

# The Curitiba's (Paraná) Urban-Tourist Space in the Online Photographs: An Analysis on Instagram.

O Espaço Urbano-Turístico de Curitiba em Fotografias Online: uma análise do Instagram.



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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze how urban-tourist spaces are represented in online photographs shared by users of the social network Instagram, focusing on the tourist destination of Curitiba (PR). Initially, we conducted documentary and bibliographic research to develop categories for analyzing photographs that depict urban tourist spaces. Subsequently, we performed content analysis on Curitiba's Instagram page to categorize the photographs that align with the established categories for this research. The primary findings of this paper discuss the representation of urban tourism shared on Instagram through photography. To achieve this, it is necessary to narrate how tourists and residents represent each category (or variable) on social media. One implication of this research is that utilizing content generated by tourists and locals can offer a fresh perspective on urban spaces. Additionally, a limitation of this study is the overly positive outlook that people often express on social media. Finally, this article establishes a discussion rooted in studies of the morphology, landscape, and imagery of urban spaces used as a primary context for understanding urban tourist spaces.

**Keywords:** Urban Tourist-Space. Online Photographs. Instagram. Curitiba-PR.

## RESUMO

O objetivo deste estudo é analisar como o espaço urbano-turístico tem sido representado em fotografias postadas por usuários da rede social Instagram, tendo como objeto de estudo o destino turístico Curitiba (PR). Para isso, foi realizada uma pesquisa bibliográfica e documental para o desenvolvimento das categorias de análise das imagens que representam o espaço urbano-turístico. Em seguida, aplicou-se a análise de conteúdo na página Curta Curitiba no Instagram, a fim de identificar e classificar as fotografias de acordo com as categorias definidas. Os principais resultados apontam para a forma como a representação urbano-turística é disseminada no Instagram por meio das fotografias. Para compreender essa dinâmica, foi necessário desenvolver uma narrativa que demonstrasse como cada categoria (ou variável) foi divulgada nas mídias sociais pelos turistas e, em alguns casos, por moradores locais. Como implicação da pesquisa, destaca-se que a construção da imagem de um destino baseada no conteúdo gerado por turistas e residentes pode oferecer novas perspectivas sobre os espaços urbanos. No entanto, uma limitação do estudo está na tendência das mídias sociais de favorecer uma visão otimista da realidade compartilhada. Por fim, este artigo estabelece uma linha de discussão fundamentada em estudos sobre morfologia, paisagem e imagem da cidade, utilizando esses elementos como premissas básicas para a compreensão do espaço urbano-turístico.

**Palavras-chave:** Espaço Urbano-Turístico. Fotografias Online. Instagram. Curitiba-PR.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The representation of urban-tourist spaces becomes a research presupposition because cities, with their multiple characteristics, can be seen as 'living' and 'pulsating' entities for those who enjoy them. Thus, photographs begin to be used to make the 'intangible' 'tangible,' raising discussions about everyday situations experienced by individuals in society (Li et al., 2018; Fabricius & Eriksson, 2017).

Castrogiovanni (2000) emphasizes the city's dynamism, noting that as observers contemplate and recognize its peculiarities, the more familiar the urban landscape seems, the more the differences become apparent. Lynch (2011) contends that the city is perceived as a construction in space over



extended periods. Moreover, Tuan (2013) states that the city serves as a center of meanings, par excellence, due to its many visible symbols.

Vera et al. (2011) discuss the city as a tourist destination, demonstrating that its use has transformed into a differentiated and unique spectacle through 'seduction' strategies and the potential for integrating new and distinct functions into spaces traditionally considered part of the urban landscape, thereby creating new urban attractions to draw in tourists. Once viewed as homogeneous, space is seen as lived through experiences, where each encounter it uniquely (Kozel, 2010; Tuan, 2013).

Scarles (2012) and Scherer (2002) clarify that a city's most valuable asset as a tourist destination is its unique character, encompassing its sights, sounds, scents, landscapes, and overt and subtle charms. Considering the ongoing discussion about urban spaces and their role as tourist destinations, it is crucial to highlight the concept of urban-tourist space, which refers to the presence and distribution of tourist attractions and the image conveyed to future visitors who will experience this space.

The incorporation of photography in studies about urban spaces and cities as tourist destinations is significant, as highlighted by Possamai (2008:70), who states that "photography has positioned itself as an instrument capable of building a visual representation of the urban, making the colossal city reducible to an intelligible two-dimensional image within reach " (translated by the authors). Man (2016) and Qian and Heath (2019) emphasize that globalization and the explosion of social media are central to the development of contemporary tourism, as they facilitate the sharing of photographs tourists take.

The studies discussing photography in the context of space representation aim to highlight the complexity of locality, referring to the place's 'appearance,' which includes the landscape, climate, natural features, cultural elements, cuisine, art, and folklore, as well as the history of the population's customs and behaviors (Perinotto, 2013). In addition to this



discussion, it is worth noting that people have increasingly begun using digital photography to share their travels to various tourist destinations (Ting et al., 2015; Lyu, 2016; Wearing & Foley, 2017; Peretó et al., 2018; Winter & Adu-Ampong, 2021).

Therefore, understanding the urban-tourist space through a visual method is essential for touristic studies, as it has become increasingly clear how individuals depict the various places they visit during their travels (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Taecharungroj & Mathayomchan, 2020; Egger, 2023). Consequently, the primary objective of this research is to explore how the urban-tourist space is represented in online photographs shared by users on the social media platform Instagram, focusing on the tourist destination of Curitiba (PR). This investigation's primary question is: How has the urban-tourist space been depicted in online photographs? In this context, we examine how individuals share photographs with the tourist space as the main element.

As a methodological approach, bibliographic and documentary research was used to develop categories of photographs that analyze urban-tourist space shared by Instagram users. Therefore, qualitative aspects were employed to discuss the content necessary to verify the representation of urban-tourist space in online photographs, as debated in the foundational paper by Donaíre and Galí (2011).

The analysis categories of urban space were integrated with discussions about urban-tourist representations. To achieve this, the perspectives outlined by the following authors have been applied: Cullen (1983), Boullón (2002), Lamas (2004), and Lynch (2011). Subsequently, we conducted content analysis (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; White & Marsh, 2006) on the Curitiba Instagram page during 2023 and the initial months of 2024, isolating the photographs that can be utilized for our discussions.

It is crucial to note that the internet, social media, and mobile devices have transformed tourists. Once seen as mere spectators, they are now active content creators who enhance experiences at tourist destinations (Costa &



Perinotto, 2017; Lee et al., 2023). Therefore, the topics covered in the current research debate encompass the methodological approach and a discussion of results, where theoretical contributions to the subject and the research findings will be examined simultaneously.

## 2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.

As a methodological approach, this article utilizes bibliographic and documentary research to develop categories for analyzing photographs of urban-tourist spaces shared by Instagram users. Thus, qualitative aspects were employed to understand the content necessary to verify the representation of urban- tourist spaces in online photographs, discussed as a foundational premise in the works of Donaíre and Galí (2011). Table 01 presents the broad categories used in our analysis.

