

Papers

You reap what you sow, don't you? Socio-environmental micro-realities transformed by tourism in São Miguel do Gostoso, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil

Quem semeia vento colhe tempestade? Microrrealidades socioambientais transformadas pelo turismo em São Miguel do Gostoso – RN

¿Quién siembra viento cosecha tempestad? Microrealidades socioambientales cambiadas por el turismo en São Miguel do Gostoso - RN

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Abstract

This study investigates the tourist city of São Miguel do Gostoso, from the theoretical and methodological viewpoint of Micro-History. The proposal is to highlight how micro-realities construct outstanding narratives about the place. For the argumentative foundation Micro-History is presented. This is the methodological route for the research construction that gave rise to this study. The methodological course of construction of the research was based on direct participant observation using semi structured interviews and analysis of films. In this article, we made use of a sample with 16 subjects, out of a universe with 52 participants, here represented by: owners of sailing boats schools or marinas; municipal government members; dwellers that are members of associations, NGOs and/or committees; religious representations, and dwellers representing local history. Therefore, our conclusions point to an inextricable relationship between culture and nature, perceived within the intrinsic relation of environment and participants' lives, as well as the urgency to think over micro-realities, so that we can reflect on tourism and future developments.

Palavras-chave:

Turismo;
Microrrealidades socioambientais;
São Miguel do Gostoso;
Micro História;

Resumo

Este texto apresenta a cidade turística de São Miguel do Gostoso, RN, a partir do viés teórico e metodológico da Micro-História. A proposta é destacar como as microrrealidades constroem importantes narrativas sobre o lugar. Para a fundamentação argumentativa, apresenta-se a Micro-História e como ela pode contribuir para a análise das transformações

advindas do turismo. O percurso metodológico de construção da pesquisa pautou-se na observação direta participante com uso de entrevistas semiestruturadas e análise de películas. Neste artigo, realizamos um recorte com 16 pesquisados, de um universo de 52 atores, representados por: donos de escolas e/ou guarderías de esporte à vela; constituintes do poder público municipal; moradores integrantes de associações, ONGs e/ou comitês; representação religiosa; grupo de moradores com representatividade na história local. Por fim, as últimas considerações apontam para a indissociabilidade entre cultura e natureza percebidas na relação intrínseca do ambiente com a vida dos atores e a premência de pensarmos as microrrealidades para refletirmos sobre o turismo e os planejamentos de futuro.

Palavras clave:

Turismo;
Microrrealidades socioambientales;
São Miguel do Gostoso;
Micro Historia.

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Resumen

Este artículo presenta la ciudad turística de São Miguel do Gostoso (RN), desde lo sesgo teórico y metodológico de la Micro-História. La propuesta es destacar como las microrrealidades construyen importantes narrativas sobre el lugar, constituyéndose como fuentes alternativas a los discursos turísticos y empresariales. Lo mismo tiempo, lo texto cumple lo papel político al destacar los valores de estos relatos para construcción de lo saber científico y de las políticas públicas en diferentes escalas. Para fundamentación argumentativa es presentada la Micro-História, lo recorrido metodológico de construcción de la investigación que se originó este estudio. El camino metodológico de construcción de la investigación fue pautado en la observación directa participante y con el uso de entrevistas semiestruturadas y análisis de películas. Este artículo realizamos un recorte con 16 individuos, de un universo con 52 investigados, presentados por empresarios de escuelas o guarderías de deportes de vela; lo poder público municipal; habitantes locales que integran las asociaciones, ONG's o comités; representación religiosa; moradores con alguna representatividad en la historia local. Por fin, las últimas consideraciones apuntan para una indissociabilidad cultura y naturaleza percibidas en la relación intrínseca de lo ambiente con la vida dos pesquisados e la urgencia que pensemos las microrrealidades para reflejemos sobre el turismo y los planeamientos del futuro.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The multifaceted and ambiguous nature of Tourism has allowed for numerous inter relations and new interpretation perspectives. This research allied Micro-History theoretical and methodological approaches to explain what we call the micro-realities of a city in a transformation process resulting from tourism.

The contribution of this text lies in the application of Micro-History fundamentals through its basic quadrant to deepen the study of Tourism. It starts from critical points such as: history focused on everyday people, and therefore bottom up approach; a language style that comes close to literature; an exhaustive deepening of sources; and, a certain way of looking at things like a police investigator (noticing signs) to understand the speech, the looks, the muteness and the behavior of individuals (Barriera, 1999; Levi, 1992).

The micro-historical approach could add a new dimension to tourism studies, this way escaping from massive and statistical standards, placing humans in their individuality and, at the same time, collectively on the discussion stage of tourism. With this in mind, this research links literature in Tourism and History to non-scientific literature, together with the use of cinematographic films, to show intriguing facets of a population when faced by the socio-environmental transformations that tourism causes in their everyday lives.

