THEMING, TOURISM AND HERITAGE IN THE CITY OF PENEDO, STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT
When studying cities and tourism, one of the aspects to be considered is the relation between the symbolic aspects of the architecture, its uses, and the heritage, both visible and otherwise. This work is part of a doctorate thesis on image construction in small tourist cities that covered Gramado, RS, Holambra, SP, and Penedo, RJ. The article shows Penedo, where tourism is based both on the natural landscape as on its Finnish image, and on how themed tourism can relate to the encouragement of traditions, helping to preserve local culture and customs. Penedo was founded in 1929 as a vegetarian and naturalist place, by a group of Finnish people, and took tourism as its main activity from 1930. Local tourism started to change in the 1970s and underwent a theme creation process represented by the opening of Little Finland and Santa Klaus House in 1998. Urry (2001) helps to understand how the construction of the image takes place in tourist cities, based on the need to attract tourists through visualization and architecture. Shields (1992) shows how the history of the place influences this process, and its relation with the community. The idea of theming follows what is proposed by Gottdiener (2001), and scenario building, showing how scenarios are set as tourism elements, is described by Silva (2004). In showing how this process took place in Penedo it is important to bear the concept of themed authenticity (MACCANNEL, 1999) in mind, with the transformation of customs in tourist events. The activities carried out by Clube Finland (The Finland Club) are fundamental for the preservation of customs and to encourage a better relation between traditional culture and the inhabitants. Apart from keeping activities such as the Finnish Dances and the Finnish Museum, the Club has been expanding its actions, with the Finnish Colony Fair, with handicraft and cultural activities, and the Finnish Route for Penedo, a leaflet that introduces the activities of Finnish people in Penedo and that highlight the visible and invisible culture, involving urban aspects, with the valuing of the local heritage. These initiatives have been increasing the interest of shopkeepers for Finnish culture, showing that the increase in tourism revenue and a wider relationship between those that defend their traditions and those that hold a more commercial view can supplement one another.

INTRODUCTION
Tourism has been earning the spot as one of the fastest growing activities in recent years. It is a process connected to services and that has a strong relation with urban elements. This work is part of a doctorate thesis that entails the relation between tourism and the city, to show how this activity can be transforming and, depending on how its relation is established with the local societies, it can participate in a positive way in processes to re-invent the cities, their economies and the culture of such places. The research is aimed at the study of small Brazilian tourist cities where the construction of the image is linked to theming and scenario-building, studying Gramado, RS, Penedo, RJ, and Holambra, SP. In dealing with how this process has been occurring in Brazil, the work means to follow up on something that takes place in a global manner and that has been happening in this country, based on the peculiarities of each place.

The study shows how these cities have been changing through tourism linked to theming and scenario-building that are done based on their ethnic and cultural heritage, in the process where cities compete with each other as tourist destinations. Based on their origins these places have been using elements from Architecture, local History, Gastronomy and Handicraft to create their images which, corresponding to that which many tourists have been seeking, many times enable the maintenance of their economies and the preservation of their local cultures. This work intends to discuss the likelihood of this process being favourable to the cities, in cases where there is a greater participation of the populations, with the valuing of their history and identity, and that theming and scenario-building can create forms of inclusion for the communities in economic processes that could be of exclusion, as well as tourism and trade. Through the encouragement to participate in cultural activities, and also with the stimulation to re-invent old habits, rescuing traditional activities of such places, cultural activities that might appeal to tourism, the population of these cities can be stimulated to seek their insertion in a new market that has great economic potential, connecting tourism and local culture.

John Urry (2001) tells us of the eye of the tourist, that is linked to this process and shows the importance of presenting the tourist with that one wants to see, in a process of increasing competition between tourist destinations. The study of all the touristic process as linked to theming and scenario-building should be done from the understanding of its local history, from its foundation. The idea of city image is well worked on by Rob Shields (1992,
p. 6), who shows the importance of a lengthier study of the history of each place to get to understand the process of constructing the image of this place, or place-image, and gives us what he calls a "set of conceptual tools" to this study.

There are several cities in Brazil with history linked to tourism and that from a given moment started to establish a stronger bond with that which can be called theming and scenario-building. Theming is that in which Mark Gottdiener (2001) presents us as the relation between themes and their use in society, not only in the cities, and scenario-building deals with the creation of tourism scenarios, in line with what is said by Maria da Glória Lanci da Silva (2004). They are supplementary processes that, albeit being extensively used and accepted in Tourism, cause mixed reactions. Another important aspect found when studying tourism in relation ethnic communities is what Dean MacCannell (1999) calls staged authenticity, which at first was linked to traditional dance and ethnic festivals.

