

ANALYSIS OF THE PRODUCTIVE DESIGN OF THE HANDMADE EMBROIDERY OF TIMBAÚBA DOS BATISTAS, RIO GRANDE DO NORTE

Análise do desenho produtivo do bordado artesanal de Timbaúba dos Batistas, Rio Grande do Norte

Análisis del diseño productivo del bordado hecho a mano de Timbaúba dos Batistas, Rio Grande do Norte



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ABSTRACT

The handmade embroidery was introduced in the Seridó region from the arrival of the Portuguese and has similar traits to the embroidery identified on the island of Madeira in Portugal. Thus, the objective is to discuss the stages of circulation, distribution and consumption of the productive spatial circuit of the handmade embroidery of Timbaúba dos Batistas in the current period of globalization. For this, semistructures were interviewed with 242 embroiderers randomly chosen in the municipality. Of that amount, 82 were held virtually between April and June 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. Authors such as Batista (1988), Brito (2010) were used in the discussion of handmade embroidery, Frederico and Castillo (2010), Moraes (1985) and Santos (1994; 2008) regarding the spatial circuit of production and use of the territory. Within the circuit, the means of transport used by the enterprising embroiderers are trucks, vans and air taxi funded by the buyers of the goods in a vertical relationship. Payment is 85% cash, 5% deposit, 3% credit card and 2% with Pix. Communication between customers is about 93% by WhatsApp, and 7% by phone. The largest consumption of artisanal embroidery is in the Northeast region itself, by the states of Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco and Ceará, which concentrate 68% of all production, and, in second place, the Central-South region, represented by the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and the Federal District, which confer 32%. Finally, it is perceived that the forms of distribution, commercialization and consumption have changed from the times brought by the Portuguese.

keywords: Space circuit; Handmade embroidery; Seridó; Timbaúba dos Batistas.

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RESUMO

O bordado artesanal foi introduzido na região do Seridó a partir da chegada dos portugueses e tem traços semelhantes ao bordado identificado na Ilha da Madeira, em Portugal. Assim, o objetivo é discutir as etapas de circulação, distribuição e consumo do circuito espacial produtivo do bordado artesanal de Timbaúba dos Batistas no atual período da globalização. Para isso, foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas com 242 bordadeiras escolhidas aleatoriamente no município. Desse montante, 82 foram realizadas virtualmente entre abril e junho de 2021 por causa da pandemia do coronavírus. Foi utilizado autores como Batista (1988), Brito (2010) na discussão do bordado artesanal, Frederico e Castillo (2010), Moraes (1985) e Santos (1994; 2008) no tocante ao circuito espacial de produção e uso do território. Dentro do circuito, os meios de transportes utilizados pelas bordadeiras empreendedoras são caminhões, vans e táxi aéreo custeado pelos compradores das mercadorias numa relação vertical. O pagamento é 85% em dinheiro, 5% depósito, 3% cartão de crédito e 2% com o Pix. A comunicação entre os clientes é cerca de 93% pelo WhatsApp, e 7% por telefone. O maior consumo do bordado artesanal é da própria região Nordeste, pelos estados do Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco e Ceará, que concentram 68% de toda a produção, e, em segundo lugar, a região Centro-Sul, representada pelos estados de São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais e pelo Distrito Federal, que conferem 32%. Por fim, percebe-se que as formas de distribuição, comercialização e consumo mudaram dos tempos trazidos pelos os portugueses.

Palavras-chave: Circuito espacial; Bordado artesanal; Seridó; Timbaúba dos Batistas.

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta resultados de una investigación de posdoctorado voluntario y tiene como objetivo sugerir acciones de ampliación en el curso de Geografía de la UFMS, campus de Aquidauana, a partir de dos perspectivas: la de las narrativas encontradas en los informes de los pasantes y la de los profesores supervisores de la escuela. Como referencial teórico fueron utilizados los materiales de Lüdke (2009), Bisconsin et al (2019), Borges; Ferreira; Fontoura (2012), Tardif; Lessard; Lehay (1991) sobre la formación docente continua y en el campo de Geografía las contribuciones sobre las prácticas profesionales supervisadas y formación de profesores de Castelar (2017), Oliveira; Santos (2019) y Vallerius (2019). La técnica del grupo de enfoque y el análisis documental y bibliográfico, siguiendo las lecturas de Gatti (2005) y Franco (2021), fueron las metodologías que contribuyeron para la obtención de los resultados sobre la impresión de los supervisores y las sugerencias de temas para acciones de ampliación. Los informes de 2017 a 2019 fueron intencionalmente escogidos por no adaptarse al formato adoptado durante la pandemia y en ellos fueron incluidos los del Programa de Residencia Pedagógica (PRP) coordinado por la CAPES. Con el desarrollo de estas dos metodologías, los resultados se mostraron satisfactorios, pues fueron identificados temas fundamentales centrados en la Geografía Física y Geopolítica como de emergencia entre los supervisores de la escuela. Las temáticas identificadas podrán servir de subsidio, inclusive, para facilitar actividades que puedan colaborar en la implementación de la Resolución nº 7 de 2018 sobre extensión universitaria en el currículo de la graduación. La propuesta es que estos asuntos sean transformados en acciones de ampliación conforme el interés institucional partiendo de los dos recursos metodológicos adoptados en la investigación.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza; Geografía; Extensión Universitaria; Pasantía Supervisada; Escuela.

