

Papers

The role of tourism in space transformations in the coast of the metropolitan region of Salvador: the case of Mata de São João

O papel do turismo nas transformações espaciais no litoral da região metropolitana de salvador: o caso de Mata de São João

El papel del turismo en las transformaciones espaciales en la costa de la región metropolitana de Salvador: El caso de Mata de São João

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Keywords:

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Palavras-chave:

Produção do espaço.
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Atividades imobiliárias turísticas.
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Abstract

The Atlantic coast of the Salvador Metropolitan Region (RMS), Bahia, has undergone, and still is undergoing, major transformations, especially in recent decades, reflecting the growing of real estate and tourism activities that are the main promoters of this area. Given the background, the main objective of this study was to analyze how the process of space production occurred on this coast, through tourism, and what were the main elements that influenced this production, using as a case study the municipality of Mata de São João. Regarding the conceptual and methodological aspects, the work is based on the concepts of space and tourism, and was developed in a qualitative approach, through the methods of monographic-descriptive and historical procedures, as well as in situ observation. The results showed that isolated urban areas, Praia do Forte, Imbassaí, and Sauípe were the most affected by tourist activities and, consequently, underwent profound socio-spatial changes. This was mainly due to the construction of the BA-099 highway, as well as other state-built infrastructure.

Resumo

A borda atlântica da Região Metropolitana de Salvador (RMS), Bahia, sofreu e vem sofrendo grandes transformações, sobretudo nas últimas décadas, reflexo das atividades imobiliárias e turísticas que estão em crescente ascensão e são os principais fomentadores desta área. Nesse contexto, o objetivo central da pesquisa foi analisar como ocorreu o processo de produção do espaço neste litoral, mediante o turismo, e sobre quais foram os principais elementos que influenciaram essa produção, utilizando como estudo de caso o município de Mata de São João. Em relação aos aspectos conceituais e metodológicos, o trabalho fundamenta-se nos conceitos de espaço e turismo, e foi desenvolvido em uma abordagem qualitativa, por meio dos métodos de procedimentos monográfico-descritivo e histórico, bem como análises através de observação direta in loco. Os resultados evidenciaram que as áreas urbanas isoladas, Praia do Forte, Imbassaí e Sauípe foram as mais afetadas pelas atividades turísticas e, conseqüentemente, sofreram profundas mudanças sócio-espaciais.

Isto ocorreu, principalmente, por causa da construção da BA-099, além de outras infraestruturas criadas pelo Estado.

Palabras clave:

Producción espacial.
Mata de São João.
Actividades inmobiliarias turísticas.
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Desarrollo turístico.

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Resumen

La frontera atlántica de la Región Metropolitana de Salvador (RMS), Bahía, ha sufrido y ha sufrido grandes transformaciones, especialmente en las últimas décadas, reflejando las crecientes actividades inmobiliarias y turísticas que son los principales promotores de esta área. En este contexto, el objetivo principal de la investigación fue analizar cómo se produjo el proceso de producción espacial en esta costa, a través del turismo, y cuáles fueron los principales elementos que influyeron en esta producción, utilizando como caso de estudio el municipio de Mata de São João. En cuanto a los aspectos conceptuales y metodológicos, el trabajo se basa en los conceptos de espacio y turismo, y se desarrolló en un enfoque cualitativo, a través de los métodos de procedimientos monográficos descriptivos e históricos, así como el análisis a través de la observación directa in loco. Los resultados mostraron que las áreas urbanas aisladas, Praia do Forte, Imbassaí y Sauípe fueron las más afectadas por las actividades turísticas y, en consecuencia, sufrieron profundos cambios socio-espaciales. Esto se debió principalmente a la construcción de BA-099, así como a otra infraestructura creada por el estado.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, tourism has grown exponentially in Brazil – mainly in the Northeast region – because of its landscape potential. However, this growth, which is linked to federal, state, and municipal development projects and programs (Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento; Programa de Desenvolvimento do Turismo; Programa de Regionalização do Turismo; Programa de Acessibilidade Aérea, Terrestre Marítima e Fluvial; Programa Estadual de Gerenciamento Costeiro among others), resulted in fast and deep transformations not only in the landscape, but also in demographic, cultural, economic, political and environmental dimensions. According to Cruz (2002), tourism stands out as one of the modern economic activities that most “consumes” space.

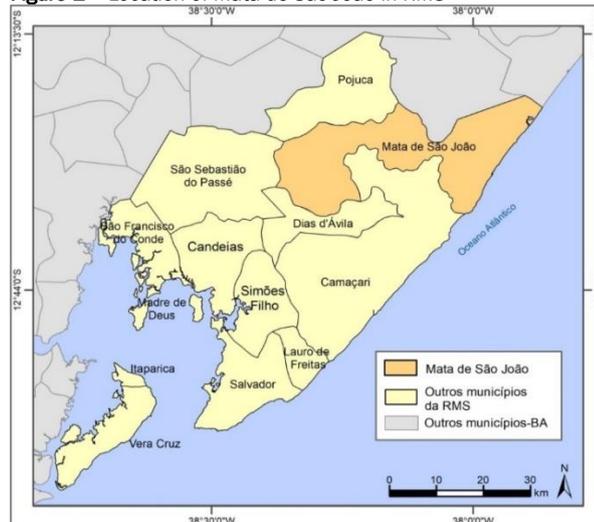
Consequently, people and capital flows have implications for the production of space that are designed to meet the needs of visitors, specifically locations where the main source of income is tourism. Thus, tourism as a multifaceted (Sivieiro, 2006) phenomenon and the result of social relations, creates new complex geographic conformations, territorializing and de-territorializing to make room for second homes, resorts, inns, flats, hotels, restaurants, and other tourist facilities.

In this sense, the production of spaces through tourism, as an alternative for development, can be seen throughout the coast of the Metropolitan Region of Salvador and, particularly, in Mata de São João, a municipality that has been undergoing major socio-spatial transformations¹ in the region, including in protected areas (Machado, 2008; Faria, 2013; Silva, 2013; Magalhães, 2015). According to the Tourism Observatory of Bahia, in 2011, Mata de São João was the third municipality in Bahia to receive the largest international tourism flow. The proximity to the capital Salvador, adding to the existing infrastructure, are factors that contribute to this data (Bahia, 2011).

In this context, the main objective of this study is to analyze how the production of space occurred on the Atlantic coast of the Metropolitan Region of Salvador (RMS) focusing on tourism, studying the case of the municipality of Mata de São João (Figure 1), in a temporal and spatial analysis.