Table 01: Photograph Analysis Categories

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Touristic Offer</b> | Urban                 |
|                        | Nature                |
|                        | Historic and Cultural |
|                        | Entertainment         |

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2025) based on Donaíre and Galí (2011).

The application of more comprehensive categories for analyzing photographs stems from the need to verify issues related to the tourist destination, specifically how urban attractions are represented in shared photographic images. Table 02 summarizes the concept concerning analyzing urban-tourist space representation in this context.

Table 02: Analysis Categories: Urban-tourist Space.

|                        |                                |  |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Touristic Offer</b> | <b>Urban</b>                   | It is carried out through the visual narrative of figures in urban space, that is, through streets, avenues, squares, and neighborhoods, which may or may not be in communion with nature present in the city or be just an aspect of the urban space represented in its fullness. |
|                        | <b>Nature</b>                  | Issues relate to the nature aspects that could stand out and be found in the places to be photographed.  |
|                        | <b>Historical and Cultural</b> | Cultural and historical things the city has in its space.  |
|                        | <b>Entertainment</b>           | Representations about the city's entertainment and what is on offer related to this premise.   |

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2025) based on Donaíre and Galí (2011).

In connection with the discussion on urban-tourist representations, we utilize categories related to urban space that were used to categorize the photographs on Instagram. Table 03 illustrates the main concepts and subcategories applied in this research stage.

Table 03: Analysis Categories: Urban-tourist Space.

| Urban-Tourist Representation | Categories                       | Concepts  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Urban                        | <b>Pathways</b>                  | Channels for the circulation of goods, people and ideas – whether used habitually, occasionally, or potentially – can be considered elements of unification and cohesion within urban space.  |
|                              | <b>Neighborhoods</b>             | These are medium or large-sized areas of a city where users can move around.  |
|                              | <b>Limits</b>                    | Linear elements that restrict users' physical access can be observed boundaries between different parts of a city, functioning as border elements. Examples include railings, ditches, hedges and gaps.   |
|                              | <b>Urban and Tourist Signage</b> | Guiding users (citizens) by directing and assisting them in reaching their intended destination.  |
|                              | <b>Street Furniture</b>          | A set of public or private objects and devices installed in public spaces.  |
| Nature                       | <b>Parks</b>                     | Green structures are identifiable elements within the urban fabric. They shape the city's image, possess distinct individuality, fulfill specific functions, contribute to urban composition and design, and help organize define and contain spaces. |
|                              | <b>Public Walks and Gardens</b>  |   |
|                              | <b>Squares</b>                   |   |
|                              | <b>Tree-lined streets</b>        |   |
| Historical and Cultural      | <b>Frames (Marks)</b>            | They have a strong connotation of 'place', perceived by many of the population who see them as physical, cultural, historical or psychological references for space construction.   |
|                              | <b>Nodal and Focal Points</b>    | Intensive focuses on which or from which the individual moves, which is the focus and synthesis of a neighborhood, a meeting point accepted by all.   |
|                              | <b>Public Places</b>             | Open or covered public spaces that allow citizens to enter and roam freely.   |
|                              | <b>Precincts</b>                 | Circulation objective: a place where traffic takes the citizen, which causes a feeling of identification in the individual.   |
|                              | <b>Monuments</b>                 | Construction work of architecture intended to transmit to posterity the memory of a great man or deed.  |
|                              | <b>Facades (Fronts)</b>          | Differentiation between constructions over time.  |
| Entertainment                | <b>Leisure and Recreation</b>    | It manages to captivate the audience through sensory stimulation, which can cause an emotional response in this audience, consequently, employing intentional actions, such as showing movies, shows,   |



|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | plays, restaurants, bars and nightclubs, among others. |
|--|--|--|

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2025) based on Cullen (1983), Boullón (2002), Lamas (2004), and Lynch (2011).

The analysis categories were based on the studies of Cullen (1983), Boullón (2002), Lamas (2004), and Lynch (2011), which discuss urban morphology and the visual representation of cities. These authors were employed to create the analysis categories due to the complementarity of their works. Even though they have different perspectives and academic backgrounds, the authors raised common questions that broadly address what is observed in urban space.

As a photo-sharing platform, Instagram has gained prominence as a social network primarily because of the innate human desire to share and remember moments and experiences deemed significant (Alves et al., 2017; Mukhina et al., 2017; Volo & Irimiás, 2021). Martensen et al. (2018) point out that Instagram is a free application where users can share their photographs and videos with approximately one billion active users, a milestone achieved in 2018 and expected to continue increasing, according to a report by Müller (2018).

Finally, to categorize photographs, we employed content analysis, a methodological tool that, according to Fearing (1953), can be regarded as a specific set of procedures for quantitative and qualitative communications content approaches. In summary, content analysis is a systematic observational research method used to evaluate the symbolic content of all recorded forms of communication (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Camprubí & Coromina, 2016; Lucibello et al., 2021).

Bardin (2011) and Lindgren et al. (2020) organize the content analysis into three stages: 1) pre-analysis; 2) material exploration, categorization, or coding; 3) treatment of results, inferences, and interpretation. In this regard, the present research, after defining the categories, conducted a pre-analysis of the content published on Curta Curitiba's Instagram page, a professional profile of the Instituto Municipal de Turismo de Curitiba that shares tourist experiences





from those who have visited or currently live in the city. When we conducted the analysis (in March 2024), there were 1,330 publications with videos and photos. It is important to note that people share their experiences using the hashtag #curtacuritiba, highlighting the best photographs from the city.

During the material exploration, categorization, and coding stage, we used the subcategories mentioned in Table 03 to select the most suitable photography. We sought an image that best represented Curitiba's urban-tourist space, which became a representation of the category outlined in the methodological approach. It is crucial to note that the selection of images adhered to predefined criteria, ensuring the content's relevance to the research.

Finally, since the research is qualitative, it presents its results distinctly; that is, in the theoretical discussions regarding the categories emphasized in the methodological framework, the photographs serve as 'justification' for the developed discussion. In the following sections, we present the theoretical debate (based on the categories illustrated in Table 03) and the prominent photographs embodying the presented theory.

