



TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE TERRITORIAL DYNAMICS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF CARAGUATATUBA/ SÃO PAULO (1990-2022)

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DO MUNICÍPIO DE CARAGUATATUBA/SP (1990-2022))**

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the transformations in the territorial dynamics of Caraguatatuba, on the Northern Coast of São Paulo, between 1990 and 2022, considering the impact of population growth on urban space through processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. The methodology used data analysis from primary and secondary sources, such as the IBGE, Pólis Institute and FUNDAAC. The results demonstrate that growth contributed to the intensification of disorderly urbanization and real estate speculation. These processes displaced traditional caiçara communities and low-income residents to peripheral or at-risk areas, exacerbating inequalities and climate vulnerability. Simultaneously, these transformations attracted migratory flows seeking employment opportunities, especially in the oil and tourism sectors, increasing pressure on urban and social infrastructure. In conclusion, the article proposes that public policies reconcile economic development, social inclusion, and environmental preservation, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Keywords: Territorial Dynamics; Territorialization; Gentrification; Socio-Spatial Segregation; Caraguatatuba.

RESUMO

O artigo tem como objetivo analisar as transformações nas dinâmicas territoriais de Caraguatatuba, no litoral norte de São Paulo, entre 1990 e 2022, considerando o impacto do crescimento populacional no espaço urbano perante os processos de territorialização, desterritorialização e reterritorialização. A metodologia recorreu à análise de dados de fontes primárias e secundárias como IBGE, Instituto Pólis e FUNDAAC. Os resultados demonstram que o crescimento contribuiu para a intensificação da urbanização desordenada e da especulação imobiliária. Estes processos deslocaram comunidades caiçaras tradicionais e moradores de baixa renda para áreas periféricas ou de risco, agravando desigualdades e vulnerabilidades climáticas. Simultaneamente, as transformações atraíram fluxos migratórios em busca de oportunidades de emprego, especialmente no setor de petróleo e turismo, aumentando a pressão sobre a infraestrutura urbana e social. Como conclusão, propõe-se que as políticas públicas conciliem desenvolvimento econômico, inclusão social e preservação ambiental, alinhadas aos Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS).

Palavras-chave: Dinâmicas Territoriais; Territorialização; Gentrificação; Segregação socioespacial; Caraguatatuba.

1 INTRODUCTION

Between 1990 and 2022, the city of Caraguatatuba underwent urban and socioeconomic transformations, consolidating itself as a strategic hub in the Metropolitan Region of the Paraíba Valley and North Coast of São Paulo. Between 2010 and 2022, Caraguatatuba experienced a population growth of approximately 33.75%, according to the 2010 and 2022 censuses (IBGE, 2022). Caraguatatuba exemplifies the urban and economic dynamics of coastal cities that, in addition to their role in tourism, have attracted global attention for the exploration of natural resources, such as oil and gas, especially in the context of the pre-salt layer. This development, aligned with the international search for energy, contributes to urbanization and reinforces Caraguatatuba as a strategic hub in the oil and gas sector's production chain. However, these advances also bring challenges, such as pressure on urban infrastructure, real estate speculation, and the necessity of public policies to promote sustainable and inclusive urbanization.

However, this urban growth does not occur in isolation, as it is intrinsically linked to interconnected factors that shape the urban fabric and the socioeconomic dynamics of the region. Among these factors, the exploration of gas and oil, the increase in tourism activities, and real estate



speculation by large construction companies stand out. Understanding the complex dynamics that shape Caraguatatuba contributes to the development of more sustainable and inclusive strategies that benefit the entire community. The analysis of the socioeconomic and urban transformations of the city, considering its population growth and the impacts of economic development, provides support for the formulation of public policies that seek to balance urban expansion with environmental preservation and social inclusion. Thus, the study of the territorial dynamics of Caraguatatuba provides a strategic vision to address the challenges faced by coastal cities undergoing urbanization and economic growth driven by sectors such as tourism and the exploitation of natural resources.

To understand these phenomena, it is essential to analyze urban space considering the categories proposed by Santos (1988), such as structure, process, function, and form. According to the author, these elements, when analyzed together, provide a solid theoretical basis for understanding the complex dynamics of spatial phenomena in the city. Thus, the objective of this paper is to analyze the territorial dynamics in the municipality of Caraguatatuba, on the North Coast of São Paulo, in relation to population growth, considering the processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization between 1990 and 2022.

The time frame encompasses three decades of transformations, allowing for an analysis of changes in land use patterns, urban expansion into environmental preservation areas, the emergence of new residential and commercial areas, and the effects of population migration. The resulting environmental impacts of these transformations will be considered, especially regarding the irregular occupation of at-risk areas, which brings with it environmental degradation and climate vulnerability.