¹ Some authors, especially in the field of geography, like Marcelo Lopes de Souza, understand that “[...] there is a possibility of double spelling - [...] “socioespacial” [in the Portuguese language], without a hyphen refers only to the social space (for example, taking it from the point of view of the result of its production in a given historical moment, real or potential, as in an urban remodeling plan); on its part, “socio-espacial” [in the Portuguese language], with a hyphen, refers to social relations and [social] space, simultaneously (directly covering the dynamics of the production of space itself, in the context of concrete society as a whole).” (Souza, 2009, p. 24-25).

Figure 1 – Location of Mata de São João in RMS



Source: The authors (2019).

This article is divided into six sections – in addition to the introduction (first section), the second one presents the conceptual aspects that guide the work; the third describes the methodology; the fourth presents the process of urban and tourist expansion on the Atlantic coast of the Metropolitan Region of Salvador; the fifth section develops an analysis of the production of space through tourism in Mata de São João, reflecting on spatial processes, agents, and practices; a final section contains some concluding remarks, considering the role of tourism in spatial transformations on the coast of Mata de São João.

2 CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS FOR UNDERSTANDING SPACE AND TOURISM

Space and tourism are key concepts in this study, helping to explain the production of space through tourism activities on the coast of the Metropolitan Region of Salvador, especially on the coast of Mata de São João.

Santos (1978, p. 122) considers the geographical space as the “[...] set of relationships carried out through functions and forms bearing witness to a history written by past and present processes.” It is the product of social relations, conceived through relations of power, which over the years can have both its shape and function changed. It is a field of forces whose acceleration is uneven and whose production is not identical everywhere (Santos 1978), since each space has its own culture and traditions. Still according to Santos (2008, p. 46):

[space is] something dynamic and unitary, where materiality and human action come together. Space would be the inseparable set of systems of objects, natural or manmade, and systems of actions, deliberate or not. At each time, new objects and new actions are added, changing the whole, both formally and substantially.

Another relevant author to be mentioned here is Corrêa (2000, p. 36), who emphasizes that space is produced by different social agents. It is worth mentioning that the production of space, by these agents, are contingent upon work relationships.

The configuration of Geography as the surrounding environment stems from the fact that human existence is guaranteed by the work of men. Through their work, men transform nature into objects of consumption and to increase their working capacity. Nature supplies the material, which will be transformed by men into objects with which to satisfy their varied needs. (Moreira, 1985, p. 68).

In space, there are still many contradictions that are manifested through social processes and their respective forms-content, i.e., through use value and exchange value, center-periphery, totality and fragmentation, homogeneity, and segregation, etc. The contradictions of geographical space do not come from its rational form. They result from practical and social content and, in particular, from capitalist content (Lefebvre, 2008, p. 57).

Therefore, space is understood as the historical framework and the social form established through social relations (Castells, 1983). Its production results from the action of concrete and historical social agents, who have their own spatial interests and dialectical practices (Corrêa, 2011, p. 43).

Spatial practices are also important to understand the process of production and reproduction of space. According to Corrêa (2000, p. 36), these practices are “a set of spatially located actions that directly impact space, altering it in whole or in part or preserving it in its spatial forms and interactions.” They are classified into: spatial selectivity, spatial fragmentation, spatial anticipation, spatial marginalization, and reproduction of the producing region.

Spatial selectivity comprises the attributes, characteristics, and aspects that are considered interesting by an individual (or group of individuals) according to their objectives. Fragmentation occurs through different fracture processes that occur due to social or spatial differentiation and caused by different social agents. Here, another concept stands out: spatial segregation, which is the (radical) separation of the population in housing areas according to social classes linked to income. Spatial anticipation is the store of value given to land use. For example, large corporations, landowners, and tourism real estate developers carry out this practice waiting for land appreciation (real estate speculation). As for marginalization, it consists of the value assigned to a given place, and that value can vary over time. It turns out that political and economic reasons can alter the importance of a place and, equally, marginalize it. And the reproduction of the producing region occurs when, over time, a company or industry, for example, guarantees favorable conditions for its performance in a given location (Corrêa, 2000).

Tourism is at the heart of this process as a strong space production driver and thus, is another key concept in this study. Tourism pressures on a certain area and changes it to meet the objectives of public and private tourism providers. So, while space is a product of human activities and social relations, tourism is one of the activities that contributes to the production of this space.

The concept of tourism is frequently discussed by scholars from different fields around the world. In this study, two authors stand out. First, De La Torre (1992, p. 19 apud Fonteles, 2004, p. 81) who understands tourism as a voluntary and temporary displacement of individuals for spontaneous reasons, most often for leisure purposes, generating various interrelations of social, economic, political and cultural importance; and, second, Coriolano (2001, p. 29), who states that tourism is a “[...] more of an elite type of leisure, a use of free time that requires travel, displacement [and, still], for some, it is a way of life and a social dynamic”. For the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism is:

An intentional human activity that involves temporary displacement of an individual from her/his usual residence for at least one night but not more than one year, and whose main purpose is other than the exercise of any activity and satisfaction of any need, with no intention of profit and making use of transportation, accommodation, and food services, among others. (OMT [UNWTO], 2001, n.p.).

Thus, in the UNWTO’s definition, it is necessary to stay overnight to be considered a tourist, i.e., an individual who performs a pendular migration to a city that is about 80 km from its point of origin and performs tourist activities there and contributes for the economy of that place, but returns on the same day, is not considered a tourist.

For this study, tourism is considered a human activity that builds and changes both the space in which it is established and the dynamics of the social life of the population living therein, often with positive and negative economic, demographic, and environmental impacts. In this activity, the tourist is the individual who feeds this chain of consumption and production and reproduction of space.

It is worth mentioning that tourism is not a new phenomenon. For example, Holloway (1994) refers that ancient civilizations already held religious or art festivals for days or weeks, to attract consumers from other cities. In the Roman Empire there were already second homes for elite leisure and recreation, used mainly in the spring (Ramos & Costa, 2017). However, “[...] although they began to organize in the middle of the nineteenth century, it was only after [the twentieth century] that tourism consolidated as a very significant phenomenon” (Fonteles, 2004, p. 87), especially in the post-World War II period, thus emerging the so-called “mass tourism”, as a result of certain economic and political processes on a global scale – globalization, productive restructuring, neoliberalism – and national scale – political re-democratization, enlargement of

municipality competencies, and actions and programs aimed at economic development, infrastructure, and public services.

Consequently, in the political sphere, tourism becomes understood and strategically disseminated as a basic economic activity in the process of local and/or regional development, with emphasis on developing countries. In this way, tourism developers (national and international) started to construct medium and large tourist facilities, attracted by profit prospects; exploitation of natural resources that are often abundant and not yet explored, and cultural attractions; tax exemptions; public funding; low land costs; flexibilization of environmental and labor laws; cheap and disorganized labor; among others (Lopes, Tinôco & Araújo, 2012).

