



Image:  
Cayari

# The digital bow

Empowering initiatives of indigenous  
community-based tourism



TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT  
DISSERTATION

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# The digital bow:

## Empowering initiatives of indigenous community-based tourism

Master Dissertation

I hereby declare that this research is wholly the work of Anna Maria Freitag. Any other contributors or sources have either been referenced in the prescribed manner or are listed in the acknowledgements together with the nature and the scope of their contribution.

Anna Maria Freitag

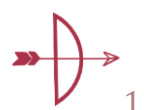
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Master Program MA Tourism Destination Management

August, 2020



## Preface

I am very happy to receive the opportunity to conduct a research, that is of high personal importance to me. I am grateful to have met amazing people on the way, who dedicate their lives to the indigenous fight. Herewith, I would like to thank those whose contributions enriched this work on different levels.

This project could not be completed without the guidance of my supervisor Celiane Camargo-Borges, who connected me with wonderful people and constantly inspired me to think forward. Every time I had doubts about my research, you steered me towards the right direction.

Furthermore, I would like to thank all indigenous Brazilian communicators for introducing me to an extraordinary universe. Especial gratitude is dedicated to Tukumã, Raoni, Brenno, Cayari, Tukano, Carolina, Luiz, Hãngui, and Ubiraci for letting the world take part in your lives through continuously sharing your thoughts and culture with us.

Furthermore, I would like to express gratitude to Marcelo Simão de Vasconcellos for your effort in organising my stay in Brazil, even when the journey did not turn out as planned. Without being able to be physically present, Santiago Bernardes, your welcoming words made me travel to an incredible destination.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of professionals, who provided me with valuable contacts and information: Maria de Lurdes Costa Domingos, Igor de Vetyemy, and Ederon Marques. Your passionate work and experience were essential for the completion of this project.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and friends who always support and encourage me in every step of my education.

I dedicate the present dissertation to all indigenous populations, who commit themselves to respect and protect our earth for future generations.



*“To govern ourselves means to govern our stories and our way of telling stories. It means that the rhythm of the drumbeat, the language of smoke signals and our moccasin telegraph can be transformed to the airwaves and modems of our times. We can determine our use of the new technologies to support, strengthen and enrich our cultural communities”*

*Maskegon-Iskwew, (1994)*



## Executive Summary

The present master dissertation presents a study which investigates, explores and reflects on the potential of online presence strategies for Community-based tourism (CBT) as a way to bring empowerment for indigenous communities. Traditional communities all over the world have experienced oppression and false representations from dominant societies during centuries. Despite recent legislative efforts and private initiatives to improve the indigenous situation, the fight for economic subsistence and visibility is still a prevailing topic. Brazil, a country with a significant number of native ethnicities, is the main destination of this study. The local indigenous groups are currently facing repercussions due to the political situation, economic exploitation of their lands and the Corona pandemic crisis. With these struggles, a movement of looking for innovative tools to contribute to their fight is rising among Brazilian indigenous communities. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have played an important role in this battle of receiving indigenous protagonism.

To investigate this movement, a small scale qualitative research with Brazilian indigenous groups is conducted taking into consideration postcolonial paradigms. Due to travel restrictions, caused by the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), a mix of active and passive online methods is applied. For the main data collection, 10 semi-structured interviews with indigenous and non-indigenous participants are conducted. The resulting information is complemented with text-conversations, social media posts, and webinars. As a result of a thematic analysis, three themes are identified: [1] Community participatory tourism as a powerful tool for self-determination and subsistence; [2] Technological difficulties, debates about modernization and rising resistance through the “digital bow”; [3] The pandemic situation created a space for creativity and confirmed the urgency of digital communication.

First, traditional communities elaborated CBT concepts as an alternative for damaging tourism activities. With these initiatives, several stories of social, political, psychological, cultural and economic empowerment are identified. Second, the empowerment of indigenous communities is further fortified through the evolution of digital technologies. Even though some villages have difficulties in accessing soft- and hardware, as well as human skills, they are taking these new technologies to their advantage intending to overcome the prevailing misperceptions about their culture. The arrow which represents the indigenous fight is tossed through the “digital bow” and the targeted opportunities result to be empowering for traditional communities. Due to the pandemic situation caused by COVID-19, many villages lack in touristic visitors, which is why an increase of these digital activities can be identified, in order to connect with people from around the world.

Throughout the research, similar stories of empowerment are explored between the community-based tourism and digital promotion of indigenous values. Both are used to create a stronger indigenous presence and educate others about their worldviews. The lack of travellers in the villages initiated the digital engagement in order to continue a knowledge exchange with people from a distance. This connection of the destination with “virtual visitors” provides the emergence of a new form of tourism. The virtual tourism brings empowering prospects for CBT initiatives that are prevailing on the long-term. Even when the pandemic situation is over, the locals can still virtually connect with travellers before the actual visit, in order to ensure the engagement of people who have genuine intentions of learning and respecting traditional values.



# Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	8
1.1. Problem Statement.....	9
1.2. Research Goal And Objectives.....	10
2. Contextual Analysis.....	12
2.1. The Struggle Of The Oppressed.....	12
2.2. Brazil's Indigenous People .....	12
2.3. Evolution Of Indigenous Digital Protagonism.....	14
3. Literature Review .....	16
3.1. Indigenous Community-Based Tourism.....	16
3.2. Community Empowerment Through Tourism .....	17
3.3. Digital Presence For Empowering CBT Promotion.....	18
4. Methodology .....	22
4.1. Postcolonial Approach .....	22
4.2. Data Collection .....	22
4.2.1. Research Design.....	22
4.2.2. Sampling.....	23
4.2.3. Interview Design.....	24
4.2.4. Complementary Sources.....	25
4.3. Thematic Analysis And MAXQDA Software.....	25
4.4. Limitations.....	26
5. Findings.....	26
5.1. Community Participatory Tourism As A Powerful Tool Tor Self-determination And Subsistence.....	27
5.2. Technological Difficulties, Debates About Modernization And Rising Resistance Through The “Digital Bow”.....	29
5.3. The Pandemic Situation Created A Space For Creativity And Confirmed The Urgency Of Digital Communication.....	31
6. Discussion .....	33
6.1. Empowering Stories Of Tourism .....	33
6.2. Difficulties And Opportunities Of The “Digital Bow” .....	35
6.3. Digital Channels And Practices.....	36
6.4. The Rise Of A New Form Of Tourism .....	37
7. Conclusion.....	40



8. References.....	42
9. Appendices .....	48
Appendix A .....	48
A 1. List Of Interviews .....	48
A 2. Interview Item List .....	48
A 3. List of Instagram Live Streams .....	49
Appendix B .....	50
B 1. Interview Transcripts.....	50
B 2. Theme Structure.....	60

## Table of Abbreviations

AIATSIS - Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies

APIB - Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil / Brazil's Indigenous People Articulation

CBT - Community-Based Tourism

COVID-19 – Coronavirus disease

FUNAI - Fundação Nacional do Índio / National Indian Foundation

ICT - Information and Communication Technologies

KUMA - Te Kupeka Umaka Maori Ki Araiteuru / Southern Maori Business Network

NGO - Non-governmental Organization

OTSS - Observatório de Territórios Sustentáveis e Saudáveis da Bocaina / Observatory of Sustainable and Healthy Territories

SME - Small and Medium Enterprises

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

WINTA - World Indigenous Tourism Alliance

WSIS - World Summit on the Information Society

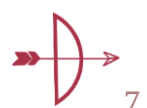


## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Indigenous struggle due to misperceptions.....	10
Figure 2. Distribution of indigenous ethnicities among Brazilian states .....	13
Figure 3. Fields of empowerment.....	18
Figure 4. Research design .....	22
Figure 5. Map of participating communities .....	24
Figure 6. “Fashion show” at the Pataxó anniversary .....	32
Figure 7. Distribution of basic-need packages .....	32
Figure 8. Parallelism between tourism & the "digital bow" .....	38
Figure 9. Handmade raffle winnings .....	39

## Table of Tables

Table 1. Sources of data collection .....	25
Table 2. Interviews .....	48
Table 3. Instagram Live Streams.....	49
Table 4. Composition of themes .....	60





## 1. Introduction

With the dominance of economic and political power and increasing inequality in the world, marginalized groups, such as indigenous people, have suffered from the threat of displacement of their lands (Scherrer & Doohan, 2013). This contributed to a disturbance of social recognition, deterioration of cultural assets and destruction of the natural habitat. In Brazil, there are still around 900 thousand indigenous people who have been facing these situations up until today. Strong political statements, globalisation and the most recent health threat due to COVID-19 have increased their vulnerable position (Darlington, 2020). Used to be struggling for their rights and recognition, many have succumbed while others managed to find new and innovative ways that could support their fight (Aguilar, 2018). Many have implemented tourism practices as a way to generate economic income and global recognition. As the digital presence within the travel industry contributes to interconnectivity and broad access to information about destinations and experiences, it became an appealing tool to obtain more visibility. Consequently, indigenous groups are increasingly using these new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to their favour communicating about their culture, political situations and the promotion of touristic activities (Aguilar, 2018). The present master thesis profiles a research that deals with this development through investigating and exploring how the presence in a digital environment can promote a Community-Based Tourism (CBT) that contributes to the empowerment of indigenous communities.

Recent trends in the tourism industry show the desire of tourists to receive deeper and authentic experiences while participating in activities of communities that differ from the visitor's own culture (Santana Talavera, 2003). The implementation of such CBT is widely debated, as traditional communities are likely to face new forms of colonization by the hands of tour operators and other private investors (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2017). Due to economic gains, the demands of the visitors are often put forward, which has caused disrespect regarding indigenous values in the past (Bojórquez-Vargas, Zizumbo-Villarreal, Pérez-Ramírez & Márquez-Rosano, 2018). It is therefore necessary to implement practices, which empower the communities through participation and decision-making and modern technologies could be helpful tools within this process.

As travelling has become more conscious, it also increased the online search for detailed information about touristic practices (Di Castri, Sheldon, Contin, Boniface & Balaji, 2002). For traditional communities, these online promotion tools can be converted into powerful opportunities to demonstrate their ideologies and activities (Davison, Harris & Vogel, 2005). History has shown that indigenous groups were pioneers in documenting their ideologies into communication tools in order to preserve them for future generations starting with pictorial calendars and symbols on clothing or handcrafts (Winter & Boudreau, 2018). However, little of this documentation reached a broad audience, as it was overshadowed by history books written by non-native authors, explaining the indigenous past (Resta, Christal & Roy, 2004). Up until today, traditional communities face the threat of external parties representing their culture, sometimes in falsely and undesired manners. Thereupon, a certain unawareness about indigenous cultures is not uncommon.

Especially in Brazil, the fact that the indigenous culture represents the original country is often not recognized and they struggle to find a representative place among today's society (Ferreira, 2015). Through an online presence indigenous communities can and are engaging with people

from all over the world, spreading awareness about their existence and current situations (Aguilar, 2018). Within the recent past, indigenous people managed to create strong bonds with the audience building fortifying networks. However, indigenous peoples nowadays are very diverse and there are groups that have adapted more towards modern technologies than others, who maintain a stronger connection to a traditional lifestyle (Carr, 2020).

As this project entails a qualitative study about traditional communities it is important to explicit the researcher's standpoint. The investigator is not from an indigenous heritage, but of white European descendant. However, her passion for Brazil, including its people and heritage triggered the interest of understanding indigenous cultures. Within the past, Eurocentric perspectives have been seen as the universal ones, undermining other worldviews (Apaydin, 2018). However, as an activist searching for alternative ways of thinking and sustainable solutions for our world, the researcher pays special attention to positioning herself in an open-minded standpoint. Therefore, this research aims not to talk for indigenous people, but to learn and to spread awareness of the importance to listen to them.

The preservation and distribution of indigenous knowledge are of high importance, not only to maintain a cultural diversity but also to pass on fundamental ancient knowledge. Being protectors of the nature, native people can play a significant role in the creation of an environmental balance (ABIP, 2019). The pandemic situation due to Coronavirus at the beginning of 2020 set the world into an exceptional situation, which will potentially bring many changes to business operations operate. Researchers often speak about the "new normal", which requires new ways of thinking and reconsideration of touristic practices in order to reduce the negative effects towards the environment (Carr, 2020). Indigenous knowledge, which focuses on sustainable and environmental-friendly developments, can therefore be crucial for post-COVID management approaches (Carr, 2020). Within the evolution of the "new normal", the pandemic situation brought innovative movements to the surface that recreate the indigenous fight for recognition, while using a "digital bow" as a powerful tool.

### 1.1. Problem Statement

In the past, indigenous people have been broadly represented in stories of conquests, in folk festivities, public media such as television, audios, and computer games (Winter & Boudreau, 2018). However, these representations often stood in relation to Western perspectives where indigenous were always "the other", having little influence on how they were projected. This imperialism rejected the "conquered" people from writing stories of historical occurrences from their perspective (Resta, et al., 2004). Consequently, the representations lead to misunderstandings of how indigenous people live. The perceptions last up until today, having severe consequences on decisions which affect their daily lives (Lima, n.d.).

The world's economic developments locate governments and influential companies into favourable positions by having a growing decision-power over common resources. Natural areas, such as rainforests, are increasingly being reduced for activities that bring economical profit and indigenous people are forced to leave their homes (APIB, 2019). The lack of consideration is also present within the tourism industry. Insufficient rights for territory demarcation and education, hamper the communities to take ownership and control over the touristic activities within the areas. Furthermore, non-indigenous companies who sell products within traditional territories with little thought can contribute to an invasion of indigenous' privacy, false representation and

degradation of sacred items (Sharma & Carson, 2002). Consequently, the prevailing misperceptions about indigenous peoples have severe outcomes, which eventually lead to the loss of natural resources and important cultural knowledge (figure 1).



Figure 1: Indigenous struggle due to misperceptions (APIB, 2019; Sharma & Carson, 2002)

According to UNESCO (2013), “indigenous and traditional knowledge is fundamental in building pathways to develop innovative processes and strategies for locally-appropriate sustainable development.” (p. 2). Hence, the indigenous heritage is relevant for organic and respectful practices through the rich knowledge about the contact with the earth (APIB, 2019). The balance of the global climate system depends highly on the ecosystem of rainforests and the indigenous knowledge of nature preservation. Therefore, the attention towards indigenous cultures is a concern for everybody as it can have a significant impact on the current struggle of climate change.

Representing their own stories through a “digital bow” can provide a chance for indigenous people to change the perceptions towards a preferable image, as well as to become protagonists in the tourism industry. Through digital strategies, a wider public, as well as a market for CBT can be reached. Brazil is a country with a substantial amount of indigenous communities and for this reason, a study of Brazilian indigenous communities is useful to understand a complex issue within a real-world setting. The examinations of this research can be immediately be put in practice by the communities, in order to react quickly to external circumstances. Due to limited physical contact possibilities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic situation, people of easier digital access are investigated. However, this thesis can still be used for further research, in order to help other vulnerable communities, which are threatened by political and economic oppression.

## 1.2. Research Goal And Objectives

The main goal of this research is to investigate, explore and critically reflect on the potential of online presence strategies for community-based tourism as a way to bring empowerment for indigenous communities. Touristic and digital practices of Brazilian native communities are investigated in order to discuss the main research questions:

How can the presence in a digital environment promote a community-based tourism that contributes to empowerment of indigenous communities?

This general research goal aims at two specific objectives: to [A] highlight empowering initiatives of indigenous community-based tourism and to [B] explore the relationship between empowering tourism and the potential of online presence for traditional communities.

