

# INCORPORATION OF THE SEASIDE INTO THE GEOGRAPHY OF NORTHEASTERN METROPOLISES<sup>1</sup>

INCORPORAÇÃO DO LADO MAR À GEOGRAFIA DAS  
METRÓPOLES NORDESTINAS

L'INTÉGRATION DE LA MER À GÉOGRAPHIE DES  
MÉTROPOLES DU "NORDESTE" BRÉSILIEN

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## Abstract

From the understanding of the conceptual definition of maritime practices in Brazil, this article discusses the logic of coastal urbanization undertaken in the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century in the Northeast. It addresses the maritime *villeggiatura* and coastal tourism, which are responsible for the metropolization phenomenon that directs the major Northeastern metropolises (Fortaleza, Natal, Recife and Salvador) toward their seaside.

Keywords: Metropolis, Brazilian Northeast, tourism, *villeggiatura*, leisure, maritimity.

## Resumo

O artigo discute, a partir do entendimento do delineamento das práticas marítimas no Brasil, a lógica de urbanização litorânea empreendida no final do século XX e início do século XXI no Nordeste. Lida, nestes termos, com a prática da vilegiatura marítima e do turismo litorâneo, responsáveis pela implementação do fenômeno de metropolização a direcionar as principais metrópoles nordestinas (Fortaleza, Natal, Recife e Salvador) as suas zonas de praia.

Palavras-chave: Metrópole, Nordeste, turismo, vilegiatura, lazer, maritimidade.

## Résumé

Prenant en compte la logique de caractérisation des pratiques maritimes au Brésil, l'article en question analyse l'urbanisation côtière, entreprise à la fin du XX-début du XXI siècle, au Brésil. Dans cette perspective, il indique la pratique de la vilegiature maritime et du tourisme côtier comme fort responsable de la mise en œuvre d'un phénomène de métropolisation qui a tourne les grandes villes du Nordeste (Fortaleza, Natal, Recife et Salvador) vers leurs zones de plage.

Mots-clés: Métropole, Nordeste, tourisme, vilegiature, loisirs, maritimite.

## Initial Considerations

Understanding the creation of the Northeastern coastal cities, *vis-à-vis* the increased market prices of their beach areas, requires an analytical effort focused on recreational activities. As a predominant variable in

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understanding the phenomenon of urbanization (Lefebvre, 1986), it is a highlight in the field of desires, expectations, and frustrations prevailing in Western society (Corbin, 2001). By analyzing modern maritime practices, Corbin (1988) undertook a diachronic analysis of the unfolding of social time in Mediterranean beach areas. Even today, in other continents and countries, the strength of his work echoes. Thus, it is possible to glimpse the gestation of a set of stereotyped images of beach areas in the world, or even a “tropicalized empty territory”, in the words of Cormier-Salem (1996). It should be noted that the commented analytical extreme is not present in Corbin (1988). Although there is no doubt that modern maritime practices lie rooted in the West, their understanding in other areas requires studies able to grasp the reinterpretation through which they undergo.

The premise cited above is sought in the understanding the metropolization process of the most dynamic cities in the Northeast (Fortaleza, Natal, Recife and Salvador). This process took place especially in the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. The intense transformation of these cities urban landscape culminated in an increased market price of their beach areas, advancing the integration between the metropolitan and non-metropolitan coastal municipalities. In this process, I highlight two stages: i) the local community increased proximity to the coast, based on the scales of coastal cities and coastal metropolises; and ii) the transformation of the Northeastern coastal cities in maritime (i.e., tourist cities), which resulted in increased flows (of people, capital, etc.) both at the national and international levels.

### **Incorporation of the sea into the cities geography**

The first phase, regarding the local community increased proximity to the coast, took place from a break with the classic urbanization model of coastal cities. These towns have experienced a considerable valorization of “their seaside” locations, which triggered the exploitation of beach tracks (and surrounding areas), with the construction of fortresses, warehouses, and ports (Desse, 1996).

