

Perspectives

Travel and tourism: from imagined scenarios to disruptive events.

Viagens e turismo: dos cenários imaginados às realidades disruptivas.

Viajes y turismo: desde escenarios imaginados hasta realidades disruptivas

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Abstract

This article covers an analysis of my main papers, produced over the last 30 years. It is an attempt to evaluate how these texts interpreted the different facets of the travel and tourism sector, from the international context that influenced tourism research and teaching in Brazil, to the different characteristics, positive and negative, of the Brazilian scenarios in which tourism has had a difficult and bumpy development, despite the puerile enthusiasm that still surrounds its operation, management, and even research. Some critical points and the controversies that have marked these last decades of tourism in Brazil are commented on, including some of its “myths” or “dogmas” that are part of its history. Finally, it looks at how the Covid-19 pandemic has suddenly truncated the global travel and tourism system, taking the immense sector to its biggest crisis since World War II. What is evident throughout these years is the intensity and speed of the disruptive changes, already detected in the papers of the 1980s and 1990s, which reached increasingly impacting proportions throughout the 21st century.

Resumo

Esse artigo abrange uma análise dos meus principais textos, produzidos ao longo dos últimos 30 anos. É uma tentativa de avaliar como esses textos interpretaram as diversas facetas do setor de viagens e turismo, desde o contexto internacional que influenciou a pesquisa e o ensino do turismo no Brasil, até as diversas características, positivas e negativas, dos cenários brasileiros em que o turismo teve um difícil e acidentado desenvolvimento, apesar do entusiasmo pueril que ainda cerca sua operação, gestão e até mesmo a pesquisa. São comentados alguns pontos críticos e as polêmicas que marcaram essas últimas décadas do turismo no Brasil, inclusive alguns de seus “mitos” ou “dogmas” que fazem parte de sua história. Finalmente, analisa-se como a pandemia da Covid-19 repentinamente trunçou o sistema global de viagens e turismo, levando o imenso setor à sua maior crise desde a Segunda Guerra Mundial. O que fica evidente ao longo desses anos é a intensidade e velocidade das mudanças disruptivas, já detectadas nos textos das décadas de 1980 e 1990, que atingiram proporções cada vez mais impactantes ao longo do século XXI.

Resumen

Este artículo cubre un análisis de mis textos principales producidos en los últimos 30 años.

Hipermodernidad.
Ruptura.
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Es un intento de evaluar cómo estos textos interpretaron las diferentes facetas del sector de viajes y turismo, desde el contexto internacional que influyó en la investigación y la enseñanza del turismo en Brasil, hasta las diferentes características, positivas y negativas, de los escenarios brasileños en los que el turismo ha tenido un desarrollo difícil y lleno de baches, a pesar del entusiasmo pueril que aún rodea su operación, gestión e incluso investigación. Se comentan algunos puntos críticos y las controversias que han marcado estas últimas décadas de turismo en Brasil, incluidos algunos de sus "mitos" o "dogmas" que forman parte de su historia. Finalmente, analiza cómo la pandemia de Covid-19 ha truncado repentinamente el sistema global de viajes y turismo, llevando al inmenso sector a su mayor crisis desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Lo que es evidente a lo largo de estos años es la intensidad y la velocidad de los cambios disruptivos, ya detectados en los textos de los años 1980 y 1990, que alcanzaron proporciones cada vez más impactantes a lo largo del siglo XXI.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The editor of RBTUR, Professor Glauber Eduardo de Oliveira Santos, invited me to write an essay on tourism and its interactions with related areas to be placed in a section of the journal devoted to reflective and critical essays, drawing on comprehensive sources such as politics, culture, economy, society, and on my own academic and professional experience. Part of my work consists of analytical and forward-thinking texts, so, I thought it would be an opportunity to assess – considering the time that has passed since then – if the forecasts I have made had some kind of impact on academia or on the corporate/institutional world and if national and international events corroborate my views. In short, it is an opportunity to examine their accuracy (or lack thereof) and relevance to society. Some texts were written three decades ago and the latest date back ten years or more, which allows a retrospective view of scenarios, trends, and analyses.

The intention is not to be critical of my academic production so far – as I would be the judge and jury of my own work – this is for other to judge, as in the article “Enfoque analítico sobre as contribuições de Luiz Gonzaga Godoi Trigo para o turismo” [Analytical approach on the contributions of Luiz Gonzaga Godoi Trigo], authored by Melo, Costa and Sonaglio (2014). Instead, this article aims to provide socio-political and academic context in which these texts were produced and to verify their objective propositions in terms of accuracy of the trends and scenarios put forward.

