



HOSPITALITY IN RIO DE JANEIRO AS A TOURIST DESTINATION: PERCEPTIONS OF TOURIST EXCHANGE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL FLUMINENSE¹

A HOSPITALIDADE NO DESTINO TURÍSTICO RIO DE
JANEIRO: A PERCEÇÃO DO TURISTA INTERCAMBISTA DA
UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL FLUMINENSE

LA HOSPITALIDAD EN EL DESTINO TURÍSTICO RIO DE
JANEIRO: LA PERCEPCIÓN DEL TURISTA ESTUDIANTE DE
INTERCAMBIO DE LA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL FLUMINENSE

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ABSTRACT: Rio de Janeiro is known as the marvelous city, the carnival city, and the city of hospitality. The aim of this article is to determine whether Rio de Janeiro, as a tourist destination, actually lives up to this reputation. For this purpose, it analyzes different categories of hospitality (Grinover, 2006): accessibility, readability and identity. The general objective is to analyze the hospitality of some of the tourist sites in the city of Rio de Janeiro, from the perspective of tourist exchange students of Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). The descriptive methodology was applied in this study, with the use of different techniques: quantitative research, through an online questionnaire applied to 54 tourist exchange students; a qualitative study with semi-structured interviews applied to six exchange students; and a qualitative data analysis of a literary review. The results show that for the UFF exchange students, there is evidence of hospitality in the tourist destinations of Rio de Janeiro, but there is also room for improvement in each of the categories analyzed. The results also show that the local inhabitants of the city are receptive to visitors.

KEYWORDS: Hospitality; urban hospitality; international tourist exchange.

RESUMO: O Rio de Janeiro é conhecido como: cidade maravilhosa, cidade do carnaval e

¹ This paper is based on the author's final thesis and was expanded and updated to include a more comprehensive literature review featuring international sources for this paper.

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cidade hospitaleira. Nesse sentido, a proposta do presente artigo é a de compreender se o destino Rio de Janeiro é realmente hospitaleiro, por meio das categorias de hospitalidade na cidade (Grinover, 2006): acessibilidade, legibilidade e identidade. Assim, este trabalho tem como objetivo geral analisar a hospitalidade de alguns pontos turísticos da cidade do Rio de Janeiro pelo olhar do turista intercambista que estudou na Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). A metodologia para este estudo foi descritiva com uso de diferentes técnicas: uma pesquisa quantitativa por meio de questionário aplicado a 54 intercambistas, uma pesquisa qualitativa com entrevistas semiestruturadas aplicadas a seis intercambistas e a análise de dados qualitativamente de acordo com o estudo bibliográfico. Para os intercambistas da UFF, existem evidências de hospitalidade nos lugares turísticos do Rio de Janeiro, mas todas as categorias – acessibilidade, legibilidade e identidade – precisam ser melhoradas. Sobre as pessoas, o resultado da pesquisa indicou que os moradores locais se demonstraram receptivos com estrangeiros.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Hospitalidade; hospitalidade urbana; intercambista.

RESUMEN: Rio de Janeiro es conocida como: ciudad maravillosa, ciudad de carnaval y ciudad hospitalaria. En este sentido, el propósito de este artículo es entender si el destino de Rio de Janeiro es realmente hospitalario, por medio de las categorías de hospitalidad en la ciudad (Grinover, 2006): accesibilidad, legibilidad e identidad. Por lo tanto, este trabajo tiene como objetivo general analizar la hospitalidad de algunas atracciones turísticas de la ciudad de Rio de Janeiro por el estudiante de intercambio turístico que estudió en la Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). La metodología para este estudio fue descriptiva con el uso de diferentes técnicas: investigación cuantitativa a través de un cuestionario aplicado a 54 estudiantes de intercambio, una investigación cualitativa con entrevistas semiestruturadas aplicadas a seis estudiantes de intercambio y análisis de datos cualitativos de una revisión literaria. Para los estudiantes de intercambio de UFF hay evidencia de hospitalidad en los lugares turísticos de Rio de Janeiro, pero todas las categorías (accesibilidad, legibilidad e identidad) dejan margen para la mejora. Sobre las personas, el resultado de la investigación indicó que los residentes locales se mostraron receptivos con extranjeros.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Hospitalidad; hospitalidad urbana; estudiantes de intercambio.

INTRODUCTION

The city of Rio de Janeiro is an internationally renowned tourist destination, with an image that evokes carnival, samba, beaches, nature and beautiful women. These images have been disseminated mostly outside Brazil, and have evolved as stereotypes that have defined the popular perception of the city over decades. These perceptions still exist today, particularly in the minds of those who have yet to visit the city. These images and stereotypes have also been perpetuated and disseminated by official state channels, through popular culture (movies, soap operas, TV series, sporting events), through social media platforms, and by word of mouth, by tourists that have visited the city. However, contrasting with this image, other stereotypes have emerged in recent years that have highlighted aspects of social fear and urban violence, a lack of public security, and a weakening of functional state apparatus. (Machado, 2012).

Rio de Janeiro as a tourist destination is seen as an attractive place to visit; the local inhabitants are perceived as welcoming, and the city presents a unique culture for foreigners. One of the main characteristics of hospitality is, of course, hosting. This is highlighted by Kant (n.d. as cited by Boff, 2011) as one of the main human values worldwide. Therefore, hospitality is fundamental for a city, because it enriches the tourist's experience, delighting



them and encouraging them to share their positive experiences with others. In the 21st Century, online channels such as social media and multimedia platforms have expanded and facilitated the dissemination of tourist information around the world.