1 INTRODUCTION

Craft production in the Seridó region of Rio Grande do Norte is a historically

reproduced practice, being initially identified in the practices of the first inhabitants of these lands, the Tapuia Indians, who produced hunting materials, fishing, and utensils for personal and collective use, and having as context of its diversification in the Portuguese occupation in the seventeenth century, responsible for the introduction of new customs and more elaborate craft techniques, such as those that served as the basis for the making of handmade embroidery.

In this way, the handmade embroidery was introduced in the Seridó region from the arrival of the Portuguese and the style made has similar traits to embroidery identified in Madeira Island, Portugal. However, the designs and inspirations have their own characteristics of the local nature scenario “composed of flowers and leaves, sometimes appearing figurative elements such as birds and insects” (BRITO, 2010, p. 47) typical of the Caatinga biome, that is, the relationship of the social and physical elements of nature. According to Batista (1988) embroidery begins to be developed in the municipality of Caicó/RN and after the popularization of the activity that gradually expands to the other municipalities of the Seridó region.

It is in this Potiguar region, formed by 24 municipalities that the study area is inserted. Of this amount, 12 municipalities (Caicó, Timbaúba dos Batistas, São Fernando, Serra Negra do Norte, São João do Sabugi, Jardim do Seridó, Ipueira, Cruzeta, São José do Seridó, Jucurutu and Ouro Branco) are producers of handmade embroidery.

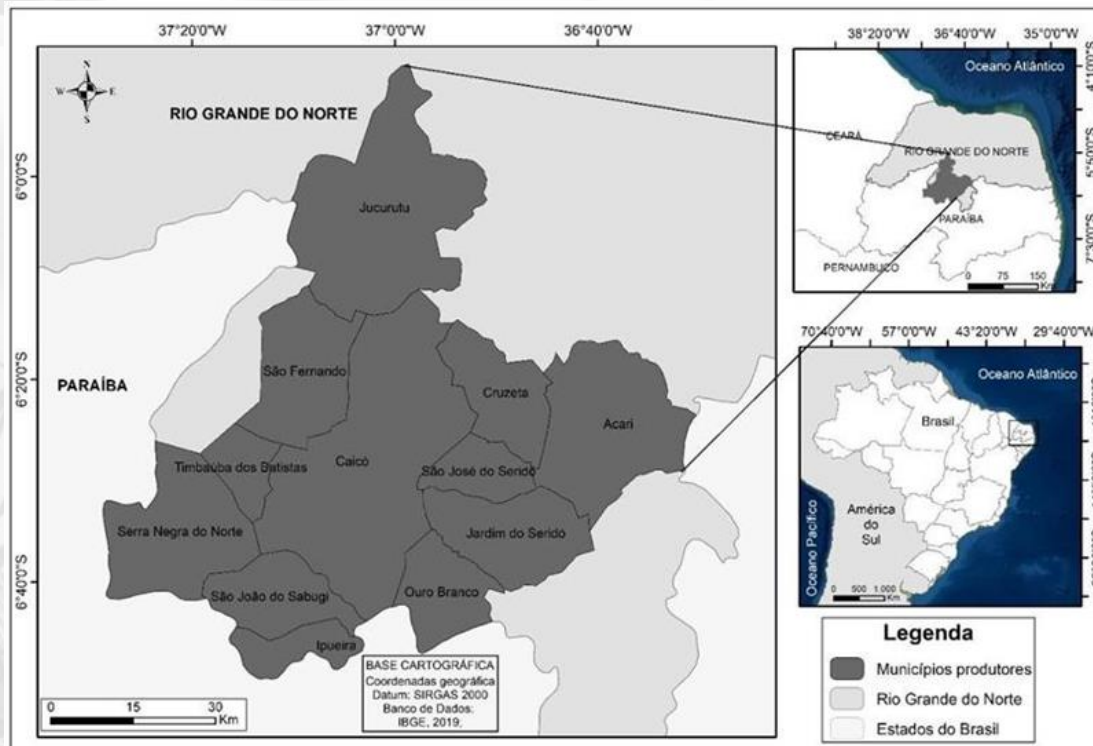
Located in the central-meridional portion of Rio Grande do Norte, covering an area of 9,122.789 km², that is, 17.27% of the total surface of the state of Rio Grande do Norte (IBGE, 2002). The Seridó is a region that has identity characteristics of resistance that is intrinsic to the history of the region, in its composition and organization (MORAIS, 2020), whether in political, economic, social or cultural aspects (Figure 01).

In this scenario, the embroidery of the Seridó/RN region is an expression that goes through the ages with unique characteristics materialized, mainly, in the territories of the aforementioned producing municipalities. However, the study area is the municipality of Timbaúba dos Batistas, which stands out in the traditional production of handmade embroidery, but which innovates in the stages of circulation, distribution and consumption. From this municipality, emanates the power relations that creates the territory of the handmade embroidery of the Seridó region, and that extends the other producing municipalities.

Given that, the history of the arrival of this activity in this region is confused with the very biography of the municipalities presented. Since the 17th and 19th centuries, the art of

embroidery was already produced, rooted and spread by the wives of the Portuguese who settled in this region (BATISTA, 1988; MONTEIRO JUNIOR, 2022).

Figure 01 – Location map of the municipalities producing handmade embroidery in the Seridó region – RN, 2022.



Source: IBGE (2019). Prepared by the author (2022).

However, the production was for the producers' own homes. For a long time, handmade embroidery was developed as a leisure activity by young people and ladies of high society.