2 THE CONTEXT

The major thrusts of my work are professional and cultural training in an ever-changing service sector and the challenges it poses. The historical context was one of the optimistic bubbles of the twentieth century, more precisely, the last wave of optimistic outlooks – and supposedly global – of major world trends. Even with my skepticism backed by research on post-modernity made during my master's program (1988-1991 - yes, back then it took four years to earn a master's degree), I went with the flow inspired by readings such as “Megatrends 2000 – Ten new directions for the 1990s” (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990); or the sophisticated *World Travel and Tourism Review: Indicators, trends and forecasts 1991* (Ritchie & Hawkins, 1991); and the exaggerated optimism of *The World Challenge*, by Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, who proved to be quite mistaken when stating employment is no longer the problem: the internal educational complex of training requires, to respond to the human needs of the computer system, more workers than assembly lines can deliver (Servan-Schreiber, 1980, p. 341). Deindustrialization, increased informal work (or job insecurity) and the new relationships made possible by social networks marked the 21st century and generated a toxic atmosphere: “Neither did our pigs-in-clover society [changed]. After the Cold War it got worse. On both sides of the Atlantic. More corrupt, inward, conformist, intolerant, isolationist, smug. Less equitable.” (Le Carré, 1996, p. 77). The philosophical-scientific optimism of Marx, Comte, Freud, and Darwin culminated in the violence of the world wars and totalitarian revolutions of the twentieth century. A century later, the “end of history”

diffuse optimism, based on the “victory” of Western liberalism with end of the cold war (1989-1991), inaugurated the twenty-first century with unprecedented fundamentalist Islamic terrorist attacks – in addition to the Arab Spring – and regional and global uncertainties. The upsurge in religious fundamentalism (Islamic, Jewish, Christian, and others) quickly contaminated various cultures. The rise of conservatism and, in the worst cases, of political, cultural, and moral reactionism, was based on social networks and smartphones which facilitated information exchanges, true or false, and the spread of fear and hatred. Between “clashes of civilizations” (Huntington, 1996), “clashes of the future” (Toffler, 1970) and hypermodernity (Lipovetsky & Charles, 2004), the world has become ideally flat.

It is this triple convergence – of new players, on a new playing field, developing new processes and habits for horizontal collaboration – that I believe is the most important force shaping global economics and politics in the early twenty-first century. Giving so many people access to all these tools of collaboration, along with the ability through search engines and the Web to access billions of pages of raw information, ensures that the next generation of innovations will come from all over Planet Flat. The scale of the global community that is soon going to be able to participate in all sorts of discovery and innovation is something the world has simply never seen before... (Friedman, 2005, p. 210).

This “Planet Flat” is not the one imagined by flat-earthers, but neither has it bequeathed a more peaceful or equitable society along the lines of celebrated globalization, which so seduced some analysts in the early twenty-first century.

The convergence of new technologies has contributed to the consolidation and concentration of capital in some companies and groups in the political, technological, and cultural fields, in addition to job insecurity in many parts of the world. Umberto Eco broadened the spectrum of criticism by stating that “social media have given the right of speech to legions of imbeciles. Before they only spoke at the bar and after a glass of wine, without harming the community” (Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata, 2015).

3 THE CASE OF BRAZIL

The first text I published in the field of tourism appeared in the proceedings of the International Congress of AMFORT, held in São Paulo, in 1990. As I reread this text, I could not help feeling some frustration, not that it would be outdated, but because it could have been written today:

The causes of the problems are not difficult to find. Poor urban infrastructure, traffic violence, assaults, visible poverty on the streets, drug trafficking, police brutality and all widely publicized in the international press... The wretched condition of our infrastructure. Technicians from the Ministry of Transport estimate that USD 9 billion will be needed to rebuild the country's road and rail networks. About 50,000 people are killed annually in traffic accidents on our poorly maintained roads and streets. Coastal and river navigation for cargo and passengers is poor or nonexistent. The beaches are encroached with disorganized developments that drive the indigenous population out, destroy nature and often offer low-quality housing. Urban violence increases at several levels. (Trigo, 1990, p. 90)

The title of this chapter was ambitious: “*O turismo na década de 1990*” [Tourism in the 1990s], based on the great conjunctural analysis proposed by Naisbitt, Aburdene, Ritchie and Hawkins. The biggest problem of the text is that, after three decades, the Brazilian context not only has not improved, it has actually gotten worsen in many areas. Since that time, I have been critical of travel, tourism, entertainment, and hospitality sector, trying to address the pros and cons, opportunities, and threats the sector faced and produced in society in general. The above excerpt is paradigmatic because it points out structural problems that persist and, in some cases – as the environmental issue – became more evident because of the federal predatory policies imposed since 2019.

My conception of tourism development has always been liberal. The fact that I studied postmodernity in the master's degree at PUC-Campinas and defended Brazil's insertion in the emerging international scene made my social-democratic option clear. Some excerpts from my dissertation, defended in 1991 and published in 1993, voiced my concerns. The updated sixth edition, in 2000, presented some of my views reinforced by professional and academic experiences, especially by the research carried out throughout my doctorate.