Nowadays, tourism demand is dictated by visitors' interests. According to Yázig (2017), a tourist is someone who has made the decision to travel and visit a place, and is therefore the one who defines whether a place is a tourist destination. After the visit, the tourist then recounts his or her experience, whether enjoyable or not, to other potential tourists. One type of tourist that plays an important role in tourism promotion is the tourist exchange student – a tourist who stays in the city temporarily, for the purpose of study. Tourist exchange students visiting Rio de Janeiro will have a more accurate view of the tourist sites and the inhabitants of the city, as they spend longer than other types of tourist. Thus, the guiding question of this article is: how do tourist exchange students at Universidade Federal Fluminense perceive hospitality in the tourist sites of the city of Rio de Janeiro?

The general objective of this work is to analyze the hospitality of some tourist sites in the city, as perceived by tourist exchange students studying at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). The qualifiers of 'hospitality' are defined by Grinover (2006) as accessibility, readability and identity. The specific objectives of the study are: to research tourism segmentation focused on study and student exchange tourism, to determine the image of Rio de Janeiro as a tourist destination; in view of its stereotypes, to discuss the defining concepts of hospitality as a Brazilian tourist destination; and to evaluate hospitality in the tourism sites of Rio de Janeiro from the perspective of the tourist exchange student at UFF.

This paper is characterized as a descriptive study. It uses a set of techniques to collect data, in order to answer the main question (Dencker, 2000). The research was conducted in four steps: first, a literature review was carried out, focusing on subjects related to the description and theoretical basis of the work; second, a quantitative survey was conducted in 2016, with online and paper questionnaires administered to a non-probability sample of exchange students that studied at UFF between 2011 and 2016; third, a qualitative research instrument was conducted, also in 2016, through semi-structured interviews with six exchange students, in order to bring out more detailed information on the issues; and fourth, a qualitative analysis of the research based on the theory. As the primary approach of this paper was qualitative, it is important to note that this is not a data generalization, but a discussion of hospitality and its perception by a special group of tourists. Following the field research, the literature review was updated to include publications in international journals. As the focus of this study is on the hospitality in the city approach, the analyses continue to be based especially on Grinover (2002, 2006).

This article is structured in sections: first it explores contemporary tourism, with an emphasis on the segment of study and exchange tourism; second, it explores the theme of hospitality, giving a brief overview of international reviews and their approach to an urban destination; this is followed by methodological aspects of field research; this study included results regarding hospitality in the tourists destinations of the city of Rio de Janeiro, based on the perceptions of exchange students of UFF; and finally, some considerations are made, and directions for further research indicated.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND - EXCHANGE STUDENTS AND THE DESTINATION OF RIO DE JANEIRO

A tourist can be defined as someone who is looking for experiences that will enable them to develop personally and/or professionally, i.e. someone who is seeking to enrich and fulfil their lives. The Brazilian Ministry of Tourism has published a research study about tourism segmentation which recognizes world trends and brings them closer to the Brazilian reality (Brasil, 2010a). In 2006, it defined priority segments for Brazilian tourism, and published a collection of guides with basic divisions of tourism segments, entitled “*Cadernos de Orientações Básicas dos Segmentos Turísticos*” – one of these segments is “Study and Exchange Tourism” (Brasil, 2010a).

The development of study and exchange tourism as a market segment is not recent. It began in Europe, with the Grand Tour (Brasil, 2010a). During the Renaissance, young Europeans would further their studies through travel, often to Paris and Southwest France – the “petit tour” – sometimes also taking in South and Southeast France and Burgundy – the “grand tour”; Thus, the expression “to do the grand tour” became popular in England between the 16th and 17th Centuries (Rejowski, 2002). Often the trip was paid by the royal crown; a nobleman would only be considered to have completed their studies if they had spent one to three years in Europe, with a guardian, to improve their studies (Rejowski, 2002). In contrast to today, the trip was taken exclusively by the nobility or young people from wealthy families. This form of tourism initially became popular in Europe, but was later adopted in other parts of the world.

This market segment of “Study and Exchange Tourism” is defined by the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism as “... a tourist movement with activities and learning programs and experiences for the purposes of qualification, expansion of knowledge and personal and professional development” (Brasil, 2010b, p. 15). Mota (2009) cites various types of courses and activities that are often offered en masse to tourists: graduation programs for university schools, MBA courses, traineeships, and post-graduation courses. Although many students may stay in the destination for more than a year, these are not viewed as people migrations; the stays are only temporary, governed by specific visas, depending on the destination. In other words, the international student intends to return to his or her country of origin, and can therefore be included in the broader concept of “tourist”.

Given that professional development and specializations are in great demand nowadays, large numbers of students engage in these trips, which enable both personal development and international experience (Mota, 2009). The development of international education is now a priority concern in many countries and their educational institutions. However, it is not only educational institutions that need to be prepared to send and receive students. “It is noted that the higher the number of international people who are ready to deal with the cultural diversity, the greater the chances that these people and, consequently, their countries, will be able to project themselves and remain competitive” (Brasil, 2010b, p. 18).