### **3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **3.1. URBAN-TOURIST SPACE REPRESENTATION**

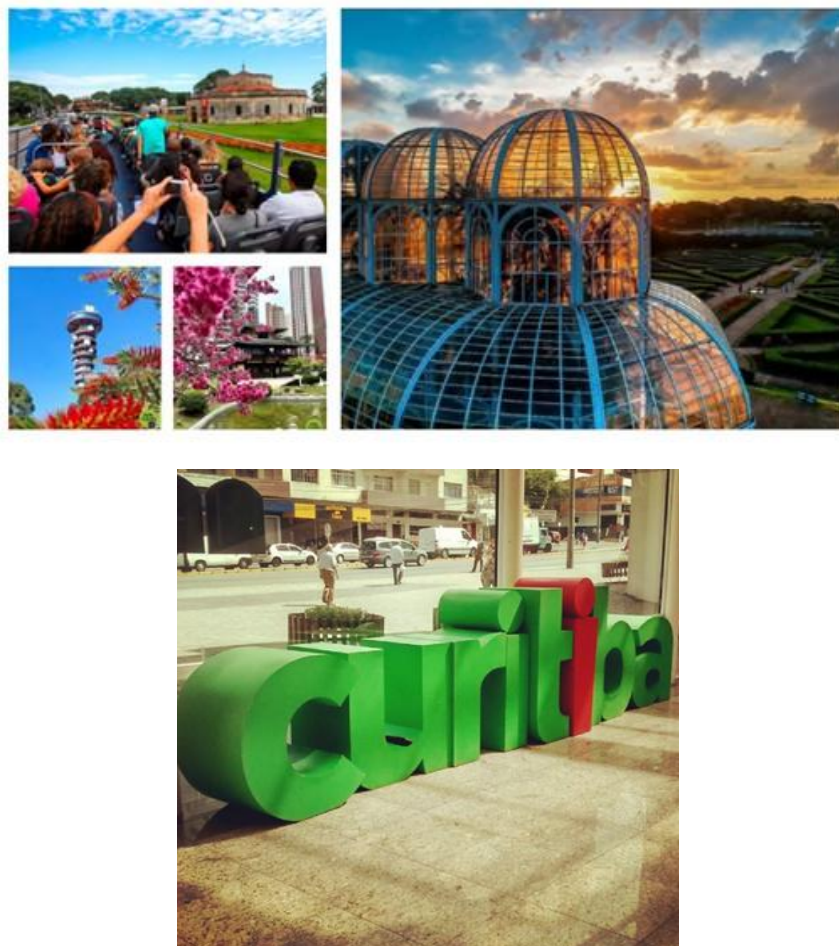
The urban goes beyond being merely a production model. It represents a way of consuming, thinking, and feeling; in other words, it embodies a way of life (Carlos, 1994). Thus, the city emerges as a means of appropriating this created space. Therefore, it can be analyzed from the perspective of its symbolism, as it is observed through its ambiguity and presents designs rooted in the marks of individual and collective memory. The city embodies desire, reflecting passions, experiences, and society's expectations. Consequently, it results from an intimate relationship between place and space, serving as a stage for transformation, appropriation, and memory interactions (Bettencourt, 2010).





When examined through its representations, Curitiba reflects the aspects that emerge from its dissemination, an essential process in urban planning that began in the 1970s with the Plano Diretor de Urbanismo. This indicates that the city was undergoing a 'revolution,' which would establish it as a model of planning and quality of life for Brazilian cities and beyond (Pinto & Nakatani, 2020). In this context, the experiences of residents and tourists/excursionists alike make the city a space of sociability, rich in the 'aspects' of interactions and memory appropriations that arise from Curitiba's everyday life (Carvalho, 2008; Fernandes et al., 2011).

Photograph 01: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Tourist Attractions.



Source: Paiol Theater (@curta\_curitiba, 2021); Panoramic Tower (@fotocepelacris, 2023); Japan Square (@euteapresentocuritiba, 2023); Botanical Garden (@juliopereira, 2022); and Curitiba (@raultoewsf, 2018).

Therefore, the city is defined by the subject's relationships with themselves, others, and the place where they live. The spaces produced from these

relationships must be perceived from their human dimension (Recchia, 2005). Argan (1993) argues that the experience of urban existence becomes one of the foundations for understanding the city, as it is hidden and divided into details formed by the time of learning and work. Thus, according to Pesavento (2007), the city's images are viable representations based on existing cities, revealing a fascinating panorama for studies on the comprehension of this dynamic and lived space by its inhabitants.

Lencioni (2003) and Gomes (2007) emphasize that lived space must be understood as constructed, interpreted, and represented by the social actors who navigate it. Lynch (2011:01) reflects, "the city is a construction in space, but a construction on a large scale; something only perceived over long periods" (Translated by the authors). Photograph 02 depicts Curitiba as experienced by its residents (and even tourists) in various situations within the same area.

Photograph 02: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: XV November Street.



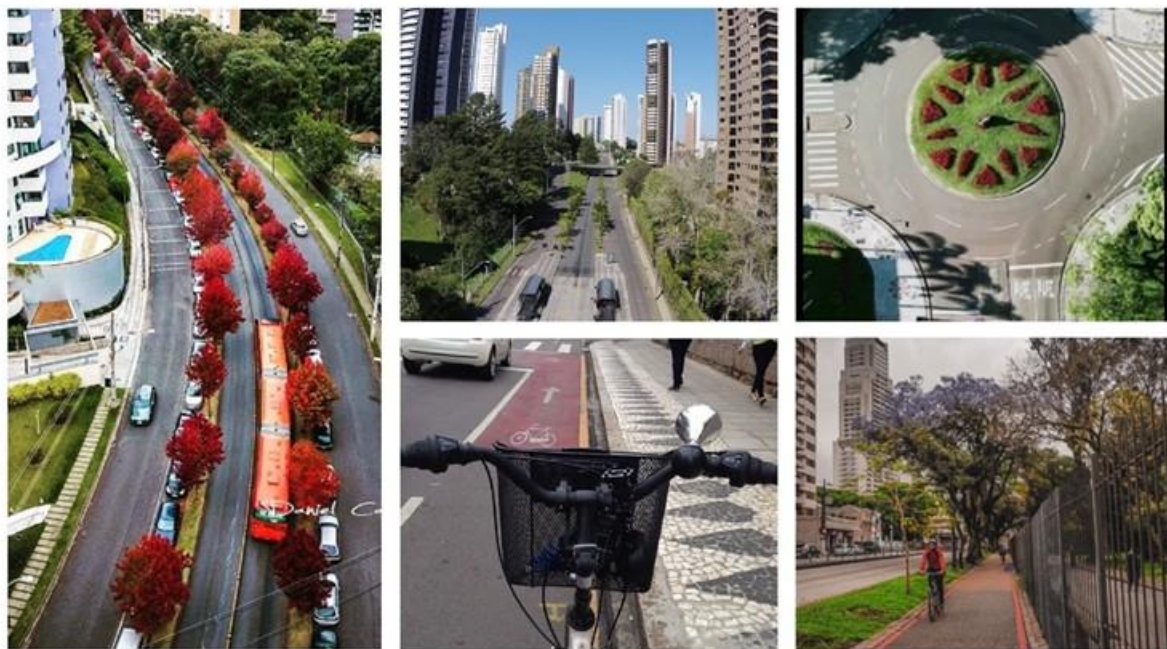
Source: Photo 01 (@voacapivara, 2023); Photo 02 (@stegutiere, 2018); Photo 03 (@eduardopalberti, 2018); Photo 04 (@tglow\_light, 2023).

The city's representation includes the premises discussed in Table 03. Therefore, urban space holds profound significance as a city, revealing itself as

a condition, means, and product of human action. In other words, it transcends the notion of the city as merely a simple location, uncovering the meaning of human life in all its dimensions (Carlos, 2007).

