

# THE DESIRE FOR THE BEACH: REVIEW OF RESEARCHES ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE MODERN BRAZILIAN COAST

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**ABSTRACT:** Longing for the beach, the warm, salty waters of the Brazilian Atlantic coast, is a relatively recent feeling. The representation of the coast as a weekend, holiday or vacation destination, with curative, recreational and rest purposes emerges at the end of the 19th century and, above all, in the first decades of the 20th century, in the context of Brazilian cities. This article aims to analyze the formation of new meanings attributed to the coast, expressed in the emergence of unprecedented representations about this space, as well as in the occurrence of practices associated with entertainment, education and health, through a literature review of works that address the theme of the history of the modern coast. Articles, books, book chapters, as well as theses and dissertations produced in Brazil that dealt with this topic were considered, in the time frame between 1850 and 1950. The review analysis is of a qualitative and descriptive nature, with the aim of guiding a discussion that brings together different Brazilian contexts, from north to south, considering their specificities and concomitants.

**KEYWORDS:** History of the coast. Brazilian Coast. Beach.

## O DESEJO PELA PRAIA: REVISÃO DE OBRAS A RESPEITO DA HISTÓRIA DO LITORAL MODERNO BRASILEIRO

**RESUMO:** Desejar a praia, as águas salgadas e quentes do litoral atlântico brasileiro, é um sentimento relativamente recente. A representação do litoral como destino do final de semana, de feriados ou de viagem de férias, com finalidades curativas, recreativas e de descanso emerge no final do século XIX e, sobretudo, nas primeiras décadas do século XX, no contexto de cidades brasileiras. Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar a conformação de novos sentidos atribuídos ao litoral, expressos na emergência de inéditas representações acerca desse espaço, assim como na ocorrência de práticas associadas ao divertimento, à educação e à saúde, por meio de uma revisão de literatura de obras que abordam o tema da história do litoral moderno. Foram considerados

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artigos, livros, capítulos de livros, bem como teses e dissertações produzidas no Brasil que se ocuparam desta temática, no recorte temporal entre 1850 e 1950. A análise da revisão é de caráter qualitativa e descritiva, com intuito de orientar uma discussão que reúna diversos contextos brasileiros, do norte ao sul, considerando suas especificidades e concomitâncias.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** História do litoral. Litoral brasileiro. Praia.

## Introduction

Beaches, bays, coves, peninsulas, islands are constituent parts of the history of colonial Brazil history, after all it was in these places where the colonizers arrived, where the first Portuguese people settled and built the first Brazilian cities, forts, fortresses and other military and commercial structures. The desire, yearning and the interest by the sea in the hedonist way, however, lasted centuries to be established in the subjectivity of the ones who arrived and were established here.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, the affective devices that were focused to the sea coast, took longer to emerge in the Western history, as Alain Corbin (1989) investigates in *Territory of the Void, the Beach and the Western Imaginary*. Through an accurate analysis of works of art, as painting and literature, travel reports and biblical texts, the author rebuilds the arising of the desire for the western seacoast, which, before, was characterized as territory of the void, the deserted landscape of a beach, vast sandy area and implacable ocean.

The distance was based on the religious root of the punitive biblical deluge. The chaos, chaos, the unreason, the infinite waves that do not know rest, were associated to

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<sup>2</sup> It shall be highlighted that prior to the arrival of Portuguese colonizers, and even after the practice of sea bathing in the therapeutic meaning and for fun, already in common among certain indigenous communities, according to Risério (2004, p.33): “It is not that the seacoast, was not populated, walked or visited since the first colonial (...) Ancheta: indigenous people are like fish in the sea”. The Jesuits, in fact, preferred to build their churches near the sea, coastal churches, so that the Indians could live with their own fisheries. This work, was delimited, indeed, to working in the topic, through the “modern” perspective, which founded the contemporary desire for the Brazilian beaches, tied to leisure and tourism, under the western perspective.

repulsive sensitivities in relation to the beaches. In the Middle Age, it was added the fear of the plague, the invasions by pirates and looters. The sea brought out the unknown, it was the connection with the ignored wild world (CORBIN, 1989).

From the early years in the XVIII century, the author identifies initial figures of admiration, from the rise of natural theology, based on a natural reeducation and in the valuation of the landscape, which made the environment to be fantastic. With the rise of the European urban life, the search for nature is imbued with a therapeutic outline, in which body care, is confused with the therapeutics of the soul, based on the ambiguity of the meanings in this space: “This way, it is outlined the paradox on which it is founded the swimwear: the sea becomes a refuge, and it brings hope because it is fearful.” (p.74).

The scientific medical thought, which is even more systematized, examines in the elements of this landscape, by suggesting the regular practice of cold and salty baths, the freshness of the air, the walks in the sandy area, which were associated to the benefits of the cure of lung diseases, toning of the muscles, treatment of melancholy and, even, the improvement of fertility. Little by little, the territory then empty, becomes pleasant in face of the look and desire of a more intimate and hedonist contact.