This global concern to promote student exchange brings benefits not only for the personal development of citizens; it also has direct and significant financial impacts on the global economy, and a host of other indirect consequences. Apart from the economic factors



associated with this market segment, these tourists are extremely crucial for the development of tourism in a destination, and for its promotion. Vasconcellos (2014, p. 32) identifies that:

... exchange students contribute to boosting the local economy, through their consumption of various services and products, as well as helping to spread the image of destination. And the better the quality of services provided by the destination, the better the consumers' perception of the destination image, as they share their experiences through the media and viral communication.

It can be inferred that tourists in this market segment have a relationship with the destination and use the services according to their quality. The tourist promotes the destination by "word-of-mouth" and via social media almost immediately. Thus, where the quality of services is poor, the exchange student tourist may discourage other, potential tourists by giving a negative image of the destination.

It is noted that there is a particular relationship between the exchange student and the destination visited. This work investigates the views of foreign students at UFF in relation to the tourist sites of the city of Rio de Janeiro. According to the Tourism Ministry of Rio de Janeiro, the state of Rio de Janeiro received, in the past few years, more than 20% of all international tourists to Brazil, and in 2015, the city received more than 1.3 million foreign tourists (Brasil, 2016). Due to its enormous historical and cultural value, and the image that is projected internationally via movies and TV, Rio de Janeiro is the second most popular destination for foreigners visiting Brazil (Brasil, 2016).

One characteristic of a destination is its brand or image. The tourist destination image is not configured merely through illustration; it is constructed through many aspects that affect the tourists to that destination. Because tourists are generally far away from the place they plan to visit, images and imagery are used as powerful tools to help bring them closer to the destination (Gastal, 2005). Imagery is an important element of many destinations, but it can differ from the reality. The destination image should, in fact, be close to the truth, so as not to deceive its tourists.

It is known that often, the images displayed by destination tourism planners and tour operators/travel agents can paint a distorted picture, whether intentionally or not. Lohmann and Panosso Netto (2008, p. 351) state that "... many images end up becoming stereotypes, i.e., certain characteristics are highlighted to peoples' "eyes". These characteristics emphasize the image and are reinforced by stereotypes. Even if some of their components are real, they do not accurately portray the destination.

The destination of Rio de Janeiro is often seen abroad as "the" destination in Brazil. There is a general view that the image of Rio de Janeiro as a tourist destination is interchangeable with that of Brazil as a tourist destination. This is because of the stereotypes projected internationally. The stereotypes of Rio de Janeiro will be outlined below, together with the results of this study.

The tourist destination of the city of Rio de Janeiro is comprised of stereotypes that influence the image of all tourists who come to visit. It is noted, in international tourist demand surveys carried out by the Ministry of Tourism (Brasil, 2016), that it captures various types of tourists, including exchange students, who are very important for promoting the

destination and for the image formation process of the potential tourist. These tourists remain at the destination for a long time, and are therefore likely to promote the destination in a way that is more aligned with the reality. Their view of the city will always depend on their experience: if it is a good one, they will attract other tourists. Before proceeding with this analysis, it is important to clearly define the concept of hospitality.

HOSPITALITY AT THE DESTINATION

The bibliographic research and field survey were conducted in 2016. However, for this study, a second literature review was conducted that included additional works published in international journals.

For international productions related to hospitality, searches were conducted in the databases Google Scholar and *Periódicos Capes*. The search terms used were: Hospitality (“*Hospitalidade*”) and Urban Hospitality (“*Hospitalidade urbana*”). More relevant results were found using only the first search term. The papers found were mainly from the International Journal of Hospitality Management and the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. These two journals focus on hospitality from a management perspective (Brotherton, 1999; Cho, Woods, Jang, & Erdem, 2006; Hughes & Rog, 2008; Che & Choi, 2008), in other words, commercial hospitality.

Another journal accessed was *Hospitality & Society*, edited by Lynch, Molz, McIntosh, Logosi and Lashley (2011). The purpose of that journal is to encourage more critical and interdisciplinary theoretical insight into hospitality.

In regards to the national publications about hospitality, recognized authors in the field were selected based on their articles and book chapters. Therefore, the discussion related to the context of the *Carioca* (inhabitant of Rio de Janeiro) was based mainly on Camargo (2002, 2005), Grinover (2002, 2006), Cruz (2002) and Matheus (2002).

In order to extend the literature review that underpins this article, there is an emphasis on Brotherton (1999), whose article seeks to understand the essence of what is referred to as hospitality and its management. It gives a critical review of the definitions and perspectives of these key issues offered in the late 20th century literature, in an attempt to create a clearer view of what “hospitality” and “hospitality management” are.

Cho *et al.* (2006) developed a study based on hospitality enterprises, in order to investigate the relationship between the use of human resources management practices and the organizational performance measured by the turnover rates of employees who work in management and non-management positions. Their results indicate that enterprises that adopt human resources as management practices, for example: participation programs in labor management, incentive plans, and selection tests are more likely to have lower turnover rates for non-management employees.

Hughes and Rog (2008) published an article aimed at clarifying what is understood by talent management, and the importance of its effect on recruiting, retaining and engaging employees. They highlight that hospitality organizations interested in adopting strategies for talent management would be advised to define their understanding of it; to guarantee the



engagement of their CEOs; to bring their talent management in line with the organizational objectives; to establish systems for evaluation, data management and analysis; and to conduct an audit of all human resources practices, in order to ensure best evidence-based practice.