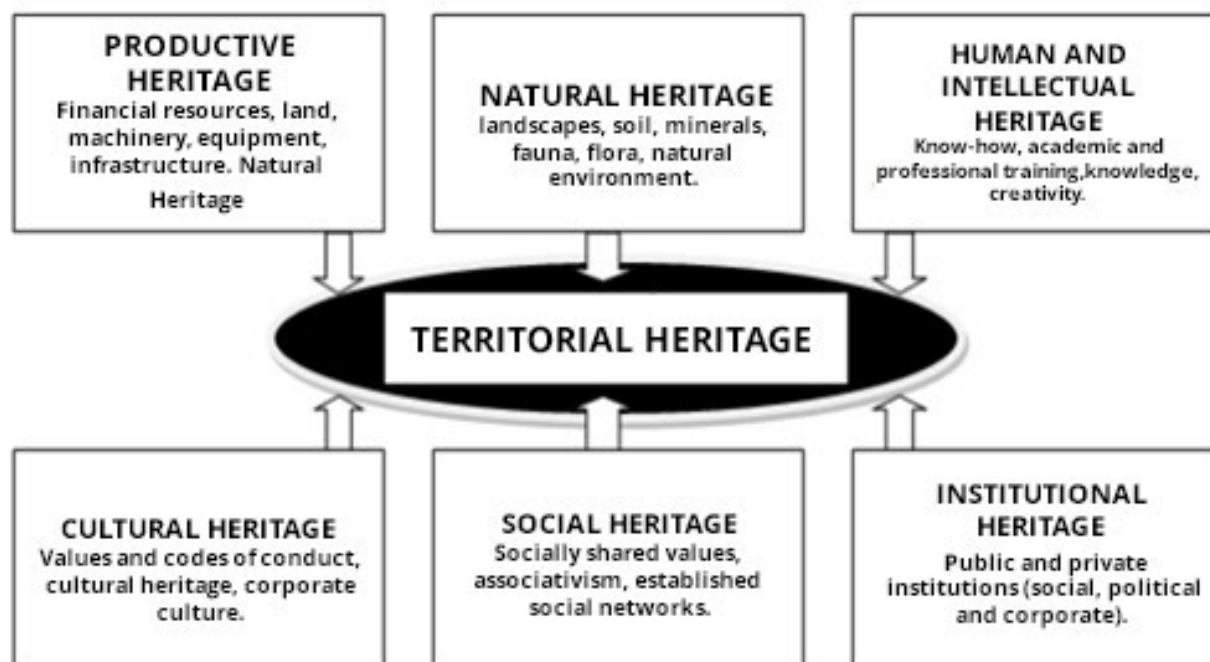


2. APPROACHES TO THE TERRITORY

2.1 TERRITORIAL HERITAGE

The concept of territorial heritage contributes to the understanding of the development of coastal cities like Caraguatatuba. Territorial heritage corresponds to the “set of assets and resources, both tangible and intangible, which have accumulated throughout history in a given territory” (Dallabrida, 2020, p. 12), a definition that encompasses tangible and intangible assets. Dallabrida (2020) points out that the activation of territorial heritage is a process for promoting the sustainable and balanced development of territories. Activation refers to the strategic and efficient use of material and intangible resources historically accumulated in a given territory. This process involves several dimensions such as social, productive, cultural, natural, institutional, and human-intellectual. As shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1 | Territorial heritage and its components



Source: Dallabrida (2020).

Dallabrida (2020) defines territorial heritage as the set of tangible and intangible assets and resources accumulated throughout history in a given territory that can be activated for development. To understand the process of activating territorial heritage, it is necessary to refer to the concepts of resources and assets. Assets are understood as factors in activity, while resources are factors to be revealed, explored, or organized. Resources, unlike assets, thus constitute a reserve, a latent potential (Benko; Pecqueur, 2001, p. 41). In the process of exploiting a territory, the objective is precisely to transform resources into assets through actions ranging from the organization and planning of space to the cultivation, preparation, and development of its potential. When exploiting a territory, adequate planning may involve the construction of infrastructure, the improvement of accessibility conditions, the implementation of public policies, and even the valorization of available natural and cultural resources. Exploitation is an active process of transformation that seeks to take advantage of existing resources and convert them into real assets.

The activation of territorial assets, as discussed by Dallabrida (2020), is essential for sustainable development. Population growth and territorial transformations require an integrated approach that values the natural, cultural, social, and institutional resources of the municipality. Effective public policies and strategic management of available resources are fundamental to promoting balanced development and improving the quality of life of the population.

Analyzing the territory from the perspective of Brazilian regional and territorial public policies, we can highlight the existing scalar dynamics within them (Stoffel, Rambo, Freitas, 2019). Regarding Caraguatatuba, the emphasis is on urban territorial dynamics, including socio-spatial segregation, territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization processes, as well as the impacts of population growth and economic transformations on the city's urban configuration. This choice is justified by the relevance of urban issues in the municipality, which have been strongly influenced by factors such as pre-salt oil exploration, the duplication of the Tamoios Highway, and gentrification and real estate speculation processes—dynamics that have shaped the urban territory of Caraguatatuba, contributing to the challenges and opportunities faced by the city in the 21st century.

Boisier (2000) argues that territorial development is broader than regional development, as it involves the integration of multiple dimensions (social, economic, environmental) and action at various spatial scales (local, regional, national, global). For territorial development to be effective, a transformation process is necessary that breaks with the status quo, involving tensions and choices of alternatives that build historical trajectories. In this same perspective, Brandão (2007) reinforces the importance of the involvement and legitimation of actions by local actors, highlighting that development should promote autonomy of decision-making and expand the space for action of social subjects.

When considering local, regional, national, and global scales, Brandão (2008) emphasizes the importance of integrated strategies that recognize the interconnection between different geographical and social contexts. This multidimensional approach is fundamental to addressing contemporary challenges, such as socioeconomic inequality, environmental degradation, and spatial fragmentation, promoting more equitable and sustainable development in all its manifestations. The discussion on territory and development is fundamental to understanding the complexity involved in implementing effective public policies. Territory should not be seen merely as a geographical delimitation, but as a space of social, economic, and cultural interaction. Recognizing this complexity and promoting the active participation of local actors is essential to achieving sustainable and inclusive development.

In the context of territorial dynamics, regional planning and development play a crucial role in preserving the environment and mitigating the environmental impacts caused by urban and economic expansion. The concept of development, historically associated with economic growth and the satisfaction of basic needs, has evolved to incorporate the dimension of socio-environmental sustainability, recognizing the need to reconcile development with environmental preservation (Santos *et al.* 2012, p. 45).