Meanwhile, a diverse range of international organizations – the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – are responsible for promoting and funding actions and programs that guide the planning and management of tourism.

In Brazil, actions and programs include the Tourism Division, the Brazilian Tourism Commission (COMBRATUR), the National Tourism Council (CNT), the Brazilian Tourism Company (EMBRATUR), the General Tourism Fund (FUNGETUR), the Ministry of Tourism (MTUR), the Tourism Development Program in the Northeast (PRODETUR/NE, I and II), the National Tourism Plans (2003-2007, 2007-2010, 2013-2016 and 2018-2022) and the Growth Acceleration Program.

On the other hand, government officials' and businessmen' speeches that tourism is a great opportunity for development or growth in certain regions, creating employment and increasing income, usually fail to mention the negative impacts and contradictions of tourism activities, such as the commodification of landscape, socio-environmental impacts, spatial fragmentation and socio-spatial segregation. According to García (2005, p. 47):

El turismo [también] repercute negativamente en el desarrollo: desvía recursos sociales para invertir en infraestructura turística, sustrae mano de obra y acaba con la producción agrícola, concentra los beneficios en la comunidad empresarial y oligárquica, altera el valor de la tierra y propicia la especulación inmobiliaria, impone un valor comercial a cualquier objeto de arte o de antigüedad, mercantiliza la cultura, distorsiona la realidad con imágenes engañosas, amenaza el estilo de vida ingenuo de los nativos, trastoca los nexos morales de las comunidades anfitrionas y los convierte en nexos monetarios (particularmente con las relaciones sexuales y las tradicionales hospitalarias) y es claramente conservacionista al mantener el status quo para proteger la seguridad física del turista y financiera de las inversiones.

The Northeast region of the country, one of the most important drivers of “sun and sea” tourism expansion, has undergone, in the last decades, major socio-spatial transformations with the emergence and concentration of mega-hotel developments and tourism facilities of national and international capital. Consequently, Northeast landscapes have often been considered as assets that can be sold and traded by tourism industry agents. In this way, these agents – in coordination with the government – guide the city planning, prioritizing new spatial demands for serving tourists, disregarding the interests of residents. In many cases, the tourist space also distances itself from the lived space, taking away place identity and history, making them non-places.

The literature review performed herein provided important data so that the objectives of the present study could be achieved – to analyze how the process of production of space by tourism occurred and which are the main elements that influenced this production, on the northeastern coast of the Metropolitan Region of Salvador and in a case study of the municipality of Mata de São João.

In addition, it is noteworthy that there are several studies on such issues in Brazil and in the world, but it is still somewhat shy in relation to the Bahia coast. Below, we highlight some relevant research that served as a basis for the work, according to five main subjects, and which may also refer to other works.

- i. Tourism and socio-spatial transformations. Nicolás (2001) highlights the main spatial characteristics of tourism, addressing the influence of tourists in the production of space; Barbosa (2005) focuses her studies on tourism as a factor of local and/or regional development; Santos (2007) presents the evolution of tourism and its relationship in the production and consumption of spaces; Alves (2009) analyzes the role of residents in the production of the tourist space in Natal, Rio

Grande do Norte, inserting them as the producing agent of this space; Gastal and Dall'Agnol (2012) assess residents' perception of tourism impacts on Laguna, Santa Catarina; Sharma and Dyer (2012) investigate the impacts of tourism on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia; Silva (2012) addresses the role of tourism in the production of space, highlighting some peculiarities and socio-spatial characteristics to understand this issue; Souza, Bahl and Kushano (2013) consider tourism activities and their influences on the production, appropriation and transformation of social space; Hall and Page (2003) analyze the relationship between tourism and leisure and spatial transformations, and cite several international case studies on Europe, North America, Australia and China; and Rabahy (2019) brings a summary of tourism activity in Brazil, the importance of domestic tourism, opportunities of inbound tourism and the impacts of tourism on regional income distribution.

- ii. Public tourism policies. Becker (2001) describes the emergence of institutions responsible for promoting tourism in the country; Mattedi (2001) organizes information related to tourism planning and management and its relationship with the environment in the state of Bahia and provides an analysis of the creation of APA Litoral Norte da Bahia; Cruz (2002) examines the possibilities and limits of the processes of reorganization of territories driven by tourism, based on public sector policies; Souza, Noia and Pinheiro (2016) investigate the evolution of public tourism policies in the state of Bahia, making a parallel with the evolution of Brazilian public policies; and Queiroz (2016) assesses the implications of PRODETUR/NE investments in the process of space production in Imbassaí (Mata de São João, BA).
- iii. Spatial organization and growth of second homes. Martínez (2003) examines the growth of second homes in different areas in Spain, as well as their distribution and spatial organization and the consequent territorial impacts; Fernandez (2003) also brings a study on second homes in Spain, emphasizing the problems arising from this phenomenon; Silva, Silva and Carvalho (2009) investigate the impact of globalization on second home growth in Salvador and in Litoral Norte in the state of Bahia; Valença (2015) discusses the commodification of nature in space production through the real estate market that serves tourism in Gravatá, Pernambuco; Gomes, Pinto and Almeida (2017) study the perception of public managers regarding residential tourism in the Algarve, Portugal; and Larsson (2019) considers the different views of public and private agents in relation to second-home tourism in western Sweden.
- iv. Socio-spatial impacts related to the implementation of tourism projects and equipment in the Northeast region of the country. Coriolano (2001) discusses the assumptions of sustainable tourism development, focusing on the coast of Ceará; Souza Júnior and Ito (2005) bring an analysis of the interference of tourist activity in the process of socio-spatial (re)organization in the city of João Pessoa, Paraíba; Coriolano, Barbosa and Sampaio (2010) study the relationship between summer, tourism, and real estate speculation in Porto das Dunas, Ceará; Silva (2013) examines public policies and the tourism real estate market and their implications for the production of coastal space in northeastern cities; and Souza, Matias and Selva (2016) address the process of real estate tourism development on the northeastern coast.
- v. Studies on tourism activities in Litoral Norte of the state of Bahia. Mattedi (2002) presents a socio-environmental diagnosis of APA Litoral Norte da Bahia, in the lots corresponding to the municipalities of Mata de São João and Entre Rios; Machado (2008) presents a case study on conflicts in the production of space by tourism in the Complexo Turístico-Hoteleiro Reserva Imbassaí; Muricy (2010) investigates the trajectory of tourism development in Litoral Norte in Bahia; Faria (2013) studies the contradictions in the dynamics of territorial occupation of the coastal area of Mata de São João; and Magalhães (2015) seeks to understand how it develops and what motivates the reproduction of spatial fragmentation and socio-spatial segregation in the urbanization process along the BA-099 highway.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach and was developed based on the monographic descriptive method, drawing on discussions of the production of geographical space through tourism, in a case study in Mata de São João. Also, the historical method was used, with the objective of analyzing facts and phenomena to explain the current situation.