To reach the research goal, the following questions need to be answered:

1. What are the stories of community-based tourism that have brought empowerment to the local communities?
2. Which challenges and opportunities have occurred through the digital presence of indigenous people?
3. To what extent are indigenous people using the digital environment to share their knowledge and traditions?
4. To what extent does the online promotion of traditional activities and heritage bring empowerment of indigenous communities?
5. How to translate stories of empowering community-based tourism practices into strategies of online presence?

The structure of the thesis initiates with a “[contextual](#)” introduction to understand the trajectory of indigenous people with a focus on how Brazilian traditional communities have adapted to modern technologies within the past. Afterwards, existing literature on concepts such as CBT, empowerment and digital presence are portrayed within the “[Literature Review](#)”. The “[Methodology](#)” section displays in detail the approach techniques and procedure of the research. Subsequently, the “[Findings](#)” chapter shows the results of the data collection in the form of themes. These outcomes are debated throughout the next chapter called “[Discussion](#)”, with the aim to find answers to the research questions. Lastly, the “[Conclusion](#)” part sums up the main ideas and provides further inspirations for communities and researchers.



## 2. Contextual Analysis

### 2.1. The Struggle Of The Oppressed

In the history of mankind, there has always been a separation between dominant and submissive groups of people. For instance, the expansion of European colonies has put indigenous people into vulnerable positions. According to Butler & Hinch (2007), indigenous people are a “*group, [which] was present and occupied a given area prior to the creation of modern states and borders [and are] seen to be distinct in terms of their culture and social identities and institutions relative to dominant groups in society*” (p.5). We are therefore talking about communities who have experienced colonisation, being forced to leave their territories by the hands of settlers (Butler & Hinch, 2007).

The darkest era for indigenous people in America was initiated with the discovery of the “New World” and the expansion of the European empires (Silva de Carie & de Oliveira Lima, 2018). The “Columbian exchange” of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the most noteworthy wave of genocide in history. A great percentage of the indigenous population was defeated by the cause of spread diseases or assassination resulting from land acquisition by European colonizers (Crosby, 2003). This colonialism entails power enforcements over land or traditions from a more dominant group, which have severe consequences on cultural alterations of the persecuted groups (Horvath, 1972). Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the indigenous peoples slowly gained recovery from the damage of the past and it is estimated that around 42 million indigenous people are currently living in Latin America (World Bank, 2016).

Highlighting important moments of indigenous resistance, Burnette & Figley (2016) state in their paper that the preservation of the native peoples and their heritage until today is due to four main factors: environmental ethics, moral economy, hiding ethnobiological knowledge while investigating and conserving of biodiversity and political adaptability. Besides, the native people did not always easily accept the acts of the land intruders and within the last four decades they slowly gained political influence (Lima & Weiler, 2015; World Bank, 2016). For instance, the United Nations (2007) proclaimed publicly: “*Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such.*” (p. 2). Countries are taking individual actions to recognize indigenous culture. For instance, the Peruvian government is making an effort to promote the teaching of the native language Quechua in local schools (Sotomayor, Gil Arroyo & Barbieri, 2019). Particular communities have further developed private initiatives by creating economic subsistence through agriculture or tourism activities (Aguilar, 2018; Belmonte & Silvestre, 2017). Despite these developments, we are still far from achieving a global political and social recognition of Native people’s rights.

### 2.2. Brazil’s Indigenous Peoples

In the year 1500, the population of the first people of Brazil was said to add up to 3 million inhabitants, outnumbering by far the Portuguese settlers (Cupertino, Cupertino, Gomes, Braga, & Siqueira-Batista, 2020). However, since the Portuguese colonization, native groups have repeatedly suffered from human domination, invasion of their land and eradication of their people. Nowadays, the numbers of the indigenous populations have drastically declined, and less than a quarter of native Brazilians still live on the “first lands” (Bojórquez-Vargas, et.al, 2018). Today, there are over 300 different groups, summing up to 900.000 indigenous people spread all



over the country (figure 2) (Darlington, 2020). Despite the core connection with nature and community structures, each community has different languages, traditions and values. This contributes to the rich cultural diversity among indigenous people. The biggest ethnic group is the Ticuna, living in the Amazonas. Furthermore, important groups represent among others are the Guarani, Kaingang, Macuxi, Terena, Guajajara and Pataxó tribes. There are even still 28 tribes which live isolated, making Brazil the country with the most uncontacted people worldwide (FUNAI, n.d.).

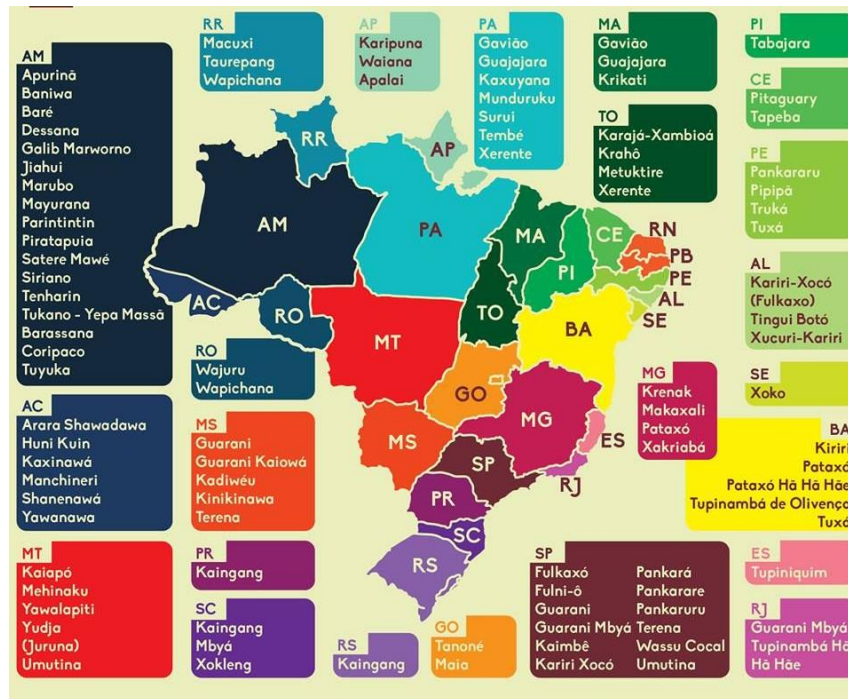


Figure 2. Distribution of indigenous ethnicities among Brazilian states (Junio, n.d.)

In the history of Brazil, the Natives were confronted with a one-way cultural assimilation, as they were forced to undermine their languages and traditions, while learning Portuguese and adapt to the laws of the “new world” (Silva de Carie & de Oliveira Lima, 2018). The dissatisfaction regarding the oppression of their own culture led to the establishment of FUNAI<sup>1</sup> in 1967, a governmental protection agency for indigenous interests. Linked to the ministry of justice, the foundation organizes frequent movements against indigenous social injustice. Consequently, the support of national and international organisations, which specialise in indigenous rights, grew over the years (Ferreira, 2015).

In 1988, the new constitution approved a chapter<sup>2</sup> to recognize indigenous customs, languages and the right for the land which they originally occupied (Brasil, 1988). However, the current reality is different and Brazilian indigenous groups keep asking for the practical implementation of the documented rights. In 2012, the APIB<sup>3</sup> sent official petitions to the United Nations to receive support, as they are still waiting for governmental legislation to be implemented. On the contrary, the Brazilian government recently approved several laws, which supported mining and agriculture enhancing the risk for locals to be further expelled of their traditional lands (APIB,

<sup>1</sup> Fundação Nacional do Índio / National Indian Foundation

<sup>2</sup> Chapter VII, Article 231

<sup>3</sup> Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil / Brazil’s Indigenous People Articulation

2016). FUNAI does not have sufficient influence and resources to react to intrusions on indigenous lands, which often happens forcefully and illegally (FUNAI, n.d.).

The backlashes increased with the regime of Jair Bolsonaro, who assumed his office as the president in January of 2019. He has openly presented himself as not supportive towards indigenous heritage and opts for them to adapt to the larger Brazilian society, which would mean another cultural assimilation and the loss of traditional values (Watson, 2018). As indigenous people are not recognised as part of the Brazilian cultural diversity, several actions are implemented that lead to a reduction of indigenous' land, in order to make use of their natural resources such as gold, tin, and magnesium (Survival International, 2019). Furthermore, the heavy fire in the Amazonas in 2019 was a strategic example to prepare the land for loggers, cattle rangers and farmers (APIB, 2019). Indigenous people have a very strong relationship with nature, which is seen as the mother of every living being (Fleuri & Fleuri, 2018). Watching their life source and rights been taken away, the natives are facing a significant fight towards the empowerment of their people. As a result, an important movement called "Indigenous Blood: not a single drop more"<sup>4</sup> was initiated in October 2019, where indigenous leaders travelled to 12 European countries giving speeches with the aim of raising awareness about the violations against their people and the environment. This movement was documented through social media channels and received great international feedback (APIB, 2019).

At the beginning of 2020, the global pandemic due to the Coronavirus represented another challenge for traditional communities. Many indigenous communities had previously been generating an income through touristic activities, some more successful than others (Carr, 2020). As a consequence of the pandemic people not only stopped to travel, but the villages further needed to be closed for protection from the virus. Especially, people in the remotest areas are highly endangered by the virus, as they do not possess sufficient health assistance (Cupertino, et al., 2020). Having received already little governmental support before the crisis, Brazilian Natives are struggling even more at the moment, as significant economic contributors to self-sufficiency such as tourism activities fell away. Researchers have foreseen, that even in the countries with a stronger indigenous tourism industry like Canada or New Zealand many local companies will have to close due to the lacking business (Carr, 2020). The Brazilian natives will need to find alternative options to the traditional CBT practices, in order to get through this lockdown situation. This crisis has brought a movement of innovations and an exponential growth in the digital presence of many indigenous people, especially the young ones.

### 2.3. Evolution Of Indigenous Digital Protagonism

For the further elaboration of this thesis, it is important to understand the context regarding the introduction of digital technologies in indigenous communities. As previously discussed indigenous communities have always fought for recognition and protagonism within the society. At the beginning of technological developments, indigenous communities did not have immediate access to these new instruments. They rather remained spectators of these new tools that were growing in the modern world (Aguilar, 2018). It was usual that Western researchers and photographers in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century used technologies to portray indigenous cultures (Winter & Boudreau, 2018). This led to a transformation of their realities towards idealized Western perspectives, in which often any signs of evolution were withdrawn without the consent of the

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<sup>4</sup> "Sangue Indígena: Nenhuma Gota Mais" in Portuguese



locals. In these representations, indigenous people were mainly characterized as simple and underdeveloped cultures, which are soon to become extinct. The portrayals were intended to create an everlasting indigenous culture, which would protect them from disappearance. However, it rather served as a “*self-congratulatory reference*” for Western societies to measure their progress, especially, since, it was the same Western people who decided which parts of the culture to preserve (Winter & Boudreau, 2018, p. 39). These Eurocentric impositions are based on a concept, which indicates the common belief that there are two types of communities: 1) most humans are uninventive and therefore stuck in progress 2) a small segment of people are able for invention and therefore more likely to experience evolution (Battiste & Henderson, 2011).

Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, leaders of different ethnical groups created connections with international entities that had strong political influence, such as the UN (Aguilar, 2018). This provided the first pavements for the fight towards the recognition of indigenous documents. Traditional knowledge was later even implemented in university doctrines, where classes about indigenous literature were thought by natives (Aguilar, 2018). At the same time, the indigenous people became aware of the opportunities that came with the technological development and started to find their ways to use them to their advantage. According to Winter & Boudreau (2018), “*indigenous peoples have always been innovators when it comes to tools of survival*” (p. 46). By using modern communication technologies the traditional people aim to approach and keep up with the dominant societies, which had contributed to social and political oppressions of indigenous cultures (Ferreira, 2015).

A significant development of the use of technological equipment by indigenous groups in Latin America was experienced after the 1990s. It was the start of indigenous activism (Lima & Weiler, 2015). Native people were increasingly representing themselves, their values and their struggles in the digital environment through websites, blogs, and fora (Pereira, 2008). However, they also faced language barriers. There was little to no software and platforms which had been installed in native idioms, but rather popular languages (Aguilar, 2018). As an outcome of the activism, more attention was paid towards indigenous rights in national as well as international events or political assemblies. For instance, the WSIS<sup>5</sup> in 2005 emphasized on recognizing and incentivising programmes for indigenous people in relation to the digital information society. These included pursuing respective governments to work actively towards multilingualism and democracy of the internet, translating digital content into traditional languages and adapting domains, email addresses as well as keywords of online searches (Aguilar, 2018).

Despite governmental efforts to approximate the internet to all citizens, the digital divide still persists among Brazilian societies (Aguilar, 2018). Rural federal states in the North, Northeast, and the West of the country are mainly affected by it (Ferreira, 2015). Lack of economic purchase power, low experience of usage and limited internet access in remote areas are the main contributors to the failure of indigenous initiatives to make use of technology. The request to governmental help for an enhanced technological inclusion is a complicated and longsome process. Consequently, the communities often still rely on the help from private initiatives or non-governmental organisations to generate technological movements (Aguilar, 2018; da Costa & Paulino, 2013).

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<sup>5</sup> World Summit on the Information Society





## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1. Indigenous Community-Based Tourism

CBT has found its beginnings in the 1970s, with the search for authenticity and experience tourism. It includes alternative forms of tourism such as eco- or responsible travel, aiming towards local natural and cultural protection, as well as regional employment and entrepreneurship (Davison et al. 2005; Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2017). Butler & Hinch (2007) define the CBT within an indigenous context as “*tourism activities, in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture served as the essence of the attraction*” (p. 5). Accordingly, it is mostly related to interactions between the visitor and the indigenous host community. These relationships can be built up in two forms. On one hand, people experience the “other” from a passive approach, observing different cultures and maintaining a certain distance. On the other hand, a more active engagement can be formed through building communication and learning activities (MacCannell, 2001). These active engagements between host and guests are crucial factors for positive long-term outcomes for the community (Scherrer & Doohan, 2013).

Since the mid-twentieth century, several academics tackled the issue of how to build successful CBT within an indigenous context. Pioneering researchers such as Graburn (1976) and Almagor (1985) have identified tourism as a form to achieve benefiting socio-economic outcomes for native communities. This was followed by scientific papers about the preservation of indigenous cultural heritage and enhancing place identity through tourism (Bunten & Graburn, 2009; Sofield, 2003; Thompson, 2007). Other studies give numerous definitions and recommendations on ways to involve the locals, with the aim to raise their quality of life referring to topics like empowerment, sustainability and authenticity (Carr, Ruhanen & Whitford, 2016). Many research papers were written with the support of indigenous organizations, such as the WINTA<sup>6</sup>, First Contact Inc., KUMA<sup>7</sup>, or the AIATSISS<sup>8</sup>, etc.. They contribute to important knowledge of the indigenous communities, especially in Australia, New Zealand, and North America (Carr, Ruhanen & Whitford, 2016).

Instead of focusing on external private investors, CBT aims to maximise the beneficial outcome for community stakeholders and minimise unwanted effects of host destination exploitations. Particularly, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are encouraged within this sort of tourism, while regional natural and cultural practices such as fisheries, agriculture, craftsmanship are promoted, respected and nurtured (Davison et al. 2005). As external policy-makers often cannot meet the community’s understandings and aspirations, CBT offers a platform where the local population is inspired to take part in the planning and management of creating a tourism based on their needs (Salazar, 2012). For instance, locals can act as operators, planners, or policy-makers. A fruitful CBT leads to local entrepreneurship, job creation and partnerships, which eventually contribute to poverty alleviation and self-sovereignty of developing communities (Davison et al. 2005). Several cases of implemented CBT in the Global South show, that the key to success for community empowerment and sustainable growth relies on participatory management (Strydom, Mangope, & Henama. 2018).