2.2 CAIÇARA TERRITORY AND CULTURE

The concept of territory is fundamental to understanding the socio-spatial transformations in Caraguatatuba, especially in relation to the processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. Analyzing changes in the urban and socioeconomic landscape of the city from the perspective of contemporary theories of territory offers a solid basis for understanding the dynamics that shape the municipality. According to Haesbaert (2004), territory should be understood from a relational perspective, within a set of social relations that constantly redefine it, continuously undergoing territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization.

The urban development of Caraguatatuba corresponds to a historical territorialization based on fishing and agriculture, passing through the deterritorialization driven by the pre-salt industry, up to the current reterritorialization focused on tourism and civil construction, reflecting this relational perspective. Haesbaert (2023) highlights that understanding the territory implies recognizing the interactions between society and nature; in the case of Caraguatatuba, this is reflected in the environmental and social impacts resulting from disordered urban expansion and real estate speculation. One of the central concepts for understanding socio-spatial transformations is the triad proposed by Santos (1978). For the author, territorialization refers to the process by which social groups establish and delimit their space of action; deterritorialization, in turn, involves the loss or transformation of this space due to social, economic, or cultural changes; reterritorialization refers to the search for new forms of appropriation of space. These concepts are crucial for analyzing how the exploitation of natural resources and urban development impact the dynamics of Caraguatatuba. Regarding the concept of territorialization, it is noted that space precedes territory, and that territory is defined by the power relations that occur for that space to develop into territory.

This concept manifests itself in the socio-spatial transformations driven by factors such as the exploitation of natural resources, tourism, and real estate speculation in the coastal municipality of Caraguatatuba. The territorial delimitation in the city is neither fixed nor linear, but subject to change as different actors, including governments, businesses, and local communities, intervene and reconfigure the space according to their interests and needs. This approach emphasizes that territorialization is a historical and social process, where the boundaries and uses of urban space



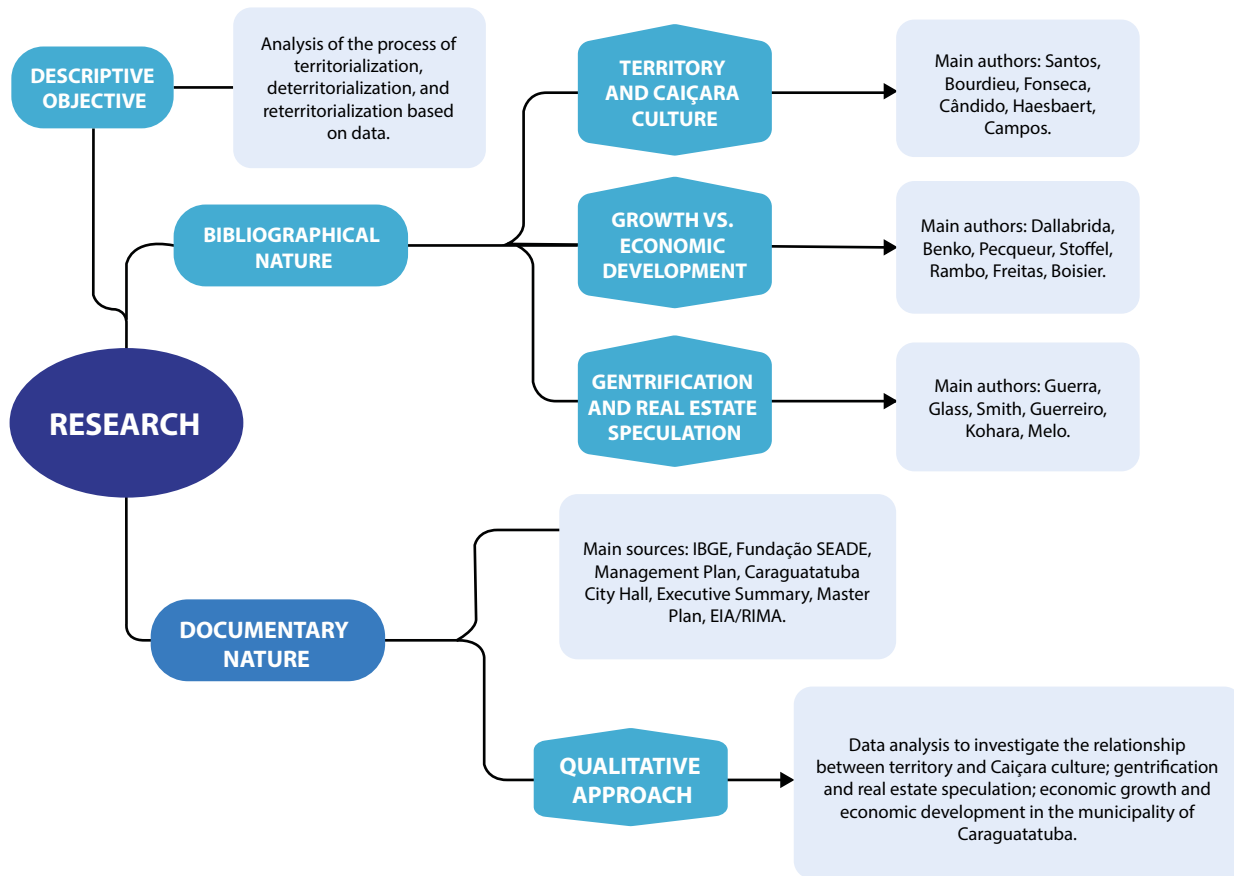
can change significantly over time, reflecting the multiplicity of power relations and the diversity of social interactions present in the region. Furthermore, the deterritorialization and reterritorialization observed in Caraguatatuba exemplify how economic and political pressures can destabilize existing spatial structures promoting new forms of land occupation and use that serve different agendas, often to the detriment of the most vulnerable communities.