The following steps were taken to carry out the research:

- Bibliographic survey - articles, books, dissertations, and theses. The search was carried out using keywords, in Portuguese, such as: production of the geographical space; land use and occupation in Litoral Norte in the state of Bahia; Metropolitan Region of Salvador; Tourism; and Mata de São João. This survey led to the pre-selection of more than 90 documents.
- Reading and registry of pre-selected documents.
- Data collection, for different periods, on the website of the Ministry of Tourism, regarding the number of accommodation units, types of accommodation, and location of developments.
- Survey of demographic and economic data about the study area on the website of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).
- Survey of satellite images in Google Earth Pro, made in the years 2005, 2018, and 2019.
- Direct observation on the coast of the municipality of Mata de São João for triangulation of data collection and examination of the research object from various perspectives.
- Grouping and development of a database.
- Critical analysis of the collected data.
- Construction of analysis graphs, tables and maps that allow representing and summarizing the research results.
- Writing of the article.

4 THE ATLANTIC COAST OF THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF SALVADOR: PROCESSES OF URBAN AND TOURIST EXPANSION

Historically, the process of urban expansion in Brazil occurred quickly and predominantly on the coast, especially in cities like Salvador, which was the capital of Brazil. In 1872, for example, Salvador had a population of 129,109 inhabitants, second only to Rio de Janeiro, according to IBGE (2010d). However, this population concentrated in the city center, i.e., in a western direction, near the edges of Todos os Santos bay.

On the other hand, in the Atlantic coastal strip, the expansion of Salvador has always been linked to summer (tourism), i.e., to second-home construction, which are tourist accommodation for occasional use for leisure and recreation, commonly used during vacation periods and long weekends. It is noteworthy that this also occurred on the Island of Itaparica, mainly after the establishment of ferries, in 1970.

The tradition of summer vacation by the sea, in Brazil, was brought by the Portuguese royal family. At first, it was used for therapeutic purposes against diseases caused by precarious sanitary conditions and, later, for leisure and recreation. According to Becker (1995), use has intensified with the consolidation of the automobile industry and the rise of road traffic in the second half of the twentieth century.

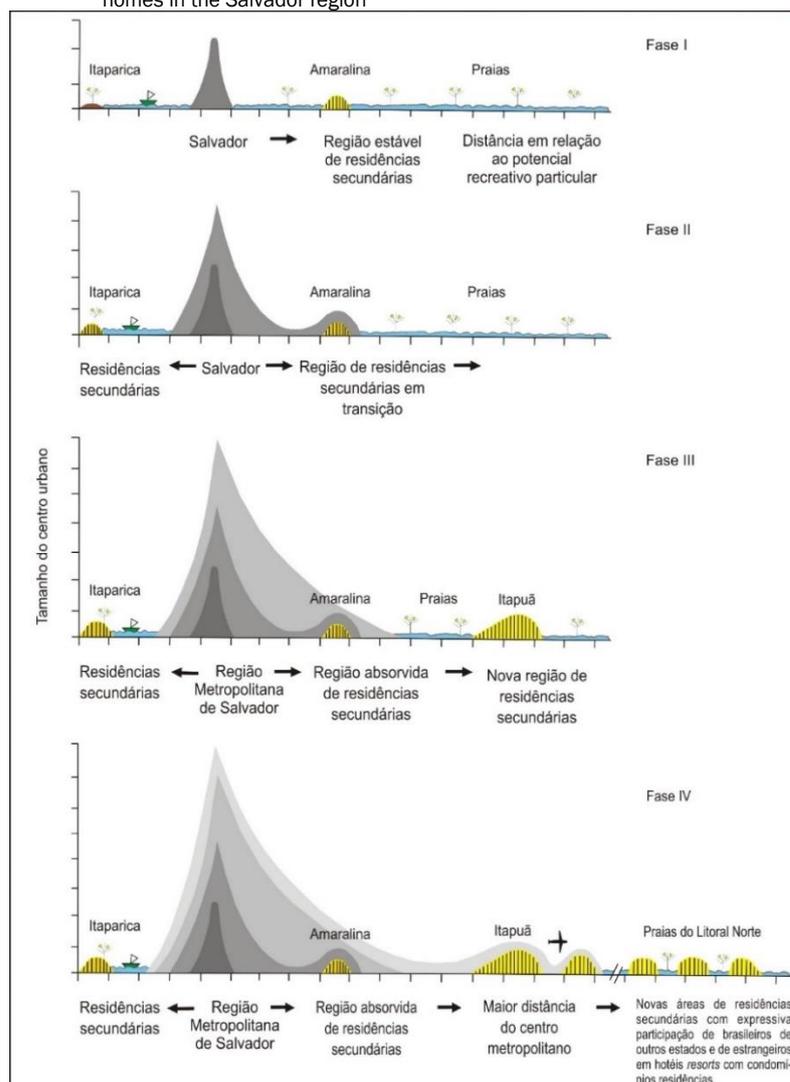
At the heart of this context, Silva, Silva and Carvalho, in a work entitled “Globalização, turismo e residências secundárias: o exemplo de Salvador-Bahia e de sua região de influência” [Globalization, tourism and second homes: the example of Salvador-Bahia and its area of influence], from 2009, adapted a model created by Lundgren, in 1974, in Canada, which highlighted the transformations that occurred in the spatial relationships between second homes and cities. In this adaptation, the authors studied Salvador and found four important phases of spatial changes involving this relationship. The model can be seen in Figure 2.

In their analysis of the model, Silva, Silva and Carvalho (2009, pp. 11-12) identified that, in phases I and II, the urban area of Salvador, concentrated in the center of the city, began to expand on the coast. This was due to the implementation, in 1897, of the tram lines and, in 1920, the beginning of second-home developments in Rio Vermelho and Amaralina. After the construction of the Amaralina-Itapuã road in 1949, coastal occupation was moving northwards. Old second homes became first ones and new second-home construction spread to Itapuã (Phase III). In the 1970s, in Lauro de Freitas, a municipality bordering Salvador, some housing plots were especially intended for vacation homes, such as Vilas do Atlântico, which was facilitated by the construction of Avenida Paralela and Avenida Octávio Mangabeira. In its growing dynamics the city of Salvador expands to Lauro de Freitas (Phase IV), a process known as conurbation, thus absorbing second housing developments. Today, the urban expansion of Salvador reaches the municipality of Camaçari, encompassing urban areas such as Busca Vida, in the Abrantes district, bordering Lauro de Freitas municipality.

