Collecting countries and territories: a proposal for counting visited places

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Abstract

Collecting is a curious human activity, which consists of meeting and guarding selected objects. It has numerous formats and features. The collection of places, that is to say, the collection of the visit to places, is not a recent practice, but in the context of contemporary, mobile, networked and consumption societies, it has acquired great importance. Although it may not be the main motivation for a trip, and may be more or less unconscious, the collection of places and, consequently, place counting, is a social act. Like other collections it exists to be shared, compared and shown. This article examines this practice, which is closely linked to travel and tourism. On the one hand it analyses a central question of the collection of places and territories, which is the definition of the collection itself, that is, its limits, and its 'objects'. This discussion allows us to examine how we divide the world, namely in the context of counting visited places. On the other hand, this paper makes a proposal on how to count visited places, which not only accounts for the fact that someone was in a particular place or territory, but it also includes other variables such as the length of stay, time distance to destinations, the degree of dangerousness of the destination, and the easiness of entering these places or territories. Interviews with eight experienced travellers allowed for a discussion and weight adjustment of these same variables, in order to construct a composite index.

Keywords

Collections; counting; travelling index; travels

Colecionar países e territórios: uma proposta de contabilização de lugares visitados

Resumo

Colecionar é uma curiosa atividade humana, que consiste na reunião e guarda de objetos selecionados. Tem inúmeros formatos e caraterísticas. A coleção de lugares, isto é, a coleção da visita a esses mesmos lugares não é uma prática recente, mas no contexto da mobilidade das sociedades contemporâneas e da sociedade em rede e de consumo, tem adquirido uma importância grande. Ainda que possa não ser a principal motivação da viagem, e que possa ser mais ou menos inconsciente, a coleção de lugares e em consequência, a contabilização das viagens, é um ato social, que à semelhança de outras coleções existe para ser partilhada, comparada e mostrada. Este artigo debruça-se sobre esta prática, que está intimamente ligada às viagens e ao turismo. Por um lado, analisa uma questão central da coleção de lugares e territórios, que é a definição da coleção, isto é, quais os seus limites, e quais os seus 'objetos'. Esta discussão permite refletir sobre a forma como dividimos o mundo, nomeadamente no contexto da contabilização de viagens. Por outro lado, propõe-se aqui uma forma de contabilizar lugares ou territórios visitados que não atende unicamente ao facto de se ter estado num determinado lugar ou território, mas que inclui também outras variáveis como o tempo de permanência, as distâncias-tempo dos destinos, a perigosidade dos mesmos e a maior ou menor facilidade em entrar nesses territórios. Entrevistas a oito viajantes com grande experiência permitiram discutir e ajustar as ponderações destas mesmas variáveis, por forma a construir um índice compósito.

Are you a serious traveller? Where have you been? Where do you stand? Where have you stood? Where are you now? (...) Share them with your friends. Let's Go! Join us on the Road to everywhere. (MTP 2015)

INTRODUCTION

Collecting is an active, voluntary, selective and emotional process of gathering and possessing objects or experiences, away from their everyday life (Pearce, 1992). It implies a certain passion, often a detailed knowledge of the collections themselves, and awareness of cataloguing and archiving processes. Belk (2006) argues that collecting is an essentially anti-materialist activity, because when an object enters a collection it ceases to be a fungible commodity, that is, it becomes a singular object that is no longer available to be exchanged for another value. Belk (2006) adds that the object value lies precisely in the contribution it makes to the collection as a whole.

A substantial part of object collection does not imply significant mobility on the part of the collectors, although there may be a mobility of the collected objects. Often collections are built regularly, and may imply, depending on the degree of involvement of the collectors, the participation in national or international meetings to display, exchange, purchases and sell objects. Despite being objects with diverse origins, collections of coins and stamps in particular, do not generally presuppose trips to the places of origin. There are, however, collections of objects (or collectors of certain objects), which are often built through travel, such as the collection of sand from different beaches, refrigerator magnets, wooden masks, and so on. These objects, associated with the places and contexts in which they are acquired, may in different ways acquire particular meanings for those who collect them and grow into part of travel narratives.

