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BRAZIL – TOURISM FOR ALL: FILLING BRAZILIANS HISTORY

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The country that we call “Brazil” is the result of different speeches and readings. For many scholars, it was in the artistic field, more than in the philosophy’s and in human sciences’, that the Brazilian society was able to achieve an original view about itself. Areas as literature, music, architecture and cinema have helped to forge a view that corresponded to an absolute new of a young country. The stereotype that sells Brazil as the land of samba, football, and semi-naked women in wonderful beaches don’t cope with the nation natural and cultural diversity, of a Brazil singed by Caetano Veloso who sees the dazzling “epic greatness of a people in development” but where “nobody, nobody is citizen”.^{2 3}

Less poetic, the official speech talks about a republic with more than eight million km² and almost 170 million of inhabitants. Fifth country in territorial extension, Brazil includes different weathers and innumerable sceneries. The majority of Brazilians lives in the cities (urban area), speaks Portuguese and is catholic. In the last demographic census, conducted in the year 2000, the colour classification stated that 54% of the Brazilians identified themselves as white. In the same poll, the blacks represented only 5% of the population (this self-declaration is the result of centuries of discrimination hidden by a well-succeeded process of racial miscegenation). People of Indian descent answered for only 0.16% of the total population and are mainly located in the north of the country. Although we have the best inclusion legislation in America, the 14.5% of Brazilians with some type of physical, mental or multiple deficiencies still suffers various kinds of prejudice and exclusion.

The southeast, the most economically developed region in Brazil, is responsible for 70% of the national production, and it is also an attraction centre for thousands of Brazilians that come into the city searching job, generally in the urban centre, which are not well equipped to receive them. From this emerge the big social problems faced by metropolitan areas as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, which together host more than 3 million people living in slums.

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² VELOSO, Caetano & GIL, Gilberto. *Haiti. Caetano Velos e Gilberto Gil*. {Compositors}. In Tropicália 2. Rio de Janeiro, 1993.

³ Free Translation

Since the 1980s, the social exclusion has seriously increased, and this has historically affected Brazilians, mostly due to the low economic growth, that consequently aggravated the unemployment and violence index. The national labour market division became, since then, each time more fluid. Many employed people have small work journey or odd jobs, earn low salaries and are near to the unemployment situation, while part of the unemployed find it difficult to enter the job market due to their lack in education and vocational training – approximately 14% of the population above 15 years old still is illiterate and only 11% of Brazilians are in University. Another Brazilian characteristic is the huge difference in income concentration: the 10% richest own an average income of 40 times more than the poorest 10% (in developed countries this difference is of around 5 times). In the 1990s, with the national economic opening, the State companies' privatization and the restructuring and modernization of companies in general, the Brazilian labour market suffered deep changes: the odd job numbers and the migration from the work place to commerce and service sector increased. So, even though the index regarding education has improved in all the country since the 1990s and that we can see today the beginning of the national industry growth; (...) *this has not been sufficient to break up with the manifestation of new forms of social exclusion in Brazil. So, besides the "old" exclusion (associated to low income and low education), Brazilians began to face the so-called "new" exclusion (associated to violence, massive and lasting unemployment)*⁴.

That is the panorama that brings us to understand the appearance of actions in a kind of tourism established in a new paradigm, which differs from the standard of mass tourism. Individuals and companies have been developing with persistency and success activities to bring together the demand, until now repressed, and the huge and potential existing offer. Besides this pioneer experiences – as SESC São Paulo's (see box) or Hostelling International's (that settled in Brazil in 1961 and nowadays has 60 hostels all over the country), other practices of non-conventional tourism are being developed to promote the access to the tourism phenomenon, having always as its grounds the democracy, solidarity and sustainability.

Evidently, this is not an organized movement. What we see is the birth of a new way of tourism and the discovery that we are not alone. Consequently, this is not a quantifiable movement. There is no way to measure the quantity of organisations or travellers that today join in these activities. Its planners do not know each other and not even know that their work give strength to the same body of action. But these persons bring big cities outskirts teenagers to see the ocean. They provide the citizens with the opportunity to keep in their memory the wisdom of the countryman life. They organize trips where disabled people can participate in radical sports. They offer to a slum girl the chance to show proudly to a group of old ladies the new clinic and the carpenter's workshop introduced by the community association of her neighbourhood. They host the employee, the business man, the child, the young and the elder, mutually, and provide an intergeneration education. They stimulate the traveller to think, to reflect, to get excited, and to be educated.

⁴ CAMPOS, André et al. (orgs.) *Atlas da exclusão social no Brasil : dinâmica e manifestação territorial*. Vol. 2. São Paulo: Cortez, 2004

There are already countless isolated initiatives; however they take place every day, all around Brazil, showing that, even empirically, the essence of tourism for all is present in us. Once more we see the enterprising and creative facet of Brazilians that start a process most desirously irreversible: the creation of a new way to do tourism in Brazil, giving the opportunity to our people to live what Guimarães Rosa's original view of art teaches us: "I met. I fulfilled my history"^{5 6}.

PS: Since the beginning of 2004, in a sense, as a result of this movement that has arrived on the scene spontaneously, in the other as the response of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva government work procedure, the Tourism Ministry and the Technical Group of Social Tourism (composed by civil society members, as business men, entrepreneurs, teachers, tourism association members, and everyone interested to debate the question) are elaborating together studies and propositions that should subsidize the creation of principles and strategies to a national policy of social tourism/ tourism for all (for more information about the public Brazilian tourism policy, access <http://www.turismo.gov.br>). Good news might come soon!

Tourism in SESC São Paulo. Tourism for all.

The pioneer accomplishment of SESC SP in the field of social tourism began in 1948, with the inauguration of the Vacation Centre SESC Bertioga, and was amplified in 1951, when it was introduced the social tourism activities – as excursions – and, later, with the systematisation of the Social Tourism Program and the standardisation of its guidance principles. With this project, SESC SP searched an alternative way to tourism, up to the moment conceived only as a work antidote, as a permitted escape. We took care – and now we still do – to not only reproduce a trip in the conventional way, but also to organize tourist events that offer to the participants the possibility to develop intellectual and physical abilities, to acquire knowledge and to interact with people, always through the offer of products and services accessible to their acquisitive power or adapted to possible special necessities of clients.

Among all the many targets of social tourism available internationally, SESC SP has adopted to its Programme a differentiated concept, as much innovative as challenging, whose actions are goaled following four interdependent principles: the democratization to give access to tourism, the social development of the participants, the education through tourism and the education for tourism. Such principles distinguish the different kinds of services of the Social Tourism Program – that, in 2003, served 75,000 people -, with the hostelling and activities done in SESC Bertioga, the one-night-stay excursions and day excursions, as well as complementary activities, that don't need displacement, but which subjects are the trips and tourism.

So, with the aspirations and formats adopted to the social tourism activities, SESC SP affirm that the promotion of a new perception of communities and places visited – and also of the own

⁵ ROSA, João Guimarães. *Grande Sertão: Veredas*. São Paulo: Nova Fronteira, 2001.

⁶ Free Translation

activity of tourism, including its planning, managing and operational aspects – can and should integrate the prescription of changes for each participant to become a full citizen, with education, information and multiple involvement in the construction of a culture, a policy and collective place and time.