. After marrying her nine years ago, I go every year. I really enjoy [visiting] my wife's family. (Interviewee 9).

I have lived in Rocinha for eight years. I'm already a customer of the agency. I travel every five years to Ceará, usually during the Carnival holidays. The tickets are very expensive this time of year. I go to Fortaleza by plane and from there I go by bus to the interior. My parents and my brothers live there. (Interviewee 12).

Reports of vacation plans and recurrence of trips to visit relatives, in some cases twice a year, corroborate with the authors reports of the hedonic aspects of consumption (Belk, Walendorf and Sherry, 1989). The use of special clothes, food and specific songs also further promote these aspects. The feasts of patron saints also appear in the accounts:

This is the first time I will be traveling back to my homeland. I came from the Northeast straight to Rocinha. That was 33 years ago. I got a plane ticket as a gift from my brother-in-law. I'm going to Fortaleza and then by bus, another six hours trip to Macaraú to visit my brothers. I will spend 10 or 12 days to enjoy the feast of Our Lady, the patron saint. (Interviewed 4).

Every year I travel to Recife, I go with my wife, to see my parents. From there I sometimes go by car to Campina Grande or João Pessoa, to see São João Festival or to some beach nearby. (Interviewee 5).

The interviewees reported the pursuit of much-deserved vacations, where the only desire is to eat, relax, or connect with friends and family. The increase in income can lead to the consumption of products with hedonic meaning, such as leisure and tourism activities.

ANALYSIS OF MEANINGS - CONSUMPTION AS INTEGRATION

Consumption as integration deals with how consumers create meanings and manipulate them. Belk (1988) explains that consumption serves to generate identities, and even confers an extended-self. Regarding tourism, the aspect of desire to visit relatives and connect with their families and places of origin,

as well as aspects related to the Northeastern cultural identity, can generate a symbolic appropriation of the “hometown” or “maternal home” as part of their nostalgic identity. According to Macalaran and Brown (2005), this is the symbolic appropriation of sites. Should consumers experience the death of a close family member or another loved one, this may represent a breach. The impossibility of returning to their home for the reunion of that deceased relative would leave them helpless, as they would lose part of their identity, and their “safe harbor”.

As migrants from the Northeast and residents of Rio de Janeiro, respondents lack the feeling of belonging to those places. The Northeast is their homeland. Moreover, Rocinha, because of its large contingent of Northeastern population, is a place where this sense of belonging is manifested. Similarly, Northeastern fairs or festivals such as the São Cristóvão Pavilion (popularly known as the Northeasterner’s Fair) can act as a place of ‘consumption as integration’. A travel agency where the owners are also of Northeastern origin, having a similar cultural identity, also promotes a dimension of integration through the bonds of trust among fellow compatriots. This is evidenced by the recurrence of purchases, since eight of the 12 clients manifested previously made purchases with the same travel agent. Others reported having come to the agency through the referral of a friend. The following excerpt is an account of one of the customers who showed his degree of intimacy with the owner, who is also from the Northeast:

I always pay him a visit, we are merchant friends, and we understand each other. I pay cash so that I can ask him for a little discount. I travel every month to see visit my building that has been under construction down in Paraíba. (Interviewee 2).

ANALYSIS OF MEANINGS - CONSUMPTION AS CLASSIFICATION

Consumption as a classification in this case can be observed on the purchase of travel packages, cruises or trips abroad. Tourism provides social markers, corroborating with the ideas of Bourdieu (2011) and Veblen (1988), that access to certain consumer goods denote not only economic capital, but also cultural and social capital.

In addition to the recurrence of the interviewees' statement that they were traveling to visit their relatives, there was also a future intention to visit other holiday destinations. In the 'aspirational' destinations, national destinations were predominant over foreign ones. The interviewees mentioned Northeastern destinations such as Salvador, Porto Seguro, Bahia, Fortaleza, Natal, Fernando de Noronha, Campina Grande, João Pessoa, Porto de Galinhas and Canoa Quebrada.

The foreign destinations mentioned by the respondents varied between European destinations: Madrid (football motivation), Switzerland and Greece; Africa (wildlife motivation); Americas: Buenos Aires (football motivation) and Miami (shopping motivation). Some did not express a desire to travel abroad. The most emblematic report was in defense of the idea that one should 'spend money in Brazil', as shown below:

I want to visit Iguaçu Falls. I'm not interested in going overseas. Brazilians have to get to know Brazil, and spend their money here. There is so much in my country to be seen! (Interviewee 9).

Here are some excerpts from interviews expressing travel aspirations, showing travel interests other than the typical travel pattern of family or home visits:

I would like to visit Fortaleza or Natal on a trip. I want to travel more in the Northeast, but I lack the time. I even want to go abroad, but there is lack of time and possibilities, it has to be organized, time wise, financially. (Interviewee 2)

I have a dream of visiting Madrid because of football. I want to meet Real Madrid. I am already getting my passport done. (Interviewee 3)

I never thought about going overseas, but if I could afford it, I'd like to go to Africa to see the animals, the jaguars, the lions, the zebras. There are many people who want to go to Disney, to visit the parks. But I want to see the animals in the wild. (Interviewed 4)

I want to visit Porto de Galinhas. When I was in Pernambuco, many people told me good things about there. Overseas, I'd like to go to Greece, because I know people who tell me wonderful things about there. (Interviewee 8)

In Brazil I would like to visit Bahia. Abroad I would like to go to Miami for the good value for money shopping. They say the place is beautiful too. (Interviewee 11).