In Brazil, initial enucleations of the colonial era, as Salvador, Porto Seguro, Recife and Rio de Janeiro, although located in the Brazilian Atlantic seacoast, the interest by the beaches, were, above all, because of its role of transportation, once it linked the colony to the metropolises, and through rivers, it connected this same seacoast to the sugar production. In this seacoast there were placed, above all, port, customs structures and small businesses, as well as military forts with defensive purposes. The

interest for the Brazilian seacoast was based in its utilitarian use tied to the role of colony, by serving the demands of Portuguese metropolises.

In the XIX century, a fact would be remarkable: “the influence of the material and intellectual culture of British people, their industry, technique, the fashion on the Brazilian life at that time” (FREYRE, 2000, p.184). The opening of the ports in 1808 would have approximated part of the commerce, in the surroundings of the customs, that is, near the beach in the capitals of Rio de Janeiro, Recife and Salvador. Beyond the economy, English people’s customs, that had been identified, in its majority, with bourgeois habits, would also had modified the structures of the city, once they preferred more isolated houses” among trees as in Tijuca (Rio) or in Vitória (Bahia); near the rivers as in Apipucos, in Monteiro, at ‘Poço da Panela’ (Pernambuco); at seaside, as in Botafogo and Olinda.” (p.187). Beyond the proximity of these natural landscapes, sea bathing, hygienic and, at the same time, recreational, according to the author, would had been developed in these cities because of the great influence of English people’s habits.

Another factor that had been mentioned a lot in researches, about the origins of the desire for the Brazilian seacoast, is the arrival of the Portuguese crown in Rio de Janeiro also in 1808, and, consequently, the import of new habits and customs in the Court. King John, then Prince- Regent, adopted this practice, with therapeutic means and guided by doctors from the Court, after the infection that had been caused by tick bites (CAMARGO, 2007; O’DONNEL, 2013).

Despite these initiatives had been emblematic for the surroundings of these mentioned seacoasts, these cases reverberated, yet timely, so that until the end of the XIX century and beginning of the XX century, representations of the Brazilian seacoast

was associated to its military, port, fishing and function, and also a place for waste, garbage, residues and, when not cemetery:

(...) it has been a little more than one century that these renowned beaches were not more but very dirty. It has been little more than a year that people used to throw garbage on them and the houses' excrements; they were places to bury black pagan people and throw dead animals; a place to abandon pockmarked mats of sheets of people who had plagues. (FREYRE, 1985, p.36)

In the end of the XIX century and beginning of the following century, a group of factors were determinant in the appropriation of the *beach as a space for sociability*, paraphrasing Thales de Azevedo (1988). Beyond the arrival Court to the then capital, Rio de Janeiro, the doctors' discourse, aligned with the prescriptions of abroad, started to encourage the salty baths. The medical hygienist movement, defended the benefits of outdoor lives, the pure air far from the urban enclosed places (SOARES, 2016). Other factors such as the expansion of the cities to far from its central nucleation, by occupying new neighborhood further away, areas of small farms and beaches, as well as the development of transportation technologies, as trams, buses and cars, favored the search for more distant places to sightsee or spend summer vacations, holidays or few days off.

The institutionalization of recreational practices, may they be those in educational entities, the medical, military knowledge, or even the first the first nautical and terrestrial clubs, date from this same period. This conjuncture favored the desire for the sea coast, and not only the longing, as well as its effectiveness, Cities such as. Recife, Fortaleza, Salvador, Florianópolis, Rio de Janeiro, Santos, Guarujá and cities in Rio Grande do Sul, share, in a higher or lower level, of the occurrence of these factors, in the encounter of the city with its beaches.

In this sense, this work aims to analyze the conformation of new senses that are attributed to the seacoast, expressed in the emergency of new representations about this space, as well as in the occurrence of practices that are associated to fun, education and health, through a review of literature that approaches the topic of the history of the modern seacoast. There were taken into consideration articles, books, books chapters, as well as thesis and dissertations that had been produced in Brazil, which dealt with this subject, in the time frame between 1850 and 1950, the period in which it was started the movement of higher occupation of the seacoast.

## **Methodology**

The analysis of the bibliographic review, here proposed, is of qualitative and descriptive character, with the purpose of guiding a discussion that gathers many Brazilian contexts, from the north to the south, considering its specificities and concomitances. The origins and popularization of the modern beach culture, was studied by some researchers of different areas, such as History, Anthropology, Sociology, Education, Physical Education, Architecture/ Urbanism and Geography, demonstrating the topic's universality.

The search for works happened through the databases "Periódicos Capes" (Capes Periodic) and searches in the platform Academic Google, by using the terms "beach history", "beach", "seacoast history", "seacoast", "holidays", "balneary", "summer vacation", "sea bath". From the results, it was considered those works on the Brazilian seacoast, in the time frame between 1850 and 1950, which thematized the social and fun senses of coastal practices, by excluding, then, works of physical

geography, biology, or in the sense of the beach as a labor space of subsistence or economic.

