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NEITHER BOUNDARIES NOR BARRIERS. INTERNATIONAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE CITIES OF SANTANA DO LIVRAMENTO (BRAZIL) AND RIVERA (URUGUAY)

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ABSTRACT

Starting from the premise of encouraging better management of the historical heritage in the south of Brazil, this work aims to disclose a social situation that unites two countries and two cultures, mixing them together and integrating the residents of Santana do Livramento and Rivera. These cities are located alongside in the borders of Brazil and Uruguay, respectively, without physical or natural division, only with boundary landmarks. In this assignment, it will be brought attention to the beginning of territorial discussions until the newest decrees of the evolution of political discussions about the separating line and the way it changed the population, so they would become one. Plenty of documental and online research, such as legislative decrees, maps, reports, and local history books, went through analysis for the construction of this study, with the main objective of bringing recognition to a territorial arrangement that resulted in a unique interaction between two countries. The situation of the unusual case is the main characteristic of the historical heritage, transcending from the history of how this territory came together and how the population became one, bounding cultures and changing the ways of living. It is of great importance to reveal this border so that the appropriation of the own residents with their past and heritage is increased, hoping to bring bigger investments and a more careful look to the visual of both cities so that they could prosper as they should. Taking this subject into consideration, it is noteworthy that the visibility of southern Brazilian and Uruguayan heritage must be explored in a way that brings more value to this territory, instead of only being outgrown by the profit, immediate gain of big corporations and buying power, so that this population can have opportunities to grow and prosper.

KEYWORDS: Border; heritage; territorial relationship; Brazil; Uruguay.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of intangible cultural heritage is recent, recognized only in 2003 given the globalization and the imminent danger of its disappearing [1, p.3]. Based in this concept, this article aims to explore the heritage of Santana do Livramento, located in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, and Rivera, located inside the Rivera Department, Uruguay, parting from the beginning of the territorial disputes and the way they resulted in a unique interaction. The heritage was defined by the territorial enclaves between the cities, bringing attention to the interaction that happened due to the territorial dispute. The history of this border commences in the period of colonization and passes through countless treaties until arriving to the situation that is encountered today.

With binational events, mutual development strategies and cooperation between the government and residents, the cities grew and still grow together, the boundary landmarks started having a bigger meaning than just being a symbol and ended up uniting the population. The territory, divided physically, becomes intangible cultural heritage when the tradition created from this event is passed from generation to generation. The boundary landmarks can be destroyed and replaced, but the feeling of belonging is abstract and differs the residents of Santana do Livramento and Rivera from other places with similar situations.

There are few dry borders with cities so close together. A dry border is considered to be a border where there is only one symbolic land border between two countries. A similar case is from the cities of Baarle-Nassau, between Netherlands and Belgium, where families disputed the definition of the boundary and ended up with one city inside another, or the case of Rio de Onor, a community village with a part in Portugal and another in Spain, key ethnological and anthropological case study in Portugal [2].

On the contrary, at the border between the United States and its neighbouring countries, such as Canada and Mexico, it is illegal to cross without a visa; on the Cyprus-Turkey border in Nicosia, as well as between Israel and Palestine in the Jerusalem dispute, divisions were created for religious reasons; many cities were divided due to war or other conflicts, such as between Poland and Germany (Gubin/Goben, for example), France and the Netherlands (Comines/Komen), Italy and Slovenia (Gorizia/Gorica), Hungary and Slovakia (Komáron/Komárno), among others. However, there are also celebrated and often shared borders, such as the Latvian and Estonian city of Valka/Valga, where their motto is “one city, two states”, Konstanz and Kreuzlingen respectively in Germany and Switzerland, where public transport and cultural and sports centres are shared or at the border between Poland and Ukraine (Horodyszczce and Wareg), where every year there is *The Land Art Festival* where part of the border is decorated [3–6]. In the case explored in this article, the territories were divided without a physical dispute and became a free border, the reason why it is called the “*Fronteira da Paz*” (peace border).