Described by tourism discourses as being located "in the boondocks", the city investigated by us was discovered by tourism due to its natural beauty and the strong winds that blow in the region (suitable for radical sports like kitesurfing and windsurfing); winds that brought travelers, adventurers, tourists and investors that have caused profound transformations in this population, which has almost doubled in size in 20 years.

Research involving beach locations and the influence of tourism on the daily life of communities is consolidated by diverse Brazilian and international studies that have been carried out in the last few decades (Lorenna Rodiles, López Guevara & López Hernández, 2015; Ramón Cardona, 2014; Toneva, 2017; Vieira & Araújo, 2015). The difference of this article is the micro-historical analysis related to tourism in a beach community. A survey of 15 recognized journals in the field of Tourism (both nationally and internationally), with a Qualis classification between A1 and B4, registered only one study involving Micro-History and Tourism

between 2010 and 2019. Thus, the innovative nature of using microanalysis as a support to understand the transformations in a Brazilian municipality caused by tourism.

Our objective was to identify and analyze the socio-environmental transformations that have occurred in the municipality over two decades, resulting from tourism and other factors in the period after emancipation of the municipality. The work that follows is part of a doctoral dissertation carried out between 2014 and 2017, in the municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso, in Rio Grande do Norte (RN), Brazil (around 100 km to the north of Natal, the state capital).

2 MICRO-HISTORY – CAN A FRAGMENT REVEAL EVERYTHING?

To me, as a playwright, what interests me is that Branca existed, was persecuted, and turned into a legend. The historical truth, in itself, in this case, is secondary; what is important is the human truth and the lessons that we can draw from it. If this did not happen exactly as it is told here, it could have happened, because it happened to other people, under the same circumstances, at the same time and at other times. And continues to happen (Gomes, 2002, p.13).

In the play “The Holy Inquiry”, by playwright Dias Gomes, is the story of the persecution of Branca Dias by Priest Bernardo, in Paraíba in the 18th century, reveals a behind the scenes look at the Holy Inquisition. The death by being burned at the stake imposed on the character of Branca after being judged by the church and being found guilty of heresy, is a microcosm of reality. An ordinary woman, at the head of her time, imposing convictions through naïve behavior and dominated by the intransigence represented by the figure of a catholic priest. “There is a minimum of dignity that a person cannot negotiate with, not even in exchange for freedom, not even in exchange for the sun” (Gomes, 2002, p. 100).

The bonfire that reaped Branca Dias is a micro-story, a fragment of so many stories told or untold. This micro-story, added to others, sheds light on the dusty micro-realities of time, stored away in drawers, but which show the realities like those of the era of the Inquisition. If Branca Dias existed or not, this is not the question. The fact is that the narrative reveals the fight of a constituted hierarchy, imposing a dogma on ordinary people, afflicted by the defense of liberty. The Menocchio story, by Ginzburg (2006), reinforces the discussion about Micro-History and micro-realities that started with Branca Dias. The micro-historical approach highlights the leading role of ordinary people.

Traditional history offers a view from above, in the sense that it has always concentrated on the great deeds or great men, statesmen, generals, or occasionally churchmen. The rest of humanity was allocated a minor role in drama of history (Burke, 1992, p. 12).

What are micro-realities? They are stories of ordinary people that translate and elucidate microscopical aspects of a reality. The smallness of this reality does not disqualify it, to the contrary, it is woven daily over the years with rich contents that are not caught by the macroscopic lens that evidence the phenomena. In this way, “normal and everyday life become the protagonists of history, and singular situations assume the intensity of points of view by which complex social functioning can be explained” (Levi, 2009, p.15)

From the perspective of Zuluaga Ramírez (2006b), the publication in 1959 of the book “Pickett’s Charge: A microhistory of the final attack at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863”, by George Stewart, is a landmark for Micro-History. This term appears for the first time in Stewart’s (1959) investigations, but possibly, the work of greatest impact has been that of the historian, Luiz Gonzalez y Gonzalez, in 1968, “*Pueblo in vivo: Microhistoria de San Jose de Garcia*”. With the work of Gonzalez y Gonzalez we therefore have a Latin American contribution to Micro-History studies (Zuluaga Ramírez, 2006b).