Batista (1988) and Araújo (2013) agreed in their work on the importance of handmade embroidery for the training of the young sertaneja for marriage, that is, the young woman who knew how to embroider had the necessary predicates to sign marriage. However, this misrepresented image of the use of handmade embroidery changes from the second half of the 19th century after the beginning of the process of industrialization and urbanization driven by the processing of cotton in this region, in the meantime, this territorial cut of the Brazilian Northeast becomes known as the "Land of Embroidery" of Lusitanian origin (DOZENA, 2017).

Over time, the activity of handmade embroidery in the Seridó region constituted by these municipalities mentioned above sought to insert new techniques, evolution of the means of production and innovation of the activity, which we understand as use and

improvement of innovation techniques in the mode of production. In this sense, the currentte investigations is part of an initial approach that will provide subsidies for future studies that intend to cover the organization and dynamics of the territory in the municipalities that produce handmade embroidery within the scope of observing the use of the territory, especially Timbaúba dos Batistas.

In this pespective, it is believed that the discussions have not yet been exhausted giving room for possibilities, ways of interpreting the theory of the spatial circuit of production, the territory as a category of analysis in geographical studies, its technification, innovation in the construction of the productive pole of handmade embroidery by seeking to understand this social organization.

Thus, allowing to approach a line of investigation in which there is the contraposition of conflicting elements, since we consider the whole of the proposed study capable of providing support to the analyzes and reflections in the course of the process. This article is part of a larger research, a master's dissertation in Geography, which aimed to analyze the circuit and circle of cooperation of handmade embroidery in the municipality of Timbaúba dos Batistas.

In this sense, this article is a clipping of part of the results obtained in this study, whose objective is to discuss the stages of circulation, distribution and consumption of the circuit productive spatial of the handmade embroidery of Timbaúba dos Batistas in the current period of the globalization. In addition, to show the contradictions and the innovation process of this activity considering the current historical period.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological procedures were divided into two moments, desk research and field research. Both aimed to collect qualitative and quantitative information on socioeconomic, productive, technical and commercialization aspects. The purpose of the cabinet stage was to dialogue with authors who discuss handmade embroidery such as Batista (1988), Brito (2010), Dozena (2017) and Monteiro Júnior (2022). In addition, the analysis included authors such as Moraes (1985), Santos (1985; 1994; 1996; 2008), Santos and Silveira (2001) and Frederico and Castillo (2010) who focus on understanding the concept of productive spatial circuit linked to the use of the territory.

A total of 242 242 randomly selected embroiderers were interviewed between December 2020 and June 2021, since there is no record of the exact number of this number

in the municipality, although there is an estimate of about 800 professionals who produce handmade embroidery, as evidenced in the interview with the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (SEBRAE) in the regional office of the municipality of Caicó. Of the 242 embroiderers interviewed, 82 were conducted over the internet through the instant messaging application, WhatsApp, by video link between April 2021 and June 2021.

This adaptation of the investigation was due to the increase in cases of Covid-19, an infectious disease caused by the SARS-COV-2 coronavirus in the municipality and in the Seridó region. This approach allowed the fulfillment of social distancing, following the recommendations of the health authorities. In this way, it was possible to physically safeguard the researcher and the research participants and continue the work. Therefore, the interviews that support the work took place individually, guided by a script, containing essential questions about the topic.

The interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes to optimize the field research, which were directed to the agents involved in the stages of handmade embroidery, carried out in the municipality of Timbaúba dos Batistas, being the main participants of the inquiry: the entrepreneurial and autonomous embroiderers¹. We also interviewed the presidents or vice-presidents, secretaries or representatives of public and private institutions/agencies, with one (1) representative of each agent being interviewed to obtain qualitative and quantitative information on handmade embroidery.

As 01 (one) SEBRAE tec technician to discuss the relationship of embroiderers' training. The vice-president, at the time, of the Cooperative of Artisanal Hands of Timbaúba dos Batistas (COMART) to seek information regarding the logistical and operational assistance of production and the president of the Association of Embroiderers of Timbaúba dos Batistas (ASTIMBA) to understand actions to strengthen the economic and cultural activity of the sector. These interviews were conducted in person between December 2020 and February 2021 following the same duration script applied to the embroiderers. In order to understand and set up the spatial circuit of the production of handmade embroidery in Timbaúba dos Batistas, the research focused on on-site visits to observe the stages of making and applying interviews and forms to embroiderers in their homes, taking as equity orientation the four zones of the city (East, West, North e South).

This phase of the field research was an important tool to understand the general

¹ They can be understood as the form of innovation of the circuit, since they leave the condition of selling their labor to manage, make decisions, solve problems, sell products, produce products, but from third parties. Autonomous or traditional embroiderers are the largest group in the circuit. They are responsible for the production of all stages of production, as well as selling their workforce to the entrepreneurial embroiderers.

process of the spatial production circuit, since it is in the manufacturing stage that the product materializes from the raw material to the final consumer. The embroiderers were asked questions ranging from a characterization of the profile of the artisan, the technical aspects of the manufacture of handmade embroidery, about the workforce, the production process, distribution, circulation and consumption.

3 CIRCULATION, DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION IN THE SPATIAL CIRCUIT OF HANDMADE EMBROIDERY PRODUCTION

In the spatial circuit of the production of handmade embroidery, circulation, distribution and consumption are the important stages of production and, when observing space, it also represents the productive situations in space. According to Santos (1985, p. 61), it "has always been the locus of production". These stages represent the areas that operate in a spatial chain of production in constant movement (CASTILLO; FREDERICO, 2010).