A documental analysis of law-decrees, maps, reports and history research mostly written by local authors, as well as field surveys were performed, to support a qualitative analysis to characterize the place. Also, as methodology, the interaction with local people of both countries was important to realize their attachment and cultural experience with this territory.

As the proposed route develops along the so-called “peace border”, there are more and more closed borders between countries with the construction of walls and fences [7], and many of the border communities end up feeling “in the middle”, having to choose administratively for a society or a culture, for this or that economic system and being dependent on international relations [8], when in fact, they are the same. The enclaves are a reality, existing many in the world [8, 9]. However, this situation can be exploited for tourism, as Gelbman & Timothy explain [8], as many have become tourist attractions. Similar routes with the same characteristics have not been found so far; in Santana do Livramento and Rivera there are no routes like this, so the proposal is innovative.

Starting from the premise of encouraging better management of the historical heritage in the south of Brazil, this work aims to disclose a social situation that unites two countries and two cultures, mixing them together and integrating the residents of Santana do Livramento and Rivera.

This article shows the potential of the creation of a cultural route, where the commercial tourism, that raises the social disparities that feed the unbridled consumerism, hides the history of this border. It is important to encourage more investment in the cultural manner in order to be closer to the residents and to be promoted so that the world would know of this unique case of dry border.

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1. From treaties to delimitations: the seed of the beginning of the cities

The arrival of Christopher Columbus to América, in 1492, brought conflicts between Spaniards and Portuguese about the territorial division in the new world, starting an endless process of treaties that defined the territorial limits of many countries from South America. The Brazilian borders already existed before 1500s, when the Spanish and Portuguese kings required the adjustment of the “*Bula Inter Coetera*”(1493) to the Vatican, that named that “*all the islands and firm lands, found and to be found, uncovered and to be uncovered*” belonged to the kings of Castile, Leon and Aragon situated a hundred leagues to the West of the meridian of the islands of Azores and Cape Verde, leaving all the Brazilian territory to the Spanish. After negotiations it was decided that the territory until 370 miles to the East of Cape Verde would belong to the Portuguese, by the demarcation line of the Tordesillas Treaty [10].

In 1806, England tried to take over the Spanish colonies in South America given that the metropolises were not able to send troops to defend them, under threat of France, governed by Napoleon. This resulted in the Peninsular War and English invasions in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. After several attempts, Buenos Aires was victorious, and Montevideo was taken over. These battles proved that the colonies could defend themselves without the assistance of the metropolis, raising a will of independency [11]. The Buenos Aires rebellion initiated because the throne was being occupied by a usurper, the defeat of the Spanish army at Cádiz and the success in defending against the English some years earlier. This way they overthrew the viceroy and the independence of the Plata provinces was declared, except for Oriental Band of Uruguay, that did not want to be attached to Buenos Aires. After a failed attempt to be named viceroy, in 1811, General Javier Elio, was declared an impostor in Buenos Aires, being the trigger to start the war, closing the harbours of the Oriental Band. Javier Elio requested assistance to the Portuguese court and the “East Band Peacemaker Army”, which was an army created from the troops that were situated in the district of Entre-Rios. They were split in two columns, the first one camped on the hills where nowadays the municipality of Santana do Livramento is situated. This was the seed to the formation of the city [11].

The second Portuguese intervention on the Plata river began when the leaders of Buenos Aires, imposing against Artigas, that did not accept the armistice, and his rising in military power, suggested that the Portuguese court should send troops to occupy the Oriental Band. The region limited by the Uruguay, Quaraí, Santa Maria and the Ibicuí river, which nowadays composes the West border of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, former district of Entre-Rios. The current municipality of Santana do Livramento, were invaded during the war. After a bloody battle, the Portuguese troops retreated, and the battle was called “Vitória de Santana” (Santana Victory). By the means of a Legal Charter, the state of Brazil was elevated to “dignity, preeminence and naming of kingdom”, integrating the called “United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and Algarve”. During the battle of Carumbés, Artigas loses, and the Portuguese troops kept moving forward winning battles until they got to Montevideo, where the territory was surrendered [11].