According to Lima Filho (2006), the 1960s were fruitful in relation to the advance in the contemporary debate about post-war Italian History. Names of historians working in this country, in the 1960s, allowed for the birth of the *Quaderni Storici de Marche* magazine (between 1965 and 1966). In 1976, the Italian researcher Carlo Ginzburg published “The Cheese and the Worms”. In international literature, the citation of this seminal work in the discussion about Micro-History, is almost unanimous. As much Carlo Ginzburg, as Giovanni Levi and Edoardo Grendi, all of them Italian researchers and historians, fertilized the term Micro-History from the second half of the 1970s onwards and fulfilled roles as fundamental protagonists in this field of study (Lima Filho, 2006). The relevance of this analysis is thus described:

When focusing the lens at a micro level, local history opens the doors for the comprehension of the singularity of human societies if, in fact, it makes a choice about the form of access to the knowledge of social reality, allowing for the penetration into the world of feelings, emotions, values, deep psychological realities and the other motivations of the actors that we analyze (Kindgard, 2011, p. 126).

The micro-realities of a people construct their Micro-History. Characters and scripts out of the limelight, which daily, breath and give life to a drop of water. Besides the aquarium, and this small world where these actors move about and relate with one another, there are other drops of water in this ocean of transformed existences. “From the starting point of the comprehension of the singularity of a community one can discover its resemblance to other communities and the society that encompasses it” (Arias, 2006, p. 182).

Another particularity of the micro-historical approach is the evidential paradigm, which can be perceived in the Argentinean film “*El secreto de sus ojos*” (2009)¹, directed by Juan José Campanella. The character Benjamin Espósito (interpreted by actor Ricardo Darín) is a retired Argentine justice worker. After the homicide of a girl, who was sexually abused, Espósito manages to identify, by going through a photo album, the strange gaze of a man that constantly admired the victim. The investigation begun because of this clue (seen by others but not identified). “The eyes talk too much, it is better if they keep quiet” (*El secreto de sus ojos*, 2009). It is this same indicative character that the Micro-History gradually reveals. And thus, a fact unnoticed by the great majority denounces what is hidden behind a screen. “When you look at things from another angle, it makes you look at your own life” (*El secreto de sus ojos*, 2009).

The last relevant aspect when dealing with Micro-History is its innovative way of reporting an investigation.

A historian soon learns that the context of a text cannot be summed up by the surface of his message. There are the secrets, the interdicts, the revealing vocabulary [...] the text usually speaks through its most insignificant details, like a criminal that talks through the clues that carelessly slip away (Barros, 2013b, p. 140)

A Micro-history narrative escapes from the standard of scientific conventionalism. Religious persecutions, false identities, crimes, and situations that escape from a scientific study gain a status of analysis and interpretation in a narrative of a micro-history. Characters that at first seem insignificant bring to light a rich sociocultural context, capable of summarizing a historical period, a social behavior, an ingrained belief. Thus, they are portrayed as follows: “Their lives and their interactions with a broad social context emerge as keys of understanding from angles ignored in this context, as if they were beams of light, capable of reaching dark places in a room that the ceiling light cannot reach” (Fausto, 2009, p. 10).

The narrative in Micro-History is different, it approaches fiction, poetry, chronicles, police literature, biographies; it considers the records of inquiries, details, and the inconsistencies of testimonials, “the detail and the accidental” (Barros, 2013b, p. 142). The clues are everywhere, in a look, in apparently loose words without meaning, and in neglected details. This “evidential paradigm”, raised by Ginzburg (2006) and restated by Barros (2007), makes explicit the possibility of working the evidence and avoiding the obvious.

The task of a historian is certainly not to judge a crime, but to evaluate the representations, expectations, producing motivations of different versions, production conditions of these versions, as well as capturing from documentation details that will reveal daily life, the imaginary, the peculiarities of a social group, its resistances, its practices and ways of life (Barros, 2007, p.182).

Micro-History also respects the style of the author, his or her way of telling the story that he/she chose. According to Levi (1992), two characteristics are important in a Micro-History narrative, the first is to avoid “generalization and quantitative formalization” (*id, ibid*), which, according to the historian, falsify and distort the reality of society. Another characteristic is to “avoid an authoritarian form of speech” (*id, ibid*) and make the reader participate in the construction. “In Micro-History, to the contrary, the researcher’s point of view becomes an intrinsic part of the story” (Levi, 1992, p. 153). This freedom of writing is evidenced as follows:

¹ Argentinean film co-produced with Spain in 2009. Inspired by the work “La pregunta de sus ojos” by Eduardo Alfredo Sacheri. Won an Oscar for best foreign film in 2010, amongst other awards.

In this strain of micro-history, where the role of the narrative in its argumentative function is more notorious and there is the capacity of elements of the world studied to construct the historical report, each author allows for the appreciation of clear forms of construction of the report with the intentionality of making clear the rigor in the analysis of the texts and facts so that his/her report does not lose its historicalness which, together with argumentation, evaluating interpretation, and concern for the reader, results in attractive texts (Zuluaga Ramírez, 2006b, p. 124).

