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Acquário Ceará: The Future of Tourism in Fortaleza

Elizabeth Duffield
SIT Study Abroad

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Acquário Ceará: The Future of Tourism in Fortaleza

Elizabeth Duffield

SIT: Social Justice and Sustainable Development

Fall 2013

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This work is dedicated to my grandparents, Richard and MaryRose Duffield, who have always been there for me.

Abstract

In 2014, Fortaleza will put on display for the entire world to see as it is one of the Brazilian cities hosting the World Cup. In preparation for such a massive event and a staggering amount attention, the state of Ceará and the Secretary of Tourism embarked on a plan to develop tourism in Ceará and the capital city, Fortaleza, into a modern tourism destination. One project in progress, Acquário Ceará, will be largest aquarium in Latin America and the third largest aquarium in the world. Situated right on the coastline of Praia de Iracema in Fortaleza, the aquarium is expected to attract 12 million visitors and generate R\$ 43 million reais revenue per year. However, such a large project is also problematic: Ceará, one of the poorest states in Brazil, is using public money, in part, to construct the aquarium while it has long standing social problems yet to be resolved. Despite the potential harmful impacts on the environment and the surrounding community, the construction of the aquarium has begun and the completion is scheduled for 2015. My investigation looks at the controversy, the government's justification for using this project to shape the future of the tourism industry in Fortaleza and Ceará, and to critically examine its environmental, political and economic impact. This monograph argues that the aquarium issue is too multifaceted to be looked at in black or white but that the aquarium represents a serious disconnect between what the people of Fortaleza want and what the government wants.

Resumo

Em 2014, Fortaleza será colocada em exposição para o mundo inteiro ver, pois é uma das cidades-sede da Copa do Mundo no Brasil. Em preparação para um evento tão grande e uma quantidade impressionante de atenção, o estado do Ceará e a Secretaria de Turismo embarcou em um plano para desenvolver o turismo no Ceará e da capital, Fortaleza, como um destino turístico moderno. Um projeto em andamento, o Acquario Ceará, será o maior aquário da América Latina e o terceiro maior aquário do mundo. Situado no litoral da Praia de Iracema, em Fortaleza, o aquário deve atrair 12 milhões de visitantes e gerar R\$ 43 milhões de reais de receita por ano. No entanto, um projeto tão grande também é problemático: o Ceará, um dos estados mais pobres do Brasil, está utilizando dinheiro público, em parte, para construir o aquário, embora tenha de longa data os problemas sociais ainda não resolvidos. Apesar dos potenciais impactos nocivos sobre o meio ambiente e a comunidade do entorno, a construção do aquário já começou e a conclusão está prevista para 2015. Minha investigação analisa a polêmica, a justificativa do governo para usar este projeto para moldar o futuro da indústria do turismo em Fortaleza e Ceará e examina criticamente o seu impacto ambiental, político e econômico. Esta monografia argumenta que a questão do aquário é muito multifacetada para ser vista em preto ou branco, mas que o aquário representa um descompasso sério entre o que o povo de Fortaleza e o que o governo querem.

Glossary of Key Terms

EIA/RIMA- Estudo de Impactos Ambientais/ Relatório de Impacto Ambiental (Study of Environmental Impacts/ Report of Environmental Impact)

MPE- Ministério Público do Estado (State Public Prosecutor)

MPC- Ministério Público de Contas (Fiscal Public Prosecutor)

MPF- Ministério Público Federal (Federal Public Prosecutor)

SEMACE- Superintendência Estadual do Meio Ambiente (State Inspectorate of the Environment)

SETUR- Secretaria do Turismo (Secretary of Tourism)

TCE- Tribunal de Contas do Estado (Court of Audit)

Key Figures

Egidio Guerra—ISP advisor

Molly Silvia—fellow SIT student, researching cultural and social impacts of Acquário Ceará

Dr. Cláudio Bastos—Professor at Faculdade Ateneu, interviewed in Fortaleza, Brazil on November 8, 2013

Professor Djalma Guerra—Professor at Faculdade Ateneu, interviewed in Fortaleza, Brazil on November 11, 2013

Marcos Pompeu—Deputy Secretary of Tourism for the state of Ceará, interviewed in Fortaleza, Brazil on November 14, 2013

José Filho-- Prosecutor of Environmental Justice and Urban Planning of the State Public Prosecutor, interviewed in Fortaleza, Brazil on November 13, 2013

Ivan Aquino—Supervisor of team that analyzes the data for environmental impact studies of the State Inspectorate of the Environment, interviewed in Fortaleza, Brazil on November 27, 2013

Introduction

When one types Fortaleza, Ceará, Brasil, into Google Images, the results are stunning. The picture that one sees again and again, just from different angles and different times of day, is of Beira Mar, an touristic avenue that runs alongside the beach. On the other side of Beira Mar Avenue are high-rise after high rise. The aquamarine color of the water and the palm trees lining the road are reminiscent of the Caribbean, and the urban setting gives off a South Beach vibe.

From the view point of Google images, Fortaleza seems flawless. Doing a little more research on Google might reinforce that idea. Fortaleza's average temperature year-round fluctuates only between 24°C and 31°C. Fortaleza is the capital city of the state of Ceará, which has 600km of coastline (M. Pompeu, personal communication, November 14, 2013) and world-class destinations for kite surfing and wind surfing. One might ask oneself, how is it that I have never heard of this city before? Why is this city so unheard of as an international tourist destination? In 2010, Fortaleza received 219,430 international tourists, only 8% of the formal tourists that came to Fortaleza, and 4% of the international tourists that came to Brazil that same year (C. R. Bastos, 2012:167). To Brazilians, however, Fortaleza and Ceará are vacation stops of choice. In 2011, Ceará received 1,560,327 formal tourists, and an estimated 3,000,000 tourists (informal and formal) in 2012.

One explanation for the relatively low influx of international tourists is that the industry of tourism in the Northeast of Brazil, and in Brazil in general, has been developed only very recently. In recent years, the state and municipal governments have shifted their focus and resources to developing tourism in Ceará, and now, in Fortaleza.

One way that the state government has decided to try to boost tourism within Fortaleza is through the creation of what will be the third largest aquarium in the world, and the largest in Latin America and the Southern Hemisphere. The current governor of Ceará, Cid Gomes, and the current Secretary of Tourism, Bismarck Maia, first developed the idea of Acquário Ceará in 2007 (M. Pompeu, personal communication, November 14, 2013). Construction was launched in December of 2011. Gomes and Maia specifically conceptualized their terms in office with the ultimate goal of bringing Ceará and Fortaleza to an international level of tourism (M. Pompeu, personal communication, November 14, 2013).

All seemed to go smoothly until the finances were drawn up and contracts signed; and that was when the controversy began. There were civil suits filled by other governmental agencies opposing the processes behind the financing, including the loan from the Export-Import Bank, a U.S. Federal bank, the contract between SETUR and the company ICM-Reynolds, who is in charge of design and construction, and the environmental impact report done on the future site of the aquarium. The public outrage was vocal and widespread as well. Organizations formed against the project, such as Acquário Não and Quem Dera Ser Um Peixe. There were even public demonstrations specifically formed around protesting the project, such as Occupy Acquario. While on the surface, a lot of these demands seem purely fiscal or focused on small details of the construction and execution of the project, a closer examination reveals deeper questions about the government's duty to serve the people and social justice questions in Fortaleza as well as Ceará.

Given the controversy surrounding the aquarium, this monograph aims to explore the different angles of the involved parties and provide a comprehensive analysis of each argument, its strengths and weaknesses. It seeks to put the aquarium in the greater context of tourism development in Northeast Brazil and the questions about viability of tourism in general. Then, using the example of the aquarium, the monograph will look at the future of tourism in Fortaleza, and also Ceará.

This monograph first outlines the literature used as the foundation for conceptualizing and analyzing tourism, its problems, and unconventional substitutes for making it more socially and environmentally sustainable. It then presents the methodology used prior to field work and in the field. It discusses relevant ethical issues for the type of research conducted for this monograph. The data is presented in three parts: a section delineating the background of the aquarium and the controversy surrounding the project, a section on political, economic, and environmental impacts that emerge or will emerge as a result of the aquarium, and finally, a section on the future of tourism in Fortaleza and Ceará, and how the aquarium fits into that picture. This monograph concludes by discussing the social relevance of the information presented and analyzed in this paper, and a discussion on why the aquarium is neither good nor evil.

Literature Review

Introduction

The Brazilian federal government has only relatively recently begun developing tourism as an industry in Brazil. The Empresa Brasileira de Turismo¹ (EMBRATUR) was created in 1966 but it was not until 1990 that EMBRATUR was converted to developing

¹ Brazilian Tourism Institute

the sector of tourism (Bartholo, Delamaro, Bursztyn, & Hallewell 2008). During the financial crisis of the 1990s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and the International Bank for Reconstruction Development (IBRD, which is part of the World Bank Group) recommended that tourism be used as a stimulus for development in Brazil, specifically in the Northeast. This international pressure led to the creation of the federal program PRODETUR/NE². Under PRODETUR/NE, which primarily funds physical infrastructure, the region received US\$670 million in funds (Siegel & Alwang, 2005). Today, much of the Northeast's coastline has been developed and promoted to attract both domestic and international tourists, and it seems unlikely that this growth will slow anytime soon. Eight percent of Brazil's GDP now comes from domestic and international tourism (Slob & Wilde, 2006). The development of tourism has been particularly dramatic in Fortaleza, as it was picked to be one of the host cities for the World Cup 2014.

