check for updates

ARTICULATION BETWEEN THE WEBSITES OF THE CITY HALL AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF TOURISM IN PORTO SEGURO-BA / BR: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VIRTUAL CITY FOR TOURIST COMMUNICATION

🆔 **Moabe Breno Ferreira Costa**

Doctoral Student, Postgraduate Program in Tourism (PPGTUR) Center for Applied Social Sciences Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Natal-RN, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This study present a case study on the virtual tourist city, referring to the connection between the sites of the City of Porto Seguro-BA and the City Council of Tourism Development. It is a qualitative case study, following the trans-methodological rationality, using both retroductive and critical-dialectic methods. The methodological procedure analyzing both the structure and content of the websites. The characteristics and categories of attitudes defined by Levy (1999) served as parameters for analyzing the structure. Pertinent content was defined through questionnaires sent to high school and university students who live in Porto Seguro. This research has concluded that the articulation between the City of Porto Seguro-BA and the City Council of Tourism Development websites does not yet constitute an informational environment in keeping with the demands of tourism in cyberculture.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing tourism promotion literature as it generates new qualitative research procedures through a critical-dialectic methodology. As one of the few research studies on the tourist cybercity concept, it contributes to the first systematic analysis of the destination, offers an integrated promotion model and documents online tourist communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Costa (2017a) tourism is considered to be driven by its own dynamics, in which ambivalent human concerns are noted, indicating a specific culture of the place. There are a variety of complexities and conflicts in culture that mix with the human experience and their social activities, attributing social values, and thereby continually demanding updates guided by a consciousness of modernity. This dynamic is called tourist culture.

In turn, cyberculture has demanded more dynamism, innovation, production, management and interaction from the tourist culture. Cyberculture represents a subversive techno-social rationality that proposes the appropriation and adaptation of digital technologies to social practices. This promotes interdependent and personalized symbiotic relationships. In this manner, Beni (2017) claims current digital technologies are necessary for the development and operationalization of the *infostructure* (informational structure) of tourism organizations.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such as bar codes and QR codes, facial recognition systems, GPS, acoustic devices, access and credit cards, cell phones, locative media, internet, apps, interactive

66

platforms such as fan pages, Foursquare[1] and Airbnb[2], are some artifacts that have dynamized tourist culture and built new infovias[3]. Such devices should have centralized management for spreading information and characterizing processes of convergence. According to Jenkins (2009) convergence consists of interactive actions between different media platforms for the dissemination of discourses, considering technological, marketing, social and cultural levels.

These processes represent informational and interactive perspectives, aimed at broadening social horizons, demanding creative communication strategies from organizations, aiding the spread of multiple content including those aimed at different public audiences, such as religious tourism and cyberpunk[4] communities. This dialectic proposes ruptures of embedded, normalized and bureaucratic practices for the construction of directed, flexible, customized and libertarian actions, which constitute the essence of cyberculture. Therefore, thinking about management of tourism communication in the contemporary world consists of the daily exercise of production, evaluation and negotiation of social values, implying the productive sector's greater connectivity and skills to act with the diversity of interests about a destination.

It is necessary to understand elements that are inserted in explicit and implicit forms in the managed cultures. After all, symbolic goods have become, more than ever, essential for the productive sector's development. Therefore, as Castells (1999) observes, the democratization of information is fundamental for a glocalized[5] and increasingly dynamic culture to exist in the global sphere.

Accordingly, the management of online tourism communication of destinations such as Porto Seguro – in southern Bahia's Coast of Discovery, located in northeast Brazil – presupposes the organization of daily elements (including adversity), tradition, history, collective memory, popular perspectives, interactive and market actions, as well as many other demands.

The promotion of Porto Seguro as a national tourist spot began with the Ministry of Communications in 1973 highlighting its natural and historical beauty and calling it the 'cradle of Brazilian civilization', a direct reference to the imaginary of Caminha[6]. Since then, Porto Seguro has had significant economic growth boosted mainly by tourism ventures and activities.

In the 1990s, the city became the main generator of jobs in the area (with a relative growth of 78.1%). In 2000, it registered the 17th highest Index of Economic Development among the 417 cities of Bahia, being the 22nd with the largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP)[7]. Porto has become a center for different types of tourism: cultural, nature, religious, sun and beach, entertainment, popular festivals, sex tourism and cyberpunk. The existence of

---

[1] Foursquare is a geolocation application for Android, iOS, Windows Phone, BlackBerry and Windows, which recommends interesting places such as bars, nightclubs, museums, restaurants, informing peculiarities and features of operation, and allow users to express opinions about places.

[2] Airbnb is a trusted community for people to book homelike residences through the internet, as well as proposes to the visitor to experience the city on the logic of the host. To participate, you must register either as a host or a visitor.

[3] Neologism of the Portuguese language. It refers to the ways of acquiring information, frequently related to the links of sites in the internet.

[4] Costa (2017) characterizes cyberpunk tourism by tourist practices that emerge with the social movement of cyberculture, characterized by raves (hallucinatory and liberal parties), cyber-fashion tribal and contemporary, full of synthetic materials, piercings and tattoos, prosthetic and interpretive cyborgs , net cyborg, hypercorpo, besides cyberart (futuristic and functional), and mainly the continuous use of ICT.

[5] Term, commonly used by sociology and communication scholars, like Castells (1999) and Lemos (2001) restores globalization to its multidimensional reality, so that the interaction between global and local would prevent the local word from defining only one identity within the dimensions of modernity. This implies that identities are becoming more and more multiple.

[6] Study available on the blog https://ciberculturaeturismo.wixsite.com/meusite/.

[7] These indexes are registered in the Plan of Integrated Development of Sustainable Tourism in the Coast of Discovery (PDITS-CD, 2001) prepared by the National Program of Tourism Development (Prodetur-2001 - http://www.turismo.gov.br/programas/5066 -prodetur.html /.) and by the Superintendence of Tourism Promotion of the State of Bahia - http://www.bahiatursa.ba.gov.br/ (Bahiatursa).

several unlike identities generates different realities. As previously noted, this growth attracted the attention of residents and businesspeople from other locations in Bahia and in the country, raising conflicts of interest and, consequently, increasing social complexity.