![Image](http://www.italiaparaujo.com.br/)

**Fig 01 - Little Finland and Santa Claus' Home in Penedo.**

The case approached in this work is about Penedo, a city founded in 1929 by Finnish immigrants. Penedo stands out in the tourism scenario of the state’s countryside as one of its major tourist destinations¹, with a large number of hostels, restaurants and activities linked to tourism (EGLER; PIRES DO RIO, 2004). It is a place with its own identity, based on its Finnish heritage, and that had its early history linked to a naturalist and vegetarian movement, which grew as a tourist city from the end of this utopian project between 1929 and 1942 (FAGERLANDE, 2007). The presence of the Itatiaia National Park² and an exuberant nature is certainly one of the greatest local attractions, but Penedo stands out for having always used its Finnish colony image as the basis for its tourist attractions. Attractions such as the Finnish sauna and its own culture, symbolized by its traditional dances and handcraft, with sweets, jams and biscuits that were always fundamental to stimulate visitors to come. From the 1970s onwards it started to present its cultural activities in the way MacCannell (1999) defines as “staged authenticity”.

In the early days of the reception activity there was no significant concern with the issue of image and only from the 1970s it started to be cultivated, especially by Press media (BÁRBARA, 1979; ARAÚJO, 1975), as it showed the colony and its peculiar aspects, such as the Finnish customs. To cater to this new demand old traditions and habits were encouraged to return, as they had been forgotten, such as traditional handicraft, typical dances and food, apart from the construction of urban equipment items, such as a museum for the colony, the new Clube Finland installations. An important point in this process was the holding of the celebrations to commemorate 50 years of the colony in 1979, with the inauguration of a monument to the Finnish, and the presentations of folklore groups created for those events³.

An emphasis was created in 1990s on this process, with the creation of urban and tourist-oriented projects that focused on a Finnish image in the Architecture of the city, such as theme shopping centres and cultural and food festivals geared to what was assumed to be its natural vocation, ethnic tourism and a place with exuberant Nature. As the natural landscape was no longer enough to attract a large number of tourists, urban alternatives were considered, geared to create a commercial environment that would be similar to that of a small traditional Finnish city. The need

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¹ Penedo nowadays is part of the city administration of Itatiaia and along with it has the fourth largest number of hotels in the state of Rio de Janeiro, being smaller only than the state capital, Cabo Frio, and Búzios (MASCARENHAS, 2005, p. 110). Most of the hotels in Itatiaia are actually located in Penedo, which has 67 hotels and hostels, with 2,674 beds, apart from 32 restaurants (http://www.italiaiapi.gov.br/, 2010).

² The Itatiaia National Park was the first created in Brazil, in 1937.

³ The first dance group was created by Aneli Turunen and others in 1974, and in 1979 a new youth group took over its operation, with more frequent presentations in Saturday balls at the Clube Finlândia.
to establish a visual identity for this culture in Architecture and in Urban Planning led to the stimulation of theming and scenario-building. The 1998 inauguration of a themed set, the Santa Claus Home in Penedo/Little Finland, with its representation of a small Finnish village started to be the greatest local attraction, strengthening the Finnish identity of the place (HOTTOLA, 2006). Despite its being an authentic Finnish enclave, with a traditional tourist activity, from a certain moment on there was an intent to mark the image of the place in a better way. This happened due to the need for a ‘product’ that could be marketed and as a result could be closer to the consumer public, the tourist. Several towns in Brazil have been experiencing that which Eric Hobsbawn (2006) calls invention of traditions, when traditions are created based on interests linked to the publicizing of tourist activities in the places but related to local culture situations. This is the case of the mythical figure of Santa Claus, used as a tourist attraction in Gramado, in the Santa Claus Village and in the Christmas of Lights, as in Penedo, with the Santa Claus’ Home (FAGERLANDE, 2010b).

These new spaces and representations, created to supply this need, have changed local configurations and deserve an investigation on the context of modern urban planning. The processes for permanence and transformation to which the place was subjected refer to its history, authenticity, and territory. Old traditions were revived and new traditions and references were created, necessary to shape this new urban image. In this context, the question of authenticity seems to be important. In a place such as Penedo, where traditions, even when they have to be revived, are part of its history, the Architecture and Urban Planning have followed the line towards forming an idealized image, of what the visual and architectural aspect would be in a Finnish colony, and not of a preservation of historical buildings of the old settlement. In spite of that, this process has been collaborating to the preservation of old buildings, as what was Finnish suddenly attained a value it did not previously have.