As the tourism sector is a relatively recent phenomenon in Northeast Brazil, many of the long-term implications of certain projects and infrastructural investments are still unclear. Unlike the original rhetoric that praised tourism as the ideal industry for the Northeast, the literature now being published tends to be more critical and probes more into the questions of sustainability and the social vitality of tourism. In a similar fashion, questions should be asked of the current mega-tourism project in Fortaleza, Acquário Ceará. My literature review hopes to highlight relevant topics of study that I used to help me guide my understanding and questioning for the investigation.

Financial, Social and Ecological Sustainability

² Tourism Development Program/Northeast

As tourism is the third largest export, one of the biggest industries, and employees one out of every eleven workers in Brazil (Slob & Wilde 2006:15), it needs to be a sustainable practice. Some of the most important ways of evaluating the viability of tourism as an industry are to ask questions about its financial, social, and ecological sustainability. Often times, tourism projects are promoted by touting the number of tourists that will be brought in and the projected profit. But financial sustainability in the realm of tourism encompasses much more than that. One phenomenon that is unavoidable with tourism is “leakage,” the idea that the destination country does not benefit preponderantly from a tourist’s trip. There are profits being made off the destination country in other countries—i.e. through foreign travel agencies; through the purchase of all-inclusive packages that benefit foreign hotels, airlines, etc; and through other goods and services that are imported rather than domestically produced (Slob & Wilde:2006). Leverages significantly affect the profit brought in by the destination country: experts estimate 60-90% of the total money spent by the tourist “leaks...and thus does not contribute to local economic development” (Slob & Wilde:2006:10). Leakage negatively impacts three major aspects of the destination country. Financially, revenue is lost to foreign companies. Socially, local jobs are lost. And ecologically, if tour operators only opt for suppliers that give low prices, and do not give precedent to suppliers that promote environmental mindfulness, suppliers “will likely forego environmental and social concerns” (Slob & Wilde:2006:10).

In terms of environmental planning related to tourism, Puppim gives two reasons why a government would be motivated to intervene: the ‘tragedy of the commons’ and externalities (2003). The tragedy of the commons refers to cases in which areas

acclaimed for their natural beauty ultimately are degraded, because the tourism industry does not take care to protect the same environment that it is sought out for. Some examples include Acapulco, the French Riviera, and Mallorca. In this case, the government must intervene to save the industry as well as the discarded environment. A positive example of environmental planning comes with externalities³ that are imposed during tourism development: for example, physical infrastructure like improved roads and airports that residents can benefit from too (2003:102). For the construction of the aquarium, the Estudo de Impacto Ambiental⁴ (EIA) addressed the environmental concerns in a report, but the report was commissioned only after demolition of the building that was there before had already begun, which caused a lot of backlash from community organizations. Additional concern has been raised about the source of the water used in the tanks, but the official report by EIA claims that they will use treated ocean water rather than potable water, and therefore they will not exacerbate the drought in the state, avoiding a “tragedy of the commons.”

Tourism and Local communities

Although tourism is sometimes extolled as Northeast Brazil’s “‘natural’ economic vocation” (Sampaio 2003:38), experience shows that tourism usually increases income inequality. What tends to happen is that multinational tourism companies compete against, and subsequently beat out, local restaurants, other local forms accommodation, and other local businesses (Slob & Wilde 2006:37). In order to prevent this phenomenon,

³ Externalities are defined as secondary or unintended consequences (Merriam-Webster).

⁴ Environmental Impact Study

Slob & Wilde advocate that local governments and companies need to work with and “cater to the needs” of the local community (2006:58). In a sense, this suggestion materialized with the construction of the aquarium in Fortaleza, as the company in charge of design and construction (underneath the American company overseeing the entire project), iMagic, is a company based in Fortaleza, so it is not being entirely outsourced. However, the policy-makers involved promoted very little, if any, local participation in the development of and major decision-making about the aquarium.

As Bartholo, Delamaro, and Bursztyn discuss in their article, *Tourism for Whom?*, the idea of situation-centered development can serve as an alternative model, one which “reinforces the centrality of local participants and local knowledge in the process of transforming their reality” (2006:104). Situation-centered development, especially ecotourism, as World Wildlife Fund International explains it, would give “the local community...substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community.” (2008:110). As Slob and Wilde describe, this much control over tourism is not a conventional model and clearly not was employed in the decision-making for Acquário Ceará. Bartholo, Delamaro, and Bursztyn claim that with situation-centered development, “improved income distribution is a direct result.” (2008:111). If this statement is in fact, true, this type of tourism-based development should be brought to the table in Fortaleza, the world’s fifth most unequal city.

Policy-making, social urban planning, and tourism

Brazilian federal and municipal governments in the past decade have claimed that tourism “promote[s] regional development, creating jobs and strengthening local infrastructure” (Bartholo, Delamaro, and Bursztyn 2008:103). But does tourism really accomplish all this? How much does it really strengthen infrastructure, especially for local residents, local businesses, local entrepreneurs? Do residents and or members of the lower classes benefit from the employment opportunities? What is the breakdown of jobs created (i.e. full-time, part-time, seasonal)? In a World Bank paper on poor-area strategy tourism by Siegel and Alwang (2005) they say that while there is the belief that the tourism sector could help decrease poverty, “state governments have not conducted sufficient planning or established appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation to ensure that tourism growth in NE Brazil achieves broader social objectives” (2005:2). They look at the case of PRODETUR/NE’s impact on the Brazilian state Rio Grande do Norte, and found that “PRODETUR/NE investments were almost exclusively focused on physical infrastructure improvements, and many of the infrastructure investments were not the sort that generate broad benefits” (2005:9) (i.e. just investing in wealthier areas).

Puppim (2003:107) defines the groups of actors in the policy-making process for tourism: local governments, state governments, small tourism business, large tourism business, community groups and local NGOs, other external actors, and developers. Araujo and Bramwell consider the claim that there is a “moral obligation to include all groups of these actors in planning and decisions of potential developments” (2002:1139). They do acknowledge that this would be problematic because under this same model,

during meetings there would be an ethical imperative to address every issue, but this would be laborious and sometimes unproductive. Additionally, I question whether power relations would prevent true collaboration between actors. But they make the point that regional tourism partnerships are worth the extra organization and effort because they have the potential to “bring together local, regional, and national interests within a regional development perspective: (2002:1140). In the case of the Aquarium, this argument seems to fall in line with the complaints of many social organizations that have denounced the project. On top of not getting a voice in any of the planning, the organizers and protesters were ignored during and after their multiple manifestations. Having an outlet where all the actors (governments, community groups, etc) could meet and dialogue about tourism ventures such as the aquarium would be ideal, but it appears that, Fortaleza, for whatever reasons, has not been able to begin that conversation.

In her thesis, Sampaio writes about how city planning causes increased socio-spatial inequalities in Fortaleza, specifically in relation to the tourism industry (2003). Coincidentally, during an increase in tourism development in Fortaleza, regional inequalities and income inequalities also grew (2003:39). Tourism began to be an excuse to invest money in already relatively prosperous areas, which created a cycle of concentrating the wealth. Sampaio says that the focus on building tourism also boosted Fortaleza’s desire for a beautiful image (2003:45). As such, the government stopped allotting money for creating government housing, but began beautifying the surroundings of and within existing favelas. This means that poor and isolated areas will receive little to no government support because tourists are unlikely to pass through those areas. This strategy encompasses the new urban planning ideologies: policies emphasize making the

city marketable rather than tackling the needs of the poor (2003:50). Tourism has become embedded within a neoliberal ideology: public funds go towards tourism and the idea is that social reproduction needs will be addressed by new jobs generated by economic growth, i.e. the “trickle-down theory” (2003:47). But this theory does not necessary have the desired results.

Methodology

In order to identify potential subjects for interviews for my research, it was necessary to procure information on who were the key players related to the aquarium. I did so through internet searches using key words that would bring up pertinent information. What I found were a handful of newspaper articles, activist webpages, facebook pages, and civil suits that were uploaded to online file sharing platforms. Using these sources as a jumping off point, I organized my research by focusing on players related to the political and environmental controversies. In total, I did six interviews. Drawing on a connection from my advisor with academic researches, I first spoke to three professors of tourism who teach at Faculdade Ateneu, each of whom specializes in a distinct area. I used the information gathered from these interviews as (an additional) foundation for analyzing and conceptualizing tourism, especially tourism in Fortaleza. As they were academics in the field, these interviewees also served to help me sharpen my analytical eye.