It is believed that the management of communication on the internet must structure all these aspects in order to spread the maximum number of imaginary possibilities about the destination in the thoughts of users, with the purpose of inspiring in them that the location can deliver in the endless search for new experiences, desires and curiosities. The communication should also present solutions to local problems. In addition, it is necessary to know about the characteristics of the environment and the categories of attitudes it makes possible. The investigation of these aspects helps in defining potential tourists' perceptions of the city and the enhancement of tourism. However, how can the municipal administration collaborate with the development of these processes?

Aiming to find this answer, this qualitative research, developed from a trans-methodological perspective, analyzed the content of websites from Porto Seguro City Hall (http://portoseguro.ba.gov.br/sitenew) and the City Council of Tourism Development (www.portosegurotur.com), comparing them with studies on 108 previously made virtual sites. The results show that the municipal administration must take measures to optimize the production of tourism communication on the internet, seeking to boost operations in the physical space and generate more opportunities for economic and social development.

The virtual city – the extension of the city to the cyberspace – is indicated as an efficient information structure to promote tourism within the cyberculture, mainly for enabling the convergence of information, technologies, institutions, social sectors, services and commerce, and also, as being a tool for the planning and execution of travel planning. So, the development of an information management plan or system is considered important, following the principles of educommunication[8].

This article forms part of a Master's degree in Culture and Tourism (UFBA-UESC) and responds to the evolution of research that has been carried out since 2005. Its developments and applications have been presented and discussed in scientific events in Brazil, including in partnerships with other researchers. It is important to note that one obstacle to developing this study has been the lack of specific literature on tourist online communication promoted by public administrations. Likewise, it is difficult to find studies on promotional actions in Porto Seguro with dedicated attention to locals. Most of the research on tourism communication refers to the private sector and tourists – the latter of which are often referred to as 'mere consumers'. When they are primarily concerned with business communication, such research leaves aside the importance of public power for the dissemination of tourist information about a city that behaves as a welcoming center.

This approach, on the other hand, offers a way for destination management to make proper use of cyberspace to promote tourism information, thinking about aspects such as convergence, democracy and competitiveness.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used follows the trans-methodological perspective of Maldonado (2013) promoting interdependencies between methods and operational procedures for the formation of a scientific unit. Thus, the rationality that guides this construct comprises an interface between Peirce (2005) principle of retroduction and the critical-dialectical method. Retroduction corresponds to a type of reasoning that investigates the detailing of the object, seeking the experimental verification of its possible consequences. Thus, this work seeks to unravel the

---

[8] According to Soares (1999) the term educommunication represents the set of actions inherent to the planning, implementation and evaluation of processes, programs and products destined to create and to strengthen open communicative ecosystems. They are guaranteed by the democratic management of communication processes in the different environments of human relationships, involving the community as a whole and the conditions of expressiveness of individuals and human groups, through cultural and artistic practices and technological resources.

articulation between the websites of the City Hall and the City Council of Tourism of Porto Seguro-BA (object of this study), fragmenting, tearing and scraping elements that compose it.

Accordingly, the critical-dialectical method proposes the triggering of analyzes from historical materialism and relies on the dynamic conception of reality, including dialectical relations between subject and object, knowledge and action, theory and practice. According to Martins (1994) the method seeks to "interrelate with the parties and vice versa, from the thesis to the antithesis, from the elements of the economic structure to the social, political, legal and intellectual superstructure". The scientific validity lies in the correlations that lead to the development of an internal logic. However, the results and discussions are reiterated with a survey by the Ministry of Tourism (MTur), which points out the three main problems of the destination analyzed, in the period similar to this study.

For this purpose, the operational procedures of this paper include bibliographical and documentary research, presenting a literature review that articulates theoreticians of tourism, communication and cyberculture; as well as analysis of the articulation between the sites of the City Hall and the City Council of Tourism Development. The analysis, carried out in May 2018, obeys the criteria as set out in Costa (2005) and involves three aspects: characteristics and categories of internet attitudes defined by Levy (1999) the content considered relevant for tourism promotion; and the design, connection speed and the types of links available, considering that these aspects promote attractiveness and ease of navigation.

2.1. Characteristics and Categories of Internet Attitudes

The categories of attitudes and characteristics of the internet used in this work have been defined by Levy (1999). The first ones correspond to analogies, substitution, assimilation and articulation. The characteristics are: metamorphosis, heterogeneity, multiplicity, exteriority, topology, center mobility and hypertextuality.

Analogies are descriptions of the functions and aspects of the place (availability of working hours of public places and services, activities carried out, rules and norms). They can stimulate the visitor and generate new forms of interaction and business between visitors and locals, like virtual guides and platforms like Foursquare. However, the substitution of actions in physical space for online actions, such as reservations, payments and contracting services, is an operational and economic output for organizations and citizens, as they occur in the Airbnb platform.

Through the process of assimilation, companies take ownership of digital equipment, content and services, such as credit card networks, bar codes and QRs, digital systems for monitoring services, favoring the control of employee and customer actions. Finally, the articulations in the online network or with the physical territory, require mutual cooperation, in which those involved can directly correlate, exercising democracy. This practice, in addition to enabling technological and market convergences, can broaden the discussion about local problems, socializing skills, resources and ideas in order to find and accelerate resolutions, thus stimulating social and cultural convergences.

This process is possible through tools (forums, chats, emails, websites, blogs, social networks, video channels, games, information storage systems, applications) and exploring the characteristics of the internet (metamorphosis, heterogeneity, multiplicity , exteriority, topology, center mobility and hypertextuality).

Through the principle of metamorphosis (constant construction and renegotiation) one can update the dynamics of virtualized entities, thereby indicating to visitors any situations that occur naturally in a space. The principle of heterogeneity or multimediality (possibilities of availability of various communicative forms - images, texts, audiovisual, real-time transmission, icons etc) can propose logical and affective connections, comprising different forms of culture simulation and sharing.