Chen and Choi (2008) highlighted that even though many studies target labor values, very few focus specifically on management differences within the context of hospitality. That article explores the value structure of hospitality management work and the perceived differences between three generations of managers and supervisors in the area of hospitality.

Lynch et al. (2011) published, in the editorial of the *Journal Hospitality & Society*, a call for authors to think of hospitality in an interdisciplinary and critical way, with the intention of arriving at a theory of hospitality. The great fields of science end up theorizing from different perspectives, with the main one being restricted to the economic aspect.

Regarding the national perspective, Camargo (2002) analyzes autonomy and the growth of the hotel segment with the purpose of evaluating hospitality studies. He also seeks to conceptualize hospitality, its dimensions, and its areas of study in his book (2005).

Grinover (2002) engages and extends the understanding of hospitality to include the welcoming extended by a physical space, as a host to its visitors. His paper also discusses the three dimensions of hospitality of a city, which must coexist simultaneously: accessibility, readability and identity (Grinover, 2006).

Cruz (2002) offers an essay that connects hospitality and the Brazilian urban phenomenon, arguing that the socio-spatial organization of a place is essential for the construction of a hospitable space. Matheus (2002) addresses the formation of the city historically, and the concerns regarding quality of life. He also raises discussion about hospitality in urban areas.

Hospitality is still a concept limited in dictionaries and common sense, and it is approached from a diversity of streams of study (Marcelino & Camargo, 2017; Lynch et al., 2011). Marcelino and Camargo (2017) carried out an extensive literature review on the claims and authors of the theme of hospitality. They have reveal that there is a "... predominance on the discussion about hospitality in personal relationships" (Marcelino & Camargo, 2017, p. 72). When discussing hospitality in the city, they point out the works of Grinover (2002), who seeks to extend the concepts of the theme to the urban space as a whole, not only limited to tourist services, the focus of this work. In addition, Marcelino and Camargo (2017) conclude that there is a large and growing Brazilian production, and some gaps in the international literature on the subject.

In order to understand hospitality in the city from the urban point of view, a search was conducted in the *Periódicos Capes* database, using the search term "urban hospitality", looking for articles by Brazilian authors in Latin American journals such as: *Revista Iberoamericana de Turismo*, *Revista Turismo em Análise* and *Estudios y Perspectivas en Turismo*. Among the eight studies found, the following two are highlighted:

a) Grinover (2013): a theoretical essay including new categories for analysis of the city as hospitable, as quality of life, citizenship and urbanity.

b) Dutra, Caldas, Pinheiro and Bastos (2017): through an empirical study conducted

in Pelotas (RS), sought to identify whether the historical center of this city is hospitable, through Grinover's categories (2006, 2013), taking into account locals and tourists.

In this sense, the national production on the concept of hospitality is highlighted, mainly to analyze the tourist sites of the city of Rio de Janeiro as hospitable or not.

The study of hospitality and its appreciation by the market has only occurred more recently. "... It should be noted that hospitality has changed nowadays and that is both a nostalgic theme and an article of fashion" (Montandon, 2003, p. 134). Many authors, such as Camargo (2005), Lashley (2015) and Montandon (2003), study hospitality themes and identify that it has existed since the beginning of society, but over time, it has transformed and may have lost its intrinsic value: receiving the other well, in a natural way. There is a close relationship between religion and hospitality, whereby the emphasis is placed more on lodging than to tourism in general. It is emphasized that for the tourist to have a sense of satisfaction, a hospital welcome is necessary throughout the trip.

Camargo (2002) reflects on the term 'hospitality' in which Anglo-Saxon countries employ the same word for the hospitality/hotel industry. This could cause ambiguity regarding the notion of hospitality, although the author prefers the use of 'hospitality' and believes that it could become a multidisciplinary science that extends beyond hotel establishments. Lashley (2015), meanwhile, conflates the relationship of hospitality with religiosity. There are mentions in works of classical literature (from ancient Greece, for example) and in the Bible, of acts of hospitality to foreigners, welcoming them, offering food or drink, and accommodation, even if only for a short period (Lashley, 2015).

Camargo (2005) understands hospitality primarily as the gift given in an infinite process called "threefold obligation", which consists of "giving, receiving and giving back". It is a natural ritual of man, and its violation or non-continuity constitutes hostility (Camargo, 2005). Today's world has come to value hospitality, not only as an act of religious obligation, but in its other variations. Many authors seek to link it with the hospitality industry, but the hotel industry is only one of the many tourism sectors that exist.

More recently, interest has grown in hospitality as it relates to the development of societies, particularly in strengthening tourism. For Camargo (2002), globalization has led to increased attention to this theme, with an increase in human migrations (mainly from countries at war), a "homogenization of habits and customs" (Camargo, 2005, p. 38), and increased tourist flows.

Grinover (2002, p. 26) makes a brief conceptualization: "hospitality is fundamentally the act of welcoming and providing services to someone who, for whatever reason, is outside his place of domicile." The author states that in addition to changes in human relations, the concept should be extended to encompass the relationship with the physical space of the city, i.e. of the inhabitant and the visitor with the unknown place. In this same sense, Cruz (2002, p.39) affirms that hospitality is a much more encompassing phenomenon and "... involves a broad set of structures, services and attitudes that, intrinsically related, provide well-being to the guest".