The other three interviews I conducted were of civil servants in various state-level governmental agencies who were involved, in some way, with the aquarium or its controversy. In order to set up interviews with these civil servants, I did a visit to the

agency to first introduce myself and then, when I was introduced to someone who I felt could answer important questions for my research, I would ask if I could set up an interview at a later time. In that way, I established rapport before asking for an interview. I found that this tactic was very effective for setting up interviews. My one attempt to set up an interview by phone was completely unsuccessful. I was hoping to interview someone from the Tribunal de Contas do Estado (Court of Audit), and to this end, went to the agency two times to try to speak to someone related to the aquarium, but both times I was unsuccessful. I was told to call, and when I did so, my questions were answered over the phone but I was told that an interview was not possible.

In the monograph, when I incorporated answers to the questions that I posed and the interviewees personal beliefs that came up during the interviews, I did my best to accurately translate what had been said. It is important to note, however, that because I did my own translations, they are subject to my personal biases and should not be considered completely accurate in any way.

My research project was somewhat unusual in the sense that it was greatly facilitated by having connections. My advisor, Egidio Guerra, who works for the office of the Governor, was crucial in obtaining these connections. Had I gone to the Secretary of Tourism by myself, there is a good chance I would have been put down as the last name on a very long list. With Egidio, however, we typically would show up unannounced, whether it was the aquarium construction site or the Ministerio Publico, and we were seen. Thus, if someone else were to want to research using the same approach and methodology as I have, I would highly recommend trying to make such connections.

One drawback to focusing on subjects in high-up governmental organizations is that scheduling interviews takes time. For example, after I met with Marcos Pompeu, Secretary Deputy of SETUR, it took me a week to set up a time to see him. However, I did not feel like it was feasible to set up most interviews before meeting with the subjects. As I mentioned above, it was necessary to establish rapport first. My suggestion, from the experiences, is that if someone were to do research with similar interview subjects, it is optimal to pay visits to all the governmental organizations the first week, and then try to schedule interviews for the second week.

My interviews were all semi-structured. The questions themselves varied greatly between most of my subjects, because of the nature of their involvement with the aquarium. The questions I asked the professors of tourism focused on tourism in Fortaleza and on more theoretical issues about the socioeconomic impacts of tourism in general and of the future aquarium in particular. The questions that I asked the civil servants were tailored to their agency as well as their relationship to the aquarium.

Because of the nature of the questions that I used to structure my research, there were not many opportunities for observation or participant observation. The only day I spent observing was my visit to the construction site of the aquarium. A head engineer gave me a tour of the site and he explained the current status of the construction. I had access to the blueprints of the aquarium, and furthermore, I had the opportunity to have informal conversations with one of the head engineers on the site and a representative from DAE, the Departamento de Arquitetura e Engenharia (Department of Architecture and Engineering).

A crucial part of the fieldwork process was identifying and mitigating ethical concerns. The priority of any researcher should always be the safety and comfort of his or her subjects. I tackled this problem in a number of ways. Prior to each interview, I did as much research as possible to understand the position of each subject, so as to avoid asking insensitive or problematic questions. I also asked myself a series of questions such as, “What is my agenda for these questions and for this project?” “Will my questions (if answered) potentially cause my interviewees harm professionally or personally?” Once at the interview, I made a point of going over my consent form and emphasizing the subject’s ability to choose a pseudonym, not answer a question, or have a question struck from the record. Another step I took as a researcher was to follow up with each subject following the interview, thanking them for their time and their help for my project. I will also make the research available for them for their personal or professional records.

Acquário Ceará: its background and controversy

I rubbed my eyes as if the motion would help keep me awake while I poured through page after page on google looking for news articles published about the aquarium. It was 2 AM and the only light in my room was coming from my computer screen and the occasional headlights passing by on the street. I had found around 40 articles, maybe only half of them actually relevant, about the aquarium. Many provided only the bare bone details about the aquarium, some talked about the announcement, and others contained reactions. The reactions were what caught my attention. Reactions from the people up to government officials themselves spoke of injustice. Many asked, why hadn't the people had a say in making the decisions about the project? Why was this money being allocated to build an aquarium that contained 15 million liters of water when the state was in one of the worst droughts in history? These questions kept me up past my normal bedtime of midnight. I couldn't stop reading. As I finally shut my computer and laid down on my bed, my mind was still reeling from the amount of information I was asking it to take in. What was going on here, and why were various agencies of the municipal, state, and federal governments at odds with one another in their assessments of this project?

As of December 2013, more than a handful of civil suits have been filed against the agencies involved with the planning, evaluation and or construction of the aquarium (the state of Ceará, the city of Fortaleza, and SEMACE). At least five of these suits come from the Ministerio Público- Federal, Estadual, e de Contas. (Federal, State and Fiscal Public Prosecutor) (Savaina, 2013); however, other civil suits were filed by the Fórum de Defesa da Criança e do Adolescente (Forum for the Defense of the Children and Adolescents) and the Instituto de Desenvolvimento Social e da Cidadania (Institute of Social and Citizen Development) (Ministério Público do Estado do Ceará, 2011). A critical report, not civil suit, was filed by the Tribunal de Contas do Estado (Court of Audit) (“TCE: indícios de contrato irregular no Acquario.” 2013, para.3) with questions, too. There maybe more reports and civil suits with questions about the aquarium, but this research project identified only those referred to above. One look at these documents gives one a sense of the dissent felt throughout the city and state. The internet tells even more of the story, showing that it's not just a fight within the bureaucracy, but one that

touches the lives of the Cearenses, whether rich or poor, young or old, urban dwellers or from the sertão (interior).

From the legal point of view, there is a lot of information to dig through in order to begin to understand what happened, how it happened, and now, the opposition. It is important to begin by clarifying each side, because a lot of the controversy itself is over the lack of transparency on the part of the state of Ceará and the Secretaria do Turismo (Secretary of Tourism). It would be impossible to do justice to each side's part of the story, but perhaps a certain amount of clarity would come from a rough timeline.

The current governor, Cid Gomes, and the current secretary of tourism, Bismarck Maia, first conceptualized Acquário Ceará in 2007 (M. Pompeu, personal communication, November 14, 2013). The project was announced to the public in 2009. In January of 2011, the Promotor de Justiça do Meio Ambiente e Planejamento Urbano (Prosecutor of Environmental Justice and Urban Planning) of the Ministério Público do Estado, José Filho, filed a civil suit against the aquarium for beginning the demolition of the previous building without prior completion of an environmental impact report. In May of 2011, Maia announced the contract with ICM-Reynolds. In June of 2011, the state government asked the Legislative Assembly of the state of Ceará to approve the US\$102 million dollar loan from Ex-Im Bank, which was approved in the same month. In August of 2011, the Secretaria do Turismo, or SETUR, contacted the Superintendência Estadual do Meio Ambiente, or SEMACE (the Brazilian agency that is essentially the equivalent of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA), to request a report on the potential environmental impacts so that the project could be approved for construction. In December of 2011, this report, EIA/RIMA, was approved by the

Conselho Estadual do Meio Ambiente (State Counsel on the Environment), or COEMA, and SETUR was officially authorized to begin construction. In February of 2013, the Tribunal de Contas do Estado, or TCE, publically declared concerns about and questioned the contract between the state and ICM-Reynolds for the construction of the aquarium. In the June and July of 2013, a few more things happened: one, the Promotor de Justiça do Meio Ambiente, published a second civil suit against the construction and approval by SEMACE, and the public involvement took off. In those same months, groups sprang up against it and many were involved in public demonstrations protesting the project. And finally, in August of 2013, the Ministério Público Federal, Ministério Público de Contas, and the Ministério Público Estadual, filed three civil suits for violations against the Federal and State Constitutions in the processes leading up to the construction of the aquarium. This social opposition occurred in the greater context of a wave of public demonstrations that originated from many other social complaints.

With the order of events presented, it is now crucial to provide background and a detailed description of each case discussed in this research paper. I will explore how these cases fit into the story of the aquarium and shape its position today.

I passed through the sliding glass doors into the familiar waiting room. The secretary immediately lifted her head and kept her gaze focused on me. The first time I had gone to the Secretaria do Turismo, I was in the company of Molly and Egidio, which helped break the ice. It also kept the pressure of me and my Portuguese skills. But today was a different day and it was time for me to be tested under pressure.

After waiting only a few minutes, I was lead back to the office of the Secretary Deputy. On the way, I was reminded of how beautiful SETUR was; the office had warm natural lighting, yet cool breeze from the air conditioning units, marble details, and wooden floors.

A Secretaria do Turismo do Estado, SETUR, was founded only in 1995. The current secretary, Bismarck Maia, began his term of service 2007, under Cid Gomes, the

state governor. In my interviews with the professors of tourism from Faculdade Ateneu, all three described Maia and his work as secretary in a positive light. Professor Djalma Guerra remarked that Maia was born to be the Secretary of Tourism and that he was very active in his role (D. Guerra, personal communication, November 11, 2013). Dr. Claudio Bastos said that while there will always be critics, in his opinion, Maia is an excellent mobilizer of resources (Personal communications, November 8, 2013). In recent months, Maia was honored by the Agence de Developpement Touristique de La France (Agency of Tourism Development of France) with a medallion of tourism (R. Lima, 2013). In 2007, the same year that Maia and Gomes came to power, talks between the two began about the aquarium.