However, through the principle of multiplicity (any node or connection can reveal itself according to a network) one can point to the social complexity that is involved in a certain icon, through the innumerable connections that it can establish. And, in the opposite direction, through the principle of exteriority (connection with other networks), the user can reach the digitized entity. These two principles direct to the other two.

The principle of topology (all becomes near when on the internet) points to the need for connections, proposing interconnections between environments. Finally, the principle of center mobility (there is not a single center in the network) points to the fact that the internet is an environment full of ramifications that sketch details, peculiarities and meanings, through which the user can travel the world, opening only the windows of your micro or other reception platforms. By enabling unusual forms of communication, the internet proposes the updating of cultural constructions, corroborating the reconfiguration of identities.

2.2. Contents Considered Relevant for the Promotion of Tourism on the Internet

The content chosen for analysis of the websites was defined in Costa (2005). Questionnaires with subjective propositions were sent to university and high school students residing in Porto Seguro. The students chosen for the sample had to be attentive to the world transformations and the technological innovations, and be in the preparatory phase for the job market, inferring that the goals of professional and adult life are being formulated.

Two schoolsin Porto Seguro were chosen for the sample with one private school in the district of Trancoso and one public school in the district of Arraial d'Ajuda. The research was also conducted in a local private college, including only students residing in Porto Seguro as well as in the urban tribe of the Pataxó indigenous community.

Ten students from each educational institution participated voluntarily, making it a total of fifty questionnaires with responses. The ten Indians of the Pataxó tribe chosen to respond were determined by the cacique (the chief of the tribe). The following questions were asked of all respondents:

a) Indicate three aspects that characterize the city;
b) Identify three positive aspects and three negative aspects of tourism;
c) Point out three positive and three negative aspects due to using technological devices in the daily life of the city;
d) Point out three technological aspects capable of contributing to the improvement of life;
e) How could the internet contribute to the improvement of human life?;
f) Daily connection time;
g) Apps used and visited websites;
h) Content accessed;
i) How would you like to see the city on the internet? and,
j) Name three aspects of Porto Seguro that should be posted on the Internet.

The detailed answers to these questions are available on the blog 'Technology, Culture and Tourism'. But, for the sake of this research, it is important to emphasize that, in general, the students and indigenous people surveyed understood the internet as an ideal way for promoting the city as a tourist center, promoting entertainment, general information, news, education, public and private services, strengthening relationships between governments, citizens and local businesses, in addition to streamlining e-commerce. They stated that natural landscapes, history and popular manifestations should be valued, and that general information on the city's contemporaneity should be provided, as well as information on tourist developments and tourist routes.

The students considered that the participation of the locals in the city's policy decisions was definitely important, specifically in respect to the resolution of local problems. They also stated that the internet could help in the provision and search for work and put companies and local workers in direct contact with each other. In view of these results, it was found that the virtual tourist city should have the following content: 1) general information about the place; 2) news; 3) services; 4) education; 5) electronic commerce; 6) interactivity.

In terms of interactivity, any provider of social relations was taken into account. General information should include statistical, geographical and the natural data, history and current facts of the city, highlighting the number of neighborhoods, hospitals, schools, banks and self-service stations, as well as any information that broadens the description of the city. News, in professional standards, should refer to information about the daily life of the city.

Under services, the booking of rooms, hiring of tours, purchase of tickets, rental of cars and/or other tourism culture services should be included.

It was understood throughout the process that education should provide guidance for tourists and local people, care for the environment and historical heritage as well as contribute to the availability of scientific studies, focusing on aspects related to the environment, history, socioeconomic organization, respect for differences, ethnicity and other themes related to tourism culture. Also considered to fall under education were guidelines to avoid social perplexities, as well as the promotion of content that encouraged respect for otherness.

Finally, e-commerce was thought to promote the sale and purchase of utensils and objects online, favoring the small traders and local artisans. Regarding interactivity, the students considered any platform that expanded the direct contact between institutions and citizens. It should be noted that this content is maintained as a guide for the analysis of tourist websites because, as demonstrated in the literature review, they are mentioned in several studies on the relationship between cyberculture and tourism.

2.3. Design, Connection Speed and Link Types

It was found that the faster the connection, the easier the user is able to move through the website; and that the simpler the architecture of the website, with harmonious colors and images, and without effects that disturb the user's attention the more visual comfort users experienced; and that the clearer the nomenclature of the links, the easier it is for users to navigate. The three elements of the analysis were set out in the form in Figure 1.

E-mail adress:
Website characteristics (connection speed, design, link types):

Total presence of the contents on analyzed websites

Content	Number of websites that feature the following content:
Interaction	
Provision of services	
Information	
Education	
E-commerce	
News	

Features found on analyzed websites

Feature:	Number of websites that feature the following characteristics:
Hypertextuality	
Metamorphosis	
Heterogeneity	
Multiplicity	
Exteriority	
Topology	
Center mobility	

Categories of attitude available on the websites

Categories:	Number of websites that present the category:
Analogy	
Substitution	
Assimilation	
Articulation	

Figure-1. Form for website analysis.

This analysis was compared to previous studies (Costa, 2005;2017) involving 108 websites related to the city of Porto Seguro-BA, following this same form. The comparison made it possible to criticize the development of the city's tourism online communication as well as to validate the effectiveness of this method for website analyses.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism, social media and cyberculture authors converge on the idea that digital information and communication technologies help citizens to strengthen interpersonal relationships and to speed up everyday tasks, turning culture into something more dynamic. Eventually, communication can be understood "as a social way of life or a technological ecosystem with human values guided by electronic realization" (Sodré, 2014). This implies that communication corresponds to mediations; to continuous processes of exchange of information between beings and between beings and organizations. Accordingly, the roles of transmitter and receiver – now merged into the idea of interlocutors – indicate that in the communicative act, the statements must be weighted by the participants towards converging them into actions.

