Sociocultural micro-realities transformed by tourism in São Miguel do Gostoso, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil

Microrrealidades socioculturais transformadas pelo turismo em São Miguel do Gostoso, Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil

Micro realidades socioculturales transformadas por el turismo en São Miguel do Gostoso, Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil

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Abstract: Justified purpose of the topic: The purpose of this article was to align theoretical and methodological perspectives of microhistory with the contribution of studies in the field of tourism, in order to understand transformations of micro-realities in the municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso, state of Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil. Micro-realities are histories of ordinary people that translate and clarify microscopic aspects of a complex life style. **Purpose**: To analyze the social cultural transformations of place caused by the tourism phenomenon from the perspective of local micro-realities. **Design, methodology and approach**: In terms of methodology we combined qualitative analysis with participant observation, analysis of documents and audiovisual records on the town. Fifty-two individuals were interviewed, among those who had a certain prominence in town history. They should not have any official position, but they should have experienced the changes occurring between 1993 and 2016. Seventeen respondents were considered for this article. **Results and originality**: The research results highlight relevant changes in the sociocultural micro-realities of participants. The most prominent impacts mentioned are: the gradual emptying of cultural traditions, changes in food habits and in language. On the other hand, the positive contributions listed concern plurality of cultures and social engagement. We concluded that tourist flows altered sociocultural micro-realities, and thus defining tourism as the region's most important economic activity, and relocating work force. This study relevance and originality is the link between microhistory and tourism, almost non-existent in scientific research.

Keywords: Tourism. Micro-realities. Microhistory. Sociocultural transformations. São Miguel do Gostoso.

Resumo: Proposto justificado do tema: A proposta deste artigo foi alinhar perspectivas teóricas e metodológicas da Micro-História com aportes dos estudos no campo do Turismo para entender as transformações das microrrealidades do município de São Miguel do Gostoso (Rio Grande do Norte). Microrrealidades são histórias de pessoas comuns que traduzem e elucidam aspectos microscópicos de um complexo quadro de vida. **Objetivo:**

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Analisar as transformações socioculturais da localidade transformadas pelo fenômeno turístico a partir das microrrealidades locais. **Design, metodologia e abordagem:** No campo metodológico aliou-se a análise qualitativa com a observação direta participante, a análise documental e a investigação do material audiovisual sobre a cidade. Entrevistou-se 52 indivíduos que tiveram alguma representatividade na história da cidade, que não assumiam nenhum cargo oficial e vivenciaram as mudanças decorrentes entre 1993 e 2016. O recorte deste artigo foi de 17 entrevistados. **Resultados e originalidade:** Os resultados da pesquisa ressaltam que houve transformações relevantes nas microrrealidades socioculturais dos entrevistados. Os impactos mais proeminentes foram: esvaziamento das tradições culturais, hábitos alimentares e linguagem. Por outro lado, contribuições positivas foram enumeradas quanto à pluralidade de culturas e engajamento social. Concluiu-se que as microrrealidades socioculturais foram transformadas pelo fluxo turístico, definindo o turismo como a principal atividade econômica da região e relocando as forças de trabalho. A relevância e originalidade deste estudo é a aliança entre Micro-História e Turismo, quase inexistente nas investigações científicas.

Palavras-chave: Turismo. Microrrealidades. Micro-História. Transformações socioculturais. São Miguel do Gostoso.

Resumen: Justificativa: La propuesta de este artículo fue alinear perspectivas teóricas y metodológicas de la Micro Historia con aportes de los estudios en el campo del Turismo para entender las transformaciones de las micro realidades del municipio de São Miguel do Gostoso (Rio Grande do Norte). Las micro realidades son historias de personas comunes que traducen y elucidan aspectos microscópicos de un complejo cuadro de vida. **Objetivo:** Analizar las transformaciones socioculturales de la localidad transformadas por el fenómeno turístico a partir de las micro realidades locales. **Diseño, metodología y enfoque:** En el campo metodológico se alió el análisis cualitativo con la observación directa participante, el análisis documental y la investigación del material audiovisual sobre la ciudad. Se entrevistó a 52 individuos que tuvieron alguna representatividad en la historia de la ciudad, que no ocupaban ningún cargo oficial y vivenciaron los cambios resultantes entre 1993 y 2016. El recorte de este artículo fue de 17 entrevistados. **Resultados y originalidad:** Los resultados de la investigación resaltan que hubo transformaciones relevantes en las micro realidades socioculturales de los entrevistados. Los impactos más prominentes fueron: vaciamiento de las tradiciones culturales, hábitos alimentarios y lenguaje. Además, las contribuciones positivas se enumeran en cuanto a la pluralidad de culturas y el compromiso social. Se concluyó que las micro realidades socioculturales fueron transformadas por el flujo turístico, definiendo el turismo como la principal actividad económica de la región y reubicando las fuerzas de trabajo. La relevancia y originalidad de este estudio es la alianza entre Micro Historia y Turismo, casi inexistente en las investigaciones científicas.

Palabras-Clave: Turismo. Micro Realidades. Micro Historia. Transformaciones socioculturales. São Miguel do Gostoso.

1 INTRODUCTION

The activity of tourism encompasses a wide array of meanings and the intersection of all of them allows us to say that tourism is much more than just traveling, entertainment, and leisure. To the contrary, it is a wide and vast field of study and reflection, which, in a hybrid way, permeates many knowledge areas; connecting people, places and dreams. The study of tourism, particularly because of its intrinsic complexity, has received major contributions from other knowledge areas, and as this phenomenon encompasses diverse approaches (Coriolano, 2006) its study is strengthened within an interdisciplinary context. "Tourism is a multidisciplinary subject which means that a wide range of other subjects (...) examine it and bring to it a range of ideas and methods of studying it" (Page, 2013, p. 7).

