

## Analysis of the Touristification of Fernando de Noronha (PE) between 1960 and 2016

Itamar José Dias e Cordeiro<sup>a</sup>  
Nathália Körössy Leite<sup>b</sup>  
Edvânia Tôrres Aguiar Gomes<sup>c</sup>

### Abstract

Tourism is a human invention full of purposes and ideologies. For this reason, the tourist space should not be assumed as a natural one. On the contrary, it must be questioned in its essence, in order to identify the intentions behind its production. This paper aimed to analyze the touristification process of Fernando de Noronha (one of the most popular and desired destinations in the country) between 1960 and 2016. Methodologically, this study is characterized as a descriptive research of a qualitative approach, based on bibliographical and documentary research and interviews. The analysis of Fernando de Noronha's touristification process has identified that throughout its history, and regardless of the management that was at the forefront of the archipelago, the island space has always been thought to fulfill the role of a luxury destination. This tendency, moreover, remains nowadays. It was observed that this logic has been responsible for the migration of several islanders and for the destructuring of the local social fabric.

**Keywords:** Tourism; Touristification; Fernando de Noronha.

### Resumo

#### Análise do Processo de Turistificação de Fernando de Noronha (PE) entre os Anos de 1960 e 2016

O turismo é uma invenção humana repleta de propósitos e ideologias. Por isso mesmo, o espaço turístico não deve ser assumido enquanto algo natural. Pelo contrário, deve ser questionado em sua essência, de modo a identificar as intenções por trás de sua produção. Este estudo analisa o processo de turistificação de Fernando de Noronha (um dos destinos mais conhecidos e desejados do país) entre os anos de 1960 e 2017. Metodologicamente, este estudo se caracteriza como uma pesquisa descritiva, de natureza qualitativa, realizada a partir de pesquisas bibliográficas e documentais e entrevistas. A análise do processo de turistificação de Fernando de Noronha identificou que, ao longo da sua história e independentemente da gestão que esteve à frente do arquipélago, o espaço insular sempre foi pensado para cumprir o papel de um destino de luxo. Essa tendência, aliás, permanece até os dias de hoje. Constatou-se que essa lógica tem sido responsável pela migração de diversos ilhéus e pela desestruturação do tecido social local.

**Palavras-chave:** Turismo; Turistificação; Fernando de Noronha.

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- Doctoral Degree from Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE). Teacher of the Tourism Course of UFPE, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. E-mail: [itamar\\_cordeiro@yahoo.com.br](mailto:itamar_cordeiro@yahoo.com.br)
  - Teacher of the Tourism Course of UFPE, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. E-mail: [nathaliakorossy@gmail.com](mailto:nathaliakorossy@gmail.com)
  - Postdoctoral researcher in Geography at the *Universität Leipzig*, Leipzig, Germany. Teacher of the Tourism Course of UFPE, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. E-mail: [torres@ufpe.br](mailto:torres@ufpe.br)

## Resumen

### **Análisis del Proceso de Turistificación en Fernando de Noronha (PE) entre los años 1960 y 2016**

El turismo es una invención humana repleta de propósitos e ideologías. Por ello, el espacio turístico no debe ser asumido como algo natural. Por el contrario, debe ser cuestionado en su esencia, para identificar las intenciones detrás de su producción. El presente estudio buscó analizar el proceso de turistificación de Fernando de Noronha (uno de los destinos más conocidos y deseados del país) entre los años 1960 y 2016. Metodológicamente, este estudio se caracteriza como una investigación descriptiva, de naturaleza cualitativa, realizada a partir de investigaciones bibliográficas y documentales, y entrevistas. El análisis del proceso de turistificación de Fernando de Noronha identificó que, a lo largo de su historia e independientemente de la gestión que estuvo al frente del archipiélago, el espacio insular siempre ha sido pensado para cumplir el papel de un destino de lujo. Esta tendencia permanece hasta los días de hoy. Lo que se constató fue que esa lógica ha sido responsable de la migración de diversos isleños y de la desestructuración del tejido social local.

**Palabras clave:** Turismo; Turistificación; Fernando de Noronha.

## INTRODUCTION

Since today tourism is one of the most significant economic powers, it influences several aspects of society, and the touristification of geographical space is one of them. Conceptually, touristification can be understood as the process of changes in geographic space aiming to adapt it to a tourism function (Barros, 1998). In this same sense, Cruz (2007) defines tourism as the process of appropriation and use of space by and for tourism. In addition, Issa & Dencker (2006) understand that touristification occurs when a space is appropriated by tourism, directing its activities to attending those who come from abroad, altering the spatial configuration in function of market interests.

It is important to study such a process because it brings a set of consequences for the territory, from the insertion of new objects and the refunctionalization of old ones, to the alteration of local dynamics (Almeida, 1999, Cruz, 2007, Fratucci, 2007; Knafo, 1996; Ouriques, 2005). Through touristification analysis, Körössy (2008) described the dynamics of tourism in Portimão, Portugal; Belhassen, Uriely & Assor (2007) approached the theme in Bil'in, Palestine; and Issa & Dencker (2006) did so in São Luiz do Paraitinga, São Paulo.