In the context of urban-tourist spaces, roads, and pathways, as discussed by Cullen (1983), Boullón (2002), Lamas (2004), and Lynch (2011), can be viewed as circulation channels utilized by habitual, occasional, or potential users. Hence, they serve as elements of unification and cohesion. In this regard, Curitiba's cycle paths and major avenues stand out in its urban planning and embody the characteristics of roads and pathways, as illustrated in Photograph 03.

Photograph 03: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Pathways



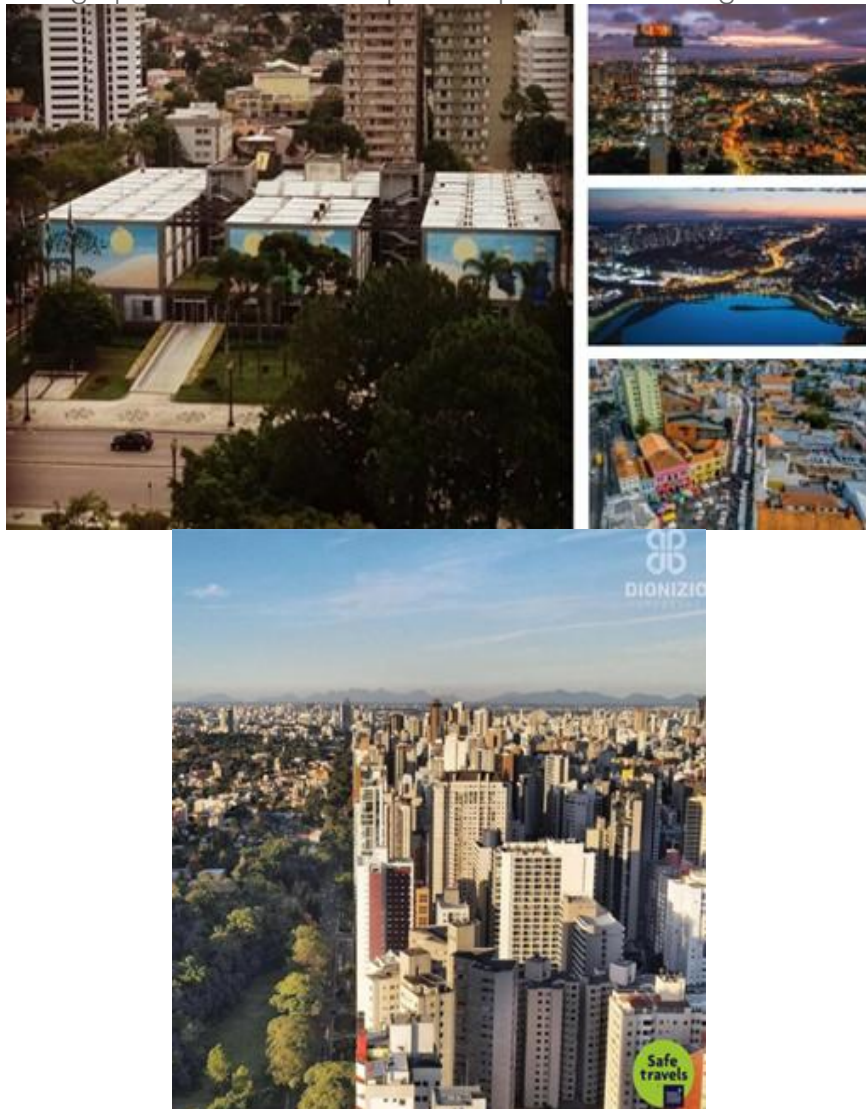
Source: Autumn Street (@dicacastellano, 2021); Trinary (@dr.\_one; 2014); Bicycle Path (@cwbtoday, 2023; @deisegubert\_imagens, 2014); roundabout street (@saiderolecwb, 2024).

Cullen (1983), Boullón (2002), and Lynch (2011), along with the perspectives on pathways, debate the concept of neighborhoods, viewing them as easily identifiable places—large or medium-sized areas that typically represent the city's structure and can be recognized by their common characteristics. Therefore, it can be inferred that, through its strategic planning, Curitiba aims to organize neighborhoods according to their unique attributes,



primarily reflecting the principles of urban planning implemented in the city (Santos, 1995; Souza, 2001).

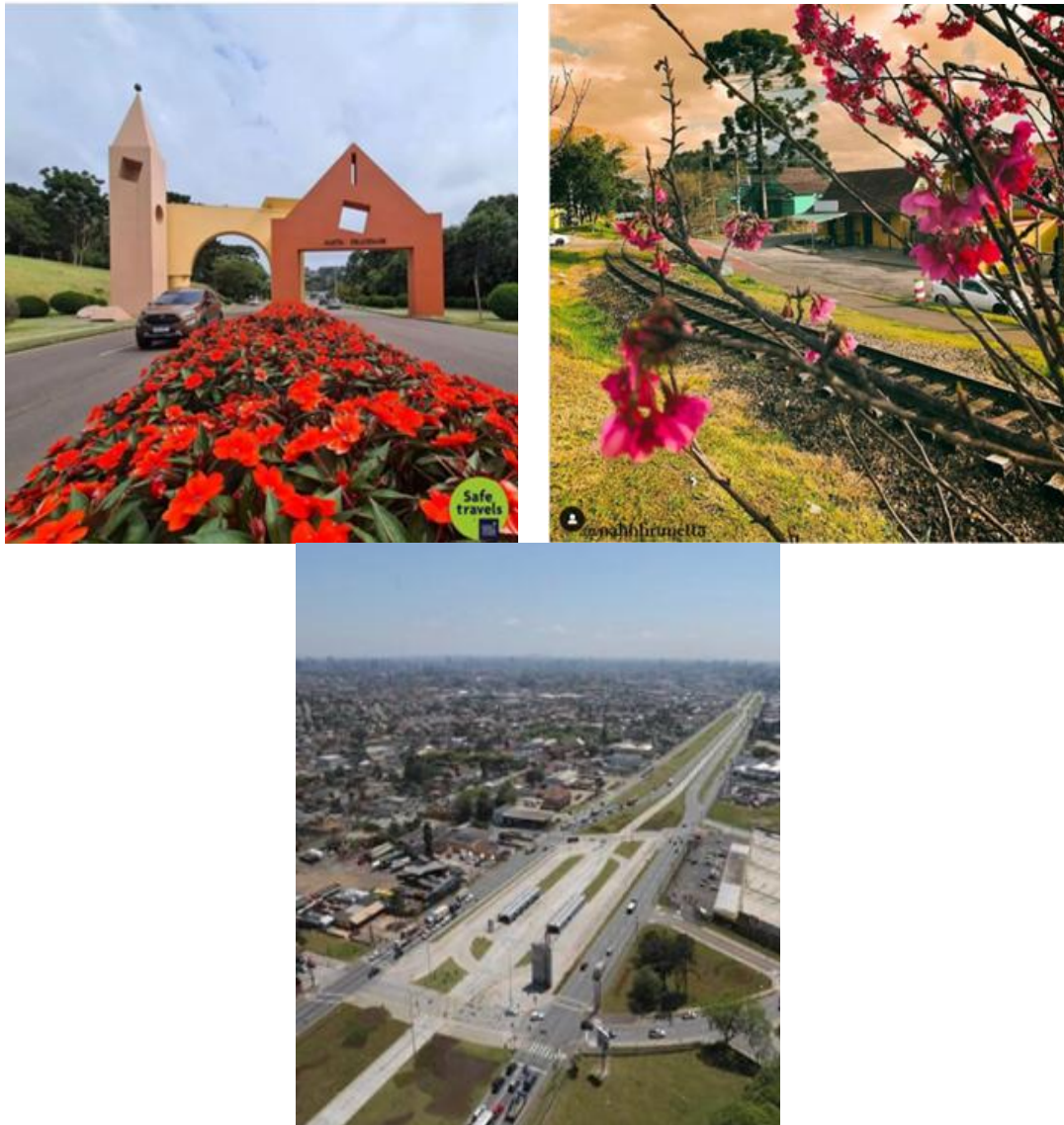
Photograph 04: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Neighborhoods.