Micro-History opens a portal of possibilities for analysis, as it shies away from the rigidity of some investigation methods. Barros (2007) calls attention to the similarities with a police investigator, or a psychoanalyst in addressing issues which, according to him, abound in the literature. The art of deciphering details, sticking to details, and seeing above the inquisitor's shoulders (Ginzburg, 2006) depicted in books about mystery and police by Arthur Conan Doyle, Eduardo Sacheri, or Agatha Christie, for example, can help the scientific investigator when dimensioning a study object. This keen perception appears with majesty in "The Cheese and the Worms" by Ginzburg (2006).

3 METHODOLOGICAL PATH

Inspired as much by Menocchio (Ginzburg, 2006) as by Espósito (*El secreto de sus ojos*, 2009), according to which, ordinary people and detailed visions of the world bring evidence of the environment that goes unnoticed by the majority of those involved, we designate Micro-History as one of the pillars of investigation. We also deal with ordinary people, with their small realities sometimes detailed by history, but which reproduce a peculiar world full of memories, perceptions, and experiences. "The intention of constructing universes from fragments of reality" (Zuluaga Ramírez, 2006, p.8).

The intention of the investigation was not the community itself, but the possibilities of micro-realities: "the micro-historiographic outlook needs this intensive, incisive analysis, paying attention to the small details as well as the main connections" (Barros, 2007, p. 184). This community is full of events, occurrences and dilemmas that occur in their realities, which is why Micro-History underpins one of the methodological pillars, due to its adequacy to our objectives.

São Miguel do Gostoso contains 26 districts and a considerable extension of beach, stretching from Touros (RN) municipality in the south to Pedra Grande (RN) municipality in the north. The beaches in the district seat are: Maceió, Xêpa² Cardeiro³, and Ponta do Santo Cristo, going from the north to the south. There is 24 km of beach area in the municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso (RN). The beaches of joint use between small-scale fishermen and kite surfers and wind surfers are located in the district seat, highlighted in Figure 1.

²According to testimonials, it was the place where the soldiers of the army platoon camped out during the Second World War ate their meals. The local population was invited to participate in the mealtimes (Xêpa). ³Cardeiro is a type of large cactus, and very common in the region.

Figure 1 - Part of the São Miguel do Gostoso shoreline

Source: kindly provided by Canindé Soares (2012)

We chose the district seat as our object of study because it is the only urban one where tourist attractions and facilities, municipal bodies and associations, as well as the majority of the population, are concentrated.

Between the end of the second semester of 2014 and the second semester of 2016, 52 actors were studied in six field immersions. The actors of the research were: owners of schools and/or establishments related to the sport of sailing; members of municipal government; residents that are members of associations, non-governmental organizations, and/or committees; religious representatives; and a group of residents that are representative of local history. In this article, we carried out a sample cutting with 16 people of those researched.

The sixteen actors selected were chosen from within a group of surveyed people that carried out some socio-environmental action in the city, and their history is mixed up with the history of the municipality itself. This group is formed by representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs); religious representatives; native residents that work or worked in socio-environmental movements; non-native residents that participate or participated in socio-environmental actions; and, members of the tourism industry.

We opted for semi-structured interviews, with formal consent, recorded in audio files. "The objective of the interview is to understand the perspectives and experiences of those interviewed" (Marconi & Lakatos, 2011, p. 281). Within the pre-established script, each interviewee was limited to 15 questions (or topics), thus reinforcing the non-standardized focal point interview.

The interviewees were numbered because this allowed for a greater amplitude of subjects than the use of letters. At three different times of data collection, two subjects were interviewed simultaneously. In this case, we decided to use the same number followed by the letters A and B (29A and 29B, for example). It is important to clarify that the number of each interviewee followed the sequence of the scheduled interviews, therefore they do not categorize the groups.

Besides the interviews, participant direct observation was used to collect data (Malhotra, 2012). The biggest challenge of participant observation was, without doubt, collecting information without interfering, participating in the daily life of the city without forming views about what was being observed, through commitment and ethics towards scientific research, without assuming political or partisan positions, understanding the functioning of the micro system from diverse perspectives, and ascertaining what is not said verbally, but projected beyond words. Added to that, complements Barros (2013b, p. 177): "The micro-historiographical outlook needs this intensive, incisive analysis, paying attention to small details as well as the large connections".

In the participant observation, the researcher inserts himself/herself in the life of the community, experiencing its daily life and participating in the city's routine activities (Gil, 2014). Besides demanding a more prolonged period of immersion in the field, it also implies a more intense contact with the subjects and with the contexts (Flick, 2009).

Both native (categorized by N) and non-native residents (categorized by Ñ), were chosen by way of a non-probability snowball sample. Zikmund (2006) clarifies that, in a snowball sample, the members of the population are recommended by other respondents, which is reinforced by Malhotra (2012): "an initial group of interviewees is chosen generally in a random way. After they are interviewed, they are asked to recommend other people that belong to the target population of interest" (Malhotra, 2012, p. 278). Why a snowball sample? The indication of referential names was the best route for the funneling of interviews, in a city whose population fluctuates around 8,000 inhabitants. It began with the name of one resident, who was repeatedly cited in the pre-visits to the municipality. He was the first to be interviewed. Besides this, these names were validated by the film resource, since the same people mentioned also appeared in the produced film.

