



Ponto de Vista
Point of View

**A MANIFESTO TO BELIEVE IN AND TO VALUE THE VISUAL RESEARCH
IN TOURISM STUDIES**

***UM MANIFESTO PARA ACREDITAR E VALORIZAR A PESQUISA VISUAL NOS
ESTUDOS DO TURISMO***

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Since 2010 I have been researching the intimate relationship between communication and tourism. Mainly visuals such as photographs, photographic images and Instagram more recently.

Why the issue we are raising is important?

For Tourism it is important to unite the themes of communication, tourism, and photography. We therefore maintain a multidisciplinary proposal from the beginning for visual research. However, for example, the study observables would be photographic images and media already consolidated (focusing on a specific niche, tourists), to find

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out how the circulation occurs in these chosen media and that are concerned with reaching the target audience, the tourists. As a result, there is a study of the circulation of photographic images of tourist landscapes, for example, from the study of the circulation of photographic images in different media and in distinct and specific media circuits.

Correct and adequate visual planning with the image of the destination is necessary, and photography is one of the most significant instruments of tourism promotion to develop such an image.

Through the approaches used in communication, it is usually possible to distinguish two important aspects of the image. The first aspect refers to the mental image, which can be defined as the one elaborated in people's imagination - that is: they are all images that the mind produces from lived experiences, messages received and assimilated as well as through the understanding of the world. The second aspect, on the other hand, refers to that image that is used as a support for communication, constituting itself in a concrete and effective way through means such as photography, television, and cinema, in this case we can call it a photographic image. Because photography can only look like media.

We believe it is important to develop an image of the tourist destination based on photographs that represent in their complexity the aspects of the location (landscape, climate, natural, cultural, gastronomic, artistic and folkloric, as well as the history, customs and behavior of the population).

Thus, we note that photographic images can generate or discourage demand, in the sense that the tourist will decide to visit, or not, a destination according to the photographic image that this tourist destination has. The photographic images thus indicate a combination of longings and perceptions of a possible trip to a desired destination. For, the image is formed by the set of all visual and sensory impressions received by consumers about the destination before choosing the trip.

The development of tourist activity is based on (imaginary) images created from photographic images and other sensory messages that try as hard as possible to emphasize certain details that catch the public's attention. We must, therefore, be aware that the photographic images are selected and well thought out. It is through photographs and photographic images, made available in different media, that the tourist raises his travel expectations, to the point of wanting to go and see what he sees.

Photographic records have several functions that may be appropriate in tourism, they are: market segmentation (phototourism); educational element (tourists and local population); as an artistic expression of local photographers; marketing mechanism (commercial nature); field research material; historical record and planning and management tool. Given this, Tourism is a field of study that needs a visual material collection to collect historical and even geographic data, to build an action plan with the power to generate a relevant tourist movement.

In this way, visualities, visual research and photographs have a significant influence on the perception of a tourist destination. For this reason, sometimes, the analysis and understanding of some fundamental aspects that make up the structure and composition of a photograph, significant and of quality, such as: themes, colors, lighting, people and tourist equipment, which are eventually photographed are studied by researchers in Tourism.

The application of photography in tourism has brought a visible world of landscapes, cultures and different places closer. The photographs used to register localities and events, or even as a tourist marketing resource, started to occupy a substantial space in tourism activities. The realistic appeal that photographic images contain facilitates the effort to decode or read them. In addition, the automatic way in which photographs are taken contributes significantly to the speed of their production. Thus, photographs can start to simulate a current situation. In tourist photography, it is more favorable to express a notion of information, actuality and similarity in the visual report. These elements, on an instrumental level, make up a photographic work, in which the fundamental role of photography is recommended as useful for tourism information.

Tourism is an activity that requires travel. For these displacements to occur, it is necessary to create mechanisms that encourage the consumer (tourist) to escape from their usual place and take refuge in a place that has awakened them, the interest in knowing them, these visual elements are fundamental to make the pre-purchase tangible.

Thus, tourism is one of the activities that most uses the (imaginary) image from photographic images to promote and attract tourists, since the tourist before buying a place, to enjoy his vacation, for example, “buying” an image as a dream or a wish. In this way, the image of a place when portrayed in different media, can show the landscape and culture of a locality, making people transport themselves to the places that are being illustrated. In view of this, when selling an image of a particular place, one should not only think about pleasing the customer, with the purpose of making the purchase complete, but also providing a quality product that will really satisfy the tourist.

The client can define which place to visit, through photography and the photographic image in different media, focusing on characteristic elements of the place and facilitating their choice, since this already comes with an image previously created in their imagination, in the face of previous perceptions and experiences experienced during your decision to travel. That is, if the tourist, when presented with a script, or place, that privileges the cultural, he will seek to find a place that has as main activity elements that include the cultural diversity of the place and what it will provide as new and enriching, with regard to experiences involving social, cultural, as well as emotional aspects.

What the problem is?

The problem is often to understand the strength of visuality in tourism, the strength of visuality with research, the strength, and the importance of visuality in the planning of tourist activity.

Another problem is linked to the fact that the confusion that researchers make between the terms of image, imaginary, photography, media, communication that are important for visual research, but that are quite different from each other. This often tends to hinder research in the field and tends to confuse students, readers of publications and lay people on the subject.

In addition, the prejudice that some of our colleagues have with visual research and the lack of understanding that the topic and area have many potentials to be developed.

What we could do about it?

We could highlight research, methodologies that use visualities, photographs and visual elements for Tourism. We can also present the importance of different areas that study the visual elements related to Tourism such as Psychology, Communication, Geography, Marketing, Management, in addition to the field of Tourism itself. Create panels at international events with the projection of the thematic area of visual research, as different colleagues who study and apply visual elements of debate as a method or object of study.

We are going to give more value to research that uses visualities: as an object, as a method, as a subject or even as procedures in Tourism. Tourism activity is surrounded by media circularity and is extremely visual in its daily practice and we need to improve this cause and effect relationship of visual studies in Tourism.

In general, this is my contribution to the reflection on the topic that I brought up.

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