Source: Centro Cívico (@viviangressana; 2018); Mercês (@curta\_curitiba, 2021); Santo Inácio (@curta\_curitiba, 2021); Historical Center (@curta\_curitiba, 2021); Bigorriho (@dioniziofotodrone, 2023).

According to Cullen (1983), limits are barriers and restrictions. Leite (2009) emphasizes that these can be viewed as obstacles to the growth of urban areas. Lynch (2011) notes that limits possess a significant organizational characteristic, as their primary function is to unify different areas, such as the water's edge, walls, and sandy stretches. In summary, limits can be described as factors that obstruct or prevent easy access for users. Photograph 05 illustrates some limits found in Curitiba.

Photograph 05: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Limits



Source: Santa Felicidade (@eduardopalberti, 2022); Railway (@nahhbrunetta, 2021); Linha Verde (@curitiba\_pmc, 2018).

Additionally, it is important to highlight what Pereira (2002) discusses regarding citizens' perceptions—not only the elements that enhance the beauty of cities but also those that collectively contribute to their design. The city includes various tools and artifacts that act as an interface between citizens and their environment. In this context, urban furniture is seen as an essential public space component that directly affects the population's quality of life.

According to Souza (2013), urban furniture consists of public or private objects and devices placed in public spaces, primarily providing essential



services with various functions. Therefore, these elements can be categorized as follows: decorative elements, services, marketing, signage, and advertising furniture (Souza, 2013), as depicted in Photograph 06.

Photograph 06: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Urban Furniture



Source: Pontos de Ônibus (Tubos) (@curta\_curitiba, 2021; @franciscacury, 2018); Illumination (@jacksoncabral, 2021); Signage Furniture (@nahhbrunetta, 2023; @curitibaspace, 2018).

In summary, Curitiba—recognized as a model city—offers its residents and visitors eclectic and dynamic characteristics within the tourist-urban landscape, thanks to innovations in its urban interventions (Pendiuk & Souza, 2010).

### 3.2 THE NATURE IN URBAN-TOURIST SPACE REPRESENTATION

Recent economic, social, and cultural transformations have prompted discussions about including nature by implementing urban parks and green spaces. These areas and their elements contribute a unique character to the city and are gaining prominence, especially due to the behavioral changes that have revitalized their use (Kaick et al., 2006). Buccheri and Nucci (2006) identify three objectives for incorporating green spaces in urban centers: ecological-environmental, aesthetic, and leisure.

Vanin (2001) emphasizes that parks, which represent the maximum green areas in Curitiba's urban-tourist space, serve as key identifying elements for promoting the city and enriching the experiences of tourists and residents. This is primarily because they showcase and celebrate the connection between the natural and cultural environments, linking those who enjoy them with their identities.

Photograph 07: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Parks



Source: Unilivre (@brunaa\_daniella, 2022); Tanguá Park (@jefferson1848, 2021); Barigui Park (@guidafrusato, 2021); Nautic Park (@dicastellano, 2021); Botanical Garden (@brunofranca.art, 2021).

Andrade (2001:119) emphasizes what was discussed about Curitiba when he states that "the reaction of parks, forests, and iconic architectural features in these areas contributed to the growth in investments and revenue in the city, particularly in tourism" (Translated by the authors).

As their names suggest, gardens and public sidewalks serve as spaces for public use. According to Segawa (1996:45), these areas can historically be viewed as "stages for social interactions and spaces frequented by those eager to gather and be seen." (Translated by the authors).

Photograph 08: Urban Tourist Space: Green Areas.





Source: Bosque João Paulo II (@leticiaseletti, 2021); Memorial Ucraniano (@mauro.longo1, 2022); Passeio Público (@curta\_curitiba, 2020).

When discussing squares, Lamas (2004) and Silva (2010) argue that in cities, they represent a public space, serving not only as a physical agent that harmonizes with the surrounding environment but also as a component that unites and reflects the local landscape. This allows for cultural, recreational, and relaxation activities, often through the interaction between the community and the environment.

Photograph 09: Urban-tourist Space Representation: Squares



Source: Praça Osório (@ramos\_photos912, 2023); Praça do Japão (@cwbtoday, 2023); Praça Santos Andrade (@meurolecuritiba, 2023); Praça da Espanha (@clickcuritiba1, 2021).

Another relevant aspect of green spaces in urban areas is street afforestation, an important element for enhancing urban environmental conditions (Monteiro et al., 2013). Shams et al. (2009) highlight that urban afforestation plays a crucial role in improving the ecological conditions of cities and, in turn, enhances the quality of life for its residents, making public spaces more effective.

Photograph 10: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Tree-lined Streets.







Source: @ramos\_photos912 (2023); @cassio\_garcia (2024); @bruno.carlesse (2023).

Curitiba's reputation as an ecological capital focused on implementing green spaces was established in the 1990s through an effective city-marketing strategy promoted by the public administration responsible for this achievement (Garcia, 1997). Thus, as Milano (1984) noted, Curitiba has a history of urban development connected to urban-environmental issues, emphasizing afforestation from the viewpoint of the population's quality of life.

### 3.3 CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT IN URBAN-TOURIST SPACE REPRESENTATION

The city, as a human construct, can be viewed as a historical-social product and, in this context, appears as a materialized body of work accumulated throughout the historical processes of generations (Grinover, 2009). Monastirski (2009:331) emphasizes that "the significance of cultural heritage for society is directly associated with the symbolic weight it carries and the sense of belonging it fosters" (Translated by the authors). The historical and cultural aspects inherent to urban tourist spaces refer to the dynamism present in cities, which has gained prominence compared to what people experience in their daily lives or as vacation destinations.