As a socio-cultural and economic phenomenon, tourism has the capacity to transform the local dynamics, either through provision of infrastructure necessary for the development of the activity, or due to increase in people flows. Fonseca & Costa (2004), for example, note that the growth of tourist activity has caused the refunctionalization of many areas and the emergence of new ways in tourist destinations. As for Loureiro & Souza (2003), the activity spectrum has repercussions beyond tourism destination itself.

This study seeks to describe and analyze touristification in Fernando de Noronha, an archipelago in northeastern Brazil, whose economy depends almost exclusively on tourism. The purpose is to describe how tourism has contributed (and still contributes) to the process of producing island space.

Regarding the research method, the study used bibliographic review, in situ observation, and interviews. The bibliographic review consisted of consultation of books, national and international periodicals and academic works on Fernando de Noronha. In situ observation, in turn, made it possible the face-to-face contact with the object investigated. The observation was systematic and non-participant, what was justified by the fact that interaction with the community – without the requirement to become a “member” – is enough to obtain the information (in quantity and depth) necessary for research purposes. For being a systematic research, it used interview as instrument for data collection, whose purpose was to obtain elements that neither the observation nor the review of the literature were able to provide on touristification in Fernando de Noronha. Interviews were performed with researchers and former employees of the Administration of the State District of Fernando de Noronha (ADEFN, 2014), employees still working at ADEFN, and islanders and former managers.

### **THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON TOURISTIFICATION**

With the improvement of means of transportation, reduction of working hours and the institution of paid vacations, a boom in tourism activity was observed worldwide in the second half of the 20th Century (Krippendorf, 2003). In 2004, 25 million international travelers registered in 1950 turned into 763 million, and in 2012, according to UNWTO (2016), this amount reached 1 billion. Nowadays, the international traveler flow exceeds 1.2 billion, and the prevision is that this amount reaches 1.4 billion in 2020 and 1.8 billion in 2030. Tourism figures show a booming economic activity, which in 2015 caused a flow of around 1.2 billion tourists worldwide, generating US\$1.5 trillion in export revenues (UNWTO, 2016).

One of the consequences of this search for filling free time through the practice of tourism was the multiplication of planned and organized territories with the primary purpose of meeting the visitors' desires, with offer of leisure-oriented equipment (Sousa, 1994; Urry 1996). After all, as Nicolas (1996) observes, tourism is a genuinely territorial social practice.

As soon as the tourism activity develops in a given territory, it starts promoting the (re) functionalization of this space and the consequent insertion of a new system of objects that are compatible with the new functionality (Cruz, 2007; Körössy, 2008).

Touristification is a process of space production for primarily tourism purposes, through which social, cultural, economic, political, physical and environmental transformations are established in the space, with the insertion of new objects (lodging facilities, leisure equipment, restoration, etc.), appropriation of existing objects and modification of their old meanings, or even refunctionalization of areas, assigning new uses to space and adapting preexisting territorial structures (Almeida, 1999).

Understanding touristification as a process of space production implies, according to Lefebvre (2013), that space is organized, occupied and transformed

to meet certain agents' interests. Following Almeida (1999), the spaces are touristified at the moment in which they are destined to meet the satisfactions of those who come from outside.

Considering that tourism spaces reflect the values of the society into which they are inserted, it can be affirmed that tourism is heavily influenced by the set of values and ideologies of society in a particular historical context. In this sense, as Lefebvre points out (1976 in Soja 1993, p. 102, free translation):

Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology and politics; it has always been political and strategic. If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be "purely" formal, the epitome of rational abstraction, it is precisely because it has been occupied and used, and has already been the focus of past processes whose traces are not always evident on the landscape. Space has been shaped and molded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies.

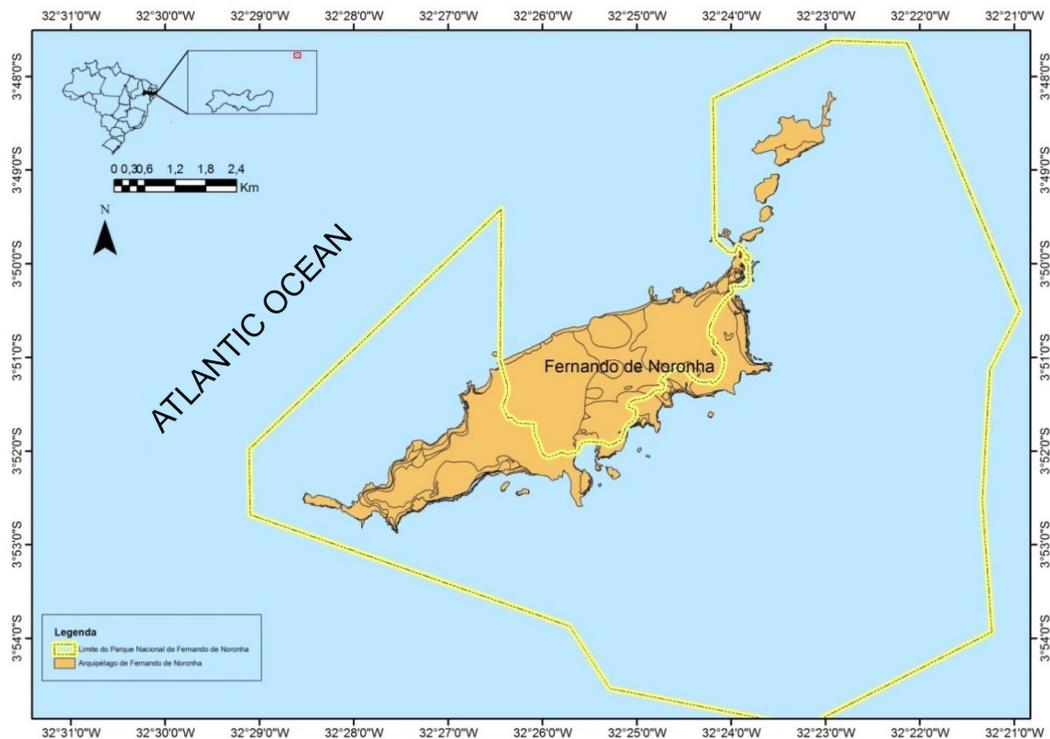
Among these external agents, Knafou (1996) identifies three particular types: tourists, markets, and territorial promoters. They seek to shape the territory according to their own desires and/or needs, separately or simultaneously. What is unique about this interpretation is that it sheds light on the fact that, in the production of a space (either tourist or not), nothing is innocent or casual (Carlos, 2012). Precisely for this reason, evidencing the agents and ideologies behind the process of production of space is paramount to understanding it beyond what is merely visible.

