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Mass tourism and low-income consumers from São Paulo, Brazil: An analysis on the sustainable impact

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Abstract

This article results from an empirical, quantitative and longitudinal study that is complemented with researches on literary references available through books, annals of academic congresses and digital database of thesis and dissertations. This article aims at analyzing common habits related to tourism of low-income population who live in São Paulo city, Brazil. Additionally, the paper discusses about low-income tourism and its consequences over sustainability issues. The literature review about sustainable tourism highlights the pressure and the impact that mass tourism represented to the environment. The results of empirical research show that between 2006 and 2011, low-income population interest in tourism has increased since it was verified a larger number of travels, change on the duration of such travels, changes on the destination and sources of information. However, this population has a low level of awareness regarding the environment preservation, which may take this population to represent a risk to the sustainable tourism.

Keywords: Mass tourism, Sustainable tourism, Consumer behavior, Communication

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1. Introduction

This article's main goal is to analyze tourism habits of low-income people who live in São Paulo city, Brazil. Moreover, it discusses some issues about the increase of mass tourism and its consequences over the sustainability. This study is justified by the tourism importance as an industry, by the attention that both media and academy give to low-income population and also by the lack of academic papers related to this theme. First of all, it was noticed that, from the second half of the 20th century, tourism became a new section of the worldwide economy and a social activity due to the capitalist expansion, new technologies development, international and social division of work, and workers claim for free time (vacation). Tourism has a crucial influence on the schedule of global transactions, and there is also a special relevance of tourism in Brazil, where it has specific features of destination and is surrounded by peculiar attractions. Other than that, tourism is an economic activity that earns a lot of money in the world and that generates more jobs than any other sector (Leimann, 2007).

Tourism industry can be considered as a growth opportunity to poor and emerging countries because the sector generates profits that go beyond any amount of foreign currency, employs a large amount of workforce and stimulates other sectors, but there is a very important aspect that overcomes any economic data, which is the human aspect of tourism (Conrad and Barreto, 2005). According to data from the World Tourism & Travel Council (2013), the tourism sector contributed with 9% of Brazilian GDP (Gross Domestic Product), which corresponds to R\$ 443.7 (Brazilian Real) billion. This amount has positioned Brazil as the sixth best country in tourism. The ranking currently has United States (US\$ 1,4 trillion dollars) and China (US\$ 850,1 billion dollars) in first place, and it takes into consideration several indexes of this particular sector, such as importance of tourism to the GDP, generation of job positions, foreign money that enters the country through international tourists and investments from the public and private sectors. In 2013, over 190 million passengers travelled by air (Brazilian Airlines Association, 2013), while 140 million passengers travelled by land (National Land Transportation Agency, 2013). Also, tourism sector grew 18% in Brazil between 2007 and 2011 mainly because of the internal market (Brazilian Ministry of Tourism, 2012).

Regarding the low-income population in Brazil, the interest in searching for more information about this particular population can be justified by the size and importance of low-income segment and one has to keep in mind that the government policies focused on currency stabilization and on lowering the levels of social inequality resulted into the emerging of a population market share that had been restrained by the consumption until that moment. The increasing number of formal jobs, the access to credit and the higher incomes together with government incentives, such as Bolsa Família Program, resulted into the strengthen of low-income population consumption. These policies allowed the population to acquire goods and services (mainly tourism) that were harder to get by individuals who were part of such population segments; these individuals spend most of their monthly income with food, cleaning and hygiene products, and consequently they are always looking for ways of reconciling their consumption preferences with a real situation of low budget income. Then, it was observed the transformation of Brazilian social pyramid into a diamond-shape structure that resulted from the incorporation of millions of Brazilians into the labor market and the consumption. According to Falcão (2014, p.14), the growth of particular social groups was followed by the alteration of consumption habits, which has brought a challenge to the companies so they could adjust

themselves to the new consumption profile in the country, “consumers that are buying more and more touristic products”.

On the academic perspective, the justification is related to the lack of academic papers about tourism to the popular social classes. In Brazil, the academic literature examination through thesis and dissertations reveals that just a few studies were completed about tourism and low-income, none of them with the same focus as this article. The Thesis and Dissertations Digital Library (2015) contains 1821 papers about the low-income issue, out of which just a few of them handle tourism and low-income together (Rolim, 2005; Fleury, 2010; Cerqueira, 2010; Caldas, 2014; Liguori, 2011; Moreira, 2012; Alves, 2013; Castro, 1992; Hübner, 2013; Leimann, 2007; Silva, 2008; Falcão, 2014). Falcão (2014) identified the processes that motivate and define the tourism choices by the C class of population. However, among the before-mentioned authors, only Hübner (2013), Silva (2008), Cerqueira (2010), Alves (2013) refer to sustainability, environment, and environmental management. On a parallel search, it was verified that the keywords “sustainable tourism” brought 231 thesis and dissertations, out of which only the dissertation from Hübner (2013) refers to the low-income issue. The search on international database revealed that articles that handle both issues, tourism and low-income, work with the perspectives of sustainability and importance of tourism sector to the economy of particular areas or countries, mainly to Asian and South American countries (Wilson, 2010, Lambert, 2009, Cunha and Cunha, 2005, Giudici, E., Melis, C., Dessì, S. and Ramos, F. P. G. (2013), Poudel, 2014).