This article looks at the collections that are made with the places, countries or territories that are visited, that is, collections built through the physical presence of the collector in these same places. As Timothy (1998, p. 126) points out, collecting places refers to "a process where visited locations are enumerated, and there is a desire to visit more places for reasons of competition". Places may be countries, but may be more specific, such as several geodesic lines (Timothy, 1998), places of human heritage (King & Prideaux, 2010) or border landmarks. They can also be experiences, such as festivals and concerts, football championships, Formula One prizes, etc. In a sense these are immaterial collections, which do not imply bringing the places home, or collecting objects. They may imply the proof of having been there, through passport stamps, photographs, or even the collection of objects. One of the antecedents of this evidences, fallen into disuse, is undoubtedly the picture postcard, which had the function among others things, of transmitting to someone the idea of "I was here" (Urry & Crashaw, 2002). Throughout

this article we have chosen to use the concepts of place and territory. Even at the risk of some simplification, the first refers to a relationship of some subjectivity between the traveller and space, and may refer to variable scales, from a beach or a café to a country. The second is more related to the delimitation and political identification of spaces, as it is the case of the definition of states, and their recognition by the United Nations[1]. Location is not used here, as it somehow refers to a precise place, evoking geographical accurate latitudes and longitudes, which do not fit the discussion that is made here.

Collecting places is thus a specific type of collection because it implies a mobility of the collector that is not common to many other collections. At the same time, because there is a socially accepted idea that having been in one place adds knowledge about the world (Timothy, 1998), collecting places offers credibility and prestige to those who collect them[2]. Often, by collecting places, collectors who may to a certain extent be considered travellers, satisfy self-esteem needs, and seek the admiration and recognition of neighbours, friends, family, and their travelling peers. Collecting in this sense is related to people for whom one travel motivation is to add a particular activity, place or destination to a portfolio. These people collect aspects of a generally larger tourist experience. This has long been well recognized by tour operators and travel agencies, who design routes to collect certain destinations and places (King & Prideaux, 2010).

Like most collections, collecting places implies the enumeration of these same places, that is, knowing the limits of the collection that is being built. Visiting the whole world, in the exact meaning of the term, would imply having been corporeally in all its parts, which is humanly impossible. Thus, partitioning the world into parts larger than the human body – notably divisions at the State scale – gives us an idea of the collection we are dealing with. While this partition making process is complex and time-consuming, it has a long history, and over time, various institutions and agencies have played an important role in the various types of accreditation that these partitions can have. At the same time, although counting countries or territories is an individual matter, it is mainly a process that acquires meaning when shared with other people, especially with other people who are involved in the same type of collection (Pearce, 1992). This is amplified nowadays by the possibilities which social media opens up. In this way, the creation of restricted access clubs in which members, usually of the urban elites of the more developed countries, discussed, presented and shared their travel experiences is an old pastime. Furthermore, collecting, independently of the collection, was, in pre-consumer societies, a "high culture" activity.

In our era of mobility (Sheller & Urry, 2006), when traveling is so easy for a significant part of the population, defining what an experienced traveller is, is a complex

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[1] See Cresswell (2014) and Elden (2010) for a detailed discussion on the genealogy of the concepts of place and territory.

[2] This is not a consensual idea however, and there are several writers and thinkers who have written notably about distant places without leaving their desks or their homes: Henry Thoreau, turned never leaving the United States into a virtue; the poet Emily Dickinson, considered that "to shut your eyes is to travel"; one of the main works of Xavier de Maistre, a nineteenth century French writer is entitled *Voyage around my room*, and *Nocturnal expedition around my room* (see Theroux, 2012).

exercise[3]. There are many perspectives on how to approach this issue: countries which have been visited, stamps on the passport, time needed to pack, objects taken on a trip, problems during the trip, time spent at each destination, visits to dangerous destinations, etc. Jorge Sánchez, an experienced contemporary traveller, makes an interesting analysis of this issue which is available on his website. It includes net travel time as a fundamental factor: from zero to 10 years, tourist; from 10 to 20 years, traveller; more than 20 years, connoisseur (Sánchez, 2018).