Even when considering what has been shown, it should be noted that the beach areas are chartered as almost an exclusive realm of traditional maritime practices: the seaport, the National Navy (defense),

as well as artisanal fisheries. Only in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, a break with the rationality presented is noted, triggering the local community's first steps towards the beach areas. The status of commercial cities not only allowed the export of fine goods to Europe. In the seaports, to meet the demands of local elites, the volume of imported material goods was significant and left the space open for the assimilation of new habits and interpretations about the sea.

The assimilation mentioned above promotes the outlining of modern maritime practices in Brazil and of processes that resignify them. Thus gestating practices similar to Western countries (Dantas, 2014), like sea bathing and hiking on the beaches. While in Western therapeutic treatments the chemical quality and the sea temperature are founding variables, in the Tropics, the warm waters lead to the reshaping of the medical discourse, according to the Lavoisier's theory of "good breathing" (Corbin, 1988). Like in "*Promenades des Anglais*", during the day, people take walks on the beach to enjoy Mediterranean mild temperatures. In regions close to the equator, however, with sun rays perpendicular to the ground, such walks usually take place in the late afternoon or during full moon evenings (Dantas, 2004). The geographical location does not allow the simple transposition of modern maritime practices imported from the West.

The local elite, formed by an ongoing process of miscegenation (Claval, 1995), plays a prominent role in redefining modern maritime practices. In the Brazilian Westernization process, mix-raced people played an essential role in the filtering established in the region. Also, vis-à-vis the lived experience in landlocked environments: in the *sertão* (hinterland), the *zona da mata* (forest zone) and the *Recôncavo* (Hollow). We refer to the existence of hinterland people molded by the proximity towards the sea, as well as slowly and gradually by the standards, habits, and morals of the Western world.

The elite cited above became the representatives of morals, establishing a counterpoint against those who cherished the traditional maritime practices. It reflected a clash among natives (one Westernized elite and the traditional inhabitants of the beaches). This phenomenon remains circumscribed within the limits of the host cities, clearly revealing the imposition of the city scale in the conflicts established in the beach areas. This factor triggered substantial urban structure transformation, with the occupation of Fortaleza beach areas (*Praia de Iracema*) (Dantas,

2011), Natal (the beaches of *Rendinha* and *Areia Preta*) (Silva, 2013), Recife (*Boa Viagem*) (Freyre, 1934; Assis, 2003), and Salvador (*Praia do Rio Vermelho*) (Vasconcelos, 1997; Sousa, 2011; Silva, 2011; Wendel, 2011) by maritime *villeggiatura*<sup>2</sup>.

The *villeggiatura* has played a central role in establishing the habit of sea bathing (therapeutic and recreational) and hiking in the Northeast. From the priority allocation of other parts of the region for these practices (ranches and farms in the hinterland, the wild, and the mountains), the invention of the beaches in the Northeast resignifies itself before the sea front valorization in the social imaginary. Hence the construction of the “maritime dimension” in the Northeast takes a different path, not associated with seaside resorts, but the need to purchase a second homestead for the practice of sea bathing and hiking. Thus, the *villeggiatura* explains and justifies the initial incorporation of the beach zones.

The limits of the cities in focus are respected up to the first half of the twentieth century. Their exclusivity falls to the ground in the 1960s and 1970s, with the creation of the modern city, which becomes polycentric. Also, it aims at its institution as a metropolis, in articulation with its neighboring municipalities.

The coastal zone plays a strategic role in understanding the city’s transformation process into a metropolis, associated with representative housing and recreation areas: i) of the wealthier classes that build their first homes on the beach (Claval, 2004). Therefore, they are added to holiday tourists and with time, they outnumber them. The strength of the desire to move permanently to the seafront is the power spring of land valorization, with the establishment of an intense process of vertical integration. It occurred after the years 1960-1970, in the coastal areas of Fortaleza (*Praia do Meireles*), Natal (*Ponta Negra*), Recife (*Boa Viagem*) and Salvador (*Rio Vermelho*). These neighborhoods tend to be a locus of housing for that segment, initially with the transformation of the second homestead into the first residences. Thus, it results in the construction of skyscrapers for residential condominiums; ii) of entrepreneurs in the leisure industry who transfer the headquarters of their clubs to beaches. Because of the attraction people have for the ocean, they start to concentrate a set of recreational activities, formerly consistent with the traditional center. The social clubs are transferred to the beach, thus offering a supporting infrastructure of modern maritime practices, both