Since it meets specific agents' purposes (almost always external to the destination), touristification usually occurs in conditions of non-synchronization between rhythm and volume of resource exploitation and the capacity that the place has to support this exploitation (López, 2002). Such disruption leads to a series of social, environmental and economic impacts on the tourism destination (Fonteles, 2004; Ouriques, 2005).

These impacts, in turn, vary depending on the importance tourism has to the place in question. Particularly in the case of small island destinations, tourism tends to have a significant weight, among other things due to the size of these environments, their reduced population, distance from the mainland, and the poor economic potential – a result of restrictions of space and resources (Briguglio, 1995, Briguglio & Briguglio, 1996, Kokkranikal, Mclellan & Baum, 2003, UNWTO, 2004).

## **TOURISTIFICATION IN FERNANDO DE NORONHA**

The archipelago of Fernando de Noronha (Figure 1), which is 545 km from Recife (PE), is composed of 21 rock formations, between islands, islets and cliff, occupying an area of approximately 26 km<sup>2</sup>, and 17 km<sup>2</sup> correspond to the main island, the only which is inhabited, according to data from the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Ibama, 2005).

**Figure 1** – Archipelago of Fernando de Noronha

Source – Cordeiro (2016)

According to the most widespread version, the archipelago of Fernando de Noronha was discovered in the early 16th Century, when the Second Exploratory Expedition (1503-1504), commanded by the Portuguese Gonçalo Coelho, left Lisbon on May 10, 1503 (Lins e Silva, 2013). A Portuguese nobleman of English descent, named Fernão de Loronha, had financed this expedition, and for that very reason he received the archipelago as a hereditary captaincy, in January 1505, becoming the first land recipient in Brazil (Rocha Lima, 2000). However, he never took possession of the property. The archipelago (now called Fernando de Noronha) was occupied by the Dutch (1629-1654) and the French (1736-1737) until being retaken by the Portuguese in 1737, when it became part of Pernambuco (Lins e Silva, 2013).

When the French were expelled, the Royal Writt of May 26, 1737, ordered the island to be “fortified and cultivated” in order to defend that strategic point on the Brazilian coast from foreign attacks (Costa, 2009 apud Pessoa, 2014, p.14). This determination was effected through the construction of *Vila dos Remédios*, *Vila da Quixaba* and the fortified system – a set of ten fortifications considered “the greatest defensive system of the 18th Century” (Lins e Silva, 2013, p.150). As a result of the Portuguese occupation, the archipelago became a “Correctional Colony for ordinary prisoners (thieves, murderers, coin counterfeiters...), people sentenced to long sentences, who were ‘exiled’ from the mainland, but were ‘excellent workers’ for all kinds of work” (Lins e Silva, 2013, page 37).

Two centuries later, in 1938, during *Estado Novo*, the main island was converted into a political prison for the “concentration and work of individuals considered dangerous to public order or suspected of extremist activities”

(BRAZIL, 1938). However, at the time of World War II, the archipelago was transformed into the Federal Territory of Fernando de Noronha (TFFN) and a military base was installed there, mainly because of the possibilities of invasion and defense of the Atlantic air and sea routes that the archipelago provided by its location (Lins and Silva, 2013). In the context of the war and under military administration, the US presence on the island was authorized.

The military (Brazilians and North Americans) erected new housing estates, created large-scale barracks, built an electric power plant, and reclassified old colonial buildings, turning them into service and grouping headquarters (Lins and Silva, 2013). In addition, they built observation trenches, bases of war pieces, sheds and a mooring for boat mooring in *Santo Antônio* Bay, whose main objective was to enable the disembarkation “of the pieces for the fight never fought, anti-aircraft batteries, coast artillery batteries, heavy trucks and everything else that was necessary” (Lins and Silva, 2013, p. 263). With the end of the war, the American military departed, the Brazilians remained and the island resumed its prison function under the administration of the War Ministry.