Chang (2017) highlights the importance of mobile devices for tourism marketing, especially the usefulness and practicality of applications. In the study, he proposes that the production of tourist information should be associated with the information platform users' demands and needs, which creates greater efficiency in the marketing.

This study found that the importance of user perception of tourism marketing applications is higher than satisfaction with such applications, that there exists a service gap of quality. This is where the tourist information supplier(tour operators or tourist spots charge) must seek to understand users ' needs and expectations, to design the most appropriate application for the user (Chang, 2017).

From that perspective, according to the vision of Alves (2009) communication management should be viewed as a communicative ecosystem, corresponding to a political process of organizing the information and elements of the culture with the aim of making the collective consciousness more dynamic, empowering social practices, or even generating new ones. The elaboration of communicative strategies should imply new discussions, shaking solidified structures and building new paradigms that follow current socioeconomic demands.

For this, it is necessary to think about management beyond the technological instrumentalization of companies, and to develop effective methods to expand public debate and optimize production, without which communication does not fulfill its role in the modern world. After all, based on Carvalho (2015) the knowledge of a tourist destination includes thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences and everything that can be related to the memory of individuals and organizations.

Therefore, environments such as the internet – where multiple institutional systems coexist with multiple discourses, in which users interact and freely express their perceptions about their interests – are ideal for the planning and production of tourism communication management based on the principle of educommunication. Beni (2017) believes that this environment should be used to increase user awareness of tourism products and facilitate transactions, given their multimedia and interactive nature. For the author, this explains why the tourism system is inevitably influenced by the new business environment created by the diffusion of ICTs and has to restructure a series of value system processes.

This perspective is widespread in several other studies. Vicentin and Hoppen (2003) highlight the availability of services, purchasing options, quick comparisons between prices and products, customization, fast deliveries, free competition, expansion of the consumer market area and reduction of costs as some of the benefits for businesses and consumers. Litvin *et al.* (2008) propose the digital environment as an ideal place to boost tourism marketing and contact with consumers. Seemingly, Liu and Park (2015) identify factors that affect the usefulness of tourist manifestations in digital networks, considering possibilities for both greater interaction and understanding of users' social and personal aspects.

In turn, Mendes *et al.* (2017) believe that personal interactions online can empower the user. The authors realized that interactions in digital networks allow users to maintain a type of control and dominance over their destinations, influencing each other. In these interactive processes, there are exchanges of experiences that allow for greater agility and objectivity in tourism decisions.

The studies have great importance, for not only situating tourism in contemporary times, but also for proposing, each within their perspectives, the contents and actions necessary to the tourist as information, interactions and marketing operations. Thus, they offer possibilities for the public authorities to think of in terms of communication strategies in cyberspace, based on technological, social and political market convergences. After all, as Carvalho (2015) observes, the success of promoting the tourist destination depends on effective strategic positioning, hence the importance of including trade organizations in an adequate process of planning and information management.

In this sense, such approaches reiterate the acuity of the contents defined in this research for the analysis of websites. These discourses, also evidenced by Graham (1998) affirm the importance of the exploration of several interactive forms of the internet (between computer and user, between user and organizations, between organizations and organizations) and open possibilities to think of endless paths for the construction of virtual representations of places.

In this context, and through the educational, political and democratic aspects of educommunication, as well as the strategic point of view defended by Carvalho (2015) it can be observed that a representation of a tourist destination online can be structured as a virtual city, promoting, in the same environment, information, interaction, business opportunity, public debates, reflections, social manifestations, and cooperation between companies, governments and citizens. As already discussed (Costa, 2017) the virtual city, digital city or cybercity, is a space with a flow that must express the essence of the place from the codification of real actions developed in the physical space, without omission of perplexities and peripheral areas.

Instead, it should emphasize the local user's ability to resolve its conflicts and unpredictable situations. Although tourism is not considered as an industry, as proposed by authors like Latif *et al.* (2016) but rather as a culture, the virtual tourist city strengthens the identity of the destination as a tourist brand, an interface with the notion of authors who think of tourism as an industry. Thus, the construction of the virtual city requires corporative processes of management and planning, involving organizations and citizens. This implies the connection between their actions, economic, political and social perspectives, so that the virtual city itself becomes a symbol of the place, as are the brands.

According to Lemos (2001) there are three models of virtual cities. The 'grounded cybercity' associates physical and virtual actions, with the representation of the city in cyberspace, promoting information and actions, and providing free users in a physical space. The 'non-grounded cybercity' is the most common model. It lists characteristics of the place and proposes activities of commerce and services on the website, such as the portals Terra and G1. The 'metaphorical cybercity', resembles the city only for providing information, constituting itself as a metaphor of the city, like the Wiki itself.

"[…] it is no easy task to digitize a city and we must keep in mind this complexity so that the digital city is not just a simplifying metaphor. Design must explore the potential of connection between people and avoid being a simple spatial transposition of space. The model should not be substitutive, nor transpositive, but complementary. In a sense, cybercities must insist on ways of *multiplying you*, since they can extend the power of action at a distance (tele-action) and potentiate the emergence of local and empathic networks of sociality (Lemos, 2001)."

In addition to knowledge about local culture, the production of the virtual city involves knowledge about the structure of the internet, considering the categories of attitudes and characteristics of the environment, defined by Levy (1999). Hence, the methodology for the proposed tourist websites includes the analysis of structure and content. The proper appropriation of these factors allows the development of multidirectional communication. Through it, producers and recipients revert in their functions, fostering an all-all communication, so that groups, communities, cities can constitute common contexts in a progressive and cooperative way. However, one-way

communication (the message starts from one polling station for multiple receivers) and two-way communication (those involved exchange their information) are not excluded.

For Levy (1999) the characteristics of the internet situate it as a tangle of connected information, constituting an informational rhizome, capable of decoding and at the same time converging organizational structures, implying in the current culture of convergence (Jenkins, 2009). This rhizomatic network structure leads to multiple productions of social meanings in a democratic way. In it, the user chooses and delimits his actions, building his horizons and informational and operational limits, changing actions and his ways of perception about the place, which is extremely pertinent to the tourist culture. After all, although each community chooses its own paths on the internet, it is the confluence of information that produces senses to the place and makes it unique but with multiple identities.