the ones previously cited and the sporting (swimming) and nautical (marinas) practices; iii) of entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry, who also migrate to the urban beaches of the cities mentioned above and specialize themselves in hosting the flow that is representative of the first tourists to visit the region. As a result of the pioneering efforts of local governments to promote tourism in the region (Ferreira, 2013), whose development only became effective in Salvador, since then constituted as a tourist city; and iv) of several users from the upper classes, primarily from the middle class, who adopted the beaches as a locus of sociability. Thus, they enjoy the sidewalks alongside the beaches, which have an urbanization pattern distinct from typical downtown squares (square shaped). Its linear pattern allows the incorporation of the whole beach formation. Its users may walk (admiring the landscape), appreciate the sea and sunbathing, and enjoy a range of services from restaurants to bars, fast food, coffee shops, ice cream parlors, craft shops, etc.

The coastal zones of neighboring municipalities, which form the metropolitan areas, have different fate. In them, with the building of second homesteads, recreation predominates alone and in competition with modern maritime practices, particularly artisanal fisheries. The urbanization of the coastal districts located in the municipalities of *Aquiraz* (Ceará); *Nísia Floresta* (Rio Grande do Norte); *Itaparica* (Pernambuco) and *Itamaracá* (Bahia) is an outcome of the demand mentioned above and represents an articulation established by the metropolis with the sea. It remarkably means consolidating a model produced in the capital cities and encompasses the regional scale.

As a phenomenon demanding infrastructure, tourism requires the expansion of urban structure in the coastal fringe (beach areas). It has been mentioned by Pereira (2012) as a constituting vector of the metropolitan region in the Northeast. We have a different picture from the one presented by Moraes (2007), by associating the logic of coastal cities' urban growth in the 1950s with the simple establishment of industries in the port areas.

The role of the tertiary sector cannot be overlooked in the Northeast, particularly the one resulting from government action. For instance, banks, research institutions, and agencies fostering production activities are essential in shaping the local middle class. This sector, which demands second homesteads, reversed the elitist character of maritime *villeggiatura*.

To achieve that, it relied on the government's former National Housing Bank (BNH) to finance real estates and the urbanization of beach zones.

In this perspective, the capital cities old *villeggiatura* areas are replaced by housing and recreation spaces. Thus, the occasional use of the capital cities beach areas weakens its importance when compared with the permanent use. Living on the beach constitutes an object of desire and, backed by the real estate market, rescales these spaces, concomitantly, motivating the incorporation of old areas dwelt by traditional populations for maritime *villeggiatura*.

However, the incorporation of the sea into the geography of the metropolises in focus did not mean the reversal of the imagery framework associated with them. They keep the essence of the coastal-inland cities, whose prevailing collective representations were still associated with the mainland, with emphasis on the hinterland. Based on a deterministic discourse, these metropolises reinforce the well-known thesis that views the Brazilian Northeast as a "troubled region".

The listed factors influence the formulation of regional public policies. Focused on industrialization efforts, they conflict with the policies adopted in other Latin American countries, whose natural base validated the maritime tourism in the post-war period. Brazilian planners considered tourism to be of little relevance. It would be justifiable only in micro-countries (islands). At best, there have been attempts by local governments to make available to the population of their states, perhaps the region, a tourist proposal associated with the history of the place and the culture of the people (Ferreira, 2013).

The scenario presented herein only changed in the late twentieth century, reflecting political shifts in the Northeast, in response to a new national and international political order. This fact is related to the crisis of the Modern State. With the implementation of a new constitution, the governments of the Northeastern states – Local State (Claval and Sanguin, 1997) – acquired autonomy for the construction of development public policies. Currently, the governors of the Northeastern states take it upon themselves the idealization and control of modernization policies. They establish dialogues to attract investment from international development agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and private entrepreneurs (national and international). The central government's power is minimized, acting only as a guarantor of loans made by the Local States.