In contrast, other areas on the north coast of the state remained inaccessible until the middle of the twentieth century, due to the lack of highways. It was accessed mainly by ferry across the Pojuca River. According to Machado (2008, p. 42):

[...] the mode of occupation of this region was based on latifúndio constituted by land lease arrangements [...], reflecting an occupation based on large estates. These occupied the region in a sparse [socio-spatial] organization, based on subsistence economy. The latifúndios coexisted with the activities developed by sharecroppers, such as fishing, subsistence farming or to be traded at local markets, extractivism, handicrafts, and small businesses that contributed to meet domestic demand.

Figure 2 – Modified and expanded Lundgren model for urban expansion and for second homes in the Salvador region



Source: Silva, Silva and Carvalho (2009, p. 13).

The most significant occupational changes in Litoral Norte began with the arrival of the entrepreneur Sigisfred Sigismundo Schindler, Colonel Otacilio Nunes de Souza, and Garcia D'Ávila, who own large tracts of land in the region and engaged in extractive activities and/or extensive livestock production. The Norberto Odebrecht construction company was also another large landowner, since, in a negotiation with the state government, it acquired in the late 1940s about 1,700 ha of land in Mata de São João and Entre Rios (Faria, 2013), a place where, in 1997, the Sauípe Tourism Complex would be built.

In the 1950s, there was still the beginning of oil exploration in this region and, with its subsequent decline, in the 1970s, pine and eucalyptus crops were introduced to produce cellulose and charcoal (Faria, 2013). Large reforestation companies established in the place, occupying large areas, supported by the government, which granted them funding. As a result, smallholders were evicted or received negligible damages for their properties. In many cases, this population started to live on the outskirts of the cities in Litoral Norte (Machado, 2008).

The construction of the BA-099 highway (Estrada do Coco) in the 1970s, which runs from Salvador to Praia do Forte, in Mata de São João, and later with its expansion, in the 1990s (Linha Verde), connecting the state of Bahia (stretch Praia do Forte to Mangue Seco) to the state of Sergipe, made possible and influenced the occupation of the metropolitan coast and the north of the state (phase IV of the model previously mentioned), thus becoming a driver of urban expansion and development. Consequently, land parceling in the region intended for occasional use housing units (second homes) of middle and upper income families, mainly from Salvador, and foreigners, was intensified and triggered the development of tourism, with construction of hotels, flats, B&Bs/inns, and large resorts (mega-enterprises) (Machado, 2008; Magalhães, 2015). Therefore, according to Magalhães (2015, p. 24):

[...] many families who have lived in these lands for generations, [particularly] growing coconut-of-the-bay on the coast, fruits and products from family farming and small livestock production [...], have been evicted by the new owners or transferred with negligible damages paid. [...] A large part of the local population was forced to adapt to the new circumstances imposed by the increasing tourism demand, in bars, restaurants, hotels and inns, either through small businesses, in construction or as employees of the new inhabitants, such as gardeners, caretakers, and domestic servants.

Also noteworthy are the Tamar project, created in 1980, and the Baleia Jubarte Institute, established in 1988; both are located in Praia do Forte and are ecological tourist attractions in the region

Finally, the growth of tourism and housing developments has changed the economic and occupational structure on the north coast of the state of Bahia. As an example, in Figures 3 and 4 these spatial transformations can be observed and compared.

Figure 3 – Praia do Forte “village”, Mata de São João, BA – 1975

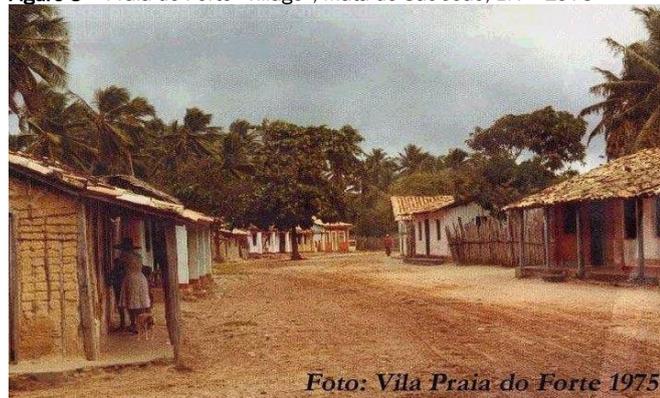


Foto: Vila Praia do Forte 1975

Source: Old photographs of Salvador (1975).

Figure 4 – Praia do Forte “village”, Mata de São João, BA – 2017

Source: Turisforte ([2017]).

Figure 2 (Lundgren model, adapted by Silva, Silva and Carvalho, 2009), previously mentioned, did not need to be updated because there were no significant changes in Litoral Norte in the period from 2010 to 2019, mainly because of the country's political and financial instability. This is discussed in Section 5 of this article.

5 TRANSFORMATIONS THROUGH TOURISM IN MATA DE SÃO JOÃO: SPATIAL PROCESSES, AGENTS, AND PRACTICES

The occupation of Mata de São João by non-indigenous (of Indian descent, especially the Tupinambás, slaves, and mestizos) began in 1549, when the Portuguese nobleman Garcia D'Ávila arrived in Bahia together with the entourage of the first governor-general Tomé de Souza. Garcia D'Ávila built, in 1551, the Casa da Torre castle (Garcia D'Ávila Tower House – the first Portuguese military and residential fortification in Brazil), in the Tatuapara bay, today Praia do Forte (isolated urban area – AUI). Strategically located, the fortress was of great importance in the defense of the state (IBGE, [2019]; Turisforte, [2019]). The ruins of the castle are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Ruins of Garcia D'Ávila Tower House

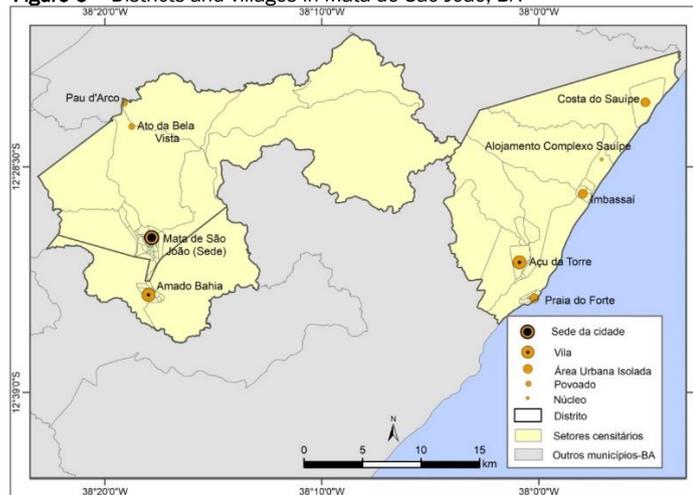
Source: Photograph by Celso Comarela.