ANALYSIS OF MEANINGS - CONSUMPTION AS A PLAY

Consumption as play, as previously mentioned, is the result of a meaning that occurs in a space of exchange between people who are involved in the consumption of goods or services, and has an autotelic dimension related to the personal enjoyment and psychological pleasure of the participants. Most of the trips occur with the presence of relatives, which denotes a common space of enjoyment that the trip offers. Apart from its role in companionship and having fun together, travel strengthens links between people. Although that simple role that each one plays, since the play is reduced to only two relatives, it is a significant one. Holidays are scheduled over a year of savings. It is a much-desired and well-deserved rest space, coupled with the return to their homelands.

It was observed with the reports of the respondents that the meanings of travel consumption are linked in all the metaphors, but with more pronounced statements in 'consumption as experience' and 'consumption as integration'. However, it was observed that many reports reflected an intimate desire for a definite return to their homelands, following the dream come true of going back home, to be welcomed by their families and returning to their roots.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Regarding the interviewees' behavior, despite the increase in the levels of income and credit experienced by most of the underprivileged portions of the population, one observes resistance, or perhaps discomfort in 'abandoning the habit' of visiting their relatives just on their holidays. However, the interviewees stated that they would like to visit coastal destinations in the Northeastern of Brazil or even other overseas destinations. It is observed that many respondents would even be able to visit some other destinations, as the cost of the air tickets or even travel packages would not be so different. The barriers would

relate more to social and cultural capital, and not necessarily economic capital, corroborating with the thoughts of Bourdieu (2011).

The authors noticed a gap in the research on alternative approaches of communication with this public, aiming at the elaboration of more effective strategies in the provision of travel packages through travel agents located in low-income neighborhoods. Family gatherings could take place in other contexts, such as sea cruises along the Brazilian coast or other excursions (Rocha, 2014).

The present research observes similar results to the study of IBAM and DATAPOPULAR (2005), which states that ninety-one percent (91%) of low-income people organize their trips on their own, not buying travel packages. Another similarity is the meaning of travel as a channel for improving the self-esteem, valuing the human being, and following a dream.

Consumption is also a way of seeking a sense of belonging, as stated by Castilhos (2007). This fact was also observed in the interviewees' reports. The sense of belonging manifested itself in their accomplishments. First, because these consumers can travel by plane and take vacations regularly, visiting their relatives. Secondly, because according to their reports, they aim to travel abroad or even go on cruises. This type of consumption denotes a sense of belonging, which can also be a way of reducing the hardships and sufferings of lower income populations (Miller, 2001). Therefore, in practical terms, vacations can become an element of escaping from everyday life.

In relation to means of transportation, a familiarity and regularity is observed, among the public researched, in acquiring air tickets. This was perceived both in the behavior during the act of purchase observed in the agency, and in the reports of those interviewed, who have a habit of traveling by plane. In addition, a similarity of characteristics with those identified in the literature was seen, with respect to the chosen travel agency and clientele, since all were residents of the Rocinha community.

Another interesting finding is the possible entry barrier to the installation of other travel agents. This barrier is established both by the entrepreneurs' relationship with clients, derived from cultural identity ties, and by a family

service process. Customers feel at home when being served by a 'fellow countryman'. They identify themselves with those who serve them. Their life history, language and cultural profile resemble theirs. The opportunity to visit the travel agent is also an example of an opportunity for welcoming, talking and complicity, as noted by the researchers.

It is noted that despite the high income of some Rocinha residents, they feel comfortable and even find it convenient to continue living in their community. The collectivism present in the lower economic strata, and the protection networks formed by the Northeastern immigrants in the communities, make up a particular picture of the characteristics of this public.

A theoretical contribution of this study is that it brings a better understanding of how consumers in low-income communities attribute meanings to their holiday travels, showing how strong the meaning related to 'consumption as experience' is, and 'consumption as integration', according to Holt's metaphors and typology of meanings. A second contribution to the theory is the discussion of a category of meaning that is salient, not contemplated in the metaphors of Holt, with potential of use in other contexts of tourism. This would be entitled 'comfort consumption'. The feelings triggered by returning home, the sensation of being welcome to their homeland during their vacations, are linked to the warmth of family sentiment. It appears to bring some comfort, as the stories evoke. This would be different from the 'consumption as integration' metaphor insofar as individuals are emotionally fulfilled in this goal of returning to the roots without needing to self-affirm in their cultural identity. Here it is evident that these individuals "are already Northeastern", while in 'consumption as integration', the essence would be in the benefit of the good/service making the connection for belonging to a group, therefore defining their identity. This new metaphor would also differ from 'consumption by experience'. 'Consumption as comfort' would be rooted in the definitive return home and not merely as a momentary experience of reliving the past.

Thus 'consumption as comfort' would be related to a subjective sense of return to their identities of origin, diluted during the diaspora process, but which would return in the form of an idyllic ideal of origin and a sense of belonging to

the values and customs of its birthplace of origin (see Hall, 2003). This finding indicates an area of research to be explored and developed, with different publics that have the same diaspora experience.

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CONTRIBUTION OF THE AUTHORS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARTICLE

Falcão: Data collection, elaboration of the theoretical reference and qualitative analysis with proposal of the new Holt metaphor emerging from the content analysis.

Toda: Review of the summary, methodology, discussion and elaboration of the final considerations of the article.