Based on the criteria used in the work, there were selected, nevertheless, to be part of this study, 22 works from 19 authors, studies that had been published between the years of 1988 and 2020 and, among them, 7 books, a book chapter, 4 doctoral thesis, 9 master degree dissertations and an article<sup>3</sup>. The analysis was done qualitatively, aimed to gather studies that analyze, through their respective contents, as well as diversified theoretical foundations, the creation of a subjectivity that is expressed in new practices, habits and desires for the Brazilian coastal beaches.<sup>4</sup>

## **Results and Discussion**

When researching more specifically, the seacoast in the time frame that comprehends the second half of the XIX century until 1950, we found reasonable quantity of publications on the Brazilian seacoast. They are surveys that had been mainly published from the end of the 1980's, being enhanced from 2011 (Figure 1).

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<sup>3</sup> There were also excluded works from authors that had already been considered in thesis, dissertations or books, when the theme was similar. We understand that the broader productions were more appropriate to the qualitative and descriptive analysis, here proposed.

<sup>4</sup> The developed analysis is part of the most comprehensive study by the author, that has been developed since 2016, with studies of ongoing scientific initiation, Final Papers, articles, master degree and doctoral dissertations.

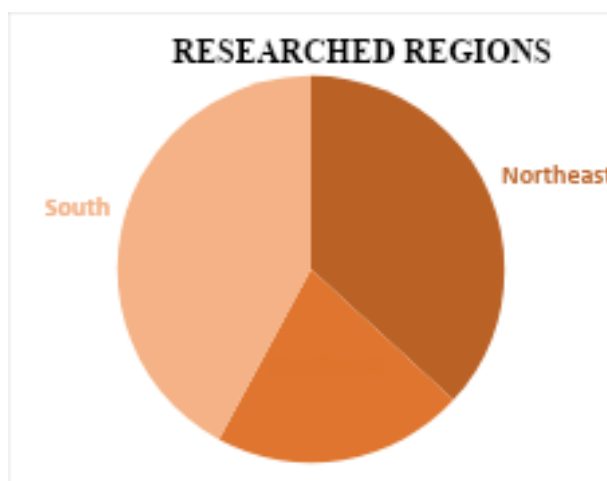
**Figure 1:** Table on the Publishing Period

<b>PUBLISHING PERIOD (1988-2020)</b>		
<b>1988-2000</b>	5 surveys	Azevedo (1988); Araújo (1989); Ferreira (1998); Melo (1999); Pinheiro (1999)
<b>2001 - 2010</b>	5 surveys	Melo (2001); Scrahmm (2001); Dantas (2002); Enke (2005); Araújo (2007)
<b>2011-2020</b>	12 surveys	Souza (2011); Ferreira (2012); Enke (2013); O'donnel (2013); Schossler (2013); Andrade (2015); Melo (2015); Terra (2016); Moraes (2017); Marino (2018)

**Source:** elaborated by the author

About the geographic cut, it gathered surveys on the seacoast in the southern and southeastern regions of the country, especially in the states of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul (42%); São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (21%). In the northeastern region, there were identified studies that approached the seacoast of Recife and Olinda, Salvador and Fortaleza, accounting for 37% of the studied surveys (Figure 2).

**Figure 2:** Graph of the Researched Brazilian Regions



**Source:** elaborated by the author

Although the surveys have a similar theme, the authors come from diverse areas of knowledge, such as History, Geography, Sociology, Architecture/ Urbanism,



Anthropology and Education/ Physical Education<sup>5</sup> (Figure 3), they have varied methodologies and references, and it is also worth highlighting that they have distinct research problems..

**Figure 3:** Table of the survey's areas of knowledge

Area of Knowledge	Quantity
Anthropology	2
Architecture	2
Geography	3
Education/Physical Education	5
History	6
Sociology	2

Source: elaborated by the author

The analysis of these surveys helps us to rebuild a scenery of field productions in the area of human sciences about the thematic here studied. They are studies that present us with diverse thematic dimensions that raise the survey of the Brazilian coastal space, and in the delimited time frame.

One of the deepest studies on the thematic of the seacoast, and that inspires the most of the gathered surveys, and that inspires the greatest majority of the gathered surveys, is the work by the French historian Alain Corbin, entitled *Territory of the Void, the Beach and the Western Imaginary (1750-1840)*, published in 1988 in France. In the following year, the book was translated to Portuguese and edited by Companhia das

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<sup>5</sup> The areas of knowledge of Education and Physical Education were grouped, because they are about authors that had their majors in the area of Physical Education, and they went to develop their post-graduate researches in the area of Education; however they were linked to the thematic of Physical Education, such as body, sports and leisure practices. They are: Melo (1999), (2001), (2015); Freitas (2014); Terra (2016); Moraes (2017); Montenegro (2020).

Letras. A big part of the surveys on the seacoast, gathered in this work, allude to the work by Corbin, making him a common reference and of unquestionable importance<sup>6</sup>.

In the second half of the XVII century, the author identifies initial phenomena that would contribute to the desire for the seaside in the following century: the natural theology, the exaltation of the beaches in Holland and the fashion of the classic trip to Naples bay. In the XVIII century, with the rise of the aesthetic of the sublime, a category before the Romanticism, which develops sensitiveness regarding threatening, aggressive and huge characteristics of nature, would modify the relationship between the west with the seacoast.

