

Hospitality and the Search for the Ideal Community in Maria da Fé, MG, Brazil

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the encounters of outsiders, whether they are migrants or tourists, with the host community in the context of migration movements. The starting point of this research corresponds to the potato crisis in the municipality of Maria da Fé, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. It caused the intensification of migrants' arrival, attracted by the low price of its lands as well as its natural farming. In addition, the city is also a destination that attracts tourists because of its low temperatures and in location close to the natural beauties of the mountain chain called Serra da Mantiqueira. As for methodology of the study, we chose the oral history method, complemented by observation and bibliographical research. Outsiders, when undertaking their displacement, have in mind the ideal community, imagining they would find safeness and be immediately accepted. However, after meeting local people they realize the distance between the ideal community and the real one. The definition of community as a cozy circle reveals an identification with the motives of the migration movements to Maria da Fé, as this place looks like an ideological locus. However, beyond some facilities for making life easy in a small city and the natural beauties there is the social issue of "being in the community" related to the integration process that sets up the feeling of welcome for some people.

Keywords: Hospitality; Community; Migration; Tourism; Maria da Fé-MG.

Resumo

Hospitalidade e a busca da comunidade ideal em Maria da Fé, MG, Brasil

Esse artigo tem por objetivo analisar o encontro dos *outsiders*, sejam estes migrantes ou turistas, com a comunidade de acolhimento no contexto dos movimentos migratórios. O marco temporal inicial corresponde ao início da crise da batata e a intensificação da chegada de migrantes e turistas. Os primeiros, atraídos pelo barateamento das terras e pela agricultura natural no município de Maria da Fé-MG; os turistas, pelas baixas temperaturas, que deram à cidade o *status* de destino indutor de turismo localizado na Serra da Mantiqueira. A metodologia escolhida para esse estudo é a história oral, entretanto observação direta e pesquisa bibliográfica complementam o *corpus* da pesquisa. Ao empreenderem o deslocamento, os *outsiders* têm em mente a comunidade ideal, onde imaginam que obterão segurança e serão imediatamente acolhidos. No entanto, no momento do encontro com o grupo estabelecido percebem a distância entre a comunidade ideal e a comunidade real. A definição de comunidade como círculo aconchegante revela identidade com as motivações dos movimentos migratórios em

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Maria da Fé, porque, de certa forma, esse lugar se afigura como um *locus* ideológico. Muito acima das belezas naturais e das facilidades da vida na cidade pequena está a questão social, o “estar em comunidade” relativo ao processo de integração que faz mitigar o sentimento de acolhimento para alguns.

Palavras-chave: Hospitalidade; Comunidade; Migração; Turismo; Maria da Fé-MG.

Resumen

Hospitalidad y la búsqueda de la comunidad ideal en Maria da Fé, MG, Brasil

Este artículo tiene el objetivo de identificar y analizar el encuentro de los *outsiders*, sean migrantes o turistas, con la comunidad de acogida en el contexto de los movimientos migratorios. El marco temporal inicial corresponde al inicio de la crisis de la patata y la intensificación de la llegada de migrantes y turistas. Los primeros, atraídos por el abaratamiento de las tierras y por la agricultura natural en el *Município de Maria da Fé – MG*; los turistas, por las bajas temperaturas que dieron a la ciudad el estatus de destino inductor de turismo, localizado en la sierra *Mantiqueira*. La metodología elegida para este estudio es la historia oral, entretanto la observación directa y la investigación bibliográfica complementan el *corpus* del trabajo. Al emprender el desplazamiento, los *outsiders* tienen en mente la comunidad ideal, donde imaginan que obtendrán seguridad y serán acogidos inmediatamente. Sin embargo, en el momento del encuentro con el grupo establecido, perciben la distancia entre la comunidad ideal y la real. La definición de comunidad como círculo acogedor revela identidad con las motivaciones de los movimientos migratorios en Maria da Fé, porque, de cierta forma, ese lugar se figura como un *locus* ideológico. Por encima de las bellezas naturales y de las facilidades de la vida en la ciudad pequeña está la cuestión social, el “estar en comunidad” relativo al proceso de integración que hace mitigar el sentimiento de acogida para algunos.

Palabras clave: Hospitalidad; Comunidad; Migración; Turismo; Maria da Fé-MG.

INTRODUCTION

Both migration and tourism constitute forms of mobility – they impact the destination society and are related to each other by economic and cultural mechanisms that influence the search for spaces, demands and investments. Tourism, characterized as a form of migration of variable duration, generates migratory flows of labor to provide the services demanded by tourists, besides producing consumption, stimulating second residency establishments, retirement migration and lifestyle and seasonal migrations. These flows are directed to places with specific resources, and as result affect the labor supply, institute innovations and change the cultural images of places (Hall & Williams, 2002).

Although such factors cannot be generalized, the dynamics established between the members of a community with the outsider – whether he/she aims at touristic visitation or establishing his/herself permanently in that society – is based on distrust or even hostility. Hosting the outsider implies a variety of phenomena, such as concerns regarding the venue of the encounter, the responsibilities of the host, besides bringing to the fore the ethical and political implications of his/her admission. Thus, hospitality has a polysemic character and complex nature, implying a diversity of aspects and senses. Studies on the theme take different perspectives, such as tourism, migration, commercial forms

of hospitality in the tourism or service industries, as well as philosophical and political aspects (Molz & Gibson, 2007).