The second phase, related to the transformation of coastal cities into maritime towns, sets is and brings forth the rationale for the intervention gestated by the region's governors. It becomes policies circumscribed within the limits of their states and guided by the potential of the natural substrate. Therefore, nature presents itself as the premise for the construction of the socio-political imaginary in the region (Castro, 1997). In short, the political elites justified the use of nature as an ideological resource. The traditional elites have been able to use this resource with competence. They left to the new upper classes the job of ascending to power in the late twentieth century, with the need to elaborate a differentiated discourse, focused on the legitimacy of the new development policy.

The coastal-marine town construction (Dantas, 2011b) can be interpreted by the passage from an understanding of the negative view of the Northeast to an economic policy matrix. It sought to reverse those negative images built from a specific view of the Northeastern semi-arid. It develops in a context (the late 1980s and early 1990s) favoring the implementation of public policies aimed at establishing this portion of the territory as a tourist region (Ferreira, 2013).

The treatment dispensed by these new regional elites enabled the region fragmentation, with an economic bias to privilege some space parcels. Metaphorically, two different Northeastern regions were forged: the Tourism and the Agribusiness Northeast (Dantas et al., 2006b.). They are respectively responsible for the reinvention of coastal zones and hinterlands (its lowland, tableland and savanna regions).

The object of our analysis, the Northeastern tourism is a result of development policy focused on the conversion of the coast into a tourist zone. Tourism is presented as a powerful argumentative tool at the service of the region and hence able to save its economy. In the discourses conceived by the governors and senior advisors, high temperatures and little rainfall (concentrated in time and space) would be a positive attribute in attracting tourist flows.

The public policy in focus is based on a tourist awareness that reflects on the new Northeastern governments. This policy has revealed itself as a political propaganda, and they transmuted themselves into advertisements to meet the terms of economic development and encourage modernization of the so-longed-for beach areas. According to Domenach's (1979) idea of marketing joint ventures, we understand how the construction

of the tourist image in Northeastern cities happens. Based on their climatic advantages, focused on the world system, and the goal to modernize the Northeast, it is possible to erase the tragic social imaginary of drought.

As a result, tourism represents one of the most important regional development vectors influenced by programs aimed at coastal tourism (PRODETUR I and II). The spatial distribution of these investment programs in the coastal zone, although outlined according to each one of the considered governors, does follow a pattern: a) the Northeast reinforcement as a maritime tourism destination, the sun, and beach tourism; b) resignification of Northeastern host cities as both tourist-receiving and tourist-distributing areas.

The classic pattern of tourism policy established in the Northeast aimed at attracting enterprises (hotels and resorts) and international tourist flows. The host cities and beach areas of coastal cities play distinct roles in this scenario. The former ones specialize in inbound tourism, concentrating on airports (except the Rio Grande do Norte, with metropolitan dynamics) and hotels. The latter ones feed on the flow of tourists and the establishment of resorts.

This tourism policy culminated in the implementation of contemporary modernization logic and based on a dynamic that cannot be explained out of the integration of airports with coastal roads. Thus, it explains this type of urbanization that follows parallel to the coastal zone. It represents greater investments in the metropolitan areas (an outcome of Prodetur I and II) as well as the spread of interventions to a greater number of coastal municipalities (Prodetur II). This spread ends up reinforcing the metropolitan weight in the region since it shows a prioritization of the metropolis and its metropolitan region in the intervention area. The tourism policy, beyond these domains, could be explained by a) the creation of new tourist centers in the state itself, like in the state of Bahia in the cases of the cities of Ilheus and Porto Seguro; b) the creation of tourist destinations on a regional scale, as in the terms agreed by the states of Ceará, Piauí and Maranhão under CEPIMA project; and c) the increasing demands of coastal municipalities, eager to participate in the tourism reality.