Camargo (2002) believes that the concept of hospitality should be expanded, and states that a professional in this field does not only work "... in the hotel and the restaurant,



but also operates in all the receptive system of a city, and in companies, bodies and enterprises that somehow welcome the inhabitants of the city itself" (Camargo, 2002, p.9). Therefore, hospitality is present in the city in various forms, and is essential for the development of tourism, especially sustainable tourism.

The main purpose of hospitality is to welcome the guest. It is perceived that this act depends both on the human relations established in the place, and on the relations of the foreigner with the place. This means that the welcome and the host infer that this space unknown to the visitor, and that they are received well. It also includes the place and its people. Thus, the current concept of hospitality is widened, and can be understood as a quality of place, whatever the situation.

The spaces of the city are related to each other and need a connection to make them a hospitable as a whole. It appears that "... hospitality is a social quality rather than an individual quality: it is a phenomenon that involves organization, an ordering of collective places and, therefore, the observation of the rules of use of these places" (Grinover, 2006, 31). People can offer hospitality, welcoming the stranger well, but it is important to organize larger spaces and their interactions, especially in common or public places.

The city as an urban space must integrate into its development: the people that use that space and everything that defines it (Matheus, 2002; Grinover, 2002). Thus, urbanity, citizenship and hospitality are related. In tourism, space is the main object of consumption, and the quality of this space or its surroundings is vital for tourist hospitality in a place (Cruz, 2002). According to the studies of Matheus (2002), man modifies the urban space to provide a better quality of life for himself. In order to achieve this quality, its aesthetic and productive potentialities are valued in cities. The space welcomes not only its residents and its workers, but also its visitors. So, it is up to man to transform the city space for all who pass through it. "The city, therefore, is not only a center of production, but also a place in which sociability develops fruition of hospitality" (Matheus 2002, p. 64). In this way, by including the other in one's space, i.e. welcoming them, the city becomes more hospitable.

According to Grinover (2006), the city can be considered hospitable due to the simultaneous existence of three dimensions: accessibility, readability and identity. From this perspective, the city must value its inhabitants, consider the old and the new, and play host to both locals and foreigners alike. The author goes on to propose that the city should be studied, to look for elements and structures that make it either hospitable or hostile.

METHODOLOGY - CARIOCA HOSPITALITY IN THE PERCEPTIONS OF EXCHANGE STUDENTS

Based on a literature review on the essential theories of the study and exchange tourism segment, hospitality and urban hospitality, this section discusses the methodological field research procedures carried out in the months of September and October 2016.

As stated, this study mostly employing qualitative analysis using techniques in paper sources (for bibliographic research used in all phases), quantitative methodology (with the application of the questionnaire) and qualitative methodology (through interviews) to perform a descriptive study. Dencker (2000) states that the purpose of a descriptive study is to present phenomena or establish relationships between variables.

The field research was executed with the purpose of identifying the hospitality of the city of Rio de Janeiro through the perspectives of exchange students. Foreign exchange students who had come to study at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) between 2011 and 2016 were chosen. UFF is located in the city of Niterói, (neighboring city to Rio de Janeiro), and is a metropolitan region of the state of Rio de Janeiro. Due to this proximity to the capital, it was believed that the exchange students would have lived or visited the sights of Rio de Janeiro during the exchange period².

The city of Rio de Janeiro covers a large area, and from the tourist's point of view, it is not fully prepared to receive tourists across its whole area, for many reasons. Cruz (2002) points out that the history of urbanization in Brazil brought several problems, due to the way it was conducted – the *favelas* or slums, environmental degradation, and violence – and also, from the tourist's point of view, improvements were prioritized in only a few of the urban spaces. This is also true of the city of Rio de Janeiro, and therefore the hospitality analyzed in this article was based on the so-called “must-see” tourist sites. These are indicated in the website of RIOTUR, the city of Rio de Janeiro Tourism company as: Maracana Stadium; Sugarloaf Mountain; Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon; Municipal Theater; Botanical Gardens; Christ Redeemer Statue; Quinta da Boa Vista (Park); Flamengo Park; Lapa; Feira do Rio Antigo; Ipanema (beach); Copacabana and Leme (beach); Museu do Amanhã; Banco do Brasil Cultural Center (CCBB); Madureira Park; Lage Park; and Tijuca National Park³ (Rio de Janeiro City Hall, 2016). Through these sites, it was possible to gain a general overview of hospitality in the tourist parts of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The data collection was initially performed through a questionnaire, followed by interviews to explore the object of investigation in more depth; and finally, an analysis of the two previous stages, to identify the level of hospitality of the main tourist sites of the city of Rio de Janeiro (RJ). The survey received a total of 54 valid questionnaires. Six exchange students of different nationalities were then selected for the interviews. These six students indicated in the questionnaires that they would be willing to act as volunteers in the interview stage, and that they had available time for this. Both studies addressed issues other than hospitality, but were related to the image as perceived by the respondents/interviewees. The main intention of the interviews was to complement the answers given in the questionnaires, so from this point on, the analysis covers the results of both instruments together.

The following section discusses the results, taking into account the theories of Paganotti (2007), Costa and Pimenta (2010) and Machado (2012) on stereotypes of the Brazilian image; of Cruz (2002) and Matheus (2002) regarding tourism urbanization and its consequences in the Brazilian destination; and especially, of Grinover (2002, 2007) and the categories of hospitality, accessibility, readability and identity analysis.

2 We sought to reach exchange students from all federal universities in the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro, but we obtained answers only from UFF, which is the authors' university

3 The survey was not applied directly in the respective localities, but was cited for the interviewees in both the quantitative and qualitative research.