With globalization, deterritorialization has become predominant, as borders have become more permeable and cultural identities more fluid. Reterritorialization involves the search for new forms of identity and belonging. Harvey (2005) addresses deterritorialization in the context of globalization, discussing how the fluidity of capital and information affects traditional territorial structures, influencing urban development and resource exploitation. Haesbaert (2023), in turn, argues that transformations and changes in territories do not necessarily lead to the disappearance of cultural identities, but rather contribute to the construction of new forms of identity that reflect the interactions and interconnections that occur in the process of territorial mobility and fluidity. He emphasizes that territories are not fixed or static, but rather dynamic and constantly transforming.

3 METHOD

The research was conducted using the scalar method proposed by Dallabrida (2020) to elucidate the territorial dynamics of development based on four theoretical categories: territory, governance, heritage, and territorial development. Combined with this perspective, a historical approach was adopted to identify factors related to the historical trajectory of the Caraguatatuba territory (Santos and Carniello, 2014). Thus, in this documentary research, data and indicators about Caraguatatuba were used, concerning local history and culture, legislation over the years related to the real estate sector, population growth, economic growth, and sustainable development. Figure 2 summarizes the research method.

Figure 2 | Research Methodology



Source: Authors' own work.

The main research instrument was the documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources, with data collected from official documents, technical reports, statistics, and information provided by the municipality, Instituto Pólis, FUNDAAC, and IBGE. Table 1 presents the list of indicators, information, and data used, as well as their respective sources, which were used in the research.

Table 1 | List of indicators, information and data used in the research

Indicators / Information / Data	Source
Master Plan and Revisions	Municipality of Caraguatatuba
Juqueriquerê Management Plan	Ambiens Solutions Environmental
Growth Population	IBGE – Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
Historical and Cultural Data	Pólis Institute
RMVPLN Diagnosis	Secretariat for Regional Development of the State of São Paulo
Summary Executive from Caraguatatuba	Pólis Institute
Urban Socio-environmental Diagnosis	Pólis Institute
Environmental Impact Report	Petrobras
Socioeconomic Data	Management Plan (APAMLN)
HDI – Human Development Index	IFDM – FIRJAM Municipal Development Index
Urban Sprawl Evolution	Pólis Institute
Mapping of informal settlements and riparian zones	IPT – Institute for Technological Research
Dynamics Real estate	Pólis Institute
Zoning Ecological	Municipality of Caraguatatuba
Waste Management Plan Solids	Municipality of Caraguatatuba
Historical and Cultural Data	FUNDAAC

Source: Elaborated by the authors.



4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 TERRITORIALIZATION: THE FORMATION OF TERRITORIAL HERITAGE IN CARAGUATATUBA

Territorialization refers to the establishment of a population in a specific area, which often implies processes of organizing and structuring space to meet the necessities of residents (Santos, 1978). In the case of Caraguatatuba, rapid territorialization brought with it challenges in the management of urban land, since the existing infrastructure often did not keep pace with the rate of population growth.

Caraguatatuba, located on the Northern Coast of São Paulo, was founded on April 20, 1857, with a predominance of agricultural and extractive activities that shaped a rural and dispersed base (Campos, 2000). Throughout its history, Caraguatatuba has undergone several territorialization processes that have shaped its communities and neighborhoods. The formation of Caiçara settlements, for example, represents a traditional territorialization based on ways of life associated with the natural environment. With accelerated urbanization, new neighborhoods have emerged, often informally and irregularly, reflecting the need for housing and the pressures of the real estate market.

The territorial heritage of Caraguatatuba is composed of elements that reflect the natural, cultural, productive, social, human, and institutional diversity of the municipality, consolidating its identity and importance on the North Coast of São Paulo. These heritages, by interacting with the territory, not only shape the local dynamics but also represent strategic resources for the socioeconomic and environmental development of the region. In the productive sphere, Caraguatatuba stands out for its artisanal fishing and local agriculture, especially with the cultivation of bananas and other typical agricultural products (Caraguatatuba Municipal Government, 2021). The city is also a strategic point for natural gas exploration, with the operation of Petrobras and the Monteiro Lobato Gas Treatment Terminal (UTGCA), which plays a crucial role in the regional economy. Furthermore, tourism is one of the main economic activities of the municipality, attracting visitors to its beaches, trails, traditional festivals, and cultural events (Petrobras, n.d.).



The natural heritage of Caraguatatuba encompasses part of the Serra do Mar Park, an environmental preservation area that protects biodiversity (Fundação Florestal, 2024). In the cultural field, the municipality preserves spaces that tell its story and celebrate its identity. Notable examples include the Caraguatatuba Museum of Art and Culture (MACC), which presents a rich collection about local history, and the Governor Mário Covas Municipal Theater, a venue for cultural events. The Hartãt Space, with its indigenous collection, is another important example, reinforcing the cultural roots of the territory. Human and intellectual heritage is represented by the traditional knowledge of the *Caiçara* people, manifested in practices such as the making of handicrafts with shells, fibers, and scales, as well as oral traditions and popular festivities. These elements reflect the cultural richness and sense of belonging of the local community.