2. Theoretical approach

The theoretical framework is mainly focused on the concepts of tourism, mass tourism, and its risks to the sustainability (Acevedo, 1998; Araujo, 2001; Garcia, 2001; Beni, 2001; Felice, 2002; Schreiner, 2004; Rolim, 2005; Fleury, 2010; and Souza, 2013) and another one that refers to Brazilian low income (Cetelem Bgn, 2012; Neri, 2008; Barki and Parente, 2010; Chauvel and Mattos, 2008; Souza and Lamounier, 2010; Vicente, 2012; Passos, 2011; Ibope, 2015; Giovinazzo and Wright, 2006; Mattoso and Rocha, 2010).

Tourism can be defined as an industry that processes natural, cultural and human resources without wasting any of such resources, in a very articulated and planned way based on the mission of making the tourists dreams come true and, mainly, promoting the local sustainable development (Brazilian Institute of Tourism, 2003). The definition that is accepted worldwide considers tourism as being a group of activities that people perform during their travels and stays in places that are different from their common place, for less than a year, aiming at engaging into leisure or business activities or any other reasons (World Tourism Organization, 2007, Schreiner, 2004).

Tourism has a crucial influence over the schedule of global transactions and has special importance to Brazil in its specific destination features, being surrounded by all of its peculiar attractions. Souza (2013, p. 15) believes that tourism is an activity that requires an economic return to provide benefits to private companies, government and even to the community. However, such benefits should be managed according to their impact over natural and cultural resources.

Mass tourism is featured, according to Ruschmann (2001, p.110) by a large amount of people who travel in groups or individually to the same place, usually during the same period of the year, and the consequent over dimensioning of receptive resources to attend them is not bringing the expected profitability, mainly due to the seasonal characteristics of such flows. Besides, the flow of a large amount of people has contributed to socio-cultural assaults in the receptor communities and to the origin of damages sometimes irreversible to the natural resources. Moreover, the lack of "touristic culture" from the visitors results in their alienate behavior over the environment that they are visiting – the visitors believe that they are not responsible by the preservation of nature. They understand that their free time is very important, so they have the right to use what they have paid for and, also, their visit to the place does not last long enough for causing any harm to the environment.

The excerpt above points out two issues that are strictly related to the scope of this article. The first aspect refers to the need of constructing over dimensioned tools to meet the requirements of specific seasonal periods. Such constructions naturally have significant environmental impact. The second aspect to be highlighted refers to the fact that Ruschmann (2001) calls "lack of tourist culture", which takes us to behaviors that are not very concerned to the preservation of the natural patrimony that the tourists are visiting. Any harm to the nature, garbage thrown in the places they are visiting, intensive use of resources with no concerns whatsoever to what will occur after the tourist passes by a specific place are extremely important factors to the maintenance of natural sites. The idea that vacation time is "sacred" takes the tourists to think they have the right of doing anything they want is even more important when it comes to the tourism actions of low-income population, whereby they lack the kind of education that is required for understanding the preservation importance.

Mass tourism emerged in Brazil during the 1970's as a viable alternative to the development, as well as to the labor and income generation. At that time, it was believed that Brazil would be able to satisfy the international market requirements because of the country's amazing environmental capital (Zimmermann, 1996). However, according to Rejowski (1996) this belief was purely illusory because tourists keep on travelling to different places in the world looking for not only a sunny day, but also professional services to an affordable cost, even though they have this vast set of environments, habits, cultures and traditions. Due to this point of view, this model from 1970's failed in Brazil because of the lack of professionalization, the economic crisis and the lack of awareness of these factors for a harmonic and sustainable tourism development, which are: the preservation of a natural and cultural environment, as occurred in Europe; the awareness of how important the quality programs on service delivering are, and the recognition that is required to have qualified workforce in all levels and in several segments of tourism and leisure areas.

Souza (2013) states that sustainable tourism is contrary to the mass tourism management, that is, bounding the tourism concept to the sustainable development aims at minimizing the negative impacts that the activity may cause to the local community and the environment. However, the author agrees that there is no consensus about the sustainable tourism concept. The World Tourism Organization presents the principles to the development of a sustainable tourism: natural, historical, cultural and other resources that are related to tourism must be conserved so they can continue to be used in the future, always bringing benefits to the current society; the touristic development must be planned and managed so it does not cause

serious environmental or sociocultural problems to the touristic area; the environmental quality of the touristic area must be maintained and improved where necessary; a high level of tourists' satisfaction must be maintained so the touristic destinations can conserve their market value and popularity; the tourism benefits must be vastly extended to the whole society (Souza, 2013, p 15). According to the Sustainable Tourism Letter (1995), "the touristic development shall be based on the sustainability criteria, that is, shall be ecologically and equally supportable from the ethic and social perspectives to the communities".

The discussion about sustainable tourism includes environmental and sociocultural impacts (the last one takes place more slowly and quietly, being detected through time). Swarbrooke (2000) states that overall, these impacts are invisible and intangible, and they would have little or no opportunity of being reverted once they have occurred. However, mass tourism privileges immediate profit and large scale, therefore destroying the relative quality of touristic sites. Negative values are associated to mass tourism, such as means of reception, nutrition risks and pollution, the degradation of touristic sites and the depletion of ecosystems. moreover, the capacity of the touristic site is limited and it can be expressed by the law of decreasing incomes, its unlimited exploration may cause the depletion and also cause investments to drop consequently, given that the search for maximum profitability long term destroys its foundations.