Certain elements symbolize the city's historical and cultural features, such as urban landmarks that, according to Boullón (2002) and Lynch (2011), serve as references for those who appreciate them in their entirety. Therefore,

for an urban form to be regarded as a landmark, it must intrinsically contrast with other elements of urban space. Photograph 11 depicts some of Curitiba's landmarks.

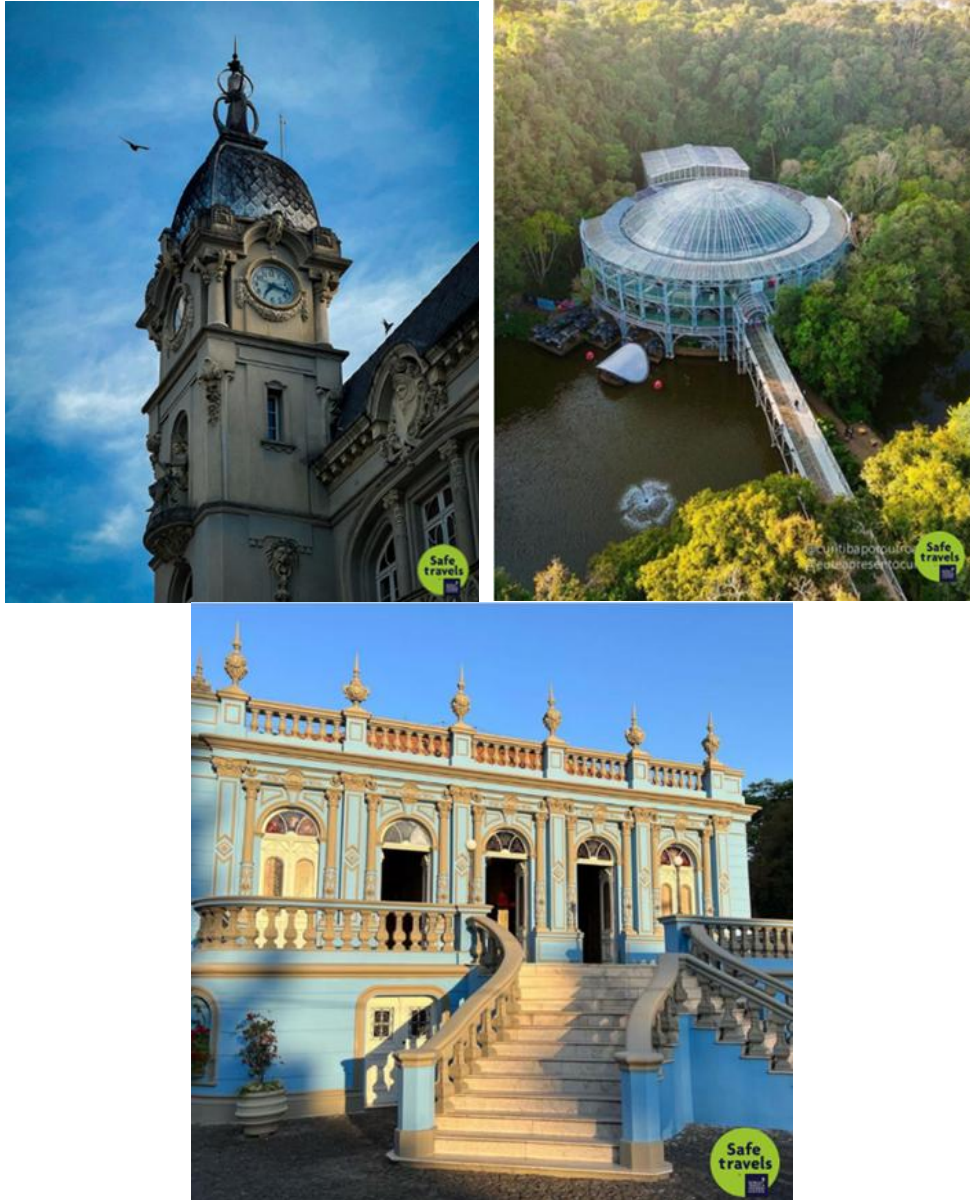
Photograph 11: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Landmarks



Source: Museu Oscar Niemeyer (@ramos\_photos912,2024); Universidade Federal do Paraná (@verhagen.photos,2024); Edifício Garcez (@c\_munhoz, 2014); Paço da Liberdade (@natanfrudeli, 2024).

In addition to this context, nodal and focal points, according to Cullen (1983), are significant locations within cities and other places that evoke emotions in those who experience them. Nodal and focal points primarily relate to meeting spots. People identify central places in a given space (Lynch, 2011).

Photograph 12: Urban-Tourist Space: Nodal and Focal Points



Source: Paço da Liberdade (@leouhths, 2024); Ópera de Arame (@curitibaporoutroangulo, 2024); Palacete dos Leões (@motionturismo, 2023).

On the other hand, public spaces are defined as “open or covered areas for public use, which tourists can enter and where they can roam freely” (Boullón, 2002:196) (Translated by the author). There is also the perspective of precincts, described by Cullen (1983) as spaces that serve as places of rest and human interaction; in other words, locations where the streets' constant flow is not fully perceived.



Photograph 13: Urban-tourist Space Representation: Public Spaces and Precincts.



Source: Precincts: Tubo de Ônibus (@higugs, 2014); Memorial de Curitiba (@cenascritibanas, 2014). Public Spaces: Rua 24 horas (@leofloresfotografia, 2023); Feirinha do Largo da Ordem (@ramos\_photos912, 2024).

The facades can be seen as a transition between the collective urban space and the private world of buildings. Therefore, a city with buildings that have different facades essentially reflects the differentiation between structures over time, as a new city image is projected each time, making their dynamism and evolution more apparent (Lamas, 2004).

Photograph 14: Urban-tourist Space representation: Facade (Fronts).



Source: @karineodias (2023); @fotosclicks (2023).

In addition to the historical and cultural perspective, there are monuments that, according to Choay (2001), possess a pre-assigned meaning from their inception, contrasting with the urban context in which they are situated, thereby defining them. Their essence is primarily shaped by use and social interaction over time.

Photograph 15: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Monuments



Source: Cavalo Babão (@amilton\_biscaia, 2024); Fonte de Jerusalém (@leofloresfotografia, 2023); Memorial Paranista (@amilton\_biscaia, 2024); Praça Osório (@meurolecuritiba, 2023).

As a final element in analyzing the representation of urban-tourist space, we consider the entertainment construct. In large urban centers, the consumption of goods is directly linked to fun and entertainment facilitated using equipment provided for this purpose (Marin, 2009).