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<sup>6</sup> World Indigenous Tourism Alliance

<sup>7</sup> Southern Maori Business Network Te Kupeka Umaka Maori Ki Araiteuru

<sup>8</sup> Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies



### 3.2. Community Empowerment Through Tourism

Attention towards the term community empowerment was paid since the mid-1960s (Singleton Rola-Rubzen, Muir, Muir & McGregor, 2009). Alsop & Heinsohn (2005) believe that it entails the growing ability of a group to collectively take part in the decision-making process, in order to convert these policies into desired activities and resulting outcomes. Hence, it refers to the capability of aspiration towards a certain goal and the freedom of choice regarding the corresponding actions (Appadurai, 2004). According to Conger & Kanungo (1998) empowerment can be seen as both, the process of gaining the ability for self-determination, but also the outcome of this procedure itself. Researchers display the importance of empowerment of individuals and groups as it enhances the sensation of self-efficacy and well-being (Hardy & O'Sullivan, 1998).

The World Bank initiatives include empowerment as one important pillar of poverty reduction. The lack of the ability of discourse and self-determination is also described as “voice poverty” (Watkins & Tacchi, 2008). A study from Ergeneli, An & Metin (2007) further reveals that empowerment particularly includes the relocation of power to less influential people. By giving more power to the marginalized communities, the latter are able to voice and realize their wishes towards “*inclusion and participation in social, political and economic processes*” (Watkins & Tacchi, 2008, p. 14). However, the perceptions of who's voices are more relevant than others vary within the context, such as geographical, political, and social structures (Eglinton, Gubrium & Wexler, 2017).

Timothy (2007) argues whether this transmission of power towards the residents of a destination can contribute to a sustainable development. He examines diverse stages of empowering local communities as significant stakeholders within the process of tourism policy-making. On one hand, the degree of community empowerment depends on the willingness of local authorities to include the residents in decision-making. On the other hand, the ability, based on education and knowledge, and the urgency of the locals to assume these new forms of power are important contributors to the extent of power relocation (Timothy, 2007).

Further scales and forms of governance imply political, social, economic, and psychological empowerment (Timothy, 2007). Political empowerment occurs when the community has a saying in the process of deciding on tourism policies. If indigenous communities gain the ability of autonomously organizing their natural and cultural resources, they could further become politically more influential (Laverack & Wallerstein, 2001). Ideologies and beliefs play a crucial role contributing to social empowerment. A cohesive community is created through a shared understanding of values, languages and traditions. Through common interests, members are encouraged to participate and take pride in their commitment towards a community goal, creating a sense of belonging (Timothy, 2007). To achieve economic empowerment, the financial benefits of the activities created through tourism should stay within the destination and be spread equally among the community members (Davison et al., 2005). This can either be realised by dividing the earnings through cooperative arrangements or creating “*opportunities to share the industry's financial rewards through employment, small businesses ownership, grant programmes and [...] basic public services*” (Timothy, 2007, p. 207). Lastly, psychological empowerment is the outcome of the recognition of indigenous value from outside parties. By receiving social recognition through sharing their stories with visitors, the self-esteem of the community members is fortified, which contributes to a sense of ownership and self-determination (Belmonte & Silvestre, 2018; Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2017; Timothy, 2007).



The cultural exchange between the host and the guest is essential for an empowering community-based tourism (Davison et al., 2005). Through the interaction with the visitor, the locals have the opportunity to share their cultural heritage with others. Apaydin (2018) defines cultural heritage as: “anything valuable from people’s past [...] not simply as an artefact or site, but as a process that uses objects and sites as vehicles for the transmission of ideas in order to satisfy various contemporary needs” (p. 2). Therefore, it is a way of communicating ideologies, which can be represented through tangible and intangible means<sup>9</sup>. Through verbal communication, cultural knowledge is constructed, as people project themselves and their values within their universe forming an identity (Eglinton, et al., 2017). Expressing this culture with others is often linked with pride and celebration through increased cultural recognition (Apaydin, 2018). Community members are aware of the importance of maintaining their cultural heritage and are increasingly taking the lead to decide about the preservation policies that result in cultural empowerment (Resta et al., 2004). All five areas of empowerment are displayed in figure 3.

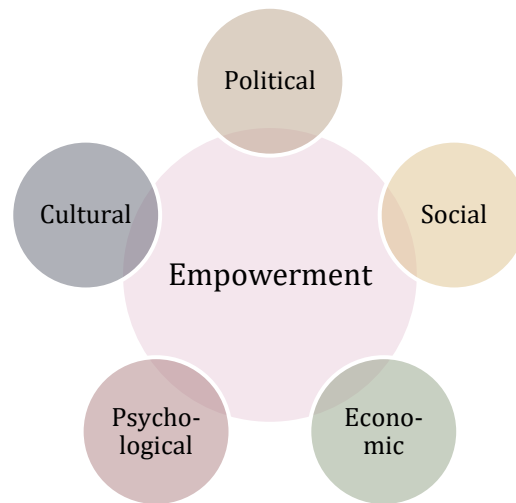


Figure 3. Fields of empowerment (Resta et al., 2004; Timothy, 2007)

It is nowadays widely accepted that there can be no sustainable and empowering developments if societies do not become able to shape their future (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005). As the empowerment of communities involves the ability of decision-making, it is also related to the determination of what subjects are important for the involved societies and which information they want to share with others not only during touristic encounters, but also within the process of their promotion through a digital environment (Singleton et al., 2009).

### 3.3. Digital Presence For Empowering CBT Promotion

The digital environment is dominating our today’s lives. According to Karakas (2000) “our world has changed into an interactive, hyper-connected, immersive, virtual, digital online ecosystem or mega platform where users create and share knowledge, innovate, and collaborate together: world 2.0” (p. 24). To create a digital environment, ICTs are utilised, while collecting and projecting information in the form of voice, texts, and images (Singleton et al., 2009). With the development of the world 2.0, new channels such as social media networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) have emerged. Those digital platforms are also used by businesses, institutions, and communities in order to create value to products and to spread awareness (Sharma & Carson, 2002). Singleton et al. (2009), claim that these technologies have more potential to distribute information faster and broader than regular media or written literature.

Michaels & Japanangka (1984) introduced the first researches about how indigenous communities make use of self-produced videos to project their culture and social structures. This was followed by several studies about the role that modern technologies play in the Native’s lives

<sup>9</sup> Tangible cultural heritage: material objects, artefacts, buildings or monuments; intangible cultural heritage: practices, oral expressions, music, craft making, social habits or knowledge

(Ginsburg, 1994; Buchtman, 2000; Singleton et al., 2009). The adaption towards ICTs and the information-overloaded internet differs between communities and even among individuals of determined groups, according to the group's or individual's willingness to learn. To avoid an inadequate usage of displaying traditional knowledge through Western technologies, it is important to leave the decision to the communities or individuals whether and how this technological adjustment is necessary (Aguilar, 2018). For instance, the users should consider the path, the energy, as well as the short- and long term outcomes, which these technologies could bring to them and their identity (Resta et al., 2004).

Despite the differences in ways of digital usage, they all have one thing in common: Technological tools provide a space where indigenous people can speak their own voice, without being modified by external mediators, such as reporters, researchers, or NGOs (da Costa & Paulino, 2013). ICTs have been a tool for indigenous people to enhance educational purposes, overcome remoteness, archive and distribute information about cultural practices, as well as negotiations with companies and governmental institutions (Aguilar, 2018; Singleton et al., 2009). Through this development, new connections are made and indigenous perspectives are spread around the world. Consequently, traditional communities can expand their territory further than geographical limits (Aguilar, 2018; Ferreira, 2015). As tourism became one of the main economic engines for indigenous economies, touristic SMEs are further using ICTs for the promotion of e-commerce and CBT (Davison, et al., 2005; Sharma & Carson, 2002).

Di Castri, et al. (2002) define that the use of ICTs is important within the tourism promotion. Firstly, they serve as a medium to promote very specific tourism activities including ecological, cultural, and ethnographical activities. Secondly, the online presence of service providers reduces the need for intermediaries and local companies have the ability to make their businesses more beneficial. The direct communication with the visitor further offers the possibility to tailor the services regarding the traveller's specific needs, creating a unique experience. It enables the consumer to take actively part in the digital strategy through dialoguing with the service provider and simultaneously co-create content through expressing their responses towards the published information or experienced activities. These new technologies have formed a complex, interactive and dynamic digital environment (Batinić, 2015).

The first step of creating a space within the digital environment is to document the required data (Robbins, 2010). To enhance the community involvement, it is for them to choose, which topics should be brought to the surface. Here, the information which is to be shared can be classified in internal and external outreach (Landzelinus, 2003). For instance, internal communication achieves community intern purposes, like research, inter-indigenous dialogue, or inhouse management strategies. The internal digital connection within an online environment in relation to tourism can be used initially for collecting information on how to efficiently operate a business (Gan, Inversini, & Rega, 2016). As people become aware of others, who despite traditional or social related differences work towards the same goal, networks are created (Eglinton, et al. 2017). Through constant communication and information exchange, these relationships become stronger (Aguilar, 2018). The external outreach communication is aimed to claim the public attention by sharing traditional lifestyles and cultural values through forms of marketing, sales, and information exchange. Summarising, the purpose of the usage of digital tourism promotion comes down to four principles: research, capacity improvement, partnerships, and communication (Sharma & Carson, 2002).



In order to transform the intentions of communities into digital data, two important tools are required: the technical infrastructure and the human input. The technical infrastructure includes equipment (computers, telephones, etc.), software resources, as well as an internet connection. These structures should respect the possibility of collective and equal usage, as well as the inclusion of indigenous languages and values. Van Dijk (2005) identified the human digital know-hows as instrumental (the skill of the usage of the equipment), informational (the skill to collect, analyse and utilise the information), and strategic (the skill of efficiently and creatively manipulate the information to achieve the desired goal). Sometimes the insufficient education, illiteracy, lacking economic purchase power and low internet access hamper the introduction of traditional communities towards digitalisation (Aguilar, 2018; da Costa & Paulino, 2013). The technical and the human input need to create an interplay in order to build an efficient digital presence. Consequently, for an empowering digital strategy, it is necessary to analyse the existing infrastructure and talents of the people and elaborate a strategy based on them (Singleton et al., 2009).

The presence in a digital environment is aimed to trigger cognitive, emotional, and behavioural reactions among the audience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The encounter with the audience can also be referred to as the customer journey, which is a set of actions between the service provider and the client. Within tourism, it is the process of a physical transition of the customer from the starting point to the product or destination itself. Within this procedure of audience engagement, three phases can be identified: the pre-purchase, the purchase, and the post-purchase (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). A study of Mknono (2016) revealed, that the dissatisfaction of travellers often relates to their expectations of Western management models. Consequently, digital communication is necessary for indigenous stakeholders to act as cultural negotiators in order to explain carefully and educate the traveller about the destination and its procedures (Sharma & Carson, 2002).

The creation of a successful digital promotion is an ongoing process, which requires maintenance and continuity from all involved parties. First, the delivery of information flows regarding content and timing needs to be paid attention to continuously. Secondly, constant training on human and technological skills are required. Furthermore, the equipment needs maintenance and renewals in order to keep up with evolving trends. Lastly, all online information should be cohesive with offline information representing the true experience to avoid confusion among the audience (Sharma & Carson, 2002). Eventually, with a sophisticated technological infrastructure, constant ability to learn, and the capacity to make decisions in how to use these technologies indigenous people can successfully create their own online content according to their values and speed judgement (Resta et al, 2004).

According to Selwyn and Facer (2007), ICTs are crucial tools to generate social inclusion, which ranges from receiving a stronger attention among societies to receiving financial support. With the evolving trends of digitalisation, people, groups, or organisations who are not familiar with these practices are more likely to be socially excluded. This means that traditional people need to afford or access these new technological tools, which enable work, information and communication opportunities. Otherwise, they run the risk of being further put behind of the society, as they do not have the chance to improve their situation (Ferreira, 2015).

All in all, ICTs provide a voice to people, who have been silenced to be heard (Eglington, et al. 2017; Singleton et al., 2009). Through building a louder and stronger voice with the presence in

the digital environment, indigenous communities are empowered. For instance, CBT initiatives, which are mainly operated by small enterprises, are virtually amplified in size and marketing power due to the global presence (Gan, et al., 2016). In the recent past, technology has been a tool for communities which cannot or do not want to live isolated and achieve a connection with the world, either to share knowledge, to learn or to receive support. Due to the complexity and difference among the situations regarding social recognition, which indigenous people from all over the world face, it is necessary to take a closer look at how the presented ideas are put into practice at specific communities. The current political situation and the increased online activities of Brazilian indigenous peoples, provide an urgent need for attention. It will further add to the empirical legacy of indigenous researches, which has shown little evidence within the Brazilian context. Therefore, the author will present a qualitative study with a practical focus on what activities, opportunities and challenges of digital CBT can currently be found among Brazilian indigenous communities and how they are leading towards different stages of empowerment.



## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Postcolonial Approach

This research intends to ascertain how digital promotion of CBT can be an empowering tool for those who struggle from being “marginalized” and “excluded” from the dominant society. When indigenous researches found their beginnings, the studies were often conducted from a top-down approach. The communities’ opinions were rarely included within the research process and the outcome was hardly ever shared with them (Apaydin, 2018). Consequently, the indigenous’ rights to knowledge of their heritage were ignored.

According to Freire (1970) “*the movement of inquiry must be directed towards humanisation [...] the pursuit of full humanity, however cannot be carried in isolation or individualism, but on fellowship and solidarity*” (p. 85). With this theory in mind, a postcolonial paradigm is applied, which is based on dialogue and participation. This implies learning indigenous ways of communication through an open curiosity by dialoguing about topics that are relevant for them while putting aside “Western” perspectives (Fleuri & Fleuri, 2018). Consequently, the reflection of the touristic and digital practices will be based on communicating and understanding the community’s values. Built on this concept of communality and human unity relationships an ontological assumption is elaborated (Wilson, 2008). The researcher’s education and knowledge only interferes in order to examine how these values can be used towards empowerment. There is no intent to give recommendations that might not be cohesive with indigenous traditions. Other than top-down paradigms, the postcolonial approach is based on traditional values, where knowledge is interactive and part of the universe, creating a relational epistemology (figure 4) (Wilson, 2008). Throughout the research process, intentions are openly communicated with participants and after the project conclusion, the outcomes are shared with the locals. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005), this paradigm allows non-Western voices to be heard and to become emancipated from dominant societies.

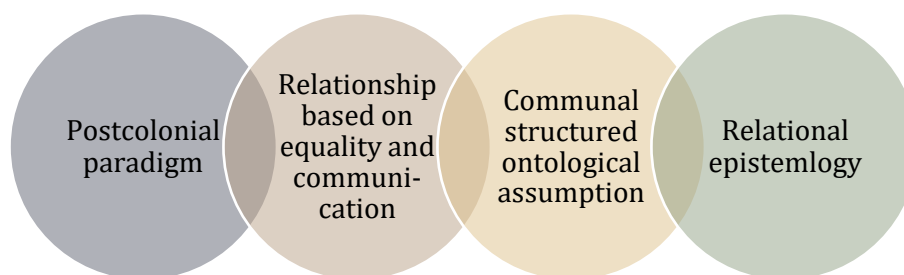


Figure 4. Research design (Fleuri & Fleuri, 2018; Wilson, 2008)

### 4.2. Data Collection

#### 4.2.1. Research Design

This research comprises a small-scale qualitative research of native Brazilian communities, in order to apply empirical knowledge within the field while understanding a complex issue in praxis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Taking into consideration the travel restrictions concerning the pandemic this research is conducted through a mix of active and passive online methods.