Cunha and Cunha (2005, p.109) considers that the tourism industry makes artificial everything that it touches, creates a fictitious and mystified world of leisure, and gives the illusion that the space becomes a scenario, a "show" to the amorphous crowd in which the subject surrenders himself to the manifestations, enjoying their own alienation.

In Brazil, famous places can be mentioned as examples of mass tourism systems, such as Pão de Açúcar and Corcovado in Rio de Janeiro; Cataratas do Iguaçu, in Paraná, and Bonito region in Mato Grosso, where mass tourism systems have been created and comprise the exploration of natural beauties in large scale. Pão de Açúcar and Corcovado in Rio de Janeiro are the best examples given that they are two of the most visited places in Brazil, where there is urban tourism that is centered in geographically restricted natural beauties. In both cases, tourists must follow an itinerary in which they form lines to take the means of transportation (the cable car to Pão de Açúcar; trains or buses to Corcovado). When the visitors reach the touristic site, they follow through a paved path that is limited by and equipped with souvenirs shops, toilets, bars and restaurants. The visit is limited and predictable. The same issue occurs in Cataratas do Iguaçu. Although the itinerary lasts longer, it takes place entirely through concrete footbridges that are protected by banisters and fences to protect and hold the tourist to the predefined route. The nature majesty is a show to be seen rather than lived. As for Bonito, an attraction that receives infinitely less tourists than the previous examples, the place established a very rigid set of rules for visiting the caves, waterfalls, rivers and trails that are spread throughout several farms around the city. In most cases, however, the tourist has a limited opportunity of reaching a level of synesthesia with the untouched nature. Most hikes, for example, take place on wooden decks that are built over stilts higher than the woods, the stones and the rivers. The natural beauty is fully exposed to be seen, not to be lived. Such as an art gallery where the masterpieces cannot be touched, Bonito's collection of beauties is preserved at the cost of interaction possibilities.

Focusing on the low-income segment, note that the terms low-income, consumer of C, D, E classes, poor, emerging, popular classes, popular layers of society or workers are usually applied indistinctly, either by the media or by academic papers (Prado, 2008; Bacha *et al.*, 2009). In academic papers, it can be verified lack of consensus on how to classify the low income, either in terms of socioeconomic class (CD or CDE or DE), per capita or familiar income, minimum wages, or place of residence (Prado, 2008). The authors of this article consider as low-income the individuals that belong to C and D classes (according to Brazil Criterion).

During the past 10 years, 35 million people step into the C class, which went from 38% of the total population in 2002 to 51% in 2013. As for future estimates, the low-income population should reach 78% out of the total Brazilian population (summing up C, D, E classes) (Cetelem Bgn, 2012, Ibope, 2015). In a study entitled "The new middle class" (*free translation*), Neri (2008, p.6) classified the C class as being the segment whose total family income would be between R\$1.040 and R\$4.561 in the Greater São Paulo area. According to the author, C class would be the "new middle class" whose emergency would be consequence of the inequality reduction and the labor market recovery, mainly during the years that followed Real Plan. The Committee that defines the middle class in Brazil, which is a committee of experts formed by the Secretary of Strategic Affairs (SSA) of the Presidency of the Republic, established that the new Brazilian middle class has a family per capita income between R\$ 291 and R\$ 1.019 (Comissão para Definição da Classe Média, 2012).

However, defining whether the C class would be the new middle class or not is still controversy. Vicente (2012) questions whether the new middle class would be a collective delusion. The author differentiates the emerging middle class from the traditional one. The emerging middle class spends their money on food, housing, clothing and personal care. On the other hand, the traditional middle class spends their money mostly on education, culture, leisure and private health services and, differently from the emerging class, the traditional would not be used to utilize public services, such as education and health, for example, because the greatest part of their family incomes goes for such expenses. Torres (2004), in contrast to the other author, states that the real middle class would be the real C class: medium not only because they are in the middle of the income pyramid, but also because their consumption habits, income and education are similar to the average in Brazil. It must be pointed out, however, that is not part of this article's scope to handle details about poverty, extreme poverty, middle class or intermediary class concepts. From the poverty definition perspective, these concepts have been target of intense debates and there is a consensus about them, but regarding Brazilian low income and "new middle class", the definition is generally arbitrary and has low theoretical or conceptual foundation that can support it (Comissão para definição da classe media no Brasil, 2012). In this context, Pochmann (2012) considers that the citizens that are part of new middle class would be closer to the working class than they are to the middle class effectively.

Giambiagi and Schwartzman (2014) state that academically there is a thesis that refers to the "model changing", with priority to the "internal model" for the development of a "masses market". The authors postulate that the always-noisy phenomena of the "C class rise" are inserted in this political context of current policies presentation as a distinctive landmark of the economic and social history of the country. "Model changing", social inclusion", "internal model", "masses consumption" and "expansion of middle class" started being synonyms of what would be a "new development concept". Giambiagi and Schwartzman (2014) consider that the employment rate evolution should be emphasized in this conception of development; the

unemployment rate dropped significantly after 2003, with greater economy formalization in which the population that are formally employed raised from 44% to 55% between 2003 and 2013, out of which there was an improvement of well-being feelings as a result. Additionally, the unemployment rates dropped among less educated people, given that there was lack of workforce due to the labor market's new dynamics. On the other hand, there was improvement on the income distribution, where Bolsa Família program has played an important part. However, the authors point out that an issue of this improvement pattern would be the lack of foundation to a long-lasting progress. Undoubtedly, there was significant progress, however, this progress does not stand out on the context of different economies, and it does not build a foundation to keep the progress pace.