Information from visual data that came from two films was utilized to understand some components of the mosaic of micro-realities of the municipality. The first documentary, produced by the Jura Films studios in Switzerland, by Lucienne Lanaz, in 2003, is entitled: "*Dona Anna: Des soins de sante primaires au nord est du Bresil*" The other documentary consulted was that of the film-maker, Eugenio Puppo, called "São Miguel do Gostoso", from 2011. The first film deals with the trajectory of the Swiss nurse Anne Louise Raboud, in the then district of São Miguel, and her legacy left on the city during decades of activities related to environmental education, citizenship, and the preservation of cultural roots. The other film provides evidence of the more recent transformations of the municipality, like tourism, the real estate speculation, the memory, and the culture and its symbolic marks. Both films bring interviews and images of the municipality in a 10-year time perspective between one and the other.

The film approach was inspired by the qualitative approach of Denzin (2004) and Flick (2009), in that the cinema opens new pathways for the interpretation and representation of reality (Denzin, 2004). The analysis of documentary cinema is defended by the author as a field of multiple experiences; a mixture between reality and the emotive construction of language. "The real, or the slice of reality that is captured, can never be reproduced, for what is represented can only occur once" (Denzin, 2004, p. 240). Already Flick (2009), thus explains about the use of film:

Compared to interviews, they [films] provide the non-verbal component of events and practices which could otherwise only be documented in context protocols. Observed situations are ephemeral, whereas events recorded with the media allow for repeat access. This may transgress the limitations of perception and documentation that are characteristic of observation. (Flick, 2009, p. 255)

Denzin's (2004) four orientations for the analysis of documental film were adopted. First, treating the visual context as a description of a phenomenon; second, that the register presents statements of truth about the world and the events that occur in it; third, that the resource of film allows for access to the analysis of content, dialogues and details; and lastly, that these readings will validate the statements of truth that a film makes about what is real.

Finally, one of the stimulating factors for the use of the films, was the emphasis that Denzin (2004) gave to the micro-analytic film structure, guiding step by step how to proceed, valuing and analyzing the constituent parts of the resource. It is also understood that a documentary is an aesthetic, technical, and emotive cutting of the person that produces it.

4 SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATIONS: THE PEOPLE, THE RUBBISH, THE WATER AND THE SEA

To live in a city like this you need to have three things: Do not criticize: If you criticize you are an enemy. Don't do anything, because if you do this will generate jealousy. And do not praise. If you praise you are an idiot, a flatterer...it is exactly this! (Testimonial 3 Ñ)

The interaction between visitors and residents appear in Tourism studies, but the different approaches complete each other to understand the type of tourism (Ramón Cardona, 2014), or the relationship with local fishermen (Lorena Rodiles et al, 2015), or the economic impacts of the activity on residents' lives (Toneva,

2017). Here, we start with micro-analysis to understand the socio-environmental transformations of the municipality.

The history of the municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso can be divided into three phases. One before 1993, when it was a district of Touros (RN). The second when it was emancipated (July 1993), and the third, from 2000 to 2005, when tourism established itself in the city, mainly driven by water sports.

The city of São Miguel do Gostoso carries, in its history, an inheritance from the Swiss nurse Anna Louise Raboud who, for two decades (starting in the early 1990s), carried out a work of commitment with the community, regarding health, cultural identity, sanitation and waste management. Currently, Anna Raboud does not live anymore in Gostoso, although she does have a property on Santo Cristo Beach, but does return to the city every year during summertime. Her name appears constantly as a reference for environmental education for the population in the interviews that were carried out. “She put together giant collective efforts to clean the beach (...) she had a lot of influence here (...) she worked as a volunteer in this part of basic sanitation” (Testimonial 5 N).

Anna Raboud is the practice of what you know in the theory of social movement. It is not just movement, it is action. Anna Raboud was the person of action (...) you could go to any other city in the region and you would find streams, sewage in the curbs (...) here you will not find this because of Anna Raboud, who would say: you're going to do your septic tank in your yard because it's your responsibility (Testimonial 30 Ñ).

Anna Raboud did not come to São Miguel do Gostoso for tourism, she came for a socio-environmental project. Her work for the health of the municipality involved actions like vaccinations, sex education, personal hygiene, and mainly, with the waste produced (Dona Anna, 2003). For one of those interviewed, few people were as careful with the municipality as Leonardo Godoy and Anna Raboud. “Anna Raboud was herself a foreigner, a foreigner that was doing everything” (Testimonial 27 Ñ). Although considered “foreigners” and “aliens” (Testimonial 21 Ñ), these two characters structurally altered social, environmental, and political aspects of the city.