This article intends to analyse the counting process while accounting for travel as part of a collection process. After reviewing the importance of travel clubs that were created mainly from the nineteenth century – places where elites presented and discussed explorations and exotic locations – the dynamics and methodologies of territory accounting by various agencies are analysed. This is followed by the presentation of a proposal for a partition of territories at a global scale, and by a proposal of a way of counting visited places which takes into account the number of territories visited, the length of time spent there, the distances travelled, the dangerousness of destinations, and the degree of difficulty in accessing those same territories. More than arriving at an almost magic formula, the paper intends to promote the discussion around travel as collection and examine some contradictions and complexities inherent in this process. This discussion is made with the collaboration of a group of eight experienced travellers, who are different from each other, and who were selected by convenience. They were interviewed about the importance of the adopted criteria.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES: NARRATING AND COUNTING TRAVELS

People have always narrated in some way the trips they have undertaken. Ancient records of extraordinary travellers include the journeys of Herodotus, St Paul, Xuanzang, Ibn Battuta, or Marco Polo (Gosh & Stearns, 2008). From the sixteenth century, innovations in shipbuildng and naval technology have contributed profoundly to the explosion of voyages and maritime trade between Europe and the rest of the world, and with these came a transformation of the perceptions of the world (Livingstone, 1992). Modern science, the Enlightenment, the interest in travel, the exploration of the world (Heffernan, 2003), brought numerous facts, discoveries and narratives about distant places that fascinated large audiences, especially urban audiences. The effusive reception of Alexander von Humboldt in Berlin, Paris, or London on the return of his travels, reveals the enormous public interest in these narratives (Wulf, 2016).

At the end of the eighteenth century, exploratory enthusiasm was no longer merely an enterprise dependent on individual resources, but mainly focused on new institutional structures, whether state-owned or not, dedicated to financing exploration and geographic discovery (Heffernan, 2003). The new impetus that the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars brought to the sciences of cartography and topography led to

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[3] It is worth noting however that a large part of the world population has never travelled. Only one in ten Chinese (total population of about 1,4 billion people) holds a passport, and this number is around 56% in the US.

the formation of several geographical societies in the main European cities (Paris, 1821; Berlin, 1828; London, 1830) and world cities (Mexico, 1833; Brazil, 1838). These societies joined other existing scientific societies in the areas of natural history and botany, for example. They all promoted exploration and travel, providing financial and material resources, and publishing and disseminating discoveries and narratives from distant places. In various ways they were deeply implicated in imperial projects.

As Livingstone (1991) points out, the Royal Geographical Society resulted from the growth of the African Association and the Raleigh Club. The latter was a travellers' dining club, founded in 1827, which resulted from an earlier club aptly named The Travelers Club, formed in 1819. The Travelers Club aimed at "gentlemen who have travelled out of the British Isles to a distance of at least five hundred miles from London in a direct line"[4]. This type of almost exclusively male clubs, had a specific social function, establishing an articulation with scientific advances, serving for the discussion of trips and exotic places among the elites, and feeding a voracious audience of explorations, myths, and adventures. For its members, the club had established "the tradition of dining on specialties from whichever part of the world the host had been traveling in: accordingly, diners on one occasion consumed reindeer from Spitzbergen, rye-cake from North Cape, crystallized berries from Lapland – all washed down by jars of Swedish brandy" (Livingstone, 1991, p. 166). The heart of Africa, the Arctic, the Australian Outback, Everest and Antarctica, among others, occupied societies and clubs until the twentieth century.

Naturally, everything changed, both with the development of tourism itself, and mass tourism in particular, which has led millions of people to travel to places that were very remote in the late nineteenth century and during much of the twentieth century, and with the different forms of images and knowledge diffusion, particularly with photography in the late nineteenth century, cinema from the beginning of the twentieth century, television after the second great war (Beeton, 2005) and much most recently with the Internet and social media (Jansson, 2017).

Nowadays there are several organizations that divide the world into parts (countries and territories) for various purposes. Some of the oldest clubs still exist, such as The Travelers Club (see above) or Travellers' Century Club (TCC), founded in 1954. Its entry requirement is to have visited at least one hundred countries, nowadays territories, of which they recognise 324. Serving as the basis for many of the world's divisions, the United Nations recognizes 193 Member States, with have an equal representation in the United Nations Assembly. The State of Palestine and the Vatican are non-permanent permanent observer states, and States such as the Republic of Abkhazia, Kosovo, South Ossetia or the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, among others, although recognized by at least one Member State of the United Nations, are not recognized by this organization.