3. Methodological procedures

An empirical, quantitative, longitudinal research was performed (Malhotra, 2001; Menard, 2002; Hair Jr, J.F., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. and Black, W.C. (2006), with a non-probabilistic and convenience sampling (Malhotra, 2001), which was composed by two phases: in the first phase there were 449 interviewee, and in the second phase, there were 420 individuals from C, D classes, who lived in São Paulo and were selected in high flow areas through the Brazilian socioeconomic classification criterion (related to the purchasing power of urban individuals and families based on the questions: patrimony, durable and nondurable goods, homing, education of head of family, and other questions inserted in the specified classes) (Associação Brasileira de Empresas de Pesquisa, 2012). Specifically in this article, the longitudinal research is a methodology used to test how the relationships between constructs of interest behave through time.

The data collection used the personal interview approach through the use of a structured questionnaire. The surveys were performed in points of pedestrian flow all over the East Zone of São Paulo, in neighborhoods such as – Penha, Cangaíba, Arthur Alvin, São Matheus and Mooca; South Zone – Ipiranga, Sacomã and Jabaquara; and North Zone – Vila Maria. The answers were inputted into SPSS research software.

The questionnaire was organized into groups of questions, such as: interviewee identification; habits related to leisure and travelling (motivation, duration, destination, favorite places). Although the statistical considerations do not allow for the elaboration of inferences about the population from non-probabilistic samples, this kind of sample was chosen due to cost and accessibility issues. The data collected was analyzed through the use of several statistical techniques. The questions related to tourism were mostly based on Acevedo (1998), Araújo (2001), Garcia (2001), Beni (2001), and Felice (2002).

3.1. Main results

3.1.1. Sample demographic Profile

From the profile perspective, although the samples have been chosen through non-probabilistic and convenience criteria, it could be verified that they are equally distributed between men and women, but the

population was predominantly young and with low level of education. Table 1 shows the main results regarding the sample profile.

Table 1. Sample Demographic Profile

Sample Profile	First Phase Sample n=449 C D	Second Phase Sample n=420 C D
Gender	%	%
Female	55	57
Male	45	43
Socioeconomic class	%	%
C	66	73
D	34	27
Age	%	%
Up to 15 years old	3	8
16 to 24 years old	26	33
25 to 29 years old	22	16
30 to 39 years old	26	22
40 to 49 years old	13	12
Over 50 years old	9	9
Education	%	%
Incomplete basic education	11	30
Complete basic education	20	21
Incomplete secondary school	28	20
Incomplete college degree	31	24
College degree	10	5

Source: Research Data, 2006, 2011, SPSS Outputs

3.1.2. Tourism habits

3.1.2.1. Reasons for travelling

Regarding the reasons for travelling, the research results show that the greatest percentage of the studied population say "having fun" (70%) and "visiting relatives/friends" (63%). Results lower than 40% are shown by the following topics: "trying new things/visiting places" (32%), "meeting people" (21%), "making friends" (21%). Results lower than 15% are shown by the following topics: "going to festivals or special events" (11%), "working" (8%), "visiting museums and historic places" (7%), "looking for spiritual enrichment" (5%), "looking for intellectual enrichment" (5%), "doing business" (3%), "health - medical treatment" (2%), "engaging into physical activities" (1%). As it will be seen in Table 3 about attitudes regarding tourism, these percentages can be explained in terms of insecurity ("I hate being surrounded by a crowd of people that I don't know" - 79%, "I never eat food made by strange people" - 61%, "I feel insecure in places where I don't know anybody" - 50%, "I never visit places where I don't know anyone" - 48%), and in terms of fear that this population has regarding travelling or meeting new places and experiences ("I'm afraid of getting sick during

trips" - 72%, "I'm afraid of experiencing accidents during trips" - 65%, "I don't like travelling to other countries" - 25%).

Thereby, the family roots and the friends cosines can be a required support to face what is unknown during trips ("every time I'm far from my family I feel sad" - 40%, "when it comes to travelling, I always listen to what my relatives have to say" - 31%, "I only travel to places recommended by my friends" - 24%, "I never travel without the company of my family members" - 27%).

Falcão (2014) classifies as low-risk behavior the fact that the people who answered the survey questions travel to visit family and stay in with them, besides showing a conservative profile regarding their expenses. These data are confirmed by Ibam, Datapopular (2005) study, which show that the act of travelling is perceived by the low-income population as a way to narrowing the social bonds, mainly when the interviewees use the house of friends and family members as a means of staying in. According to them, they mostly travel during weekends and holidays, through road transportation or their own cars and, in almost all cases, they stay in their friends and family's houses, although 16% of the interviewee has also checked in hotels, inns or similar places during their travels. Travels where the buses are the means of spending the night also take place very often, and they are entitled "one-day trip" (Falcão, 2014; Ibam, DataPopular, 2005). Based on the theoretical references, it can be stated that the motivation of any tourism consumer is influenced by aspects such as personality, life style, past experiences and personal circumstances, including family situation and available income for the travel, however, the sociability tends to be one of the most important aspects to the interviewee sample.