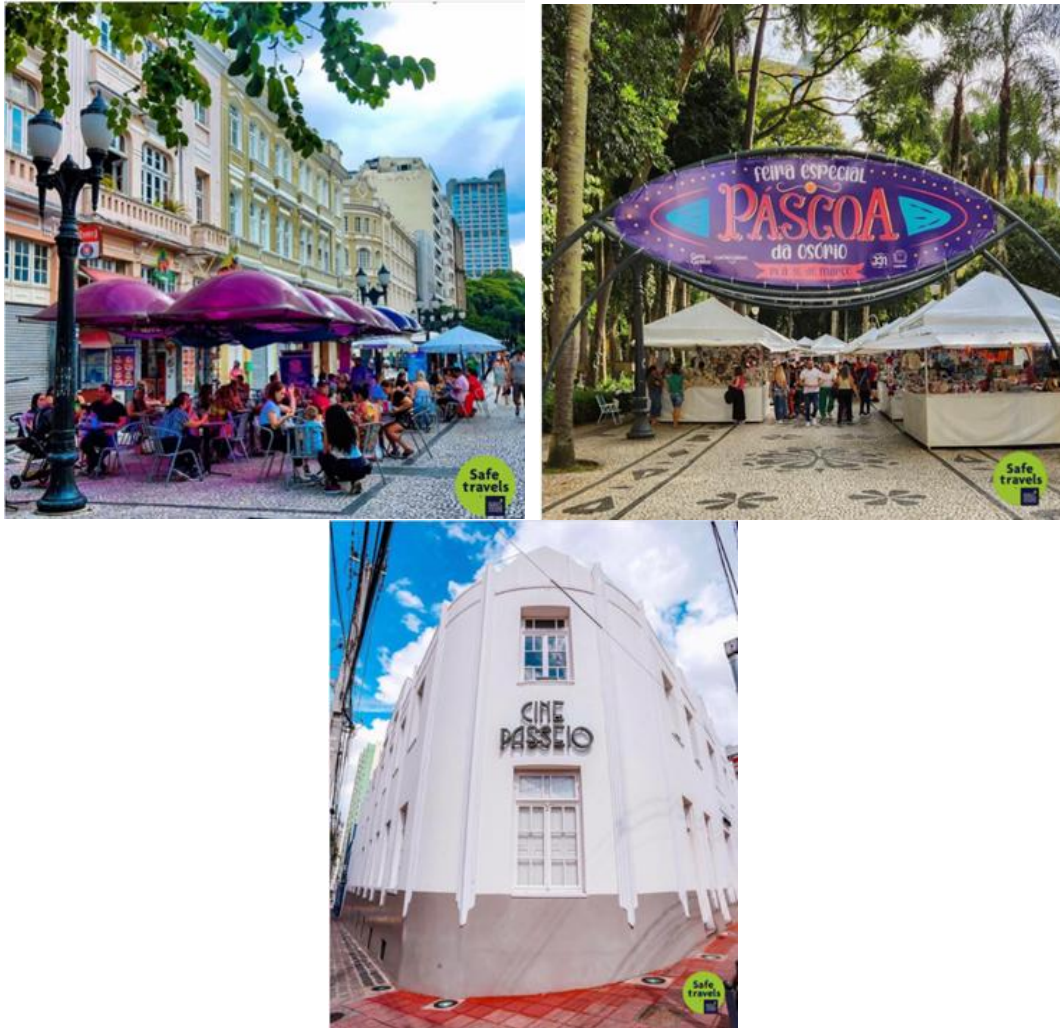
Moss (2009) defines entertainment as something that captivates an audience through sensory stimulation, evoking an emotional response. Accordingly, entertainment involves intentional actions, such as presenting films, shows, plays, or spectacles. Mattos (2004) also emphasizes that activities within the entertainment sector are essential for understanding the new urban reality, highlighting the importance of integrated or diversified commercial and entertainment spaces.

Restaurants and spaces for dining and socializing, such as bars, play a vital role in shaping the dynamism of urban space within the context of



entertainment. As Oliveira (2006) notes, starting in the 1980s, Brazil's gastronomic sector experienced a revolution, moving away from a stagnant environment that favored similar businesses to a new era where globally inspired dishes began to take center stage.

Photograph 16: Urban-Tourist Space: Entertainment



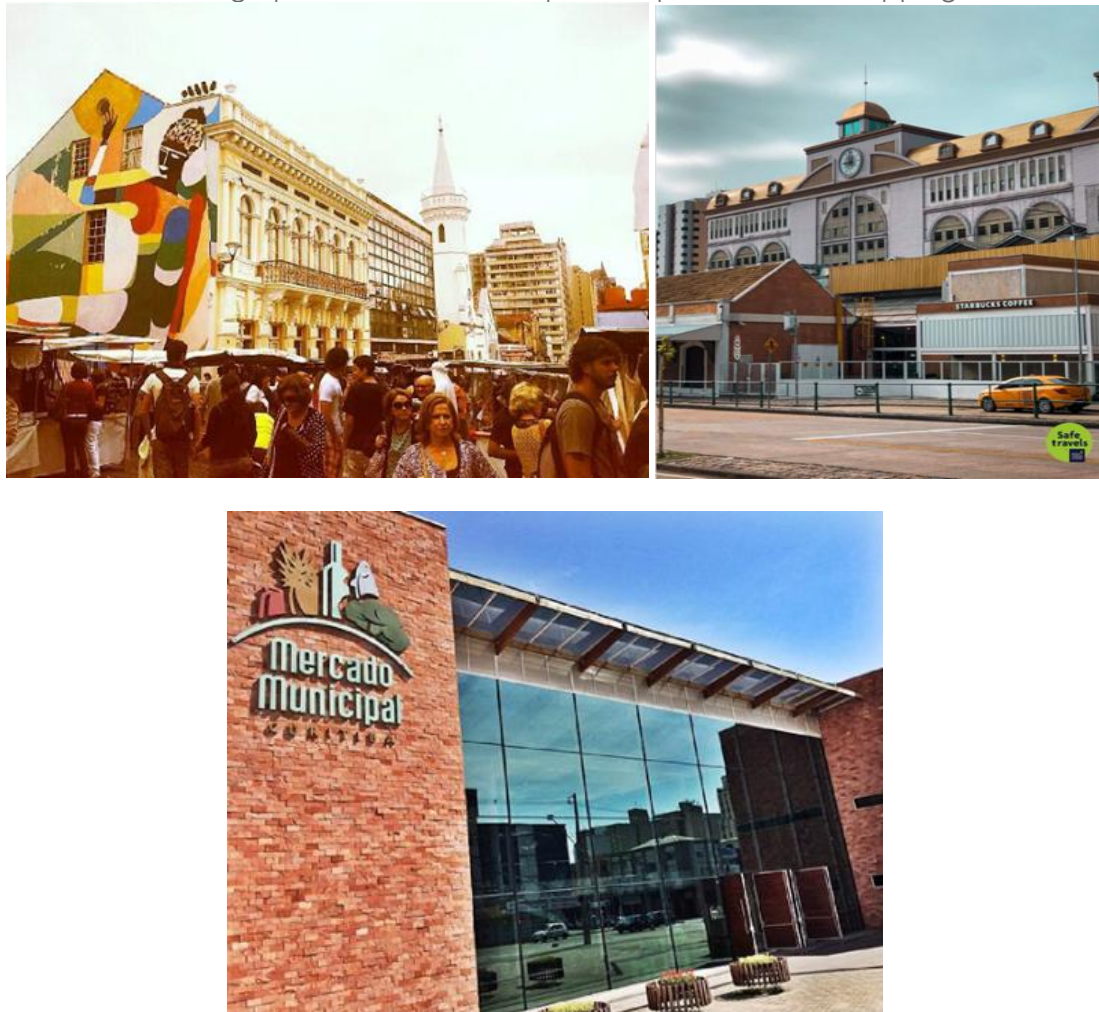
Source: Restaurants (@guriah\_curitibana, 2022); Feira de Páscoa (@andretobo, 2024); Cine Passeio (@cine\_passeio, 2023).