The search for the ideal community has motivated migrations since ancient times. However, after encountering the host community, sometimes the migrant finds that the dreamed and idealized place may not be within his/her reach. The idealized community has been the motive for some permanent or temporary displacements to Maria da Fé, a small town located in the south of the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, with around 16 thousand inhabitants. It is near one of the highest points of the mountain chain called Serra da Mantiqueira, whose landscape, climate, olive cultivation and natural agriculture have been attracting many people. When they go to Maria da Fé, migrants look for a kind of **Shangri-la**, an ideal community to visit or to live.

The objective of this article is to analyze how the encounter of outsiders with the host community occurs in the context of migratory movements, especially regarding the community idealized by the migrant and the real community he/she effectively finds. The study of the relations established between the migrant and the host community from the perspective of hospitality is relevant because it sets parameters for reflection on what motivates the visitation to a community, as well as the type of hosting the community offers the visitor.

This work was carried out using as methodology the oral history, through interviews with the community and the outsiders, whose testimonies were recorded and treated. For Alberti (2013), oral history is a method of research and not an end in itself, but it is a means for obtaining knowledge. The author also affirms that oral history is only justified in the context of a scientific investigation articulated with a previously defined research project. So before even thinking about oral history it is necessary to formulate questions that justify the investigation¹.

According to the author, "oral history interviews presuppose relations with the biographical method: either focusing on a theme, or the life of a deponent and the thematic cuts made in his/her trajectory. ..." (Alberti, 2013, p. 48).

The article is divided into seven parts, starting from this introduction and procedures. After, introduces Maria da Fé community. The fourth part deals with its two main concepts: the real existing community, and the imaginary one, originated from the utopian field and the desire and yearnings that migrants bring with them. The fifth part explores how the community hosts those who arrive to settle there, while the sixth part reveals how the host community manifests its power through hospitality over those who arrive. And finally, we finish the article with a conclusion.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The data that supported this study were collected through direct observation, bibliographical and documentary research, and testimonies, establishing a reliable and objective approach to the proposed theme. Regarding the methodology of oral history: "The sources are the interviewees themselves and the elaborations

1. The discussion presented in this article integrates the master's dissertation *Hospitalidade e movimentos migratórios contemporâneos no município de Maria da Fé-MG (1990-2015)* [Hospitality and contemporary migratory movements in the municipality of Maria da Fé-MG (1990-2015)], presented as a requirement for obtaining the Master's degree in Hospitality from Anhembi Morumbi University, São Paulo, Brazil.

they provide based on their stories Diving into narratives, transcribing, listening to and reading them dozens of times constitute the privilege of the researcher who works with oral history (Rouchou, 2008, p. 29).

As this is a contemporary topic, oral history seemed to be the best choice, because the narratives and experiences of people may indicate accurately how the encounters between outsiders and host community happened, which is the living and pulsating element of this work. Although it was not the only source, narratives of the interviewees played a prominent role because this phenomenon is happening in a historical moment in that specific community.

The selection of interviewees (outsiders and community people) was driven by the objective of the study and the importance of the experiences lived by them. Regarding the interviews with the 10 migrants, we sought to understand how the encounters with the community have developed. These migrants have experienced facts that answer some of the issues raised². The host community was also heard (six people) and they revealed facts they witnessed or came to know, as well as their perceptions of contemporary migratory movements. As for the type of interview, they were sometimes thematic and sometimes life stories. According to Alberti (2013, p. 48), thematic interviews are those that deal primarily with the interviewee's participation in the theme under study, while life histories have as their center of interest the individual himself.

To process the data, the interviews were recorded, transcribed and edited, and we eliminated slang, grammatical and concordance mistakes, as well as common language vices and colloquialisms. Some terms were maintained in order to preserve the lightness and originality of the testimonials³. We also interspersed the text with the statements transcribed in italics, according to the thematic pertinence.

Chart 1 – Interviewee's profile

| Migrant | | | | Host community | | | |
|---------|-----------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|
| age | sex | occupation | origin | age | sex | occupation | origin |
| I1 | feminine | agriculturist | São Paulo | I6 | masculine | seller | Maria da Fé |
| I2 | feminine | agriculturist* | São Paulo | I7 | feminine | seller | Maria da Fé |
| I3 | masculine | teacher | Greece/São Paulo | I8 | masculine | artist/designer | Maria da Fé |
| I4 | masculine | agriculturist* | São Paulo | | | | |
| I5 | feminine | agriculturist* | São Paulo | | | | |

* Occupation declared on the occasion of the interview, however, before migrating had another occupation, respectively pharmaceutical (I2) and banking (I4 and I5)

Source – The authors

2. After an initial contact with the interviewees, we made an agreement about their participation in the interviews, when we described the purposes of the work, showed the importance of their testimony, and made clear our respect for it. We also asked the interviewee's prior authorization to record the interviews, giving them autonomy to exclude excerpts from the testimonies, as well as the possibility of turning off the recorder device whenever they find it necessary. Although interviewees have been identified in the document of authorization and disclosure of the interviews, we chose not to reveal their names, since the reach of a scientific article cannot be precisely determined. And, in order to avoid misunderstandings, they were distinguished in the text through the presentation feature I1, I2 etc. to refer to them in each interview.
3. The interviewees were consulted about the content of the transcript and signed a consent form.