However, it can be assured that the construction of knowledge in this field of study brings us back to the work of basket

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construction itself. (Morin et al., 2003, p. 43). We intertwine circles, searching for new frameworks, recognizing imprecisions, looking for other forms and architectures. Frameworks come to the forefront through various bits of knowledge and are sewn together in a search for the "re-enchantment of the world to liberate human thinking even more" (Wallerstein, 1996, p. 110).

In the specific case of this article, the search for re-enchantment and the production of complex knowledge comes about through the valuation of the micro-realities of the small municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso (Rio Grande do Norte), opposing itself to the large tourism models existing in northeastern Brazil, and whereby local inhabitants of different ages organize themselves to impose their will against processes of massification of cultural landscapes. The resistance is accompanied by transformation. Much of the routine of these "natives" (as they like to be called) has already been profoundly altered by the practices of tourists. How do we perceive these remains, ruptures, resistances, and re-elaborations? How do we reflect about the impacts of tourism on different scales on a specific location? Our answers were engineered from theoretical and methodological discussions that came from microhistory, but more than answers coming from the academic bosom, the answers were formed through dialogue with local inhabitants.

To that end, the keystone of this study is the combination of microhistory research with the reality of tourism in a beach community. The scarcity of scientific research in the last five years relating tourism to microhistory should also be pointed out, thereby reinforcing the countless investigation possibilities in these two areas.

The proposal of this work is part of a doctoral study, which tried to analyze the sociocultural, economic, and environmental transformations in a municipality located on the northeast coast of Brazil, using local micro-realities. The target was to cut the objective up into fine slices, specifically exploring in this article the most prominent sociocultural transformations resulting from the flow of tourism in the municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso (Rio Grande do Norte).

This article was built on three pillars. First, a clarification about the micro-historical approach and sociocultural influences on tourism, followed by the presentation of the methodological procedures and lastly, the results of field immersion experiences carried out between 2014 and 2016.

1.1 Microhistory – the self-portrait theory

Writing history from below, considering the opinion of ordinary people, and returning to past experiences of the mass population (Sharpe, 1992). These three approach criteria inspire us to escape from the stories "concentrated on great achievements or great men" (Burke, 1992, p. 12), to demonstrate history from below, where microhistory fits in.

This field of study puts the emphasis on individuals that go unnoticed in great tales. "Not just the kings, the chiefs, the magistrates, but the ordinary people, the women,

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the children make their appearance (Ginzburg, Castelnuevo & Poni, 1989, p.181). Microhistory as a part of the coverage of history from below, intends to give voice and help strengthening identities, memories, diaries, and records of ordinary people.

> As an approach, history from below provenly fulfils two crucial functions. The first is to serve as a corrective to top person's history (...) and the second is that by offering this alternative approach, history from below opens the possibility of a richer synthesis of historical understanding, a fusion, so to speak, of the history of the everyday experience of the people with the subject matter of more traditional types of history (Sharpe, 1992, p. 54).

According to the historian Jim Sharpe (1992), history from below is a research proposal where the speech of the "insignificant" has the strength of historical narrative and analysis. These individuals without positions, without insignias, without noble titles, at times neglected, can now be represented, and heard.

This microanalysis attempts to verify the information retained in the small universes (the micro-realities), and has a preoccupation with the excluded, the minorities, the under privileged, and the marginalized, "whose existence is so frequently ignored" (Sharpe, 1992, p.41).

For Barros (2013a, 2013b,) microhistory treats these individuals like "small privileged fragments", "rejecting large generalizations" and identifying more substantial realities through the statements of these actors. This small examined particle (the individual and his/her micro-reality) is made up of fine slices that are rich in content, and soaked in

singular knowledge, which on many occasions is never revealed. This drop of water is full of information and realism, like a chest of meanings that goes through a house, invades the road, and translates moments from the history of a people.

> However, microhistory is not necessarily the history of the excluded, the powerless and the far away. It needs to be the reconstruction of moments, situations and people who, studied with an analytical eye, in a defined context, regain both weight and color; not as examples, in the absence of better explanations, but as points of reference within the complex contexts in which human beings move (Levi, 2009, p. 14).

According to the Argentinian historian, Darío Gabriel Barriera, microhistory is based on three points: a reduction in the scale of analysis, intensive exploration of sources, and the adoption of a descriptive reasoning model (1999). As for Levi (1992, p. 136), "Microhistory as a practice is essentially based on the reduction of the scale of observation, on a microscopic analysis and an intensive study of documentary material". From the starting point of this tripod, microhistory can be broken down into greater detail.

The Italian historian, Carlo Ginzburg is one of the pioneers and one of the major names in the study of microhistory (Lima Filho, 2006). In his work, "The cheese and the worms" (1976), Ginzburg questions about the quantitative history of ideas, about the silence of the least wealthy classes and their discard in the process of documenting of history. "Countless are the threads that link an individual to an environment" (Ginzburg,

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2006, p. 25). The author explains the religious, cultural, and social context of a period through the story of Menocchio, a simple miller[3]. In this scenario, Menocchio is the drop of water, drawing on the metaphor of Barros (2013a, 2013b). "But Menocchio's discourse, even though it comes from his own personal case, ends up covering a wider scope" (Ginzburg, 2006, p. 41).

Another relevant point in the exposition of Ginzburg's (2006) research, besides the presumptive tone, is the conception of this explicit reality outside of the scope of the dominant class. In the sense that who tells the story is a heretic miller, and not a priest, elder, or pontiff. An ordinary person, without relevance in the microcosm of social class (Ginzburg, 2006). This positioning for the retrieval of common people is noted in the second half of the 20th century, in the opinion of the historian, José Costa D'Assunção Barros:

> Now, a great variety of historic subjects deserve to have biographies written about them, not just the heroes and the great political figures, but also the anonymous individuals that would never have come out from the dusty archives if they had not been discovered by historians (Barros, 2013b, p.188).