A hamlet grew up close to the Tower House, established by families who were attracted to the coconut cultivation. Fishermen also settled at the site. In 1846, the hamlet grew to a village (IBGE, [2019]). Today, the municipality is divided into three districts – Mata de São João (seat), Amado Bahia, and Açú da Torre (Figure 6) – covering an area of 605,210 km² and with an estimated population of 46,583 inhabitants in 2019 (IBGE, [2019]).

Tourism began to develop in Mata de São João after the construction of BA-099, with several developments being built. These were made, particularly, by the businessman Klaus Peter, who bought, in the 1970s, a piece of land where Praia do Forte is located, close to the village of Açu da Torre.

In 1979, Praia do Forte started to be parceled and several buildings related to tourism were built. These were governed by the Praia do Forte Master Plan, as pointed out by Faria (2013, p. 201). The author highlights the prohibition of building in this area, as it is an Environmental Protection Area (APA Litoral Norte). Machado (2008) also states that the real estate company Barreto de Araújo has allotted large areas in the region that were acquired through the purchase of property titles and/or eviction of land invaders and squatters.

Figure 6 – Districts and villages in Mata de São João, BA

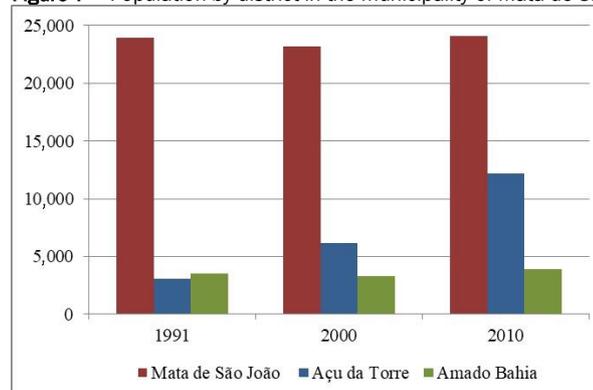


Source: The authors based on IBGE ([2010a]) data.

In 1981, the first large hotel development in the municipality was implemented by Klaus Peters, the Resort Hotel, today called Tivoli Ecoresort Praia do Forte Bahia, a luxury building by the sea. With great importance in the region, the Ecoresort became a reference for similar investments.

In the district of Açu da Torre, where the largest tourist and residential developments are located, the period in which tourism activity was most intense, in the 1990s, also experienced a high population growth (Figure 7). Thus, between 1991 and 2000, the population of the district doubled, from 3,040 to 6,142 inhabitants, and in the period from 2000 to 2010, the same process happened, reaching 12,207 inhabitants (IBGE, [2010c]). This was because migrants from the municipality itself and from other areas of the state went to work in these large tourist developments. In 2017, for example, the number of people working in the hotel industry in Mata de São João amounted to 5,888. They served 61,355 international tourists and approximately 229,000 of domestic visitors. It should be noted that, in Mata de São João, 39% of its population are non-native to the municipality (IBGE, 2010d).

Figure 7 – Population by district in the municipality of Mata de São João, BA 1991–2010

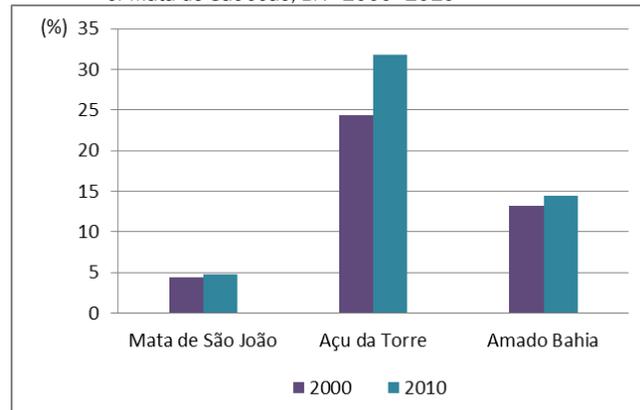


Source: The authors, based on IBGE data ([2010c]).

In addition, the number of second homes has also grown in these districts. In Açú da Torre, there was an increase of 8% between 2000 and 2010 (Figure 8). In the latter year, the percentage of these municipalities amounts to 32% of the total (IBGE ([2010b])).

It should be stressed the role of the Tourism Development Program in Northeast Brazil (PRODETUR/NE) – established by the Northeast Development Superintendence (SUDENE) in partnership with the Brazilian Tourism Company (EMBRATUR) and funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through the Banco do Nordeste, its financial executor – in the spatial configuration of the region under study here. PRODETUR/NE was a major promoter of tourism development on the coast of Mata de São João, creating actions aimed at improving infrastructure and public services.

Figure 8 – Empty homes for occasional use by districts in the municipality of Mata de São João, BA - 2000–2010

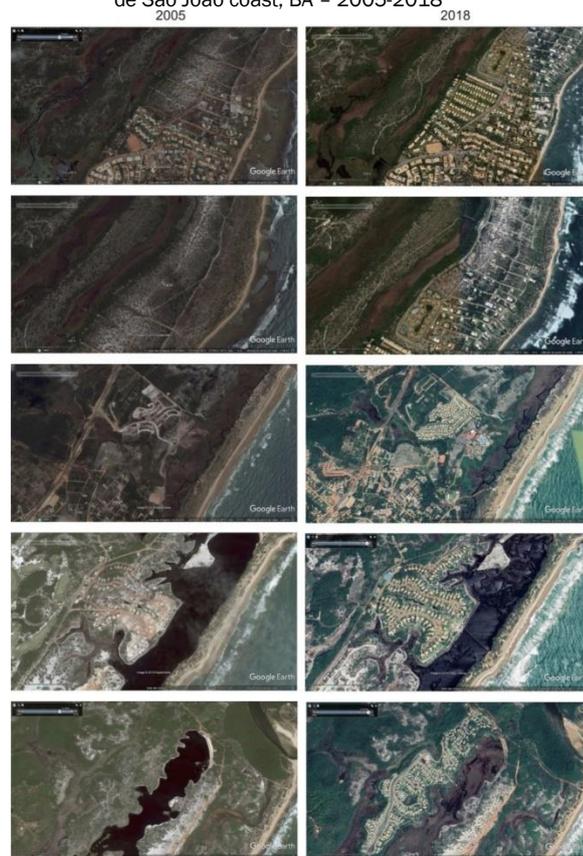


Source: The authors, based on IBGE data ([2010b]).