According to Palácios (2001) the proper structuring of the city in the network contributes to the promotion of benefits such as administrative and budgetary transparency, direct democracy, de-bureaucratization, access to information and alternative education and leisure programs that can collaborate to promote social equity. However, it takes proper ways to transpose the social effervescence to the internet, providing political, economic, educational, informative, interactive actions, among others that cooperate for democracy.

Citizens must be encouraged to participate in the future decisions of the community in which they live and in some way they feel responsible for. In chats and social networks, for example, the citizen can expose and share with the world his indignations and claims directly. The internet also contributes to the promotion of global political actions, such as flash mobs – instant social movements organized from the network – or even cyber-activism aimed at collaborating with struggles of political minorities.

Online interaction permeates the domain of citizenship, penetrating and interconnecting economic, educational, informational and behavioral issues. In this context, social projections and social movements allow companies to do commerce and provide specific electronic services for demonstration groups. This is what is seen on the official website of the gay group of Portugal (www.portugalgay.pt). It is evident that the commercialization of products for the users, besides the possibility of booking hotel rooms and tickets for concerts and LGBT festivals, among other services. This cooperative practice represents a new organizational conjuncture of the companies and a new interactive organization with their suppliers, consumers and competitors.

The use of the network as a communicative ecosystem of an institution or productive sector affects the whole process of creation, exchange and distribution of values, giving rise to a new sociotechnical configuration, the understanding of which is indispensable for the success of sectors that make tourism more dynamic. For Carvalho (2003) companies working on and with the internet correspond to an economic activity agency structured around specific business projects, so they must present flexibility and adaptability towards a global economy, in which there is evidence of a constantly changing demand.

It is noted that the articulation between trade enterprises, public departments and citizens through the virtual city, collaborates to strengthen local, regional and interregional ties, which is important to favor the continuous development of productive sectors related to tourism. As Mishra et al. (2016) point out, the organizations that make up tourism culture have become indispensable to the socioeconomic dynamics of tourist centers. This is why there's the need for incessant innovations and the availability of fast, accurate and targeted information, which should result in better efficiency, user satisfaction and reducing costs.

For this, virtualized entities can include an infinite number of components, depending on the operations and transactions developed, characterizing processes of identity expansion as observed by Carvalho (2015). Thus, by providing elements of the organization with creativity, coherence and conciseness, tourism organizations become capable of acting in the local and global spheres. Therefore, the more interactivity and personalization of services, the better the quality and the adjustment between organizations and public.

Proper management of these factors allows greater flexibility management. Thus, while maintaining the control of operations and business transactions, it is possible to expand the scope of the consumer market and offer new products and services, including for purposes of social inclusion, as proposed by Hussien and Jones (2016). As the authors note, public and private organizations should develop strategies to meet the needs of citizens and clients with disabilities. The virtual city should provide opportunities for this audience to build their roadmaps, choosing organizations and services that develop accessibility policies. It also offers possibilities for these citizens to demand actions from the public authorities and guidelines that ensure their participation in the events of the tourist culture.

In the same manner, it is noted that the virtual tourist city can also be a space for promoting education, providing users with scientific content about nature, history, behavior and popular manifestations, as well as orienting tourists and residents to better relationships and, contributing to more actions developed in educational units. In this sense, the virtual city stimulates the creation of a school curriculum aimed at teaching tourism and hospitality for children and adolescents. Even though it is not the purpose of this article to discuss tourism and formal education, attention is drawn to the idea developed by Marunda (2015) to offer tourism education to students of the first educational levels as well as to residents of rural communities. In this context, it is reiterated that the communication management of the tourist city takes on the character of education, after all, digital technologies are being used to increase knowledge and strengthen citizenship in tourist centers.

This proposes that actions in the network involve the constitution of virtual communities, whose members that have common interests are the main disseminators of artifacts. Such communities are based on user preferences and expectations, not requiring them to interact with each other, but rather to express their choices and thoughts, which will therefore generate interactivity. This indicates that the understanding about aspects of the community is essential to the management of tourism communication, favoring directed productions, in which the final product is adapted to the individual consumer, including by customization and contributing to cost reduction with production and distribution. Therefore, it is important that public and private organizations stimulate debates in their environments.

In this sense, the virtual city is a structure that allows public and/or private organizations to think of strategies to redefine spaces or even to recover in case of natural or man-made disasters. After all, as observed by Zibanai (2014) the tourist centers are directly affected by political, economic, social and natural phenomena occurring all over the globe.

However, as shown below, the experience of Porto Seguro-BA shows that tourist websites still do not offer such rich details and interactive processes but are finding a way to do so. As noted in the analysis, it generally maintains fixed structures and functions in isolation, like leaflets intended to sell services, sensationalising the culture by displaying exotic landscapes and nocturnal attractions, revoking the imagery of Caminha.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the articulation between the Porto Seguro City Hall and the Municipal Tourism Development Council and its comparison with previous internet destination promotion analyzes (Costa, 2005;2017) allows for the formulation of three main considerations. First, we identified an evolution in the management of destination tourism communication in cyberspace. Next, it was noted that such a process requires rearrangements in order to constitute itself as a communicative ecosystem. This implies, according to Alves (2009) the need for an organization of the informational environment, aimed at stimulating the cognitive capacity of citizens, reaching also their subjectivities and affectivities. Finally, it was observed that the virtual city offers this option, collaborating for the integration between sectors of the tourist culture.

In terms of connectivity between websites, the City Hall's page provides information and public services, while the City Council builds networks of tourism service providers (where to stay, where to eat, what to do), with addresses and telephone numbers of hotels, restaurants, agencies, real estate, bars, nightclubs, beach huts, as well as

data on other ventures that are not directly linked to the trade, but are part of the dynamics of the city, such as gyms, supermarkets and drugstores. Porto Seguro Tur also offers geographical aspects, location, history of the city, information about events, cultural centers and enumeration of the main economic activities. However, the narratives are limited to the imaginary of Caminha and there is no content pertinent to education.