We go back to the fundamental thinking of microhistory proposed by Barriera (1999) and Levi (1992); escaping from large flows to detailed worlds, thorough analysis of everyday life, in-depth investigation of the chosen reality, and a narrative with a differentiated proposal.

For Barriera (1999), whilst macro studies are organized around landmarks con-

scious or unconsciously pre-determined, micro studies, on the contrary, highlight the dimension of uncertainty and possibilities. Barriera (1999) points out that both micro and macro analysis are full of meanings and degrees of importance, "But as micro is not negligible because it is small, the macro is also not negligible because of its dimensions" (ibid., p. 184).

The opinion of the Argentinian researcher is anchored, like Zuluaga Ramírez (2006a, 2006b) exposition, on the idea that macro analysis provides us with general information (statistics, averages, indexes, production levels, amongst others) based on the large quantity of elements and generalizations, whilst micro analysis is focused on the interrelations between the stakeholders.

The adoption of a micro-analytical scale is an attempt to understand the phenomenon that presents itself beyond the official discourse, in a variety of social worlds, and that another version of history is possible from a personal point of view (Revel, 2011). According to the historian Jacques Revel, "the focus on an object is not solely increase or reduce its size on the screen, it is to modify its form and mesh" (Revel, 2010, p. 438). Even though it can be thought that microhistory is fragmented because it deals with the smallest particles of a case, it can become much more profound than surveys, census and large samples, which are good in quantity, but shallow in depth.

> The premise of Microhistory is that by limiting the field of observation, more numerous and refined data can emerge; which consti-

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3 An individual that is the owner or works in a mill

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tutes previously unseen configurations making the social cartography appear much more novel (Man, 2013, p. 169).

According to the historian Matti Tapani Peltonen (1999), micro-historians investigate things of large amplitude in their microscopes and with their exceptional lenses. The focus of this aspect of history is on small areas, on fragments of history (Peltonen, 1999).

> Microhistorical analysis therefore has two fronts. On one side, by moving on a reduced scale, it permits in many cases a reconstitution of 'real life', unthinkable in other kinds of historiography. On the other side, it proposes to investigate the invisible structures within which that lived experience is articulated (Ginzburg, Castelnuevo & Poni, 1989, p. 178).

Zuluaga Ramírez (2006a, 2006b) points out that microhistory is used as an instrument to understand the mentalities and the has the "intention of constructing universes from fragments of reality, from individuals or unique units" (ibid., p. 9). Whereas, for the historian, Eva Pasek de Pinto (2006, p. 97), "Microhistory is characterized, principally, by being a long time in a small space, studied in depth". There is a preoccupation of the cited historians to listen in depth to individuals that escape from official records and that hide in the background.

1.2 Microhistory, tourism and sociocultural transformations

Three points deserve to be highlighted in our approach: the scientific literature that addresses the sociocultural impact of tourism is quite ample (Marrero Rodríguez, 2006), the interest in the relationship between local populations and tourism is quite old and widespread (Marrero Rodríguez, 2006; Ramón Cardona, 2015), and the associations between tourism and culture are frequent, given that "Tourism as a multidisciplinary phenomenon implies sociocultural effects both on tourists and on the daily life of residents of the locations" (Monterrubio-Cordero, Mendoza Ontiveros & Huitrón Tecotl, 2013, p. 44). Besides this, associating these aspects to microhistory is something exceptionally new.

The price of land, agglomeration of people, acculturation, commodification of culture, are some of the unfavorable cultural transformations resulting from tourism highlighted by Camargo Velandia (2016) and Monterrubio-Cordero et al (2013). In relation to the positive aspects of tourism at different locations, we can highlight the permanence of residents in their locations, avoiding migration, and cultural exchange and enrichment with the visitors (Camargo Velandia, 2016), in addition to changes resulting from language, dressing and eating habits. Tourism relates to many sociocultural elements in contemporary society (Urry, 2001).

Cities, communities, villages, and "islands of history" have experienced these new configurations. In the landscapes, in the communications, in the relationships, in the ways of dealing with the past, the present and the future. These effects are not exclusive to tourism, but come from a resonance that is a result of the complexity of human beings. "Culture is not the property of anyone, neither of some group (…) but is a stratified process of struggles" (Yúdice, 2004, p. 126).

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The alterations caused by the reverberations form the sociocultural system can be seen in the capacity for reorganization and re-adaptation by cities to the new practices common to the activity of tourism. For Stuart Hall (2005), the shrinking of time and space resulting from the acceleration of global displacements favors this more immediate impact on people and places. Places no longer have the power of invisibility, reclusion and/or untouchability. At the same time, their characteristic scenery, sense of place, home or lair are lost in the whirlwind of visits, on the arrival of large organizations, and the weakening of identity in a "fragmentation of cultural codes, multiplicity of styles, emphasis on the ephemeral, the fleeting, the impermanent" (Hall, 2005, p.73-74), commonplace to tourism.

The metaphor that Justo Serna and Anaclet Pons (2002) make about the ocean, coherently explains our intention in this case. We have two oceans, one represented by tourism and the other represented by sociocultural questions. Even if everyone studies the same ocean, on the one hand, larger parts, on the other, smaller parts, all are focusing on the same reality. The difference comes about however, in the theoretical structure, in the scale of investigation, in the definition of parameters, in the temporality, in the sensibility of understanding and "none of them exhausts the complexity of what is real" (Serna & Pons, 2002, p. 119).

Although we opt to go deeper in fractions, filings, sparks of local reality, "reducing the measures of a network does not mean to investigate with less information, it means

that they all refer to the same object" (Serna & Pons, 2002, p. 118).

2 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

In returning to what Revel (2010) emphasized, our scale of observation is man/woman, the social actor, his/her standing in the group; individual markers to understand a wider reality. In the case of our research, the new configurations and compositions resulting from the tourist activity in local, everyday life. We deal with ordinary people, with their small realities, which on occasions are detailed by history, but which replicate a peculiar world full of memories, perceptions, and experiences.