2.2. The demarcation of the frontier line

Since the border is a condition resulted from a policy, the policy of borders should be the way to manage them, being the only way to protect and stability to the border since it is a sensible location. The border should go beyond the dividing line, being alive and uniting the population so that it will be a way to fortify the countries instead of weakening them [12].

The border between Santana do Livramento and Rivera started turbulently, with uncountable treaties constantly changing the dividing line. In 1825, after the Independence of Brazil from Portugal the conflicts kept going, the provinces of the Plata river and the Brazilian Empire started the dispute for the Cisplatin provinces, now the country of Uruguay. Brazil, with its unstable economy, lost the dispute, and with help from England, which had economic interests, an agreement was established so the Cisplatin Province would become independent. This is how the Oriental Republic of Uruguay came to exist [10, p.370]. The Treaty of Alliances and Limits defined the new borders between the Brazilian

Empire and the Cisplatin Provinces, based on the same principles which the Portuguese adopted during the Madrid Treaty, “*uti possidetis*”, the territory is of whom lives in it [13]: “To the East the ocean, to the South the Plata river, to the West the Uruguay river, and to the North the Quaraim river until the Cochilla de Sant’Anna, which divides the Santa Maria river, and by this part the Taquarembó Grande stream, following along the Jaguarão points, goes into the Merim Lagoon and passes through the Pontal de São Miguel taking the Chuy which enters the Ocean”.

The countries division was decided by the concept of “water divisor”, which is defined by a theoretical line of water distribution, marking the land by its drainage basin. The concept worked until they reached the central area, at Caqueiro Hill, where there were already residences and plots of land. This problem was only solved when in 1920, the Mixed Commission of Limits Brazil-Uruguay altered the dividing line and used an abandoned area to the deployment of a park [14].

3. THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES

During the years, several kinds of measurements were taken so that peace was always the reality of this border. The Legal Statute of the Border, established conventions to favour the development of the frontier between the United States of Brazil and the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, concluded and signed in 1933, in the city of Montevideo, capital of Uruguay. It addressed the problematic of road construction and maintenance, general construction works, and traffic where the border is located and assured the intervention of authority agents in both countries on the international corridor, bringing better and increased security between the cities [15]. The creation of the International Park was due to the crescent growth of the cities, that crossed the limits in the central region, forcing the Mixed Commission of Limits Brazil-Uruguay to act. It was then signed a convention in 1920 that changed the limit line and decided about the construction of the *Parque Internacional* (International Park), to belong to both countries. Founded in 1943, it reflected the manner how the urban occupation happened between these countries and it was deployed in a huge and unoccupied piece of land [15, p.97]. There’s as inscription at the obelisk located at the International Park that says: “*In this border, instead of bullets and trenches, parks and gardens*”, referring to common situations of borders, using an allusion to the reason why this one is different and known as “*Fronteira da Paz*” (peace border). This obelisk does not have the purpose of marking but representing the interaction between these “sister cities”.

Diverse binational events are held in this border to encourage cultural habits and interaction between the citizens. The most common and frequent are “*Festival de Pandorgas*” (Kite Festival) (Figure 1), “*Fronteira em dança*” (Dancing in the border), “*Choriceva*”. They happen once or twice a year and attract several residents and visitors.

