

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN CULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE
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Cultural Sustainability and Regional Development

Theories and practices of territorialisation

Edited by
Joost Dessein, Elena Battaglini and
Lummina Horlings

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Theories and practices of
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Edited by Joost Dessein, Elena
Battaglini and Lummina Horlings

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Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	vii
<i>List of contributors</i>	ix
<i>Series introduction</i>	xiii
<i>COST statement</i>	xv
1 Introduction: the role of culture in territorialisation LUMMINA HORLINGS, ELENA BATTAGLINI AND JOOST DESSEIN	1
2 'Sustainable places': place as a vector of culture. Two cases from Mexico MICHAEL REDCLIFF AND DAVID MANUEL-NAVARRETE	17
3 Territorialisation and the assemblage of rural place: examples from Canada and New Zealand MICHAEL WOODS	29
4 The worldview and symbolic dimension in territorialisation: how human values play a role in a Dutch neighbourhood LUMMINA HORLINGS	43
5 Nature and culture in territorialisation processes: challenges and insights from a case study in Serbia ELENA BATTAGLINI AND MARIJA BABOVIĆ	59
6 Territoriality as appropriation of space: how 'engaging with space' frames sociality LEONARDO CHIESI	73
7 Exploring culture and sustainability in rural Finland MARI KIVITALO, KAISU KUMPULAINEN AND KATRINA SOINI	94

8	Territorialisation in practice: the case of saffron cultivation in Morocco	108
	JOOST DESSEIN	
9	Is there a place for place? How spaces and places are included in the measures of sustainable development and well-being	125
	ANNALISA CICERCHIA	
10	Making territory through cultural mapping and co-design: how community practices promote territorialisation	146
	LEONARDO CHIESI AND PAOLO COSTA	
11	How to scale a territory: experiences from the United States	162
	FRANS PADT	
12	Culture matters. Planning processes and approaches towards urban resilience in European cities and urban regions: two examples from Brussels and Ljubljana	176
	JENNY ATMANAGARA	
13	Re-creating and celebrating place(s) in designated space(s): the case of Wales	189
	EIFIONA THOMAS LANE, SIÂN PIERCE, ARWEL JONES AND IAN HARRIS	
14	Local maize practices and the culture of seed in Luoland, West Kenya	206
	PAUL HEBINCK, NELSON MANGO AND HELLEN KIMANTHI	
15	<i>Les jardins partagés</i> in Paris: cultivating space, community and sustainable way of life	219
	MONICA CAGGIANO	
16	A 'European Valley' in South America: regionalisation, colonisation and environmental inequalities in Santa Catarina, Brazil	235
	LUCIANO FÉLIX FLORIT, LILIAN BLANCK DE OLIVEIRA, REINALDO MATIAS FLEURI AND RODRIGO WARTHA	
17	Conclusions: territorialisation, a challenging concept for framing regional development	249
	ELENA BATTAGLINI, LUMMINA HORLINGS AND JOOST DESSEIN	
	<i>Index</i>	260

Illustrations

Figures		
4.1	The worldview and symbolic dimension of territorialisation	45
6.1	The dialectics between society and space	75
6.2	Appropriation of territory as the result of three dominant modalities	77
6.3	Socio-environmental indicators: forms of empirical evidence of appropriation of space	80
6.4	Routine as regular behaviour of appropriation of space	81
6.5	Traces as indicators of spatial needs and usability	82
6.6	Behavioural routines that produce trace	83
6.7	Example of alterations as indicators of a social need of redesigning relationship between regions of space	85
6.8	Examples of adaptations as indicators of creative realisations of non-designed affordances	86
6.9	Adaptations and public space design: an adjustable bench that affords multiple arrangements with different relational implications	87
6.10	Example of sign as addition to form to evoke meaning	88
6.11	A different kind of line of stones on the ground: a Tuareg mosque in the Tassili n' Ajjjer, Algeria	88
6.12	Signs as personalisations to counter anonymity in a residential building, Florence, Italy	89
7.1	Case studies in Central Finland	96
7.2	The framework for analysing the relation between culture and sustainability	100
8.1	Territorialisation as the combined processes of neo-endogenous development and co-production	111
8.2	The region Souss-Massa-Draâ in Morocco, and the indication of Taliouine	112
8.3	The House of Saffron and serving saffron tea in the Saffron Inn	115
8.4	Position of the development activities in the territorialisation scheme	119

