

CHAPTER 6

THE VALUE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN TOURISM: THE CASE OF VIRAL SOCIETY

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Introduction

In contemporary times, tourism constitutes a fundamental part of global economies, societies and cultures (Andrade, 2020a, 2020b). However, Covid-19 virus pandemic turned this situation on its head. Therefore, it is also necessary to put reflection and action conducted by Social Sciences upside down. The present text aims to discuss the different types of value of tourism goods and services, in the context of the current '*viral society*'. This unprecedented emerging paradigm of virulent social formations, can be understood and defined, among other terms, as a social dialectics among confinements and lack of confinements, in what regards social spaces and times.

In sociological terms, such social clash may be translated as relations among three central concepts: 'social mobilities' (John Urry, 2007), signifying that 'everything is on the move': capital, labor, means of production, goods, services, etc. After this pre-pandemic mobile era, under a rising pandemic stage, '*social demobilities*' are associated with a relative lack of freedom, in what regards social and physical movements. Thirdly, '*social remobilities*' is a post-pandemic idea that the sociologist may use, to overcome this demobilities conjuncture, in articulation with the participatory remodeling of social activities and discourses by citizens. In fact, today a '*viral culture*' is also emerging, founded on cultural activities undertaken in a novel '*viral public space*', where new dialectics of demobilities and remobilities occur.

Viral public space means a collective social sphere conditioned by the characteristics of the viral society, which leads, for example, to cultural events developed more frequently and deeply in cyberspace and cybertime, especially within digital social networks (Web 2.0) and inside Web 3.0's socio-semantic networks. In the context of tourism, the model of '*viral tourism*' is designed as an unprecedented way of traveling, which inherits some of the characteristics of viral society, such as the preponderance of virtual travel on the internet, and a greater development of locative tourism driven by mobile phones, even if used in a somewhat virtual way.

Table I: Society regimes and respective central value type

society regime	predominant (but not exclusive) value type
pre-capitalist societies (primitive communism / community driven / artisanal / slave dependent / medieval / Asian regimes: Prehistory, Antiquity and Middle Ages, until the middle of the 15th century)	use value
capitalist and modern societies (stages: concurrential-liberal capitalism, since the middle of the 15th century, corresponding to the emergence of the world economy (Immanuel Wallerstein); organized capitalism, in two phases: monopoly capitalism, which started around the economic crises of 1870, and monopoly capitalism of State, since the 1929 crisis)	exchange value
capitalist and modern societies (stage of disorganized capitalism and post-Fordism (Scott Lash, John Urry), since the mid-1970s)	sign-value, informative-textual value
post-capitalist societies (socialist or utopian)	reciprocal-distributive value

1. Historical types of value

As for the reflection on value, this text debates, in particular, '*informative-textual value*'. This is a configuration of the value of products and services, which integrates and combines some of the components of use and exchange value defined by Marx, as well as some features of Baudrillard's sign-value, but also differs from them in some aspects. To this aim, it is necessary, first of all, to guard against the ambiguity of the term, confronting the various interpretations of the concept 'value', within the various social spheres: economic, political, cultural-discursive spheres, etc. Such prior care allows to create the conditions for a wide-ranging debate and not the dominance of a unique thought. However, for now this discussion will be necessarily incomplete. At least, it may shed some light on the scientific and sociological value of the social phenomenon 'value', as a relevant explanatory concept of the Social and Human Sciences (See Table I).

Use and exchange values, sign value

According to Marx (1887), exchange value is defined considering, as a unit of measure, the socially necessary abstract labor time, on average, to produce a given commodity. That is, exchange value, in the beginning of this process, refers to the temporalities, places and social circumstances of the production of a good or service. However, after its production, the commodity will be exchanged for others, the value of which will ultimately be expressed in the use value of an ultimate reference commodity. In capitalism, this fundamental and ultimate good is essentially money, meaning the universal equivalent of value, still as Marx opines. In addition, and as I see it, money may work within capitalism, not just as the measure of all things, but also, in some way, as the measure of all measures.