The social heritage includes cultural associations and community initiatives, such as the Municipal Art and Craft Fair (FEMAAC), which brings together more than 90 local artisans, and the “Prof.^a Eloiza Andrade Antunes” Cultural and Educational Center. These spaces strengthen social bonds and promote community development. (Caraguatatuba Municipal Government, 2018). Finally, the institutional heritage of Caraguatatuba is marked by the work of institutions such as the Caraguatatuba Educational and Cultural Foundation (FUNDACC), responsible for promoting cultural and educational events, and the Afonso Schmidt Municipal Archive and Public Library, which preserves its historical memory. (FUNDACC, 2000). This set of heritages reveals the territorial complexity of Caraguatatuba.

In this context, the pressure on these peripheral areas became more noticeable from the 1970s onwards, when the first signs of irregular occupation began to appear, and developed with the population increase of the following decades. The historical processes of territorialization had a direct impact on the population growth of Caraguatatuba from 1990 and extends to the last census in 2022. The city experienced a significant increase in population, driven by economic development and the attraction of new residents and tourists. According to Table 1, Caraguatatuba showed a remarkable population growth between 1991 and 2022, increasing from 52,878 to 134,875 inhabitants (Vieira *et al.*, 2023).

Table 1 | Population Growth on the North Coast of São Paulo

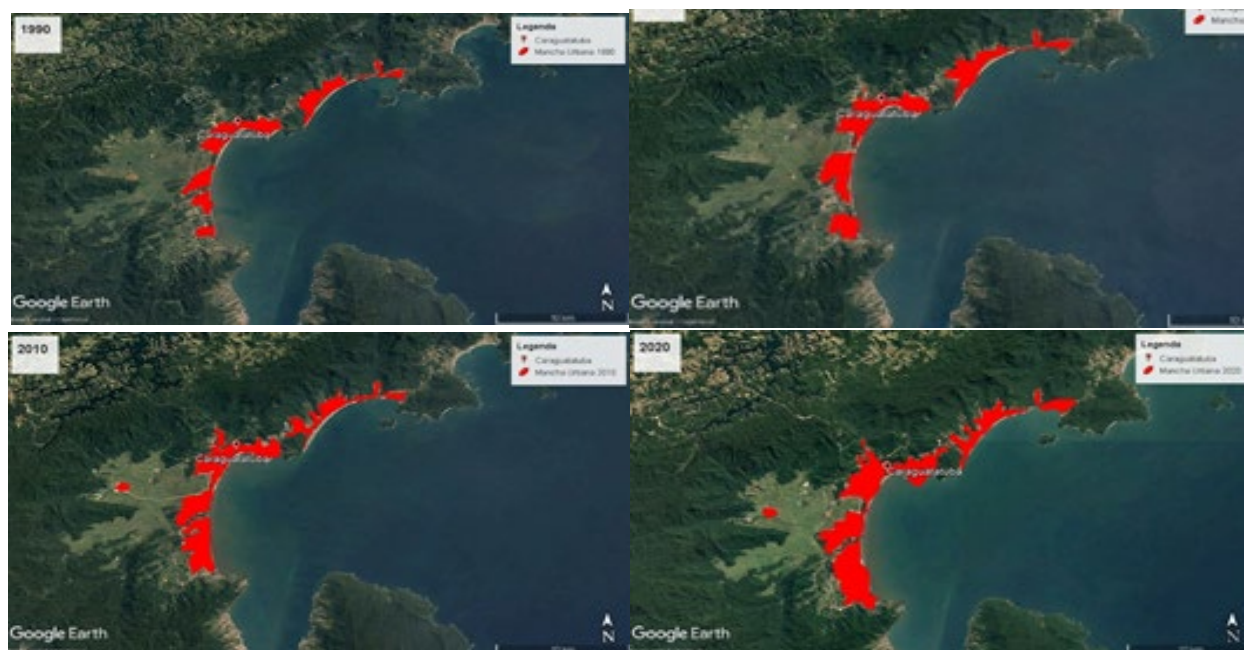
LOCATION	1991	2000	2010	2022
CARAGUATATUBA	52.878	78.921	100.840	134.875
ILHABELA	13.538	20.836	28.196	34.934
SÃO SEBASTIÃO	33.890	58.038	73.942	81.540
UBATUBA	47.398	66.861	78.801	92.980
NORTH COAST	147.704	224.656	281.779	309.395
VMRegion	1.651.594	1.992.110	2.264.594	2.506.053
SÃO PAULO	31.588.925	37.032.403	41.262.199	44.420.459
BRASIL	146.825.475	169.799.170	190.747.731	203.062.512

Source: Vieira *et al.*, 2023, p. 478

According to IBGE data, shown in Table 1, the population growth rate of Caraguatatuba from 1991 to 2022 was 155.07%, with a population growth of 34% in the last decade alone (Vieira *et al.*, 2023, p. 478). Caraguatatuba was the municipality that showed the greatest population growth from 2010 until the last IBGE census in 2022, among the municipalities of the Metropolitan Region of Paraíba Valley and North Coast. From the 1990s onwards, Caraguatatuba experienced population and housing growth, particularly in the form of disordered occupations on hillsides and riverside areas, resulting in precarious settlements located in high-risk areas. At the same time, the coastline was almost entirely occupied, except for a few areas between Indaiá and Palmeiras, and between Cocanha and Mococa (Instituto Pólis – Executive Summary of Caraguatatuba, 2012).

Urban densification also advanced in previously occupied neighborhoods, especially in the Southern part of the municipality, expanding the urban sprawl towards the Serra do Mar mountain range. This period was marked by socio-spatial segregation, with the low-income population being pushed inland, while coastal areas near the shore were dominated by high-end secondary residences.

Figure 3 | Urban Sprawl of Caraguatatuba (1990 - 2020)



Source: Landsat images 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2020, Google Earth, 2024. Elaborated by the authors.