In 1952, this time in the Cold War context, the Americans returned to Fernando de Noronha. Through a military agreement between Brazil and the United States, the archipelago was made available for the construction of a Guided Missiles Observation Post, a structure that had the function of monitoring the experiments of guided projectiles launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida (Nascimento, 2009) and was part of efforts to stop a possible communist advance in Latin America. The new US presence in Fernando de Noronha, as occurred during World War II, triggered major transformations in the island landscape: roads were opened, the landing field was increased, and radars, rockets and everything that was the most modern in armament was used (Nascimento, 2009). At the end of 1959, the Americans left the archipelago because “technological innovations no longer needed tracking on land” (Lins e Silva, 2013, p 249). It is from there that touristification of Fernando de Noronha begins.

## The origin of tourism between the 1960s and 1970s

When the Americans left Fernando de Noronha, they left behind all infrastructure they had built. In 1965, one of these structures, the Guided Missiles Observation Post, built in *Boldró* neighborhood, was adapted and transformed into the *Pousada Esmeralda*, giving rise to Fernando de Noronha’s first lodging facility with 50 apartments and 120 beds (Lins e Silva, 2013).

From 1969, at the request of the then governor of the territory of Fernando de Noronha, Colonel Jayme Augusto da Costa e Silva, to the Ministry of the Army, the island visitation by civilians was authorized (Lins and Silva, 2013). In 1974, *Transbrasil* began operating the first regular flight schedule, with trips on Saturdays and Sundays; in 1981, an attempt was made to include Fernando de Noronha in maritime destinations, experience that was not successful due to lack of operational conditions; and in 1982 there was attempt to establish a new flight schedule departing from Natal (Cordeiro & Gomes, 2016).

This period marks the beginning of tourism, not only due to the emergence of the first lodging infrastructure (*Pousada Esmeralda*), but also for a change in mentality regarding the purpose of the archipelago: space is no longer considered only in terms of security (whether as a prison or as a military base) but also for other possibilities, such as tourism. This understanding will mature throughout the 1970s and find effective development in the mid-1980s.

## The 1980s and the logic of luxury

Operating in an incipient (in terms of visitor flow), precarious (in terms of leisure and lodging infrastructure) and disorganized (in relation to the planning of the space for the activity) way, the territory of Fernando de Noronha was effectively conceived for tourism purposes from 1986, when, under the management of the military, some tourism-related bodies were invited to evaluate the archipelago's conditions to sustain visitor flows (Lins and Silva, 2013). According to the article published in *Jornal do Comércio* newspaper, dated May 25, 1986,

the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces (EMFA), Admiral José Maria Amaral Oliveira, and João Dória Jr, *Embratur* Director, announced the signing of an agreement to elaborate a pilot plan for tourism and economic exploitation of the Territory.

Through the plan – which, according to the authorities, will seek to preserve the ecological conditions –, EMFA will rebuild and expand the local airport (which today operates with Boeing 727 and 737 airplanes) so that it will be able to receive large jets, besides building a port. EMFA will be also responsible for preserving nature.

As for *Embratur*, it will be responsible for the coordination of the tourism part of the plan. The body intends to stimulate the construction of three hotels by the private initiative (currently, there is only one).

The Staff of the Armed Forces (EMFA) then hired the services of a consulting firm (*Hidroservice Engenharia de Projetos Ltda.*), which, in 1986, elaborated the Development Master Plan for Fernando de Noronha. The consulting firm understood that the vocation of the archipelago was that of large-scale sophisticated tourism. Therefore, measures were proposed for touristification of the place, such as port and airport expansion; construction of five hotels and five hostels, landfill, shopping mall and marina; building of a golf course, area for horse breeding and horseback riding; and expansion and rebuilding of the road system, government facilities and housing system. The expectation was that these interventions would lead the island to be able to receive more than ten thousand people (Ibama, 1990). However, it should be noted that the first movement to conceive Fernando de Noronha as tourism destination was aimed at a high-purchasing power public. This is evident in the infrastructures designed for the place.

Nevertheless, the proposal did not become real because, on June 30, 1987, the then President José Sarney enacted Law No. 7,608, which transferred the administration of the territory of Fernando de Noronha from military to

civilian jurisdiction (Ministry of the Interior). This law also determined that the territory would be administered by a governor appointed by the President of the Republic (Article 4). Sarney then decides to appoint his friend and then Ombudsman of the Republic, Fernando César Mesquita (Lins e Silva, 2013) for the position. From there, a new phase of touristification starts in Fernando de Noronha.

### The transition to civilian administration and the renewal of the logic of luxury

Mesquita, as Fernando de Noronha's governor, ignored the Master Plan commissioned by the military. However, he did not fail to imagine the territory as a luxury destination. When assuming the management of the archipelago, he launched an invitation to bid for the construction of a "totally ground-floor luxury hotel, and indispensable to develop our tourism proposal with limits," according to the former governor himself (in *Jornal do Brasil*, May 17, 1988).

According to the article published on *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper of April 14, 1988:

*Embratur* has already given the green light for the construction of a hotel in Fernando de Noronha. The four-star hotel will have 100 apartments, and those interested in building it will have four years to do so, ensuring its exploitation for 50 years. After that, the owner will be Fernando de Noronha's government. The public bidding notice will be published tomorrow. With this work, the governor Fernando César Mesquita transforms its territory into what was said of Brazil years ago. An island of prosperity.