According to Queiroz (2016, p. 66), “the implementation of this program was decisive for attracting foreign investors and increasing tourist flows. [...] Along the coast [...], the tourist activity was driven by major transformations in the infrastructure [...], thus allowing the establishment of large hotel developments.” The first phase of the project started in 1994 and ended in 2002. From that period, the main work was the expansion of BA-099. However, it was in the second phase of the program, from 2005 to 2019, that Mata de São João benefited most from the investments. At this stage, Bahia created 11 tourist poles with the objective of better distributing resources, providing a significant increase in local infrastructure. The municipality is part of the Costa dos Coqueiros pole.

Therefore, in the satellite images in Figure 9, the extent of the accelerated growth in land use and occupation of stretches of coastal areas in Mata de São João, between 2005 and 2018, is shown, as well as in Figure 10, which shows the large areas occupied by resorts. Among these developments, the Sauípe Complex, created in 1997 by the construction company Odebrecht, stands out. It was a landmark in the country's tourist activity, due to the high investment, the media visibility, etc., and, consequently, consolidated the north coast of the state as a major tourist center of national and international importance.

Figure 9 – Satellite images showing the growth of stretches of Mata de São João coast, BA – 2005-2018



Source: Google (2005; 2018)

Figure 10 – Satellite images of Açú da Torre resorts, Mata de São João, BA – 2019



Source: Google (2019).

On the other hand, in Figure 11, there are other large areas not yet occupied on the coast because they are in an Environmental Protection Area (APA Litoral Norte do Estado), but which are already being demarcated for future construction. APA comprises, over 142 thousand hectares, a rich and fragile ecosystem that includes remnants of the Atlantic Forest, dunes, sandbanks, beaches, coral reefs, swamps, lagoons, and mangroves in six estuaries (Bahia, [2020]).

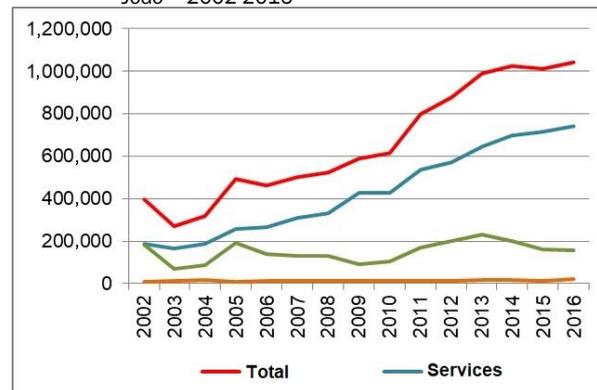
Figure 11 – Satellite images of unoccupied areas in Açu da Torre, Mata de São João, BA – 2019



Source: Google (2019).

Figure 12 shows total GDP and by sector of activity in Mata de São João, from 2002 to 2016. By observing Figure 12, we can see the growth of total GDP and services to the detriment of other sectors, a consequence of tourism activities in the municipality.

Figure 12 – Total GDP and by sectors* of activity in Mata de São João – 2002-2016



* In thousand reais.

Source: The authors, based on IBGE data ([2016]).

In relation to the number of tourism developments, Table 1 below, shows the growth of hotels and other accommodation establishments in Mata de São João over the years², particularly in the last decade of the twentieth century.

Table 1 – Accommodation establishments in Mata de São João by time period

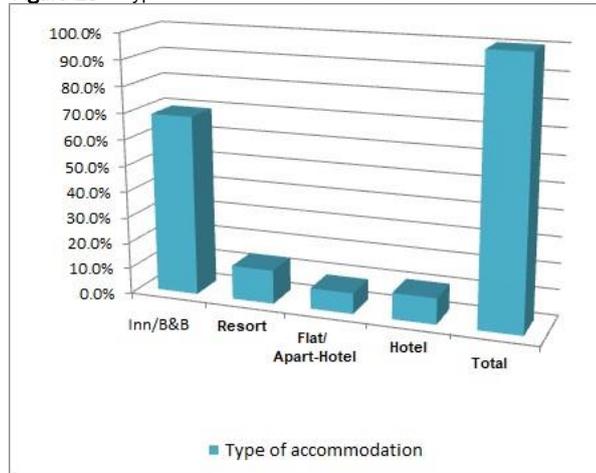
Years	Units
1981 – 1989	3
1990 – 1999	23
2000 – 2009	21
2010 – 2018	11
No information	22

Source: The authors, based on Brasil (2019) data and fieldwork.

² The 2019 data refer to the first quarter of the year. The data were collected from the website of the Ministry of Tourism and in situ observation. In addition, the Google Earth Pro tool was used.

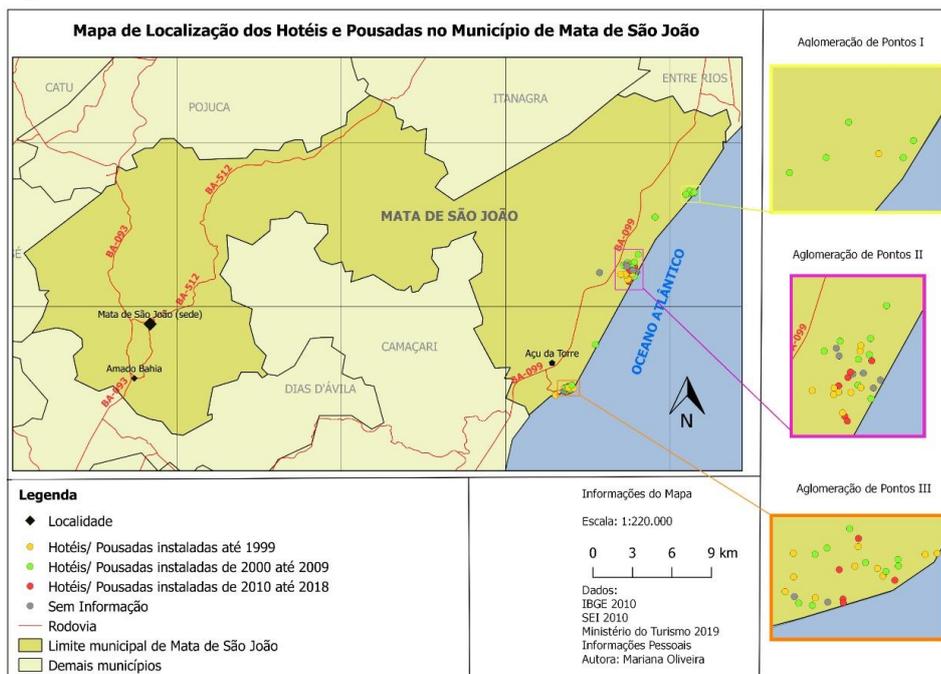
Figure 13 below, shows the type of accommodation in Mata de São João. There are 48 inns, 9 resorts, 7 flats/apart-hotels, and 6 hotels, and Figure 14 shows the spatial distribution of these accommodation establishments:

Figure 13 – Type of accommodation in Mata de São João – 2019



Source: The authors, based on Brasil (2019) data and fieldwork.