During the 2000s, the pace of urban expansion slowed, focusing mainly on consolidating already urbanized neighborhoods. However, settlements continued to advance towards the slopes of the Serra do Mar mountain range, increasing the risk of natural disasters. In this context, the installation of the Caraguatatuba Gas Treatment Unit (UTGCA) by Petrobras brought a new element of development to the city, although its location was disconnected from the existing urban fabric, in a sensitive area close to the Serra do Mar environmental protection zone.

In 2010, Caraguatatuba had a highly occupied, yet fragmented, coastline, with luxury subdivisions and condominiums that did not integrate with each other, leaving large empty areas between the urbanized spaces. The advance of real estate speculation and gentrification continued to shape the occupation of the city, while problems of irregular occupation and precarious housing persisted, especially in at-risk areas. Over the decades, Caraguatatuba underwent a significant transformation in its urban configuration, especially compared to the first half of the 20th century. Central neighborhoods such as Sumaré, Estrela D'Alva, Jardim Primavera, and Indaiá began to show increasing population density, while more distant neighborhoods, such as Martim de Sá, Palmeiras, Porto Novo, Prainha, and Massaguaçu, were also gradually occupied. During this same period, the

emergence of luxury condominiums, such as Tabatinga, was observed, marking the beginning of a new real estate and socio-spatial dynamic in the city (Gigliotti and Santos, 2013).

In 2022, the urban landscape of Caraguatatuba reflected an even more significant process of urban densification, with a large part of the territory already occupied. Real estate speculation intensified, resulting in new high-end constructions in the most valued areas near the coast, while the low-income population continued to be pushed to more distant regions with less infrastructure. The Master Plan, revised over the years, attempted to mitigate the impacts of these transformations, but socio-spatial segregation, irregular occupations, and the loss of cultural identity of traditional neighborhoods, especially those of the Caiçara people, remained critical challenges for urban planning. The growth of the city was thus characterized by increased pressure on the environment and a dynamic of constant territorialization and reterritorialization.

Studies by Vieira et al. (2023) indicate that the economic growth of the municipalities on the North Coast, especially Ilhabela and São Sebastião, is strongly related to the expansion of ventures linked to oil exploration and port activities. However, Caraguatatuba and Ubatuba also experienced economic growth above the regional, state, and national average, driven mainly by the tourism sector, as is the case in Ubatuba, which is not directly linked to oil or port activities.

Thus, starting in the 1990s, a new territorialization took shape in the municipality of Caraguatatuba, resulting from intense migration driven by the growth of tourism, real estate speculation, the search for pre-salt oil reserves, and the subsequent duplication of the Tamoios Highway. Within this range of factors driving the economic growth of the city, it is possible to analyze that this economic growth did not occur in line with its development. Regarding the problems related to this growth, there are socio-spatial segregation, a lack of urban infrastructure and equitable quality of life, as well as irregular land occupation in areas of risk and/or permanent preservation.

The duplication of the Tamoios Highway not only facilitated traffic between São Paulo and the North Coast, but also had a significant impact on logistics chains, allowing for a more efficient flow of goods. This can lead to reductions in transportation costs and delivery times, benefiting both logistics companies and consumers. However, these transformations do not occur without complex

consequences, especially regarding real estate appreciation, speculation, and gentrification.

The Coastal Project (PMC, 2003) carried out a comprehensive mapping that details the current situation, development trends, and desired situation for the coastline of Caraguatatuba. The objective of the project is to achieve the desired situation through urban improvements and infrastructure. Still, the concentration of infrastructure investments in central areas and the prevalence of private interests over public ones have perpetuated existing trends. Instead of promoting an equitable redistribution of the benefits of development, these actions tend to exacerbate real estate speculation and gentrification, expanding inequalities and resulting in the displacement of traditional Caiçara populations to less valued peripheral areas.

Currently, the duplication of the Tamoios Highway and expansions related to the oil industry have significantly contributed to the territorial transformation of Caraguatatuba, with the territorialization of new areas for commercial and industrial use, but they also generate spatial segregation and environmental impacts. These deficiencies can increase problems of mobility, supply, and quality of life, resulting in the forced displacement of residents who live in areas without essential services.

4.2 DETERRITORIALIZATION OF THE DETERRITORIALIZED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CARAGUATATUBA

Deterritorialization occurs when communities or individuals are displaced or expropriated from their original territories. In Caraguatatuba, this phenomenon can be observed in the removal of traditional populations and vulnerable communities due to urban development projects or pressures from the real estate market. This displacement often results in the migration of these populations to peripheral and less developed areas, causing irregular land occupation and creating pockets of poverty. The deterritorialization of Caraguatatuba from 1990 onwards can be understood as the processes that destabilized established forms of land use and organization, causing significant changes in the socio-spatial and economic structure of the city. Urban expansion and real estate speculation frequently led to the displacement of low-income populations to peripheral and less developed areas. This generated a fragmentation of urban space and contributed to the formation



of irregular settlements and slums (Gigliotti and Santos 2013).

According to Tulik (1995), the relationship between tourism and secondary residences is defined by the “time-cost-distance relationship.” Improved access conditions, such as the duplication of Tamoios Highway, facilitate travel and reduce travel time, making the city more attractive for the construction of secondary residences. For Weissberg (2009, p. 14), “The increase in secondary residences represents the strength of the real estate sector in the coastal area”. The transformation of rural or natural areas into urban zones or areas of real estate speculation has frequently destabilized traditional forms of land use. The phenomenon of tourism as a driver of population growth in Caraguatatuba can be observed in the increased verticalization of the municipality (IBGE, 2024).