Marx (2015) makes a detailed analysis of circulation in relation to capital. However, Santos (1985) emphasizes the circulation of capital materialized by firms, companies and the State itself, which rationalizes the circulation of production in the territory, which makes it efficient by the agility in the distribution of goods. In the case of the spatial circuit of production analyzed in Timbaúba dos Batistas, because it is an artisanal activity, capital is dynamic. The entrepreneurial embroiderers need a revolving fund of R\$ 2,000 reais to pay for labor, materials and daily inputs.

Self-employed embroiderers also need a fast flow of capital, as they need to receive per piece produced to ensure the purchase of new raw materials and inputs. However, within the circuit, circulation goes beyond capital. The circulation of information production, advertising and the circulation of technique affirm the autonomy of the spatial circuit of the production processes of artisanal embroidery, a process that goes beyond the limits of the politically delimited territory.

The technicality of production and reproduction in a visual and manual way in the embroiderers' houses, passing from generation to generation, expresses that circulation is an important link in the circuit. It corroborates with Marx (2015, [1857 - 1858] p. 265), who understood circulation beyond the exchange value of money for goods, since:

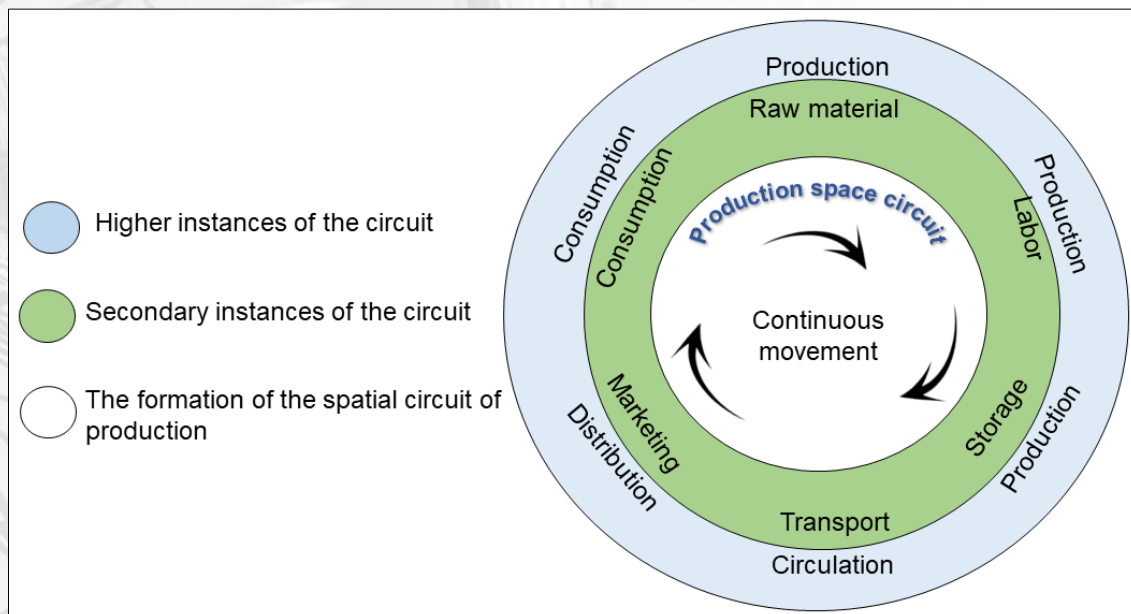
[...] circulation itself is no longer [determined] solely as the simple process of exchanging commodities for money and money for commodities, no longer

solely as the mediating movement to realize the prices of different commodities, to reciprocally equalize commodities as exchange values [...].

Marx (2015, [1857 – 1858] p. 75) claims that circulation, distribution are interconnected, forming the spatial circuit of production and "circulation [is] only a determined moment of exchange, or also the exchange considered in its entirety". The relationship between these three instances must be understood as a whole and the moment of realization of the circuit in the act of exchange.

Santos (1985) points out that circulation, distribution and consumption are analyzed separately. However, real values cannot be independent, because "space, as reality, is one and total" (SANTOS, 1985, p. 64). The spatial circuit of production of handmade embroidery in Timbaúba dos Batistas is closely interconnected with the upper and lower instances that form the circuit (Figure 02).

Figure 02 – Spatial circuit of production and superior and secondary instances.



Source: Prepared by the author (2021).

The previous diagram highlights and exalts the dynamics of reading the spatial circuit of production, from production, through circulation, and consumption, as already underlined by Marx (2015), necessary instances to compose the production circuit. Santos (1985) points out that the superior and secondary instances, that is, ramifications acting in space, denote the complexity of the circuits, producing at several points at the same time.

The production of the spatial circuit of the handicraft production of Timbaúba dos Batistas includes raw material, labor and storage; circulation through transportation, direct

distribution to and varied consumption dispersed in space, which materializes the instances of the circuit. Thus, we separate each stage of the circuit to define the specificities and to be able to assemble the circuit of handmade embroidery of Timbaúba dos Batistas, in constant movement in space.

Moraes (1985), the spatial circuit of production is in permanent movement and all these steps using equipment of the territory in several simultaneous places for the constitution of the production of a certain product or service. Thus, the use of the territory goes beyond the equipment of the State, but also by firms, companies, the banking system, the internet, information, knowledge and any forms of use that integrate the productive circuit.