The low education profile is another variable that helps understanding these results because where this profile is low, there is usually "cultural enrichment", "going to festivals or special events", "visiting museums and historic places" or "looking for spiritual enrichment". The data shows that, even though the number of travelers has grown throughout the latest years, these travels still reflect a search for what is familiar, whether it is a journey back to the origins or visiting family and friends. The most "radical" experience in tourism related to the discovery of new world seems to be far from this public. This scenario contains indicators of "lack of touristic culture" (Ruschman, 2006), which is one of the main issues related to mass tourism.

In a study entitled "Self-concept: the construction of a new ethos to the low-income consumer", Bacha and Figueiredo (2015) present four different groups (clusters) within the low-income profile that can be differentiated according to their behavior. Among the groups or clusters described by this research, there are "people who work hard" and "humble people", both groups have the same behavior as previously described; they see risks on tourism and would rather travel to see and meet again friends and places that were part of their childhood. However, two other groups, the "onliners" and "I can find the place" correspond to a profile of consumers who are bolder and open to new experiences. They are willing to try new and exciting experiences in life and, for them, the tourism follows the same rule. They look for new places and attractions, excitement and fun, unexpected experiences and thrilling discoveries. These tourists are the ones who feel attracted by the "ecological paradise", but they not always behave to keep those places as heavenly places.

3.1.2.2. Number of leisure travels

The data analysis show growth on the number of travels between both periods that were analyzed, the weighted average number of travels in 2006 was equal to 3,16, increasing to 3,88 in 2011. In details, the data shows that 59% of the sample had up to three travels in 2006, compared to 45% in 2011, and 12% had four to seven travels against 24% in 2011, also 7% had over seven travels against 11% in 2011. The percentage of interviewee who declared not having any travel was 22%, which was constant for both samples. Table 2 shows these numbers.

The increase of the purchase power and the efforts from the Ministry of Tourism stimulated Brazilian domestic tourism; additionally, initiatives from companies such as CVC, one of the pioneers in the expansion of credit and installment for travel packages in Brazil and the company that introduced the concept of leisure travels for workers in São Paulo, or from GOL airlines that came up in 2001 and introduced the low-cost business model due to the economic instability. For the sake of illustrating this scenario, CVC advertising pieces were added to help understanding some points of this article.



Figure 1. Punta Cana Ad (Source: CVC, 2015)

In Figure 1, it can be seen a typical ad of touristic packages spread through the media. Two factors require our attention here. The first one is the chosen images. Deserted, distant and inaccessible beaches. The dream of a “touristic paradise” is associated to the wild and untouched nature. Another factor to be observed is the text features of the ad, given that it highlights the values charged for this travel (installment values). As it will be further seen, this kind of ad is directed to the public who cannot pay their travel in cash. The payment option in 10 installments means that this offering is for people who will pay for this travel during almost the entire year for a week of tourism.

3.1.2.3. Company during the travel

The question “who is usually with you in your travels?” tries to understand whether people tend to travel alone or accompanied, and if they travel with someone else, then who is this person? The interviews revealed that, in 2006, 20% travelled alone. From the ones who stated they travel with someone else, 31% travelled with friends, 26% with their kids, 24% with their spouse and 27% with other relatives. In 2011, 33% stated they travelled with friends, 35% with their kids, 36% with their spouse, 18% alone and 54% with other relatives. The high rates of people who travel with spouse or kids demonstrate the conservative profile of the kind of travel that this public makes (see Table 2).

Aguiar *et al.* (2008) analyzed sociologic aspects that influenced the behavior of low-income consumer, such as their role in the family, mutual helping system and personal relationships. The family has great importance because this segment manifests disbelief regarding some institutions, such as the police, the judiciary and the politicians. However, 12% of excursion travels in 2011 is a number that calls our attention. There is the hypothesis that this percentage is related to the touristic packages that are offered by the tourism companies by a cost and payment conditions that are very good to this segment. The credit constraints seem to be a critical aspect for the access of low-income people to the market of touristic travels. These elements suggest that there is a potential market to the low-cost touristic packages. Table 2 summarizes these comments.

In this context, Perussi and Rejowski (2006) comment that CVC, the greatest Brazilian operator in the tourism segment, is a company that has a wide distribution network and that is positioned in the Brazilian domestic market thanks to its low prices and better payment methods. The company works with air travel packages only, including round-trip tickets, transfer on arrival and leaving, with breakfast, half board or full board, and also a city tour. According to the company's general director, “the tourism packages sales must be as easy as the appliances sales”. Based on this statement, the director compares CVC with “Casas Bahia” (Figure 2), completing his idea by saying that the tourism company can be known in the future as “Casas Bahia of Tourism” (Teich, 2003, pp.64-66).



Figure 2. Casas Bahia ad (Source: Casas Bahia ad, 2015)

Although there are aesthetical differences, it can be noticed that both advertising pieces (Figure 3 and Figure 4) use equivalent elements. They mix photos with illustrations; they overlap images by creating a “dirty” visual set, full of “noise”; they offer a payment option in 10 installments and focus on the value of each installment rather than the total amount. Malerba (2011) emphasizes another example of partnership that focus on the C, D classes market: TAM airlines, with its distribution and sales through Casas Bahia retail network, a company that is specialized in making sales by installments.