Before collecting primary data, secondary research on existing literature, official reports, and ongoing news is performed. This involves getting familiar with the historical and political background, as well as previous developments related to tourism and digital presence among



indigenous communities. It also prepares and informs the researcher before talking to the participants.

The qualitative research promotes a profound insight into what is happening and why it is happening through maintaining conversations with people being affected by the current situation. With the inductive approach, the researcher is free of previous assumptions to build an understanding of the experiences and meanings that people have towards the studied social phenomenon. Through this, patterns and correlations among these relationships can be explored, while it is possible to stay flexible throughout the entire research process and to adapt the investigation towards the needs of the indigenous communities (Leavy, 2017).

#### 4.2.2. Sampling

A purposive sampling technique was used to choose participants for the study. Through this technique, the researcher selects respondents based on her judgement of the participant's ability to provide the required information for the research purpose (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The purposive selection process of the participants allowed to conduct a time-effective research with high-quality data. However, it also includes a risk of judgement errors from the researcher, which can lead to excluding information from significant potential participants. To avoid the subjective judgement, participants were asked for recommended contacts, who have relevant expertise and interest within taking part in the project (Etikan et al., 2016). Accordingly, a snowball effect was triggered and a great representative number of participants was found.

Initially, the overall population included all people with adequate knowledge of indigenous CBT developments within Brazilian contexts. As the research was mainly conducted within an online environment, it was necessary to reach a targeted population with sufficient internet and technological access. Despite the relevance of majorly talking to people of indigenous descendant, age, gender or other demographic characteristics did not matter within the participant selection. The sample size was established based on theoretical saturation (Mack, 2005).

On one hand, community members of different Brazilian indigenous ethnicities participated. Each group has its own language, symbols, traditions, and aspirations, which emphasized the importance of talking to people with different backgrounds. The focus hereby lies not within giving a generalized perspective about the Brazilian indigenous people but understanding the complexity and cultural diversity. Consequently, six participants from Pataxó (3), Potiguara (1), Tukano (1), and Caiçara (1) ethnicities were selected. Additionally, four interviews with experts of the industry, such as tour operator (1) owner and academicians (3), which were not necessarily of indigenous origin took place. These conversations provided a consolidated expertise in the world of promotion of CBT (Gan et al., 2016). A broad range of perspectives was collected by talking to people with distinct roles towards the community's empowerment. Consequently, parallelisms and dissimilarities of these diverse opinions were identified.





Four different communities were considered for the data collection (figure 5). The participants either were part of one of the communities or had touristic work relationships with them. The communities also experienced different levels of tourism development. For instance, the Aldeia Coroa Vermelha in the state of Bahia is one of the most famous indigenous visitor centres in Brazil. Secondly, the Aldeia Maracanã in the city of Rio de Janeiro is one of a few urban indigenous villages in the country. Furthermore, the Aldeia Pataxó Hã-Hã-Hãe Paraty in the state of Rio de Janeiro is a small community, which recently has experienced a development for educational tourism. Lastly, at the Southern end

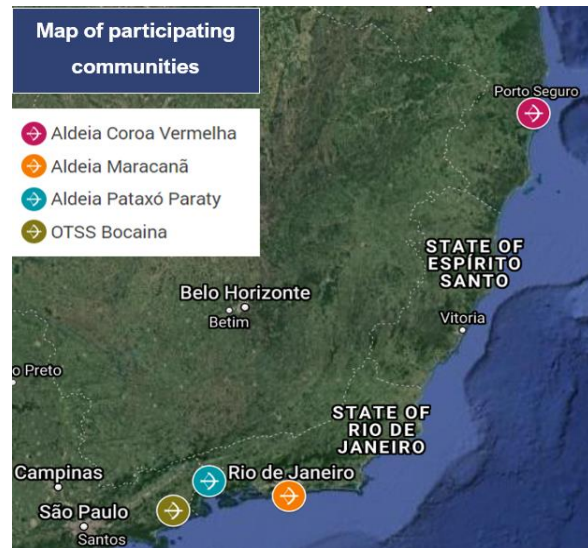


Figure 5. Map of participating communities (Google, n.d.)

of the state of Rio de Janeiro, a project of protecting traditional cultures, called Bocaina's OTSS (Observatory of Sustainable and Healthy Territories), is currently striving for turning conventional beach tourism into sophisticated CBT projects.

#### 4.2.3. Interview Design

The necessary information was primarily collected through in-depth interviews, which took place through video calls via WhatsApp. The average duration of the talks was 45 minutes. Online interviews are a suitable alternative option to face-to-face conversations, as they allow the researcher to collect data over large geographical spaces without having to be at the location (Jowett, 2020). Open-end questions were elaborated, where the interviewees could freely express what is important for them, enhancing their identity and social reality (McCabe & Foster, 2006). The development of the interviews was not completely rigid and new questions and topics could rise throughout the conversations (Camargo-Borges, 2019). Almost all interviews<sup>10</sup> were conducted in Portuguese, which gave the members a chance to properly express themselves within a language they felt comfortable with. The interviews were recorded with the participant's agreement and transcribed word for word through the software MAXQDA.

The researcher set 10 virtual conversations from May until June 2020 (Appendix A1). Throughout this period, the data was assessed simultaneously, in order to generate a general idea of the main topics, and what was still missing. As a consequence, the researcher was able to adapt the subsequent interview questions accordingly. Despite the differences with each interview, the main conversation topics included the participant's relationship with the community, experiences with tourism and digital practices, as well as future aspirations. The interviews with the indigenous members entailed a focus on what they desire to communicate with the exterior and non-indigenous people were asked to think of creative possibilities of contributing to the promotion of the traditional values. Through a narrative approach, the participants were encouraged to share impactful stories about their personal achievements and obstacles (Appendix A2) (McCabe & Foster, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Except two

Apart from the video call interviews, 6 WhatsApp conversations through text and voice messages with community members of the Pataxó Paraty village were used. These conversations did not necessarily take place in synchronous time settings but entailed the same topics as the semi-structured interviews.

#### 4.2.4. Complementary Sources

The obtained information of the interviews was compared with data from complementary non-academic sources such as recent news, Instagram posts, and YouTube videos (table 1). The pictures and videos obtained from these sources provided a visual understanding. For instance, important to highlight are the Instagram stories and live streams from indigenous people. The author assisted 18 live streams in which two or more people have conversations about a certain topic, while the audience can simultaneously participate through asking questions. These features are a way to replace a (non-)participant observation and to observe authentic activities and concerns in a real-time setting, which kept the researcher up to date on the most recent movements. Additionally, several webinars on topics like CBT, digital promotion, current pandemic situations in indigenous communities, and the post-COVID travel behaviour were attended to obtain expert knowledge and inspirations for the main topics of the research.

*Table 1. Sources of data collection (own elaboration)*

<b>Method</b>	<b>Researcher involvement</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
In-depth Interviews	Active	10
WhatsApp Conversations	Active	6
YouTube Videos	Passive	15
Assisted Instagram Live Streams	Mixed	18
Webinars	Passive	4
Other (news, publications, posts, stories, etc.)	Passive	

### 4.3. Thematic Analysis And MAXQDA Software

The last step of the research includes analysing the findings through a content analysis. After the completion of the data collection, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to the transcripts and collected notes. With an eye on the inductive research, where experiences and beliefs are most important, the thematic analysis allows to focus on finding similarities and relationships between portions of the data.

First, the researcher got familiarized with the data while reading through the material, which was previously introduced into the software MAXQDA, and highlighting relevant sections. The system provides a joint overview of the collected data of the different sources, including the interviews, videos, webinars, posts, live streams, etc.. The next step of the thematic analysis encompassed organizing the highlighted parts, giving them a descriptive label, which was emphasized through five different colours. Afterwards, these meaningful codes or categories were clustered into three overarching themes. With these themes in mind, the data was assessed again, to ensure that the outcome is an adequate representation of the research. Special attention was paid to include repetitive data, which was mentioned by different stakeholder profiles, to obtain a multiple source backup for the outcomes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

#### 4.4. Limitations

Through the online interviews, the researcher was only able to talk to people who had a sufficient internet connection and knowledge on how to use the communication devices. This might have excluded community members with important voices to be heard. Nonetheless, the community bond is very strong. Tribe leaders and official indigenous communicators represent the collective community voice. It is their main interest to talk about the concerns of their nation, which are discussed regularly during community meetings.

Furthermore, despite the effort of putting aside Western perceptions, individual interpretation cannot be completely avoided. Especially, since the research deals with intercultural dialogues, the communications among the participants and the researcher might lead to different interpretations. Furthermore, there is a probability that the most outstanding or appealing online publications are chosen for the data collection. This can include that posts, which did not receive a high visibility but offer important insights, are not considered.

Lastly, the online interviews were a suitable alternative to engage with the participants during the time of the pandemic. However, it did not come free of limitations. The researcher could not submerge completely in the daily activities and experience the community feeling at first hand. However, the members showed a great effort in sending pictures and videos regularly to comprehend their practices. Despite being difficult to create an emotional bond with the participants from a distance, the researcher maintained many personal conversations, receiving a great response to the research and people were keen on sharing their individual stories.



## 5. Findings

The following section provides an overview of the findings, which are divided into three themes. The first theme “Community participatory tourism as a powerful tool for self-determination and subsistence” comprises the empowering opportunities, which tourism has brought to the communities. Secondly, indigenous communities are facing difficulties and prejudices when being confronted with the usage of technological tools. The struggles and indigenous’ reactions are displayed within the theme: “Technological difficulties, debates about modernization and rising resistance through the digital bow”. Lastly, ways on how the indigenous communities have used the digital environment in practice, with a focus on activities during the times of Coronavirus are shown within the theme “The pandemic situation created a space for creativity and confirmed the urgency of digital communication”.

### 5.1. Community Participatory Tourism As A Powerful Tool Tor Self-determination And Subsistence

While talking to the participants, it was clear that there is no overall definition of CBT, as each community has a different story to tell. However, each community defines successful tourism as an initiative that is based on the local’s attributes and needs. For instance, the CBT network in Bocaina is called “Nhandereko”<sup>11</sup>, which is translated as “our way of being”. Before the Coronavirus, tourism was very present among indigenous villages. Some had experienced forms of tourism, which had the potential to jeopardize indigenous heritage. Because of this, the communities started to develop initiatives that are used for their benefit and the stories and activities that were most present while talking about empowerment through tourism are displayed here.

In many cases, the CBT emerged as an alternative of “conventional” tourism. Indigenous people live on land with rich natural assets, that are attractive to tourists. Especially, the ones in littoral areas have felt an invasion of beach tourism and the need to organize themselves:

*“The communities in littoral areas, even if they do not want to work with tourism, the tourism runs them over. Organisation is important to avoid social, human historic, cultural degradation.” (Interview 10, pos. 24)*

The conventional tourism cannot be avoided. But through organized CBT programmes the negative outcomes of unstructured tourism, like waste pollution, can be minimized:

*“Through CBT we managed to minimize our problems. We cannot eliminate them, but minimize. This involves for example protecting the environment. If you have organized groups, you have a better organization over the waste. The people can collect the waste, which is what a conventional tourist does not do. People come with their cars full of groceries and when they leave, they leave all the waste here.” (Interview 5, pos. 14)*

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<sup>11</sup> Origin from Guarani language



The participation of all community members within the CBT planning and organisation progress is crucial. They come together to exchange information and discuss the objectives of tourism:

*“Everybody is involved. The whole community takes part in it.[...] Who decides is always the collective” (WhatsApp 4, pos. 51 + 63)*

The organisation of tourist activities also helped to include groups of people, who might have been detached from the culture or decision processes in the past:

*“Here we try to bring back the youth, who became a little distant from our culture in order to encourage them to be involved in tourist activities.” (Interview 7, pos. 26)*

Moreover, for the community’s engagement with CBT visitors means including them in activities and educating about indigenous worldviews such as the respect for others and the nature:

*“Many people are not aware that they are destroying mother nature and the climate.[...] The visitor can get to know and participate in the activities of our village. With the stay, we show our values and respect for the nature.” (WhatsApp 4, pos. 4-5)*

The participants were gratified to have these connections and share cultural habits with visitors:

*“When you take a tourist to get to know agriculture, fishing, or a ritual it is what we do all our life. The person is proud to show that. He has property over it.” (Interview 5, pos. 35)*

Within the CBT process, education takes place on different levels to overcome false perceptions that can lead to dissatisfaction of the travel experience and unwanted effects for the villages:

*“We start with teaching the driver of the bus, over the guide and of course the tourist. It is a question of education for all. Everybody needs to understand what is happening, so there will be no conflict and disrespect.” (Interview 10, pos. 30)*

CBT has opened spaces for strengthening networks with entities like universities, travel agencies, associations, and individuals:

*“The partnerships are what make us feel strong. When we have people that are always with us, we gain strength.” (Interview 3, pos. 21)*

Through these relationships, joint learning among entities builds an enriched knowledge for all involved parties:

*“We always talk about the exchange of knowledge. Who comes to visit us, brings something and leaves with something. So we are always in exchange.”  
(Interview 3, pos. 21)*

Some populations have further been recognised by governmental entities as tourism has brought income and development for the city:

*“The municipality believed we would bring difficulties. But not anymore. Today they are looking for collaborations with us, because they have seen that we bring something different. We came to bring income for the city.” (Interview 3, pos. 18)*



All communities stated that tourism is important for the villages' economy. For instance, for the Aldeia Pataxó Paraty it is the main source of income:

*"All the income that we receive is thanks to the tourism because we sell our handicrafts and medicinal herbs." (Interview 3, pos. 11)*

Through CBT initiatives the tourist spending does not only flow in one sector but is spread among different businesses and more people are involved:

*"Mass tourism only charges what you take, like for example a beer at the kiosk. CBT goes further than just buying a beer. You buy the beer, but you also pay a guide to take you on a walk." (Interview 5, pos. 7)*

Attending people for touristic activities is an easier alternative to receive an income than traditional farming work:

*"It is a work that helped my people. People who lived from agriculture before, are now living in a less sacrificing way." (Live 8, pos. 64)*

Other communities, such as the OTSS in Bocaina combine tourism and agricultural activities:

*"It is not a product that is made for touristic consumption. It is a system that creates an income from tourism but it goes further than that, because when the tourist is not here, they keep doing the same. They keep going fishing, they keep telling the old stories." (Interviewee 5, pos. 35)*

In general, the participants saw two sides of tourism. First, there is the "conventional" tourism, which does not engage with the community's history and activities. It is seen as a tourism that runs over the villages without considering the locals. However, to enhance the indigenous visibility, a new form of tourism was elaborated. It helps to show their culture and educate others. These initiatives lead to an increased participation of the members and stronger networks among the industry. Furthermore, communities have adapted differently to the economic benefits, which the tourism activities have brought.

## 5.2. Technological Difficulties, Debates About Modernization And Rising Resistance Through The "Digital Bow"

To efficiently promote the indigenous tourism initiatives, there is a need for digital engagement with possible visitors. The second theme deals with the challenges and opportunities, which this digital presence presents for traditional peoples.

Some communities still struggle with the full development of technological usage. One major concern is the insufficient internet connection in many communities. They often need to go to the city or specific areas in order to have WiFi. Some communities possess electronic generators which permit them to be online for a couple of hours a day. The more remote the communities live from the cities, the more difficult becomes the digital connection.