Those working in tourism cannot be ethnocentric or preach exclusionary nationalism. Tourism is a field where cultural diversity and openness to new experiences are part of everyday life. [...] It is

not possible to isolate the country or a region at a time when the internationalization of the economy and culture takes place in various parts of the planet... To ensure stability and freedom in democratic societies, all authoritarianism must be fought relentlessly, regardless of which side of the ideological spectrum it comes from. This is one of the contemporary challenges, especially in countries with recent democracies, like Brazil. Without economic, political, and social stability, productive sectors are unlikely to be developed, especially tourism. (Trigo, 2003, p. 72-73).

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, Brazilian democracy is once again threatened by the specter of right-wing authoritarianism, as opposed to presumed authoritarianism and corruption with partisan purposes from the last so-called leftist governments. Rereading these texts, I realize how we have advanced in some sectors – air transport, restaurants, hotels, interconnected agency services, airport privatization... – and we have stagnated, or even regressed, in others.

My most important and cited text was the doctoral thesis defended at the Faculty of Education at Unicamp, in 1996, and published in 1998, with more than 330 citations in Google Scholar. In the thesis, I return to the question of post-industrial societies, relating their concepts and methods of analysis to professional training in areas related to pleasure, such as leisure, tourism and hospitality, and I ponder on the area of entertainment, the subject of my lectures in ECA-USP in 2003. The structure of the latter is a long discussion about the evolution of work in service or post-industrial societies and how to prepare people for these areas at technical and higher levels (technology, Bachelor's, and Master's degrees). The core of the thesis was summarized in the following 12 statements:

- The starting point for professional training in tourism, according to Jafari and Ritchie, is that it must be taught in a transdisciplinary way.
- Tourism is one of the fields of science; training takes place in the context of global changes (1990) and the focus of the work is on education and not simply in training tourist skills.
- Tourism education still has several problems to be solved but it has evolved considerably in its short academic history.
- There is still resistance in some places to the understanding that the quality of tourism services, safety standards, profitability and efficiency depends in large part on serious and continuous professional training.
- Collaboration between academia and the market is necessary to improve the level of both.
- The computer, like new technologies in general, is a facilitator of learning and other human activities (professional, leisure, etc.). Education should focus on students' ability to think and express themselves clearly, solve problems and make decisions. Quality education is essential in post-industrial societies.
- The humanist perspective is fundamental in professional training, the human being is more important than capital or technology. (Trigo, 1998, p. 199).

Almost a quarter of a century later, in the context of hypermodernity (Lipovetsky & Charles, 2004), after the series of terrorist attacks that shook the world tourism between 2001 and 2003, the banking crisis of 2007-2008 and the series of bankruptcies of financial institutions and companies linked to travel and tourism, not only the core of this thesis regarding professional training is still current, but also some points – such as the importance of information technology and humanism – are essential to planning, operation, and management of leisure and tourism activities. The fragmentation of tourism into various related activities (hospitality, events, entertainment, gastronomy, leisure, culture, arts, sports, and other segments) took place both in the market and in academia. This is a trend pointed out by international researchers – such as Jafar Jafari – and perceived in several countries where the pleasure industry has become important for the economy, both in more developed regions and in poorer areas, but with significant investments in travel and tourism (Jamaica, Southeast Asia, Colombia, Peru, South Africa etc.).

4 THE CRITICAL SIDE

Travel and tourism in the second decade of the twenty-first century presents a contrasting picture. On one hand, there is a global consolidation of mass tourism supported by a network of operators, travel agencies, transportation platforms, hospitality, entertainment, and leisure in general. On the other, some regions suffer from the unprecedented phenomenon of overtourism, resulting from lower prices, the rise of travel as a status symbol or adventures widely publicized by social networks, and digital financial services coupled with loyalty or mileage programs that facilitate access to various types of trips, events and other promotions that involve physical displacement.

The concentration of wealth in some countries (United States, Russia, India, Brazil, China, or the oil monarchies of the Middle East) has generated a class of super-rich people who demand high-end offerings, generating high luxury travel. This exclusivity extends to sporting or artistic events that have VIP boxes and access whose high rates are paid by corporations or well-off people.

In addition to mass and luxury tourism, other segments emerged according to age groups, income, lifestyle, preferences, and susceptibilities. Diversity and individualization coexist with the massification and standardization in pleasure consumption centers such as shopping malls, theme parks, sports arenas, cultural, and artistic centers.

Despite improvements in living standards in several developed countries, the historical problems of humanity persist: structural misery, social injustice and concentration of wealth, epidemics, lack of comprehensive public policies, and institutionalized exploitation of human beings. This exploitation often reaches the heart of the human condition, i.e., dignity and character. Large tourist flows can create wealth, income, and jobs, but they can also enhance the economic, cultural, political, or sexual exploitation of the communities involved. The gray area of sex tourism is related to travel, events, business, and tourism. Academic studies have been produced, especially in Asia and Europe, on the relationship between travel, sex, and diversity. However, outside academia there is still no broad awareness of this problem, especially in authoritarian and/or poorer countries.