The current Master Plan of Caraguatatuba and its updates show a significant increase in the issuance of building permits for increasingly taller, vertically oriented buildings. This increase is a direct response to the liberalization of verticalization proposed in the city’s master plan in recent years. Envisioned in Law no. 10.257/2001 (Statute of the City), the Master Plan is the basic instrument of urban development policy and municipal planning and is mandatory legislation for cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants. Approved in 2011, the Master Plan of Caraguatatuba (Complementary Law 42/2011) underwent revision after five years of validity (Complementary Law 73/2018). According to the executive summary of Caraguatatuba, the Municipal Master Plan of Caraguatatuba defined Macrozones with specific zoning, which guide environmental protection and urban occupation policies. The Urban Development Macrozone defines specific zoning that allows verticalization at different levels and for diverse uses. Thus, vertical developments in Caraguatatuba comply with municipal zoning regulations and are implemented in areas that generally encourage commercial, service, and residential uses.

The new Master Plan of Caraguatatuba will allow areas previously considered Permanent Preservation Zones (ZPP) to become zones open for vertical development by real estate projects. The revised Master Plan includes, among other points, the authorization of developments on the northern coast of the municipality, in Mococa and Tabatinga. Gentrification, followed by real estate speculation, allows construction companies to prioritize financial interests over

collective well-being, worsening the situation in environmental preservation areas. Uncontrolled urbanization has resulted in the displacement of more vulnerable populations to at-risk areas, often environmentally sensitive, where there is a lack of basic infrastructure such as sanitation and garbage collection.

Disorganized urbanization and real estate speculation in Caraguatatuba, especially in areas near the coast, have caused a process of deterritorialization of the Caiçara people and poorer communities. Real estate appreciation and gentrification create challenges for social integration, requiring a reterritorialization that considers social inclusion and the preservation of local cultural identity. Disorganized urbanization remains a problem, and the gentrification of the coastline is a clear example of deterritorialization affecting Caiçara populations. The challenge here is to ensure that these policies promote inclusive reterritorialization and do not contribute to socio-spatial exclusion.

4.3 RETERRITORIALIZATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF CARAGUATATUBA

Reterritorialization is the process of reorganizing and restructuring space after deterritorialization, often by new populations or for new uses. In Caraguatatuba, reterritorialization has been marked by the disorderly expansion of neighborhoods and the irregular occupation of environmental preservation areas. This uncontrolled occupation not only violates environmental laws but also creates areas lacking essential public services such as basic sanitation, transportation, education, and health.

Maricato (2002) discusses the pattern of urban growth in Brazil, which, despite its regional specificities, is characterized by land tenure irregularity as a central element in territorial occupation. Between 1995 and 1999, according to the author, approximately 4.4 million dwellings were built in the country, but only 700,000 were formally produced by the real estate market. This means that more than three million residences were built in invaded areas or areas unsuitable for urbanization, reflecting the persistence of spatial segregation. This reality is the result of ineffective or non-existent public policies, which continue to perpetuate the exclusion of significant portions of the population from formal urban spaces.



Maricato (2002) addresses the division between the “legal city” and the “illegal city” as a striking characteristic of urban segregation in Brazil. The “legal city” is the one recognized by the public authorities, equipped with infrastructure and valued by the real estate market, while the “illegal city” refers to irregular areas, occupied without planning and frequently located on vulnerable and precarious land, described by the author as marginalized spaces and “outside the ideas” of the public authorities. This fragmentation, sustained by the logic of the real estate market, reinforces inequalities and limits the access of the most vulnerable populations to rights and opportunities in cities.

In this context, housing located on slopes in more remote neighborhoods such as Jardim Califórnia, Jaraguazinho, and Olária presents a risk to residents. According to a technical report developed by IPT - Instituto de Pesquisas Tecnológicas (2010), these areas, among 13 others distributed in risk areas, are in the sector for housing removal due to the imminent risk of landslides. In many of the areas described, it is possible to observe constructions situated on steep slopes and unstable terrain, frequently associated with deficient or non-existent infrastructure. The dwellings are often precarious, with inadequate structures to withstand adverse environmental conditions. The lack of adequate urban planning and irregular land occupation contribute to the high vulnerability of these areas, making them prone to disasters that threaten the safety and well-being of residents. Problems such as inadequate drainage, risk of landslides, and lack of sanitation make future urbanization extremely costly and reinforce the cycle of social exclusion. Simultaneously, public investment guidelines prioritize the generation of real estate income in high-value areas, benefiting specific political and economic groups (Maricato, 2000).

Thus, it is possible to observe the infrastructure disparity among the population of Caraguatatuba. In the city, socio-spatial segregation is critically reflected in risk areas, demonstrating urban inequalities. The IPT analysis indicates that 78% of the mapped areas in the municipality present a high or very high risk of landslides. This disproportionate distribution of risks accentuates socio-spatial segregation, as low-income communities, frequently located in vulnerable areas with less infrastructure, are more susceptible to the adverse impacts of natural disasters. The lack of investment and the absence of effective public policies to mitigate these

risks in the most affected regions contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities and the fragility of the populations inhabiting these risk zones.

Within the socio-spatial dynamics of Caraguatatuba, segregation becomes even more evident when considering the disparity between gated communities with seasonal use and areas inhabited by permanent residents. While gated communities, generally used as vacation homes and with complete infrastructure, offer a high quality of life and adequate services, the residences of permanent residents located in risk zones often lack basic infrastructure, such as electricity and water supply. This sharp division between privileged and deprived areas not only illustrates socio-spatial inequality but also highlights how the lack of investment and inadequate infrastructure contribute to an unequal experience in the municipality. The lack of infrastructure in areas occupied by permanent residents reinforces disparities and limits these communities access to essential services and security, strengthening the challenges faced in the context of high geotechnical risk (IPT, 2010).