From the start of this process in Penedo, the changes brought to tourism and to the city are the object of this study, where the aim is to understand how the global tourism process, where the image and its consumption, as linked to traditions (URRY, 2001) can help with the preservation of local culture, creating interest in the visitors that seek the fantasy and that which is different in objects linked to the history and to the culture of these places. In recent years the holding of events such as the Finnish Colony Fair, the launching of the Finnish Guide and the Nord Fish Festival shows how this themed tourism can actually increase the value attributed to the traditions, even with a business interest.

THE FORMATION OF PENEDO

Penedo is a Finnish colony, founded in 1929 after the utopian ideals of a group of vegetarian youths. Set in a derelict coffee farm, the group intended to implement a new society in the tropics, seeking direct contact with Nature. The colony followed a Housing Project created by Toivo Uusakkio, where the respect to Nature was fundamental. Religious in the sense of being near God through Nature, the enterprise in Fazenda Penedo was the stage between 1929 and 1942 of a collective living history, with the construction of public ways, houses and plantations. The end of the colony took place with the sale of part of the land to Plamed, a Swiss company whose business was medicinal plants. This company would soon sell the land and a land development project was implemented there, the Itatiaia Holiday Town, in the 1950s, which would produce the present urban configuration of Penedo (FAGERLANDE, 2007).

4 The figure of Santa Claus, with a clear commercial appeal to it, is connected in Penedo to the fact that there is a Santa Claus Home in Lapland, in the north of Finland, where the reindeer come from, which would make it the land of Santa Claus. In the town of Gramado the use of the figure would be linked to German tradition, very connected to Christmas and to Santa Claus.
The main economic activity of the colony was the production of orange trees, and from then on it shifted to tourism, from receiving guests, started in the utopian period.

Penedo remained an utopian-based colony in the 1929-1942 period when, along with the agricultural activities a production of handicraft started, with the production of jams and liqueurs. In parallel to that, the homes started to receive guests, giving rise to the first pensions, apart from the use of the old farm house. Some of those pensions, as the small inns were called still exist, even under new owners\. With the end of the community in 1942 and the sale of Fazenda Penedo, the main activity of the place moved to tourism, and the old pensions were enlarged and redecorated, becoming small hotels (FAGERLANDE, 2007).

Visitors were attracted by Finnish cuisine, with meals, bread, and jams made by the owners, by the nature one could experience in the place, with rivers and mountains, by the sauna that had been brought to Brazil by the Finnish, and by the balls at Clube Finland every Saturday. Thus, the Finnish culture was present, being an important point to attract the visitors, there was no need to stimulate something that was natural, in the presence of the Finnish and their daily habits, such as the celebrations, the food and their daily lives which, being so different from the daily lives of Brazilians, was naturally enticing. With this activity gaining importance, Penedo saw the number of hotels and hostels increase, apart from a small commerce of locally-produced handicraft.

THEMING AND SCENARIO-BUILDING IN PENEDO: STAGED AUTHENTICITY

From the 1970s Penedo saw the beginning of a new stage. The region saw a process of touristic development, which was boosted by the completion of the width duplication works of the Via Dutra motorway in 1967 (FRANÇA, 2001). The publicizing in the media collaborated to this surge, to remember what Urry (2001) says on the relevance of the media publicizing the tourist activity and the formation of the image of places. The exposure of Penedo increased with the celebration of the 50 years of its foundation as a colony on January 20th, 1979 when it is possible to see the start of the change process in Penedo. There was an inauguration of a monument with the presence of many Finnish people, with a dance presentation. It was an event with wide coverage, with articles showing the colony, the old dwellers, the handicraft produced and the folkloric dances (HILDEN, 1989).

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5 The first of these pensions, belonging to the Reiman family, is nowadays the Arboretum Inn; the Penedo Inn, of founder Toivo Uuskallo, remains in the same family; the Bertell Hotel also remains under the same name, and the old Chácara das Duas (Orchard of the Two) has become the Little Sweden Hotel.
In these typical dance festivities, which always took place in the old club, a reinforcement was obtained with the formation of an institutionalized dance group in the colony. Two groups were then formed, one with the old pioneers and the other with young descendants, all of them wearing traditional attire, called national costumes. It was no longer a group focused only on the amusement but on the presentations, as a show to tourists. This theatrical feature introduced in traditional activities is what MacCannell (2001) calls staged authenticity, which gains importance not only as a means of preservation of the local culture, but especially as a tourist attraction. Traditional dancing events that always had a place in the colony from the start, as well as national costumes that all the pioneers had brought from Finland and that were used in festivities, gained a new meaning, with the group becoming a new tourist attraction in Penedo, to be seen in weekly presentations at the Club. This was one of the first actions meant to maintaining and restoring Finnish traditions in Penedo, geared especially to the outside public, the tourists. This process, which followed a global trend in this sense (Urry, 2001) follows the industry of tradition, that in many European countries has become responsible for the maintenance of traditional habits through their consumption by tourists.