The day after, *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper published:

Fernando de Noronha's Government and *Embratur* inform:

#### CALL FOR BID

#### FOUR-STAR HOTEL IN FERNANDO DE NORONHA.

The Brazilian Tourism Board – EMBRATUR, a federal body, linked to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, headquartered at Rua Marize Barros, no. 13 – Praça da Bandeira – Rio de Janeiro, and the Government of the Territory of Fernando de Noronha, hereby announce to those interested that on July 13, 1988, in its auditorium, the envelopes of habilitation and economic proposal will be received, aiming at the implantation and operation of a four (4)-star hotel with one hundred (100) rooms in *Praia da Conceição* in the archipelago of Fernando de Noronha, under a maximum fifty (50)-year lease.

This Competition shall be ruled by the provisions of Decree-Law no. 2,300, dated November 21, 1986, and its subsequent amendments.

Interested parties will be able to take the full text of the notice at a price of Cz\$ 50,000.00 (fifty thousand *cruzados*), as well as obtaining more information from Embratur Investments Department, on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of the abovementioned address.

Rio de Janeiro, April 15, 1988.

It should be noted that with the end of military tutelage and the beginning of civil administration on the island, the mentality changes only in terms of form, not content. The proposals to be made were left aside, and not the interventions themselves. Thus, in spite of the differences between the military government and Mesquita's government, the orientation for the development of luxury tourism in the archipelago was maintained.

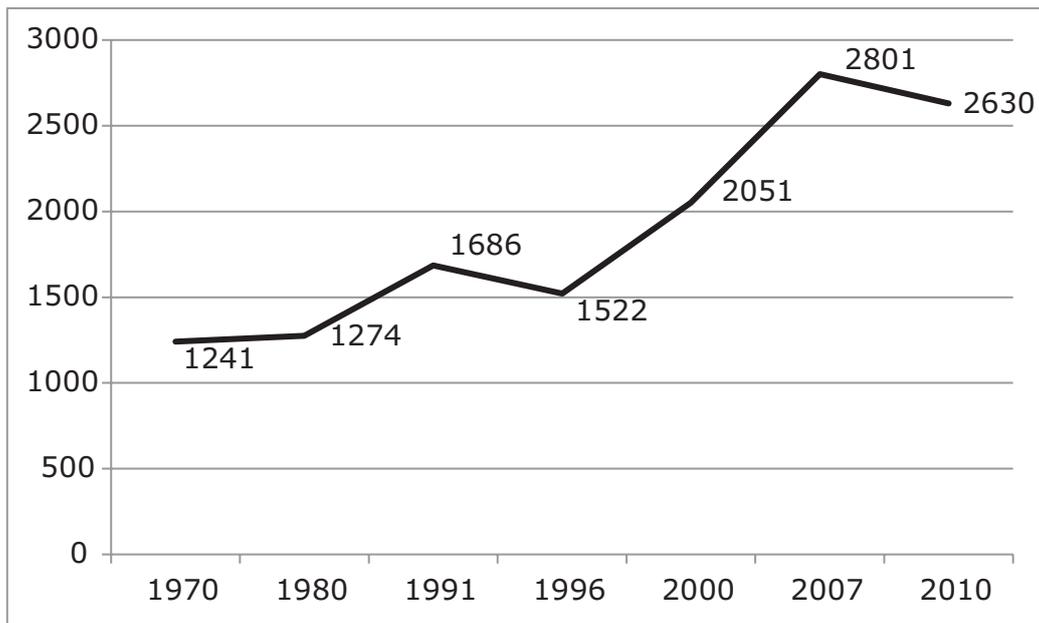
However, given the political conjuncture, it should be noted that Fernando Mesquita's pretensions for tourism in the archipelago did not become real. This did not occur because, in 1988, during the Constituent Assembly, the territory of Fernando de Noronha is extinguished and becomes part of the State of Pernambuco (Gonçalves, 2009). With the re-annexation,

Pernambuco's government decided to cancel all actions directed to implementing tourism in the archipelago of Fernando de Noronha, whose possession was reacquired through the Federal Constituent. Yesterday, the acting governor, Carlos Wilson, took the first step and asked *Embratur* Director, Pedro Grossi Júnior, to stop a bidding process that had started for the construction of a four-star hotel on the island, a project designed by former governor Fernando César Mesquita (*Jornal do Comércio*, 1988).

According as the state of Pernambuco starts being responsible for the luxury tourism model in Fernando de Noronha, it is abandoned. The truth is that, as federal territory, Fernando de Noronha had access to the Fund for Participation of States and Territories (made possible during the management of Fernando Mesquita and, to a large extent, due to his proximity to Sarney). This resource, however, ceased to exist with its re-annexation to Pernambuco. Without access to the money from that fund to manage the new territory – which, according to Rozowykwiat (2006, p. 212), cost it “the equivalent of the expenses it had with 32 inland municipalities” –, the State government found in the opening of the island to tourism and, above all, in the charge for its access, the solution to increase the tax revenue and the possibility to support the new territory (Cleto, 2013). Thus, the Environmental Preservation Tax (TPA) was created, charged from all those who were visiting the place, according to state law No. 10,403, dated December 29, 1989. It is from this point on that the touristification process of Fernando de Noronha effectively starts.