Tourism and sexuality were at the heart of two well-known contemporary novels. Michel Houellebecq, the controversial French writer, published, in 2001, *Platform*. The work describes a (fictional) commercial operation of sex tourism resorts in Asia and the Pacific. His novel gained popularity after the Islamic terrorist attacks in Bali, Indonesia in October 2002. More than 200 tourists died and hundreds were injured in the explosions of two nightclubs full of tourists. The similarity between facts and fiction gave Houellebecq considerable publicity.

Another novel that is a criticism of the sexual exploitation in resorts is *Welcome to Paradise*, published in 2016 by Jamaican Nicole Dennis-Benn (2016). The author is a Lambda Literary Award winner, and the story is told by a female character. The daily life of the humble people who live around tourism developments in islands like Jamaica is described in detail. The fragile condition of women, prejudiced by locals in addition to the influences of elite tourism in neighboring resorts, is portrayed vividly

Critical tourism literature exists in most OECD countries, encompassing topics such as social justice, the environment, sustainable planning, cultural issues, public health, and emerging issues. In Brazilian academia, part of the research focuses on planning, management, and analysis of tourist projects, public or private. In these cases, the proposed models are within liberal thought, with its more conservative or progressive nuances. There are also more specific themes focused on mobility, urbanism, artistic and cultural issues, entertainment, ethnic, and diversity issues.

Few studies are within the sphere of Marxism. In general, theoretical sources are liberal, with socialist or “social-democratic” tendencies, with their diverse methodological and epistemological nuances. Only two specific works of tourism stand out for an allegedly more critical analysis of authors such as Dóris Rutschmann, Mário Beni, Marutschka Moesch, Mario Petrocchi, and myself.

Helton Ricardo Ouriques (2005) wrote “A produção do turismo: fetichismo e dependência” [“The production of tourism: fetishism and dependence”], in which he makes superficial inferences about postmodernity, analyzing this theoretical production based on classical Marxist concepts, without considering the changes that

occurred in Brazil and in the world, which left the text obsolete and innocuous, with little impact and receiving few citations.

The researcher Helio Hintze (2013) did a more systematic and profound work in his doctoral thesis “Espectáculos e invisibilidades do discurso legitimador do turismo” [“Spectacles and invisibilities of legitimizing discourse of tourism”], in which he analyzes the various theories about tourism with epistemological rigor, understanding the paradoxes and contradictions inherent to the field and our times and, proposing in the end, “new” critical studies that have to do with the proposals of the authors analyzed by him. Unfortunately, the thesis was not published as a book, but it is available at the USP Digital Library (www.tese.usp.br).

In the fields of geography, environment, anthropology, history, arts, sociology, and politics, articles and theses emerge with a more leftist or progressive view, complementing the research done by tourism specialists, hoteliers, leisure, and entertainment scholars.

5 THE CONTROVERSIES

Western civilization has historically resisted the innocent enjoyment of pleasures, without guilt, without shame, and without sin. Born in the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman tradition, the West idealized a moral marked by “watch and punish”, by the work ethic and its sacrifices, by the aristocratic-bourgeois puritanism of the Victorian era, by the Iberian inquisitorial fires, and by the Slavic circumspection. The tropical colonies were an escape channel for the colonists’ delusions and greed, after all “there is no sin below the Equator”. Soldiers, explorers, traders, religious, and civil servants built this “Rome of the tropics” – according to Darcy Ribeiro referring to Brazil – with the work of indigenous people, black slaves and, later, immigrants from various countries.

In the economic and cultural context of Latin America, Brazil has remarkable specificities, as pointed out by the classical works of Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Darcy Ribeiro, Ariano Suassuna, Gilberto Freire, or more recently, authors such as Lília M. Schwarcz, Laurentino Gomes, Eliane Brum and other writers who breathe new life into the national literature.

Between tropical nonchalance and rigid Christian morals brought from medieval Europe, Brazil developed sophisticated schemes of concealment, hypocrisy, quibbling, fallacies, manipulations, distortions and, finally, fake news. Brazilian tourism was marked by being elitist and discretionary, in a society in which masters and slaves were the normal poles of coexistence for 300 years. Even after the abolition of slavery, servile relations remained in effect throughout rural Brazil and in part of the country that began the process of industrialization and the provision of services.

The Brazilian cultural melting pot mixes romantic nationalism, elitism mimicking the “developed” foreigner, populism of various political hues, and the growing wave of ostentation and arrogance carried out by the so-called elites and fueled by social media. In this potpourri, tourism is one of the themes idealized by the dominant classes to be developed, as well as the communications, design, or fashion sectors.