Chart 1 systematizes the profile of the interviewees – five migrants and three community members – whose statements were incorporated into the article, which means were not included in the analysis, due to the objective outlined for the approach employed. From the profile of the interviewees, we can note the motivating attraction of the cheap lands of Maria da Fé, given that four out of five interviewees selected are farmers, while two local ones are engaged in commercial activities and one of them is a designer, an artist and idealizer of the Gente de Fibra Project⁴.

MARIA DA FÉ: A PLACE WITH A WOMAN'S NAME

Maria da Fé⁵ is part of the tourist circuits of the Mantiqueira Highlands, the Southern Way of Minas and even the Circuit of Waters (Circuito das Águas)⁶, an aspect that reinforces its economic potential, but which in a way indicates the difficulty of defining its touristic identity, despite its recognition as a destination that attracts tourists (Emmendoerfer, 2014). The geographical location of relative equidistance to the main capitals of the Southeast region, being 335 kilometers from Rio de Janeiro, 436 from Belo Horizonte and 281 from São Paulo, makes the city not only a place of agricultural production, or that serves as a support to the agricultural activity.

With a population of around 16 thousand inhabitants, which defines it as a small city – less than 50 thousand people – according to IBGE (2019), Maria da Fé has had a GDP that surpassed some of the medium and large municipalities of Minas Gerais, due to its being the largest producer of potatoes in Brazil until the early 1990s. However, a crisis in this industry required alternative actions for economic recovery and, with the participation of the Service of Support to Micro and Small Enterprises (Sebrae), the Secretariat of Tourism of the city, and the local population, the project called *Minas Recebe* was launched. It consisted of a series of initiatives to foment touristic activity within the state's government program. These actions aroused the tourists' interest in the city, who arrived in search for the mountain climate (Maria da Fé is the coldest city of the Southeast region). Tourists were also attracted by the olive culture or simply came to appreciate the works of craftsmen and designers of the city.

People began to arrive interested in acquiring land, whose owners were no longer able to maintain, due to the bankruptcy of potato monoculture, and so the city gradually changed its profile (Santos, 2003)⁷. Mystic people consider

4. Gente de Fibra Project was created to support the tourism Project. Although it no longer exists, it maintained the appreciation of simplicity, considered as one of the main exponents of the cultural identity of the city. (I8 – host community – interview held on 27/05/2015).

5. There was a parish dating back from October 27, 1908, whose name derives from the railway station, inaugurated on June 27, 1891, which honored the pioneer farmer of the region, a woman named Maria da Fé. This station eventually represented the generating matrix of the new village, Vila de Campos de Maria da Fé, which was elevated to the category of city in 1917.

6. Its registration in the Circuito das Águas follows from the proximity to the city of São Lourenço, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

7. Cities have their configurations changed by transformations that alter what was apparently static. The city of “notables” stood out for the exacerbated importance given to their outstanding personalities who were the priest, the notary, the primary school teacher, the judge, the prosecutor and the telegraph operator. It gave way to the economic city, where are essential: the agronomist (who used to live in the capitals), the veterinarian, the banker, the agricultural pilot, the specialist in fertilizers, the responsible for the specialized trades etc. (Santos, 2003, p. 56).

Maria da Fé as one of the seven sacred cities of Brazil, being currently the seat of some institutions that, in a way, influence part of the migratory movements and visitation. As examples we may mention: the Brazilian Society of Eubiosis⁸, the Holistic University, and the Association of Natural Agriculture Producers of Maria da Fé (Apanfé).

REAL AND IMAGINARY COMMUNITYREAL AND IMAGINARY COMMUNITIES

According to Bauman (2003, p. 7) words have meanings, but some of them also carry sensations. **Community** is a word suggestive of a good thing. For the author, whatever **community** means, it is good to have one and take part in it. For him, this word entails a good sensation because of the associations it carries, promising pleasures and sometimes the kinds of pleasure we would like to experience, but are out of our reach. According to the author, a community is a warm, comfortable and cozy place. It is like a roof under which we can shelter from the heavy rain, or a fireplace before which we can warm up our hands on a cold day.

In a community there may be discussions, but friendly ones, as everyone is trying to make **being together** even better and more enjoyable. We can infer from this thought that the feeling of solidarity experienced in a community evokes a sense of safeness and belonging.

The way the community hosts outsiders reveals the concept of hospitality analyzed in this work. Hospitality is treated here as the encounter (Godbout, 1997) between outsiders and the community (Elias & Scotson, 2000). Although the concept may seem simplistic, it is rather complex, as the meeting between the two universes does not always occur in a peaceful way, and there as always mutations in the two poles.