We have a person called Anna Raboud (...) it was her that changed this habit of how to collect rubbish, how to discard rubbish... she mobilized the population, she was always getting people to work together, made children aware at the time and was educating the whole community about cleanliness (Testimonial 25 N).

According to a survey carried out in the field immersions, before Anna Raboud, there was no garbage collection, and the residents grouped their waste together in the yard of their houses, in a dunghill⁴. For residents, São Miguel do Gostoso is a clean city because this was already sown in people's heart. “São Miguel do Gostoso is a clean city, if it is compared with others in the region” (Testimonial 33 Ñ). According to interviewee 33 Ñ, the role of the Swiss woman Anna Raboud was crucial for this awareness, education, and sensitization of individuals. For him, the legacy that Anna left is compared to “gold, diamonds”. In this way, two residents defined the work of Raboud as, “For me she was a very important figure for the development of São Miguel do Gostoso...in relation to garbage and health” (Testimonial 32 N).

The name of the Swiss nurse comes up repeatedly, “It was her that helped educate the people, how to deal with garbage, with the beaches, she contributed a lot towards this (...) I believe that São Miguel learnt a lot with her (...) she spent more than 20 years here” (Testimonial 1 N). The work developed during this period (the 1990s and the 2000s) can be seen even today, as shown in Figure 2. The seed sown by the nurse resulted in the creation of a non-governmental organization, ASDEGE.

A woman passed through here that worked environmental awareness issues with the people, with the natives, with garbage, with sanitation issues (...) The garbage was thrown in the road, the sewage went to the road, today we don't have this anymore, thanks to the work of a foreigner. Everyone talks about her with a lot of respect, in that she opened up and alerted many people to this environmental issue (Testimonial 24 Ñ).

⁴ The garbage accumulated in the yards of houses, and was normally buried or burned, was considered a dunghill.

Figure 2 - Environmental education campaign in Gostoso



Source: Direct research (2016)

In Anna Raboud's work there is an unusual way of dealing with less well-off places. It is common for both domestic and foreign travelers who land in hamlets like São Miguel do Gostoso to take advantage of these spaces, acquire land, exploit the labor and profit from their business. The experience of the Swiss nurse goes against the usual behavior of tourists who become residents, since she became involved in the community as a participant, developed socio-environmental projects and left a legacy for the municipality. "I consider her a native" (Testimonial 25 N).

São Miguel do Gostoso is a city with peculiar characteristics. The fact that many visitors had decided to reside in São Miguel do Gostoso and participate actively in actions in favor of the municipality created another convivial atmosphere. In the case of Anna Raboud, she received from the residents the title of "Garbage Minister", for her hard work on environmental health (Direct Research, 2016; São Miguel do Gostoso, 2011).

The visionary work carried out by Raboud in the 1990s and 2000s in São Miguel do Gostoso was crucial to promote socio-environmental awareness in the municipality. Despite this, the city deals with other obstacles as a result of growth. Among the most common dilemmas cited by respondents: noise pollution, water supply, and waste management are those that concern them the most. What the interviewees had to say about local environmental issues is very consistent, and which can be seen in the following statement: "People blame the increase in tourism for the majority of environmental problems, but I blame those in power and to a small extent, entrepreneurs" (Testimonial 22 Ñ).

Naturally, due to temporary visitors who, added to residents, generate more garbage and increased water consumption, São Miguel do Gostoso suffers with the volume of waste. Regarding garbage, the city does not have a landfill, but there is a systematic weekly garbage collection in the districts. The waste is dumped 4 km from the District seat. This large collection of garbage reduces the value of nearby land, in the area called Estrada da Paz.

The city does not have a sewage system, and the supply of water is carried out precariously by a municipal company known as SAAE, by way of artesian wells. The municipality's sewage is stored in septic tanks, and drinking water is provided by individual artesian wells or SAAE. The testimonials highlight the water problem in the city. "SAAE's water is bad" (Testimonial 13 N). The water supply does not meet the needs of the population, and water shortage is a recurrent problem in the summer, when the number of tourists increases. "The water that comes from the network is salty (...) each house has a well (...) there are serious problems with water" (Testimonial 35 N). Due to this, many undertakings and residents dig their own wells, without effective control over this process. "Who has money, digs a well" (Testimonial 18 Ñ). This will entail future investments on the part of public management in obtaining and distributing water.