The spatial circuit of production of handmade embroidery of Timbaúba dos Batistas uses all forms of seizure of the territory in various parts of the State to ensure production, spatialization and consumption of the commodity. This is because the territory used presents itself as space, roughness, giving the idea of constant totality, which is characterized by these multiple uses, in historical moments (SANTOS; SILVEIRA, 2001).

4 LOGISTICS, OPERATIONALIZATION AND MARKETING OF HANDMADE EMBROIDERY

It is worth noting that the analysis of the productive spatial circuit should consider all stages: raw material, production, distribution and consumption. However, the contradictions of each phase can be seen in more detail when the phases are studied in isolation, but articulated with each other. This allows a verticalized study of each step of the circuit, analyzing in depth the nuances, contradictions and conflicts in the use of the territory.

4.1 Circulation: from raw material to product

Based on the approach of Santos (1994, p. 50), the distribution stage seeks the "quality, quantity and diversity of transportation routes, means of transportation, etc." Marx (2015, p. 208) expresses the importance of quality means of locomotion and instruments (road, rail, air or naval), because "to make goods circulate effectively, transportation instruments are needed, and this cannot be done by money".

This diversity of the mobility system enables the circulation of goods. However, "the relative decrease in transportation, its quality, diversity and quantity, generate a tendency to expand the movement of the territory" (LINS, 2010, p. 109). This decrease or scarcity of

good means of transportation makes it more expensive and slows down, where mobility is compromised.

Arroyo (2017, p. 135) shows that the form of circulation and "the conditions of circulation are as important as the conditions of production. Hence the pressure from companies for the existence and effectiveness of a transportation and communications network when they decide to settle in a place". This is because the existence of a good transportation system enables all stages of production, distribution and consumption effectively.

Santos (1994, p. 51) already brought up the issue of transportation as a primary instance for the circulation of goods. "The number of products, goods and people circulating grows enormously, and as a consequence the importance of exchanges is increasing, because they not only evolve as diversify". According to Galvão (1996 apud BOTELHO, 2010), the development of the transportation system in Brazil has particularities, is not as simple as it seems, mainly by the advent of national integration.

Returning to the ideas of Santos (1994), in the same sense, it is agreed that in the current period, the technological-scientific-informational period, there have been significant changes and advances in the means of locomotion of underdeveloped countries. The most popular means of transportation in Brazil are buses, private cars and trucks and trailers used for the flow of people and goods. As Lins points out (2010, p. 109) the material flows that "can intensify as a result of its greater flexibility condition".

Despite improvements in roads and vehicles, it is still insufficient, the increase in unstable fuel prices forces the country to return to its policy of road transport, which raises the value of production and distribution and affects the final consumer. Thus, products are increasing to cover transportation and fuel costs. Santos (1994) correctly demonstrates that the increase in costs for factors related to production is higher to offset the prices of factors related to transportation to compensate for these variables.

In the spatial circuit of handmade embroidery production in Timbaúba dos Batistas, RN, due to the specificity that this circuit presents with entrepreneurial and autonomous embroiderers, there are five types of circulation stages, or means of circulation. Within the circuit, the means of transportation used by entrepreneurial embroiderers are trucks, vans and air cab chartered by the buyers of the goods in a vertical relationship.

And the self-employed embroiderers rely on private cars and vans to disperse the goods, often agreeing with the buyers themselves to pick up the products in loco, with the observance of horizontal relations. In the spatial circuit of handmade embroidery production,

for both main agents (entrepreneurial and autonomous embroiderers), they use the logistics system of the Brazilian Post and Telegraph Company (Correios) to distribute the goods produced in that municipality.

During the fieldwork, in Timbaúba dos Batistas in 2021, the use of the Post Office was observed as a third means of transportation, that is, as an alternative to distribute the goods in small volumes to all regions of Brazil and also to Latin American countries, the European Union, to some countries on the African and Asian continent. The means of transportation are directly linked to the circulation of the higher instance of the spatial circuit of production, i.e. essential step in the circuit.

The actors that make up the spatial circuit of handmade embroidery production do not have their own means of transportation to distribute. In order to fulfill this step, it is agreed with the buyers to pick up on site or pay the freight in the final price of the amount purchased.

4.2 Marketing: new buying and selling strategies

Following the logic of hierarchization of the production circuit and its codependency link, the marketing of goods is directly related to distribution and vice versa. Santos (1994, p. 50) explains the relationship of dependence of commercialization by "[...] existence or not of monopolies of purchase, form of payment, taxation of taxes, etc." As well founded by Lins (2010), marketing relationships can occur on a local, regional, national or international scale, it is up to each organization to articulate and set up marketing strategies.