### From the 1990s to the present: tourism as a means of local economic dynamism

When Fernando de Noronha was re-annexed to Pernambuco, the state government chose to encourage the visitation to the archipelago as a way of generating revenue. However, this stimulus was not accompanied by measures to impose a strict control on who arrived. Without this inspection, as reported by a former manager interviewed, many of those who went to Fernando de Noronha as tourists eventually settled on the island. Since then, the number of dwellers in Fernando de Noronha has not stopped growing (Figure 2).

**Figure 2** – Fernando de Noronha’s population evolution (1970-2010)

Source – Cordeiro (2016)

Islanders (unqualified, without entrepreneurial profile, or capital to invest) have seen better-educated newcomers, with more financial resources, and full of good business investment ideas (such as lodges, boats, or taxis) taking over their territory (Ibama, 2005). In part, this predominance of outsiders was also due to a certain apathy that persisted among the islanders. In the first few years after the re-annexation, there was still reluctance by the local community regarding tourism, considered unnecessary.

Since the State had financed everything, including the islanders’ particular needs, most of them were not interested in providing any kind of service to the visitors. Thus, the desire to work with tourism was much more by chance, as reported by *Dona Pituca* (apud Mesquita, 2012, page 51), the first person to open a hostel in the building that had once been the parish house:

Here in my house I made the first Noronha’s hostel. I worked at the hospital, retired very young and did not want to stop working. I started serving lunch. On Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays, the people came to my house: “Today we are going to have lunch here.” I started cooking meals for lunch, and when I realized, my house was full of people. ... They came from the military, officers, and stayed around. They said they did not want to eat there anymore, so on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays they came here. That’s how I started ... and ended up having a hostel...

Others who rented rooms in their homes were criticized by the most radical part of the community. However, faced with the lack of economic choice, it was not long before that those people began accepting the situation; after all, there was no option without the federal resources to which they were used.

It is therefore verified that the beginning of touristification under state power aegis is marked both by the lack of planning of the use and occupation of space

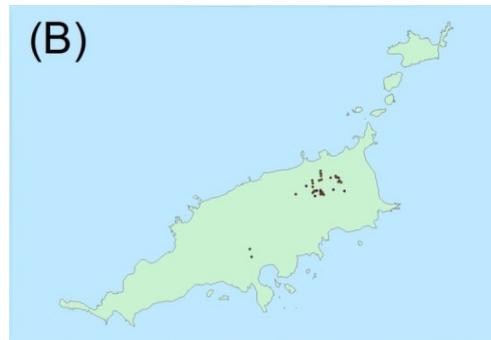
and by the conflict between old and new dwellers (many were from Pernambuco and migrated to the island encouraged by the state government). In addition, it is noted that touristification occurs more by force of the circumstances than by a genuine desire of the local community to start the activity.

In any case, the act of hosting tourists, initially viewed with suspicion, eventually became the place's main economic activity. The result was the expansion of lodging facilities, especially of household character: the seven establishments that emerged on the island between 1965 and 1988 (Figure 3) turned into 34 in 1995 (Figure 4); between 1996 and 2010, another 38 new hostels were established (Figure 5); and between 2011 and 2016, two more hostels appeared (Figure 6)<sup>1</sup>.

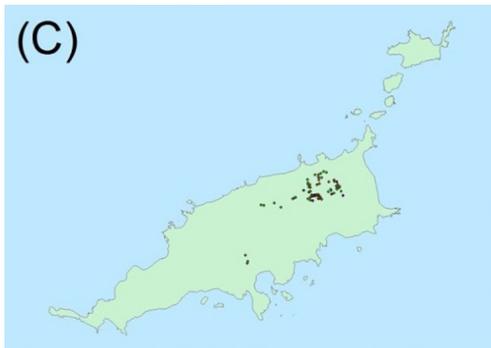
**Figure 3** – Spatialization of the hostels in Fernando de Noronha (1965-1988)



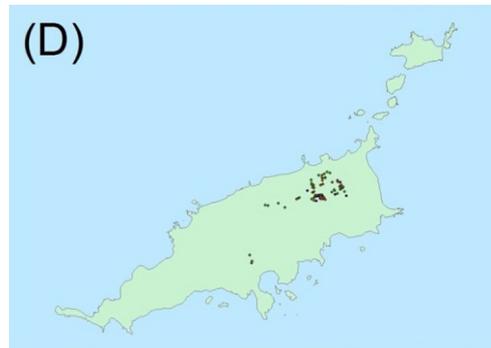
**Figure 4** – Spatialization of the hostels in Fernando de Noronha (1988-1995)



**Figure 5** – Spatialization of the hostels in Fernando de Noronha (1996-2010)



**Figure 6** – Spatialization of the hostels in Fernando de Noronha (2011-2016)



**Source** – Elaborated by the authors based on ADEFN/DHT (2014) and on direct research

It should be mentioned that not all hostels that emerged during these decades were regular. Since the entire island area is protected as a Conservation Unit, there was government concern to limit the opening of new hostels. In this way, the district administration stipulated a limit of operating licenses for hostels. However, since the establishment of a hostel was the most comfortable and right way for the islander to extract income from the growing tourism in