The use of artesian wells has also intensified to attend tourist demand due to an increase in the number of accommodation establishments. For one of those interviewed, the future will exacerbate the problems of São Miguel do Gostoso's not yet addressed by public management: "The first problem that will appear will be the result of not having sanitary sewage, in some way this will appear" (Testimonial 27 Ñ). The problems raised

in São Miguel do Gostoso are like those identified by the researchers Vieira et al. (2015) in another North-eastern Brazil beach community: lack of sewage system, water supply problems, garbage disposal, too many artesian wells, salty water, amongst others.

In the field immersions and by way of Micro-History, the environmental variable showed itself as one of the most worrying for the future of the municipality, almost like an “announced death”. Unsolved environmental problems will affect other socio-economic and cultural dimensions.

The circulation of vehicles on the beaches and the preservation of turtles’ nests are examples of environmental conflicts cited by those interviewed. The fear of real estate occupation and the continuous flow of tourists on the beach are two issues that have mobilized the population, non-governmental organizations, committees, and council actions.

The movement of vehicles on the beach not only destroy sea turtles, but also puts at risk their nests next to the sea. Even though there are signs up all along the beachfront, it is still common to see traffic made up of motorbikes, quadricycles, sand-buggies and 4x4 vehicles, both driven by residents and tourists. This type of tourist excursion is extremely damaging to the local ecosystem. Besides running over sea animals, it also puts at risk people walking along the beachfront.

The NGO most remembered and cited in the interviews was AMJUS; it was created in 2009 and focuses mainly on education and socio-environmental justice through youth involvement and mobilization. Besides AMJUS, Espaço Tear, and CDHEC were also remembered as organizations that work in the city. NGOs constitute an important element for the locality, as they occupy spaces where the relevant governments are not working. The tertiary sector is gradually occupying empty or forgotten spaces, confronting the structures of power, and gaining credibility among the population (Rabinovici, 2009). One of the interviewees thus defines the role of the NGOs that work in the municipality as follows:

When I arrived here in São Miguel do Gostoso I came across this panorama. I don’t know how many NGOs exist, but around nine or ten...but I perceived that the people have this supportive spirit, of getting involved with the social side of things, of helping. The NGOs have different characteristics, a different profile. Some address the cultural issue, others the role of youngsters, others the environment, others sports, ultimately, they all have a key role when they are joined together” (Testimonial 26 Ñ).

The most representative work of AMJUS is on behalf of sea turtles, with monitoring actions along the 14 km of beach in São Miguel do Gostoso. According to the report for the demarcation of the sea turtles, two species are found in the region; the Green Turtle and the Hawksbill Turtle (Direct Research, 2016; Demarcation report, 2014).

According to a report produced by the NGO AMJUS, the number of killed turtles and destroyed nests is still very high. There is clearly a joint effort between the volunteer environmental monitors (called “*Tartarugueiros*”), focused on the environmental education of the local population and visitors. The tourist excursions with vehicles along the beach (sand buggies, motorbikes, private 4x4 vehicles and quadricycles), promoted by local tourist companies, are an aggravating factor for the preservation of sea turtles. However, as already described, despite the tourist signs, inspection and complaints, vehicles can still be found driving along the beachfront.

Besides the flow of vehicles, another aggravating factor, according to the report, is the intense movement of kite surfers and wind surfers. There are also other risks that come from the construction of kiosks and stands, the depredation of the nests by animals, accidental hunting and fishing, and the tide itself.

It should be noted that there has been considerable progress in dealing with turtles in recent years. In the past, they served as food for some residents, but with the work for the sensitization and awareness building of the community, today they are protected. However, after the arrival of tourism, the problems arising are different, as the flow of people in spawning areas harms marine animals. The birth of turtles is monitored and disclosed by the NGO; an event that groups together locals and visitors. “Neither the NGOs, nor tourism constitutes salvation for all the bad things of the community” (Rabinovici, 2009, p. 283). In the opinion of one of those interviewed, the NGOs take on roles that belong to the public sector and “outsourced responsibility” (Testimonial 30 Ñ).

Naturally, tourism is a sector that uses natural heritage to materialize as an activity, and a complex network of inter-relations. São Miguel do Gostoso did not escape unscathed from this process. The social, environmental, and economic impacts of tourism (as much positive as negative) highlighted by Kim, Uysal and Sirgy (2013) and Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) are clearly present in the municipality: the increase in investments, use and occupation of land; deterioration of local culture; drugs; intense vehicle traffic; social interaction opportunities; transformations of the forms and types of occupations; and influence on the style of life and demography, amongst others. "Regardless of this, tourism is still a relatively clean industry, with fewer pollution problems when compared with other types of industry" (Kim et al., 2013, p. 528).

In turn, São Miguel do Gostoso gained tourist and environmental visibility (for the preservation of sea turtles project), prestige and notoriety, identification of the visitors with the locality, commitment, and popularity of the host community in the country; all these aspects are also highlighted by Toneya's studies (2017).