In both environments, which feature fast connection speeds and easy navigation, there are social networking devices (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), as well as the traditional 'talk to us'. However, such processes still do not allow public debate. The few manifestations that occur on the fan page of the City Council revolve around memories and expectations of tourists, not having connections between them. In turn, the institution's posts follow the formula of news production of the site, which is limited to entertainment, works more like postcards or advertising of enterprises, not using content that stimulates reflections on tourism and the city. However, on the fan page of the City Hall, citizens express their dissatisfaction, needs and request public interventions. There are no responses from the City Hall representatives whose statements repeat the practice of official journalism, which is always aimed at building a good image of management and at limiting tourism to entertainment.

From the structural point of view, it is stated that the articulation between the websites of the two institutions represents the appropriation of the principle of metamorphosis, since it characterizes processes of reconstruction and renegotiation, configuring the use of other characteristics as the topology, establishing a proximity between public agencies and private ventures, and heterogeneity or multi-mediation, with the exploitation of several media languages. As there is a diversity of links, it is pertinent to say that in the formed structure the multiplicity principle is used, although user mobility is limited since as the addresses of the available companies are not hyperlinks, it is necessary that the user opens another window to search for the companies.

This consequently impairs the mobility of the centers. In fact, this feature is not properly explored since there is a single connection center that is in the address of the City Hall. If you access the network through Porto Seguro Tur, you will not be able to get to the city's website, therefore you cannot talk about externality, because the existing connections do not allow free traffic by all the organizations articulated in the network, making it harder to have a wider perception of the city.

As far as the categories of attitudes are concerned, the connection between the sites alone establishes the articulation, since there is a correlation between two municipal institutions, allowing several others to correlate, and being able to create new organizational strategies, as well as possibilities of actions by the network. Also there are similarities noted, as there are descriptions about the municipality and similar banners of credit cards used on the companies' websites, for example. No substitution is identified.

In spite of the fact that it still needs to be expanded and improved in infrastructure, this connection between sites represents a path to the process of market, technological, social and cultural convergence, proposed by Jenkins (2009) since it is formed from interactivity between public and private institutions, with the possibility of integrating citizens with activities in cyberspace. Thus, it is possible to consider the connection between the two websites as an initial step towards the development of the virtual tourist city, carrying out communication management consistent with current demands.

However, what reiterates this conjunction as an evolution in the online communication of Porto Seguro is the comparison with the analyzes of 108 sites referring to the city conducted in the years of 2005, during a Master's degree research, and in 2017, during publishing the book *Technology Culture and Tourism: potentialities and complexities of Porto Seguro-Ba in the era of cyberculture*, by Nova Edições Acadêmica. The results presented in these two distinct periods showed static communication, since the structures and even the information are repeated.

None of the 108 sites analyzed in the two periods, including those highlighted above, combined all the content defined to characterize the city, nor did they properly explore the characteristics and categories of attitude of the environment. The only place that allowed more comprehensive contextualizations about the socioeconomic dynamics of the city, in the first stage of the analysis, was unavailable in the second. Most websites defined Porto

Seguro as a place of exotic, fun and permissiveness as described in the text below, identified both in 2005 and 2017, at the same address:

"[...] known as the site of the discovery of Brazil. Carnival is especially lively and the place is known for its bustling nightlife and New Year celebrations. Pataxó Indians still live in Porto Seguro, fishing and making artifacts to sell to tourists in the center of the historic city, where they have interesting churches, lovely gardens and a beautiful panoramic view. The area around Porto Seguro is a dense Atlantic Forest reserve. Crossing the bay, one arrives at the Arraial d'Ajuda, an admirable scenery on an irregular cliff with calm beaches. The center is full of bars and restaurants and has a good nightlife. Along the coast is Trancoso, a small and simple village known for having the most beautiful beaches in Brazil."

Every website used the imaginary of Caminha, which is necessary, since it is part of the history and memory of the place. But in almost all cases, like the one above, there are processes of sensationalisation of culture (Debord, 1997). Internet news (found on twenty one websites - including blogs, extensions of printed newspapers or portals covering the entire region) described it simply as a spectacle, just as it was with violence and politics. Popular accomplishments, real neighborhood situations, solutions to social perplexities, public policies, education, job opportunities were not identified as journalistic content. An example is the portal www.radar64.com that covers the entire south of Bahia. Although it had several editorials, its homepage showed stories on urban violence, characterized with sensationalism.

Only eight websites were concerned with education, presenting scientific studies, local history versions, including productions aimed at children, offering explanations about the fauna, flora, architectural constructions and culture of the city. E-commerce (also available in eight websites), was often found in representations of real estate. This was the case with https://www.bahiahomes.com.br/, the online extension of a family business that sells lots and properties in Trancoso, among other places of Bahia, such as Ilhéus, Praia do Forte and Barra Grande. The user could contact the seller directly through a dialog box. There were also offers of works by local artists, as well as objects such as clothing and household appliances (OLX was not considered in the analysis in 2017, because it was not available in 2005).

Interaction devices were found in 76 websites, generally linked to service providing (identified in 65 sampling sites). Many of these interactive processes corresponded to business actions aimed at prospecting clients. Currently, there are usually links to fan pages of the institutions, where images of the city and photographs of tourists at the company's physical facilities are available. These websites also showed shared experiences of tourists who left compliments or criticism to the company and/or the city. However, reflections and questions about contemporary themes were not stimulated.

Another problem was that the analyzed websites did not properly exploit the characteristics of the internet, which made it difficult for users to search and have a better understanding of the dynamics of the city. Only in three addresses were all the characteristics of the medium considered. Heterogeneity was identified in all sites, hypertextuality in 102, and mobility of the centers in 57 sites. These characteristics were usually explored by hotels, as strategies for presenting their accommodations, features and the services offered. The exteriority was identified in only fifteen sites, which is justified by the fact that these are isolated buildings, allowing the inference that there was no formal cooperation among tourism companies in the city.