The testimony of the following migrants reveals the importance of acceptance being welcome in the encounter with the community: *"The contact with the person who sold me the land inserted me in some sectors of the community, of the city"* (I1 – migrant interview conducted on 05/17/2015); *"I know people who left here because they could not really fit in and be part of the community. But people who already have a place and want to live further away, these manage to stay"* (I2 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/19/2015).

The encounter between the two universes is usually permeated by conflicts of interest. The one who arrives (*foris* – of the kingdom of Hermes) brings with him/her, besides the cultural baggage, the desire to be assimilated and accepted. The community is the fixed element of the relationship (*domnis* – the kingdom of Hestia), is the hostess, heir of the land and local culture.

Hospitality, in what concerns the encounter, is of central importance in a hosting context. The encounter with the community and the community's way of receiving reveals whether or not the community idealized by the outsider is materialized.

At first, the utopian community is for the migrant, a place of "friendship" and fraternal coexistence that supplants the mere existence of a group of people living together. A watershed is observed between the moment when the outsider

8. The Brazilian Eubiosis Society (Sociedade Brasileira de Eubiose) has existed in the city of Maria da Fé for more than 25 years and has attracted migratory movements to that locality.

meets the hosting community, and the moment from which he/she begins to feel accepted and integrated. The moments in group become more pleasant when the imagined community is found. Although differences may exist, they are treated cordially as there is a concern that the experience of “being together” is always getting better.

According to Bauman (2003), in the imaginary community idealized by the outsider, he/she can rely on the goodwill and help of others. In this sense, the individual duty is simply to help others and accordingly to have the right to obtain help needed. The author concludes by stating that in the current merciless times we live, community is an inaccessible kind of world. The sense of community vanishes as cities grow and the speed imposed by capitalism dictates the pace of human relations.

Williams (2003, p. 9) defines **community** as another name given to a lost paradise, a place in the future to where people wish to go and are continuously searching for paths that might lead them there. Among the people who went to Maria da Fé, some perceive the city as this kind of lost paradise, while others compare the community to the promised land of the Old Testament:

When we got here, we started looking for a job in college. People saw the curriculum in Physics, master's degree at USP, PhD ... I was hired soon, but it was difficult for me to speak in public. But to stay here, I had to learn to speak in order to survive. And I was in a process of spiritualization; I felt my life as a new exodus, as if I were in Egypt, lost in the desert as a slave and then I found my Canaan. So, by analogy, here is my promised land. It has this symbology to me. The people here have a very beautiful religiosity. This community welcomed me. I have Greek blood and am an Orthodox Catholic. (I3 – migrant – interview conducted on 11/15/2015)

These thoughts, in a way, synthesize the psychological element: the desire guiding the search of some of the contemporary migrants who move to small towns or rural communities, believing that there the feeling of *communitas* remains alive. The testimonies of some interviewees reveal that this community is for them a kind of “promised land”, where peace, health and fraternal coexistence between people of different backgrounds and members of the host community prevail.

We can infer from the testimonies that the idealized community is the driving force of some migratory movements to Maria da Fé. The human being demonstrates the desire to find a mythical place where his/her dream of peace will be realized, and some of them do fulfill it. But for other people, the idealized community does not materialize and they embark on a kind of return to the real world, or begin to cultivate a sense of expulsion from paradise, or feel they cannot remain there, or even condemn themselves to banishment, etc. In short, they develop a feeling of reservedness. At best, they find what they have sought, but are aware of the costs of this achievement.

The definition of community as a cozy circle (Bauman, 2003), reveals a certain identity with the motivations of contemporary migratory flows to Maria da Fé because, in a way, this place looks like an ideological locus for some migrants who went to live there.

Therefore, an ideological locus is the opposite of what Bauman (2003, p. 17) calls the real community, for it is an imagined, artificially created place. The real community is the one that, on the contrary, leads one to the realization that logic and human dreams hardly go together.

So, whether ideological or not, the concept of community here referred has stimulated the search of those who once left the big city looking for an ideal place. We may note that the community of Maria da Fé brings together some characteristics that make it get closer to what the outsiders seek, but in no way can it be said that the coexistence and integration of these people in that space happen in a peaceful and immediate way. The climate, the landscapes, and the possibilities of life in the open air are not enough. Above and beyond the natural beauties and conveniences of life in a small city there is the social issue the, “being in community.” It is the process of integration that mitigates the feeling of community for some, because it reveals the real community: “*We feel very good here, in terms of health, tranquility, this region is very special.*” (14 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015); “*It’s a kind of little paradise. And also the issue of the town being one of the sacred cities of Eubiosis.*” (15 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015).

I liked the region and I found it beautiful. I got to know several cities and I could be in any of them, but this is a beautiful place that has water in relative abundance. And I ended up choosing here, despite the distance from Sao Paulo. I did not choose Maria da Fé beforehand. The group [Apanfé]⁹ welcomed me and that was good, made my stay easier. Meeting the group was not critical for my decision, but it helped. (11 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/17/2015)

Bauman (2003) speaks of the imaginary, attractive community that reproduces the idea of coziness, which inevitably leads the hospitality scholar to associate it with the concept of hosting.