The success of public policies is evident. However, it does not mean that the goal has been met as heralded. Although the view undertaken by the governors is strategic and innovative, new variables have been included for new users and entrepreneurs. Regarding international flows,

the importance that national tourism acquired in the region has surprised the governors. Nowadays, it represents the strong contingent involved and validates the investments made in the region. The exploration of the international market reveals the national strength, both with fluxes of tourists from other Brazilian regions and states, like the ones of an eminently regional character (Dantas, 2012). In the domain of the search for classic enterprises, the growth of the hospitality sector is evident. It can be verified with the implementation of national and international hotel chains as well as a considerable number of resorts in the beach areas of coastal municipalities in the region and mainly in the metropolises. It should be noted a higher emphasis on the metropolitan regions and lower on the remaining municipalities of the coastal zone. This proliferation of enterprises was important to strengthen inbound tourism in the region. However, invisible users ended up imposing themselves, specifically a large number of *villeggiatura* visitors from abroad. It is justified by both the validation of maritime *villeggiatura* and tourism-related real estate developers. From the classical logic of *villeggiatura* involving the local scale, with the saturation of spaces for maritime *villeggiatura* in developed countries (Boyer, 2008), the discovery of attractions in the Northeast by foreigners became a reality.

The government planners did not predict the arrival of new users (international *villeggiatura* visitors). The classical bias of tourism policy ended up blinding them. It was the local entrepreneurs associated with the international ones (Portuguese, Italians, and Spaniards) who anticipated the phenomenon economic potentiality. From this association, they seek to explore the international market eager to find new spaces for *villeggiatura*.

The entrepreneurs mentioned above diversify the array of economic options in the Northeastern states, notably in the real estate field. In order to achieve that, they have some advantage, such as access to land with urban infrastructure and financial resources necessary for the creation of enterprises. Additionally, by occupying the political scenario, these agents are responsible for sensitizing Northeastern government officials about the importance of participating in international industry fairs.

What is distinct in theory (tourism and *villeggiatura*), in the entrepreneurs' practice they tend to complement themselves. As discussed in Dantas (2015), on the one hand, entrepreneurs make use of second homes, especially in the high season, to increase the number of beds available in

the tourist complex. On the other hand, when presenting the possibility to include second homes into the hotel pool, they offer income to the second homestead owner. This starting point leads Spanish colleagues to direct their analysis to what they call Residential Tourism (Andreu, 2005; Aledo, 2008; Nieves, 2008; Demajorovic et. al., 2011; Munoz e Timon, 2011; Torres Bernier, 2003).

Nonetheless, with the international crisis, initial attempts are revisited. The desired consumers' (international *villeggiatura* visitors) expenditure and the volume of investments are decreased. On the other hand, after 2009, real estate developers changed their marketing policy, directing it to the national market and rescaled their projects. Once again, and replicating what happened to tourism, the basis responsible for generating flows to avoid a crisis in the sector, as occurred in Europe and the United States, was the local clientele: national, regional, and segments of local elites.

Based on this national and regional movement, the traditional occupation of the coastal areas in the Northeast is transformed. Initially, foreign *villeggiatura* visitors arrived to enjoy the Northeastern beaches. This segment, mostly from the country itself and a fewer number from abroad, innovates and diversifies the dynamics of the occupation of the coastal zones. This segment also demands infrastructure, unlike what was found in the early maritime *villeggiatura*. It diversifies by encompassing in its areas of settlement a portion of larger spaces than those currently cherished by the local elite and the middle class. They have settled both in the host cities, privileged by the more affluent segments as a place of permanent housing, and on the beaches of other coastal municipalities. What is important for this segment is the maritime ambiance characteristic of the host cities also.

### Inclusion of the northeastern cities in the world system

While it is obvious that the strength of the desire for the sea, with a growing incorporation of leisure and recreation activities in the coastal areas, causes profound marks in the urban landscape, we cannot forget that its aftermaths differ from continent to continent and from country to country.