Additionally, due to financial issues, it is difficult to possess sophisticated hardware:

*“My computer is in terrible condition. Here in Brazil, there is no money. There is no way to buy a new computer.” (Interview 8, pos. 31)*

There have been several initiatives to support indigenous communities with the approximation of technologies. For instance, projects are organised to install internet antennas and to teach about the usage of the technologies. Nonetheless, a sophisticated digital presence goes further than just teaching about basic knowledge:

*“They are already using technologies, but without a direction, without an aim of usage. They produce videos, but they do not know how to edit them yet. [...] Now there is the necessity to build a laboratory in the community for technical formation and equipment. It is a collaborative process that promotes autonomy and proactivity.” (Interview 8, pos 14)*

In addition to these difficulties, it is not uncommon that indigenous people face social debates whether they should have access to technology. These confrontations mostly included controversies from non-indigenous people, arguing if they lose their traditional identity through utilising technological devices. However, these statements are the result of misperceptions of what the indigenous identity truly is:

*“... “an indigenous can have a mobile, a TV, or an electrical boat. He won’t stop being indigenous because of that”<sup>12</sup>. Those things are not what make them indigenous. What makes them indigenous is the connection with nature and traditions and the ideals they want to have and to keep. There are a lot of people who think, when the television gets introduced in the tribes it destroys the day by day of them.” (Interview 4, pos. 30)*

One of the main battles of Brazilian indigenous people is to overcome these misperceptions, which are based on false historical images and media coverage that often present unprivileged and unevolved natives. The digital environment is a space to raise their voices:

*“Technology is a great tool for us to show our reality, which was neglected in Brazil. So we can show our side of the history. For us to show our face. For us to organise our rights and to show that we still exist and resist. We want to show that our culture is strong and we still survive after 500 years.” (Instagram Post 3)*

All participants stated that digital tools have become important within indigenous lives. They are aware of the opportunities of technological evolution. The “digital bow” became a weapon to not only built relationships through long distances but it is also necessary to keep up with the society:

*“We always talk about the “digital bow”. Because today we have reached where we did not imagine to reach. With the technology, we can talk to relatives of other ethnicities of all states of our country and also look for resources outside of our country.”  
(WhatsApp 5, pos. 7)*

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<sup>12</sup>Quoting a music vídeo by Matogrosso N. (2017)



*“Today we need to think differently than our parents. [...] I have to keep up with the progress, because what I believe important is the following: we can no longer be the exotic ones! [...] I will not stop being Indian just because I am using a computer and the “digital bow”. If I don’t do it today, I will be totally forgotten and isolated. This cannot happen. I can’t always walk with a bow and arrow. Now I have to use a pen and know how to write.”*

*(Interview 9, pos. 29)*

Lastly, the technology has also provided the possibility for indigenous people to educate themselves about different topics, in order to have stronger arguments in favour of their defence:

*“Today with the communication technology people can understand more of their own rights” (Interview 5, pos. 44)*

Despite obstacles, including limited access to internet, technical equipment and know-hows, indigenous people have become aware of the potential which modern technologies can bring to their fight and are embracing them. The debates and surprised reactions from non-indigenous citizens are dwarfed, as indigenous people are increasingly learning how to use digital tools, which are referred to as the “digital bow”. Resulting opportunities entail fulfilling educational purposes and raising indigenous voices.

### 5.3. The Pandemic Situation Created A Space For Creativity And Confirmed The Urgency Of Digital Communication

Even before the COVID-19, many indigenous communities used ICTs in order to promote their villages and ideologies. However, the lack of tourism has only enhanced the creativity and the urge to communicate with others through the digital environment. Within this chapter, the preferred means of communication and the innovative stories which are most represented among them are displayed.

WhatsApp is the main communication channel for all participants to connect among indigenous people as well as to contact non-indigenous acquaintances. It is popular to have WhatsApp groups in order to share community concerns. The second most mentioned channels were social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. These networks incorporate an important aspect of the indigenous culture - the orality:

*“We are unlettered cultures, we appreciate the transmission and dissemination of our knowledge through our orality” (Interview 3, pos.7).*

For the Natives, it is common to create videos showing rituals for internal and external purposes. For instance, they are using them to transmit strengthening energy:

*“We had a colleague who was not feeling well, so we made a video asking for strength and protection and we sent it to him. This way he could feel the prayer and the blessing at home.” (Interview 3, pos. 37)*

On social platforms, the majority of the representations entailed exposures of certain habits, such as body paintings and accessories, with occasional explanations of the differences among the ethnicities. Visual discourses of one or more speakers about political statements and declarations





of indigenous rights were further very common. These representations mostly included topics to raise awareness about lacking governmental support and the importance of nature preservation.

Through being physically isolated because of the pandemic, many communities have seen the necessity of using technology for connecting with others and the online activities have increased since then. In the beginning, campaigns to educate indigenous communities about isolation and recommended behaviour during the pandemic were launched.

The feature of live streams on Instagram has become a significant trend as it enabled a direct exchange with the viewers. Moreover, many celebrations and cultural manifestations are transmitted virtually, encouraging external people to participate. For instance, the Pataxó community in Paraty organized the fourth anniversary of the village with sport, games, and a fashion show, to which usually they would have invited a lot of friends (figure 6). Videos were made of the event and sent in a WhatsApp group, so the audience could take part in the event and vote the most beautiful body paintings.



Figure 6. "Fashion show" at the Pataxó anniversary (personal communication with Aldeia Pataxó Paraty)



Figure 7. Distribution of basic-need packages (personal communication with OTSS Bocaina)

Other community activities, such as the distribution of basic-needs packages are frequently documented digitally (figure 7). These initiatives aim to reach a broad audience to receive financial support in the form of donations. Due to the isolation situation, many communities are currently relying on external aid in order to cover primary supplies. Some people are further increasingly selling crafts online or organising raffles where participants can win accessories.

The research illustrates that the preferred communication channels include reciprocal dialogue options, which enable the indigenous people to express themselves orally and visually. The pandemic situation has shown the potential to educate others through the "digital bow" and to engage with their "digital visitors" by including them in cultural celebrations. The economic incomes, which would have been generated through tourism are now aimed to be achieved through donations and online transactions.



## 6. Discussion

This research aims to investigate, explore and critically reflect on the potential of online presence strategies for CBT as a way to bring empowerment for indigenous communities. This section shows the meaning of the findings in relation to the research question and the existing literature.

### 6.1. Empowering Stories Of Tourism

On one hand, the communities have faced tourism as an invasion due to the appealing natural assets their land had to offer. This tourism did not engage with the locals, ignoring their existence. The participants had negative perceptions towards these tourists, indicating that they leave trash and do not spend money in local businesses. Through the need to minimize those negative effects and creating a stronger protagonism, initiatives of CBT have emerged. All participants had a clear understanding of what they want from this type of tourism, being convinced that it provides opportunities for their people, as long as they create participatory interactions with the visitors (MacCannell, 2001; Scherrer & Dohan, 2013). The differences among the values and attributes of the villages make each initiative unique. There is no way to create a unified strategy. This uniqueness can be empowering for the communities as it enhances them to stand out with distinctive experiences.

The fact that many communities are taking the initiative of creating alternative forms of tourism shows the ability of deciding over their situations, shaping their preferred future (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Appadurai, 2004). Community well-being is an essential part of this future and through hearing different opinions throughout the CBT organisation process the needs of all the members are considered, enhancing social empowerment (Strydom, et al. 2018; Timothy, 2007). It also demonstrates the capacity of creativity and innovation, which is closely linked to the indigenous past of finding helpful tools for their fight (Winter & Boudreau, 2018). The organized activities through CBT help the locals to have a better overview and control over the happenings in the area leading towards political empowerment (Timothy, 2007). They are no longer just observers of the tourism development in the area but are taking actively part in it.

The community involvement during the tourism planning also enhances psychological empowerment for groups of people who might not always had a strong voice, like young members. Through giving them the right to decision-making, their opinions are recognised and given great value. In this sense, Watkins & Tacchi's (2008) theory of empowerment through relocating the voice towards less influential people is reinforced. Eglinton, et al. (2017) claimed that the decision whose voice is more relevant depends on its context. For the indigenous communities, it is especially important to find ways to engage the youth to keep them connected with the village and the culture, as they are the ones taking it over to future generations. In the past, many youngsters left the tribes in order to find educational and economic opportunities in the city, becoming detached from their heritage. These participatory initiatives are an essential way to trigger their creativity and to provide them with impactful tasks.

For many communities, tourism means education (MacCannell, 2001). Through raising awareness about having respect for people and the nature, indigenous ideologies are expanded. Consequently, cultural empowerment can be created, as the importance of their knowledge for our daily lives and management processes is fortified (Resta et al., 2004). Tourism has become an important tool for the recognition of indigenous cultures and clarifying misperceptions. Participants stated, that when tourists come to the village they expect to see painted natives doing



rituals. But the truth is often different and tourism is used as an eye-opener. There is a risk that these initial expectations create dissatisfying experiences (Mknono, 2016), which is why there is a strong need for previously communicating with the tourists about what they can anticipate from their trip. The pride of revealing the cultural habits with others was clear in every conversation with the participants. It shows the strong identity, which indigenous people have and the willingness to share it with the world, enhancing the psychological empowerment (Timothy, 2007).

Indigenous communities often lack governmental support for their subsistence. However, they managed to create networks, mostly with private or academic institutes. The community of people sharing the same interest in raising awareness about indigenous knowledge becomes bigger and goes further than just the villages themselves. The reciprocity and constant exchange in the relationship with external partners are important for joint learning and growth, which consequently lead to social empowerment. Furthermore, the political situation of indigenous people can be increased, as eventually, even the government seeks partnerships with the communities. These networks have also provided confidence and psychological empowerment, knowing that the SMEs can keep up with industries like tourism, as they have valuable insights something to offer for different stakeholders (Timothy, 2007).

An important aspect for the communities was the economic empowerment through tourism, whereas there are different forms of adaption. At first sight, it seems powerful that a village generates all its income through tourism because they are no longer dependant on governmental aid or donations. CBT has further brought the opportunity for local entrepreneurship, as the residents can act as guides or handcraft fabricants (Davison et. al, 2005). However, there is a high risk of relocating the economic dependency towards tourism. Now with the lack of tourist arrivals, the communities, who most relied on these incomes are struggling the most. To avoid this, there is a need to have alternative revenue sources. In Bocaina for example, they managed to maintain daily farming activities, which create basic resources for subsistence and tourism income is rather additional. Here, tourism is aimed to show these traditional activities, having more potential to be sustainable, as there is not a unique dependency on tourism. This strategy reaffirms Davison et al.'s (2005) definition of a successful CBT where local practices are promoted, respected and nurtured through tourism. Nonetheless, many members opted to dedicate themselves more towards tourism professions such as guides rather than farmers, as it is a less sacrificing work. People are able to generate an income with less effort, which contributes to the individual's well-being. It shows the necessity for the locals to carefully analyse the different outcomes of touristic professions on the long-term and determine which the most preferable future scenario would be (Singleton et al., 2009). This might include taking a step back from traditional activities, as long the alternatives can bring a long-term empowering development.

CBT has been seen as a powerful alternative to a damaging and less participatory tourism. It contributes to different levels of empowerment of traditional communities, as they are increasingly taking over the management and policy-making. The community involvement has also given the recognition of voices of youngsters, who are now important contributors for tourism planning. The knowledge exchange through educational tourism is crucial not only to nurture cultural habits but to contribute to the fight of rectifying misperceptions and receiving a stronger appreciation of traditional peoples. As new networks are formed, a stronger community



is built, which helps to obtain greater visibility among the society. CBT has also been generating important financial income for the communities, leading towards auto-sufficiency. However, there is a risk of being solely dependent on the visitor's expenditure. All in all, the CBT initiatives are empowering for traditional communities as long as they embrace local strengths and future visions within the planning process.

## 6.2. Difficulties And Opportunities Of The “Digital Bow”

While looking at digital challenges, the irregular internet connections and the lacking financial resources for hardware confirm the still present digital divide in Brazil (Aguilar, 2009; Lima & Weiler, 2015; da Costa & Paulino, 2013). Therefore, there is a need to consider alternatives. For instance, it is debatable whether the communities have to be online continuously. A strategic planning of the content could be helpful not only to clarify the community's goals but to organise when there is a need to be connected. The interaction with the audience is very important (Sharma & Carson, 2002). However, if this cannot happen due to connection problems, it should be communicated with transparency showing the visitors to be patient and understandable. Furthermore, to enhance the empowerment through digital use, there is a need for autonomous management of the devices (Singleton et al., 2009). There are many options to overcome complicated technological processes like video editing, in order to nurture and empower the local human digital know-hows (Van Dijk, 2005). For example, without the editing, a more real and authentic content might be created. Social media platforms do not only provide inexpensive options but through simple processes, authentic content can be created.

Indigenous people are frequently asked whether their traditional cultures are threatened through globalisation and the resulting modern technologies. However, this research has unanimously shown that the world 2.0 (or as the participants call it “digital bow”), actually turned out as a desired and powerful development, if applied in an appropriate way (Karakas, 2000). On contrary to the Eurocentric debates, indigenous people feel the desire of evolving and receiving additional knowledge (Battiste & Henderson, 2011). The risk of them losing their identity through the technologies is very low, as they have a clear understanding of who they are, what is good for them and which values they aim to preserve. The reasons for the loss of traditional traits in the past occurred due to cultural and social oppressions, land displacements, and the lack of governmental support (Ferreira, 2015, Silva de Carie & de Oliveira Lima, 2018).

The confidence of the opportunities for indigenous empowerment through the digital presence is strongly present among the results. First, the participants recognised communication tools as a way to speak for themselves and raising cultural awareness (da Costa & Paulino, 2013). Their aim is to rewrite history showing it from an indigenous perspective. Through self-defined online representations, false images can be rectified, which still cause misinterpretations of indigenous cultures up until today. Second, digital communication has helped to not only overcome social but also physical isolation. This is also why the digital instruments are often referred to as the “digital bow” because it has enabled the communities to shoot the “arrow” beyond physical borders reaching other traditional groups and citizens all over the world. These connections help to build networks and a broader community for the indigenous cause, fortifying social empowerment. Lastly, publicly declaring that they are strong and determined is an important step towards psychological and political empowerment. The internet has provided a space to obtain knowledge, which makes it harder for external bodies to influence indigenous people. Through showing self-esteem as well as the ability of negotiation, governmental and corporate entities



have more difficulties to ascertain policies over common resources, which might be harmful to indigenous villages. The urgency of keeping up with the developing world is therefore necessary to combat being further pushed towards the margins of society (Selwyn & Facer, 2007).

There are still many pitfalls with the presence in a digital environment, such as insufficient internet connection, financial resources, and usage skills. However, this did not hamper indigenous people to see opportunities in the new technological tools aiming to rectify the controversy about losing their identity. Through portraying their histories within a digital environment they aim to rewrite the past from an indigenous perspective, raising awareness about their culture. The “digital bow” further offers a space to build networks and connections that reach beyond physical boundaries. Traditional people also educate themselves through the digital usage in order to have confidence for a stronger negotiation power with external bodies, leading towards psychological and political empowerment as well as societal inclusion.

### 6.3. Digital Channels And Practices

After analysing the challenges and opportunities of modern technologies, the ways on how indigenous people are implementing the digital usage are further evaluated. Channels like WhatsApp are mainly utilized for community purposes (Landzelinus, 2003). For instance, in the past, remote villages suffered from invasions, massacres, and illnesses. Without communication, there was no way to report these incidences and the help often came too late. Now with the digital communication people can be warned and assistance can be sent directly. WhatsApp is a channel that enables very targeted purposes. However, as one needs to possess the other’s contacts, the audience range is relatively low. Through social media platforms like Instagram, the published content can be seen by everyone. With an adequate use of hashtags, people with specific interests can even be filtered (Di Castri et al., 2002). There has been a strong movement of indigenous Instagrammers representing and promoting their culture. These initiatives are often led by young indigenous<sup>13</sup>, showing a great sense of creativity and pride for their heritage.