However, the imagined community is the realm of many differences involving those who have arrived and the local people; the culture brought by migrants and the established in the host place; the rhythm of life, which the migrants themselves define as “infernal”; the busy big cities from where they come and the quiet life in the imaginary community. These differences help determine the degree of adaptability and acceptance of the migrants, a fact that may generate conflicts of several orders, causing some of them to see their ideals of *communitas* frustrated. It is possible to infer from the testimony of some outsiders that at their moment of choice of a particular paradise, Maria da Fé corresponded to the characteristics of the ideal community they had in mind when they began their quest. But it is also noteworthy to recognize that how the group was received was important for their stay. There are striking differences distinguishing the dreamed community of the **really existing community**. In Bauman’s view (2003, p. 9), a community that endeavors to be the ideal one, the outsiders’ dream come true, must show loyalty, treating everything that remains short of such loyalty as an act of unforgivable betrayal.

9. The Association of Natural Agriculture Producers of Maria da Fé (Apanfé) has existed for more than 20 years and was created by local farmers who, after the potato crisis in the city in the 1990s, decided to substitute practices harmful to the environment related to conventional agriculture with organic production agriculture. Some migrants have gone to live in the city to produce healthy food in the ideal community, living integrated to the environment. The association has been, over the years, a gateway into the community for those who want a healthy life based on sustainable agricultural production.

COMMUNITY AND HOSTING

When he/she feels accepted by the community, the outsider starts to perceive the price of his choice and that his/her acceptance requires unrestricted loyalty to the community for a certain price, which normally means loss of freedom or of a portion of it. According to Bauman (2003, p. 10), there is a price to pay for the privilege of “living in community” – and it is small and even invisible only while the community still is a dream. The price is paid by restriction of freedom, which is also called “autonomy”, “right to self-affirmation” and “identity”.

Whatever the choice, something is gained and something is lost. Having no community means having no protection; reaching the community, if this happens, may soon mean losing freedom. Security and freedom are two equally precious and desired values that may be well or poorly balanced, but never totally adjusted without friction.

In this context, losing freedom means giving up a portion of one’s cultural and moral individuality in order to be collective. “Outsiders” understand this movement in a variety of ways: *“People know us more than we realize. It is a silent language. Action is a very strong thing in the human beings, involving persistence and coherence”* (I4 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015).

We were observed without knowing ... even what we consumed ... Once came to me a person asking if I had pots of a product that I consumed in quantity. I was impressed: How could that person know what I ate at my own house? Another thing is that sometimes we were not home and someone came looking for us. Some neighbor said that if we were not at home we would probably be at Eubiosis. How can this be?! When we come to a city, there’s a lot of people to meet, but when you are the novelty, just like a foreign body, everyone wants to know who you are. We were frightened by how much we were observed. (I5 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015).

When it comes to the ideal city, Léonard-Roques (2011) states that it can present itself as a refuge for the imaginary due to dissatisfactions with present. Paradoxically, the utopian city may be an unfriendly place, which limits the spaces of freedom (Léonard-Roques, 2011, p. 502). The place that consecrates the desire for evasion and the triumph of fantasy can set strict limits that seem to be the reverse of hospitality. In other words, keeping in mind a perfect encounter with the ideal community may generate an illusion of reception and hospitality as a natural consequence, but it may be in fact an experience of exclusion and/or hostility.

The community as possibility of a naive immersion in human union is increasingly possible only in dreams, which makes the study of human migratory and touristic displacements in search of an ideal community even more stimulating.

From the practical point of view, what happens when the outsider crosses the threshold of a receiving community is that he/she will not always find a cozy circle, as the local codes will keep him/her at a distance until acceptance. It may be the moment of contact with the real community, which is different from what was possibly imagined by the outsider (Rosenberg, 2000, p. 16).

Riedfield (apud Bauman, 2003, p. 17) defines the small community as an “arrangement from cradle to grave,” which allows the inference that in Maria da Fé, as well as in other small communities, the so-called cozy circle will be entirely available only to the people who were born there and intend to die there (the heirs to culture). The perception is that, the circle exists, but that it is not enough to be there to receive its benefits, which indicates that logic and human dreams do not go together:

At first I stayed in my new property, and then I went to the association [Apanfé]. Most of the associates are from the city and the association is already 15 years old. I showed interest in joining in, but things took time. They seem to “cook” you for some time, maybe to know who you really are. People seem to be afraid of those coming from other cities [distrust of the mineiro¹⁰]. I do not have much contact with the community of Maria da Fé, and what I know of the city is through the association. (I1 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/17/2015)

The mineiro is suspicious, but with the outsider he is even more suspicious. Because when we arrive, the first question is “Are you the son of whom”? And I’m just my mother’s son, but nobody knows my mother. (I4 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015)

The survival of the ideal community in a globalized world reveals that there was no collapse of frontiers, but that they in fact have been risen to protect the people behind them from uncertainties individually faced by them (Bauman, 2003, p. 21).