The desire to travel and to be recognized as a great traveller is present in some of these clubs and organizations and in the construction of an imagined community (Anderson, 2006). TCC members who have travelled through all 324 territories that the club recognises receive a crystal globe as recognition of their achievements. To date, 15

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[4] Retrieved from de www.thetravellersclub.org.uk

members have completed this collection. Recognition, prestige, or even fame is central in the course of Charles Veley, an American traveller. In 2000, he headed to the offices of Guinness World Records in London, with his passports, photographs and other evidence of having visited several territories, with the purpose of obtaining the title of "the most travelled man in the world". The reaction of the president of the TCC was that it would be impossible to certify Veley's claims because the club operates under a trust system and there is no way to confirm the truth of his allegations. As a result, Guinness World Records has decided not to award the most travelled person recognition in the world. For his part, Veley created the Most Travelled People (MTP) platform in 2005, which, through the participation of its members, proposes and discusses partitions and currently divides the globe into 874 territories (July 2018). The MTP intended "to create a community and standards for extreme travellers". Despite having dropped the recognition of the world's most travelled person, the Guinness World Records awards a number of recognition awards to travellers, such as the one awarded in 2017 to Cassie de Pecol, an American who visited 196 countries in less than two years, reducing in more than a year the time that his predecessor had needed. Some of these platforms allow to count a number of specific places and not just the territories discussed here. These range from capital cities, Unesco World Heritage sites, Michelin Star Restaurants, beaches, borders, etc.

WORLD DIVISION OF THE LIMITS OF THE COLLECTION

> British brand launches the Cork Globe, a globe of cork where it is possible to mark, with a drawing pin, the places already travelled. (*Público*, February 3, 2014)

Possibly, the simplest level of hierarchizing of a person's travel level can be achieved through the number of countries already visited. Starting from the 193 countries recognized by the United Nations, it is only necessary to indicate those where one has already been. But such addition does not tell us much about such visits, that is, whether they were many, for a long or short period of time, and which places within those same countries one has been. Moreover, it does not distinguish between a visit to a country with more than 17 million square kilometres such as Russia, and one to a country the size of Liechtenstein, roughly equal to that of the municipality of Guimarães (Portugal). By following this methodology each visited country has the same weight (and only once). Thus, starting from the same 193 countries, we propose to create more homogeneous divisions, always valuing the stay in different political-administrative territories. In some cases, this methodology does not differ much from that followed by some platforms already indicated (see Table 1). Yet, it was decided not to divide countries with an already reduced area, such as dividing Switzerland's 26 cantons into 26 territories, or Germany's 16 constituent states into 18 territories (which is done by the MTP or by The Best Travelled (TBT). The decision was to identify the median area of the 193 countries – between 120.000 and 130.000 km² – and to prevent that territories under 200.000 km² would be divided, in order not to obtain smaller areas than this median. When a territorial/

geographical discontinuity exists (continental Portugal, Azores and Madeira for example), these divisions are adopted. When the population density is very low (less than 40 inhabitants per km²), no territories are divided, even if they have an area of more than 200,000 km². Some examples are Greenland, the State of Amazonas in Brazil, or Australia. Thus, 838 territories were recognised, which were mapped and integrated in a Geographic Information System (Figure 1).

Organization	Start	Members (July 2018)	Countries and Territories
United Nations	1945		193 (2018)
Guinness World Records	1954		249 (2003)
Travelers' Century Club (TCC)	1954	+1400	324 (2018)
Most Traveled People (MTP)	2005	18265	874 (2018)
The Best Travelled (TBT)		19891	1281
Greteast Globetrotters	2011	477	1461 (points)
Shea International Standards Organizations (SISO)[5]			3.978
Our proposal			838