Tourist places suffer from a double conflict: the environment as a key resource and as a destination for waste. There is indeed, "the danger and the tendency for over exploitation of natural resources and the use of nature as a source of resources and as a recipient of waste" (Altvater, 1995, p. 38). Although tourism is considered a clean activity, compared to the impact of industries, its massification aggravates social and environmental problems. First, because small cities are not prepared to deal so finely with cosmopolitanism and, secondly, because the natural environment transforms itself into a tourist product, capable of being consumed, used, and discarded.

Finally, Frame 1 summarizes the positive and negative actions identified in the research and intensified by the tourism phenomenon in the location.

Frame 1 - Positive and negative impacts of tourism on socio-environmental transformations in São Miguel do Gostoso (RN)

Positive influences	Negative Influences
Actions of non-governmental organizations	Noise pollution
Environmental education	Water supply
The preservation of sea turtles	The destination of garbage
The participation of visitors in the community's internal actions	Sewage system
Promotion and disclosure of the city	The ignorance of beach signs
The commitment of tourists as well as residents	The use of tourist and non-tourist transport along the beachfront, putting the turtles at risk

Source: the authors, 2019

The socio-environmental problems of small beach locations, arising from the flow of tourism, are the result of a mosaic of inter-relations that involve the public sector, the private sector, and the community. Tourism is still used: as a banner for salvation, for frantic promotion, and as a developmental discourse in the three areas. But who supposes alienation of the residents is mistaken:

What really hurts is at the base [...] as I comprehend and understand tourism [...] that is reflected in a lot of damage and there is a commodification of the natural, something that is nobody's business and then becomes someone's priority and has a commercial value, that's tourism [...] this in itself is not born well (Testimonial 27 Ñ)

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Thinking about Tourism as a transformation agent is not something new. The history of this research draws on the particularity of thinking about tourism from the angle of micro-realities. Micro-history reveals: the interferences of foreigners on the land, the new flows, and the singularities that influence and help to rewrite the daily realities. The reality of tourism is mixed with the reality of each person; providing new colors and formats, or defending the natural, or taking advantage of the natural as a product and discarding it.

What we have here is the fleeting present, full of nonlinear characters, without oversimplifications, but with magnetisms and subjectivities that surface through the skin. What direction will these winds take? We don't know! Despite all the confrontations of the past and the perspectives of what happened in other places and

which, maybe, project onto São Miguel do Gostoso, even if they are contradictory, everything tends to repeat itself, no matter what scale we are talking about. From neurons to the cosmos, there are standards and behaviors that are very similar, which apply to other spheres of ordinary life, to micro-realities. Even with unique traces of microscopic particularities, the universalization and replication of situations occur as common threads.

Yes, the city of São Miguel do Gostoso was transformed by tourism. To begin with, the local micro-realities were influenced by the embryonic work of Anna Raboud. It is noticeable how the socio-environmental education implanted in the 1990s reverberated in more forceful preservation actions in the 2000s and up to the present day. This legacy has delayed a slowly appearing massification. Subsequently, tourism landed and brought with it an avalanche of new interventions, in a proportion difficult to handle.

A compass rose symbolizes this search for a path to follow, for good winds, representing the cardinal points, the elements of the earth and its unity, taking into consideration all possible directions. It is expected that other findings, other approaches, other authors, positions, and perspectives will be possible in future investigations, because each cutting is a choice. Tourism was chosen as the study object, as a transforming agent, but other external forces exert their influence on the municipality, in a large sum of interdisciplinary reconfigurations.

Not a single actor (native or non-native) associated his/her life story with the dynamism of tourism. Memories were sought in the remote past, and bonds have always linked to cultural or nature elements. Micro-History revealed the strong identification of the interviewees with the socio-environmental elements: the land, the sea, the ecosystem, and the inseparable relationship between humans and nature.

The history of humankind is an environmental history. The conquests, the occupations of territories, the displacements, and the relations with natural elements are part of the history of each place and of each individual. These relations between man and the environment will gradually change the landscape, the notion of belonging, forgetfulness, memory, gratitude, and the bonds. The environment is not static, nor is humankind. "The relations of men/women with nature are inseparable from the relations that men/women maintain with each other during the passage of time" (Duarte, 2004, p. 152).

The São Miguel do Gostoso of this investigation will migrate to other understandings in the near future, and maybe a different city can be born. "Do you think that the wind is going to change?" (Testimonial 28 Ñ). Yes, the winds are going to change! The tones of the grounded wind turbine propellers, the colorful banners of kite surfing, the tourist tricycles on the beach, the birth of sea turtles, the accents, the multiple sounds and senses of a chameleon-type place, which gives way to growth and reinvents itself by the winds. Trade winds, winds of history, winds of tourism. Who knows, maybe other Annes will come! And, as the saying goes they who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind.

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