RESULTS - HOSPITALITY AT THE TOURIST SITES OF CITY OF RIO DE JANEIRO

First, the students' reasons for deciding to carry out their student exchange at UFF in the state of Rio de Janeiro were discussed. It was noticed, in the quantitative research, that the main factor was cultural (42%) and the second was a preference for the city (23%). In the interviews, UFF was chosen mainly due to its proximity to Rio de Janeiro (3 of the 6 respondents), two others chose Brazil and then opted for UFF. Thus, the response were mainly related to the popularity of the city.

The cultural factor, according to Lohmann and Panosso Netto (2008), is about learning and interacting with another culture. The "like" factor, meanwhile, was given with answers related to preferences for specific characteristics of Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, such as the natural beauty, Carnival, etc. In this regards, the people of Rio de Janeiro had not yet been mentioned, though an interest in the culture presupposes an interest in its people as well.

With regards to the images of the city that some of the exchange students held before coming to Rio de Janeiro, some stereotypes prevailed. Bignami (2002, p.12) states that "... the image, in this case, is the one which coincides with most representations in the minds of individuals". The students were asked about their perceptions of destination before arriving, and to state three words that they linked with Rio de Janeiro. To identify the words most cited, a word cloud was used, through the website Tagul - Word CloudArt⁴. The result is shown in Figure 1.



Fig 1. Word Cloud: Images of Rio de Janeiro image before arrival.
Note. Designed on the website Tagul - Word CloudArt, 2016.

It is possible to relate the words quoted to theory of Paganotti (2007), who analyzed international newspaper reports that portrayed Brazil and grouped them into four different

⁴ Tagul - Word Cloud Art. Downloaded in 28 October, 2016 from <https://tagul.com/create>. The words are all in Portuguese because the whole study was originally conducted in Portuguese.

stereotypes of Brazil: “Green Brazil”, “Mud Brazil”⁵, “Brazil Blood” and “Plastic Brazil”. Similarly, the exchange students’ impressions can be grouped into three “Brazils”: “Green Brazil” (associated with its natural beauty and landscapes, including beaches, sea, sun, Christ the Redeemer and its landscape, and the wonder of the city); “Brazil Blood” (associated with violence and drug trafficking, in an image of the city as unsafe and dangerous); and “Plastic Brazil” (associated with Carnival, parties, sexual promiscuity, drinking and samba). These were their images before visiting the city, based on what they had learned in their countries of origin, through the media or word of mouth marketing. Through the interviews, it was possible to gain a better understanding of what information the exchange students had received from previous advice and recommendations, such as prevailing statements about Paganotti’s “Brazil Blood” (2007). The exchange students already knew that to live in Rio de Janeiro, one had to be careful.

At the end of the questionnaire the exchange students evaluated their images after and/or during the exchange. Using the same prior technique, another Word Cloud was produced (Figure 2).



Fig 2.Word Cloud: Images of Rio de Janeiro after and/or during the exchange program.

Note. Designed on the website Tagul - Word CloudArt, 2016.

Looking at Figures 1 and 2, we see a change in some of the main words, with less repetition. Due to this modification of the terms, it is observed that the tourists were charmed by the city and by its nature. It is inferred that Rio de Janeiro reinforces its image as a marvelous city. However, it is also full of contrasts and inequalities. The reports stated that the constant danger and threats of insecurity do not exist everywhere in the city. According to Machado (2012), the negative tourist stereotype of both Brazil and Rio de Janeiro has grown as a result of media influences, which ultimately project an international image of a

⁵ The “Mud Brazil” for Paganotti (2007) incorporates the politics, the underdeveloped country and the magnitude of poverty, often linked to violence and corruption. However, the words quoted by the exchange students could not be linked to this type of “Brazil”.



violent destination, as in the category of Paganotti (2007) - "Brazil blood". The interviewees confirmed that their opinion of the city's image had changed after visiting it, describing it as an incredible destination, not to be missed by tourists, as well as identifying the *Carioca* as a friendly person who is receptive to foreigners, always willing to help them.

Along with recommendations from friends and/or relatives, the respondents reported receiving guidance on places to meet. In general, the free sites were preferred by the exchange students. This was identified in the interviews, which mentioned hiking trails and beaches. It was also seen that Lapa – the public central part of the city, with several bars and an active nightlife –, Copacabana and Leme – beaches, were the most visited tourist sites, having been visited one or more times (94% each), according to the questionnaires.

Christ the Redeemer statue (Cristo Redentor) was quite well portrayed in the interviews in several categories. It was related to the image of Rio de Janeiro by interviewee 6 and was the most popular tourist place for interviewee 5. In the questionnaires, this attraction had been visited by 33 respondents (61%), therefore it was not top of the list of most visited tourist sites. However, most of the respondents were busy on their exchange programs, and was believed that they would probably visit the Christ the Redeemer statue before leaving the city. Urry (2001, p. 28) highlights that "there are absolutely different objects to be contemplated and that everyone knows. They are famous because they are famous, although they may have lost the basis of their fame ..." citing the Eiffel Tower, the Empire State Building, Buckingham Palace and others. May consider the Christ the Redeemer statue to be one of these objects. Thus, interviewee 6 states: "I think the Christ represents Rio de Janeiro and Brazil".