An important aspect of empowering digital use is the ability to have a space to express themselves orally and virtually. The ICTs are a way for the Natives to keep telling stories while strengthening the cultural traits. The participants used videos for transmitting spirituality through rituals for a targeted audience and informing about paintings or accessories on social media. The explanations of the cultural exposure are crucial in order to rectify misperceptions. A static picture or a simple video of a ritual would still leave space for individual interpretation. Therefore, adding a story about the background of a cultural process can enrich the understanding of the true meaning. Additionally, channels, where the audience can take actively part in the communication further provides the empowering knowledge exchange. The representatives repeatedly encourage the audience to communicate with them for joint learning.

The political statements and the public revelation of indigenous rights violations helped to raise awareness and finding supporters for the fight. Through constantly sharing information about the truth, more online space is filled with indigenous discourse. As there is an unlimited amount of information within the internet, all kinds of discourses are happening at the same time. It often occurs that the negative content, where natives talk about the backlashes and asking for donations, takes over. On one hand, this content is reasonable as they are currently facing many struggles (APIB, 2019). However, there is a need to give more attention towards positive

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<sup>13</sup> Between 20 and 30 years old



discourses, in order to create empowerment. For example, through donation petitions, indigenous people are relocated again towards a weak position of society. To avoid this, it is necessary to create predominant content that reveals indigenous' strengths and resistance. More serious and urgent matters can still be communicated but with a focus on illustrating the importance of indigenous heritage preservation.

The "digital bow" has been used for communication, cultural promotion, and political statements. However, the current pandemic situation has shown that there is a possibility to connect with people in a different way. Through the physical isolation, indigenous communities started online initiatives to educate others about the situation in the villages and to let people take part in their everyday life through live streams and videos. Activities, which normally would have taken place with visitors, are transformed into virtual events. Many communities have faced the need for alternative financial incomes, using online petitions for help. Others are also more frequently selling art crafts and jewellery on the internet showing the potential for economic empowerment (Timothy, 2007).

#### 6.4. The Rise Of A New Form Of Tourism

A remarkable finding of this research shows that there is a parallelism between the empowering stories of CBT and the opportunities of the "digital bow", as displayed in figure 8. Both actions build a dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous people, aiming to increase indigenous protagonism. First, this can take the form of having more control and knowledge over the policies and activities that occur in the villages. Second, both initiatives encourage silenced voices whether within the community themselves or the global society. Third, an important aim of tourism and the "digital bow" is to raise awareness about indigenous history and culture, in order to rectify prevailing misperceptions. The determination of doing so strengthens the indigenous self-esteem for the cause. Supporters for this indigenous fight are found through both initiatives creating networks, which are nurtured through constant knowledge exchange. Lastly, tourism has brought financial income for indigenous villages and new initiatives are rising to generate economic benefits through the "digital bow".



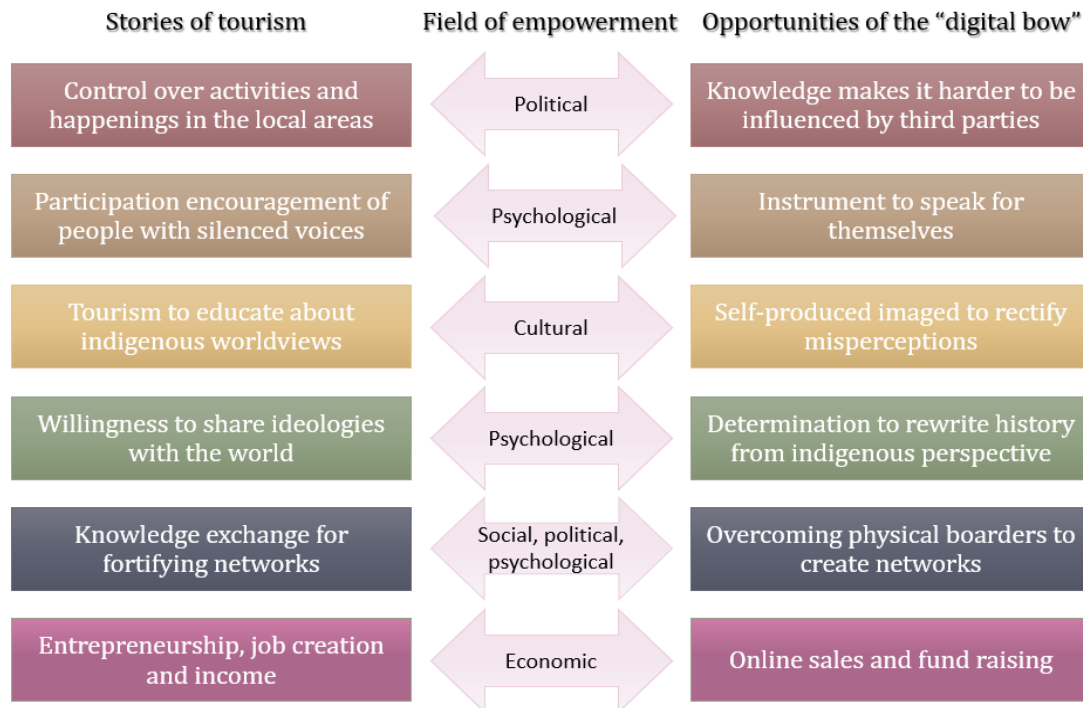


Figure 8. Parallellism between tourism & the "digital bow" (own elaboration)

These similarities invite to rethink the concept of tourism. What if the physical displacement of the traveller is taken away? What if tourism is seen as a space for cultural knowledge exchange? The "digital bow" has created an opportunity to do so, without the need of physically going to the villages. The pandemic situation has triggered the reinvention of the travel industry and alternative concepts such as virtual CBT are rising (Carr, 2020). It is not a completely new initiative, as indigenous people are already creating a cultural exchange through digital platforms. It is rather a different way of looking at the digital presence.

The participation and engagement of the audience play an important role here, as it represents the knowledge exchange that takes place during successful touristic activities. It further creates an emotional connection between the presenter and the audience. Not only the visitor feels closer to the community, but the locals are also socially empowered by receiving feedback and support from the audience (Timothy 2007). Through frequently documenting the current activities like the distribution of basic-needs packages, trust is communicated. Indigenous communities are being transparent about their situation. Hereby, it is important to show the reality, without exoticizing it in order to build an honest relationship with the audience.



Through virtual tourism, the steps of the customer journey might be overlapping (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). For instance, the purchase and the moment of travel can take place simultaneously, as the visitors are already engaging with the community members virtually. However, this does not impede the possibility for the visitor to travel physically at a future moment. On the contrary, the connection will likely be more valuable due to the previously created cognitive relationship (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The visitor will have learned about the values of the destination and will know how to behave once they get there. The digital presence can therefore further be an alternative to damaging tourism. Through previously connecting with

the potential visitor, it makes it easier to filter out who is genuinely interested in a cultural exchange with the communities and who is just a “pass-by” visitor.



Figure 9. Handmade raffle winnings (personal communication with Aldeia Pataxó Paraty)

Despite the social benefits, which the digital tourism has shown, there is still a need to find ways that also provide an economic income, just as CBT did before the Corona crisis (Graburn, 1976; Almagor, 1985). Many communities are selling handicrafts online. Others have introduced creative initiatives of organising raffles (figure 9), however, they are still on a small scale as it comes with difficulties. First, some have never sent things via mail and have no experience in doing so. Second, the recent pandemic situation limits community members to leave the villages. Consequently, the discourse of petitions for donations is more present. Alternative ways to bring economic empowerment through virtual tourism can be to provide classes about specific skills or to organise concerts or events with an “entrance fee”. Once again, it is necessary for each community to identify their strengths and how to convert them into successful strategies of online CBT.





## 7. Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate, explore and reflect on the potential of online presence strategies for CBT as a way to bring empowerment for indigenous communities. To find answers to the research question a qualitative research of Brazilian indigenous people through a mix of active and passive online methods was conducted, while taking into consideration postcolonial paradigms.

Indigenous communities have been suffering from oppression and false representations from dominant cultures since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Within the last 40 years, there has been an increase in public recognition of indigenous rights. However, these legal regulations often did not leave the paper and the Natives are consequently taking private actions, such as agriculture, tourism, and public activism, in order to increase their economic subsistence and visibility. Brazilian indigenous people have recently faced several backlashes under the current government and the pandemic situation, which show the urgency of finding alternative ways to contribute to their fight. Within the past, they have been increasingly using modern technologies as a support to reach protagonism and despite some difficulties, these initiatives have proved to be powerful.

Through the obtained data of this study three themes have emerged: [1] Community participatory tourism as a powerful tool for self-determination and subsistence; [2] Technological difficulties, debates about modernization and rising resistance through the “digital bow”; [3] The pandemic situation created a space for creativity and confirmed the urgency of digital communication. First, different levels of empowerment could be identified through tourism, as the control over activities in the area is enhanced. All community members could take actively part in the process of CBT creation. Especially, the young members are involved to demonstrate their ambitions and creativity. The educational connections with the visitors are powerful, as the locals felt a greater recognition of their culture. Through these encounters, fortifying networks are built, which help the villages to be self-sufficient on social, political, and economic levels. Second, the digital presence played a significant role in the empowerment of indigenous people. Despite the difficulties and misperceptions, which many Natives faced when confronted with digital implementation, they unanimously recognized the opportunities to spread the traditional worldviews. The “digital bow” has provided a space to access knowledge, to project their own images, and to build a strong network which ranges further than the land of traditional villages. Lastly, recognising these opportunities, indigenous people have increasingly been using digital technologies for communication, cultural promotion, and raising political awareness. With the current travel restrictions, they have found new creative ways to use these platforms to connect with the audience. Educational sessions are taking place on social media channels, where the viewers take actively part in creating a virtual knowledge exchange.

The parallelism between learning about cultures during an empowering CBT and the current online strategies lead to the main thought of this research. Seeing tourism as a way to create a cultural knowledge exchange, without the necessity to be physically travelling from one place to another could be a way to reinvent the industry. The initiative of virtual tourism helps to connect with the audience or visitor on a personal level, which is empowering for the locals as they can network with people, who are genuinely interested in knowing and supporting them. Even when travelling will be possible again, the digital connections can be maintained in order to make use of the advantages. Despite this, there might not be a need for all communities to be equally digitally connected. There are still many villages that have a more traditional lifestyle with no



interest in a digital presence. Nonetheless, as long as there are strong leaders out there representing the indigenous peoples, they also include the most conventional communities, supporting their fight for recognition.

To build a successful engagement with the audience, digital storytelling might be a powerful approach. Through a process of reflecting on cultural values and personal experiences, these stories can enhance the expression and representation of indigenous identities. As people are encouraged to express themselves, digital storytelling has the potential to break classic hierarchical structures and empower those, who desire change but have been underpinned to articulate it so far. This is because the focus of digital storytelling lies within figuring out what individuals really think, feel and desire. Through adding this emotional content the audience is more likely to understand the indigenous thoughts and to rectify the existing misperceptions, which occur through static images and erroneous representations.

Furthermore, as the young community members are very skilled with social media channels, they play a crucial role in the development of an indigenous digital presence. Due to their creativity and ability for innovations, they are especially encouraged to bring virtual tourism forward. It is also an opportunity for them to teach and inspire other community members, which might be hampered from the technological usage due to lack of soft skills and courage. As their importance is already recognised by other community members, it is for the youngsters to enhance this and show that there are uncomplicated and inexpensive tools, which help to create a strong online presence.

This thesis does not come free of limitations and provides the opportunity for more studies to emerge. For instance, it delivers not the full body of research but rather an introductory insight into the most recent digital movement of different ethnicities. But in order to present more detailed information and elaborate practical online CBT strategies, it would be interesting to conduct a study focussing on one specific village and their unique aspirations. Furthermore, this research had a focus on understanding indigenous perspectives. However, tourism does not occur without travellers. Therefore, it would be important to receive an insight into the audience's feelings and behaviour patterns during the engagement with the locals of a destination.

The intention of this thesis is to inspire others to listen to those voices, which have been undermined for too long. Indigenous cultures include a vast knowledge for us to learn and values such as the respect for the nature and others could become important assets for a sustainable living or management processes. With this, you dear reader are thanked for your attention and invited to further reflect on the following:

*Where would our world be, if we would have listened to the voices of the guardians of the earth earlier?*



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## 9. Appendices

### Appendix A

#### A 1. List Of Interviews

Table 2. Interviews

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Community contact</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Duration in minutes</i>
<b>Interviewee 1</b>	40-49	F	Non-indigenous	Academician, participant community projects	Aldeia Pataxó Hã-Hãe Paraty	15.05.20	30
<b>Interviewee 2</b>	40-49	M	Non-indigenous	Academician, Graphic Designer	OTSS	22.05.20	30
<b>Interviewee 3</b>	30-39	M	Pataxó Hã-Hãe	Tribal Chief	Aldeia Pataxó Hã-Hãe Paraty	25.05.20	30
<b>Interviewee 4</b>	30-39	M	Non-indigenous	Professor, developer of scholar indigenous tourism	Aldeia Pataxó Hã-Hãe Paraty	27.05.20	45
<b>Interviewee 5</b>	30-39	M	Caiçara	Communication director Bocaina	OTSS	03.06.20	45
<b>Interviewee 6</b>	30-39	F	Potiguara	Teacher and palenist	Aldeia Marracana	03.06.20	60
<b>Interviewee 7</b>	20-29	M	Pataxó	Social Media influencer	Aldeia Coroa Vermelha	04.06.20	60
<b>Interviewee 8</b>	40-49	M	Pataxó	Specialist in audio visuals for indigenous content	Aldeia Pataxó Hã-Hãe Paraty	09.06.20	45
<b>Interviewee 9</b>	60-69	M	Tukano	Tribal chief	Aldeia Marracana	10.06.20	60
<b>Interviewee 10</b>	40-49	M	Non-indigenous	Tour operator owner	OTSS	12.06.20	45

#### A 2. Interview Item List

*Example indigenous members:*

**(1) Context:**

- (a) Can you tell be about the village? How many people live there?
- (b) Can you tell me about a typical day as an indigenous leader?

**(2) Indigenous culture:**

- (a) What are the most important elements of your culture? Can you tell me a personal story what makes these values so important in your life?



- (b) Can you tell me a story about the difficulties your village is facing?
- (c) What are your dreams for the community?

**(3) Tourism:**

- (a) What are the values that you are trying to transmit to the tourists?
- (b) How did the development of tourism in the village take place?
- (c) Can you tell me a story when you felt the most recognition of your people through tourism?

**(4) Digital practices:**

- (a) Now in these times of isolation which communication channels are you using to connect with other people?
- (b) Can you tell me a story of success that you experienced through digital connections?
- (c) Which message would you like to transmit through these online connections?
- (d) What are the difficulties of an online presence for your community?
- (e) Could you think of a practical way of online presence to raise awareness or even generate an economic income for your village?

### A 3. List of Instagram Live Streams

*Table 3. Instagram Live Streams*

<b>Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	21.04.2020	Open live to answer audience questions
2	27.04.2020	Indigenous peoples & Coronavirus
3	23.05.2020	Explanations of face paintings
4	27.05.2020	Support during pandemic
5	03.06.2020	Indigenous paintings of different ethnicities
6	03.06.2020	Indigenous culture and values
7	05.06.2020	Indigenous music
8	07.06.2020	CBT
9	08.06.2020	CBT
10	08.06.2020	Indigenous education
11	10.06.2020	Union among indigenous peoples
12	10.06.2020	CBT
13	18.06.2020	Indigenous culture and stories
14	23.06.2020	Indigenous paintings
15	23.06.2020	Ancestral knowledge and connections
16	25.06.2020	Differences among ethnicities
17	25.06.2020	Indigenous youth
18	03.07.2020	Indigenous culture



## Appendix B

### B 1. Interview Transcripts

This chapter provides two examples of interview transcripts. Further transcripts of the conversations with the participants are available on request.