In this way, large cities, through companies, public agencies, institutions, and community centers, have offered a variety of free entertainment options to the population, such as parks, plazas, cultural fairs, shows, and, in the case of Brazil, football and samba schools (Vasques & Donaire, 2003).

Entertainment spaces in cities serve as a point of integration for the worldviews, beliefs, and values of a community and its residents. The local population and entertainment venues benefit, while the surrounding urban

environment collaborates by implementing initiatives revitalizing entire city regions (Abreu, 2006).

Photograph 17: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Shopping



Source: Feira do Largo da Ordem (@rodscuritiba, 2014); Shopping Estação (@curi.ititiba, 2023); Mercado Municipal (@feriasnow, 2014).

In the context of entertainment, Boullón (2002:209) discusses tourist itineraries, defined as "circulation routes selected by tourist traffic of vehicles and pedestrians as they move to visit attractions and enter or exit the city" (translated by the authors). Photograph 18 highlights a prominent example of a tourist route in Curitiba: the Linha Turismo.

Photograph 18: Urban-Tourist Space Representation: Tourist Itineraries



Source: @cwbtoday (2023); @torrealba\_aponte (2023).

With the analyzed points, we can infer that the city is a world of representations—whether small or a metropolis—it pulsates, lives, seduces, attacks, transforms, and reshapes those interacting. Its actions represent the movements of individuals acting in this environment with a strong capacity for organization, transformation, and reordering (Castrogiovanni, 2000; 2013).

### 3.4. LET'S DISCUSS THE PHOTOGRAPHS AND THE URBAN TOURIST SPACE.

An analysis revealed that representations of Curitiba's urban tourist space on Instagram are predominantly positive. The shared photographs emphasize iconic attractions like the Botanical Garden, the Ópera de Arame, and socializing areas like squares and urban parks. Moreover, updated elements, urban mobility, and natural landscapes suggest that the visual construction of the city is linked to quality of life and urban planning.

The findings support the literature on urban tourism and destination image, emphasizing the role of social networks in shaping how spaces are perceived and advertised. The analyzed images confirm prior studies that indicate the curation of digital platforms as a crucial element in creating an idealized tourist identity, often detached from the city's negative aspects.





Digital curation, which highlights only positive images—a common trait of social media today—can create a distorted perception of the destination by obscuring urban challenges such as infrastructure issues, social inequality, and urban mobility. As Baka (2016) and Chatzigeorgiou (2017) assert, the lack of authentic representations can lead to unrealistic expectations among visitors, resulting in frustration and negative impacting the tourist experience. Furthermore, constructing an idealized image can hinder sustainable urban planning by ignoring the problems that must be addressed to improve the tourist experience and residents.

Managers and authorities should adopt more balanced digital marketing strategies to avoid creating an unrealistic portrayal of tourist destinations. Gretzel et al. (2019) and Marine-Roig and Clavé (2016) suggest that content showcasing urban attractions and challenges is crucial. Institutional campaigns can encourage visitors and residents to share authentic experiences, highlighting less idealized aspects of the destination and fostering a more realistic perspective.

Furthermore, platforms can embrace storytelling techniques that humanize the destination by showcasing local narratives, sustainability efforts, and urban development initiatives. Collaborating with influencers who share authentic stories, rather than solely focusing on iconic landscapes, can enhance a more genuine and reliable digital presence (Egger, 2023; Taecharungroj & Mathayomchan, 2021).

#### **4 FINAL REMARKS**

This article initiated a discussion based on various thoughts supported mainly by authors with differing ideas who complement each other's studies. From this viewpoint, methodological procedures were applied based on the discussions and methodology of Donaíre and Galí (2011), which essentially outlined the categories of analysis to better understand what was represented in the photographs, encompassing the perspective of tourist offerings (representation)



To complement the discussion, points from studies on morphology, landscapes, and the urban image of cities were utilized, primarily based on Cullen (1983), Boullón (2002), Lamas (2004), and Lynch (2011). This was connected to representations in urban-tourist spaces, as Donaíre and Galí (2011) mentioned.

A common theme in the results presented was the presence of urban interventions in various areas of the city, which started to be promoted as points of interest and appeal to those looking to explore Curitiba as a tourist destination. Ribeiro and Silveira (2006), Pedron (2013), and Horodyski (2014) emphasize that the promotion of parks and urban interventions significantly enhances the image of ecological capital and model cities both nationally and internationally.

This research shows how important social networks have become in representing and manifesting experiences in the urban-tourist space. As a result, utilizing such a tool to analyze tourist destinations is crucial for enhancing the discussion of destination images, using photographs shared by tourists and residents to illustrate what the actual city offers.

Additionally, this research highlights the context of identifying key points of interest shared by Instagram users regarding Curitiba's urban tourist space. It shows that not only are the city's tourist attractions being shared, but also its urban areas, including streets, neighborhoods, entertainment venues, parks, and squares that are not promoted in the media, all of which relate to dynamism and multiculturalism present in Curitiba.

Moreover, this study contributes to tourism by demonstrating how images shared on social networks can influence perceptions of urban-tourist spaces. Theoretically, it enhances understanding of the relationship between digital photography and destination representation. The findings also indicate that tourism managers can implement strategies based on user-generated content to reinforce the visual identity of the destination.



A critical research limitation was the lack of photos depicting the negative aspects of Curitiba's urban tourist space. This may be attributed to the curation by the Instituto Municipal de Curitiba, which shows only the city's positive features. Therefore, future researchers could explore the negative aspects of the city more thoroughly, but it is essential to locate a source that accurately represents the town's reality.

In that matter, photographic images can be identified, classified, and circulated in various ways, including through titles, descriptions, tags for categorization, locations (marking the photo on maps), and referenced individuals, all to create context for each photograph. They can also be commented on, saved as favorites in a profile, listed in an exhibition, grouped, or organized in an album. Finally, networks interact with others, such as social media platforms and digital social networks, allowing for the creation of modules with slideshows on blogs and personal sites' websites.

Evaluating the nature of current tourism is challenging without considering how various media and communication channels shape, reinforce and sensationalize this activity in our imagination. Photographs are pertinent to this research because the city's marketing can utilize this tool to portray the reality visitors can expect when they travel to a destination. Thus, campaigns encouraging visitors and residents to share their experiences can create a more compelling tourist image.

### **TRIBUTE:**

This article is dedicated to Professor José Manoel Gonçalves Gandara, who inspired this research and continues to inspire us.

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