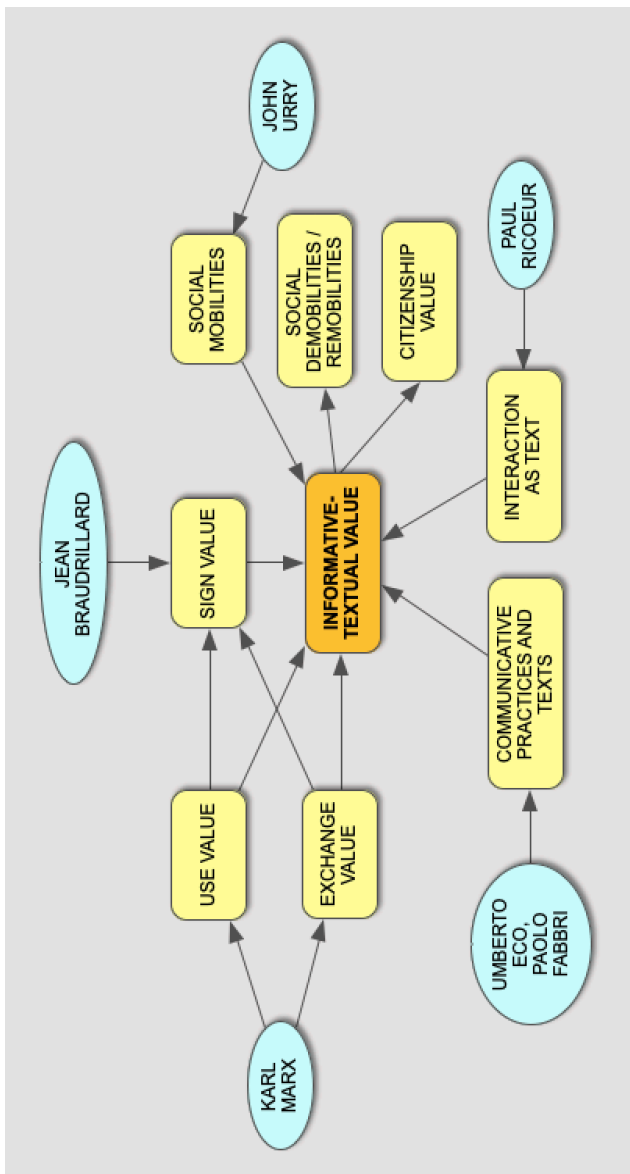


Figure 1 The debate on textual informative value and citizenship value

Let us see how Jean Baudrillard understands this issue of *value within capitalist production and consumption*.¹ The *consumer society* that guarantees such a new status of the object is also circumscribed by this sociologist.² Finally, the ‘exchange value / sign’, according to Baudrillard, is delimited.³

Such sign-value, circumscribed by Jean Baudrillard, originates in the contemporary society regimes of capitalism (2nd phase). However, some critics of Baudrillard, such as Fredric Jameson and Roy Porter, argue that sign-value does not explain everything, or has already been explained, in other ways.⁴

¹ “Consumption is not a material practice, nor a phenomenology of ‘abundance’, it is not defined by the food that is digested (...) nor by the oral and visual substance of images and messages, but by the organization of all this in substance significant; it is the virtual totality of all objects and messages constituted from the present in a more or less coherent discourse. Consumption, as long as it has a meaning, is an activity of systematic manipulation of signs. (...) In order to become an object of consumption, it is necessary that the object becomes a sign, that is to say, external in some way to a relationship that that object does nothing more than signify - therefore arbitrary and not consistent with this relationship. concrete, but taking its coherence, and therefore its meaning, in an abstract and systematic relation to all other sign-objects. It is then that the object is ‘personalized’, that it enters the series, etc.: the object is consumed - never in its materiality, but in its difference.” (Baudrillard, 1968, 233).

² “If the consumer society no longer produces myth, it is that it is its own myth. (...) In other words, it is a word from contemporary society about itself, it is the way our society speaks of itself. And, in some way, the only objective reality of consumption, is the idea of consumption, this reflective and discursive configuration, indefinitely taken up by everyday speech and intellectual speech, and which has become a force of common sense.” (Baudrillard, 1970, 311-2).