Qualitative parameters guided this study, placing the researcher in the community (in the natural environment), by means of face to face interactions, behavioral observation, the carrying out of interviews, examination of documents, and complemented by multiple data sources (Creswell, 2010; Silverman, 2009). In relation to data collection procedures, the following was used: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, documents, and audio-visual material (photographs and videos).

As the municipality has around 9,000 inhabitants and 26 districts, the cut out was made in the district headquarters for three reasons: first, because it is where the tourism activity occurs, as much because of the natural attractions, as because of the equipment that has been installed for the visitors. Second, because the district headquarters is where all the municipal offices are concentrated. Lastly, because it is the district with

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the greatest number of inhabitants and where associations, committees and non-governmental organizations are located.

For two years, 52 stakeholders were researched and divided into four groups (representatives from government levels, tourist entrepreneurs, representatives of associations, committees, and non-governmental organizations, and lastly, members of the local population whose personal history is confounded with the city's history itself). In this article, the cut out is equivalent to 17 stakeholders from the fourth group that had some representation in the city's history, whom did not assume an official position, and who experienced the changes which occurred between 1993 and 2016. The interviewees were categorized by numbers, which represented the sequential order of the interviews. The 17 participants of this group were interviewed in alternate order and days, and that is why the numbering on the list of interviews is not sequential. Information on gender, age, or length of residence was not disclosed in the results to avoid any type of identification of the respondents.

The fourth group of interviewees was chosen by means of a snowball type, non-probabilistic sample, inspired in what was proposed by Malhotra (2012). This group covered local citizens that accompanied the emancipation process and/or lived through the transformation of the city by tourism in the last few years. Fisherman, artists, housewives, small retailers, local business people, professors, and pensioners, amongst others, made up this group, corresponding to 32.69% of the total number of interviewees.

Semi-structured, non-systematic, anthropological, or free interviews were used (Marconi & Lakatos, 2011). This type of interview truly gives the subject space to expand with greater freedom on the impressions, evaluations, conceptions, and images that each one of the proposed themes evokes, and that a more "rigid" instrument does not allow for.

All the interviews were recorded as audio files, with an average duration of 50 minutes each, and included an informal consent form (Creswell, 2010). The transcriptions of the audio files took about two months for each group of interviewees. In this process, the statements of the participants were grouped into six main areas by the researcher: economic, environmental, and sociocultural transformations, memory and history, tourism and future scenario, and questions about emancipation and politics. The focus of this cut out was the intersection of the fourth group of interviewees with sociocultural transformations.

Fieldwork note-taking adopted the orientation proposed by Yin (2016) in relation to the organization, format, transcription, language, and outline. This approach allowed for the comparison of sources of evidence and "conflicting or complementary versions about the same happenings in real life" (Yin, 2016. p. 151).

We would like to point out the dissection of the information that was the result of the field surveys obeyed Yin's (2016) five-phase cycle for qualitative data analysis: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding.

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The location and the time of the interviews were generally chosen by the researcher, or by mutual agreement between the parties. Inspired by what Flick (2009) proposes, the questions elaborated contemplated three aspects: questions more open and free about the experiences of the interviewee at the location, questions directed towards the objectives and hypothesis of this paper, and finally, more confrontational questions about the relationship between tourism and the micro-realities in the community. Within the pre-established script, a limit was placed on fifteen questions (or topics) per each interviewee, reinforcing the non-standardized, focal point interview.

Together with the interviews, we considered pertinent to carry out direct observation in situ of the participant (Marconi & Lakatos, 2010; Malhotra, 2012). It is important to highlight that the direct observations in situ occurred during six periods of immersion in the location. One of the reasons for the choice of the microhistory approach in the analysis of the statements made by the interviewees was the attempt to uncover "revealing silences", as Barros (2013b) explains:

> As microhistory works a lot with the contradictions of social actors to be investigated, with the subjective, distorted dialogical statements – bringing this subjectivity, these distortions, this dialogism to the surface of the final text (Barros, 2013b, p. 167).

From the planning stage, the qualitative research requires criteria for choice and exclusion. Yin (2016, p.212) also confirms "the brevity of the quoted materials also matches the author's fieldwork methods". The selection of parts of text of the interviewees weaving and intersecting with the theoretical approach to the theme expressed in this research, was the author's decision. Once again, Yin's (2016) approach inspired the format for the presentation of the results "the combination of the author's own narrative interspersed with the quoted passages produces an easy and attractive presentation style" (Yin, 2016, p.212).

3 SOCIOCULTURAL MICRO-REALITIES IN TRANSFORMATION

The "Gostoso" settlement was founded on September 29th, 1884, and one of its first inhabitants, Miguel Félix Martins, constructed a temple there in homage to the patron saint of the village after surviving a shipwreck. The church was inaugurated on September 29th, 1899 (Tabosa, 2000; Aragão, 2001). The district was dismembered from the city of Touros (Rio Grande do Norte) in 1993, and according to IBGE (2010) data, the city's population is 8,670 people.

The municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso is located in the Leste Potiguar mesoregion, microregion of the Northeast coast, in the Costa das Dunas Complex, 100 km from the capital of the state (Natal). According to Figure 1, the municipality has as its borders: to the north, the Atlantic Ocean, to the east and south, the municipality of Touros, and to the west, the municipality of Pedra Grande and Parazinho (Miller, 2014).