My research interests have always been focused on education, culture, entertainment, and social issues related to tourism. These are broad – and not always consensual – themes. One of the controversies I experienced was about the regulation of the tourism profession. This was the banner of the 1970s, when tourism programs were created in Brazil. Half a century later, this controversy has the same validity as the Planet Flat theory: regulation is impossible in complex and fragmented areas such as travel and tourism. Fortunately, today the subject is not in the agenda and it is rarely mentioned. It was one of the futile struggles in the area. I published several texts about it in books (e.g.: Trigo & Panosso, 2009, p. 181), journals, blogs, and trade magazines. I recommend reading two of my most recent texts on the topic: Trigo (2012) and Trigo (2015).

Some thoughts crystallized over the years into “dogmas” or “myths”, bordering on the emotional and tending towards obscurantism. Amos Oz points out some possible antidotes to fanaticism such as humor, curiosity, and argumentativeness. Also, a certain propensity for playfulness (Oz, 2016, p. 28). In a book chapter published in 2000, I make considerations about the need, problems, and shortcomings of education in hospitality, tourism, and leisure. I criticize catchphrases echoed by the common sense of the time such as “tourism

is learned in practice", "profit is a sin and the market belongs to the devil", "in Brazil people speak Portuguese", "globalization is damnation", "tourism is a priesthood", "the tourism potential of Brazil is tremendous", etc. This Brazilian common sense, as it happens in other countries, with their cultural and geographical specificities, in general goes hand in hand with pockets of prejudiced ignorance or with conservative minority groups, including in this denomination left people, but rooted in religious dogmas or ideologies marked by a nationalist corporatist unionism that, after all, slips into conservative positions.

The history of tourism in Brazil is characterized by slow development linked to peaks of success or economic crises over the years. A country far from the big Western and Eastern source countries, closed to the world for decades interspersed with dictatorships (1930-1945; 1964-1985), and democratic governments with premature termination of office (Collor and Dilma). Its strong development cycle, starting with the governments of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, suffered the devastating economic crisis of 2014-2015 and the sanitary, economic, and political crisis of 2020, originated by the new coronavirus, Covid-19.

The Brazilian difficulties – added to the global crises and changes caused by various reasons – impact, directly or indirectly, the business chain related to leisure and tourism: Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, economic or political crises, rise of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), the emergence of new consumer segments, the rise of hedonism and real and virtual ostentation in addition to, of course, the new pandemics that have emerged in recent decades. All of these changes and crises show the volatility of global business environment, increase the speed of change, and the obsolescence cycles of products and services, cause uncertainty and distress in the face of new local and regional challenges and cause a feeling that "all that is solid melts into air" (Berman, 1986).

Adding to the political changes that took several governments to the right of the political spectrum (USA, Hungary, Italy, Brazil, United Kingdom, Turkey) in the late 2010s; the disruption and fragmentation of ideas, projects, and scenarios; China's strong economic and political rise; complaints of pollution and predatory actions caused by overtourism (a new word for an unprecedented problem); and concerns arising from wealth concentration and destructive competitiveness of an exacerbated neoliberalism, a mutant pathogenic organism emerged paralyzing the global economy in general, in 2020, and directly affected the travel and tourism sector: Covid-19.

Even with all these changes and uncertainties – or exactly because of them – if I have to choose a text representative of my academic writings related to education and professional training, I select the following excerpt, which closes a book chapter that I consider essential in my work:

What guarantees the integration into the labor market is solid, deep, and continuous training, ethics, constant improvement of skills, professional seriousness, meeting deadlines, budgets, and obligations. In a world that enters the twentieth century! With many difficulties, doubts, and new opportunities, practitioners need to be guided by the continuous flow of changes and the new models that emerge. Much remains to be understood in the dynamics of new post-industrial societies. Technological changes are far from stabilizing. We live in a revolutionary world and fear is a useless burden that only makes it difficult for us to take a leap into the future. Charles Handy says that 'the only thing we can be certain of is uncertainty'; therefore, another certainty that we can infer from this premise is that the coming years will be very exciting, challenging and even fun, for those who understand the logic of these changes. (Trigo, 2000, p. 255)

6 AT LAST, THE HYPERMODERN APOCALYPSE

After famine, humanity's second great enemy was plagues and infectious diseases. Bustling cities linked by a ceaseless stream of merchants, officials and pilgrims were both the bedrock of human civilisation and an ideal breeding ground for pathogens. People consequently lived their lives in ancient Athens or medieval Florence knowing that they might fall ill and die next week, or that an epidemic might suddenly erupt and destroy their entire family in one swoop" (Harari, 2016, p. 16) The 'red death' had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its Avatar and its seal – the redness and horror of blood. (Poe, 2012, p. 143).