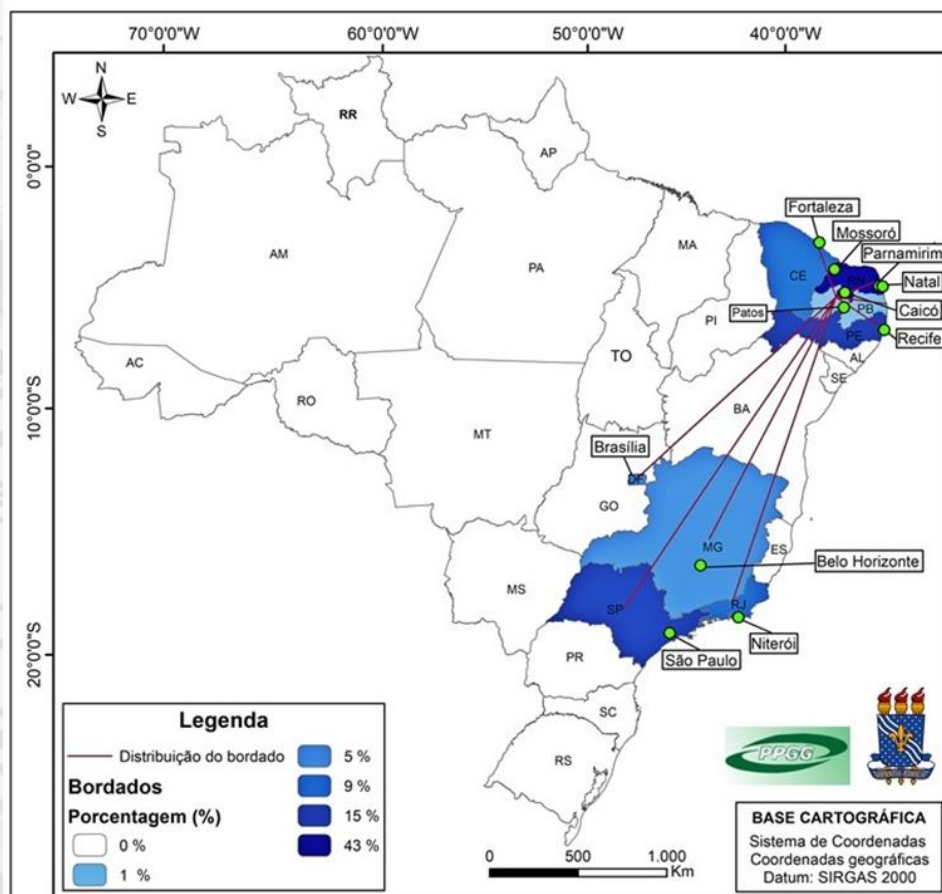
During the analysis of the actors of the spatial production circuit, we can see that the entrepreneurial embroiderers, despite maintaining vertical marketing relationships, negotiations do not occur directly with buyers. The presence of middlemen is common, intermediating marketing with large consumer centers. As presented by Santos (2008), in this type of activity, these agents (middlemen) are often identified in the lower circuit of the economy, especially in underdeveloped countries.

Although middlemen are the main form of commercialization of the production of this group, it still maintains horizontal relations with local and regional buyers. Horizontal relations are with stores in the upper economic circuit that specialize in this type of product. At this stage of the circuit, the forms of payment are also considered. Entrepreneurial embroiderers receive payments in all forms, in descending order, payment by post-dated check represents 61%, boleto bancário (12%), credit card (11%), bank deposit (8%), cash

(7%) and Pix² (1%). After consulting the entrepreneurial embroiderers, we identified 15 buyers/sellers who were middlemen.

This stage expresses the spatial distribution or what "is part of the process of spatialization of the product" (LINS, 2010, p. 110). The spatialization of production allows us to understand the use of the territory of Timbaúba dos Batistas in the various fractions of the territory. The middlemen were identified in the states of the Northeast, Southeast and Midwest and by the respective cities that market the production as Rio Grande do Norte (Caicó, Parnamirim, Mossoró and Natal, 43%), Pernambuco, (Recife, 15%), São Paulo, (in its capital, 13%), Rio de Janeiro (Niterói, 9%), Ceará (Fortaleza, 9%), Federal District (Brasília, 5%), Minas Gerais (Belo Horizonte, 5%) and Paraíba (Patos, 1%) (Figure 03).

Figure 03 – Map of production distribution by middlemen in Brazil, (2006-2022).



Source: Field research (2020-2021). Prepared by the author (2021).

² PIX is an instant payment system of the Central Bank (BC) of Brazil, and can be connected to the international PIX. It allows the transfer of funds between accounts in a few seconds, at any time or day by creating a key that can be the CPF, the telephone number, the e-mail or a random key (BRASIL, 2021).

The interlocution of the middlemen with the entrepreneurial embroiderers and other customers to request the goods, i.e. to request the amount of products, helps in the control of production and marketing periodically. The middlemen choose the products (bed, table, bath, clothing, newborns and accessories) using the available models, but they can also suggest a theme and the designer/embroiderer develops new models to the customers' liking. This contact takes place through the social networks Facebook, Instagram, E-mail, WhatsApp and by phone, dictating the characteristics of the model.

On the other hand, in the form of commercialization, of the autonomous embroiderers, there is no intermediation of the middlemen, that is, the negotiation of prices and models takes place directly with the client, as well as the other phases of production. Marketing relationships take place horizontally at the local and regional level. The financial dealings, i.e. payment is 85% in cash, 5% deposit, 3% credit card and 2% with Pix (instant payment system).