We must highlight that in the previous extracts from migrant interviews those who wished to feel protected by the boundaries of the community and be part of it, encountered all kinds of barriers, starting from the non-biological land membership. Attention is drawn to the fact that, in general, the first question asked by the locals is “Are you the son of whom?”, because there is a veiled interest that people be someone of the city. But in the mind of the migrant, the imagined community, the cozy circle does not need to know their origin; for them there would be no need for this kind of accreditation. This fact, in a way, increases the impact of the outsider’s arrival, because it configures a confrontation with reality. Another issue quickly perceived by them is the loss of freedom as a tradeoff to the sense of belonging and acceptance. This all adds up to the feeling of having the doors closed in Shangri-la.

Elias and Scotson (2000, p. 25) understand that in the group of city residents, families whose members have known each other for more than a generation, establish a common lifestyle and a set of norms that, in themselves, represent a frontier. They develop certain standards and are proud of it. Because of that, the influx of outsiders is felt as a threat to the established lifestyle. Besides, outsiders are unknown not only to residents, but among themselves and this does not provide them with any cohesion.

Formerly there were the traditional families, who went to the club, even with those who came from outside, during the holidays it was all the better before. But with the potato crisis, some people have enriched fastly and this started changing the city. Nobody gets rich overnight, but they found themselves with lots of money. Then the new rich arrived, and they built a closed circle among themselves. They did not go to the clubs and

10. Mineiro is how the inhabitant of the state of Minas Gerais is called, and popular culture characterizes him/her as a reserved and suspicious person. (NT)

had no social life. They used to travel, some to Itajubá, others went to Ubatuba. Then all has been disintegrating. (I6 – host community – interview held on 06/27/2015)

Hospitality and community are themes with close connection, because the feeling of belonging is the result of hosting. According to Godbaut (1997) hospitality is the gift of space, used to inhabit, cross or contemplate. Gotman (1997) reveals the immanent capacity of space to produce hospitality and hosting, sublimating the importance of being admitted in the interior, that is, of transposing the threshold and having the right to be inside.

The need to be inside a community, of interaction (hosting/belonging), requires some time to identify whether the individual who asks for his/her entry shows or not some kind of empathy with the established group. Or, as in old hospitality, it is necessary for a member of the community to sponsor the stay of the outsider within some boundaries, until he receives the “visa”, the tacit acceptance of permanence. (Grassi, 2004, p. 53).

The following three accounts reveal this bias: I2 who pointed out that the man who sold him/her the land also introduced him/her into the intricacies of the community; I4 and I5, who stated that the bank where they worked bridged the gap between them and the community; and I6 who talked about his friend, a local artist, who opened him/her a few doors; and about the couple from the building material store. Even though they feel admitted into the cozy circle, they recall their eternal condition of outsiders.

I had a person who helped me a lot in the beginning. He helped me make contacts. Today I have very good relationship with trade owners; the couple of the building material store was also a good support in the beginning. Because of them I got credit in town. (I2 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/19/2015)

When we arrived, we received a fantastic hosting at the bank, from the manager also from colleagues. This welcome also helped us. The bank was the godfather, who facilitates and opens doors. (I5 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015)

And since we were from the bank, there was a job for us, people did not see us that loose... (I4 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015)

Be admitted ... and accepted ... it was not immediate; it took a few years for people to accept us. I feel integrated, welcomed, but I know I'm not from here. (I5 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015)

It should be noted that the first contact of the outsiders with the community of Maria da Fé usually happens in the context of commercial relations. The couple in the building material store was mentioned in almost every interview, not just as merchants, but affectionately by the outsiders, as if from the commercial relationship a friendship had been born. This, in a way opens some doors, offers credit and support. It also changes the outsider, that no longer feels so loose and with no territory.

The person looks for us because we are honest. Whoever comes in, whether he/she is looking for human warmth or a brick, we have to be open to offer. We have come to the

world to serve. We have to be pure of heart. When the person is welcomed, he/she feels encouragement to stay. We do not distinguish anyone, all people are important in the same way. (I7 – host community – interview held on 06/27/2015)

These so-called “godfathers” of outsiders in the city are, in a sense, the missing link between archaic and contemporary hospitality. Currently, unreserved hosting seems something unimaginable, since society consolidates itself in exclusion. For Grassi (2004, p. 53), the complexity of laws – written or not – governing the arrival and installation of outsiders in the old and the contemporary societies shows that hospitality is complex, difficult and sometimes impossible, that what is unconditional clashes incessantly with what is conditional.

Achieving space and community confidence can take a long time. It is a process permeated by setbacks that make the migrant feels totally integrated in one day and in the next he/she wishes to be in another place. This is especially true in Minas Gerais state, where there is a reputation of distrust from its people.

In mythology, Sisyphus and Tantalus are condemned for rebellion and disobedience to the gods and are forced to perform repetitive tasks. Sisyphus was condemned to eternally roll a large stone with his hands to the top of a mountain, and every time he was nearing the top, the stone would down the hill again and again to the point of departure, by an irresistible force, completely invalidating the hard effort expended.

Tantalus, deceiving the gods at a banquet offered to them, was sentenced not to be able to quench his hunger and thirst, since always when he would approach the water, it drained away; and every time he would rise to reap the fruits of the trees above him, they fall away from his reach under the force of the wind. The expression “torture of Tantalus” demonstrates the suffering of one who desires something seemingly close but unreachable.