Once the aquarium project had been conceptualized, SETUR had to get funding and had to find a company to undertake the project. SETUR signed a contract with the U.S.-based company, ICM-Reynolds, which reportedly has built 215 of the world's 250 largest aquariums (Saraiva, 2013). This deal also conveniently secured a loan from the Export-Import Bank (the official U.S. export credit agency) for 102 million USD. The estimated total cost of building the aquarium is 150 million USD. The loan from Ex-Im Bank and contract with ICM-Reynolds are two areas under fire. When asked about which came first, the loan or the contract with ICM-Reynolds, Pompeu did not go into much detail, but said that ICM-Reynolds was the only option because of their capacity to carry out the "turn-key" system: the company is involved in design, construction, and all the of execution until it is ready to open (Personal communication, November 14, 2013). According to Pompeu, there were only two companies in the world with "turn-key" capacity, ICM-Reynolds and NIPPURA, but NIPPURA officially reported that they were

uninterested in the project. “As [ICM-Reynolds] is such an enormous American company,” explained Pompeu, “this also influenced the decision of Ex-Im Bank in the sense of considering the loan for the state [of Ceará], and chiefly because the state of Ceará is a state that has its finances in order.” There was no mention on his part of whether Ex-Im Bank suggested ICM-Reynolds as an option for the aquarium.

With the finances secured, Bismarck Maia presented the project to the Tribunal de Contas do Estado in 2009 (Tribunal de Contas do Estado, 2009). It is unknown, however, whether this presentation was public or not. It is beyond the scope of this research project to identify any more official presentations of the project, public or not, between 2009 and 2011. In August of 2011, SETUR approached SEMACE to request an environmental authorization of the project in order to begin construction of the aquarium. Once the report was produced by SEMACE, it had to be presented to a public audience and then the Conselho Estadual do Meio Ambiente could approve it or ask for or require further elaboration of the study (M. Pompeu, Personal Communication, November 14, 2013).

Construction began a few short months later in December of 2011. The aquarium is scheduled to be completed in 2015.

I climbed out of the cab and was thankful for the gust of wind that blew my way upon my exit. My clothes were already drenched in sweat. I looked up and saw a sign that referenced the Ministério Público so I walked on inside through the glass doors, which had been propped open. When I walked inside, I understood why they were keeping the doors open to the oppressive heat of midmorning; there was no air conditioning. Oh great, I thought, this is even worse than the stuffy taxi. When I explained my purpose to receptionist, I was led up a set of stairs and asked to wait for my interview. I sat down and immediately began fanning myself with my notebook. After a minute of attempting to combat the heat, I looked around and took in my surroundings. The tile floor and white walls were nothing reminiscent of the Secretary of Tourism, not to mention the lack of air conditioning. I had a feeling that during the interview, I would

not be brought coffee and water on a silver platter like I was served in the Secretary of Tourism. Quite the juxtaposition.

The Ministério Público, as defined by the federal constitution, is not connected to any of the three powers (executive, legislative, and judicial) and has the purpose of defending public interest. Ministério Público policies the law and ensures its implementation (S. Sena, personal communication, November 28, 2013).

As mentioned, the state, federal and fiscal branches of the Ministério Público on have all filed civil suits protesting some aspect of the aquarium. This research project focused, in particular, on the involvement of José Filho, Promotor de Justiça de Defesa do Meio Ambiente e Planejamento Urbano (Prosecutor of Environmental Justice and Urban Planning), of Ministério Público Estadual (MPE), and the two civil suits he pressed against the state. The first, published in January of 2011, calls attention to SEMACE's duties as outlined by the constitution: "To protect the environment and combat pollution in any of its forms; preserve the forests, fauna and flora" (Ministério Público do Estado do Ceará, 2011). It also emphasizes how, in the federal constitution, the coastlines of Brazil are just as protected as the Amazon. Filho adds in the civil suit that a full study of alternatives (for location) should be done as a part of the environmental impact study (EIA/RIMA). The civil suit asks why the state of Ceará never presented the project to society to clarify details or talk about the potential environmental impacts. Overall, the two main requests of Filho's civil suit are that the state present the project Acquário Ceará in a public audience, and that SEMACE does a thorough and unprejudiced report on the potential impacts.

Filho lodged a second civil suit in July of 2013. The suit filed a claim that SEMACE has been outsourcing the data collection used in the EIA/RIMA to third

parties, specifically using the case of Acquário Ceará. According to Filho, these contracts go against one of the fundamental codes of Associação dos Servidores da SEMACE (Workers Association of SEMACE) because there are people trained within SEMACE who are trained to collect the data for EIA/RIMA (Ministério Público do Estado do Ceará), 2013). So, Filho argues, public money is going to paying the people of SEMACE and the private company contracted. This ação civil (civil suit) calls for the report to be annulled and to temporarily put the construction on hold until a proper report is completed by SEMACE trained workers.

As reported by the newspaper Diário do Nordeste, another civil suit filed by MPE called for the annulment of the contract between SETUR and ICM-Reynolds because of “administrative irregularity” (Saraiva, 2013). The MPF (Ministério Público Federal) filed yet another civil suit based on claims that there was fraud in the administration and fraud in the bidding of the companies seeking to take on the project. The MPF also called for IBAMA (SEMACE at a federal level) to do the EIA/RIMA, as the aquarium project is out of SEMACE’s jurisdiction for the coastline being protected by the federal constitution (Dip & Barros, 2013). And MPC (Ministério Público de Contas) asked that 1.8 million reais be returned based on the agreement between SETUR and the Convention Bureau, and called to annul the claim of exemption from putting contracts out to tender⁵ in the contract between SETUR and ICM-Reynolds.

⁵ This concept (in Portuguese: “inexigibilidade”) is when governments (or businesses) ask suppliers/contractors tender (to offer) their price for doing the job. The word is used almost in a sense of auction, i.e. auctioning out contracts to the best bidder.

From the nature of the civil suits originating from the Ministério Público, they are intent on assuring that the law—federal, state, or municipal—is executed and that no projects, no matter their importance to the state government, are allowed to cut corners.

I nervously dialed the number I had been given. The phone rang twice, then the call was picked up by a woman who said I had reached the office of Edilberto Pontes of the Tribunal de Contas. I asked to speak to his advisor, Ginton. She told me to wait a moment. While the phone was ringing, I tried to make myself comfortable on the concrete bench in the small park from where I was making the call. No luck. A man picked up, but did not introduce himself. Going on the assumption I had been transferred directly to Ginton, I began my long introduction describing myself as a student researcher from the US, studying the aquarium. “I was hoping to talk to you,” I said, “about the controversy between the Tribunal de Contas and the aquarium project, and how it stands right now.” All of a sudden, Ginton cut in and began speaking rapidly about how I was mistaken and then proceeded to explain the situation. Five minutes later the phone call ended, and I was left with some answers, but also, many new questions.

The Tribunal de Contas is similar to the Ministério Público in that it is not tied to any of the three powers. Its responsibility, however, is to oversee the accounting, budgets, and financing of the administration of bureaus. In February of 2013, an analysis was done by TCE, looking at the same issue as MPC; the issue of *not* putting the aquarium contract out to tender (Diário do Nordeste, 2013). TCE published a report in December of 2012 that looked into the irregularities in the contract between ICM-Reynolds and SETUR’s reasoning behind not tendering the contract. TCE asked, why is ICM-Reynolds considered the only company capable of constructing Acquário Ceará when it is not the only company in the world that is capable of building a great aquarium?

Marcos Pompeu explained the reason for the necessity to choose ICM-Reynolds was not that other companies were not qualified to build Acquário Ceará, but that only two were able to do the “turn-key” system, and when NIPPURA declared it was not interested, that left only ICM-Reynolds (Personal communication, November 14, 2013).

In an interview on November 14, 2013, Pompeu reported that in compliance with TCE's request, SETUR had submitted all the documents including a study done by a professor who specialized in the area of "inexigibilidade" (or not putting government contracts out to bidding). Pompeu commented that within a few weeks, by the end of November or the beginning of December of 2013, TCE will approve SETUR's contract with ICM-Reynolds.

When this report was published, however, it was viewed as the next fight put up against the aquarium. Peixuxa Acquário, one of the groups in opposition to the construction of the aquarium, uploaded the TCE report onto their Slideshare⁶ page, and captioned it "Comissão Técnica do TCE considera obra do Acquário Ilegal" (TCE Technical Committee considers Acquário project Ilegal) (Peixuxa Acquário, 2013). Thus, when the advisor of the TCE councilor, Edilberto Pontes, who published the report, was contacted for this research paper, the advisor adamantly asserted that TCE had never considered the project *illegal* (Personal communication, November 26, 2013). The advisor, Glinton, was insistent that the report simply asked for clarification on the deal between ICM-Reynolds and SETUR because there were some gaps in the information that was provided.