Figure 14 – Number of accommodation establishments in Mata de São João – 2019



Source: The authors, based on Brasil (2019) data and fieldwork.

From the data in the figures and table, one can see that in the study periods there was a boom in the construction of accommodation establishments in the coastal strip of Mata de São João, including large developments such as resorts. Spanish groups (owners of the Iberostar and Gran Palladium resorts), Thai groups (like the owners of the Tivoli Ecoresort Praia do Forte Bahia), Portuguese, Americans, etc., but also Brazilians (like the Goiás group, owners of the Sauípe Complex), stand out in the spatial configuration of tourism in Mata de São João coast.

Here we must return to Figure 2 (in Section 4), the Lundgren model adapted by Silva, Silva and Carvalho, 2009. As previously mentioned, Figure 2 did not need to be updated because there were no significant changes in Litoral Norte, in 2010-2019, mainly because of Brazil's political and financial instability. Today, the urban expansion continues accelerated and follows the same pattern towards the coast of Sergipe. Real

estate speculation is intense, but the pace of growth in the construction of hotels, inns, and resorts has slowed down. However, there is a tendency to build other fortified enclaves, the condominium resorts (Figure 15), aimed at the high-income public in Salvador and abroad. These are high-end luxury houses, which combine residential and hotel infrastructure, an experience already consolidated in European countries, such as Portugal and Spain.

Figure 15 – Satellite image of a condominium resort in Açú da Torre, Mata de São João, BA – 2019



Source: Google (2019).

However, with regard to Itaparica Island (located in the RMS, coastal strip of Todos os Santos Bay), the forecast is that its socio-spatial configuration will undergo even more accelerated changes, due to the implementation of the Oeste/Ponte Salvador-Itaparica Road System, put out to tender in December 2019 and which will be built by Chinese giants China Railway 20 Bureau Group Corporation (CR20), CCC South America Regional Company S.A.R.L. (CCCC SOUTH AMERICA) and China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC LTD). The project aims, in addition to a bridge over Todos os Santos Bay, the construction of access roads in Salvador (4.6 km), a new expressway on the island (21.4 km), and the recovery and expansion of a stretch of the BA-001 highway. The bridge is to be completed in 2025. It is noteworthy that the island consists of two municipalities, Itaparica, and Vera Cruz, where 35% and 48% of housing, respectively, are vacation homes (IBGE, 2010b).

In Figure 14, as well as in the fieldwork, one can observe that tourism in Mata de São João is exclusively located on the coast, in the Açú da Torre district, mainly in Praia do Forte, Imbassaí, and Sauípe. No accommodation units were identified in the Amado Bahia district and at the municipal seat, where most of the population lives.

It should also be pointed out that Mata de São João has become a tourist center in the Northeast of the country and an example of the power of private entities acting in the valorization, speculation, and commodification of nature, as well as in the touristification of space, aimed at a homogeneous class of domestic and international medium- and high-income groups. This is noticeable in the high daily rates, especially in resorts, with prices up to R\$5,000.00 per double room in high season (Booking.com, 2020).

Therefore, in the processes of spatial transformation on the coast of Mata de São João, the state stands out as an important space-producing agent by building infrastructure and setting public policy. The state of Bahia makes agreements with regional development banks, makes laws, exempts businessmen from taxes, and manifests itself through its superintendencies and secretariats. In this way, the state creates interest relationships with investors and, thus, makes it possible to secure funding from new private capital. In addition to it, there are tourists, the market, and tourism companies.

The market would be responsible for managing and coordinating tourism seasonality, as well as the use of places, i.e., the degree of importance and investment in Mata de São João at a certain time – therefore, this influences prices and selection of tourists that this place can receive.

On their part, companies build accommodation, set up services such as shops, restaurants, markets, etc., and interact and demand, from public authorities, infrastructures to meet their needs. It is important to highlight that, in the municipality of Mata de São João, sources of investment capital in the hotel industry are mainly from abroad (Bahia, 2015).

Here we should resume and examine how spatial practices are important to understand the process of occupation and organization of the RMS coast, specifically Mata de São João (explained in Chapter 2). Spatial selectivity is evident on Mata de São João coast. The municipality has natural attractions that have strong potential for the implementation of tourism, as well as the necessary infrastructure to establish this activity (proximity to the capital, airport, highway, etc.). Spatial fragmentation and socio-spatial segregation are also evident in the Matense space. On one side of the BA-099 highway, we find private condominiums and resorts, while the poorest population lives in simple houses that are far from the tourist center and urban facilities (Figure 16).

Figure 16 – Satellite image of Praia do Forte, Mata de São João – 2019



Source: Google (2019); Booking.com ([2019]).

The issue of spatial anticipation is observed when some groups and entrepreneurs, even before the construction of the BA-099 highway, bought large portions of land at very low prices, with the prospect of future profit, as in the case of Odebrecht. And, finally, the reproduction of the producing region guides the way in which tourism activities are perpetuated in Mata de São João, or when hotel developments, especially resorts, guarantee, over time, their operating conditions. This happens through tax incentives, development policies for tourism and maintenance of public spaces.

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this study, we observed that tourism is one of the main economic activities in the municipality of Mata de São João and the major driver of space consumption and socio-spatial transformations. These changes were visibly perceived through satellite images and confirmed in the data on hotel developments and in situ observation.

Tourism developments in Açu da Torre (Praia do Forte, Imbassaí, and Sauípe) – hotels, resorts, inns, flats, vacation homes, etc. – started from the moment the state provided access to the region, i.e., the construction of BA-099, mainly in its second stage. Thus, the year of establishment of the first largest resort known to the region, occurred, precisely, in the post-construction period of the highway, thus bringing large amount of investment, tourists, and tourism facilities, consequently producing a new space in the municipality.

In this sense, we highlight the agents examined in the study: the public sphere – federal, state, and municipal; and private agents – large landowners, such as Klaus Peter and Odebrecht, and the construction capital represented by large national groups, especially from the international sector (Portugal and Spain).

Finally, it should be stressed that tourism is selective, as the high daily rates show, particularly in the case of resorts – the big consumers of São João da Mata space – which results in an uneven process of production and reproduction of space. In addition, despite not being addressed in this study, we also emphasize that the changes that have occurred in the region in recent decades, through tourism, have caused high environmental loss with the densification in the Environmental Protection Area, since large extensions of land were and are being deforested to build large hotel complexes, as well as causing profound changes in the local landscape and other consequent urban and social problems: water supply, solid waste management, security, pollution, violence, prostitution (children and adolescents), unemployment, housing, inequality, among others.

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