When taking into account the level of specificities, such logic is detected in dynamics that are characteristics of two major blocks of countries, i.e. the pioneers and those affected by the phenomenon of “internationalization” of modern maritime practices. The first block includes Western countries, with emphasis on the Mediterranean region (Western Europe) (Corbin, 1988) and the United States (California and Florida states) (Boyer, 1996; Nijman, 2010). The second block represents an opening to the world, also contemplating the countries of the South undergoing a process of Westernization.

In the Americas, we verify the existence of a complex context, both with the presence of Western countries (the United States and Canada) and Westernized nations. The first group of countries consolidates in their territories the modern maritime practices *pari passu* to their peers in Western Europe. The second group consolidates them from two types of distinct filterings and in relation to which they gravitate: i) external demand – from the West and associated with the discovery of tropical coastlines by beach lovers, both tourists and international villeggiatura visitors (Desse, 1996; Cormier-Salen, 1996; Boyer, 2008); ii) domestic demand – justified by intensive process of Westernization, which the Southern countries face. It represents, in the terms indicated by Claval (1995), the seduction that the Western model generates among the local elites and middle classes.

Countries (islands, also) gravitating closer to the first dynamic with development policies derived from external demands for tourist places are located in the Caribbean and Central America. In this part of the American territory we find the political system (local governments) associated with the trading system (of travel and airline agencies) (Cazes, 1999), which are responsible for implementing the planning policy that transforms countries into international tourist destinations. They constitute the privileged locus of coastal tourism in the Americas and benefit from air transport innovations (Chardon, 1987).

Brazil gravitates close to the second dynamic, representing the block in which the international tourism is not included. Focused on industrialization efforts, the modernization policy adopted by the country was the bedrock for the creation of a consumer base (the elite and the middle classes) eager for leisure and recreation spaces. Seduced by the West, Brazil undertook incorporation procedures of modern maritime

practices similar to those from Western Europe (Dantas, 2004). Therefore, justifying the consolidation of a maritime *villeggiatura* and the generation of coastal tourist flows of strong national character.

Dealing with countries gravitating between two extremes provides a view of a complex picture of nations that adopt policies of mixed character as well as of those whose standpoints change over time. In the first case, we refer to what happened in Mexico, positioned in an intermediate state of affairs, by taking advantage of both international tourist flows and the ones derived from the local elite and a middle class in formation process (Kadt, 1979). Such logic is now warranted against an isolated demand, either: i) allochthonous, found at the core of urban transformation, local beach lovers, influenced by Western standard and benefited from social policies (paid leave), abound in tourist places (Evans, 1979); ii) autochthonous, due to benefiting from the proximity to the United States and Canada, capturing the flow of tourists and *villeggiatura* visitors. In the second case, in countries like Brazil, it is perceived the reformulation of modernization policies, with the resulting incorporation of tourism as a development variable. Albeit tardily, if compared to many countries in the continent with policies implemented in the post-war period, the country's consolidation goal as an international tourist destination reforms the regional planning policy.

By overcoming the interpretation guided by antagonistic dynamics and assimilating the ground principle of measurement levels to oscillate between allochthonous and autochthonous valorization priorities, with differentiated repercussions from country to country and changing in time, we may be able to understand current consequences of tourism development policies in Brazil, with their impacts on major cities in the Brazilian Northeast and their respective metropolitan regions.

The comprehension of this Westernization process undertaken in Brazil, whose reflection is seen in cultural practices and the relations with the beach areas, for example, enables the understanding of how the Northeast – a food producer region recently industrialized – is reinvented as a tourist destination. When taking into consideration the subsidiary movement of the strength that the desire for the sea reaches on a planetary scale, we realize that it is not by chance that maritime *villeggiatura* and coastal tourism have become intensification vectors of the urbanization logic undertaken in the cities' beach areas and metropolitan regions (Dantas, 2013).