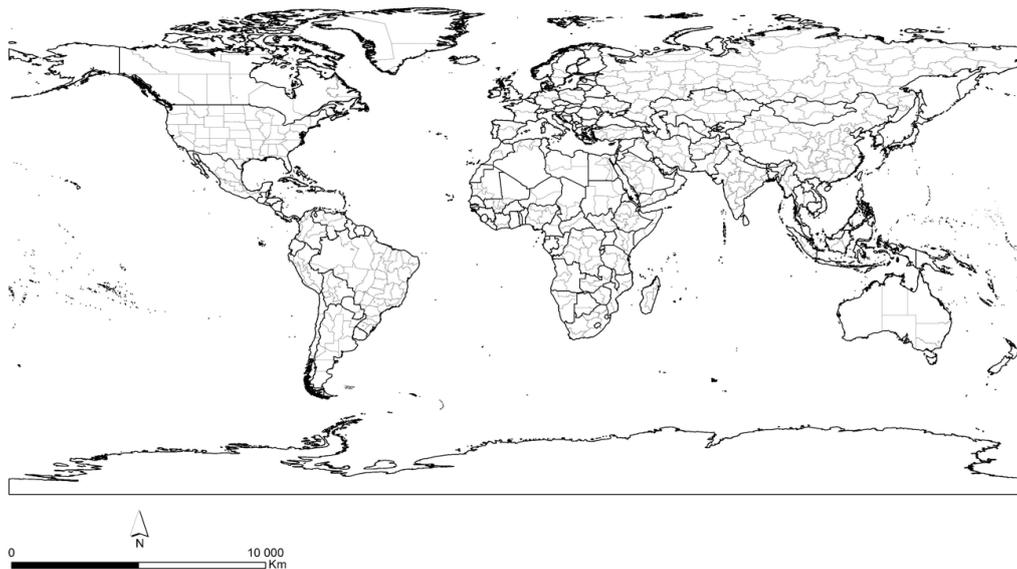Tabela 1: Selection of organizations that divide the world in territories[5]

Figure 1: World divisions

Travel counting

Although the territorial division proposed here seeks to create territorial units that are somehow more homogeneous than those presented by other platforms (within a

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[5] Part of the 2003 version of 'Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions – Part 2: Country subdivision code' – ISSO 3166-2, which includes 3931 territories.

context of pre-existing political-administrative diversity), some divisions are open to discussion and revision. Still, as already mentioned, having visited a territory (1 for yes and 0 for no), nothing is known about the characteristics of the visits themselves. Thus, it was decided to introduce some variables that are not used in the existing forms of counting travels (Figure 2). The first three relate to a quantification of each of these visits and the other three to a qualification of those destinations in relation to a particular origin:

b = The number of visits to each of the 838 territories;
x = The total number of nights spent in each of the territories;
y = The number of consecutive days spent in each of the territories;
z = The distance in time from the origin to each of the territories;
w = The dangerousness of each destination;
k = The degree of difficulty in getting permission to enter each territory.

The first three variables are indicated by travellers. The last three can be calculated in advance. The proposed travel index assumes that the number of times a territory is visited may be related to an increase of knowledge and experience and should be taken into account (Figure 3). This approach attempts to value travellers who repeat destinations, who return to a particular territory, perhaps to see places they do not know, and intends to counteract the idea that the experienced traveller is one who has travelled to many countries (or territories in this case), even if only once and often for a short period of time. Therefore, the number of visits to a territory is multiplied by 10%, which is added to the number (one) obtained by visiting that same territory (visiting France seven times results in a total of 1.7). At the same time, the total number of nights in a given territory is valued. No doubt it is not the same to visit Belgium three times, for periods of two days, or to visit the same three times, but for periods of a month each time. Five classes were created for the total number of nights in a given territory, which resulted in bonuses. Destinations where one stays less than 30 days do not make up any bonuses. Of course, we realize that the time of permanence at a destination is not directly proportional to the interaction and experience that may exist, since there are innumerable contexts and variables that may influence this aspect. In her autobiography *Under my skin*, Doris Lessing (1994, p. 138) explained this relationship, by writing "you may live in a place for months, even years, and it does not touch you, but a weekend or a night in another, and you feel as if your whole being has been sprayed with an equivalent of a cosmic wind". Still, longer staying times open interaction opportunities, and these have been considered as contributing to the travellers' experience. A traveller who stays in a territory for three or six months will have to adapt the stay to a lifestyle that is less like a tourist and will have different interaction opportunities that are valued here. In this way, five classes have been created for the total of consecutive days in a territory, which result in bonuses.