Figure 3. CVC1
(Source: IbopeInteligência, 2015)



Figure 4. CVC2

3.1.2.4. Favorite destination

Either in 2006 or in 2011 the favorite destination was the beaches, with respectively 70% and 62% of the interviewees’ preference. The second preferred destination is the countryside, with 22% in 2006 and 26% in 2011. Other destinations have less than 10% of the interviewees’ preference (see Table 2). The data related to favorite destination and favorite time for travelling (next topic) are closely related to the concept of mass tourism that is featured by a large volume of people who travel either in groups or individually to the same places.

According to Ibam, Datapopular (2005), the low-income tourists travel for short or medium distances and choose as destination places that are in the countryside of the State where they live in. In general, these tourists themselves organize their travels, come up with a list of activities and, as previously mentioned, the main reasons for their travels are having fun, resting and visiting their family and friends, or even boyfriend/girlfriend.

In this context, Falcão (2014) reminds that there would be three barriers to the tourism that are very relevant to the low-income population: place-related attributes, lack of time and/or lack of income. The reliability and closeness are factors that affect them, as well as work environment, school and church.

Besides that, the fact that they might ignore the existence of low-cost tourism packages that are offered by the travel operators and offices, the destination features and financial constraints should also be considered.

Regarding favorite places, “other cities from the State of São Paulo” with 60% out of the total answers stands out. This fact can be correlated with the second main reason for travelling as per the interviewees' answers, which is “seeing relatives and friends”. The second favorite place comprises the States from the Northeast area of Brazil, with 13% out of the interviewees' preferences. Other options have less than 10% of their preferences. The choice for quiet places (55%) is higher than the choice for crowded places (45%). This choice is probably justified by the fact that the interviewee population is mostly mature people who usually travel with their family on vacation. In such situations, more “quiet” destinations would be justifiable.

Note that the expansion of the geographic universe of this particular group is still limited and consistent to the data that shows that own car and bus are significantly more used than air transportation. Since this survey has been applied in areas of intense flow of people in São Paulo city, the high number of destinations within the State of São Paulo is not surprising at all. It can be seen that weekends or holidays trips to the beaches (south beaches, mostly) and to the countryside towns show a touristic afflux of this society layer that aims at having fun and enjoying the leisure environment.

Although such travels take place in a mass tourism system, the ad promises are based on exclusive experiences. There are no lines, crowds or huddle. Even though most of these tourists are looking for exciting and crowded experience on vacation, the communication leaves a message that means they are exclusive. The ad showing in Figure 5 is a perfect example of such ambiguous communication for low-income tourism.

Figure 5. Cruise Tourism (Source: entretenimento r7, 2015)

Us and them. The image (Figure 5) shows an excited couple who enters the sea by holding hands. Exclusive, pleasure, excitement. The title promotes an “incredible adventure”. In the background, however, there is a ship where the cruise is offered, a vessel that transports thousands of people 'perched' on tiny cabins. The offer follows the pattern that highlights the value of each installment and offers 50% off to your travel companion. Retail disguised as exclusive offer.

3.1.2.5. Favorite time for travelling in Brazil

According to 89% of the people who responded the questionnaire in 2006, and 90% in 2011, summer is their favorite time for travelling. Spring was the favorite option for 22% in 2006 and 14% in 2011, Fall was the favorite for 17% in 2006 and 8% in 2011, and Winter was the favorite for 16% in 2006 and 12% in 2011. Given that the favorite destination was the beach, these results are easy to understand. Table 2 summarizes these comments.

In Brazil, the topographic condition favors the arrival of tourists, the beaches get full of stands, somewhere throughout the beach the thermal sensation reaches 40^o C, just a few waves and clear water, which makes it easier for the family and the kids to spread themselves throughout the beach edge, where they spend their time between swimming and practicing sports (volleyball, soccer...).

3.1.2.6. Average duration of a leisure travel

Travels that last one week on average are the most common among the interviewees. In 2006, 42% of the people who answered the questionnaire travelled for up to three days against 27% in 2011. Regarding travels lasting up to one week, in 2006 there was 38% while there was 31% in 2011. On the other hand, travels that last up to 15 days had a significant increase, from 18% in 2006 to 37% in 2011. The same increasing is observed in travels that last longer, over 30 days, which represented 2% in 2006 and 5% in 2011; these numbers reflected on average duration of travels: 5,89 days in 2006 against 9,48 in 2011. Table 2 shows these results.

Based on what the Ibam, Datapopular (2005) survey pointed out, the tourism for this particular segment would be represented only by long-lasting travels or by travels to special destinations, which involves leaving the reality behind, given that short travels are seen as essential and sometimes related to transferring from home to work. It can also be stated that the results are consistent to the favorite destination. According to Ibam; Datapopular (2005, p.22), looking to leisure activities or activities performed during “free time” of low-income population provides a wide universe of information that allows us to understand the meaning of travelling and 'making tourism' to this public. Travels, specifically for being one of the few ways of leisure that takes place out of their neighborhood, 'common place' or their city, represent privileged aspects to understand how their leisure activities are related with their behavior and world perspective.

3.1.2.7. Sources of information about travelling

While analyzing the sources of information used by the interviewee, it was verified that the main kinds of influence are: personal relationships, which refer to family members and relatives, friends and co-workers; and media role (the percentages are explained in Table 2). In this case, it must be highlighted the percentage

that refers to the Internet, which increased from 5% in 2006 to 33% in 2011, while the percentage of other media types decreased, and it must also be highlighted the growth of tourism offices, even though they are still unknown for this public, as previously explained. Additionally, it should be pointed out that currently Brazil is the fifth country in the world in number of cell phones with 280,7 million cellular telephones and tele density of 138,0 cell/100 inhabitants. In the low-income group of population, over 90% currently owns a cell phone with Internet access, mainly because there is a low percentage of this population that owns a personal computer. By taking into consideration the Internet access according to social classes, the C class that represents 50% of Brazil's population has 52% of Brazilian Internet users, while D and E classes together has 10% of users and represents 25% of Brazilian population (Teleco, 2015; Ibge, 2015; Ibope Inteligência, 2015).