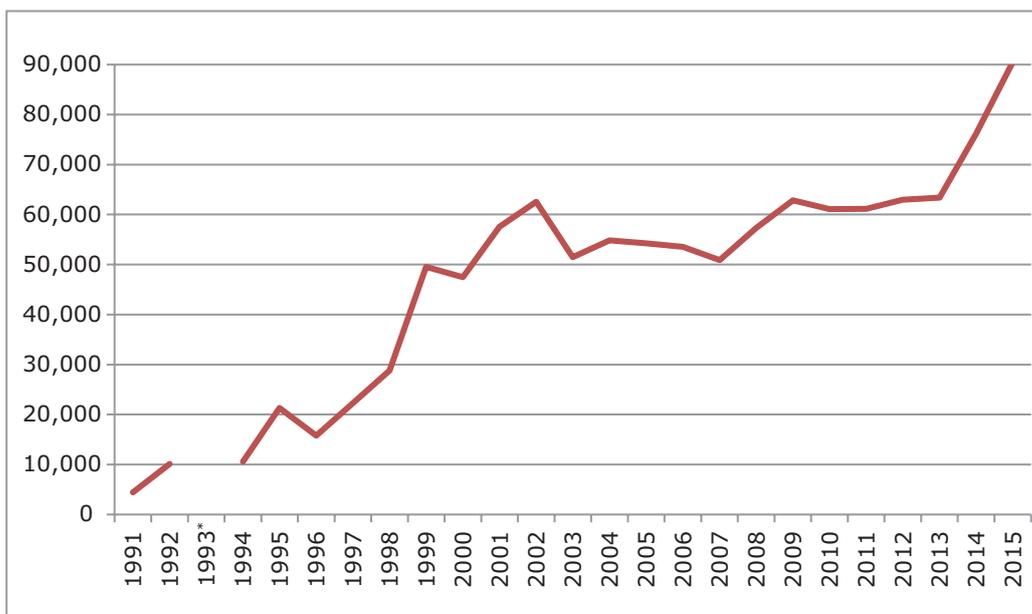
1. It is essential to say that we did not get access to data of hostels' official opening years, since ADEFN did not provide them. For the periodization presented here, we used data from ADEF/DHT (2014), complemented by field research. Thus, due to absence of official data, it should be noted that the spatialization described here, although close to reality, does not faithfully reflect it.

Fernando de Noronha, the legal provisions were not enough to prevent new hostels to appear.

These lodging facilities that operated without license were classified by the public power as “informal hostels,” that is, establishments that operate as hostels without district administration knowledge. It should be noted that informality is not necessarily associated with the precariousness of facilities and/or services provided. Certainly, there are informal hostels that do not work as well as formal (regular) hostels. However, the opposite is also true: there are informal hostels that have much more sophisticated facilities and services than certain formal hostels. Formality and informality are therefore related to the authorization from ADEFN to operate as a lodging facility.

The systematic increase in the number of hostels has led to an increase in the number of visitors (Figure 7). In addition to the environmental impacts associated with the increase of this number of people (Cordeiro, 2016; Cordeiro & Gomes, 2017), tourism also implied significant changes in the profile of lodging facilities.

**Figure 7 – Evolution of touristic flow by air (1995-2015)**



\*Missing information

Source – Cordeiro (2016)

In the last decade, many outside entrepreneurs have started investing in islanders' homes or in small home hostels to turn them into real luxury ventures. More and more modest establishments (which in reality were nothing more than the islanders' houses adapted to receiving visitors) give rise to expensive and sophisticated hostels. The (carefully) rustic architecture of these new hostels does not change the fact that the public interested in staying there needs to pay, for example, more than R\$ 2,200.00 in daily rate, and more than R\$ 100.00 for a meal.

This process does not happen only among hostels. Small restaurants are also giving way to increasingly sophisticated establishments. The crowded

(and expensive) New Year's Eve at *Pousada Zé Maria*, full of celebrities, is another example of the level of sophistication the island has been experiencing. What happens in Fernando de Noronha is the consolidation of a destination that progressively becomes an enclave of exception, reserved for few well-heeled visitors. Currently, the situation of touristification of Fernando de Noronha is the resumption of the status of luxury destination, this time not as State action (whether military or civil), but as private initiative. It brings an inescapable reflection: which is the consequence of this tourism model for the local community?

According to some of the islanders interviewed, touristification of the island, from the point of view of luxury, has caused rise in the prices of products and, consequently, increase in the cost of living to such an extent that staying in the locality has become difficult. However, the rise in the cost of living motivated by tourism is not new (Almeida, 1999; Fonteles, 2004; Krippendorf, 2003; Ouriques, 2005). It is natural that the cost of products and services rises in a certain destination desired by visitors. This increase is experienced by tourists, but also by the local community. For being an island environment, where the cost of living is not usually low, the situation becomes even more dramatic since the options to escape from the increased prices are practically non-existent.

There is also the action of the foreign investors who offer generous amounts for islanders' simple houses, in the effort to turn them into hostels (even without the formal authorization from ADEFN to operate), just to take advantage of a growing market niche. According to the islanders themselves, it is increasingly common to choose to rent their home to an entrepreneur, usually for R\$ 5,000.00 per month (in some cases this amount can reach R\$ 10,000.00), to live on this income on the mainland or even abroad. As Cleto notes (2013, 127): "renting the house became a career plan, in detriment of the connection with the land and Fernando de Noronha identity."