#### *B 1.1. Interview 3*

Date: 25.05.2020

Duration: 30 minutes

Setting: WhatsApp video call

Person 1: Anna Maria Freitag

Person 2: Cacique Pataxó Hã-Hã-Hãe

- 1 **Person 1:** Tell me, how is the village? How many people live there? Can you tell me a little bit?
- 2 **Person 2:** In our community we are 15 families. With 52 people. We live in houses next to each other. We have nothing in division. Everything we do we do it for the community. We work this way. This is how we always connect with our culture, everytime a bit more. We show the culture to our young ones. We work this way. We live this way. Our biggest aim is to protect our mother nature. We were born for this. We were born to take care of the nature. So that is our objective. Always taking care of nature, so noone will hurt her. And through this, we survive, because people live through nature.
- 3 **Person 1:** And you are the chief of the community right?
- 4 **Person 2:** Yes, I am the chief.
- 5 **Person 1:** Can you tell me a story of a typical day as a chief? What work do you do?
- 6 **Person 2:** The task of a chief is to always guide the community. He is responsible for the village. What happens inside the village. What happens inside the village. He always has to be aware of everything. It is as if he were a mayor of the city. The only difference is that we do it out of love. We don't get anything for it, you understand. And we have a respect for our community. And the community respects the chief. Then we work with love for our village. For the development of the village. And always taking care of our people. I put myself in front of anything to defend my people. So we work with love.
- 7 **Person 1:** It's a very honourable job. And you were receiving tourists before the pandemic?
- 8 **Person 2:** Our project works with tourism. And it also works with the school. It works a lot with the university. We bring the universities to the village. We do various projects with a reforestation aims. We are creating a trail of the captive, where it speaks a little of the history of the indigenous, showing how they lived in ancient times. We teach bioconstruction, which is the construction out of raw material that are selected from the forest. We do these projects and also have the activity of telling stories and when the person also wants to stay overnight in the village, we do a ritual. We also use many medicinal herbs for healing. And we have that space which is our holy house (Oca). We do all our activities to be receiving people and for them to want to come to visit.
- 9 We have the medicinal herbs. We trust, who heals is who has faith. We are there to pass our knowledge and to share our faith with him through the medicinal herbs. But he who heals is always faith. If he takes that medicine with the faith that he'll heal for sure, he'll heal himself.
- 10 **Person 1:** I would like to learn more about these activities. Maybe one day I will have the opportunity to go back to Brazil and learn more about these practices. Now with the pandemic how is the situation in the village?



- 11 **Person 2:** So now we're having a little trouble. Because we're working through tourism anyway. All the income we receive is thanks to tourism because we work selling handicrafts and medicinal herbs. So we are with the village closed. It's been three months with the village closed.
- 12 Then there are many families that depend on it. Who depend on handicrafts to get food. So we are having a very hard time today. But we have faith in our father Tupa who is god and everything he is doing is because he has a goal. So we always ask him to protect us and that this passes soon. Here in Brazil and also in the rest of the world.
- 13 **Person 1:** Yes everybody was affected in one way or another. What are the most important elements or symbols of your culture for you? Could you tell me a personal story of why these elements are so important in your life?
- 14 **Person 2:** So, we have a lot of important things. We have our headdress that is important. It is made out of feathers. A headdress means protection, the divine protection that we always use in our rituals. And we have our necklace that we always wear. I'll send you a video later so you can see what the culture is like. We have great faith in our father Tupa who protects us, like a shield. So when we're using our adherents, we are always protected by him.
- 15 I am Pataxó Ha Ha Hae. In the 50's we suffered a deflection from our village. There was a great genocide in our village. So today we are seeking strength. Because they killed many of our old people. Today we are rising again, from the bottom to the top. So we can always be (unhearable). We are refugees in our own country. So it is very difficult for us
- 16 **Person 1:** Now that you're talking about these difficulties, could you tell me story of the community about the situations you're facing?
- 17 **Person 2:** So, today we are in the village for 4 years. We are originally from Bahia. So we are 4 years in this village in Paraty. So when we arrived, people had a lot of prejudices. Because they said that we are not from the state of Rio, so we could not be here. So we went through this. We... just by changing the state they think we're foreign. As if we're not from our own country. That we have to stay there, because we were born there, and we have to go back there. But NO! we are free. We can go where we want to, understand?
- 18 **Person 1:** The earth is for everybody.
- 19 **Person 2:** Absolutely! So we suffer a lot from that. But today, through our culture, through our work, we are managing to change many minds, who thought that. The municipality believed we would bring difficulties. But not anymore. Today they are looking for collaborations with us, because they have seen that we bring something different. We came to bring income for the city, because today we are working with tourism. And today there are a lot of tourists just to visit the village. So we are also bringing development to the city. Many people think and look at us differently today. We are bringing something else. We are bringing a difference.
- 20 **Person 1:** I am glad to hear you are achieving that position. And that they accept your work. What's your dream for the community? What is the future that you want for them?
- 21 **Person 2:** So my dream, I think, is the dream of the whole community. That we take care of our space, so that our children have the same opportunities like we are having today. It is a place that has a very beautiful waterfall. It has a nature that is very intact. So my dream is for it to stay the way it is so that my community is not dependent on anyone to survive. So that it only depends on us, on our work to survive. So that is my biggest fight for us to be independent. That we do not need the government, governmental aid. That we do not need anything of that. Because when you are independent, you can do anything. So that's my goal, Work, and always looking for partnerships. Because the partnerships are what make us feel strong. When we have people that are always with us, we gain strength.



22 **Today we already have many partners who work together with us. Like schools, universities... That is very rewarding for us. Because there is nothing better than that, knowing that we have something to offer and that we are up to who wants to meet us, who wants to learn from us. We always talk about exchange of knowledge. Who comes to visit us, brings something and leaves with something. So we're always in exchange.**

23 **Person 1:** I totally agree. I believe there are many people in this world who want to know, to learn and to get to know better your culture. I send a lot of strength and opportunities for you to achieve that dream. Now in these times, when people cannot travel anymore, it would be interesting to find new ways to have this knowledge exchange, maybe through a digital way. So I wanted to ask you a few things about that. Are you using media now to connect with other villages or other people in the world?

24 **Person 2:** So today we do everything by cell phone. We are working with a culture group. We have a WhatsApp group that we have just formed. A group where we are passing... What we do in the village, we pass on to it. Because we have no signal in the village. We only get a signal in the city. So we make the videos and send them. We do the rituals and send them. We sing our rituals

and send audios or videos. So today we're working that way. It is a way that even if you are far away, you will always be close to us. Always by our side, through our rituals, through our activities. Today we are working that way. Passing the energy through the social networks, the internet.

25 **Person 1:** What social networks are you using?

26 **Person 2:** Today we use more Instagram and Facebook. Whatsapp too.

27 **Person 1:** Can you tell me a story about a success you had because of this digital connection?

28 **Person 2:** We did an activity on the 16th of May. The village had the four-year anniversary. So we did an activity where we invited the public to be our juror. And through the social networks we made them vote, who was the most beautiful couple, who wore the most costumes of the culture, who included the paintings... So we worked this way and thank god we had a great result. Everyone voted through the social networks. Everybody participated. That was pretty cool. It was something that we saw worked out well. They were not with us in the village but managed to follow our activities, our whole ceremony, through social media.

29 **Person 1:** This is an opportunity for you to be connected with the people and the people with you. You already said that in the village there is no internet. This is quite a difficulty. Can you think of more difficulties that you have with the use of the internet?

30 **Person 2:** Today we have this difficulty of not having energy. This is a problem, because we don't have internet in the village. We only have a generator there that can connect us to it from 6 o'clock to 10 o'clock. It is a problem because the internet always needs energy. But we're always trying to get the internet, so we can work better, because today everything is on the internet. We can do everything through the internet. We are already working with a project to put a solar panel, which is also a sustainable energy. So we are in this battle to get this solar panel and to get the other jobs done through this energy. With the internet we can work calmly.

31 **Person 1:** Do you think that presence in a digital environment can also be a threat to the indigenous traditions?

32 **Person 2:** So, we also have this step back with the internet. But it's like that, we work a lot to not let our young ones get carried away. We have control of everything. We are always trying to guide our young people not to forget our culture. Every week we practice our culture, our rituals. So even with the digital world we are always.. we have a time when have to forget about the digital world and touch our lives. To remember who we are... and always remember our culture because if we don't have our culture we have no identity. The indigenous identity is because of its culture.

33 **Person 1:** And young people are very important in this process because they will bring this culture to next generations.



- 34 **Person 2:** Of course, our young man will be the leader of tomorrow. Today I am a leader but if there is not a young man here, who will be a leader tomorrow we will lose the essence. So we have to prepare the young men for tomorrow, so he will rise as a chief. To receive the position of leader. We have for example the Paje and the young men have to suitable fit for it. So we don't lose the essence.
- 35 **Person 1:** What are the images and values that you would like to transmit through this digital communication? What is the message?
- 36 **Person 2:** So the message that we like to transmit and always protection and love. Today we all depend on it. Protection, love, affection and respect. We work through it. All these goals are what we always seek. To live in a better world we have to have all that. So we always try to pass on that vision to everyone. That we have to have affection, that we have to have respect for each other even if we have a different culture or religions. Because we have to respect for everyone. That is what we are looking for. Here in our village we receive evangelical, catholic... we receive people from the Umbanda. They have different religions but when they arrive in the village they also have to respect our religion. The Indian also has his culture. We just need to respect each other. So this is what we try to transmit. With affection and respect is the best way for us to be living.
- 37 **Person 1:** This difference in cultures also makes the world beautiful. That we can all learn from each other. We are not all the same but it is good to learn and grow.
- 38 We have reached the last question. It is something a little more practical. So, you have already talked about the event you did for the anniversary and I was very inspired by it. But could you think of some other way to share your stories with the world? To get this protection, this social recognition or even an economic income. Do you have any ideas?
- 39 **Person 2:** So we work more on the side of our culture. It is hard to think of something like that. It is about talking about our culture, spread a little bit about our culture. But these are things that we have to adapt to over time. Today if a person needs us to do a prayer for him. Or a ritual, even at distance. That already happened to a friend of us. Because he was not doing well and we were using social networks. We record the video, always asking for strength and protection and send him to feel the prayer at home. And through that he will receive the blessings too. So we work that way.
- 40 And there are also the handicrafts that we sell through social networks. is a way that we seek today to give... surviving through social networks.
- 41 **Person 1:** Thank you so much for all this information. I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to speak with you.
- 42 **Person 2:** I am going to invite you to meet the village as soon as the pandemic passes. To get to know this conviviality that we talked about. And the village will always be open to all of you. It will be an honor to welcome people from other countries.
- 43 **Person 1:** Thank you.
- 44 **Person 2:** And then you can also tell us a bit about life outside of Brazil. That way we can also learn a little from others.
- 45 **Person 1:** Thank you very much. If you have the opportunity to come here you are also always invited. You can count on me for anything.



## B 1.2. Interview 4

Date: 27.05.2020

Duration: 45 minutes

Setting: WhatsApp video call

Person 1: Professor

Person 2: Anna Maria Freitag

- 1 **Person 1:** (talking about Coronavirus) For them it is kind of hard, but they will resist. What we have here is, they say we have been resisting for 4 or 5 hundred years. For us that is just common sense. You guys are the ones experiencing this now.
- 2 **Person 2:** I can imagine they have always been fighting and now we are the ones put in that situation. So Lurdes told me that you have been working a lot with the community. Can you tell me a little bit about the project?
- 3 **Person 1:** Actually it did not start as work. It started as a personal thing. I had a personal contact. Well, I was once in an event from one of the universities where I teach and there was a law teacher. It was an event to show the extension projects. So she brought a student of hers, who was an indigenous to get to know better the logic of the white people society. So he came to study law. And they had a project together and he came all characterized to this event. And then I got fascinated that even someone, who lives in Brazil, who always had interest somehow in the indigenous culture and never ever had the opportunity to have a conversation with them. So I came to him and said that I did not realize that I have had this opportunity. "I would like to know about, where do you live, how is your life?". And then he said "Yeah now I am living in the city but I come from Bahia from a big tribe in Bahia with more than 3000 Indians, but now I am living in the city. There are some cousins of mine, who also came recently to Rio 10 years ago. And they just found another tribe close to Rio, in Paraty. And I am going there in two weeks, so if you want to get my Whatsapp just type it in." And then I wrote it down and I came with him (excitement).
- 4 It was an amazing experience because it completely changed. Suddenly in one trip it changed completely my perspective. I can still remember the fear that I had that moment. The fear of the unknown. Even being in the middle of this I really did not know. I remember the first time, I slept with my phone and my wallet in my pocket, think of "oh my god, what would happen, I am just in the flow in an indigenous settlement". And then in this first week in there, I forgot my things everywhere. So there I was already all the time going to the waterfall and then there was always a child running after me "eeeh, you forgot your camera! Take care of your phone! It's here" and I immediately started a very close relationship. I love children. So I started a very close relationship first with the children there. After that first week I immediately started coming back at least once a month. And suddenly I was seeing them more than my family. They kind of started becoming my family. And I started to have an intimate relationship with a lot of them. This first contact with the children, also with the teenagers, because of playing football and things like this. And the parents started liking it because I was always taking care of the children. It is really when I go there walking, then there are 10 children behind me walking. "Professor, professor" (imitating the children) They call me professor.
- 5 And... (pause) this is already four years ago. They had arrived one year before. So I have been part of four of five years of this tribe. First, in this personal connection. Then I was already in this state of family. There were pregnant girls. One of them, no.. btw. I was the first one she told that she was pregnant. And she asked me to be the godfather of the child. So then I started really feeling like family. And they really gave me a family.
- 6 And then I remember, I was always in the university saying "Oh this weekend I will go to the tribe, it is so nice. If someone wants to come with me and then one day two students wanted to come with me. They came the weekend. Then the next time I was there, other two students came. And then I started to realize that could become kind of a project to put the students in contact with them. Actually kind of using architecture as an excuse.