The topology was identified on 60 websites, mainly real estate and tourism agencies. It did not generally extend the original content, but instead, led the user to another space, adding other superficial information. In the agencies' websites, a better possibility of moving from hotel to hotel was detected, or, in a few cases, a virtual tour of the city. But, the mobility of the centers and of the exteriority were not explored, and it was necessary to resort to resources off the page to reach intended information.

It was found that usually hotels, travel agencies and real estate agencies explored categories of attitudes. Analogy appeared in most sites (in 100), substitution was identified in three digital real estate websites; assimilation

in 50 environments. The use of articulation (travel agencies and real estate agents) was verified in 36 sites, placing the user in direct contact with hotels or, in the second case, the landlord or the real estate owner. Therefore, it can be considered that between 2005 and 2017, the local government and companies did not properly exploit the tourism potential of the city, showing a limited communication scenario, away from contemporary perspectives that require creative and interactive strategies, as proposed by the culture of convergence and educommunication .

This precarious situation is reiterated with the diagnosis of the report of the Ministry of Tourism (2015) which places communication as one of the three major problems of the city. The other two are the sense of insecurity, including in tourist areas, and a shortage of qualified professionals working in the sector. For the Ministry of Tourism, the deficiency in the management of tourist information in Porto Seguro consists of the lack of tourist assistance centers to provide information about the destination and its attractions. In addition until 2017 there was a lack of a virtual space to anticipate information, actions and promote interaction, so that tourists can have a broad dimension of the destination. The articulation between the websites of the City Hall and the Municipal Council of Tourism, identified in 2018, started to change this reality.

In the light of this new framework, it is pertinent to think of tourism communication based on an information management that contributes to the development of the destination, bringing together, as integrated associations, various aspects of culture, which characterizes the expansion of network identity, pointing to its multiple identities and diverse imaginaries.

Aaker (1996) supports that there should not be an exclusive setting of the identity of the brand in the attributes of the product, explaining that a brand is much more than a product, and that the attributes of a product are not the only key elements in the customer's decision, since the brand includes other potentially relevant associations, for instance the brand personality, and the relationships between brand and customer. According to Aaker (1991) brands can become symbols of the auto-expression of a person (Carvalho, 2015).

The internet should be used as a link between the various communities that make up the scenario and local dynamics, making proper use of their characteristics and categories of attitudes in order to widen the connections between the social sectors. Thus, building a cybercity in the 'grounded cybercity' model is highly recommended. The process is slow and continuous. It requires extensive knowledge about the city and its planning, as well as proposing new cognitive constructions.

The rooted city proposes the mutual cooperation and the construction of tourist communities, offering ways to the best planning of the place. As a destination where many tourist practices are developed, Porto Seguro must prepare itself to answer questions and meet the demands of audiences who are different but connected to one another through actions in cyberspace. Therefore, diversity of information, service delivery, promotion of interaction, education and responsible journalism should be included in this virtual representation, so that the host is well recognized and able to encourage tourists to a *flanerie* by the city since after all, as already noted (Costa, 2017) the tourist is the *flâneur* of cyberculture.

In addition, this model of virtual city can operate in synergy, offering, mainly to the visitors, the possibilities of connections to the free network, since they are not at home. These free areas can be public open spaces such as squares, museums, parks, as well as welcoming centers for tourists, which can provide not only the network but also accessible equipment. It is recommended that the projection of the city on the internet should start from a public initiative, seeking the support of business and philanthropic organizations and residents or visitors who enjoy it in the physical space.

The virtual city can cooperate in processes of mutation of the local identities, promoting multiculturalism, which favors the respect to the otherness and the acceptance of differences. Accordingly, it cooperates to increase the competitive power of the destination, since it allows the continuous updating of information and operations, as well as allows the public power and the trade organizations themselves a permanent process of self-assessment.

After all, as Mazaro (2018) observes, the revaluations and metamorphoses of tourism systems reiterate that competitive power is an inherent characteristic, and is not determined by the market or the competition.

The virtual tourist city should be considered as a spectrum of social dynamism, aimed at optimizing resources, monitoring and evaluation of activities, resulting from ethical commitment among politicians, businessmen and the population, capable of organizing and sustaining the whole process, guiding their senses and purposes. The virtual city can be understood as a logical and dialogical communicative system, as its contents are precise, orderly and democratic, providing a rational and multicultural connection of its elements. It contemplates, therefore, the practice of a communication strategy of the city public power: the result of a collective construction, in which the members are recognized for their actions, demands, perspectives and cultural diversity.

5. CONCLUSION

The study proved that there was an evolution of the management of tourism communication produced by the City of Porto Seguro. However, it recognized that new guidelines are still needed for the communicative processes to keep up with the pace of contemporaneity. The virtual tourist city emerged as an ideal strategy for both, proving the contents and actions necessary for the development of the productive sectors that compose the culture. It is the responsibility of the city's public power to manage this structure, allowing residents and visitors to use the internet as a space for empowerment of actions and democratization. As well as expanding economic transactions, it can create the same opportunities for large and small entrepreneurs, and work as a tool for the management of communication and urban planning.

The cybercity represents a way for the city government to use the internet to stimulate the strengthening of cultures, the creation of new community and neighborhood ties, as well as to expand struggles against exclusion, contributing to the regeneration of the public space. Thus, the model should be thought of as a mirror of society, presenting icons and symbols chosen by residents and visitors. One must also consider the construction of this virtual structure, as a means of synergy and equality, in relation to the destinies of the city, rich and poor, bosses and employees and other antagonistic types that daily make up the ambience of the place.

Therefore, there is a need to hire professionals capable of establishing dialogic relations between the dynamics of the city and tourism communication, since they are both in constant change. The study also showed us that the methodology used is a useful tool for technical and scientific production, as it establishes research criteria that permitted a structural approach to the internet considering its characteristics and categories of attitudes, as well as the delimitation of content pertinent to the description of the city.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D., 1991. Management brand equity. New York: The Free Press.

Aaker, D., 1996. Building strong brands. New York: Free Press.