³ “The sign is the height of the commodity. Fashion and merchandise are one and the same. It is in this form of exchange value / sign that the differentiation of the commodity is suddenly inscribed (and not in the quantitative logic of profit). The fulfilled state of the commodity is one in which it imposes itself as a code, that is, as a geometric place for the circulation of models, and therefore as a total medium of a culture (and not just of an economy).” (Baudrillard, 1972, 259).

⁴ “Baudrillard offers an evocative, if impressionistic, picture of contemporary capitalism. What needs to be emphasized from the historical viewpoint is that this characterization of capitalism as a fevered, frenzied epidemic of signs is not applicable solely to *late* capitalism. At least since the seventeenth century, capitalism been inseparable from the incitement of imagination, the creation of blitzes of speculation, fantasy, fiction, hyperstimulation (...) But the historian also requires to take all this with a large pinch of *déjà vu*. *Mutatis mutandis*, all this could have been



Figure 2 Informative-textual value inside goods' labels: about the origin and characteristics of Portuguese touristic wines

According to David Harvey, the recent economic regime within the capitalist system, post-Fordism, is based on the process of *flexible accumulation* which, unlike Fordist accumulation, allows for high flexibility in production, distribution, trade and consumption. As for the consumption that underlies this flexibility, the author clarifies such issue.⁵

In turn, John Urry (1990), applying these theses to tourism consumption in postmodernity, provides the most complete definition and differentiation of the two moments. The consumption of the Fordist period receives the following traits: mass production determines mass consumption, which is, therefore, secondary to the productive sphere; poorly differentiated goods; limited product choices reflect the interests of producers. On the contrary,

said - and was being said - of the age of Locke. And, after all, Nietzsche died, and *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published, in the nineteenth century. Yesterday's tomorrows suggest that we have been there before." (Porter, 1993, 7,16).

⁵ "Flexible accumulation has been accompanied on the consumption side, therefore, by a much greater attention to quick-changing fashions and the mobilization of all artifices of need inducement and cultural transformation that this implies. The relatively stable aesthetic of Fordist modernism has given way to all the ferment, instability, and fleeting qualities of a postmodern aesthetic that celebrates difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the commodification of cultural forms." (Harvey, 1990, 156).

post-Fordist consumption, which began during the 70s of the 20th century, is defined in these terms: the increase in consumer purchasing power causes more expenses and a predominance of consumption dynamics; new forms of credit encourage more spending, but create alarming situations of indebtedness; most aspects of social life are commercialized; the differentiation of purchase models is organized according to market segments; consumer preferences are very varied; the increase in consumer movements testifies to the growing politicization of consumption; we are witnessing the emergence of new products not mass produced, but following consumer demand, such as ‘natural products’; importance given to information about the product and its aestheticization.



Figure 3 Informative-textual value within goods: on souvenirs at a Lisbon touristic shop

In short, nowadays, consumption seems to be somewhere among economics, citizenship and culture, or between socio-symbolic practices and the new forms of value of consumer objects mobilized by these practices. For example, the 'informative-textual value', circumscribed here (Cf. Figures 2-12), consists of written and read information in daily practices, and embedded in products and services enjoyed or subjected to criticism by consumers, and sometimes inscribed in their own body.

Informative-textual value

This is a type of value, still little discussed, but whose reflection seems pertinent. However, not only this mode of value in particular, but also the information in general, or the notion of text itself, are always problematic, requiring, for this reason, an adequate criticism. Such strategy allows, in a second step, the elaboration of a ‘*theory of informative-textual value*’, one

of the possible contributions to a larger hermeneutics of value within society.

Paul Ricoeur is explicit on this matter, characterizing action and interaction as an objectified text.⁶ Consider also the semiological-textual theory of communication, proposed by Umberto Eco and Paolo Fabbri, whose main theses are as follows. Firstly, social actors do not exchange simple messages, but share social 'textual sets'. Secondly, such communication does not involve just messages and codes, but several social 'textual practices', based on social grammatical systems of rules. Thirdly, social speakers exchange a multiplicity of messages and texts, both diachronic and synchronic (Eco; Fabbri, 1978: 570).