Amid the frenzy of turbulent capitalism, rampant consumption, and tourist hordes devouring the landscapes, as Jost Krippendorff would say, a mutant agent gradually paralyzed the economy of most of the world in a matter of weeks. Dystopia arose in the form of a new version of an old enemy of humanity: the virus. It was not a global economic-financial collapse, a Matrix or Terminator-style artificial intelligence rebellion, a global

thermonuclear war, an alien invasion, or a sequence of terrorist acts that forced the world to stop and reorganize. It was a flu-like virus, something that has been with humanity since its inception. An unprecedented virus (despite being from the coronavirus family, was a peculiar mutation) highly contagious, with rapid spread and low lethality, which simply collapses health systems and funeral services in the regions where it finds an environment favorable to its selective pestilence. Its main victims are the elderly, the chronically ill or the poor who are unable to protect themselves with efficient isolation, without good nutrition and ideal conditions of hygiene. However, several younger and healthier people also perished due to the complications of the disease, demonstrating that it is not a simple “flu” or an innocent “cold”.

Without medication with proven efficacy to date (June 2020) against Covid-19 or vaccines, humanity was held hostage to an atrocious choice: to practice social isolation to slow down the rate of contagion and paralyze broad sectors of the economy, or let the population become naturally contaminated, keep life almost “normal”, waiting for “herd immunity” to restore public health. This second option proved disastrous in northern Italy and in few other places where it was tested, causing the authorities to determine social isolation or even lockdown, with more severe restrictive measures, with the resulting economic consequences. Thus, high unemployment, sharp declines in various consumer sectors, receiverships and bankruptcies, declines in revenues from products and services and a recession with variable periods in each region forged the shadow that hung over humanity throughout 2020, not to mention the slow and painful recovery that would take yet another months or years.

Lethal pathogens are nothing new for humanity. Epidemiological terror has a long history and some of its memorable cycles are the Black Plague (or bubonic plague), in the fourteenth century (with peaks between 1347 and 1351); the epidemics of smallpox, influenza, tuberculosis, syphilis, typhus that devastated the indigenous populations of the Americas and Pacific islands between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries; the Spanish Flu between 1918 and 1920; Ebola, known since the 1970s and extremely similar to Poe's “red death”; the HIV epidemic in the 1980s and 1990s; flu waves with respiratory complications such as SARS-COV (2002, China), H5N1 (2005, avian influenza), H1N1 (2009, swine influenza), MERS-COV (2012), H7N9 (2013) and Covid-19, in 2020.

The world damage that the 2008-2009 economic crises, other influenza epidemics and the terrorist attacks in the early twenty-first century did not make, was triggered in a few weeks by the new virus. Since its official discovery in Wuhan, China, in late December 2019, until mid-March 2020, the explosive expansion of Covid-19 has been gradually paralyzing health systems, international air, sea and land travel systems, trade, the sector of public events and entertainment, industrial and agricultural production and, thus, the stock exchanges and financial systems in the main centers of production and consumption of wealth on the planet.

The global economic system has not experienced such stagnation and decline in consumption, investments, travel and in the production of goods and services since the Second World War. Few segments have profited from isolation or quarantine determined by governments in much of the world, especially in large and medium-sized cities. Among the lucky segments in the pandemic are distance learning, online entertainment, platforms for remote work, nutrition and health, telemedicine, health plans and life insurance, food, telephony and broadband internet, and cleaning and health care products. Among the losers are (in order of losses) the sectors of home appliances, fashion and beauty products and services, fitness centers, cinema/theater, events, hotels, restaurants and travel and tourism. Since the beginning of the year, the lockdowns began in China and spread to Asia in general, Oceania, Europe, Africa, and the Americas, where it had more lethal effects in the United States, the richest and most powerful country in the world. As noted in the list above, the leisure, tourism and entertainment industries were among the most affected and with the longest expected time to recover, unless medicines and vaccines are produced quickly and allow the majority of the population to be immunized.

In this crisis, words like random, imponderable, disruptive, hybrid, dynamic, unpredictable, and dystopian, used to characterize facets of liquid (Bauman), postmodern (Lyotard) or hypermodern (Lipovetsky) societies, had their meanings amplified by chaos unleashed in 2020, prolonged in several places due to poor pandemic management and control.

In tourism, one of the most affected sectors was ocean cruises. About 300 cruise ships (most from the four leading companies: Carnival Cruises, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Norwegian Cruise Line and MSC), in addition to exploration and tourism ships, river cruises and passenger ferry boats, have been suspended. In full as of March 2020. With the cancellation of scheduled cruises and the drop in sales of new trips, the companies stopped obtaining resources, dismissed, or placed most of employees on unpaid leave, but continued to have expenses with ships docked for a long period. According to estimates, each anchored vessel costs between one and three million dollars a month, which is necessary to guarantee prior maintenance and to prevent deterioration of on-board electrical and electronic systems and installations. Something similar happened with airlines, road, and rail companies, shopping centers, entertainment venues, events, theme parks, hotels, and resorts. Despite not having halted all operations, drops in sales was around 40 to 90 percent.