- 7 **Person 2:** How did you put the architecture in it?
- 8 ...Connection was broken...
- 9 **Person 2:** Does it work now?
- 10 **Person 1:** Yes, that happens all the time
- 11 **Person 2:** No worries
- 12 **Person 1:** But anyway, one of these times, I was coming back from the waterfall with these two students. And then I saw one of the families building a house. And then I got in and I started asking about it and a 12 years old child started teaching me how to do with their techniques, with the clay and with all the preparation of the wooden structure inside the clay wall. Then I started doing it with them. It is a very fun process. Because you keep throwing clay in other people's faces. On one side put your hand and then you put the other hand. And the clay must transpass your hand and heat, you need to put heat because of the consistency. It is all very fun. So I started to think that could be nice to bring students there. And then from time on we we already made like I think, the last one was the eight study trip.
- 13 The first ones we used to leave very early from Rio. It is 4 hours of a bus trip. Then we would get there around lunch time. We would eat there, their traditional food that they were preparing already. Then in the afternoon we had two lessons. I already prepared some material to show them in Rio before. They already had some basis and then they would show exactly in practice how it works. And then we would work the whole afternoon. We started building a guest house. The place where tourists could stay. **Because they had this plan of creating his ethnotourism.** (*thinking, laughing*) There are so many stories, I keep thinking which ones to open.
- 14 **Person 2:** Tell them all (*laughing*). I would like to hear them all.
- 15 **Person 1:** This place where they settled was very explored in a very kind of a deploration tourism. It was full of garbage and those kind of things, when they arrived. So they cleaned it all. And they had this complete different idea of tourism. Ecotourism mixed with ethnotourism. And that is a process that I helped with, bringing these first classes. It was the first time that they did it, with architecture students first. So for the first for or five trips we were building this big house to host us the next time we would come. So when we finished the house, we started coming for a whole weekend or a week. We would come on Friday and we would sleep in the house that we built ourselves. And after that we could do much more than only working with architecture.
- 16 We could do demonstrations of the rituals. Spending the night with them is totally different than just spending the day. Part of their culture is sitting around the fireplace at night and telling stories. So it grew like this and it is amazing how it really moves every student, because we just get in touch with another culture. I know Europeans do a lot of travel much more than Brazilians. When we travel it's often inside Brazil, which is already a difference, but it is a big shock when Brazilians get in touch with such a different culture.
- 17 **Person 2:** Which is even part of the own country, of the own culture...
- 18 **Person 1:** There are a lot of things from their culture, which we have already appropriated and our culture is a big mix between indigenous roots, African roots of the slaves, and European style of life. Later on with an ideological colonisation of the US also comes another layer. But when we get in touch with their particular culture, the raw culture, it is amazing how many things we realized suddenly that we grow up thinking that is the way it is and actually it is not. It is culture. I compare a lot with the shock of reality that I had when I went living abroad for the first time.
- 19 **Person 2:** I am a tourism student, so for me my initial project actually was to see how this connection with visitors can help the communities to reach the social recognition and international recognition especially. And what are the practices that can be taken to also keep the traditional culture and not just transform it into a touristic product.





- 20 **Person 1:** Your focus of your study is very interesting. This ethnotourism thing grew after a hard situation. Because they left their original tribe in Bahia, in the South of Bahia because of the violence just like 500 years ago when farmers wanted to invade and coming in the middle of the night and just shot inside the houses with children inside and things like this. So there was a certain moment, on trunk of this family that the grandfather, the grandmother, 8 children and their 20 grandchildren decided that it was time to leave. That they wanted to go to Rio de Janeiro. Then they started coming down from Bahia to Rio. When they reached the state of Rio, they found this region that they felt somehow that was the place, with their connection.
- 21 **Their ancestral connection.** And that is a beautiful story. Because the grandmother was from one ethnicity called Tupinamba, They are Pataxo Ha ha Hae, which is a derivation when it is a Pataxo with another tribe. So the great-grandfather is Pataxo and the great-grandmother is Tupinamba. And when they got there, she said she felt that this was the place, that was the place, that was the place... Later on, with more people visiting and researchers coming, they discovered that her ancestrals the Tupinambas had already lived in that exact place.
- 22 **Person 2:** Ooooh this is wonderful. I am having goosebumps.
- 23 **Person 1:** Yes, everytime I tell this story I get goosebummps. Because they have a really strong connection with their ancestors. But about how tourism can help became clear for me, when they got close to this land, they still could not find a way to settle themselves in a peaceful environment. First, they went to these small very poor cities close to Rio, which is close to where they are now. & they stayed for around 8 years. First, they tried to go to a place and then they were sent away. And then they just went to live in a kind of favela house. This favela city. The whole city is a bit like a favela. And they lived in the most poor part of it with a lot of self-employed people. So the cacique of the tribe started working as a driver, another one started working as a servant as a construction worker. The other ones went to wash dishes in the restaurants... Things like this. And that was the moment when they were most far away from their culture. Living in a favela, working in self-employment. And then they found the land that they decided that would be it, made plans and they went there one night and took it from a farmer. They managed to settle there, which was not easy. For four months for example, they did not sleep. It is an occupation. And then for a long time they could not sleep. There was always one keeping guard and the farmers from around would come and shoot to the sky and threaten them. And they were always afraid and not understanding who they are. They thought there were more than 200 indigenous, just because of the noise. But it was not. There were just a bunch of them. There was always this conflict.
- 24 But after a while. After these first four months they started being able to open more. To receive people. There is a beautiful waterfall inside the tribe that used to be touristic. The first thing they did when they got there was taken tons of garbage from the water and after 4 months they started opening it on the weekend And then the tourists started to get to know them. And they are very very welcoming when they do not feel threatened. Especially this empathy is very open. They love what they call intercultural connections. So they started making a lot of friends. There are six or four other tribes around the area. Guaraní tribes. And Guaraní are more introvert. They kind of go on top of the mountain and cut the contact. And with the Pataxo it is pretty much the opposite. They love to interact but to fight as well, when they feel they have the right for it.
- 25 There have been some disputes in the city. The mayor was completely against them, saying that they did not owe that land. Only the Guaraní who were there. So for a long time they were put aside. And even in the councils of the indigenous of that area. But as people started getting in, they started captivating people like me and people from other professions as well. And then suddenly people started seeing how much they are welcoming. They had a very quick process of almost getting their official demarcation. The municipality itself started seeing how much tourism could bring. That was a lot



because there was this other indigenous guy that supported them for the first time. A very young guy. He participated in a lot of very well known projects. The occupation of the Aldeia Marracana. This guys was the first one to get there.

26 **Person 2:** The fact that I cannot be there phisically made me change my research focus on how this digital connection could help them. I have been seeing a lot of virtual presence of indigenous people on social media, posting a lot of things. And now I am trying to figure out how this could be an opportunity for them. Especially now, that with Covid people cannot travel anymore. What to you believe to what extent can the digital environment overcome this situation and bring social and economic benefits?

27 **Person 1:** These kind of networks, who already work with indigenous people are trying to help in this way. Especially in the beginning of the pandemic there was a lot of networks for donations. That was the first phase that I saw and participated. And now I have seeing a couple of them trying to sell their things online. And the first digital contact that they have is the WhatsApp. Because they do not have internet all the time, so its when they go to the city to do something, so it gets connected.

28 It was funny because now they wanted to do the anniversary of the tribe. The fourth anniversary. They were planning it a lot. It was meant to be a big party, to call indigenous from the whole Brazil. And they were super happy about it organizing. And then came the pandemic. So they tried to organise something online for these partners, who are not from there to be able to participate. It was very cute. They created a group with a lot of people from the whole Brazil and they tried to kind of simoultaneously transmit the celebrations with a very bad signal. So they were more doing videos and then sending to this group on Facebook and then try and create some participation of us. They called us to be the judges of the fashion show. There were three different groups for the whole day of celebrations. So they would do sports and games and everything. And then most of the games were connected to their practices like bow and arrow or with the salabatana. Like this one here, I have a lot of objects from them here. (*showing some items*) One of the themes was that one couple from each group would make the best characterisation. And make kind of a fashion show. They all produced a lot and we had to vote. So they are looking for these other type of connections. It is interesting to see that in this moment they could have just celebrated themselves. But they are really eager to keep this communications.

29 **Person 2:** What do you think are the main challenges to do so apart from the problem with the internet connection?

30 **Person 1:** Well there is a note that we in Brazil have. At least my generation. You know probably one song that lots of Brazilian musicians recorded together "Demarcacao Ja". There is a 12 minutes video with a lot of Brazilian artists giving their reasons to say how important it is to demarcate the indigenous. One of the artists says one thing that is very interesting: "an indigenous can have a mobile, a TV or en electrical boat, he won't stop being an indigenous because of that.". Those things are not what make them indigenous. What makes them indigenous is the connection with nature and traditions and the ideals they want to have and to keep. There are a lot of people here who think, when the television gets introduced in the tribes it destroys the day by day of them.

31 It is parcially true. It happens a lot. I have seen the difference in the tribe. There was absolutely no light in the beginning. So every night that I spent there was a whole family together around the fire, talking and talking. After, they arranged some way of light. A generator that you can turn on and off from 6am to 10pm, which also gives them access to WhatsApp. So all of them started having mobiles and WhatsApp. Nowadays the nights are not really everybody together. There are some that each one of them are in their house watching the television. It does have a little bit of truth in that. But it what I said. It is not that what makes them connected to their culture and they keep connected in many other ways.



- 32 **Person 2:** It is also very interesting, when I talk to people here, and then I tell them about my projects and they immediately answer "indigenous people they do not have phones!". People have such a misperception of it.
- 33 **Person 1:** Totally true. Also here in Brazil. Even I got surprised when the first indigenous person that I talked to and he said write down my WhatsApp. I got surprised. And everytime I tell the story people laugh at this part. Because it is kind of a contrast. "Oh an indigenous with a mobile" people put it as if it was contradictory: indigenous and technology, which is totally not.
- 34 **Person 2:** So the presence in the digital environment could maybe also help to overcome these misperceptions. It could make people understand them better and what they are doing.
- 35 **Person 1:** Yeah that might be a very good question that you could ask to the indigenous themselves. I will send you some contacts of indigenous. They will not be able to do a video call with you, but you will be able to exchange some messages with patience.
- 36 **Person 2:** That would be wonderful. For me it is very important to talk to them, because I would like have their perception. Like what do they want to achieve? How do they want to present themselves? How do they want the world to see them?
- 37 **Person 1:** That is super important. They have a problem with anthropologists who used to come & get to know and talk for them. They even have a prejudice about anthropologists. If you say you are an anthropologist... I had an advantage of saying to be an architect. They did not even know what that was. But I was a professor, not an anthropologist, so they felt more comfortable with me. So that is very important if you manage to get their direct voice.
- 38 **Person 2:** And through this digital presence, if they manage to control it themselves, they are the ones projecting those images. They are the ones projecting the voices. Could you maybe think of some practical ways how they can implement the digital presence?
- 39 **Person 1:** I think, they have been trying to live the most out of their culture. So the main thing, there is this tourism part. But the main thing is commerce of the crafts. So the most direct thing is that could help is this economical support that this could bring. The potentialisation of the sale. Because they are used to do the sale just live. So if digital world can help them to expand their commerce, which is the main activity that is connected to their work, I think that is the step number one.
- 40 **Person 1:** How to organise? I think most of the tourism itself. How to have a website... They had already started to have a Facebook and Instagram account... So they show these things online. Always kind of showing how to get there. I think there is a next step that could help without being invasive that is somehow instrumentalising them to still be the owners of the whole process but expand a lot their sales through the internet. So how to create the process for them to just incorporate it, take it to themselves and do every step and still be able to potentialise this public connection. This universe that they can reach. With their sale and with the organisations of their ethnic tourism.
- 41 **Person 2:** What about selling through retailers?
- 42 **Person 1:** Yeah, that is what they are doing nowadays. They try to sell to the tourists who just come to the tribe. To go to the waterfall or they go to the city, to the town close by to sell on the street. But then in this beginning when they were not welcome in the city there was a lot of fights, because the people who owned the stores were selling the products for 10 times more. They were complaining, because they were paying taxes and they were complaining. So if the whole process could be put in their hands. The whole



thing, from the production to the sale, in their hands with the digital presence. A way to organise themselves. That would be a big help for them.

- 43 **Person 2:** That would be more beneficial for them. What is it in terms of empowerment and gaining social recognition. Do you believe digital presence can help with that too?
- 44 **Person 1:** I do think so. I think it can overcome a lot of missinterpretations. We all know very little about them. In the schools we are untought of the history of our civilisation from one specific perspective. I think probably nowadays that is changing but like everything, these changes push the counterchange, like what is happening now in Brazil. I think making clear that this very recent process of getting these gadgets, this mobiles, computers and ever so. I think it can help with the social recognition. Showing a more true story of their lifes. There are a lot of ghosts that the society has created for centuries.
- 45 **Person 2:** What about being a potential to receive more political influence? If they have more people supporting them. I have the feeling if there is a stronger voice out there it might be a chance to overcome the political problems they face.
- 46 **Person 1:** Yeah, there is a bit this. I think the connection between them that just now has been created through these digital networks, have been more powerful. Our society, our people are also embracing them together. But there is this thing, they do not want anybody to talk for them. I think it is more of giving them a direct voice. Which just now for the first time we have a in congress of Brasil, that one is indigenous. Which is completely crazy. But I think now digital revolution reaching them, starting to reach them now, the main benefit that they can get is this direct voice of them telling themselves their stories.
- 47 **Person 2:** Yes that can be powerful. About tourism... We all know that tourism can also do a lot of damage to the communities. Especially, when the products are more turned into meeting the tourist demand and not looking too much on the cultural values. So what do you think about it, if the connection with the potential visitors through an online environment could lower these possibily of damage? Let's say, for example, if they can enter a house via a 3D presentation, instead of physically being there to somehow replace it virtually.
- 48 **Person 1:** Yeah, I think there are two sides of it. The experience of really visiting it, can absolutely not be substituted by this. What you are saying from their side, indeed it would be less invasive. There is no doubt that it would be less invasive and I can understand. I see this side that you are saying. It is not very much what I experienced because it is a very small group. But I also remember that in bigger groups, where they have a very consolodated tourism programm, indeed it transforms themselves in a fake version of themselves. That is indeed a bit dangerous. Yeah, maybe digital possibility can help in that. I do not think substitute in that but diminising the pressure over there, with less tourist present. Dividing the public, tourists that are more... there are tourists and tourists... There are different levels. Of course, someone who goes to really be part of it, is much more interesting than who goes just because "yeah i was passing here & I heard this so I might just pass and take a photo for my instagram & go". For this type of tourist, accidental tourist almost, I think digitalisation of this and of the sales and of the experiene, of everything could be very beneficial yeah.
- 49 **Person 2:** Yeah sometimes it is relly difficult to filter out who of those peopel are really here because they want a genuine connection and who are just there to take a picture. It is not easy in terms of marketing and attraction of them.
- 50 **Person 1:** Yes, that is true. I can for sure give you some contacts of the tribe and some other ethnies. You can always say that I gave you these contacts and that you are doing this research, so they feel more comfortable. & I will look for some messages that I have



here with groups of indigenists, white people who study indigenous.

51 **Person 2:** That is wonderful, I am so grateful. Thank you so much, also for giving me the opportunity to talk to you. These stories were wonderful. I could listen to them forever. I hope we will get the chance to meet in person one day.

52 **Person 1:** Whenever you get the chance to come to Brasil I will take you there. It was a pleasure and i am happy that you are doing this project. Good luck with your studies.

## B 2. Theme Structure

Table 4. Composition of themes

Theme	Category	Codes (Examples)
<b>“Community participatory tourism as a powerful tool for self-determination and subsistence”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous values</li> <li>• Tourism activities</li> <li>• Empowerment through tourism</li> </ul>	<p><i>“They love what they call intercultural connections.” (Interview 4, pos. 24)</i></p> <p><i>“When you take a tourist to get to know agriculture, fishing or a ritual it is what we do all our life. The person is proud to show that. He has a property over it.” (Interview 5, pos. 35)</i></p> <p><i>“Everybody is involved. The whole community takes part in it.[...] Who decides is always the collective” (WhatsApp 4, pos. 51 + 63)</i></p>
<b>“Technological difficulties, debates about modernization and rising resistance through the digital bow”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digitalisation challenges</li> <li>• Modernization debate</li> <li>• Empowering opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><i>“My computer is in terrible conditions. Here in Brazil there is no money. There is no way to buy a new computer.” (Interviewee 8, pos. 31)</i></p> <p><i>“Technology is a great tool for us to show our reality, which was neglected in Brazil.” (Instagram Post 3)</i></p>
<b>“The pandemic situation created a space for creativity and confirmed the urgency of digital communication”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital activities</li> <li>• Pandemic innovations</li> </ul>	<p><i>“We had a colleague who was not feeling well, so we made a video asking for strength and protection and we sent it to him. This way he could feel the prayer and the blessing at home.” (Interview 3, pos. 37)</i></p>