The data that refers to Internet usage are meaningful (Leal, 2013; Bacha *et al.*, 2013) because they represent a tendency to the detachment of traditional means of scheduling a travel. If some individuals used to consult relatives and friends to go to places that were part of a common universe in the past, now they can take a risk and live adventures that are out of their conceptual universe. This movement seems to be in its initial phase yet, given that most of these people are still looking for a known territory for their touristic choices.

3.1.2.8. Most used means of transportation

The research results indicate that the most used means of transportation during the interviewees' travels is the car, which corresponded to 62% in 2006 and 52% in 2011. The second most used means of transportation is the bus, with 34% in 2006 and 37% in 2011. Planes are the third most common choice, corresponding to 5% in 2006 and doubling this percentage (10%) in 2011 (according to Table 2).

Malerba (2011) in a study about popular tourism explains that 48% of people who responded the survey pointed price as being the main factor for them to choose bus, which has been losing its place to the airplane due to the air companies' latest sales. A study from Datapopular (2010) indicates that 60% of Brazilian populations that intend to travel by plane for the first time belong to C class. Falcão (2014) points out that the means of transportation choice can be influenced by its price, ticket purchase antecedence and amount of luggage allowed. Castilhos and Rossi (2009) comment that travelling by plane is a way of seeking for a belonging feeling, which is supported by Karnani (*apud* Falcão, 2014) who believe that individuals who belong to the pyramid base have the same hedonic logic as the richest people. Table 2 brings the main data of the Summary of Habits related to Tourism as mentioned on topic 3.1.2.

Table 2. Summary of Habits related to Tourism

Number of leisure travels	2006 %	2011 %
None	22	22
Up to 3	59	45
From 4 to 7	12	24
Over 7	7	11
Total	100	100
Weighted average	3,16	3,88

Companion during travels		
Friends	31	33
Relatives or Family Members		
Spouse	24	36
Kids	26	35
Grandkids	-	1
Other relatives	27	-
Excursion	-	12
Alone	20	18
Favorite Destination		
Beach	70	62
Countryside	22	26
Major cities	5	9
Others	3	3
Favorite place for leisure travels		
Other cities from the State of São Paulo	-	60
Other States from the Northeast Region of Brazil	-	13
Other States from the Southeast Region of Brazil	-	8
Other States from the North Region of Brazil	-	6
Other States from the Center-West Region of Brazil	-	4
Other States from the South Region of Brazil	-	4
Countries outside South America	-	3
Countries from South America	-	2
Time of the Year		
Summer	89	90
Spring	22	14
Fall	17	8
Winter	16	12
Average duration of travels		
Up to 3 days	42	27
From 4 to 6 days	38	31
From 7 to 14 days	11	24
From 15 to 30 days	7	13
Over 30 days	2	5
Weighted average	5,89	9,48
Sources of information		
Social		
Family/relatives	48	67
Friends	39	53
Co-workers	5	10
Media		
Internet	5	33
TV	27	14
Radio	24	4
Newspapers/Magazines	3	4
Travel / Tourism Offices	3	12
More used means of transportation		

Car	62	52
Bus	34	37
Airplane	5	10

Source: Research Data, 2006, 2011, SPSS Outputs

3.1.2.9. Attitudes related to tourism

Attitudes related to tourism were evaluated according to Likert scale of five points (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree). The four factors were found through factorial analysis (insecurity, desire for adventure, sociability and fear) with KMO=0,765 and 63% of total variance explained. The results shown on the following table (Table 3) add some barriers to the low-income tourism (besides budget constraints, distance and time), among which are insecurity and fear.

Table 3. Attitudes related to tourism

Statements	%
Insecurity	
I hate being surrounded by a crowd of people that I don't know	79
I never eat food made by strange people	61
I feel insecure in places where I don't know anybody	50
I never visit places where I don't know anyone	48
When it comes to travelling, I always listen to what my relatives have to say	31
I only travel to places recommended by my friends	24
Desire for Adventure	
I would like to travel and get to know exotic places	76
I'm interested in getting to know different cultures	58
I love trying new food and drinks	32
I'm excited by the idea of living abroad	31
Sociability	
I can easily make friends regardless other people's culture, race, religion or gender	78

I don't trust in people who do not speak a language that I don't know	40
I always feel sad when I'm far from my family	40
I have a group of friends that usually meets for travelling	30
I never travel in an excursion	29
I never travel without a family member	27
Fear	
I'm afraid of getting sick during travels	72
I'm afraid of experiencing accidents during trips	65
I don't like travelling to other countries	25

Source: Research Data, 2006, 2011, SPSS Outputs

3.1.2.10. Attitudes towards the conscious consumption

The following considerations refer to the conscious consumption practiced by the low-income population. The statements choice reflects the positioning of Stone *et al.* (1995) who defend that consumption with ecological responsibility reflects awareness, personal values and a genuine desire to act according to this goal, and requires that the agent has knowledge and abilities. These authors consider that the consumer's environmental responsibility would have different dimensions: opinions and beliefs about the human relationship with the environment, awareness about the environmental impacts of consumption, wiliness of acting to protect the environment, attitudes to remediate the environmental issues, actions of ecologically responsible consumption, ability of acting in defense of the environment, and knowledge regarding the ecological issues. The analysis was split into statements related to *beliefs*, *speech* and *what they really do* (conduct/behavior).