The issues and civil suits brought against the aquarium shed important light on relations between agencies and political processes in Fortaleza, Ceará, and perhaps in all of Brazil. There were questions about what studies are necessary for such an undertaking as the aquarium and who can do such studies. The majority of civil suits and reports found for this research project were published after construction had actually begun on

⁶ Slideshare is a file sharing format that allows users to upload presentations on to their site.

the aquarium. There were questions asked on all levels, and disagreement on all levels; for example, MP-Federal published a civil suit claiming that only IBAMA could do the environmental report on the aquarium, where as MP-Estadual published a report asking for SEMACE to do the report. Looking through each side, concerns about lack of transparency, money allocation, and political priorities all appear woven into each report or civil suit in different ways. The example of the aquarium shows how controversial tourism can be as a public endeavor. This project underscores fundamental political divisions within the government of Ceará. In particular, the conflict between Ministério Público, protector of the public interest, and SETUR is highlighted by this research. The indignation shown by the Ministério Público, regardless of the contradictions between their own civil suits, was certainly reflective of the public indignation. Regardless of what civil suits or reports are published, it appears that construction of the aquarium will go on, unhindered by opposition.

Political, Economic, and Environmental Impact

Perhaps the most controversial part of the aquarium is its potential political, economic, and environmental impacts. From all sides on the debate, there is significant speculation on what these impacts will be and how much or little the effects will be felt. The political impacts are less discussed and will likely manifest themselves in subtle ways, but they will still exist. The relationships between the state, the people, and the government agencies within the state over the issue of the aquarium were very strained, and these tensions will continue to be charged and resurface in association with other issues in the future. The economic impacts are multifaceted; on one hand, the aquarium will bring returns for the city. But on the other, who will this profit go to? What is lost by spending public money on the aquarium instead of on other potential projects? Environmental impacts are widely discussed and hypothesized, but these are some of the hardest impacts to predict. This section attempts to look at the arguments from all sides to join the available information together so that readers can make up their own minds about what will come of this project.

The waiter had just brought our food, so I sat in silence, eating. The rest of the table was not quiet, however. I was with Molly, Andres, and Egidio, our ISP advisor, who had invited an activist friend of his, Jeff. Jeff was the only one speaking and he had been talking for a while: first about the aquarium, but now his focus had shifted to general social complaints he had about the city and the state. The more I listened, the more aware I became of how strongly Jeff and demonstration groups felt about the direction their state was heading in. I thought back to the various youtube videos I had watched over the summer of demonstrations in Ceará that consisted of thousands of people taking to the street. Whether or not it manifests itself in full right now, I thought, there is a growing political consciousness here, and the people are demanding to have their voice heard.

In Ceará and Fortaleza today, there is unprecedented tension between the state and the people. In the summer of 2013, the people took to the streets to publically display the discontent that was felt with a variety of issues. Thousands of people marched and participated in this peaceful protesting. While some of their demands were met, like lowering the bus fare, an underlying tension remains between the people and the government. One reason that the strained relations continue is that, even though the government picked up its ears when the streets were packed with unhappy citizens, the government has yet to veer from its trajectory. The agendas of the people have yet to become the agenda of the government.

Within the framework of the aquarium, the dynamic between the people and those with the power of decision-making is not much different. From my fieldwork and interviews, the largest complaint that arose from conversations was that the public was not adequately consulted about the aquarium and that the public's opinion was not heeded. The public hit hard at the state and SETUR for not, as demonstration groups put it, letting the public have a say in the decision-making. More than anything, there seems to be a frustration that the public's calls for reconsidering the project were never really heard. This information, however, do not match up with what was reported in interviews with government officials. Both Marcos Pompeu of SETUR and Ivan Aquino of SEMACE, cite public forums about or public presentations on the aquarium (M. Pompeu, personal communication, November 14, 2013; I. Aquino, personal communication, November 27, 2013). In fact, the law requires (Resolução CONAMA de nº 009/1987) that there are public presentations and forums when projects of this size and impact are proposed (Núcleo de Impacto Ambiental, 2011). Some questions remain, however. If

there were these opportunities for the public to speak up about the aquarium, were they actively advertised to ensure knowledge about the event and participation? In fact, Federal law (art. 225, IV, § 1o, CF/88) mandates that the publicity of the study is the responsibility of SETUR (Núcleo de Impacto Ambiental, 2011). How many public hearings were held in total? And why, as José Filho asks in his civil suit from 2011, was there no public presentation of the project before demolition of the previous building began (Ministério Público do Estado do Ceará, 2011)?

The problem is not the aquarium as much as it is the spending on the aquarium. In his interview, José Filho of the Ministério Público said,

My personal opinion is that the aquarium truly could be a project, a project that would come in the future, you know? It generates advantages for the state of Ceará in the area of tourism and tourism material. However, in the current day and age, the aquarium is not a very celebrated project by society. Why? Because a lot of money is being bestowed on the project when we have real social aberrations that still need to be resolved. Basic social issues, okay? Like the problem of famine in the state. The crime rate is another one, and the lack of education. The lack of better education for the people. Lack of better economic resistance of families. And the aquarium will rack up exorbitant expenditures when it could have been invested in other social areas. (J. Filho, personal communication, November 13, 2013.)

There are serious social problems affecting the people of Ceará, so the message that a large-scale project promoting tourism has been launched will sound, given all the problems, like public money is being siphoned off.

On the screen of his laptop, Marcos Pompeu, deputy secretary of tourism, had pulled up a powerpoint called "The Economic Impacts of Acquário Ceará and its Practicability," and was going through it with me. I was in his warm, inviting office and he had asked if he could show me the presentation before I conducted my interview. I said yes, eager for any and all information.

At this point, however, I was having trouble processing the words coming out of his mouth. This was not because I did not understand what he was saying or because I did not understand the powerpoint; in fact I had the powerpoint already at home from a previous visit to his office and had already spent a few hours pouring over its content trying to make sense of it. Today, however, I found myself instead lost in thought about the deeper meaning of it. The aquarium may pay for itself in 5 years or 7 years but when will this public investment start to benefit the people? Will upping the number of tourists really create a large number of jobs? And most of all, why is there no way to accurately gage the positive and negative impacts of the aquarium?

Perhaps SETUR's most substantial argument for the construction of the aquarium is the positive impact on the local economy that the project will engender. Tourism as an industry impacts 52 sectors of the economy (D. Guerra, personal communication, November 11, 2013). As soon as the aquarium opens, there will be noticeable economic returns. The aquarium will directly create around 350 jobs, and it will indirectly generate jobs within the tourism industry; more hotels, restaurants, and car rentals will pop up in Fortaleza (M. Pompeu, personal communication, November 14, 2013). The economic report that Marcos Pompeu presented in his office relayed the following information (Secretaria do Turismo, 2012): The estimated number of jobs that will be indirectly created by the aquarium is between 37,400-74,200. There will be a permanent effect on the number of tourists: tourists who already come to Fortaleza and when those tourists stay one day more (estimated to be between 15-30% of current tourists). Moreover, there will be an attraction effect, which is the number of tourists who will choose to come to Fortaleza because of the aquarium (estimated to be between 5-10%). The expectation is that the aquarium will take 4.5 years to pay for itself, but it could take as long as 9 years. Four and a half years is a good estimate, because the world's largest aquarium, the Georgia Aquarium, has not yet paid for itself and it was completed in 2005, or eight years ago (J. Passos, personal communication, November 13, 2013).

The financing of the project has also spurred a lot of public controversy. Many people feel a sense of outrage at the sheer amount of money being spent on the aquarium, a total of approximately 150 million USD. This number, however, is deceiving. Of that 150 million, only 48 million USD will come from the state treasury (Secretaria do Turismo, 2012). What this figure means is that the remaining 102 million, loaned by the Ex-Im bank, will be repaid to Ex-Im Bank from the profit of the aquarium. This money will never come from the public. While 48 million USD is no paltry sum, there is still a vast difference between 150 and 48 million.

48 million is, however, still a considerable amount of public money. Two journalists, Andrea Dip and Cirro Barros of Publica, a Reporting and Investigative Journalism Agency, put the numbers of the aquarium side by side with the budgets of the Secretary of Education, Secretary of Health, and Secretary of Security: 60 million reals, 46.3 million reals, and 12 million reals respectfully (2013). Even if one remembers that the state of Ceará only invested 96 million reals (approx. 48 million USD), of the total cost of 300 million reals, into the aquarium it is still a significant public expenditure relative to the state of Ceará.

Molly and I climbed out of the backseat of Egidio's car. As I got out, I covered my eyes with my hand to block out the piercing sun. It was 10 in the morning, and the sun was already relentless. I looked down at my sandals and noticed- this was more beach than parking lot. The sand was already filling the spaces between my toes. Egidio got out of the driver's seat and motioned for us to follow him. I started walking forward and looked up to see the aluminum sheets that were being used to block seeing into the construction site of the aquarium. I then turned 90 degrees to face the sea. It was a sharp contrast between the industrial work site and the peaceful waves lapping up on the sand. While I knew the area would look vastly different once they had completed the aquarium, I saw how close the aquarium came to the beach and wondered if they could ever perfectly integrate man and earth.