The swimmer and the doctors agree in demanding from the sea, three fundamental qualities: coldness (or, at least, the freshness), salinity and turbulence (...) The swimmer is delighted when experiencing the huge power of the ocean. The bath in the waves, takes part in the aesthetic of the sublime: it implies in facing the rough sea, but with no risks, enjoy the simulacrum of being swallowed, receive the wave's caning, but with firm feet (CORBIN, 1989, p.85).

Romanticism, in the area of aesthetic, and the therapeutic imperative, linked to a scientific rationality, in the XIX century, were yet, more determinant for what Corbin (1989, p.65) calls "the awaken of the collective desire of the beaches" which is developed in European cities, especially in France and England.

In Brazil, studies point out the pioneering spirit of Rio de Janeiro, for the practice of sea bathing, because of the arrival of the Court in 1808 and accession of European habits, as well as by the presence of immigrants. Having as time frame, the XIX century, the works by Victor Melo (1999; 2015), which awake a transition from the therapeutic sense for the recreational one, they are centralized in the story of two

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<sup>6</sup> Alain Corbin is a French historian who gave important contributions to the New Cultural History. He produced original works, and he called himself as the historian of sensitiveness. He also Works about the history of smell, of the male sexual misery, the sound landscape, of the (CORBIN, 2005). It shall be highlighted, however, that his production arises from the western perspective and which, then shall and has been relativized in the most recent productions about the Brazilian seacoast.

nautical sports: rowing and swimming. The group of Melo's surveys, help to think the sports phenomenon that is, little by little, also inserted in the seacoast. For Melo (2001), rowing can be considered, together with turf, one of the first sports in the modern format, and enter in Brazil, especially in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the then capital of Brazil. The city would already have received the sport in the XIX century, and, then, it did not take long for the seacoast also be the favorable for the scenery of sports practice. Rowing and swimming had already had been manifesting, in the coast of Rio de Janeiro, in the second half of the XXI century, being influenced by the diffusion of a more comprehensive interest for the seaside, and by the sea bathing, even if they had character of therapeutic practices (MELO, 1999; MELO, 2015).

Among the reasons that facilitated the development of nautical sports, the author identifies: worries about health, the diffusion of sea bathing, care with swimmers safety, more acceptance of body exposure and new muscle build, more intense public dynamics, as well as the valuation of physical exercises.

Nowadays, one of most famous beach in the city do Rio de Janeiro, Copacabana, however, would only raise interest in the population from Rio de Janeiro, in the last years of the XIX century, and beginning of XX century, as shown in the work by, Julia O'Donnel (2013). In the interface of two areas of knowledge, urban anthropology and history, the author works with sources of literature, the press and images, attentively highlighting the practices and the individuals in the coastal space between the end of the XIX century, and start of the XX century. *The invention of Copacabana: urban cultures and lifestyles in Rio de Janeiro (1890-1940)*, has as a problem the formulation and permanence of the distinguishing that is associated to the sea coastal neighborhood of

Copacabana, “constituting peculiar range of urban cultures and to a lifestyle linked to a not less peculiar urbanistic group (p.15).

O’Donnel (2013) approaches since the first manifestations of interests<sup>7</sup> by the stretch of coasting and by the neighborhood of Copacabana in the 80’s ( 1890), to the more massified invasion of varied social levels in the 1940’s. Diversified thematic arises in the narratives, some with mote centrality, and others with less: sea baths, sunbathing, tourism, betting games, clothing, relationships with distinct groups, sports and gymnastics, nature, clubs, etc. All these issues arise to indicate the mechanisms of distinction, based on an optimum of modernity, which is operated in that new space.

In the seacoast of São Pauli<sup>8</sup>, we identified the work of Vinicius Terra: *The invention of Santos Beach (1880-1940)*. Until the end of the XIX century the seacoast in Santos, was presented in a little attractive way in the media, mainly associated to filth and accidents. Slowly, this muddy and rotting beach becomes more modern with the improvements and restructuring of the port, yet in the XIX century. In parallel, little farms and secondary housing, start to be built, as confirmed by the author, “countered by bourgeois families” (TERRA, 2016, p. 215). Horse races are the first manifestations, organized by these groups, mainly happening on weekends. In the same period, sea bathing starts to make part in the routine of some bourgeois families, endorsed by Brazilian medical and scientific literature that sees in the cold salty water, therapeutic qualities (TERRA, 2016).

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<sup>7</sup> It shall be highlighted that Copacabana was not the first beach to be hit, in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Already in the XIX century, Botafogo, Santa Luiz, Boqueirão do Passeio, Flamengo and other beaches which were closer to the city center, were populated and hit (AZEVEDO, 1988; O’DONNEL, 2013; MELO, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> In the seacoast of São Paulo, Haroldo de Camargo in *A pre-history of tourism in Brazil: aristocratic recreations and bourgeois leisure activities (1808-1850)*, also made references to the creation of a seaside resort in Guarujá, in the last decade of the XIX century (CAMARGO, 2007, p. 307).