As mentioned, three criteria were calculated previously and are independent of the travellers' profile. Two limitations relate to the fact that the used origin of the trip is anchored to the city of Porto, Portugal, and that it was assumed that the travellers' passport

is Portuguese. Thus, the distance in time from origin to destination was calculated from Porto for each of the 838 territories, using the website www.rometorio.com, which allows a simulation of the number of hours of travel (Figure 2). Naturally we are dealing with a dynamic system and the travel times, especially when it comes to flights and air links, refer to particular moments in time, and can vary significantly with the time of year, the day of the week, and other variables. In any case, it is assumed that the friction of time distance influences the difficulty of the trip and therefore should be taken into account. It is not the same for a traveller living in Portugal to visit a part of mainland Spain or one of the islands of New Zealand. Also, it is not the same to travel to a destination which is 2.000 kilometres away, such as Germany, or to travel to a similarly distanced country such as Algeria. Thus, seven classes of time were created, to which several bonuses are attributed.
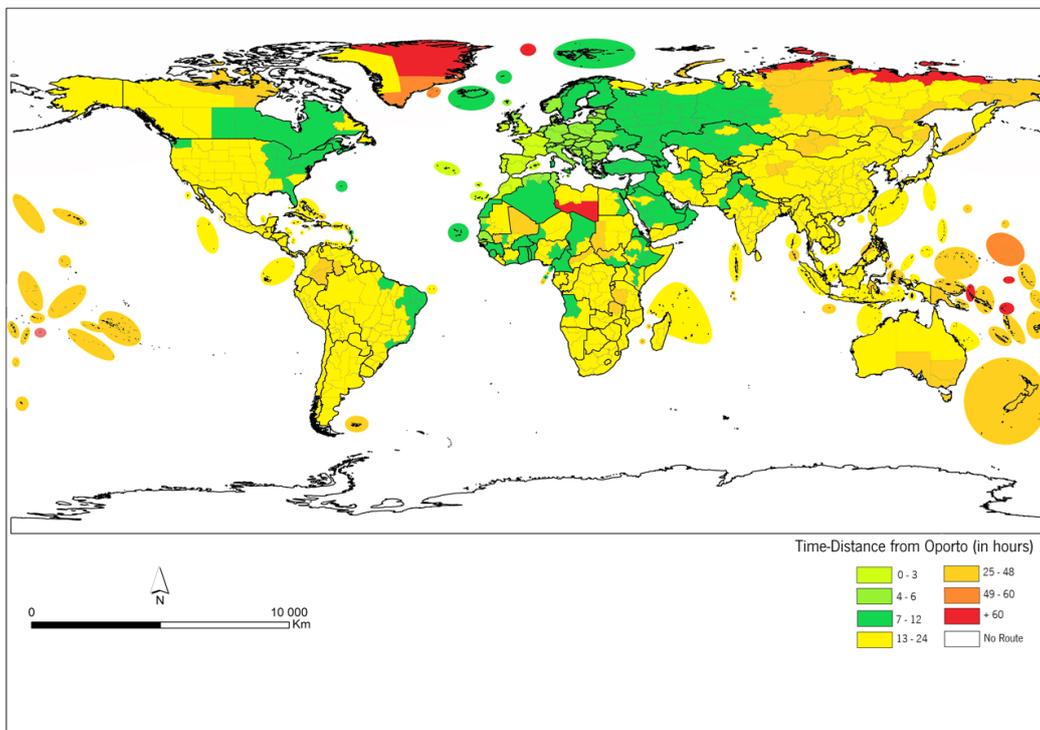

Figure 2: Simulation of time-distances with an origin in Porto airport, Portugal

Another aspect that has been taken into account is the dangerousness of the destination, and bonuses are given to destinations indicated as being more insecure, which are considered to imply a greater degree of difficulty in traveling. For this purpose, the Global Peace Index of 2017 of the Institute of Economy and Peace was used. Bonuses were given to the three higher categories of the scale: from 1, more peaceful, to 5, less peaceful. Finally, the difficulty in obtaining authorization to visit these territories was assessed, assuming that the traveller has a Portuguese passport. Thus, a) no bonus is given to destinations where no passport or any type of visa is required (all of the European Union for example). Bonuses are given to those destinations which b) only a passport is

required (Ukraine or Brazil, for example); c) visa is required upon arrival (e.g., Kenya or Vietnam); d) visa is required and it should be obtained at corresponding the embassy/consulate in Portugal (Russia or India, for example); e) visa is required but it has to be obtained in an embassy/consulate abroad or through a travel agency (e.g., Myanmar); f) visa is required but travel must be within a group and through a travel agency (e.g., North Korea and Bhutan). This information was gathered in the Portal of Portuguese Communities, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in March 2018, and it is subject to permanent updates.