Alves, L.R., 2009. Training policy and political training of managers for communication and culture. In: Baccega, Maria Aparecida & Costa, Maria C. Castilho. Paulinas: Paul. pp: 189-220.

Beni, M.C., 2017. Understanding the new tourism in the collaborative and shared economy. The technological evolution and the impacts on the strategic management and the marketing of tourism: E-tourism. São Paulo: National Association of Tourism Research.

Carvalho, C.R., 2003. The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the internet, business and society. Trad. Maria Luiza de A. Borges. Rio De Janeiro: Jorge Zahar.

Carvalho, P.D.D.C., 2015. An integrated conceptual model f destination branding-touristmind. Journal of Tourism Management Research, 2(2): 24-40.Available at: https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.31/2015.2.2/31.2.24.40.

Castells, M., 1999. The network society. 2nd Edn., São Paulo: Peace and Earth.

Chang, P., 2017. The importance performance analysis of Taiwan tourism mobile marketing. Journal of Tourism Management Research, 4(1): 12-16.Available at: https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.31.2017.41.12.16.

Costa, M.B.F., 2005. Cyberculture and the enhancement of tourism activity. Masters Dissertation. State University of Santa Cruz / Federal University of Bahia. Postgraduate Program in Culture and Tourism. Department of Economics and Law.

Costa, M.B.F., 2017. Technology, culture and tourism. Potentialities and complexities of Porto Seguro-BA in the era of cyberculture. Mauritius: New Academic Editions.

Costa, M.B.F., 2017a. Reflections on tourist culture in times of digital revolution based on contextualizations about Salvador-BA. Tourism & Development Magazine (RT & D) / Journal of Tourism & Development, 1(27/28): 425 - 434.

Debord, G., 1997. The society of the spectacle. Comments on the society of the spectacle. Trad. Estela dos Santos Abreu. Rio de Janeiro: Counterpoint.

Graham, S., 1998. Cyberspace and the city. Magazine of the Department of Urban Planning and Territorial Planning. No. 1, 2. Available from http://polired.upm.es/index.php/urban/article/view/192/188 [Accessed 10/25/2001].

Hussien, F.M. and E. Jones, 2016. The requirements of disabled customers: A study of British customers in Egyptian hotels. Journal of Tourism Management Research, 3(2): 56-73.Available at: https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.31/2016.3.2/31.2.56.73.

Jenkins, H., 2009. Culture of convergence. 2nd Edn., Trad. Suzana. Alexandria. São Paulo: Aleph.

Latif, W.B., M.A. Islam, M. Mohamad, K. Kongsompong and A. Rahman, 2016. Conceptual framework of brand image for tourism industry: Tourism management and advertisement as moderators. Journal of Tourism Management Research, 3(1): 1-9.

Lemos, A., 2001. Cybercides. In: Lemos, A. & Palácios, M. The windows of cyberspace. Porto Alegre: Sulina. pp: 9-38.

Levy, P., 1999. Cyberculture. Trad. Carlos Irineu da Costa. São Paulo: Publisher. pp: 34.

Litvin, S.W., R.E. Goldsmith and B. Pan, 2008. Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. Tourism Management, 29(3): 458-468.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.05.011.

Liu, Z. and S. Park, 2015. What makes a useful online review? Implication for travel product websites. Tourism Management, 47: 140-151.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.09.020.

Maldonado, A.E., 2013. The transethodological perspective in the conjuncture of civilizing change at the beginning of the 21st century. In: Maldonado, A. E; Bonin, J.A .; Rosário, N. Methodological perspectives in communication / new challenges in interrogative practice. Salamanca: Social Communication Editions and Publications.

Martins, G.D.A., 1994. Manual for preparation of monographs and dissertations. 2nd Edn., São Paulo, Atlas.

Marunda, E., 2015. The enhancement of sustainable tourism education and training to primary school level and rural communities in Zimbabwe. Journal of Tourism Management Research, 2(1): 9-23.Available at: https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.31/2015.2.1/31.1.9.23.

Mazaro, R., 2018. Outside in, inside out: Tourism competitiveness and brazilian strategy analysis. Journal of Tourism Management Research, 5(1): 68-80.Available at: https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.31.2018.51.68.80.

Mendes, F., M. Luiz, A. M., F.B. Tan and S. Milne, 2017. Empowering the traveler: An examination of the impact of user-generated content on travel planning. Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 35(4): 425- 436.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2017.1358237.

Ministry of Tourism, 2015. National tourism competitiveness index - Porto Seguro 2015. Analytical Report of the Ministry of Tourism of the Federal Government of Brazil. Available from http://www.turismo.gov.br/sites/default/turismo/o_ministerio/publicacoes/Indice_competitividade/2015/Porto%20Seguro_RA_2015.pdf [Accessed 15/042018].

Mishra, P.K., H. Rout and Sanghamitra, 2016. Tourism in Odisha: An engine of long run growth. Journal of Tourism Management Research, 3(2): 74-84.Available at: https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.31/2016.3.2/31.2.74.84.

Palácios, M., 2001. Myth and powers of cybercides. Jornal Correio Brasiliense - Thinking Supplement. Available from https://www.correioweb.com.br/ [Accessed 11/15/2004].

Peirce, C.S., 2005. Semiotics. 3rd Edn., São Paulo: Perspective.

Soares, I.D.O., 1999. Communication and education: The emergence of a new field and the profile of its professionals. Revista Contato, Brasília, year 1, n.2, jan./mar. Available from https://www5.usp.br/ [Accessed 17/04/2018].

Sodré, M., 2014. The science of the ordinary. Notes for the communicational method. Petrópolis: Vozes.

Vicentin, I.C. and N. Hoppen, 2003. The internet in the tourism business in Brazil: Use and perspectives. Electronic Journal of Administration, 9(1): 1-26.

Zibanai, Z., 2014. Is the tourism industry a fragile heavy weight? Validation through a literature review of tourism system shocks. Journal of Tourism Management Research, 1(1): 1-13.Available at: https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.31/2014.1.1/31.1.1.13.