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Figure 1- The map of the state of Rio Grande do Norte highlighting the municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso
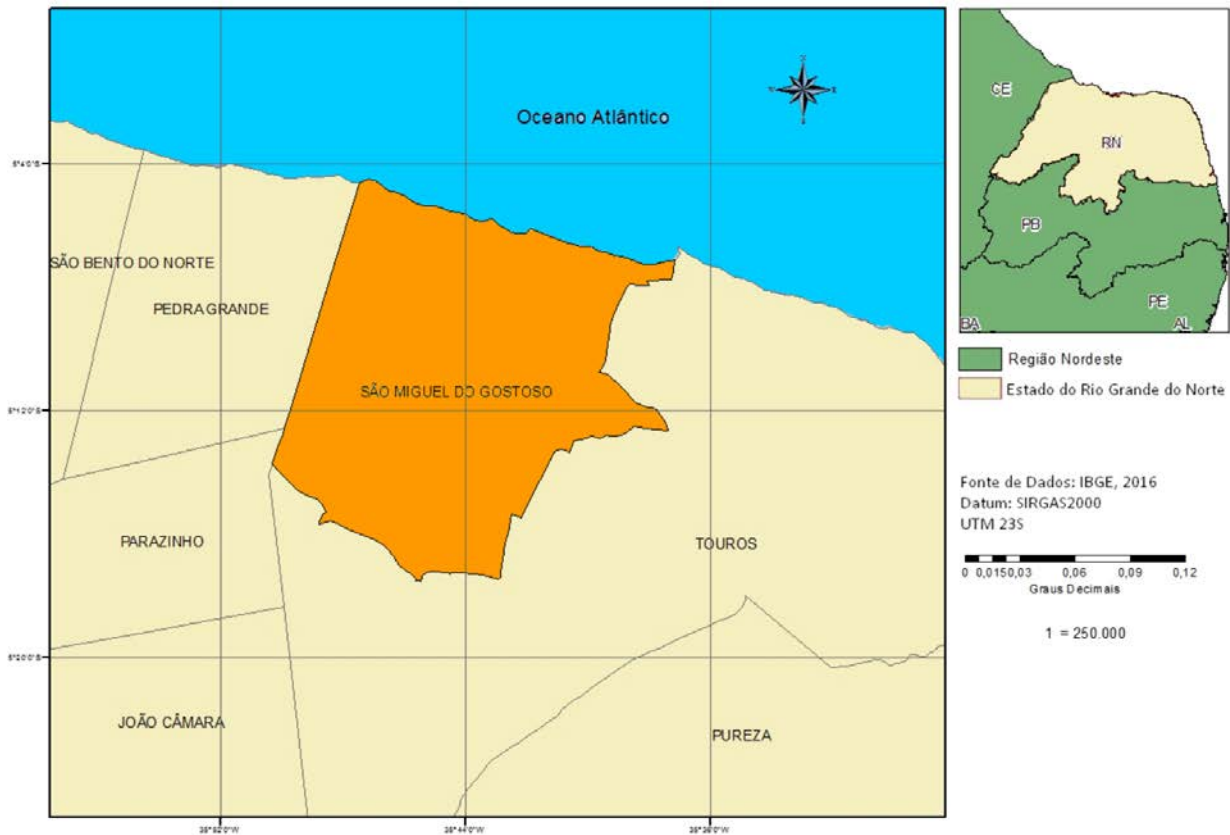
It is not known for sure what marked the beginning of the flow of tourists in São Miguel do Gostoso, but two milestones are important to understand this movement. The first, is the creation of the Pousada do Gostoso (1985) by the Rio Grande do Norte navigator, Leonardo Godoy. This guesthouse located at the Ponta do Santo Cristo was the first type of accommodation in the location (Neri, 2013; Direct Research, 2016).

The other milestone was the creation of the first kite surf [4] school in 2007 by an Italian called Paolo Migliorini. The conducive winds, the natural geographic disposition and the ease of access results in a tourism that associates sport to a type of vessel.

As is the case of other municipalities along the northeast coast, São Miguel do Gostoso had through fishing and agriculture one of its main sources of income. According to Miller (2014), the location's economy is based on three pillars: "the economy is concentrated on the following activities: farming (with cassava flour being its main product), fishing, and tourism" (Miller, 2014, p. 109). Over time, small-scale fishing [5], the handicraft of labyrinth [6] embroidery, and subsistence agriculture have lost space to other more a-

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[4] A nautical sport using a sail and a board.

[5] Fishing using handmade instruments, put together by the fishermen themselves, from the making of nets to the vessels themselves.

[6] This type of handicraft is called labyrinth owing to the type of embroidery carried out on the fabric. Consequently, the artists that do labyrinth embroidery are called "labirinteiras" in Portuguese.

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tractive economic activities.

The first rupture from isolation was the arrival of electricity, followed by the tarring of RN 221[7], which made access to the district easier. And at a third point in time, tourism. Even though the road between São Miguel do Gostoso and Touros existed in the 1990s, the stretch of gravel and sand made traveling slow and difficult. The residents were accustomed to making this trip along the beach, including the *labirinteiras* (women embroiderers), in order to sell their products in neighboring hamlets. Whilst the district was isolated, the beach village characteristics remained untouched. For interviewee number 12, "Here we had only undergrowth, cashew trees and *guabiraba*[8] trees (…) everything was covered by scrub". For another resident, "Every night it was common for people to stay on the sidewalks, on the streets, until early morning" (Statement 14). The forgotten district at the end of the 1970s was described in the following way:

> São Miguel do Gostoso was a village of fishermen with three small population areas. One covering the area of the Pousada Mar de Estrelas, a second area close to the Rua dos Dourados, where the Catholic Church is wedged in with eight or ten houses and another formed by Cícero Martins people (Statement 23).

The occupations of the then district of São Miguel do Gostoso were subsistence agriculture, small-scale fishing, and the handicraft of labyrinth embroidery. This last occupation being exclusively carried out by women. Basically, "we lived on agriculture and fishing (…) and it was a small village with a few and narrow roads" (Statement 25). This legacy was passed on to the children, who replicated the activities of their parents, "All my children learnt how to fish, the men" (Statement 4). The fishing was for the men, and the handicraft for the women. These occupations were torn apart upon the arrival of tourism, together with other sociocultural and economic questions, as the original jobs available (like embroidery, fishing, and planting) lost space to tourism services in the guesthouses and restaurants. "The fishing culture stayed with the oldest and stopped being passed down to future generations" (Statement 29). Fishing lost space to tourism due to various factors such as: for being a risky and heavy work, and for yielding little profit. "The young people don't fish anymore (…) young people today can study, which was not available 15 years ago" (Statement 28).