Bearing these observations in mind, and starting from Marx and Baudrillard, let us see what is happening today in the consumption scene. In particular - and here lies the heart of the matter - it should be stressed that *informative-textual value consists of a particular case of exchange value*, as indeed exchange value / sign also is, as Baudrillard points out.

In effect, exchange value constitutes the main type of value that capitalism circumscribes, according to Marx, to measure the products of human labor, although in different forms under post-Fordism. It should also be noted that Baudrillard makes connections between the economic and cultural spheres. However, it seems to us that, in addition, today, spheres and social dimensions are related in unusual ways, especially in terms of their hybridization. *In the contemporary socio-symbolic scene, we are not only witnessing the circulation of signifiers, but as well, new breeds of social information and texts*, as Paul Ricoeur, Eco and Fabbri emphasize.

⁶ "Just as the interlocution undergoes a transmutation by writing, the interaction undergoes an analogous transformation in the countless situations where the action allows itself to be treated as a pinned text. (...) This objectification is made possible by means of some internal features of the action, which bring it closer to the structure of the act of language and which transforms doing into a kind of enunciation. In the same way that the fixation by writing is made possible by a dialectic of intentional exteriorization, immanent to the actual act of discourse, a similar dialectic within the transaction process allows the meaning of the action to stand out from the event of the action." (Ricoeur, 1986, 213-4).



Figure 4 Textual informative value as a service: information at a Lisbon touristic café, about its meeting and working space, wifi and portable devices charging, drinks, snacks, timetable

What is more, texts are not only and mere places of inlay of signifiers, but they themselves become nomadic and are inscribed and described through multiple social actors and authors. This process is intensified inside cyberspace and cybertime, in particular across social networks, blogs and sites. In short, social texts are written, continuously, within other social texts. Therefore, text is no longer just a support, but as well a sort of pen or computer mouse and ultimately, together with other conditionalities, the subject of its own object or service, intended for consumption within the network society.

In sum, *informative-textual value* can be defined as a type of hybrid value, halfway between Marx's 'exchange value' and Baudrillard's 'exchange value / sign'. On the one hand, it is defined as *the socially necessary abstract working time to introduce, in a commodity, components of information and knowledge* about it, in particular its conditions of production, exchange and use, and also about our society in general. In addition, on the other hand, informative-textual value pursues such objective, partially, from a *circulation of signifiers of the contents in play, functioning equally as code or, more properly, as information and textual knowledge* conveyed by an object / product or service. In fact, what informative-textual value measures

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TECNOLOGIA INOVADORA COM VARIAS CAMADAS DE PROTECCAO

respirabilidade

proteção antimicrobiana eficaz contra vírus e bactérias (99% de eficácia)

elevada taxa de ventilação de partículas 95%

máscara social adulto

certificação nível 2 - uso profissional



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proteção repelente à água
resistente a gotículas que contêm vírus e bactérias, minimizando o risco de contágio.

respirabilidade
tecido respirável e com tecnologia de secagem rápida, contribuindo para um maior conforto do utilizador.

durabilidade
capacidade de retenção de partículas, permeabilidade ao ar e conforto certificados pelo CITEVE para um mínimo de 3 lavagens, não estando comprometida a perda de eficácia após as mesmas (mais informação no folheto interno).
proteção antimicrobiana testada com eficácia para 50 lavagens*.



escudo contra vírus e bactérias
este produto pode ajudar a diminuir a actividade de vírus e bactérias.

proteção antimicrobiana
a primeira camada preseneta tecido equipamente tratado de forma a criar uma camada protectora que ajuda a eliminar a actividade microbiana.