$$I = \sum_{i=1}^{838} \left[\left(a_i (1 + 0,1 * b_i + x_i + y_i + z_i + w_i + k_i) \right) \right]$$

In which:

$$a_i = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if} \quad \text{did not go to territory} i \\ 1 & \text{if} \quad \text{went to territory} i \end{cases} \qquad b_i = \text{number of time in territory } i$$

$$x_i = \begin{cases} 0 & <30 \\ 0,5 & 30\text{-}90 \\ 2 & \text{if} \quad 91\text{-}180 \quad Days \\ 4 & 181\text{-}360 \\ 5 & >360 \end{cases} \qquad y_i = \begin{cases} 0 & <30 \\ 1 & 30\text{-}90 \\ 3 & \text{if} \quad 91\text{-}180 \quad \text{consecutive days} \\ 5 & 181\text{-}360 \\ 8 & >360 \end{cases}$$

$$z_i = \begin{cases} 0 & 0\text{-}3 \\ 0,1 & 4\text{-}6 \\ 0,2 & 7\text{-}12 \\ 0,3 & \text{if} \quad 13\text{-}24 \text{ hours} \\ 0,5 & 25\text{-}48 \\ 0,7 & 49\text{-}60 \\ 1 & +60 \end{cases} \qquad w_i = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{Low or very low} \\ 0,1 & \text{if} \quad \text{Average} \\ 0,3 & \text{High} \\ 0,5 & \text{Very high} \end{cases}$$

$$k_i = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{ID only} \\ 0,1 & \text{Passport only} \\ 0,2 & \text{if} \quad \text{Visa when entering} \\ 0,5 & \text{Visa in Consulate in Portugal} \\ 0,7 & \text{Visa in Consulate abroad ou through travel agency} \\ 0,8 & \text{Visa within travel group} \end{cases}$$

Figure 3: Index of visited territories

Thus, a formula was constructed which allows for the valorisation of these variables, which have been calibrated successively so that the effect of the bonuses is as accurate as possible. A panel of eight experienced travellers who make travels in very different contexts helped to calibrate the above-mentioned bonuses (Table 2). The interviews (face-to-face, by phone or email/Facebook) served to understand and discuss how these travellers count (or not) their travels, how they make up a collection, and the importance of the criteria as defined by us. In descending order of importance in the sum that each traveller assigned to the six criteria (from 1, minimum, to 5, maximum), the number of visited territories, the number of visits to those same territories, the total duration of visits, the distance to these territories, the difficulty of entering the territories, and finally, the dangerousness of these places.

Alias	Number of territories	Number of visits	Total number of nights/days	Distance	Visas	Dangerousness
Manuel	5	5	4	1	3	1
Rita	3	3	3	2	2	2
Maria	5	4	4	4	2	1
Mariana	3	3	2	1	3	4
Teresa	4	1	4	4	1	4
João	4	2	3	5	1	-
António	5	5	5	5	5	5
José	2	4	2	1	3	2
Total	31	27	27	23	20	19

Table 2: The importance of variables in the view of the interviewed travellers

Almost all of these travellers count their travels, even if this is not central or has a critical importance in the decision of travelling. João, an architect who works in a city hall, is perhaps the most organized traveller, and says that he counts all his trips. He says that

> before travelling and taking into account the type of trips that I do, I always produce a preparation dossier and study the territory that I will go through. There, in a way, the places that I will go through are kept. Then, as I always carry travel books, I draw as I travel. Now I do not mark on a map the places I've been like many people. The trips and places are all inside me ... I do not feel the need to expose them in this way ... on a map.

The map as a form of representation of the places where travellers have been is common to three of the eight travellers. Rita, who works for the United Nations in Africa, says "I have a map where the format of the country I visited has a picture of me taken there. The map was made by me". Maria, a prominent foreign ministry official in the European Union, initially did not count the countries she visited, and only listed them on her cell phone. But she decided to begin to mark on a map all the countries she visited

when they began to be numerous. Finally, António, an independent backpacker, counts the countries in a very simple way, through a map, colouring the visited countries.