In the beginning of the XX century, Terra (2016) highlights the installation of electric trams and lines that would go to sea coast, as well as the emergence of medium and large sized hotels, as importante happenings in the direction of a new contour of a new tie on how to relate with the beach. Sports and social clubs, which had already been appearing in the end of the former century, were consolidated in the turn of the century, getting together with others that would appear. As the main entertainment, canoeing and cricket were highlighted. From the 1940's, the beach, goes through changes in the senses, with the arising of pools, which will discredit the therapeutic and pedagogic functions of the sea.

“Baixada Santista”, in the then seaside resort of Guarujá, was also the topic of the Master Degree's thesis of Carlos Marino (2018), about the maritime Holiday and the invention of Guarujá, between the years of 1893 and 1913. The author attributes this ‘invention’ to the bond between territorial expansion in São Paulo, the technological advances, the diversifying of investments from the elites of coffee with the traffic of ideas between the Brazilian seacoast, Europe and part of the United States.

In the seacoast of the Southern regions in the country, we highlight some works. In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, especially in the seacoast, it was developed the habit of Summer holidays that consists in the practice of going to beaches in periods of higher temperatures.

This type of structuring a relationship with the intermittent seacoast, affects all the logic of sociability that takes place in that space, causing, many times, a dichotomy between those that have the main address, near the seacoast, and those who have that space as secondary housing.

Regarding the seacoast in the city of Rio Grande, there is a concentration of works of different areas, and periods of production, about the summer resort Villa Sequeira, which after was then named Summer resort Cassino. Pinheiro (1999), thematized the foundation of this summer resort in the end of the XIX century, as well as its expansion and transformation in the course of XX century. Rebecca Enke (2005) researched for her Master Degree dissertation, the invention of this new leisure activity, sea coastal, also in the transition of the centuries in the same Summer resort. Years later, in her Doctoral thesis, under the perspective of social history, she broadened the time frame, thematizing Villa Sequeira/Cassino, since its foundation since the decade of 1960's (ENKE, 2013).

About the same Villa Sequeira, Felipe Ferreira (2012) developed his Master Degree dissertation focused, especially, on the practices of sea bathing, in the context of the foundation of the seaside resort. The author makes use of the history of sensitiveness, from a perspective of the cultural history, which gets closer to Alain Corbin, when analyzing to experience sea bathing in Rio Grande.

The same Praia do Cassino/Villa Sequeiro was also investigated by Gustavo Freitas (2014), thematizing the building of memories about the infamous<sup>9</sup> in the neighborhood – summer resort of Cassino in the beginning of the XX century, having as the analytical cut the practice of entertainments. Methodologically supported in the perspective of oral history, she held interviews with people who lived in the neighborhood, among “famous” and “infamous” ones. According to Freitas (2014), the infamous or cassineiros gave meaning at the same time labor and entertaining for the

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<sup>9</sup> Based in Michel Foucault, the chosen term by Freitas (2014, p.15) “is used in order to identify individuals who are not famous, all the lives that are destined to happen on the edge of any discourse, such as “sparkling existences”. In his research, the infamous are represented by individuals of popular classes as fishermen, maids, bricklayers, mechanics, who had permanently lived in the neighborhood of Cassino.

practices done on the beach, distancing from that therapeutic or, exclusively, of fun, attributed by the elites que used to visit the neighborhood temporarily – the vacationers. Aside from that, the infamous had their practices in the neighborhood, but which did not involve the beach: riding horses, dance, soccer, bars. The relationship they establish with the seacoast was very complex, in where elements of fun, education and work were confused.

Broadening the geographic cut about the sea coast in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the work by Joana Schossler (2013) is not delimited to an only city, but in the phenomenon of summer vacation in the northern and southern seacoast in the state. Starting from the therapeutic purpose for the hedonist, the initial manifestations of enthusiasm by the seaside or maritime holidays in Rio de Grande do Sul, would had started in the first decades on the XX century. The author highlights, in the specific case of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the importance of pioneering of European immigrants (German, Italian, Portuguese) and their descendants, may they be in the first expressions of interest by the seacoast, in the entrepreneurship, especially in the hotel sector. Other factors, more general ones, are also highlighted as relevant in the diffusion of the interest for the summer vacation and by the maritime holidays: the medical discourse that identifies the sea as the cure and refugee of the modern diseases, the right to vacations that was won in the decade of 1930's, the development of transportation technologies, as well as the process of urbanization in the summer vacations beaches.

In Santa Catarina, yet in the Southern region of the country, it was identified the survey by Sérgio Luiz Ferreira (1998) entitled *Sea bathing in the island of Santa Catarina*, which aims to “notice the process of implementation of this collective desire

to be at seaside in Florianópolis, as well as the arising of the conception of the sea as a place for baths” (FERREIRA, 1998, p.17). The historian analyzes as sources, the newspapers from the city of Florianópolis from the months of January and February, characteristic periods of the practices of summer vacations. According to the author, the many senses attributed to the practice of sea bathing, were being changed. This practice, which was forbidden in the XIX century, by the code of behaviors in the city, is analyzed in his work until becoming in a central element in the touristic activities in the decades of 1960’s and 1970’s, always passing by the therapeutic sense and amusement of the families in the beginning of the XX century. According to Sérgio Ferreira, sea baths had importante role in the structuring of the city of Florianópolis and in the costumes, especially with its diffusion in the decade of 1930’s: “The sea bathing changed the configuration of the city, its area of expansion modified the architecture and the directions of houses’ facades, imposed new fashions and new outfits, changed mentalities and habits, silenced rooted prejudices and raised other ones” (FERREIRA, 1998, p.19). The author especially highlights the practice of sea bathing, but in his survey other practices appear in a more secondary type: the picnics and the sports practices, as in Rio de Janeiro, rowing and swimming.