According to the Caraguatatuba City Hall (2024), in the first half of 2024 alone, more than 30 attempts to invade permanent preservation areas (Law no. 6,766, December 19, 1979) were prevented, and they receive an average of one to two complaints per week. Among the most invaded neighborhoods are Morro do Algodão, Golfinhos, Rio do Ouro, Olaria, and Mococa, which, according to IPT (2010), are among the 19 areas and 54 sectors with risks of landslides/earth slippage ranging from lower to higher risk. This demonstrates that despite the oversight of the City Hall's and the removal of some of these attempted invasions, there is no effectiveness in relocating these people, nor effectiveness in removing them, given the number of neighborhoods that have developed in recent years in APPs (Permanent Preservation Areas), without any type of prior intervention or infrastructure.

Reterritorialization in Caraguatatuba, characterized by the disorderly expansion of neighborhoods and irregular occupation of environmental preservation areas, follows a pattern observed in several coastal regions with rising urban growth. As described in the study by Vieira *et al.* (2023), social and spatial segregation amplifies the vulnerability of communities to natural disasters, such as floods and landslides, resulting from disordered urbanization. In Caraguatatuba,

this dynamic is aggravated by the occupation of risk areas and the lack of adequate infrastructure, resulting in a population exposed to significant risks and lacking basic services. The disordered occupation of space and urban expansion in risk areas, often driven by the reproduction of capital, progressively expose the population to climatic dangers.

Historically, housing programs and areas designated for social housing in municipalities like Caraguatatuba tend to be located far from the urban center, hindering the access of vulnerable populations to efficient public transportation and formal city services. This dynamic perpetuates a cycle of vulnerability because, as pointed out by Ermínia Maricato (2003), many of these people end up returning to at-risk areas due to a lack of access to the “legal city.” The plan, while relevant in the context of reducing immediate risks, demonstrates the need for an integrated and inclusive housing policy that not only removes people from danger but also guarantees them the right to safe housing connected to the urban fabric in an equitable manner.

The process of reterritorialization in Caraguatatuba has not only affected traditional communities, such as the *Caiçara* people, but also the population with lower purchasing power who, faced with increased migration, are forced to occupy at-risk or environmentally sensitive areas. Disorganized urban expansion, driven by real estate speculation and the search for new economic opportunities, especially in the oil sector, has displaced these populations to poorly planned peripheries and regions lacking adequate infrastructure. This has exacerbated environmental degradation, as many of these settlements occur in protected areas or on slopes prone to landslides. Population pressure in vulnerable areas intensifies the destruction of local ecosystems, while exposing these communities to environmental and social risks, perpetuating a cycle of exclusion and degradation.



5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research conducted on the processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization in Caraguatatuba reveals a complex scenario of disordered urban growth, real estate speculation, and socio-spatial segregation. The population growth observed since the 1990s, driven by the expansion of tourism, the duplication of Tamoios Highway, and the exploration of pre-salt oil reserves, has significantly altered the socio-economic and environmental dynamics of the city. These factors have contributed to the territorialization of new areas, with urbanization advancing into sensitive regions lacking adequate infrastructure, leading to the deterritorialization of traditional communities, such as the *Caiçara* people, and low-income populations, who have been displaced to peripheral and high-risk areas.

Territorialization in Caraguatatuba reflects urban encroachment on sensitive and previously preserved areas, driven by factors such as the duplication of the Tamoios Highway, the expansion of tourism, and pre-salt oil exploration. This process represents the appropriation of territory to meet economic demands, often disregarding socio-environmental impacts. This dynamic contributes to socio-spatial fragmentation and the exclusion of vulnerable populations, widening inequality in access to the territory and its resources. Deterritorialization involves the forced displacement of traditional populations, such as the *Caiçara* people and the low-income population resulting from migratory flows; they, in turn, represent a highly relevant intangible cultural heritage. This process reflects the rupture of historical and cultural ties, exacerbating socio-spatial segregation and disregarding the dimension of territory as collective heritage (Dallabrida, 2020).

Reterritorialization in Caraguatatuba demands a reorganization of the territory that prioritizes social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and the protection of the *Caiçara* cultural heritage. Measures such as regulating the real estate market, creating affordable housing in central areas, and including the population in urban planning are fundamental to promoting a more just and resilient territorial occupation. This approach can balance economic development and environmental preservation, ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to basic infrastructure and protection against the challenges of climate change.

The lack of continuous and efficient oversight allows irregular settlements to advance into protected and high-risk areas, exacerbating environmental and social problems. Furthermore, the mapping and clearing of high-risk areas, although planned, are often not accompanied by adequate resettlement policies, perpetuating the vulnerability of affected populations. The absence of sufficient investment in infrastructure and the recovery of degraded areas also contributes to the inefficiency of the policies established by the Master Plan. As a result, the municipality continues to face recurring environmental disasters, such as landslides and floods, which could be mitigated with the correct application of the regulations stipulated in the legislation.

Therefore, Caraguatatuba needs to strengthen its public policies aimed at reterritorialization, to guarantee the right to decent housing, environmental protection, and the socio-spatial integration of its populations. Furthermore, it is urgent to implement preventive measures to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters, with a special focus on at-risk areas, in order to prevent tragedies like those of 1967 and 2023 from recurring. The urban plan of Caraguatatuba must seek a balance between economic development and environmental preservation, promoting a more just and resilient territorial occupation in the face of climate change.

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