Another significant source of conflict and confusion was the issue of the estimated environmental impact caused by the aquarium. The major question is whether or not the aquarium's location will negatively impact the ocean because of the close proximity.

While the EIA/RIMA published by SEMACE says it is not probable that the aquarium will provoke a change in sea level (Núcleo de Impacto Ambiental, 2011), Dr. Aquino, supervisor of the team that analyzes the data for EIA/RIMAs in SEMACE, said that it is also impossible to predict this kind of alteration (Personal communication, November 27, 2013). José Filho, of the Ministério Público, goes on record saying otherwise, that the aquarium “will not only cause an imbalance [of the sea levels] in the capital but also in the metropolitan area” (Personal communication, November 13, 2013). Filho also reported that there were studies published by NGOs that supported this idea of a change in sea level. While it is out of the scope of this research paper to analyze each side's argument, it is clear that the data presented does not line up on the topic environmental impacts.

There also appears to be a lack of understanding within various circles of the people or activists when it comes to a few basic yet crucial details about the project. One is the question of the water for the tanks that total 15 million liters. Many ask, “where will the water come from?” In a state that is suffering one of the worst droughts in history, it would be an alarming abuse of public resources to use millions of liters of potable water for an aquarium. During the first five minutes of my first visit to SETUR, Marcos Pompeu informed Egidio, Molly and me that the water would be treated sea water, and they would need to withdraw very little water (10% of the total amount) on a

monthly basis from the ocean. Why was this information, so easily rattled off, the source of so much controversy? Is this detail simply not presented on the internet? Or is it just too easy to make this argument, despite the facts involved, because it gives anti-aquarium activists another way to stir opposition to the project? Even if the water is treated seawater, does the treatment of seawater involve using non-seawater? What resources are needed to treat the seawater and are these resources scarce in Ceará?

SETUR argues that the aquarium, far from undermining the environment, will serve as a center of maritime studies and provide information crucial to the protection of the ocean's resources. The Universidade Federal do Ceará and its marine studies lab, LABOMAR, will work primarily with SETUR to protect and study the species of fish housed in the aquarium and the species native to the northeastern coastline. Pompeu explained how this aspect of the aquarium will serve all of Brazil, as well as the rest of the world:

All the other universities in Brazil, those who also have laboratories and centers of maritime studies, will have a great interest in exchange of research, professors, scientists, students, etcetera. And also in the same way with laboratories and centers of marine research in various parts of the world, and clearly, with corresponding with the most important aquariums in the world. (Personal communication, November 14, 2013).

While there is no way of determining the outcome of the environment, it will be crucial for the impacts generated by the aquarium to be monitored in the years to come to assure there are no substantial risks associated with it. And only the future will tell if the aquarium can serve well as a center of maritime studies and develop that field for Ceará and Brazil.

The Future of Tourism in Fortaleza

Tourism as it stands in Fortaleza consists primarily of national tourists. In 2010, Fortaleza received 219,430 international tourists, only 8% of the formal tourists that came to Fortaleza, and only 4% of the international tourists that came to Brazil that same year (Bastos, 2012). As Professor Cláudio Bastos said, tourism in Fortaleza, in international terms, is very weak. “The tourism in Fortaleza, it is not *in* Fortaleza. People come to Fortaleza [through Airport Pinto Martins], but tourism is outside of Fortaleza” (Personal communication, November 8, 2013). Even when international tourists come to Ceará, they are drawn in much larger numbers to beach towns like Jericoacoara and Canoa Quebrada than Fortaleza. With the advent of the World Cup in 2014 and given Fortaleza’s existing infrastructure for national tourism, it is understandable that the state would want to take advantage of the world stage to push up the numbers of international tourists. The state of Ceará and SETUR do, in fact, have a strategy that consists of developing tourist attractions and making additional infrastructure investments to prepare the way to attract tourists from around the world to Fortaleza and Ceará. The aquarium makes up a part of this plan, and is especially important to drawing tourists to Fortaleza. Some questions, however, remain: is the tourism industry in Fortaleza prepared to receive larger numbers of international tourists? Is the industry prepared for larger numbers of non-Portuguese speakers? And what will the promotion of international tourism mean for the city’s inhabitants and for the trajectory of its future development?

The first time I visited the Secretaria do Turismo, it was a visit with my advisor, Egidio, his friend and colleague, Rodrigo, and my classmate Molly. We had been waiting in the main waiting room for about half an hour when we were led to...yet another waiting room. We sat in relative silence, and during that time my eyes began to explore the room we were seated in. A man had brought us a silver tray of water and coffee,

which was sitting in the middle on a glass coffee table. The room had comfortable couches and plenty of potted plants. I started looking around the walls and noticed that hanging from each one was at least one banner with a concept picture and title of a project underway in Ceará. "Terminal de Passageiros, Mucuripe," "Centro de Eventos do Ceará," read a few. In the room alone were five banners. "Wait a minute...", I thought. The whole face of tourism in Ceará is soon to be updated.

According to the Deputy Secretary of Tourism, Marcos Pompeu,

There was a plan to transform Ceará into an international tourist destination... The Secretary, Bismarck Maia, and governor, Cid Gomes, understood that it was necessary invest in infrastructure for tourism, so that [Ceará] could be considered at an international level. Therefore, from 2007 onwards, the planning to endow new institutions for tourism in Ceará was developed. The aquarium is one of these projects, which will strengthen the tourism. Apart from the aquarium, a few projects are being chosen or finished. A few examples: The Center of Events of Ceará that today is the most modern exhibition center in Brazil and South America. It was opened in August of 2012, so, a little less than one year. We are doubling the touristic highways. Ceará has 600 km of coastline, and we are doubling the access to the coast of Fortaleza from east to west with double the lanes. Part of these highways is already ready, and the others will be done in 2014. We are also working on sanitation in the principal beaches, specifically taking care of the water supply, and treating sewage residue so that the all beaches are clean, sanitized, in that which touches the water supply. We are also constructing new airports. We have two important beaches in Ceará, and very famous: Jericoacoa, and Canoa Quebrada. And in these two locales, we will have new airports; the one at Canoa Quebrada is already completed, and that of Jericoacoara is under construction, expected completion for initial operations in 2014. As such, with new airports, new roads, with sanitation of the beaches, with a center of events, with the aquarium, Ceará, and Fortaleza, will be exhibited for Brazilian tourists and international tourists as a modern tourist destination, with good structure for receiving the tourist, and strengthening the image of an international tourist destination. (M. Pompeu, personal communication, November 14, 2013).

As can be seen from this statement, the aquarium is just one of many projects underway to develop tourism in Ceará. In fact, as Pompeu says, the goal is not focused on building the aquarium, but having Ceará achieve more international recognition as a modern tourist destination. This push to promote tourism was not chosen at an arbitrary moment in Fortaleza and Brazil's history; these infrastructure and mega-tourism projects are all nearing completion in or will be completed by 2014, the same year that Brazil will

host the World Cup. Brazil, as Pompeu says, is being presented to the whole world. “Ceará, Fortaleza, and Brazil... will be on the televisions, the magazines, the journals, and the news of the entire world in 2014” (Personal communication, November 14, 2013). And while not all of these tourism projects will be completed by the World Cup, the aquarium included, Bastos, citing a study he had read in his interview, said that, often times, the real profit from the World Cup and Olympics does not happen in that year. The reputation and image created by these mega-sporting events yields more tourists and more profits in subsequent years (Personal communication, November 8, 2013).

The question remains, however, whether Fortaleza is ready for a shift in tourism, and one that may happen soon, and quickly. When asked what he thought the tourism industry was lacking in Fortaleza, Professor Djalma Guerra responded that there remains a lot to be desired with the service:

What is lacking, in my understanding are professionals capable of understanding and having the power to correctly receive tourists. Often we claim that we are a welcoming and nice people, and I fully agree. This is part of our culture. However, you girls [referring to Molly Sivia and myself] are foreigners, and you must have realized that in restaurants, in hotels, many times the attendance is very domestic [simple]. People really need people who understand a little of this psychology applied to the tourist, because many times a tourist come here, and he doesn't want to eat shrimp and lobster. He wants to eat *carne de sol*, a *paçoca*, more similar to the way he would eat in his home country. This goes hand and hand with service. So when I talk about service being from the hygiene to the preparation of the food until the form in which it arrives on the person's plate on the table of the restaurant. So I am not able in whatever moment demand of maid in a hotel, for example that she has a certain degree of hygiene when in reality, often times, she does not even have a bathroom in her own house.

Simply from my own observations of more touristy areas of Fortaleza such as Beira Mar, Praia do Futuro, Mercado Central and Monsenhor Tabosa, it is apparent that English is not commonly spoken. This would not prove to be a problem, if the majority of

international tourists in Fortaleza are other Latin American countries because romance language to romance language is possible to understand. However, with an advent of tourists from the United States, Germany, or China, this would become problematic.