Thus, there is an analogy between the mythological figures mentioned and the migrants who are forced to resume their task of continually integrating themselves with the community whenever they are very close to achieving their goals. Contemporary migrants in search of the ideal community are obliged to exercise daily in order to integrate themselves, although they are not taken by the feeling of belonging to the *communitas*, as they often feel obliged to redo this movement eternally or to be condemned to isolation.

By analogy with the mythological figure of Tantalus, Bauman (2003) states that the hope of relief and tranquility that makes the community with which they dream so attractive will be boosted every time they believe, or are told, that the common home they seek was found. To the agonies of Tantalus they join – making them even more suffering – those of Sisyphus. The “really” existing community will be different from that of dreams, more similar to its opposite, that is, it will increase their fears and insecurity rather than dilute or set them aside (Bauman, 2003, p. 22).

THE POWER OF THE COMMUNITY

There is a maxim in Roman law that says: *ubi pedis, ibi patria*, that is, where your feet are, there is your homeland. However, in order to feel that the ideal community is their new homeland, the migrant must feel assimilated.

The process of assimilation is tortuous and can lead to feelings of expulsion, when the values brought in conflict with established values and local codes. The migrant will sometimes feel attached to the power of the community, and that this attachment depends not only on his/her will to belong, but mainly on his/her ability to renounce portions of his/her individuality, leaving aside the feeling of being one to feel plural.

The collective identity of the community is a factor of resistance and power, configuring a microcosm of rigid moral and social structures, where those who do not integrate have to face the social isolation that makes the migrant feel a homeless person in the land where he decided to settle, the feeling of reservedness.

Silva and Sant'Anna (2014) describe the confrontation between tourism and cultural identities, analyzing the psychosocial impacts in this relation. Their work has a link with this study, since it analyzes the encounter between the mobile realities (displacements and the displaced) and the established culture (collective identity).

In a conceptual perspective the authors define cultural identity as a set of specific and exclusive characteristics that provide a person with a sense of belonging, inclusion and attachments in relation to a certain group. It is the cultural identity that makes the individual perceive his/her role in society and be a part in the group with which he/she shares the same references (Silva & Sant'Anna, 2014, p. 6).

According to Weeks (1993, p. 208-209), the strongest sense of community exists in groups that perceive their threatened collective existence and thus build a community of identity that gives them a sense of strength and power. Unable to control the social relations in which they are involved, people choose one world to adapt it to the size of their communities and act politically from that base. The result is often an obsessive particularism as a way to confront and / or deal with contingency.

Rebuilding very real individual weaknesses in the form of the (imaginary) power of the community results in conservative, pragmatic, and exclusivist ideologies. Conservatism (back to roots) and exclusivism ("they" are a threat to "us" collectively) are indispensable for the imaginary community to generate the dependency net that will make it real. "If people define a situation as real, it tends to become real so that its consequences can operate."

"Communitarianism" occurs more naturally to people who have been denied the right to assimilation. They have been denied the choice – seeking shelter in the supposed "fraternity" of the native group is their only option. Voluntarism, individual freedom, self-assertion are synonymous with emancipation from community bonds, from the ability to disregard the inherited attribution - and this was denied to them when they were not invited to assimilation or withdrawn. (Thomas apud Bauman, 2003, p. 92)

The migrant who does not submit to the power of the microcosm (community) has two options: either he/she declines his/her individuality and submits him/herself to a conservative, exclusivist and pragmatic ideology, making the imagined community real or he/she resists all, allowing him/herself to be one, relinquishing the imagined community and accepting reservedness

I'm not closed to the community. The walls are an energetic protection, they are not synonymous of isolation. Fear is a natural barrier that they themselves put. I keep this to protect us. I am not part of groups of the city, I do not have close friends who visit

me in my house. I live here in my isolation, I have employees who live here in the area, but my connection with the city is commercial, to meet my needs. (12 - migrant - interview conducted on 05/19/2015)

The statements of the interviewed migrant illustrate the attitude of those who refuse to give up part of their cultural individuality to be welcomed by the imagined community. It seems that those who resist the power of the call of the community, in fact, do not give up their self nor the memories brought with them from other places. Santos (2003, p. 330) is emphatic in this respect when he affirms that the outsider is the bearer of a memory, a kind of frozen consciousness that comes with him/her from another place:

The new place forces the person to a new learning and a new formulation. . . . the more unstable and surprising the space, the more surprised the individual is, and the more effective the discovery operation will be. . . . The notion of an unknown space loses the negative connotation and gains a positive one, which comes from its role in the production of the new story.

Against dissidents or against those who resist the established culture in the name of preserving their cultural individuality, the community silently imposes, by a act of exclusion, the penalty of exile. It should be noted that “culture” becomes a synonym with besieged fortress, and those inside a besieged fortress have to daily manifest their unbreakable loyalty and refrain from any cordial relations with strangers (Bauman, 2003, p. 127).

It is contradictory to dream of an ideal community in a world of individuals and individualities, in a world where the inner search itself, for an ideal place, is also an individual dream. As a community, Maria da Fé, with its legitimate or adopted children, ignore this highly philosophical discussion. But many thinkers have delved into the subject. In Léonard-Roques (2011, p. 504) we observe that the model community, “full of hope, lies at the foundation of the utopian genre that develops in the wake of Thomas More’s Utopia (1516). It is the escape from all reality. . . the universe described is imaginary: utopia is the island of nowhere.”