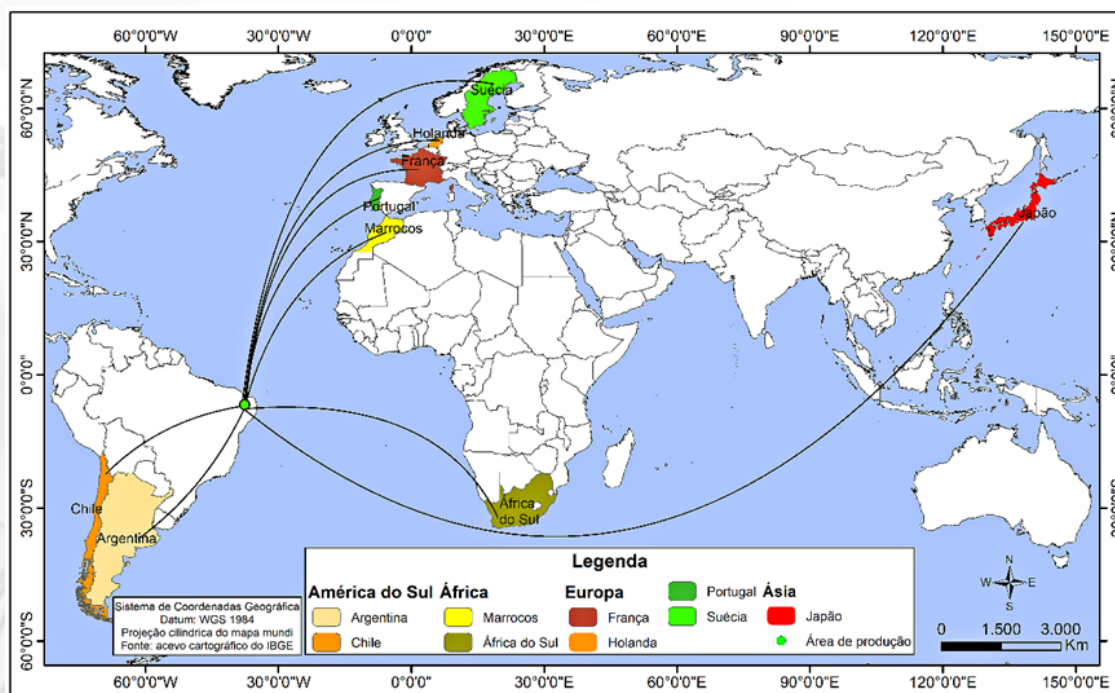
It is worth mentioning that many embroiderers did not know the latest form of bank transfer/payment. Communication between customers occurs in most of the dealings by WhatsApp with about 93% and only 7% by phone (call). The use of social networks, such as Facebook and Instagram, is insipient, that is, it does not represent a considerable percentage in the current total sample, but with great potential for expansion.

According to information collected from the Cooperative of Handicrafts of Timbaúba dos Batistas (COMART), about 99% of the production is marketed nationally, and about 1% is exported by the entrepreneurial embroiderers themselves and by middlemen. The activity of handmade embroidery is deficient in data control. Thus, we used a historical series from 2006 to 2020 to verify with the embroiderers³ this quantitative estimate of 1% of total production, distribution and main buyer countries (Figure 04).

As mentioned earlier, data on quantity are imprecise. However, reports from entrepreneurial, self-employed embroiderers and two middlemen who buy or have bought embroidery from Timbaúba dos Batistas, pointed out that products were exported to Latin American countries, such as Argentina and Chile; in Africa, Morocco and South Africa; in Asia, Japan; and in Europe, France, Holland, Sweden and Portugal.

³ In the data on the export of products, the information obtained in the field research by selfemployed embroiderers between 12/15/2020 and 06/15/2021 and by entrepreneurial embroiderers from 01/22/2021 to 02/15/2021 was considered.

Figure 04 – Export map of handmade embroidery from Timbaúba dos Batistas-RN, (2006-2020).



Source: Field research (2020-2021). Prepared by the author (2021).

The products that have already been exported are tablecloths, table runners, bath towels, liturgical vestments (stoles, vestments, chasubles and altar cloths), this being a specific branch of production, as these pieces are not frequently marketed and have a specific niche. These countries described were mentioned by a group of embroiderers, however, they could not inform the volume exported to each country, but emphasized the importance of these exports for the activity, even as a matter of cultural recognition.

On the occasion of World Youth Day (WYD) in 2013, the associated embroiderers presented Pope Francis with sacred vestments, stoles and embroidered towels. The distribution expressed in the figure above refers only to marketing and for this reason the Vatican is not included. However, it is worth mentioning the reach of the embroidered pieces in Timbaúba dos Batistas, which went beyond the limits of the use of the national territory. Corroborating Arroyo (2001; 2017), the agents in the territory are articulated in such a way that they allow action at different scales when, "often, many of these agents are willing to operate at all scales - state, regional, national and eventually international".

4.3 Consumption: new faces in the current period of globalization

This stage was perhaps the most complex to carry out the analysis because the embroiderers have no control over the data. Therefore, a thorough work was carried out

through the semi-structured interviews, so that only this moment of the research constituted the recording of 11 hours of conversations with the autonomous and entrepreneurial embroiderers. This stage closes the circuit and opens it again in permanent transformation, because as Arroyo (2017, p. 135) points out "every product is distributed, stored, marketed and consumed".

In this respect, in this respect, consumption takes place in three moments: when the product is sent to the middlemen; from the middlemen to the owner of the establishment and, soon after, at the time of purchase by customers in the establishments. The first two can be classified as intermediate consumers, and the last as final consumers. This path is observed only in the case of entrepreneurial embroiderers, since in the case of self-employed embroiderers the consumption of production is carried out directly in the embroiderer - final consumer relationship, without the presence of the middleman.