proteção repelente à água
proteção antimicrobiana
filtro de elevada retenção
tecido leve para maior conforto de humidade

	mo adult	FFA/MSB	máscara cirúrgica	máscara facial
propriedade	protege e evita a entrada de partículas, vírus e bactérias no nariz e boca e evita a propagação de partículas e gotículas para o ambiente de trabalho	resistente a água e óleo para a retenção de gotículas e partículas que possam estar presentes no ambiente de trabalho	resistente a água e óleo para a retenção de gotículas e partículas que possam estar presentes no ambiente de trabalho	resistente ao suor e ao óleo
anti-microbiana (vírus, bactérias, fungos)	✓	✗	✗	✗
respirabilidade	90% respirável*	8 a 22 horas, dependendo do modelo	depende da forma, tamanho e material	variável
resistente a lavagem	✓	até 50 lavagens*	até 3 lavagens*	✓
filtração PFFS3 (retenção de partículas)	✓	✓	✓	✓
repelente à água	✓	✓	✗	✗
atp na mão	✗	✗	✗	✗

composição

MoVEI interior: 80% polipropileno, 20% elastano
MoVEI exterior: 100% polipropileno

produto desenvolvido em colaboração com o gov. pt

edalberto

CEIHO-TEX B STANDESSE 100

CEIHO-TEX B STANDESSE 100

EU

COVID-19

10 anos

Figure 5 Textual informative value within a product cover: about an innovative mask against Covid-19, made in Portugal

efficiently, is the capacity to allow access and exchange information and knowledge for all and everyone, deposited in the material and symbolic products and services of our societies. As mentioned above, this phenomenon occurs today in greater scale and depth within cyberspace and cybertime, and in particular inside digital social networks. Concretely, these daily data that each commodity provides, refer to the adequacy, real or virtual, between, on the one hand, the needs and interests of social agents and, on the other hand, the actual consumption made by them. Or, still, such daily data inscribed in a good or service are focused on the space-times where consumption and production of consumers are founded and hybridized.

From a more specific level, concrete information – the one which sociologically and empirically indicates the abstract informative-textual value - is printed and published, on the one hand, in labels and packaging, in the case of physical products (see Figures 2, 3, 5) and services (cf. Figures 4, 6-12) within face-to-face interaction. On the other hand, in the case of virtual products and services, the abstract informative-textual value is shown, concretely, through texts, images and other media circulating across the internet. These elements of any commercial, scientific, technical or cultural product or service, insofar as they relate to other texts, work in a transtextual way, if we also call on Julia Kristeva (1974), who introduced the concept 'intertextuality', as well as Gerard Genette (1979: 187-90; 1987: 2). For example, such textualized information, that is, data embedded in a product label as a touristic wine bottle (Fig. 2), or in the cover of a mask against Corona virus (Fig. 5), resend or are cited via 'paratexts'. According to Genette, 'paratexts' are texts that present other texts. In our case, the commercial adds that advertise the consumer objects on which information labels are located. Furthermore, textualized information is linked to 'metatexts', that is, those texts that 'speak' socially and succinctly, and in the second degree, of the object or service to consume, for example a commodity's brand. Moreover, textualized information connects to 'architexts', which classify product and services types, such as supermarket sections and the names of commercial areas or 'streets' in some shopping centers. Later, these varied text configurations will be read and interpreted by consumers. In short, if, as Baudrillard advances, within the consumer society, the exchange value / sign realizes the exchange value, in some way *exchange value and sign value are as well resolved, of course partly, via the informative-textual value, mainly within post-Fordism.*

2. Information and knowledge about consumption

Other authors warn of this role of information, especially in the sphere of consumption and urban life, which is useful for the present reflection on the consumption of tourism. In fact, such a phenomenon, although much more visible today, has been observable since the beginning of the exchange of goods and services for humanity.⁷

Therefore, if, at first, the exchange of goods generates information about them, this information and, even more deeply, knowledge on them, also provide a framework for deciding on the choice of purchasing these products and services.

On the other hand, Scott Lash and John Urry seek to delimit the current contours of this centrality of information, relating it to the sphere of production, based on the concept of 'reflexive accumulation'.⁸

For his part, Manuel Castells is even more involved in the discussion of the relevance of the information that underlies the capitalist mode of production in its current phase, by identifying, but also by demystifying, the main historical consequence of this association, the network society.⁹

⁷ "Man needs goods for communicating with others and for making sense of what is going on around him. (...) communication can only be formed in a structured system of meanings. His overriding objective as a consumer, put at its most general, is a concern for information (...) a concern to control it. (...) Being near the center [of the information system] requires a strategy of organizing the exchange of marketing services (...)" (Douglas, 1996, 67).