The Binational Festival of Kites is traditional and happens every year during the Good Friday holiday, when the residents of both cities reunite in the Caqueiro Hill and compete in separate categories distinguished by age, with Brazilian and Uruguayan judges. The competition is not obligatory, many go to the festival to have fun flying their own kite. In the year of 2019, it was held the 44th festival. The “*Fronteira em Dança*” (Dancing in the border) festival (Figure 2, left), happens during the month of November, having the duration of two days. It is a binational event held by the city hall of Santana do Livramento and the intendancy of Rivera, by the means of the Office of Sports and Entertainment and Cultural Division, with the attendance of authorities from both countries. The event intends to promote the artistic expression of the border, welcoming dancers of other cities in the region and alternating styles of dance, awarding the best dancers by category. In 2019 the 18th Festival will be held. One of the most popular festivals is the “*Choriceva*” (Figure 2, right), which is a wordplay with “*choripan*”, a bread filled with a traditionally made sausage (“*chouriço*”) and “*cerveja*” which means beer. Created to encourage the local market of beer and traditional food, this party is organized biannually during two days of the months of April and November by the Binational Slow Food, microbreweries and local gastronomic establishments. The result of this festival is the promotion of local culinary and market while bringing entertainment for the people with band groups and music. In 2019 it was held the 7th edition of this event.



Figure 1 - Binational Festival of Kites (authors, August 2019)



Figure 2 – Left: binational Festival Dancing in the Border; right: Fiesta de la Cerveza Artesanal y del Choripan (both: authors, August 2019)

In addition to binational events, there are binational schools like the Sul-Riograndense Federal Institution, that provides degrees legitimated in both countries to Uruguayan and Brazilian students. The project started in 2006 by the initiative of the institution and the Professional Technical Education Counsel of the Uruguay University of Work. As result of this cooperation, social, research and extension projects were implemented whereas the border inclusion grew, bringing local development.

Beside the public cultural manifests, there are also numerous artistic expressions at this border, with the most remarkable works on traditional *gaúcha* (term that designates people from the South of Brazil) music. For example, the hymn of Santana do Livramento, composed by Agapito Prates Paulo, praises the conviviality of the people that are one in two different countries. This hymn speaks about the historic image and present values of “fraternity and liberty”, bringing attention to the fact of the geographic place conditioning the significant events of history “these facts do not register in the poem, for they should be in the heart”. The third verse speaks about the historic accomplishment [11].

4. PROPOSAL OF A PEDESTRIAN ROUTE

For better understanding of the border and exhibition and its exceptional interaction, it is proposed a pedestrian route (Figure 3), between the boundary landmarks of the centre of the cities, where the border is more alive. The path takes about sixty minutes and is mostly levelled, having many resting spots and green areas.

The route proposal starts in the Caqueiro Hill, in the landmark number 1, of the Labarte Avenue and ends in the “Cerro do Marco”. The path begins in the boundary landmark number 1 in Caqueiro Hill, bringing attention to the superior view of the cities (Figure 4, left and centre), Santana do Livramento in the left and Rivera in the right, differing only when enlarging the field of vision, so the social disparity is noticed. The path leads to the cities’ centre. When arriving at the boundary landmark number 3, (Figure 4, right), the last landmark in the Caqueiro Hill, it is possible to visualize the cities from above. This is a residential zone, descending from the hill the city centre area begins.