More recently, the researcher, Claudia Moraes (2017), also dedicated herself to investigate the relationship of the practice of rowing, with the urbanization process in the city of Florianópolis between 1857 and 1932. According to the author, rowing was a practice that re-signified the seacoast through an education of the body, in line with the modern ideal that, little by little, was being installed on the island.

Yet, about the seacoast in Santa Catarina, *The invention of the seacoast: urban reforms and the social readjustment in Florianópolis in the First Republic*, was the title



of the dissertation the historian *Hermetes de Araújo* (1989). Although much more worried with the urban reforms and the social readjustment, than with the seacoast, itself, this work has as the central problem, the image that is forged of the man from the seacoast, in face of new desires of latent modernizations in the First Republic.

From the social Reading that started to be imposed, in seacoast inhabitant was configured as the other in relation to values, habits and images by through the local elites were modelled. And this other was built, created, invented as a specific type that would be bearer of essentially negative characteristics, as the inability, indolence, indecency, lateness, etc., which strongly contributes to create a field of truths, and justify the desires of tutelary intervention of the elites, that had been manifested in the period (ARAUJO, 1989, p.14).

Even though the author's proposal was not to understand the diffusion of an interest by the seacoast, that had started in this period, it is very likely that it had been the first survey in Brazil – or one of the first ones- in the field of history, to approach the formation of the modern seacoast, through a perspective of human sciences, in the end of the decade of 1980's.

In the productions about the northeastern seacoast, we identified works about the seacoast in the capitals of Pernambuco, Bahia and Ceará. In the seacoast of Pernambuco, it is highlighted the extensive research by the historian Rita de Cássia de Araújo on the seacoast in Recife and Olinda. As a result of her doctorate thesis, and supported in the social history, *The beaches and the days aims* to:

Rebuild and interpret the types of occupation, the uses and social meanings that are attributed to the beaches in the seacoast of Pernambuco, especially the ones that were under the direct influence of the city of Recife. In this latter one, we precisely observe the beaches of Brum, Pina and Boa Viagem. In Olinda, the emphasis of the analysis was on the beaches located in their urban perimeter, or the ones that were closer: the beaches of Istmo, Milagres, Carmo, São Francisco and Farol (ARAUJO, 2007, p.15).

The time frame comprehends the years from 1840 to 1940, a period in which the Introduction of sea baths, its diffusion and the consolidation of the beaches as a place

for healing, amusement and social interaction, are gradually configured. According to Araújo (2007), until mid of XX century, the preference for the cities Recife and Olinda, was because of river baths. However, the author evidences two movements in the end of XX century, which were determinant for the approximation with the seacoast: the acknowledgment of the scientific basis and the diffusion of therapeutic virtues of salty waters, as well as the urban growth, that would broaden the search for places, beyond the city's central perimeter.

In the decade of 1920, the ideals that were linked to the cities by the sea, are formed with more consistency in the seacoast of Olinda and Recife, being, for example, built a sea-coastal avenue in Boa Viagem in 1925. In the following decade, Araújo (2007, p.432) identifies as consolidated a specific and collective way of experiencing the beaches:

A way that privileged the cultural practices, as well as sports and recreational, the relaxation, the contemplation of nature, the walks on the beach, the sea baths and the sun baths, which facilitated the forming of groups of coexistence and friendship. The beaches also became privileged places for personal exposures, to show off signs of luxury and richness, distinction and prestige by those who had them.

The seacoast of Recife and Olinda, as well as from many other sea coastal cities in Brazil, is outlined as a place for diverse social practice for meetings, conflicts, but also as a territory of entertainment, cure and multiple pedagogies that attributed to the body, centrality, acknowledged as practices of the universe of physical culture.

The seacoast in the city of Salvador, in Bahia, is marked by the specificity of being divided into oceanic seacoast, that is in front of the open Atlantic Ocean, and the one known as the seacoast of All Saints Bay, of calm Waters, made of peninsulas, coves, islands.

Souza (2011) developed his Master Degree dissertation in the area of Geography, by schematizing the representations created and transmitted for seacoast spaces, having as a cut, part of the oceanic seacoast in Salvador between Porto da Barra and Ipitanga beach. To the author, although the first decades of the XX century have been those in which it is started a higher frequency to the beaches, it was the period of pre-metropolization (between 1945-1969) responsible for the initial valuation of the Oceanic seacoast in Salvador, being still an area of little density.

In the field of Architecture, Andrade (2015) also investigates the beach practices in Porto da Barra, in Salvador. The author makes use of part of his dissertation of rebuilding the historical interest by the seacoast, and he identifies the beach of Barra as a pioneer in the therapeutic, recreational and sports senses. It was strategic place, because it is a natural harbor in the frontier between the Atlantic seacoast and All Saints Bay.