In May 2020, FGV Projetos issued a document, “Impacto Econômico do Covid-19: Propostas para o turismo brasileiro” [“Economic Impact of Covid-19: Proposals for Brazilian tourism”] (FGV, 2020), outlining the beginning of the opening of the economy in May, the gradual resumption of domestic travel between September and October 2020, the stabilization of business trips and events from February 2021 and the return of international tourism from mid-2021 (other analysts postpone the date to 2023). These analyses mainly covered the sectors of hospitality, transport, bars and restaurants, travel agency and operation, property rental, and recreational activities. Travel agency and organization was the most affected sector, followed by road and air transport. Bars and restaurants were less affected, but still have a mean decrease of almost 60% in production. The projection of economic losses from tourism, compared to the GDP of 2019, totaled R\$ 116.7 billion in the biennium 2020-2021, a decrease of 21.5% in total production in the period. Measures to assist the sector were considered, such as public aid, especially for the airline sector; review of concession contracts; easy credit to small and medium-sized companies; redirecting resources and efforts to promote domestic destinations; in addition to consumer credit.

Leonel Andrade, president of CVC Corp., declared, in April 2020, that 2019 tourism levels will only be reached by 2023, which means a slow and difficult recovery of domestic and international tourism. Andrade took over CVC in March 2020, amid the company's crisis, marked by bankruptcy of Avianca Brasil, an important partner of the group, in addition to the accounting problems of the 2019 balance sheet, which compromised the positive results of the period. This crisis preceded Covid-19, which only deepened the uncertainties for the group.

In May 2020, SEBRAE published a document entitled “Comportamento dos viajantes: Importante para a retomada do turismo” [“Traveler Behavior: Important for tourism resumption”] (SEBRAE, 2020). The text was divided into health, family, hyperconnection, trust, humanization, and sustainability sections. These general guidelines, without objectivity or significant operational details, are an example of the uncertainty that engulfed the world in the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated the number of jobs eliminated in the pandemic crisis at around 100 million and alerted the G-20 countries to the seriousness of the crisis (WTTC, 2020a). The organization stated on its website that “we are in uncharted territory; our sector is uniquely exposed, and in a fight for its survival”. (WTTC, 2020b). This demonstrates the degree of uncertainty in the first few months of the pandemic due to lack of knowledge about the specificities of the virus and how it would develop in different geographical regions. In addition, little was known about how different governments would manage the crisis and how local infrastructure would facilitate or hinder procedures to control the pandemic.

Comparatively, the WTTC points out that the extent of the damage caused by SARS to the economy in general – and to tourism in particular – in 2003 was around 30 to 50 billion dollars. China had a 25% reduction in travel and tourism, with a loss of 2.8 million jobs, and the country took 16 months to recover its activities. With regard to the H1N1 crisis, in 2009, there was an estimated impact of between USD 45 and 55 billion, with Mexico alone having lost USD 5 billion in tourism alone. In 2020, the coronavirus is already much more widespread than SARS and H1N1 in their respective peaks. Covid-19 had an estimated global impact of USD 2.7 trillion and caused the elimination of 100 million jobs, with Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America being the regions most affected, in decreasing order (WTTC, 2020a).

While Brazilian airlines gradually resumed flights from May-June 2020, Argentina halted all domestic and international flights until September 2020, in an isolation operation similar to that of Australia and New Zealand, among others countries which have introduced stricter measures to control the pandemic in their territories. Eduardo Sanovicz, president of ABEAR (Associação Brasileira das Empresas Aéreas [Brazilian Association of Airline Companies]) and professor at EACH-USP, declared that it is impossible to make projections or predictions, because the level of uncertainty and ignorance of the variables involved in the crisis (epidemiological, virologic, economic, logistics, geographical, political...) makes it difficult to understand such an unprecedented event in history.

Amid hundreds of lives, distance consultancies, coaches in agony and analysts looking for clients and fame, several hypotheses emerged trying to guess what the post-Covid-19 world would be like. It was clear from the various interviews that those who were more informed about the crisis made less prognosis, as they knew the imponderables and the large number of variables with unknown or only partially raised data. Covid-19 was a devastating “black swan”, the first dystopia of the twenty-first century which made the planet come to a halt, brutally reducing the mobility and participation of people in events, trade fairs, trips, celebrations, and fabulous parties. For some people and institutions, it was a time to reflect on today's chaotic development and how to reorganize for the future. For others, it was a wasted opportunity, a crisis that left many losses, misunderstandings, and little learning, due to ignorance or selfishness.

In Brazil, the health and economic crisis was exacerbated by the political and social crisis, led by members of Jair Bolsonaro's government, who, in a sequence of disastrous events, made prejudiced, offensive remarks against China and the United Nations World Health Organization, based on childish conspiracy theories and fake news spread on social media through robots run by the government's so-called “hate office”, formed by relatives and accomplices of the president, an act that led to the opening of an investigation by judicial authorities.

The president himself publicly defended that the pandemic was harmless, a “mere flu”; he dismissed two ministers of health in the midst of the crisis, for having high popularity thanks to the correct work they did together with state governors; it disallowed renowned doctors and public health officials, confusing the poorest or least informed ones. Thus, according to the international press, he was among the worst world leaders in the fight against the new coronavirus. Also, the uncertainties generated by the head of the executive branch have considerably affected the fight against the pandemic.