For the understanding of hospitality in tourist sites, Grinovers' (2006) categories – accessibility, readability and identity – could best be identified in the questionnaires. In the interviews, the opinions about hospitality were extracted from the responses given to some of the questions. The interviews did not cover the topic of accessibility (tangible and intangible), which appeared only in the questionnaires. For the exchange students, the access needs to be improved mainly in the tangible aspect, as there were difficulties in finding information (especially due to the language barriers) and in physically getting to the tourist destination. The intangible aspect of accessibility related to citizenship, therefore it was translated in the research as the availability of free and/or discounted sites, which were more satisfactory for the exchange students.

Readability was analyzed in both surveys. Quantitatively, the analysis was performed using a Likert scale – according to the level of agreement to the statements – the majority replied that they "agreed in part" with all five statements related to this category. This aspect enabled an understanding of the validity of the information, the ease of reading by the tourists, and how far the tourist attraction represented the destination as a whole. As Rio de Janeiro is an internationally famous destination, the exchange students interviewed stated that before visiting the city, they already had previous information about it, and knew that they needed to find more precise information to access the attractions, such as signs and maps, but these were often inadequate or non-existent.

Thinking about identity, which relates to the culture and people in tourist sites, including both the workers and visitors, the questionnaires presented six statements related to this category, which were also evaluated on the Likert scale: 35.7% of the respondents agreed in the affirmative, and 37.8% agreed only in part.

The issue of service was addressed in the interviews. Most of the interviews (5 of 6) said that the *Carioca* is very friendly and always seeks to help foreigners. They did not distinguish whether a *Carioca* was a working person, or just someone who happened to be at the tourist attraction trying to help the tourist. However, interviewee 4, a Japanese exchange student, felt that a ticket sales person at a paid attraction had not welcomed her pleasantly, and at a free tourist attraction (Copacabana beach), she was not well received either. Boff (2011, 231) affirms that welcoming, in hospitality "... means accepting others, in their difference, without prejudice and in a cheerful manner ". This exchange student therefore experienced a lack of empathy of the local people, at these two times.

Urry (2001) studies the tourist's gaze and raises questions about eye direction. It is noticeable that the tourist, when traveling in a new place, looks for things they already know about, and that have been recommended to them. However, the quality of services provided by the tourism industry can generate problems of customer satisfaction. The services provided by the employees are often at odds with the expectations of managers of a tourist establishment, since employees do not usually earn any extra for providing a good quality service (Urry, 2001). That is, the tourist's gaze seeks signs of hospitality, and they may be disappointed to find places where employees are dissatisfied, or the quality of service is not as high as it should be.

According to Costa and Pimenta (2010, p. 89) "Even within a delimited space, people are not homogeneous in their cultural aspect". Therefore, it is evident that the treatment of tourists may differ from one place to another. The exchange students perceived the Brazilians as welcoming, however, this is not transmitted by all workers of all the tourist sites. Meanwhile, the locals encountered at tourist sites tend to be more sympathetic with foreign tourists.

Also in relation to identity, questions were raised about the culture perceived at the tourist sites. "The biggest issue today is the dialogue between cultures; interculturality" (Boff, 2011, p. 232), i.e., the attraction must bring representations of the local culture and allow the expression of new cultures. This understanding of identity and cultural representation is complex, as the concept of identity differs from one individual to another. The same question was put to all the respondents, but as the interviewees' found this concept difficult to grasp, they succinctly reported that in some of the tourist sites, there is a strong presence of *Carioca* culture, such as music, food and beverages. In other tourist sites – the more populated ones - two interviewees said that due to their scenery, there is no local culture, or any other culture for that matter. Due to their tourist attractiveness and mass appeal, these attractions may have lost their cultural characteristics. Urry (2001), talking about the fame of some tourist objects, highlighted that often, they end up losing the original basis of their fame. Thus, as far as Rio de Janeiro is concerned, it can be seen that the fame of these objects seems to be related more to the landscape than to the culture i.e. they have become iconic landmarks in themselves.

Matheus (2002, p. 66) states that "... all identity requires the existence of the other", therefore, the tourist attraction must bring local aspects, while also including the tourist as well. In other words, there is a relationship of identity with accessibility and readability; the tourist must understand that place by itself. This includes, for example, information in other languages, elements that portray the history and culture of the region, traditional foods, as



well as universal foods for those with dietary restrictions due to culture or personal reasons, and access to the attraction/information for people with disabilities.

Finally, the surveys sought to find out the student's perceptions of the city *after* their arrival, as this is the image they will pass on to their friends and acquaintances. A change of perspective was observed: after their arrival, the students had a more positive image of the city, as corroborated in the study by Machado (2012). The exchange students described the *Cariocas* as welcoming, mainly because they were foreigners, and recognized that the warnings of danger were somewhat exaggerated.

In the closed (yes-no) questions, the respondents stated that the sites were hospitable. However, this evaluation did not apply to the city as a whole, or even to all the tourist sites. Overall, the tourists were delighted by the tourist destination, although this perception referred more to the tourist sites than to the city as a whole.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Hospitality in the tourist destination can be perceived in several ways, and is increasingly important for the development of tourism. The purpose of this article was to study the destination of Rio de Janeiro in regard to the perceptions of hospitality of exchange student at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). It therefore addresses the tourism segment of study and exchange tourism, and hospitality in the tourist destination, in relation to the city of Rio de Janeiro. Studies in this area of hospitality perception are important, to detect aspects of the destination that need improvement, and whether the residents are satisfied with the tourists. This latter point is analyzed based on the responses of the tourists and their interactions with the *Cariocas*.