Concern with Image

At the end of my interview, Marcos Pompeu paused and lifted a hand to motion that I shouldn't get up just yet. "Ah I just remembered," he said, "I must show you the concept video of the aquarium!" I had grabbed my purse and begun packing up, but I slowly returned it to the wooden floor and readjusted myself on the chair to have a more comfortable view of his computer. Pompeu turned the screen a little more towards me, and spent a minute fiddling with it, looking through different files. He apologized for the delay, but I told him it was fine, as I had nothing pressing to get to. Finally he clicked on a file, and the screen went black momentarily. As quickly as it had gone black, the video began and I was inundated with flashing pictures of concept pictures of the aquarium. The video was dazzling and I found myself transfixed during the next few minutes. There were photos from earlier designs of the aquarium, drawings in 2D and then 3D animated renderings. Marcos Pompeu shot a look at me to gauge my reaction. He smiled at my mesmerized look. Finally, there was an overhead shot of Brazil as if it had been taken from Google Maps. The screen slowly zoomed in over Fortaleza and the words popped up, "the first international aquarium of Latin America." My mind took a moment to take that in. Will Fortaleza soon be one of the most famous Latin American cities?

In the interviews with the professors of tourism of Faculdade Ateneu and the deputy secretary of tourism, Marcos Pompeu, the word 'modern' came up surprisingly often. Fortaleza was often depicted as 'modern' or as a city that is increasingly so. The deputy secretary used said word to describe the infrastructure and tourist projects underway and their intended impact on Ceará:

Besides just an economic impact [of having an aquarium in Fortaleza,] we also have that impact in the image of the state, or rather, modern equipment, such as the Center of Events, the aquarium, the airport, the highways; and everything creates an image of a modern state, and therefore the tourist feels attracted to visit. (M. Pompeu, personal communication, November 14, 2013).

All of the professors and the deputy secretary were asked if they thought these recent tourism projects along with the influence of the World Cup would make Fortaleza into a more international city. All agreed to the statement and many went on to discuss how the projects will affect the image of Fortaleza internationally (see field journal).

This discourse requires close examination because while it may seem like an innocuous or laudable goal in principle, in practice, when these ideals are manifested and become the subconscious ideology of the leaders or those with money, this can become a real social justice issue. Overvaluing modernity and image could further exacerbate how the government treats impoverished communities, and perhaps this already exists at the root of that problem. There is an aversion to an ugly spot on the face of Fortaleza's face and instead of working to fix the root of the problem, there are just moves to conceal it. Building up tourism infrastructure should go hand and hand with efforts made to improve education, health care, and means of transportation.

Conclusion: Symbolism of the aquarium; the aquarium in and of itself is neither good nor evil

In the body of this paper, the Acquário Ceará and the issues related to its construction and the project itself were discussed, clarified and analyzed. First, the paper aimed to delineate the background of the aquarium, the timeline of events that occurred related to said project, and each key player and their relation to the aquarium. This section attempted to clarify each case made for or against the aquarium and to bring the information together into a single document so that it would be available in one source. The second section of the paper was devoted to examining current and predicted political, economic, and environmental impacts from the construction and or the finished project. The purpose of discussing the impacts was also to provide a source that contained a review of some of the more prevalent ideas being debated. The final section placed the aquarium in the greater context of tourism in Fortaleza and Ceará, and how it is a part of an integrated strategy to promote a reorientation of tourism. This section was included to help readers conceptualize the bigger picture behind this one project.

With the presented information in mind, the reader can easily see that arguments can be made about the aquarium from all different angles. Additionally, a lot of what is disputed are impacts that are unpredictable as of now or can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. Every opinion on the aquarium falls onto a spectrum that ranges from inherently good to inherently bad. On the end, the aquarium is regarded as a poor use of public funds that will create repercussions for Fortaleza and Ceará. In the middle, the project will create more jobs, more economic growth, but perhaps the money could have been allocated to more wanting areas of society, like education or healthcare. And on the other

end, the aquarium will improve the image of Fortaleza in the world's eye and have all types of benefits in many different areas that will continue to manifest themselves over the coming years.

With all different types of analyses and evaluations available, the one conclusion that can be made about the aquarium is that nothing is black or white. Nothing is inherently done with good intentions or bad intentions. In reviewing the data presented in this monograph, there are more questions generated than answers. "Is the aquarium good or bad?" is not a viable question to ask; in fact, what is presented in this paper makes that question even more complex.

What can be ascertained from all the controversy from all different parties across the board, is that many disconnects exist. If the Ministério Público truly represents the public interest, than the majority of residents of Fortaleza and Ceará do not want this aquarium, do not think it is a good allocation of resources, or do not agree with the motives behind its development. In my personal opinion, it is not acceptable for the citizens of a democracy to be shut out in important decisions regarding distribution of public funds. Their leaders should be in power to serve the public's wishes and to look out for those who are intrinsically disadvantaged by society.

Now that construction has begun and there is little possibility of that being put to a stop, the discussions should be shifted to working to mitigate any negative consequences, environmental or socioeconomic.

Social Relevance

This ISP should be of great social relevance to the populace of the state of Ceará as the project's construction is being publicly funded (but its administration and upkeep

will be outsourced to the private sector) (Ferreira, Magno, and Coelho, 2013). As such, this research should be valuable to the public because it will pull together some of the available information on what the Secretaria do Turismo is doing with these funds. The Acquário Ceará does not have an official webpage where all the information regarding the construction, finances, and benefits are available. The lack of official information and the feeling expressed by many residents that they do not have a say in the project has generated misinformation online and more dissent. This monograph was written with the desire of collecting the details and different arguments for and against the aquarium so that people have the opportunity to make educated judgments about it. Additionally, the investigation will serve as another case study for the literature on the tourism industry in NE Brazil. The aquarium is being built using, in part, public funds.

Future Research

Extensions of this research could be conceptualized in many ways. If one wanted to continue looking at the same questions addressed in this monograph, it would be possible to continue developing the section on political, economic and environmental impacts because more potential impacts exist, but because of the scope of this research, could not be included in this paper. Additionally, if one had the opportunity to continue this research after the aquarium opens in 2015, there would be much to study about what did or did not fulfill expectations and predictions.

If one were to broaden the focus and explore the future of tourism in Fortaleza on a more general level, there would be a lot more ground to cover, but it would add considerable to the narrative of tourism in Ceará. And following the World Cup in 2014, or even waiting a few years after that mega-sporting event, there would be a new crop of

information available. There would be considerable potential to study how tourism changed after the World Cup and with the thrust from all the projects and infrastructure currently being implemented by the state and SETUR.

Appendix I

1. Could you have done this project in the USA? What data or sources were unique to the culture in which you did the project?

In a sense, I could have done very similar research on tourism in the USA. There are many cities in the United States that have a strong tourism industry and certainly many problematic tourism projects as well. What was unique to Fortaleza, however, the state of Ceará is historically poor and tourism was a method chosen to help boost its economy. Also the literature available on tourism in the Northeast of Brazil is related to or explores the consequences of the model of tourism development imposed upon the NE of Brazil by the World Bank.

2. Could you have done any part of it in the USA? Would the results have been different? How?

Working from the USA on this research project would have been very limiting. I could do the preparation for the field work period in the US, but all the data gathering would be severely limited from another country. The majority of my research was based on documents from the case and interviews. The majority interviews were only set up and conducted after I had visited the agency and established rapport. A lot of the documents I used for the write up of my monograph were given to me during interviews. As such, there is a strong chance that had I attempted to email subjects for interviews via email, I would have been rejected and would have not gotten my hands on the various documents I collected over the ISP period.

3. Did the process of doing the ISP modify your learning style? How was this different from your previous style and approaches to learning?

The ISP period was my first experience with having the ability to completely structure my time, first experience with deciding the methods I used to gather information, and first experience with writing a monograph. I did not think the ISP necessarily modified my learning style, but it taught me to better understand myself and how I handle academic independence. I thought that I successfully managed my time and that I did not put all the work off until the last minute. I would say the work I did for this ISP is not comparable to any other ways I've approached learning in the past because I have simply never had this much time to devote to one project.

4. How much of the final monograph is primary data? How much is from secondary sources?

I would say that it is 50-50. The nature of my project made it almost impossible to have 75% primary data. I do not, however, think that because it is 50-50 that it makes it better or worse. I simply chose questions that made me reliant on secondary sources as well.

5. What criteria did you use to evaluate your data for inclusion in the final monograph? Or how did you decide to exclude certain data?

In order to begin organizing and drafting my monograph, I started by looking over my problem statement and abstract from my ISP proposal. From there I was able to quickly decide on three main focuses for my ISP. I had a lot more information than I was able to put into the monograph, but it does not pertain directly to the questions I posed in my problem statement so it does not need to be brought into this project.

6. How did the "drop-off's" or field exercises contribute to the process and completion of the ISP?

I think that the interviewing work we did in Canindé was particularly helpful when it came to actually interviewing because I had already experienced a bad interview and a good interview. I lost a lot of nervousness by having a run through. I think that more activities in Portuguese class that require interacting with strangers might help as well.