Fish appeared as an essential product, as much for food for the inhabitants of São Miguel do Gostoso, as for supplying the local infrastructure of food and lodging. In spite of this, there are complaints, both from the residents, as well as the owners of local undertakings about the high cost per kilo of the product.

The transformation of fishing is not something isolated, it is macro, it is not just something that is happening in São Miguel do Gostoso, it is a process where the activity is stopping, as well as the replacement of small-scale fishing by industrial fishing. It requires a

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[7] A road that connects São Miguel do Gostoso to the BR 101 highway. The tarring of this road happened in the first ten years of this century.

[8] An edible fruit from a type of plant that was common to the region.

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lot of time to invest in the vessels, in the techniques, in the handling and learning how to fish. It is still possible to see in São Miguel do Gostoso artisans building fishing boats, fixing trawl nets, and selling their fish at the local market, but for how much longer?

In relation to women's occupations, there is an evident disbanding of the *labiriteiras* groups, given that they still do not have their own space to sell the products, which, on many occasions are sold in the doorway of their residences, and without defined pricing. Therefore, many women that work with this are selling their labyrinth embroidery at prices below commercial cost and the cost of labor, depreciating their manual work. Handmade labyrinth embroidery is a difficult product to make, and the artisans' labor is not always compensated for at the time of sale.

In the district headquarters, the *labirinteiras* can still be found working in the open air, or in their houses. It is noticeable amongst the interviewees the stopping of labyrinth embroidery, even though it is an activity that is maintained among the older ladies. "There are no more young women doing labyrinth embroidery" (Statement 5). Tourism here is like a two-edged sword. It contributes to take young people away from handicrafts and, at the same time, creates a market for labyrinth embroidery pieces. Following on from this, one artist spoke about her fear, "I feel pity, but whilst I still have my sanity I will continue working" (Statement 12).

Tourism is not the only one to blame for the disappearance of labyrinth embroidery. It is evident that the enchantment of tourism lured many young people, but the changes caused by access to technology and information, by short and fast travel, and the easy access to schooling, as well as behavioral changes, have brought a lack of interest for activities that are not very profitable and which require a large amount of physical effort.

As can be seen in the following statement:

> Labyrinth embroidery is a handicraft that is a lot of work, a lot of work (…) for a woman to do the embroidery is a process, from the purchase of the fabric, the thread, the fabric is expensive, the thread is expensive, first, you have to design, it takes a lot of time to undo (…) it takes a woman eight hours of work to make a hand towel with a 10 cm border (…) it is a lot of work and not very profitable (Statement 17).

In spite of the intrinsic cultural aspects involved in the activity of labyrinth embroidery, it has also adapted itself to the demand from tourism. Today, many pieces are made to order, in such a way as it is the consumers themselves that determine and/or choose the models, designs and sizes. "It is the pockets that choose the designs" (Statement 37). This tendency of this adjustment to make the product according to the taste of the visitors, provides us with evidence of a risk of this activity succumbing to the industrialization of handicraft. When the original activities adjust to the desires of the tourist, tradition and originality weaken, allowing the handiwork to lose character. It is the attempt to adjust to the markets (including foreign ones) that determines how the product should be to satisfy the consumers. There is a resistance to produce large pieces, like table cloths or bed sheets, as much because of

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the strain, as because of the time it takes to make them.

The *labirinteiras* prefer to produce smaller pieces because it is easier to sell them, and the time it takes to make them is shorter (as Figure 2 demonstrates). Depending on the item, the artisan could take months, "Labyrinth embroidery is work that takes a long time" (Statement 6). The interviewees perceive the traditional value of the handiwork and the risk of its depletion, and which can be represented in the following statement, "There are no more young women doing labyrinth embroidery" (Statement 5).

Figure 2 - Cloth with labyrinth embroidery handiwork

Source: Field research (2016)

One of the interview questions was focused on the future of labyrinth embroidery and fishing in the municipality. Almost all the interviewees referred to fishing as an activity in decline, as well as the handicraft. "Our fishing is at a time of decadence" (Statement 36). The references to small-scale fishing in the past highlighted mainly the lobster fishing. One fisherman defined the low productivity in fishing in the following way, "Some of the fish changed (…) but you can still survive from fishing" (Statement 4). In this way, one city resident defined what happened, "In the past, there was only the professions of farmers and fisherman… today, you have chambermaids, waiters…" (Statement 8).

The migration from fishing and labyrinth embroidery towards tourism and wind power is visible in the following statement:

The fisherman puts on his clothes and goes to work on the wind power farm, generally with heavy machinery and does not return to fishing (…) the same thing

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happens with the lady that was a *labirinteira*. She does not manage to make enough money to maintain herself, so she becomes a chambermaid in a guesthouse or a cook (…) the young man that worked in agriculture becomes a waiter (…) this takes people from handiwork and they don't return, once they become specialists in that activity, they don't want to return anymore (Statement 22).

The future of labyrinth embroidery done by hand is still unknown. While its manual production in the district of Reduto represents a cultural and tourist asset, the way in which this is carried out is gradually declining due to the lack of artisans. Fishing is heading in the same direction, having dwindled in relation to previous years when it was the principal economic activity of the city. Hope appears in only a few statements, "Fishing will not end, there is a lot of fish and it is traditional" (Statement 33).

The tendency is that the passing down of the technique and the learning process in the making of the boats will be lost with the passing of time. When an activity is extinguished, what is lost with it is the tradition. The boys on the rafts, the girls on the looms, the parents working in agriculture, all of this is changing, never to return. "The city was a village of fishermen originally, people would arrive and would see many boats out at sea (…) with development, this main source is being forgotten, I think that this is one of the most significant changes in the city's history" (Statement 29).