7 FINAL REMARKS – “YOU CANNOT PREDICT THE FUTURE, BUT YOU CAN CREATE IT”

Peter Drucker's sentence (Cohen, 2008, p. 133) remains valid. There are some ethical principles, theoretical foundations of management, economics and governance, logistical and operational procedures that cover products and services in the world and maintain companies, governments, and institutions on track., even in times of deep crises. The current random dynamics generates crises amid the unpredictability caused by the disruptive technological evolution, by the economic and financial instability, by the fragmentation and diversity of political and cultural, stylistic, and artistic movements. If the changes are abrupt and structural, there are so many variables, and many of them, unprecedented. Thus, it is of no use merely betting or relying on ideologies and trends with a closed schedule. There is no forecast except for the information flows generated by the big data of the big Internet service platforms that collect quantitative information and try to anticipate trends in consumption, behavior in general, health, vote intention, etc.

It is, thus, of utmost importance to lay solid foundations for professional, citizen and personal training (form the character) so that, in the various possible scenarios, from opportunities to crises, people have skills to take advantage of the good chances or minimize the damage caused by the unforeseen. Nobody foresaw the Internet, for example; some predicted a new flu epidemic with respiratory complications, but no one paid any attention. Even at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, there were people who did not believe in the disease or the virus. September 11, 2001 was a lightning bolt in the blue sky (almost literally), but the traces of discontent and violence in radical Islam have been evident for decades. Many people were fooled by scams involving derivatives, cryptocurrencies, “chains” disguised as business opportunities, not to mention political and religious deception.

For this reason, a good training must provide the ethical and intellectual bases to enable solid professional and citizenship competences and, concomitantly, to prevent against beliefs, irrationalism, or simply bad faith acts to which we are all subject if we are not prudent and discerning, have emotional balance and existential maturity. The future cannot be predicted, but it is possible to prepare for different situations through dynamic and strategic planning.

In 2020, overtourism, environmental pollution and congestion caused by the intense flow of travelers were temporarily controlled by the pandemic. It is yet another crucial warning that the brutal interaction between humans and nature causes dangerous mutations. In Chinese wet markets, there is an abusive concentration of people and animals (domestic or wild); intensive livestock production around the world; predatory devastation of forests, waters, and biomes essential for ecological balance and preservation of quality of life.

This radical interruption of our excruciating and frantic rhythms – even if temporarily – served to think about some basic questions of life. There will be changes and they are already underway. Some were deeper, others were mere accommodation. Emerging trends (such as distance education, conference calls) have been consolidated. Some addictions will remain, as not everyone learns from crises or opportunities; there is a part of imbeciles (as Umberto Eco would call them) who oppose rationality and let their selfishness cloud their values and ethical understanding.

Tourism is not disconnected from the economy, the environment, society, politics, and culture. Tourism is one of the pleasures that life offers in the immense field of leisure and hedonism, but it depends on this complex interaction and articulation to develop into acceptable parameters of sustainability. Tourism is the result of culture, civilization, the ability to enjoy pleasures without guilt, without fear or shame. But it must also, like all economic and social policies, ensure that social justice is not just a catchphrase for governments or institutions.

The extreme concentration of wealth in the world, the environmental and geopolitical problems that have increased the number of refugees and the impoverished, the devastation of forests and other ecosystems, are the result of predatory and selfish exploitation of natural and human resources. The cyclical crises of the last century show the web of issues that have challenged humanity since its inception, but which have been enhanced by new information and communication technologies and new management, control, and governance processes. Awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity promotes the respect and tolerance that everyone deserves. There is an ongoing struggle to guarantee or expand citizenship rights in each region and human rights in general.

After each crisis there are always changes and resistance generated for different reasons. For many, it is still difficult to adapt to everlasting deep transformations we are experiencing and the even more profound – and perhaps catastrophic – we will experience in the coming years. We will have more and more technology and the ability to control society through big data, algorithms, external surveillance cameras and internal sensors to monitor our bodies – the totalitarian desire is to control bodies and minds.

The only way to counterbalance bureaucratic and centralizing technocracy is to develop, alongside scientific and technological advances, ethics and justice, the defense of individual freedoms and the plurality of diverse cultures and lifestyles. Knowledge will always be essential to guarantee excellent levels of safety, quality, comfort, health, and pleasure. This is true for all sectors of society and the economy, especially for services intended for the enjoyment of existence, such as tourism. In this sense, what was important for the training of professionals in the twentieth century continues to be relevant, but added to other skills necessary to face the new worlds that, periodically, appear. Change is the only constant.

However, as long as the world sparks interest and curiosity in people, the act of traveling will remain strong in the imagination, in the will and desires, no matter what life throws at us. The adventure overcomes fear. The changes are beyond imagination. Pleasure – Eros – must always overcome castration, death – Thanatos.

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