It is necessary to review the theory of the transposition to the tropics (former European colonies) of modern maritime practices, created in the West. Even if a considerable number of scholars still insist on bringing to light the transformations influenced by the same European pattern. On the one hand, Brazilian scholars like Linares (1992) and Gomes (2002) insist on the trending effect triggered by strategic players in the country, respectively D. Pedro II and the actress Sarah Bernard. Pioneers in the establishment of modern maritime practices in Brazil, they reinforced the flow of information that transformed society's collective representations of the sea and played, preserving due proportions, the same role played by their peers in Europe. On the other hand, non-Brazilian scholars like Desse (1996) and Cormier-Salen (1996) treat the coastline as a space of conflict between modern maritimity (allochthonous), regarding Western demands, and traditional maritimity (autochthonous), related to traditional inhabitants.

The two types of approach assist in understanding the phenomenon in focus, though, in the case of Brazil, the modern maritime practices are not incorporated with impunity. It is perceived both the filtering performed by the places about the innovations (Santos, 1985) and the mutability of culture, which is a repercussion of the individuals' standpoint to external influences (Claval, 1995).

The seaside town of yore weakens. The emerging metropolis gradually begins to incorporate the beach areas of the metropolitan region into its geography, and we cannot, as consequence, understand this phenomenon without addressing the current valorization of the coastline as space of leisure and tourism.

The users, beach lovers, create a new world outlined by multiple scales. For instance, of those who inhabit the metropolis and, from it, materialize their desires for a second homestead in other coastal municipalities (autochthonous maritime *villeggiatura*). Also, of those travelers who are eager to visit the beaches of Ceará state (coastal tourism). Additionally, of those who are mistaken for tourists, the *villeggiatura* visitors, whose desire is to settle occasional homes in the beach and even in the metropolis (allochthonous maritime *villeggiatura*). For tourists, the state invests in infrastructure and attraction policies. For *villeggiatura* visitors, nothing of this kind has been planned. However, it should be noted that they also benefited from the tourism infrastructure, being the

increase of its contingent (from other states and abroad) the foundation for the emergence of real estate ventures.

The incorporation of the seaside into the geography of Northeastern coastal cities has slowly and gradually transformed the beach areas. Nowadays, it reaches refinement level with the construction of urban infrastructure derived from public investments, which in addition to tourism justify national and international real estate development (Dantas, 2013).

With the advent of the leisure society, the Northeastern coastal cities have become maritime towns, validated by recent tourist activities and maritime *villeggiatura*. Thus, they are projected internationally, participating in the pool of cities that value their seaside.

### Final Considerations

Based on the evidence presented above, it is understood how the urban coastal landscape, characteristic of the Northeast of yore, with cities turning their backs to the sea, has completely changed. Nowadays they have gained the aspect of a metropolis and fully project themselves to the coastal zones. Roughly, in response to the demands for leisure and recreational spaces, they represent and legitimate the spread of modern maritime practices (the recreational and therapeutic sea baths, the maritime *villeggiatura*, and in the last decades, the coastal tourism associated with real estate enterprises) on a global scale.

The widespread phenomenon of verticalization in major coastal neighborhoods of the metropolises in focus, the construction of coastal roads linking them to their metropolitan areas, as well as the increasing urbanization process noticed in the coastal districts of other metropolitan municipalities, denote a framework to explore and justify the institution of modern maritime practices in the country and its relationship with the world system. It must be noted the emphasis on incorporation of the seaside into the cities' geography, based on the scattered urbanization process, whose main characteristics are the following: i) Linearity, dictated by a dynamic running parallel to the coastal zone; ii) Fragmentation, representing non-continuous urbanization and focused on some portions of the metropolitan territory; iii) Seasonality, which is a reflection of the use derived from practices materialized in specific periods of the year: the tourism in the high season and the *villeggiatura* in longer periods of time.

## Endnotes

<sup>2</sup> Translator's note: *villeggiatura* (or villegiature in English) is the practice of going to a place and time of idleness. The term comes from the concept originally created by wealthy Venetians of the Italian Renaissance, meaning the habit of spending time at a second homestead during certain months of the year (usually, in the summer), located in their marina villages in the countryside.

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