Tourism has positioned itself as one the most interesting activities for young people, thanks to the possibilities for personal growth, cultural exchange, and interactions with foreigners that it provides. According to one of the statements, the incentive for the activity of labyrinth embroidery could delay its disappearance, "Labyrinth embroidery was more than fishing (…) today, if you search here within the city, I don't know if you will find ten (…) I believe if these women had support, associations that came along to rescue (…) because it is very interesting" (Statement 1).

Gradually, there is a reduction of boats out at sea, young people moving away from fishing, oblivion of roots, a cooling down of the activity in the face of tourism which imposes:

> The increasing real-estate speculation, the settling down of foreigners that arrive in the community, and tourism seem to have defined a new status for the fishermen, placing them in a less privileged position in the bosom of family and community as a whole (Miller, 2014, p. 116).

Miller's (2014) opinion goes together with Grendi's (2009, p. 46) observation that there are "fabrics of interpersonal relations inserted into wider social contexts", reinforced by one of the statements that will follow, where it is highlighted that the transformations are of a greater magnitude, and come from external flows.

> It is difficult to talk about what changed because of tourism and what changed because of natural social and technological development. Because I think that technology had a much more important impact than tourism (…) technology like the telephone and the internet (…) it is not tourism that changed this, it is an explosion of technology that has an incredible social impact (Statement 2).

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Another aspect that can be observed is the mutation of the city towards certain habits of foreigners to accommodate the continual flow of foreign visitors, blowing in from all directions. It is visible to see the number of establishments (principally, those for food and lodging) that use words in other languages, which is a result of the hybrid process of tourism perceived in language.

All the transformations, adaptations, and updates to the language are a result of globalization (García Canclini, 2008). As much for interviewee 23 as for interviewee 24, "The Northeast is very adaptable in the acquisition of imported habits" and "The Northeast is adaptable in relation to foreign habits". For some of the stakeholders consulted, the incorporation of foreign behavior in the daily lives of young people, gives them a certain differential and status in relation to the others. "The way that the girls dress has changed, the way that boys get their haircut has changed. People have lost the fear of the way they dress, they dye their hair, now it is fashionable" (Statement 3).

The changes in São Miguel do Gostoso go from the jargon used, to the clothing, to the eating habits, to the way in which people express themselves. This attempt to homogenize culture in communication is highlighted by Hall (2005) and by the following statements:

> It opened up an array of other languages, they are hearing other languages… German, English, French, Italian… a lot of Italian. This is a major thing, opening up the world for the people from here… something that was not available. New and different ideas, sometimes a little shocking (Statement 28).

> We receive a lot of foreigners (…) some people get very involved there and shortly the

people from here will be speaking other languages, other customs, other slang… I think that they are losing a little bit of their identity (Statement 14).

Relations between visitor and visited are not always harmonious, "On occasions, those that come from outside want to impose their way of doing things, their way of being in the city and the culture of the people, without taking into consideration what the natives have" (Statement 24). Or still, "A little of the local culture is being forgotten because young people will focus on what is new" (Statement 29).

Usually, younger people are more attracted to habits that are different from their parents, and the behavior of foreigners will be incorporated in everyday life. This declared and consented appropriation has promoted and validated this hybrid process, of renovation and breaking down, of rebirth and oblivion, always versatile, volatile, and continuous.

Perceptively, the flows of tourism, migrations and deterritorialization will knit together other social fabrics; reconfiguring the landscape, the social and urban, the cultural. "When the circulation, which is becoming increasingly freer and frequent, of people, capital, and information relates us daily to many cultures, our identity cannot be defined anymore by exclusive association and a national community" (García Canclini, 2008, p. 131). These interferences and new compositions that tourism creates appears in the following statement:

> For one reason or another, tourism gave its own characteristic to São Miguel do Gostoso and for this I don't think I can separate tou-

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rism from São Miguel do Gostoso, they are intrinsically aligned (...) (Statement 22).

The fastness of these hybrid processes is leading to the formation of mosaics which are difficult to homogeneously define and validate. This recombination and transformation of the elements of a society by another goes beyond simple cultural differences. It is more than this, it is a reconfiguration of the format. However, according to the Argentinian author, "our identity cannot be defined anymore by exclusive association and a national community" (García Canclini, 2008, p. 131). For one of the interviewees, the cultural exchange is something positive because, "We begin to learn new ways of living" (Statement 17), or still, "I don't believe in acculturation, I believe in exchange" (Statement 31).

The old São Miguel do Gostoso and the first tourists no longer exist. "Before, you knew who the tourists were, you knew by the name (...) but today you can't identify who they are" (Statement 34). According to the fieldwork (2014-2016), the first tourists were trailblazers that arrived at São Miguel do Gostoso by the beach, or after confronting a long journey (as there were no roads at the time), and that were in search of refuge, isolation, and peace. They were not the adepts at nautical sports that can be found today (this is because these activities only came about in the first ten years of this century), but another type of tourist as participant 24 informs us.

The cultural changes are also apparent in the food. The creation of a municipal fair was the idea of the resident, Isabel Neri (Dona Bebé), and supported by Leonardo Godoy.

> Isabel closely followed the whole growth of the city. And was responsible for actions like the creation of the local free fair, which takes place every Monday, and is pretty busy. She would conduct meetings, talk to traders, and listen to answers that weren't very motivating (...) (Neri, 2013, p. 58/59).

In the statements captured by the interviews, the market added new products, became more dynamic and adapted itself to new demands. For the participants, the food offering, the types of products, and the gastronomy all changed in the city over the years. The residents of São Miguel do Gostoso altered their eating habits as well. From a certain aspect, it can be perceived in the food market, a proliferation of leafy vegetables, pulses, and green vegetables that before the boom in tourism were not commonly found. For respondent 19, "In the old days, a lot of salt and fat was used, food with a lot of salt, there was no electricity, there were no fridges (...) dried meat, fish... today, this has changed".