This situation is not merely the convenience of having a fixed income to live on the continent. It is also a question of the market: how can islanders who are owners of small hostels manage to compete with hostels whose owners are external investors endowed with financial capital? According to some interviewees, most of the islanders cannot afford investments in their establishments because, since the archipelago is Union's, all real estate and land are Union's as well, which prevents dwellers from using them as a fiduciary guarantee, mortgage or credit required by credit institutions. They also claim that they do not have incentives from the state government to circumvent this problem. Deprived of capital, small hostel owners cannot invest in order to make them competitive with hostels that rely on foreign investments. Therefore, for many small owners, the only option available has been leasing their establishments or homes.

The combination of increased costs of living and harassment by the foreign investor has caused, as verified, an "island exodus" process. Attention should be drawn to the consequences of this process: when the local community migrates, there is a weakening of the social fabric; social relations fade because the community that animated the destination, which gave life to it, is fragmented and tends to disappear. There is thus a process of tourism that, instead of contributing to the development of the destination and improving

the quality of life of the local community, ends up producing an space empty of meaning, whose animating element is the tourist – a subject who is, in fact, just a passer-by and has no commitment to the place. In these circumstances, a space is created in which the relations between individuals are impersonal and devoid of references common to a group. In other words: there is a space without identity (artificial), a pastiche.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Tourism is neither an innocent nor a no-purpose activity, but a human invention that meets the interests of the current economic model and, therefore, it is full of intentions, purposes, and ideologies (Coriolano, 2006). Therefore, restricting the effects of tourism simply by placing infrastructures (mainly hotels) on the spaces is to ignore that the activity is able to insert, eliminate and alter objects in these territories (lodging facilities, restaurants, leisure equipment, etc.), or even remodel the functions of these objects, modifying their meanings. In addition, it means to ignore that different interests occur in the conformation of spaces, and, therefore, that tourism imposes its own logic of territory use, producing several changes in local structures and, consequently, in society (Körössy, 2008).

For this reason, it is imperative not to accept the data as something ready, much less natural. It is necessary to go beyond the obvious and study the action of society on space, which produces and reproduces forms that are visible to the observer, but which need to be investigated in their essence (Andrade, 2008). It is necessary, as Eagleton says (1986 in Soja, 1993: 20), “to turn inside out the imposing tapestry, to expose in all its confused entanglement, devoid of any glamor, the threads that compose the prosperous image that it exposes to the world.”

From this perspective, this article aimed at analyzing touristification of Fernando de Noronha, which occurred, as it was verified, in two moments. The first, between the 1960s and 1970s, was marked by the use of the infrastructure left by the US military, adapted for tourism purposes, specifically lodging. In the course of those first years, the activity has meant practically nothing to Fernando de Noronha. The tourism infrastructure was limited to the *Pousada Esmeralda*, which, in turn, was nothing more than a set of rooms adapted to meet the needs of an incipient demand without many requests.

The second moment occurs during the 1970s and 1980s, first in the military government and then in civilian life, with the emergence of a rationale for island space: to turn it into a luxury destination. This logic, however, falls to the ground when the State Government of Pernambuco becomes responsible for the management of the archipelago, in the 1990s. The idea of a luxury enclave is abandoned and its popularization is favored instead, since tourism has come to be understood as the alternative par excellence for local economic development. This is the moment when tourism actually begins to be practiced in Fernando de Noronha.

From the analysis of this passage we can see that, in one way or another, the tourism in Fernando de Noronha has always been focused on the constitution

of a luxury destination. Whether with the military (with its plans for golf courses and equestrian area), whether with Fernando Mesquita's civilian administration (with its four-star hotel and 100 housing units at *Praia da Conceição*), the idea has always been to develop an enclave of exception, and this tendency has always been maintained. The difference is that at first this task was administered by the State, and from the re-annexation, the private initiative took the lead.

It is curious to note that if luxury was the declared objective of the State for the island space touristification (although it did not materialize), today it is the omission of the State that makes it viable. From Lefebvrian's perspective, which understands the process of space production as permeated by intentionality, it is possible to raise the suspicion that the omission of public power has more to do with the strategy of space elitism than with a possible insufficiency of the apparatus to control and restrain the activities of private agents. Sometimes doing nothing is even more effective than doing something. If, in fact, the public power still intends to convert Fernando de Noronha into a luxury destination, the simplest option seems to be its inaction.

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## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Itamar José Dias and Cordeiro:** Definition of the research problem and objectives. Development of the theoretical proposition. Performance of bibliographic review and theoretical foundation. Choice of methodological procedures. Data collection. Data analysis. Elaboration of tables, graphs and figures. Manuscript critical review. Manuscript composing. Suitability of the manuscript to RTA standards.

**Nathália Körössy Leite:** Definition of the research problem and objectives. Development of the theoretical proposition. Performance of bibliographic review and theoretical foundation. Manuscript critical review. Manuscript composing.

**Edvânia Tôrres Aguiar Gomes:** Manuscript critical review. Manuscript composing.