In the 1990s, the festivities continued to happen at the Club, which had its Eva Hildén Finnish Museum opened in 1993. It was certainly one of the most important elements in the sense of giving the colony a space for the maintenance of its history and tradition, stimulating the local memory and collaborating to imprint the Finnish image of the colony. In this period Penedo went through a transition in its tourist activities which, in line with the global trends, sought other paths to follow apart from those that were already being explored at the place. The image of the Finnish colony had little visibility in its Architecture, and a group of local shopkeepers tried to launch an enterprise where this would come to the fore. From 1994 architects Alva and Sergio Fagerlande, descendants from one of the pioneer families were approached to suggest what could be done and thus appeared the idea of building the Brazilian branch of the Santa Claus’ Home as it exists in Lapland, Finland, as that would be a way to create a new attraction in Penedo (FAGERLANDE, S.M.R., 1999). The idea evolved to the creation of something wider, that would represent the Finnish culture through a vernacular Architecture, apart from the presence of Santa Claus. The set, named Little Finland and Santa Claus’ Home in Penedo, was opened in 1998, with the coming from Finland of a Santa Claus, straight from its home in that country. The event, apart from the very construction of the set stirred the image of Penedo, confirming that which Urry (2001, p. 18) mentions on the need to create places that are contemplated through dreams and fantasies, different from everything one is used to live with.

“The places are chosen to be contemplated because there is an expectation, especially through dreams and fantasy, in relation to intense pleasures, whether in a different scale or involving senses other than those one is usually faced with. Such an expectation is constructed and kept by a variety of non-tourist practices, such as the cinema, television, literature, magazines, records, and videos, that construct and strengthen the eye.”

The enterprise, with handcraft shops, restaurants, cafés and a small theatre, emulates a traditional village in Finland. The Architecture, as in a theme park, would suggest the image whose creation was intended. Brick houses that simulate wood houses, and the authentic colours, copied from catalogues brought from Finland gave the set its aesthetic veracity. Some details, such as wooden fences, apart from the names of the shops, where all at first had to be Finnish, made the image in the set more original. (FAGERLANDE, S.M.R., 1999).
In spite of being linked to local and Finnish traditions, the idea of having a Santa Claus’ Home, tradition invented in Finland, and that was used to benefit the tourist trade in Penedo, seems like what Hobebawn (1997) says on the way whereby traditions are created, and on how people take hold of them. The strong image of the “good old man” would be a tourist attraction in the place.

The project, apart from being linked to the tradition, also raises the issue of authenticity and of how ‘typical’ attractions are created, with a non-authentic Architecture. MacCannell (1999) discusses the issue of authenticity and of how tourists want to see something that is not necessarily true, but that is the so-called staged authenticity. In this case, what is true or what is created to seem true would not be relevant but the way in which the eye of the tourist looks at the object would.

The creation of a project such as Santa Claus’ Home and Little Finland is not exactly that of a theme park, seeming more like a theme shopping centre, but holds many similarities with a park. Anyway, from the 1990s on, Penedo had to create new attractions, in a process that Silva (1999b) calls scenario-building and that can be understood within the so-called Architecture of the spectacle (DEBORD, 2007). The attempt to build Finnish Architecture, even as a copy of something that had never existed there before, seems linked to this Architecture of theme parks, where a perfect scenario is created to match a revived tradition and to keep what already existed. The possibility that some traditions could remain, such as the dances at Clube Finlândia, of certain handicraft works such as the tapestries of Eila⁶, were only possible with the scenario-building that was done, which allowed significant publicizing in newspapers, magazines, and on TV, including in Finland.

**HOW THEMING REFLECTS ON THE CITY: URBAN CHANGES AND THE RESCUE OF THE LOCAL IDENTITY**

The construction of the Santa Claus’ Home and Little Finland got some media attention. Most of the newspapers published articles in their travel supplements in the inauguration in 1998 and others, for some years, especially when events were made that were linked to the tradition, such as winter and food festivals. There was an increase in activities linked to the Finnish culture, with the coming of dance groups, artists and even the visit of Finnish politicians to Penedo.