The overall percentages are low when compared to other studies (Ottman, 1994; Akatu, 2004, 2005; Shinnamon, 2010; Bacha *et al.*, 2010; Bacha *et al.*, 2014), which reveals that the changing of habits of the low-income population is slow and requires more attention. In this case, it can be considered the hypothesis that there is still a long path ahead because theory and practice are clearly distant from each other. From the *beliefs* perspective, one can find the following statements: "using less plastic bag protects the environment" - 73%, "everyone should use recycled bags" - 68%, "the government is not concerned about the environment" - 63%, "campaigns against environmental pollution deserve my support" - 63%, "I feel responsible for protecting the environment" - 58%, "compared to most people, I know very little about organic products" - 56%).

The following statements refer to the sustainability *speech*, which uses terms such as “whenever it is possible”, “look for”, “try”, “would rather” that indicates intention, but does not indicate commitment: “I try to save water/I try not to leave the tap open - 77%, “Whenever possible, I choose products that cause less pollution” -50%; “Whenever possible, I buy products with reusable packaging” -41%, “I am willing to pay a little more for products and food that are free of chemical elements that harm the environment” -40%, “I would rather buy products and food that are free from pesticides because they respect the environment”-39%, “whenever possible, I buy products made of recycled material” - 37%, “concerns with the environment interfere on my purchasing decisions” -32% “I always try to use home appliances during off-peak periods” - 32%. These statements and their respective percentages allow us to consider that, theoretically, low-income consumers have a speech that shows a very conscious attitude, but in practice, they act differently. Taking into consideration their leisure moments, it is perfectly natural the relaxation on their social posture and behavior and, consequently, it would be reasonable to predict that during their touristic activities these consumers will be less committed to the environmental preservation rules.

The third topic regarding the conscious consumption brings statements that show up what this consumer *really does (conduct/behavior)*: “I look for home appliances that consume less energy before buying them” - 67%, “I bought expensive light bulbs that save electricity” -64%, “I write on the back of sheets of paper that have already been used”-59%, “I ask for the invoice on every purchase I made”- 57%, “I read package labels carefully before purchasing a product” - 43%, “when I have to choose between two identical products, I always choose the one that is less harmful to people and the environment” -43%, “I do not buy products and foods that can cause the extinction of some animals and plants”-34%, “I do not buy products for my home that may harm the environment”- 32%, “I leave the car at home at least once a week”-31%, “I usually carry a (non-disposable) sturdy bag when shopping” -30%, “I have resorted to consumer protection agencies” -28%, “I have already convinced friends and relatives not to buy products that harm the environment”-24%, “I buy organic products for over six months” - 18%.

The results reveal a great educational and communicational challenge. Tourism is an activity made by people to people. Due to its intrinsic features, tourism demands the presence of people to make the relationship and the discovery of places possible and pleasant, as well as tours, restaurants and other entertainment options. Thereby, the need for a human presence contributes to the society as a way of professional training and improvement and, consequently, the social statuses improvement of all people that are involved. This professional qualification effort results into the economic and social promotion of significant society groups and also, if it was focused on conscious consumption, this effort could bring benefits to the sustainable tourism.

4. Final considerations

This article aimed at associating the results of the surveys completed by 2006 and 2011 regarding the habits of low-income consumers in São Paulo, among which their awareness and their actions related to the environment, as well as the literature about mass tourism, sustainability and environmental preservation. It

is verified that, even though they prefer travelling in group, with family members, individuals from C and D classes are looking for exotic experiences with a feeling of exclusiveness and excitement.

Ecological paradises naturally have a feeling of exclusiveness because they usually are distant from the civilization, hard to be accessed and restricted to a limited amount of tourists. On the other hand, the popular tourism advertisement promise is full of images that project exclusiveness, adventure, and distant untouched places that are rich in natural resources. Thereby, there are an increasing number of low-income tourists that are looking for experiences that fulfill such criteria.

However, the literature review showed some incompatibility between mass tourism and ecological paradise. It was verified that an essential condition for the preservation of ecologic sites would be the restriction of number of visitors and the limitation of the tourism resources, such as hotels, restaurants, bars and shops. Additionally, it is required to intensify educative campaigns to spread the preservation concept. In parallel to this goal, there is the consumer perception that "vacation is sacred", vacation is a moment when each individual is allowed to take a break from rules and social expectations. Thereby, it is even harder to apply a set of rules that are related to the preservation of places whose natural balance is fragile. It seems that there is a problem that is hard to be solved: how can quality mass tourism be offered to a population with low level of preservation education and culture, and environmental respect?

While it can be seen the growth of popular tourism and interest for ecological sites, this public's understanding and efficient processes of environmental education must advance so Brazil does not lose its natural paradises to the degradation and the unbalanced tourism. Therefore, it is fully understood that this discussion must be deeper and develop methods that allow quality tourism and, at the same time, provide financial, social and ecological sustainability to the places where the tourist can live an intense experience of going deep into the nature.

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