Teresa, a university professor, like José, a professional traveller who works for an alternative travel agency, and Manuel, a traveller who does religious and military missions, especially in Africa, says that she only counts the countries mentally. José argues that he does not habitually count his trips, since he knows by heart which they are, and says he does not attach great importance to the number of territories visited, since he values other types of totalling. In his words: "I mark, more than places, experiences that I passed and people I met: Pachu in Norway, Pal in India, Sahar in Iran, and Jasmine in Armenia!" This is a very different perspective from the one adopted in this paper, but equally interesting, indicating the variety of ways people register and are marked by travel. Manuel is making several collections of objects from different countries, such as cups, plates, stamps, coins, etc. His accounting, although it may not be very precise, is made through these collections, which is also a narrative of his travels. Similarly, Mariana, a fashion and clothing businesswoman, does not count her travels either, but collects magnets that refer to the visited cities/countries, which indicate and record these places. At home, refrigerator magnets are banal souvenirs, but they are also a mark and a symbol of a contemporary status of mobility (Peters, 2011). Rita collects everything she can, "from newspapers, information about the country (tourist and political), books of the country, maps and postcards. On the last day of the trip she always sends a postcard to herself, registering what she feels for that country". Maria says that when she travels, she always likes to bring a souvenir, even if it is symbolic and worthless, depending on the site in question. Since she is very fond of art, she always seeks to bring objects related to the subject, namely paintings. João, in addition to his dossier and drawings, collects other objects such as subway or plane tickets, which then serve as book markers that he takes for travel or which he purchases during the trip. He also holds water from the great Venice channel and sand of Wadi Rum (Jordan), but confesses that his favourite objects are the drawings he makes during his travels.

José and António, in part because they often travel by bicycle or backpack, have a different relationship with objects, due the volume and weight they imply. The former says that whenever possible, he brings hats from various countries, pieces of posters that rips from walls, postcards or papers of people who write to him. The latter states that he collects something far more important to him: "stories and experiences in each country. A lot of them, very funny stories because it is a completely different habitat from ours". Finally, Teresa says that she buys increasingly less in her travels, claiming that the tendency is to move away from material goods.

Naturally, the differentiated characteristics of travellers explain these internal differences in results. José undervalues the distance travelled to reach a destination, because in fact this depends a lot on the modes of transportation used. He, who often travels by bicycle, simply says that getting to New Zealand by plane is much simpler and faster than going to the Pyrenees by bicycle. Mariana, due to the high number of travels she makes, became a little immune to this fact, not valuing it, and affirming that distances are an

integral part of what the journey is about, giving more importance to the dangerousness of a destination. On the contrary, Manuel, Rita and Maria, who travel in the context of organized missions, do not value the dangerousness of destinations like other travellers, since their travels are encircled in specific safety contexts. Visas, they explain, are also not a constraint, because it is not their responsibility to deal with this practical issue. What these experiences tell us is that the diversity of travellers is reflected in the also very different appreciations of travel. The index we propose here is not the most suitable for those who travel by bicycle, who travel in the context of professional missions, or other particular types of trips. The index aims above all to stimulate the discussion around what is to travel.

Conclusion

This paper intends to discuss travel as a collection. In the context of collections as social practices and based on the existing ways of counting travels which various organisms and platforms have built, an index was proposed that includes variables that seem important to us, but which are usually discarded: the number of visits to a territory and the length of stay, and some characteristics of the same territory. Other variables were considered but not included in the index because they raised complexities of operation: the linguistic and cultural distance between origin and destination was mentioned in our discussions, as well as learning one or more languages because of travel. Both can enrich the index.

Ideally, a mobile application could be devised to allow travellers to simply and independently enter their data. Dynamic links to databases would make it possible to calculate time distances instantaneously at different times, and especially to consider origins other than Oporto, as was done here. At the same time calculations could be made with different passports, connecting to databases with this type of information. The variables dangerousness and difficulty of entering a territory, which are associated with the present time and not the date of the visit to that territory, could also be calculated with more precision, acquiring an increased interest in the calculation of the index proposed here.

Many travellers mark places they visit in different ways: collecting objects, telling stories of their travels, using pins on maps, sharing photos on blogs and social networks, and so on. There are also travellers who choose to make these sums on platforms, which allow for fairly simple calculations of the visited places. The work presented here reflects on these ways of counting and proposing a more complete or complex method, which serves above all to discuss the theme of travel, and not to crystallize a blind formula or index. In addition to these contributions, the work promoted the discussion of the territorial division of the world, with its geographical, political and social implications, which far exceed the question of tourism and travel.

Translation: João Sarmento and Patrícia Lopes

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