7. What part of the RME most significantly influenced the ISP process?

I think that the conversations about ethics were really necessary for me because I had never done fieldwork before. So before, I simply did not have the eye for identifying ethical or unethical behavior in the field. I do believe, however, that sometimes the ethical conversations got hammered in a little too much.

8. What were the principal problems you encountered while doing the ISP? Were you able to resolve these and how?

I think for me the principal problem encountered was finding subjects to interview. Often times, I would be referred to someone who was not really capable of answering questions I needed for my project. Sometimes I was not able to resolve this problem (for example, at the TCE), but in other cases I was able to. If this problem arose, it would take a few days to sort out but normally I would just talk to the person I was referred to, and he would refer me to the right person to talk to.

9. Did you experience any time constraints? How could these have been resolved?

Toward the end I did experience time constraints. I found myself needing to do visits and interview during the write-up week. This could have been resolved had I not been waiting for my advisor to get back to me about when he could take me to these visits and I had just got a cab and headed over by myself. I was just very worried that I would not be seen if I were without someone who worked in the government. I was worried I (and my cause) would not be taken seriously.

10. Did your original topic change and evolved as you discovered or did not discover new and different resources? Did the resources available modify or determine the topic?

My topic did not change over the course of the ISP period, but I was introduced into a much more complex world than how I had conceptualized it before entering the field.

The resources I found that were related (but did not answer my problem statement and therefore will not be included in the monograph) were, perhaps, a whole other project on its own as there was a lot to be analyzed within that material as well.

11. How did you go about finding resources: institutions, interviewees, publications, etc.?

Before ISP period started, I did a lot of research on the web about the aquarium. From that I got a grasp of what organizations and government agencies were key players in the controversy. A lot of publications I found online made me realize more existed that simply weren't available online and a few of secondary sources I was able to get out of interviews. A lot of the interviews I got were through connections by my advisor.

12. What method(s) did you use? How did you decide to use such method(s)?

I decided to make my fieldwork primarily interview based, simply because my proposal was not conducive to doing participant-observation. I was able to do some observation during my visits of government agencies and visit to the aquarium worksite, but still it was not a significant portion of the fieldwork. I had many informal conversations with people in government agencies and conducted three semi-formal interviews with civil servants. I conducted six interviews in total.

13. Comment on your relations with your advisor: indispensable? Occasionally helpful? Not very helpful? At what point was he/she most helpful? Were there cultural differences, which influenced your relationship? A different understanding of educational processes and goals? Was working with the advisor instructional?

My advisor was very helpful and crucial to the beginning process of the ISP. He works for the Governor's office so he was a huge help in preparing me for interviews at other governmental branches. He also facilitated the process of meeting people and setting up interviews for the first week and a half of ISP period. However, when my advisor ceased responding to my emails, calls and texts during the second half of the ISP period, I was still able to successfully set up interviews and extract necessary information.

14. Did you reach any dead ends? Hypotheses which turned out to be not useful? Interviews or visits that had no application?

I had been sure that one government agency, TCE, would be a very useful resource as an argument against the aquarium. But when I finally was able to have an informal conversation with the man I hoped to interview, I found out the information I had procured online was incorrect. I had expected from the beginning, however, that I would run up against walls like that.

15. What insights did you gain into the culture as a result of doing the ISP, which you might not otherwise have gained?

More than anything, I learned a lot about business/formal relations in Portuguese. I learned what expected of dress, behavior, and conversation in very formal environments. I learned how to write formal emails. While this example is not necessarily a part of the culture, I do consider it to be a cultural attribute because what is expected here is not the same as in the United States.

16. Did the ISP process assist your adjustment to the culture? Integration?

I feel like it did not *directly* assist my adjustment. Indirectly, it did: my Portuguese improved which helped conversations that happened outside of my field work, and having more free time also pushed me to go to more cultural events and get out more in general and I made some more acquaintances in Fortaleza.

17. What were the principal lessons you learned from the ISP process?

I learned how to navigate by myself in an unfamiliar city. I learned how to hold my own in difficult conversations in language that is not my native tongue. I learned how to organize and write a major research paper.

18. If you met a future student who wanted to do this same project, what would be your recommendations to him/her?

I would advise that he or she researched the situation extensively before going into the field and know all the names of the people he or she wanted to interview before beginning her field work. I would also recommend that she interviewed as many people involved as possible because everyone has different, interesting takes on the situation.

19. Given what you know now, would you undertake this, or a similar project again?

I would certainly undertake this project (or a similar one) again. In fact, I think I would enjoy furthering this paper and refining the information gathered. It was an intensive process but certainly rewarding; having produced this monograph will something I will always be proud of when I look back on my college career.

Appendix II- Interview Questions

Professors:

O que é o foco dos seus estudos de turismo?

Na sua opinião, como vai a industria turística em Ceará? E em Fortaleza?

O que você opina que melhora a industria de turismo agora?

Quero saber o que você sabe sobre esse projeto, sobre o aquário, sobre a controvérsia.

Como vai servir o aquário para a indústria turística ou como vai afeitar a indústria na sua opinião?

Que impacto vai ter o aquário para a cidade, para o povo daqui?

O que você acha sobre os desvantagens de contratar uma empresa multinacional para projeto de Ceará

O que você acha sobre o empréstimo? Você acha que está bem usar tanto dinheiro estrangeiro para construir esse projeto? Ou, não?

Em termos gerais, o que opina você sobre a Secretaria do Turismo do Estado? E sobre o planejamento dela?

. E quero saber se você acha que no caso de Ceará, de Fortaleza, a maneira de usar turismo como para criar uma economia; se este realmente vai melhorar esse problema de desigualdade da renda?

As duas ultimas perguntas tem que ver com essa coisa que vou dizer: Agora mesmo estão acabando de construir o Centro de Eventos (que é o segundo mais grande de Latino America), o Terminal de Passageiros do Mucuripe, o aquário está sendo construído agora, estão fazendo reformas de Pinto Martins, e também vão construir um aeroporto perto de Jericoacora e outro aeroporto perto de Canoa Quebrada. O que você opina sobre este empurrão turística?

Você acha que esses grandes projetos para o turismo e também a Copa, vão levar Fortaleza para reconhecimento internacional?

Jose Filho:

Como Promotor de Justiça de Defesa do Meio Ambiente, o que você faz especificamente? Quais são suas responsabilidades?

Gostaria de saber a sua opinião sobre o aquário. Opinião pessoal.

Quais são os problema principais relacionados ao construção? Em termos ambientais e também termos gerais?

Na sua opinião, acha que existem uns vantagens ambientais de construir este aquário?

Um argumento que apóia a construção do aquário e que vai ser um lugar de estudos marinhos que vai girar mais informação sobre o mar daqui, do nordeste do Brasil. Que acha sobre isso?

Marcos Pompeu:

Para começar, você pode falar lentamente e claramente o seu nome completo e a sua função na Secretaria do Turismo?

Como Secretario Adjunto, o que é que você faz especificamente? Quais são as suas responsabilidades?

De onde veio a idéia do aquário? Faz quanto tempo?

Na sua opinião, que mais falta em Fortaleza para receber mais turistas internacionais?

Como foi o processo de aprovar o aquário? Por quais órgãos governamentais teve que passar?

Como vai servir o aquário para a industria turística?

Quais são os benefícios de ter um aquário aqui, e os desvantagens?

No vídeo de antes, chama o aquário como o primeiro aquário internacional de America Latina, que quer dizer com essa frase?

O meu entendimento é que uma parte do acordo com o banco Ex-Im é que o empréstimo era condicional com usar a empresa ICM-Reynolds, ne? Então, o que veio primeiro, o interesse no empréstimo ou a idéia de contratar a empresa ICM-Reynolds?

Eu quero saber mais de como o aquário serviria como centro de estudos de biologia marinha.

Existe uma polemica sobre o aquário e a Lei de Licitações, pode me explicar um pouco sobre isso; o que aconteceu, como é agora?

Ivan Aquino:

Para começar, você pode dizer—falar claramente e lentamente o seu nome e a sua função na SEMACE?

Como supervisor do Núcleo, o que é que você faz especificamente? Quais são as suas responsabilidades?

Em na SEMACE, tem servidores ensinados para fazer esta EIA/RIMA? Porque faz dois dias você me falou que sempre contratam empresas terceirizadas, ne? Para fazer essa EIA/RIMA. É verdade?

Muitas pessoas que estão em contra do projeto do aquário (como ativistas, o Ministério Publico) arrogam que a proximidade do aquário ao mar, vai causar como uma mudança da altura da orla do mar. Não só em Fortaleza mas também por outras partes do litoral. Você sabe sobre isso?

O Ministério Publico Federal publicou uma ação civil que exigiu que a IBAMA fizesse as licenças ambientais do aquário. E, a IBAMA respondeu que não tinha essa competência de fazer este relatório. E você, que opina sobre isso?

A última pergunta que tenho, quero perguntar a sua opinião pessoal sobre toda essa polemica que eu tinha falado. Por exemplo que o Ministério Publico, como, pegou

essas leis para usar essas leis contra a construção do aquário. O que opina sobre isso?