⁸ 'Reflexive accumulation' has a number of important characteristics. It emphasizes how knowledge and information are central to contemporary economies. Knowledge though is not just a question of increasing information intensity as a way of coping with a complex and uncertain economic environment. Knowledge on the basis of reflexivity operates via not just a single but a double hermeneutic, in which the very norms, rules and resources of the production process are constantly put into question. (...) We shall argue that specialized consumption and flexible production entail knowledge-intensive production. (Lash and Urry, 1994, 60-61)."

⁹ "The information, global economy is organized around command and control centers able to coordinate, innovate, and manage the inter-twined activities of networks of firms. (...) They all can be reduced to knowledge generation and information flows. (Castells, 1996, 409).



Figure 6 Textual informative value as a service: circulation rules at Lisbon Amoreiras mall, in the context of Covid-19

In addition to these macrosocial determinants, which certainly influence micro-social consumption practices, the following process, in reverse, is also true: consumption, at least in advanced modernity, does not take place without any information or awareness on the part of the consumer, in the same way that the use value presupposes a certain knowledge of the needs of each one, although associated with the exchange value, mainly in the society regimes articulated with capitalism.



Figure 7 Textual informative value as a service: at shops, on Covid-19 (masks, social distance instructions, bottles with disinfectant liquid, etc.)

3. The Viral Society

How does the informative-textual value work, in the context of the pandemic originated by Covid-19? It should be noted that the impact of this virus may have caused irreversible changes in the social fabric, originating a harbinger of 'Viral Society'. As mentioned above, this seems to be an emerging social formation, where *viral economies and technologies* flourish, based on: capitalism's global weaknesses and economic crises, caused not only by computer viruses, but also and increasingly, by biological viruses; *viral policies, politics and politicians*, such as the possibility that certain states, institutions, organizations, associations, or other social agents, use various types of viruses as weapons of threat, aggression or surveillance, local or global; *viral cultures and cults*, that is,

ways of exercising science and the arts, or other knowledge and leisure, in virulent ways. For example, through *virulent strategies*, that is, according to the idea that the more followers and / or friends (or, in certain cases, the more enemies) are articulated or branched with a given social subject, individual or collective, the more cultural and cultural value that subject accumulates and / or distributes across the social fabric.

Within viral society, *viral tourism* is understood as a way of traveling conditioned by forced confinement: that is, tourists make more virtual trips in cyberspace and cybertime, to the detriment of physical travel. Or they prefer to do a *virtual locative mobile tourism* through cell phones, which can become progressively more frequent than the classic mass tourism. In particular, viral tourism includes activities for the displacement and enjoyment of culture or within leisure spaces that occur largely in situations of social distance. Some consequences are the greater difficulty in physically visiting cultural spaces and institutions, such as archaeological sites, museums and galleries, which are closed or imposing a limitation on the number of visitors. Or the loss of contact in terms of sharing identity with local communities, partly due to the widespread use of masks. Or the compartmentalization and demarcation of restricted or controlled areas, in local social and cultural territories, such as squares and streets.

In sum, viral society causes *social demobilities*, as it metamorphoses *mobile pre-pandemic* social fabric into a partially immobile society. In view of this situation, social agents need to revitalize cultural and tourist citizenship, through a counter process of *post-pandemic 're-mobilization'*. In other words, *social remobility* may be defined as a position of resistance to viral society, aiming at overcoming it and reinventing social mobility actions and activities, to be carried out among citizens, tourists and migrants. This means, among other things, the re-creation of innovative urban mobilities as well as unprecedented re-mobilizations, in the areas of economics, politics, culture, ecology, etc. For example, novel connections between urban cultures and mobile cultures, e.g. tourist cultures hybridized with the cultures inherent to digital social networks and practiced by mobile phone tribes.

One of these initiatives to resist Corona virus is the project *Viral Cultural Tourism via Mobile Devices* (see Andrade, 2020c, and site: Andrade, 2020d).