As regards the urban issue, the development process of a new urban centre was boosted. Penedo did not have a defined commercial concentration, as the handicraft shops and restaurants were scattered, as well as the hotels. After the inauguration of the new set, the axis formed by the crossing of Rua das Velas and Avenida das Mangueiras was consolidated as the new trading hub of Penedo. As regards the Architecture, many buildings followed, or tried to follow, the ideas of Finnish Architecture in Penedo. The coming to Penedo of Finnish restaurant Koskenkorva, which existed previously only in Rio de Janeiro, was another example of how Penedo started to have more elements of exposure of its culture, in a movement where the image is directly linked to the commercial aspect, aimed at the local survival, and very much connected to the tourist activities.

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⁶ Eila Ampula was Penedo’s most famous Finnish artist, having shown her work in many countries, such as Finland itself. She came to Brazil with the first group in 1929 and died in 2008. Her daughter, Laura Ampula, keeps her atelier and the weaving of hand-made tapestries.
In 2009 a commemorative event was held at Clube Finlândia on the 80 years of the foundation of the colony, the Finland Festival, with the dance and music groups from that country coming to Brazil, presentations by Brazilian artists, exhibitions of Finnish painters from Penedo and a round of talks on the colony, with foreign guests. These ethnic festivals are very important to encourage local participation, as well as tourism (HOELSCHER, 1998b), not only an element to attract visitors, but also increasing the self-esteem of the members of the community, who see the interest caused by its ancient culture, and by the articles produced in a traditional manner.

Clube Finlândia recently started a new activity, holding a monthly Finnish Colony Fair where the Finnish can meet at the weekend, initially on the first weekend of every month, to show their handcrafted products, food and activities related to the Finnish presence in the place. The growing involvement of the participants is a stimulus to everyone, and the event also includes talks and visits to old Finnish buildings, along with the sale of traditional Finnish bread, such as the pulla and korvapuusti, or piparkakku biscuits, that are back in production in Penedo2, on account of the renewed interest on being Finnish.

This is another aspect of this rescue of the local Finnish culture. The large old house of Fazenda Penedo, where the pioneers settled, after years of neglect and abandonment, is being restored by a Finnish couple, where she was born in Penedo and he was born in Finland. In this important space of the colony the couple intends to open a Finnish Café, with traditional handicraft being produced as the old producers did in the early days of the colony. It is possible to see this way the importance of the increment in tourist activities, when it possible to see a care regarding local traditions and heritage, both immaterial and that which is built.

**FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Being an authentic Finnish colony was no longer enough to sustain the capacity to attract of Penedo as regards its visitors, fundamental to the survival of the place. The changes in habits and the new demands of the tourist trade caused the appearance of new urban elements, such as the Santa Claus’ Home and Little Finland, which changed the urban centrality of the place. Other examples of Architecture, geared to the Finnish image, brought urban changes about and contributed to imprint the position of Penedo, which continues to be a centre for weekend leisure and tourism, attracting tourists from Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and from Vale do Paraíba.

This way, next to the local natural treasures, still an important factor to attract tourists, the Finnish image contributes more and more to the media publicity of the place, always attracting more visitors. It no longer seems possible to sustain the tourist activities with the landscape that existed in the 1940s and 1950s, when the natural beauties and the real life of people were enough to see the visitors arrive. The permanence of several elements from that period, such as the Clube Finlândia and its dances, a fundamental part in the construction of the Finnish image, subsist shoulder to shoulder with the new enterprises that helped create transformations in the local scenario, being

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2 Inga Hohenthal Costa has been making and selling her biscuits all over the region, and her sister-in-law, Vera Hohenthal, also sells pulla and korvapuusti, typical Finnish bread varieties, at the Eva handicrafts shop. Some hotels, such as the Arboretum Hostel, offer Finnish bread at breakfast time, such as the korvapuusti, produced in the traditional way.
indispensable elements in the publicizing done by the. Thus happened the consolidation of the local Finnish character, with new elements helping to shape this image of Penedo.

The importance of the Finnish presence still produces effects in Penedo, with the appearance of new shops, and the creation of new attractions based on the Finnish presence. The example of the Casarão Penedo, of the Finnish Colony Fair, and of several other activities linked to Finnish culture shows how traditional culture can relate in a positive way with the increase in tourist trade brought about by theming and scenario-building, contributing to an increase in tourism linked not only to the commercialization of the culture, but of an encouragement for the preservation of this culture. This way, the process of theming and scenario-building, that in many places is regarded as harmful for the maintenance of local cultures, can be considered within a less harmful perspective, if it is associated to a preoccupation with the preservation of local habits, and if the sale of products linked to such traditions is stimulated.

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