It is also common to find more sophisticated products in the bars and restaurants (like wine, mushrooms, and spices).

> The food market demonstrates the transformation of consumption (...) now, you can see a lot more green, before, it was all brown in color (...) now, there are green vegetables, herbs, spices, leaves, lastly, this is a reflection of the new consumers connected with the restaurants and guesthouses (Statement 27).

For some interviewees, the demand on the part of the tourists led to the local production of arugula, horseradish, and parsley,

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which were not part of the day-to-day life of the community, reinforcing the transformation of these micro-realities. For interviewee number 14, "we grow up and will demand something" or still, "things have to evolve, they cannot stay retroactive in time" (Statement 11).

On one hand, there is a generalized offer of products and services, which are not available in the neighboring rural districts, and a discreet oblivion of local roots in the culinary. The fish from the beaches are part of the menus of the guesthouses and restaurants, but other symbolic food from the region (like corn and cassava) has lost its status vis-à-vis wraps[9], pancakes, and sandwiches. According to statement 32, the modification of menus attended to the globalization of the visitors, who are more interested in different types of food. Once more, the global in the detriment of local. "In a certain way, the production and offering of food was being shaped to meet the habits of outsiders and because of irrigation (Statement 8). On the other hand, some residents and guesthouse owners focused on fruit and local production, transforming them into sweets, jams, and juices. As statement 29 mentions, "We begin to see things that the city does not know about, like Arborio rice and tomato sauce from other brands".

This changing of eating habits, of retail, and of the language is valued by some of the interviewees as can be seen in the following statements:

> We begin to learn new forms of living (...) Tourism came, but came aggregating a series of values. I think this is very good. We learn with them and they with us. Tourism fixed people here (...) this multiculturalism is very important. Because a child already grows up knowing that there are various forms of language. The things that they could learn further down the road, they can learn from day to day living. What brought this here? Tourism! (Statement 18).

> Another positive point of tourism, which I believe, with the exclusive public and differentiated customs from the community, people that consume different food and which we are not accustomed to seeing here. This means that local trade diversifies, offers more options of food and drink, and products in general. Our people today have access to new products, which if we hadn't had tourism, we would be fated to continue in the same way. Tourism brought this characteristic to our community (...) many things that you find here, like imported beer or some delicacy (...) something that was not here before, which the tourists when they come here are looking for and the market adapted to (Statement 26).

By expressing the changes in local food and in the differentiated product offering from neighboring districts or cities, the interviewees are highlighting this singularity with pride. All those that cite the offering of the local municipal market, the restaurant menus and the variety of items in the markets, extol them as something positive for a small location. In São Miguel do Gostoso it is even possible to find a wine emporium, which belongs to a resident born in the city. The transformation of eating habits was due to changes introduced by tourism, with the arrival of new cultures and becoming closer to the visitors. The fact that many tourists have fixed their residence in the municipality, is also a factor that should be considered.

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[9]. It is a type of Syrian-Lebanese sandwich.

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4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the interpretation of local micro-realities, we can detail the most prominent sociocultural transformations in the daily life of São Miguel do Gostoso. Changes regarding work, language, food, and clothing were perceptible after the arrival of tourism developments.

It was found that the transformations in work, whether centered on fishing, agriculture, or handicraft, all migrated towards tourism services. This migration was most intense in the first ten years of this century, thanks to the push given by kite surfing. Tourism was a modifying stimulus, given that labor in the past was not attractive, and did not bring new perspectives and stability for the youngest generations. These micro realities were altered definitively.

The municipality's gastronomy, before tourism, was focused on the region's fruits, roots (like cassava), fish, salty meat, and on traditional family-based agriculture. The growth in tourism brought new experimentation and modification of eating habits, from imported sandwiches, to more sophisticated fish (like cod), to wine, to new leaves, and to mushrooms. This change does not necessarily mean that there were improvements in the food, despite diversity, just indicates the introduction of new flavors and menu options, as much for the tourist establishments, as well as for the daily life of the city.

With the statements "There is a lot of people here that talk like an Italian" (Statement 14) or "There is a lot of people wanting to mix, talk Italian…" (Statement 3) it is per-ceptible that people directly involved in tourism see in the cultural diversity, in the learning of new languages, a chance for ascension, prestige, and differentiation from the others. This tendency to mix is more common amongst the younger people. Tourism provides these interactions between languages, adjustments, and incorporations. The jargon is mutating, words are lost, and others gain other formats and meanings from generation to generation. Tourism has the power to accelerate these transformations, that come sneakily and embed themselves in the local dynamics.

The differential of this study was the association between microhistory and tourism, something that is almost inexistent in scientific literature. The incorporation of the micro-realities study to understand tourism in São Miguel do Gostoso allowed for a dive into the experiences of ordinary people, who are a long way from the spotlight. The intention of this study was never at any time to highlight the tourist, the visitor or the traveler, but to understand how the locals deal with these transformations that occur over time, altering their routines.

The micro-realities of a population constitute their microhistory. Anonymous individuals, which breath daily and give to life a drop of water. Besides the aquarium, this small world in which these actors move and relate to each other, there are other drops of water in this ocean of transformed realities. "From the understanding of the uniqueness of a community one can discover its similarity with other communities and with the society that encompasses it" (Arias, 2006, p. 182).

Understanding was the challenge:

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spoken comprehension, expressed in the look, in the muttered words that stick in the throat, in handwritten notes, in the tapping of fingers, in the embroidery of the loom, in the coffee cup, in the walks along the beach, or in the working of wood. These were the clues that were searched for, conflicting close ups, unique and revealing moments that run through every work. As the German philosopher, Hannah Arendt wrote "understanding is a strange enterprise" (Arendt, 2008, p. 345).

Many other transformations are perceptible in beach municipalities where tourism dictates new configurations, which conform to other variables not highlighted in this study, but which provide new avenues for research.

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