Figure 8 Textual informative value as a research knowledge service: information demand by UK health administration, on a successful method for testing Covid-19, developed by Portuguese Algarve University

4. Informative-textual value of tourism within the Viral Society

In our contemporaneity contaminated by Covid-19, it is necessary to move to a more refined stage of self-consciousness of the tourist interests, in terms of *tourism consumption associated with tourist citizenship*, a process that is still babbling. It was noted above that viral society favors the contacts that took place in cyberspace and cybertime. Therefore, the use of the internet is likely to allow its users to update *tourist citizenship value*, linked to the informative value or to the text value of these goods or services, which are

not only of an economic nature, but also, and sometimes predominantly, of a political-symbolic nature. The value of citizenship underlying tourism, is exercised, in part, in three moments that we will develop below: pre-purchase, the acquisition itself and post-contract actions to purchase products or services within activities concerning tourism.

An outline of this ternary dialogue of the *moments of tourist consumption*, may be observed when problematizing the phenomenon of consumption as a journey in search of sociability, prestige or information about goods and merchandises related to tourism activities. This dialogue finds another, the historical process of the main commercial and tourist establishments, which allow daily trips of consumption and information on goods and services, and which, in the History of Western societies, are linked, in turn, to the modes of consumption production, as follows:

Firstly, a diachronic figure of a commercial place, the *small commerce*, appears associated with societies developed before the dominance of the capitalist and modern 'world system', in part analyzed by Immanuel Wallerstein. The clients of these local establishments are frequently recruited in their neighborhood, and their consumption include "... intermediary practices of solidarity and community and local's exchange of information" (Andrade, 1993: 56).

Secondly, in the 19th century, the large *department store* or the *specialized shop emerges*, more characteristic of contemporary social modes of organized capitalism, in its two stages, the competitive and monopoly stage. The supermarket is one of the last incarnations of such process, although obeying to the same basic logic as the specialized store. In other words, "... consumerism no longer is manifested only via the circulation within the supermarket, where the acquisition is often subordinated to the ostentatious dynamics of the buying agent, representing a lifestyle with a certain power purchase (...)" (Idem, *Ibidem*); finally, inside the society regimes connected to post-Fordism, the *shopping center* is dominant, "... in which people stroll not only to buy or talk, but essentially to see who will buy and find out about what to be acquired. This is a kind of pre-purchase, a fragmented and dispersed visual and informative conditioning, predecessors of an acquisition that is often not achieved, but that shapes the desire and consumption styles through an involving and uninterrupted way." (Idem, *Ibidem*).



Figure 9 Textual informative value as a service: on touristic boat tours, at Fuseta town, Algarve, South of Portugal

Nowadays, the *three moments of consumption* in general and tourism in particular, take place in terms of the informative-textual value underlying all goods and services.

In the first instance of consumption, the *pre-acquisition stage*, before the purchase of a tourism product or service (e.g. a travel to a given vacation destination), the tourist is asked several questions, and is assisted by a huge mass of information about the products and services available, namely in three ways:

- (a) regarding the socio-economic sphere, in the form of consumption precepts, in this case in relation to travel, for example, via travel agencies travels;
- (b) within the political and powers sphere, as duties and rights of consumption and the respective conflicts, for example, through

consumer protection associations, such as DECO in Portugal; and by the state apparatus itself via central administration services, such as *Turismo de Portugal (Tourism of Portugal)*;

- (c) inside the discursive, cultural or ideological sphere, in terms of arguments about the advantages and disadvantages of a product or service, advanced by advertising in the mass media, on the websites of travel agencies or museums, etc. If we bring together the economic and the discursive spheres, we will notice, in its synthesis, frequent power relations among the actors concerned, for example, in the practice of consuming food: “Consumers are perceived to be removed from appropriate knowledge on what they eat. They need to be properly informed and persuaded to respond accordingly.” (Fine, 1993: 22o).