Thales de Azevedo (1988) corroborates with the vanguardism of Barra and identifies the representations of the “new” seacoast space, aligned with ideas of modernity and civility of the period:

Sea bathing in Barra, at that time, provided Bahia with momentary fulgurations of a civilized land who wears maillot and drives cars, a Copacabaninha yet a little fearful, maybe fearing the constant vigilance of Santa Maria, fort, but that already puts in the sail two palms of supra knee legs. The bath there is always delicious, tonifying, rejuvenating, not only for its therapeutic qualities, but especially by the extra therapeutic, not only because of the maritime qualities, but mainly for the marital ones (AZEVEDO, 1988, p.9).

The seacoast in the city of Fortaleza as a geographic cut highlighted some works in the areas of sociology, anthropology, geography and, more timidly, history. In *Sea in Sight*, the geographer Eustógio Dantas (2002) has as a central problem, the change of the character of the city of Fortaleza, in relation to the seacoast during the XX century. From a seacoast city in the countryside, to a maritime sea coastal city, from Capital of

the Hinterland to the City of the Sun, this is the movement the author identifies in the city. In the colonial Ceará, the hinterland was already superimposed in the technologic, natural and symbolic points of view, hosting in the countryside the greatest part of economic activities in the state, yet administratively dependent of the province of Pernambuco.

It was only in the beginning of the XX century, when Ceará becomes politically and administratively independent from Pernambuco, and when there is the opening of the Brazilian ports from beyond the metropolises, that Fortaleza would place itself strategically as a channel for abroad. Dantas (2002, p.24) yet highlights “without abdicating the heritage that comes from the symbolic picture of the hinterland”. These events, together with the ascension of the cotton production in the state, would be needed enablers of the construction of the domination of the seacoast over the hinterland, in the view of the author, in special thanks to the port in the city of Fortaleza.

The end of the process of transformation of Fortaleza, in a maritime sea coastal city, would only happen in the end of the decade of 1980's. Nevertheless, to the author, it was already in the decades of 1920's and 1930's, time frame delimited by the work, that it would have timidly started the initial incorporation of the beach zones, from Iracema Beach. The way that Dantas (2002) deals with this period, designated by him as initial in the process of integration of the beach zones to the city, and, more than this, in the changes in the mentalities of the population in relation to the seacoast, is yet, little worked on.

Attributing causes that are predominantly economic for the approximation with the seacoast, the therapeutics only timidly appearing in relation to sea baths, done by the rich classes, it is put aside the multi-faceted sense that the many practices and

uses of the seacoast space, manifested, not being restricted to a class (although conflicts of classes were there carried out). These are examples of practices that attribute totally unique senses to the beach: the nautical spaces, especially the races of rafts and swimming competitions, being them institutionally organized or of more spontaneous character, as the investigations by Nara Montenegro (2020), in *The Physical culture and their manifestations in the seacoast of e Fortaleza (1925-1946): new ways of educating and having fun*.

Although it is not comparable, the transfiguration by which the city passes by in the decades of 1980's and 1990's, characterized by the broad valuing of tourism and estate market in the beach zones, with what happened between the decades of 1920's and 1940's, it is in this latter period that it can be talked about an interest widespread between the local population in the seacoast. Despite not being sufficient so that the whole of the rich groups, or the population as a whole, became eager to live in the beach zones, and from the decades of 1920's and 1930's, that the sea coastal environment is consolidated as a place of sociability, of gatherings and conflicts for the biggest part of the population, in which interests related to health, entertainment and physical culture, were aggregated to the former meaning and yet existing of work, mainly highlighted by fishing and port activities (MONTENEGRO, 2020).

In the field of sociology, we highlight the work by Solange Schramm (2001), *Free territory of Iracema: only the name remained? Collective memories and the production of the space on Iracema Beach*. This Master Degree research is centered in the use of a collective memory of a specific group in order to legitimize the symbolic construction of the tradition of the neighborhood and of Iracema Beach, aiming, therefore, to establish a relationship between memory and the production of the urban

space, In the search for the identification of the identities that pervades the memory of the neighborhood of Iracema Beach, Schramm (2001) points out four moments that consolidate in the tradition of the neighborhood ; they are: romanticism, and refined sociability between the decades of 1920's and 1940's; bohemian and serenade player between the decades of 1950's and 1960's; rebelliousness and intellectualized bohemian between 1970-1980; and the decade of 1990's on, with the locus of leisure and tourism.

The review articulated by the author is around the crystallization of these traditions, that improve the neighborhood, until the current days, to the sense of a bohemian and cultural neighborhood, through governmental actions and investments from the private sector. According to the analysis of Schramm (2001), this understanding about the neighborhood obscures “the existence of other groups and other memories” (p.96). The institutionalization of a unique memory, nevertheless, is important criticism that the author writes about: “From the convenient use of past references, it can be affirmed that, in order to legitimize the new order, there was the institutionalization of a memory, countersigned by a discourse which, appearing to be consensual, dilutes the conflicts and disguises relations of power (SCHRAMM, 2001, p.96).