To achieve the first specific objective, the study and exchange tourism segment was analyzed, as an activity in which the tourist experience of exchange students is different from that of other types of tourist. This is because with international student mobility, the student as a tourist knows and recognizes stereotypes and composite images before the trip. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the destination of the city of Rio de Janeiro from the tourists' perspective, considering its images and its stereotypes. The image and imagination of the foreigner are influential aspects in their decision-making process as potential tourists. Therefore, these aspects must be disseminated in a way that portrays the reality of the destination. Studies by Gastal (2005) and Bignami (2002) emphasize the importance of destination image. The image of the city of Rio de Janeiro evokes terms like "wonderful" ("*maravilhosa*"), "happy" ("*feliz*"), "hospitable" ("*hospitaleira*") yet at the same time "dangerous" ("*perigosa*").

The imaginary is influenced by the media and by those who have visited, and often does not portray the reality. In other words, it may represent outdated and/or unrealistic stereotypes. In the case of Rio de Janeiro, potential visitors may have a somewhat simplistic view of the city, relating it only to Carnival and partying. Another stereotype has also been established, although this is still not confirmed by theory: the image of the *Carioca* people as welcoming and hospitable. Costa and Pimenta (2010) raise this issue of Brazilian being hospitable, in view of the idea of cordiality.

The second specific objective discusses hospitality. This is a recent theme in academic studies, and is important for tourist development, whether for an establishment or for a destination. Acts of hospitality relate to the “give-receive-give back” gift (Camargo, 2005) in welcoming the guest. There is a relationship with hotel and hotel management, but hospitality should not be summarized by this alone; on the contrary, it must be present in the different spaces of a destination: domestic, public, commercial and virtual. The international literature still focuses on this theme from an economic/commercial perspective. The international works investigated discuss hospitality in a different way from this article, therefore we focused mainly on national authors.

In a city, hospitality should be equally proportioned to its residents and visitors. However, when it comes to Brazil, and Rio de Janeiro as a destination, one perceives a flaw in relation to the proposal of hospitality in the city as a whole. It is mainly the tourist sites have good infrastructure to receive tourists, depending on the city and public management. Many places in the world are advancing economically based on the profits of tourism, therefore, they give presence the places most visited by tourists, so that they feel well received and share the destination. In these tourist areas, in general, the availability of comfort, food, security and entertainment is expected, as well as people willing to welcome the tourist. Therefore, the tourist at leisure is satisfied, as stated in research; they have been very well received and consider Rio de Janeiro hospitable.

This survey was carried out with exchange students who spent longer periods in the tourist destination than other types of tourist. Therefore, to achieve the third specific objective, two studies were conducted, to enable a qualitative analysis. It is noted that as UFF is located in the city of Niterói, very close to the city of Rio de Janeiro, the majority (81% of respondents) chose to stay closer to the university. Some limitations of the research were that ideally, more exchange students staying in the city of Rio de Janeiro itself could have been reached, and also, it could have had a larger sample of respondents. If these two limitations were overcome, the qualification of the city as hospitable may have been more precise. A total of 54 exchange students were questioned through online and paper questionnaires, which were dissemination via the social networks.

Despite this, the study brought some significant considerations about the destination of Rio de Janeiro. First, it was concluded that the students’ perceptions of the city changed after their arrival. Previously, they had held stereotypes of Carnival, beaches, and danger, but after and/or during the exchange, they described Rio de Janeiro using terms like: happy, nature, culture, and friendly people.

The students’ perceptions of hospitality of the tourist sites in the city of Rio de Janeiro, based mainly on the categories of Grinover (2006), were not entirely positive, thus, it is concluded that the tourist sites are not 100% welcoming. To say that a tourist destination is hospitable requires reflection on several aspects. Although the quantitative research indicated that for 98% of the respondents, the tourist sites were hospitable, this view was not extended to the whole city, or even to all the tourist sites. The students reported that they had been welcomed with hospitality and that the people were very kind to them, with some exceptions: difficulty finding their way around the city, a feeling that some parts of the city were unsafe, and the stark contrast between rich and poor.



Another point to emphasize in the area of hospitality has to do with the fact of being recognized as foreigners. The exchange students reported that they felt safe in tourist sites, but realized that they were perceived as strangers to the place. It is concluded that the *Carioca* shows empathy towards foreigners, particularly in tourist sites, where they tend to welcome the visitor. It would be interesting to discover whether this hospitality is also extended to Brazilian tourists.

“‘Tourist sites’ are therefore organized around what MacCannel calls ‘staged authenticity’ (1973)” (Urry, 2001, p. 25). Hospitality may exist, and is offered in tourist sites, especially by the city’s residents, but some aspects still needs to be improved for everyone to enjoy it equally. Thus, can we say that the tourist sites of the city of Rio de Janeiro display “staged authenticity” – both in its spaces, and by the locals who recognized the foreigner?

Finally, other aspects of *Carioca* hospitality are raised, and these could be investigated in future studies. It is important to note that the study of themes related to cordiality and hospitality can help promote tourism to a destination.

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Author's contributions

Isabela Lima Pinheiro da Camara: National and international bibliographic research; field research; tab; analysis; writing of the essay.

Ari da Silva Fonseca Filho: International bibliographic research; field research, and writing.