In the second moment of consumption, the *concrete act of acquisition*, the information about the product or service appears embedded in the very ‘shopping experience’ carried out, on a large scale, inside the contemporary ‘consumption temples’:

There is a difference between 'going shopping' and 'doing the shopping'. Going shopping is a vague activity, an extravagance - literally, 'wandering out'. It is open-ended, with no precise plans or destinations: you can spend all day or not, you may just look and not buy. (...) is pleasurable, and possibly transgressive. (...) Doing the shopping, on the other hand, suggests an obligation or a regular routine. 'The' shopping implies something both planned and limited (...) the future itself is envisaged in the image of a great supermarket in which citizen- consumers move about making their more or less informed, more or less random individual choices. (Bowlby, 1997, 102,109).



Figure 10 Textual informative value as a service: at a café, on the use of masks (Fuseta), and at the Ria Formosa beach, Algarve, about circulation rules

In short, there is an immense volume of information, available in societies founded on capitalism and advanced modernity. This process, besides conditioning the choice of goods to buy, remains one of the sources of democratic opinion. *Thus, there is an informative-textual value of goods and services, closely associated with exchange value and sign-value.* That is, as mentioned above, the former appears as a more specific manifestation of the latter.

Thirdly, in the *post-purchase period*, the consumer (the cultural tourist, etc.) can accept his purchase contract, even if often reduced to a receipt. In that case, the products and services will be subsequently *used, abused or disused*, within the framework of the continuous dialogue between overvaluation and undervaluation of commodities, dictated mainly by the information available on these products or services, often in a textual form, but also through images, sounds, campaigns, periodical events, etc.

In such context, the citizen, the tourist or the migrant, even applying different levels of power, may contest the value of the sale and purchase operation, according to democratic consumer rights, one of which is exactly the right to information, which in Portugal, takes the form of the following regulation norm, among others:

Article 9, Right to information. 1- The consumer has the right to be fully and loyally informed, with a view to forming his decision to contract, and in any case before the conclusion of the contract, about the essential characteristics of the goods or services that are going to be provided to him, in order to make a conscious and rational choice between competing goods and services, and to use these goods and services with complete safety and in a satisfactory manner. (Santos, 1997. 21-22).

This information must be provided on the labels (paragraph 2), by previous economic agents in the production-consumption cycle, such as the producer, distributor, etc. (point 3). Other recent legal collections relating to consumer rights and duties are these: Braga, 1994; Ferreira, 1995.



Figure 11 Textual informative value as a service: information about the beach and its bar services, and on safety in what regards Covid-19 (Ria Formosa)

5. Conclusion

What about the future of tourism within pandemic and post-pandemic societies, in connection with the value of textual information that underlies them? The economic/social/cultural value of information on products and services, can be articulated with other goods, through social practice and via sociological reflection. Indeed, at least in the society regimes that may rise

as utopian, the value of the merchandise will probably integrate new informational utilities and unprecedented wisdoms, in close connection with the need for the exchange of global and local information and knowledge, inherent to our complex societies. In other words, within our risk society but now also viral society, remobilized information and knowledge about viral tourism are simultaneously becoming some of the most central means of production and consumption of commodities and services.



Figure 12 Textual informative value as a service: at the beach, about safety in what regards Covid-19 (Ria Formosa)

However, the emerging exchange values and sign-values, underlying the irruption of this recent circulation of information / knowledge, and inherent to the respective social interruption perpetrated by the Corona virus, combined with novel use values, should be guided by the need for a stronger and egalitarian redistribution of information and knowledge. For this reason, the informative-textual value may eventually be transformed into a *reciprocal-distributive value*, a kind of deeper hybridization of the previous types of value. In the present viral age, such a process will probably occur through a more frequent and profound exchange of both information and knowledge with other goods, preferably for the common good. This will allow that commodities and services where this value is printed and expressed, may act, more effectively and affectively, as vehicles for the equal sharing of wealth and social justice among peoples.

Likewise, research knowledge must accompany such deep social metamorphoses, reflecting on them within a critical, emancipatory, political and sociological way, but also inside a cultural imaginative manner, in order to counteract the novel socio-economic inequalities and ‘viral wars’, such as those between vaccine subscribers and negationists, that are already circulating inside the present *viral social fabric*.

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