It is worth highlighting that other works, even if not taken into consideration in the surveying here proposed, once their cuts comprehend the period after the limit of 1950, there shall mentioned because they approach, in chapters or excerpts, the importance of this period. In João Pessoa, it is evidenced the research by Thaise Gambarra (2012) on the imagetic construction and the transformation of the territory of the beach of Tambaú, between the decades of 1950's and 1970's.

In Ceará, there was identified the survey by Roselane Bezerra (2008) on the discourses and appropriations of the neighborhood of Iracema Beach, especially the symbolic representations – its cut, however, happens after urbanistic interventions in the decade of 1990's. In the area of Geography Alexandre Pereira (2006) developed a dissertation on the seacoast of Aquiraz in the decades of 1970's and his Doctoral thesis, a broaden survey in which it is evidenced aspects of the historicity of summer holidays in Salvador, Recife, Fortaleza, Natal, as well as the social segments that participate in the dissemination of this summer holiday, its infrastructure of the sea coastal production and in the real state production and locational standard of capitals in the Northeast<sup>10</sup> (PEREIRA, 2012).

Between distancing and approximations, this group of surveys here gathered, will highlight specific aspects, motivated by their geographic, temporal delimitations, and theoretical-methodological models. They are studies that present us many thematic dimensions that arise the survey of the sea coastal space: the distinction, pleasure, cure, beauty, memory, immigration, entertainment, inequalities, urbanization, nature, tourism, among others.

The analysis proposed by this article, helps us not only to build a scenery of what had already been done in the field of human sciences about the theme, but present possible approximations and distancing. Our look was on the conformation of new senses attributed to the seacoast, different or distant senses from the traditional ones, that is, the emergence of representations about the seacoast and practices that are associated to entertainment, education and health, and not uniquely anymore, of fishery, subsistence and transportation.

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<sup>10</sup> From the decade of 1980's, especially, the northeastern capitals are taken by intense valuing of tourism and the state market in the beach zones. In order to understand this phenomenon, there is great interest for surveys in the areas of Social Science, Architecture and Urbanism and Geography, for this period.

## **Final Considerations**

The greatest part of the surveys had an important and common bibliographic reference: the work by the French historian Alain Corbin *Territory of the Void: the beach and the western imaginary*, except for Thales de Azevedo, who published this essay in the same year that Corbin would publish his French work, in 1988. The book *Territory of the Void* has as its object, the new types of feelings and relationships between the subjects and the beaches

In Corbin's work (1989) he expresses, in different ways, its problematic, mentioning "an awakening of the beaches' collective desire" (p.65); in the penetration of the seacoast "in the horizon of attractions" (p.72); in the emergency of pleasure and its types" (p.299); in other moments, it is used more categorical expressions, as the genealogy of a modern beach (p.298) or simply the "invention of the beach" (p.82). The works that were here analyzed, in different measures, has as its problematic, or social context, these changes on the beaches and summer resorts in the scenery of the seacoast of Brazilian cities, elaborated in specific geographic cuts, from the northeast to the South of the country.

As it has been presented, some field researches in the area of human sciences, produced in Brazil, studied, more specifically, on the thematic of the resignified seacoast, for hygienic means, of cure and entertainment. There are, yet, other researchers, that although they do not have as the central problematic these changes that operate in the seacoast, give importance to this context in their analyses, and they are: *The Invention of Copacabana*, in which O'Donnel (2013) has as its problem the formulation and the permanence of the symbol of distinction, associated to the sea coastal neighborhood of Copacabana; the surveys by Victor Melo (1999, 2001, 2015)



on the formation of an institutionalized sports formation of the modalities of rowing and swimming, in the seacoast of Rio de Janeiro; and Freitas (2014) on the building of memories about the subjects of popular classes in the neighborhood- summer holiday of Cassino, in Rio Grande do Sul, having as its analytical cut the practices of entertainment.

The other ones, however, share of a similar problematic: the conformation of new senses attributed to the seacoast in a certain period. Most of them, for example, will assume that in the seacoast there was a distancing or a rupture regarding its former military sense, of fishery, transportation, by respecting the specificities of each geographic and temporal cut. Some expressions that appear in problematics, objectives or titles will highlight it: “ Collective desire to be near the sea”, in Ferreira (1998), presupposing that formerly, there would not be this collective desire; “ changes in the social imaginary (...) in relation to the seacoast” (p.23), in Schossler (2013); “The beach as a space of sociability”, in Azevedo (1988); “consolidation of a predominant type of the collectivity to enjoy beaches and seas” (p.15), Araújo (2007); “ The invention of Santos beach”, in Terra (2016), maybe the most dramatic expression of rupture, void in a creation.

From these distinct perspectives, varied theoretical bases and diverse focuses, the here analyzed surveys, demonstrated that between the end of XIX century and beginning of XX century, a significant change of subjectivity, emotions, operate about the sea coastal landscape, and from the most intimate and pleasurable contact with it. This change modified not only the “feel”, but also all an urban, architectural and touristic structure in these cities, that are spread in the Brazilian coast until the current days.

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