The established inhabitants (cohesive as a community) create for themselves a way of life that can obviously generate a feeling of strangeness in those who arrive. Some patterns of behavior, dictated by the power of the *communitas*, such as distrust, silence in certain situations and the time to do each thing at its proper moment are perceptible.

The community at first receives the outsiders with reservations. Some say that because of the legendary distrust of “mineiros”¹¹. Therefore, the migrant is observed. There is no sense of contempt or hatred against outsiders; on the contrary, there is a general desire for that person to remain there and help in the development of the municipality, but it is clear that a period of veiled observation is imposed.

If the person arrives and is not welcomed, he/she leaves. These people arriving now are Those who are coming are pioneers like the ones who came in the old days. The

11. In some reports, the migrants stated that the miner is suspicious, “low-profile”, but the discussion about mining is not the objective of this research project. However, the alleged distrust has been dealt with on several biases, among them as a sign of respect for “the ones who come from there” as a trait of topophilia and even as a feature of the people who live surrounded by mountains.

new migrants are bringing new conditions. For example, there was a couple who came here, the woman gave classes in painting and ballet...there are also those who have been opening people's minds about the danger of pesticides, bringing organic agriculture. (I7 – host community – interview conducted on 06/27/2015)

The arrival of the "outsiders" is very good for Maria da Fé. . . To be accepted here, one must have a code of behavior. . . Acceptance depends more on who arrives than on the natives (I6 – host community – interview conducted on 06/27/2015)

The only thing there is is an observation time that both native and outsiders affirm to be part of the taciturn behavior of those who live in the mountains. In unison, one hears that for the outsider who arrives with heart and mind open, there will always be a place on the maternal lap of Dona Maria da Fé (the community):

Those who arrive here do not normally need the acceptance and understanding of the residents, they arrive with their projects and follow their track. People are prejudiced; there is still some veiled prejudice, but the inhabitants will receive people very well, and the person will outcome this barrier. (I8 – host community – interview conducted on 05/27/2015)

This business of, "please, come in, feel yourself at home" of the "mineiro" has several stages. First there is a phase of superficial contact, of "hello"! Very polite, but only after he/she [the "mineiro"] begins to trust you, he/she lets their guard down. But at first it's just for the sake of appearance, they keep watching you. . . The "mineiros" say that to become friends with someone, you both must eat a sack of salt together." (I5 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015)

The community realizes the importance of **outsiders**, not only for cultural interchange, but to boost the economy, which has never been the same after the potato crisis in the 1990s. It is clear from the above that, for the reception community, the one to dictate the tone of the dialogue is the outsider:

Our attitude of respect allowed us to be respected as well. We have many friends who came imposing their manners. They arrived at the bakery complaining that the service was slow, that the change was wrong, that the queue was long. . . these people did not stay. Something goes wrong. These people are aborted from here. (I5 – migrant – interview conducted on 05/28/2015)

To be accepted here the person needs to behave. . . 99% of the people who come here are good people. That one percent that is not accepted, is composed of people who want to impose themselves. Then the person rejects him/herself. Those who come here wanting to change everything will not be accepted. You have to respect the principles of the city. (I7 host community – interview conducted on 06/27/2015)

If **outsiders** respect the local culture and codes, if they are willing to renounce a portion of their individuality, they may enter and feel at home! However, if the tone is harsh and those who arrive want to impose their big city culture and rhythm of life, then they should build very high walls.

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that there is a latent community feeling in Maria da Fé, as an internal and psychological element, a true cozy circle, in the words of Bauman (2003).

Some outsiders came to the town motivated by the idea of the imaginary community; when they came across reality, some read it as closed and reactionary place, others as a very watchful and reserved society, but the native inhabitants say they are very hospitable to all who come, as long as they do not impose their culture, have an open heart and are willing to contribute.

The confrontation with reality makes the outsider realize that Maria da Fé, like any ideal community, is the realm of differences and that, in order to be welcomed and to belong, he/she must relinquish part of his/her freedom and cultural identity. Communitarianism sometimes makes feel monitored and intruded upon.

Not being a “child of the land” is a barrier; it is observed that the first question the outsider is usually asked is: “Who are your father and mother?” And since they are “childs of nobody” , they will need a godfather. This fact shows that the community still has remnants of an ancient hospitality, because there are still those who receive without reservation, and to remain there, someone from within (a godfather) must support the stay of the stranger.

It can be inferred that the collective identity of the city is a factor of resistance, because those who do not adapt to the local codes are condemned to isolation and end up leaving the community. The community of Maria da Fé does not close itself to those who arrive; on the contrary, the majority understands the benefit of the presence of outsiders. They understand the economic importance of tourism and try to adapt to it.

In this sense, the notion of community represents a differential of the city. However, we point out to the necessity of further studies that provide parameters to enhance this sense of community and hospitality without, affecting the relationship and the reception that is established between community and tourist. The role of tourist visitation in the decision of permanent fixation in Maria da Fé also deserves future investigation.

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