The most consumed products are bed, table and bath articles. The ease of marketing in wholesale and retail ensures that these items are more consumed in this segment. Handmade embroidery is a high-priced item, as the raw material is expensive and not available in the region, the labor is qualified and the time factor to produce makes the product more expensive, since it encompasses technique and art. The sale of products in fractions allows to reach a larger number of consumers, for example, the commercialization of bath towels in pairs (male and female) between R\$ 170 to 190 reais, or per unit, with price varying according to the embroidery (technique and style) and the fabric.

Marketing is directly linked to distribution, which in turn is linked to consumption. Thus, the largest consumption of handmade embroidery is in the Northeast region itself, by the states of Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco and Ceará, which concentrate 68% of all production, and, in second place, the Center-South region, represented by the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and the Federal District, which give 32%. Consumption in these regions is by high-end stores and brands⁴, i.e., agents that make up the upper circuit of the economy, a phenomenon that is carried out with the help of middlemen.

The handmade embroidery of Timbaúba dos Batistas is produced in the lower circuit of the economy, with large participation of this production also in the informal circuit of the

⁴ This information was obtained from the entrepreneurial embroiderers and the middlemen. The conversation with the middlemen took place by telephone. However, the most sensitive questions about commercialization the interviewees refused to answer. For example, to whom or which stores do they sell the embroidery from Timbaúba dos Batistas? What is the commercial value of the bed, table and bath articles? Competition between middlemen is one explanation for the negative response.

urban economy. The latter is perhaps responsible for the largest number of embroiderers, mainly self-employed embroiderers, which corresponds to about 92% of the entire sample surveyed. However, the handmade embroideries produced by this circuit are consumed by all economic spheres and classes, due to the diversity of products, techniques and forms.

However, fine embroidery, i.e. the more detailed embroideries, which bring together a set of techniques, for example, a linen tablecloth embroidered with the Richelieu, Richelieu breaks needle / thorn, Open or Sheath and Crivo techniques, demand time and raise the degree of difficulty, which translates into a price of up to R\$ 10 thousand, depending on the size of the piece. These specialized artifacts are likely to be consumed by the upper circuit of the urban economy, making the spatial circuit of production of handmade embroidery in Timbaúba dos Batistas complex, uneven and contradictory.

The Spatial circuit of production of handmade embroidery in Timbaúba dos Batistas is unequal because the self-employed embroiderers, despite having the same technical training/qualification as the entrepreneurial embroiderers in the activity of handmade embroidery, the opportunities for access to capital and qualification (technical, operational and logistical) limit the performance of traditional embroiderers in the production of embroidery. This is contradictory, given that both self-employed and entrepreneurial embroiderers master the techniques. However, the use of willing agents (association and cooperative) in the territory of Timbaúba dos Batistas is used in different ways, which privilege a small portion of the embroiderers.

The activity of handmade embroidery performed in this municipality is known for the refined finishes of handmade embroidery. Throughout the research, we identified the participation of agents in the spatial circuit of handmade embroidery production, located in the municipality of Timbaúba dos Batistas, as well as their relationship with other characters who work in the same circuit at other scales.

Despite the importance of all subjects in the circuit, the agents in Timbaúba dos Batistas play a leading role in the basic stages of the activity, that is, in production, in which handmade embroidery takes place through the participation of family labor and the performance of commercial capital attracts the interests of national groups, such as the Riachuelo Institute and middlemen in the purchase of the local product.

The handmade embroidery in Timbaúba dos Batistas works as a granary, that is, it is produced and marketed with the strong participation of traditional and entrepreneurial embroiderers, who see the activity as an opportunity to insert themselves in the capitalist market increasingly competitive by the use of modern machines. However, they bet on

cultural appropriation, tradition, craft, quality of the pieces and the uniqueness of handmade embroidery.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The spatial circuit of the production of handmade embroidery in Timbaúba dos Batistas presents a traditional nature, that is, the cultural elements are indisputable aspects in the production. The identity elements brought by the Portuguese are still visible in the territory. However, new forms in production, marketing, distribution and consumption allow an injection of innovation in the production circuit.

The modernization of banking transactions such as cheque, deposits, transfers and pix are part of the forms of payments for the marketing of handmade embroidery. Although pix are a tool that speeds up transactions in the study site was perceived with less percentage of use. The distribution occurs in two different ways depending on the organization of the embroiderers. Self-employed embroiderers use their own vehicles and even their own customers pick up the goods on the spot and entrepreneurial embroiderers distribute the goods by renting transportation (vans, trucks and cars) and the middlemen directly pick up the goods at the distribution points (physical stores).

The internet element is very important for both staff organizations in the circuit. During the pandemic period, it was through the internet that sales continued and opened a new range of marketing reaching niches such as those who prefer to buy through the network. For this, websites and pages on Instagram were created to publicize the goods.

Consumption is still concentrated in the state of Rio Grande do Norte; however, it is a primary consumption. In this activity the presence of the middleman is very active. These represent a primary consumption for stores and spaces specialized in this type of merchandise. It is through these middlemen that these goods spread to the states of the Southeast and Northeast of Brazil. Consumption takes place when the customer buys from these specialized stores. This consumption is in charge of haute couture (designer ateliers) that forms a specialized niche in the circuit, also by the bed, table and bath articles that are consumed by all social spheres. These articles represent about 80% of the consumption of the productive spatial circuit.

Finally, it can be seen that the forms of distribution, marketing and consumption have changed since the times brought by the Portuguese. However, the way handmade embroidery is produced maintains the cultural identity ties of a people. The organized way

between the stages of production ensures agility and market coverage and a survival of the production of Timbaúba dos Batistas handmade embroidery coexisting with past and present techniques.

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