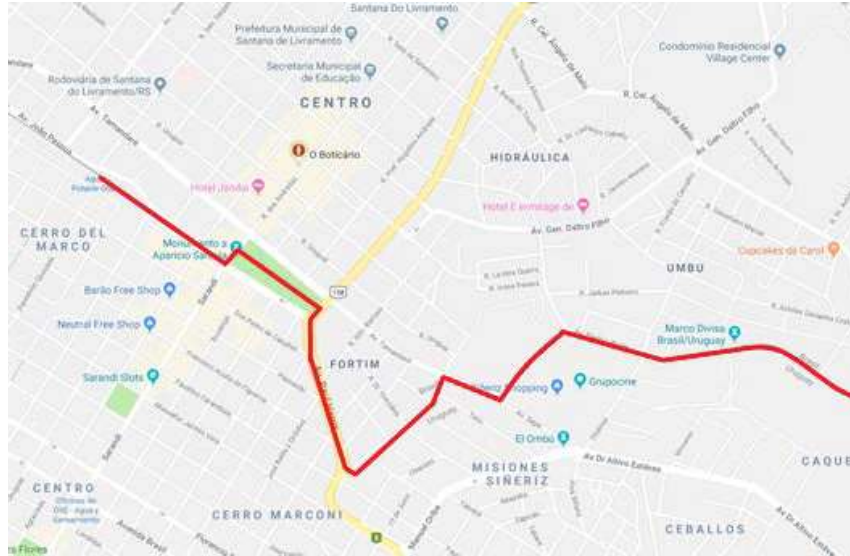


Figure 3 – Pedestrian route map (Google Maps)



Figure 4 – View in the region of the first landmark, Brazilian side on the left and Uruguayan side in the center; right: insertion of the 3rd boundary landmark (authors, August 2019)

Between the boundary landmarks 4 to 7, zone revitalized in 2018, sidewalks and resting zones with good illumination were built (Figure 5). During this path there is the shopping centre of Rivera, that together with the other Free Shops from Uruguay, bring many tourists to the border, and since there is no tax added to the products, they are designed for the Brazilian consumers. Continuing the way, there is a residential zone (Figure 6) and afterwards it passes through the International Park, founded in 1943 to avoid a dispute between central areas. The park and the Municipal Theatre of Rivera (Figure 7) host many binational events such as the “Choriceva” and “Dançando na Fronteira da Paz”.



Figure 5 - Boundary landmark number IV to VII, revitalized zone that encourages walking (authors, August 2019)



Figure 6 – View from the boundary landmark X, in the left Uruguay and in the right Brazil (authors, August 2019)



Figure 7 – International Park and its' obelisk and the Municipal Theatre of Rivera, where many binational events take place (authors, August 2019)

The Cerro do Marco is the last stop of the proposed route. It is located in a park, having a great view to the cities that are so linked from the beginning of times (Figure 8). A mixed culture that with the passage of years got used to the different reality and that is living in a border known as *Fronteira da Paz*. In this point it is possible to visualize the sunset behind the hills in the horizon.



Figure 8 – Left: Flores da Cunha Park, revitalized in 2015 (authors, August 2019); right: view from Cerro do Marco (authors, May 2018)

With the increased use of the proposed route, safety increases, attracting more passers-by, but will also take care of these spaces, because, when used, users will increasingly require intervention in and maintenance of spaces. In the medium/long term, this route could become a new tourist attraction that will benefit both cities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Beginning on the study of territorial disputes between Brazil and its neighbouring countries, it is possible to understand how this unique border came to be and the way the free interaction between the countries appeared, passing through territorial divisions and creating new laws that permitted the mobility between them, becoming a free border. Frontiers are always hard to manage, where a loose wrong step can result in disagreements between countries. This border, with treaties and agreements and the Brazilian and

Uruguayan governments working together, was able to increase security and the quality of life of its residents, which resulted in a different kind of traditionalism from the surrounding cities.

Innumerable treaties were created to change the boundary line between both this cities, and this constant change of government made the development of its own market hard, resulting in the adoption of commerce for support, promoting the unbridled consumerism. Bringing the Uruguayan Free Shops to the city centre increased the social disparity, and since the taxes are reduced, the Uruguayans are not able to purchase since they should pay the full fees. This means, the history of this border was left aside, alienating the residents and feeding consumerism.

There are several attempts to increase the events that encourage the interaction, however they usually have profit motives. The recent revitalizations in parks and squares, such as Flores da Cunha Park and the walking path from the boundary landmark 4 to the 7 follow the right direction and raise the value of local heritage.

The pedestrian route would be a step forward towards appreciation of the history of this cities and would increase the security in the opposed hills in the route, since they are considered dangerous because of the lack of people's movement.

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