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Series introduction

Katriina Soini and Joost Dessein

Achieving a more sustainable level of development is the biggest global challenge of the twenty-first century, and new approaches are urgently needed to ensure that development is much better aligned with the environmental, societal and economic challenges we are facing. Scholars and policy makers increasingly recognise the contribution of culture in sustainable development. The issue of culture is also being increasingly discussed in debates in various international, national and local arenas, and there are ample initiatives driven by local actors. Yet despite this increased attention there have been very few attempts to consider culture in a more analytical and explicit way within the frames of sustainability. The challenge of incorporating culture in sustainable development discourses, both scientifically and politically, arises from the complex, normative and multidisciplinary character of both culture and sustainable development. However, this difficulty should not be an excuse for ignoring the cultural dimension within sustainable development.

The Routledge Studies in Culture and Sustainable Development series aims to analyse the diverse and multiple roles that culture plays in sustainable development. It takes as one of its starting points the idea that culture in sustainability serves as a 'meta-narrative' that will bring together ideas and standpoints from an extensive body of academic research currently scattered among different disciplines and thematic fields. Moreover, the series responds to the strengthening call for inter- and transdisciplinary approaches that is being heard in many quarters, but in few fields more strongly than that of sustainability and sustainable development, with its complex and systemic problems. By combining and comparing the various approaches, in both the sciences and the humanities, and in dealing with social, cultural, environmental, political and aesthetic disciplines the series offers a comprehensive contribution to present-day sustainability sciences as well as related policies.

The books in the series will use a broad understanding of culture, giving space to all the possible understandings of culture from narrow, art-based definitions to broad, way-of-life based approaches, and beyond. Furthermore, culture is not seen only as an additional aspect of sustainable development – as a 'fourth pillar' – but rather as a mediator, a cross-cutting transversal framework or even as a new set of guiding principles for sustainable development research, policies and practices.

The essence of culture in, for and as sustainable development will be explored through the series in various thematic contexts, representing a wide range of practices and processes (e.g. everyday life, livelihoods and lifestyles, landscape, artistic practices, aesthetic experiences, heritage, tourism, agriculture, planning). These contexts might concern urban, peri-urban or rural contexts, and regions with different trajectories of socio-economic development. The perspectives of the books will stretch from local to global and cover different temporal scales from past to present and future. These issues are valorised by theoretical or empirical analysis; their relationship to the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainability will be explored, when appropriate.

The idea for the series is derived from the European COST Action IS1007 'Investigating Cultural Sustainability', running between 2011 and 2015. This network is comprised of a group of around 100 researchers from 26 European countries, representing many different disciplines. They have brought together their expertise, knowledge and experience, and based on that they have built up new inter- and transdisciplinary understanding and approaches that can enhance and enrich research into culture in sustainable development, and support the work of the policy makers and practitioners in this field.

Cultural Sustainability and Regional Development: Theories and Practices of Territorialisation explores the relationships between culture, sustainability and territorialisation. Here, the notion of territorialisation points to dynamics and processes stretching beyond localities and administrative boundaries. In this process the authors emphasise the role of nature in its interplay with culture, and the culturally varied ways in which people shape their territories.

The book contributes to our understanding of sustainable regional development by highlighting the time-space dimension of development and the varied ways in which people use resources. The cases represent different scales, a variety of locations and several continents (Europe, North and South America, Africa, Australia). The authors analyse these cases as the outcome of interaction between human intentionality, place-based characteristics and cultural history. Culture is not expressed only in practices and institutions, but also in the form of subjective perceptions, sense-making, and the construction of narratives and regional identities. The book provides empirical and theoretical insights into how these cultural expressions can contribute to sustainable regional development.

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COST – European Cooperation in Science and Technology is an intergovernmental framework aimed at facilitating the collaboration and networking of scientists and researchers at European level. It was established in 1971 by 19 member countries and currently includes 35 member countries across Europe, and Israel as a cooperating state.

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16 A 'European Valley' in South America

Regionalisation, colonisation and environmental inequalities in Santa Catarina, Brazil

Luciano Félix Florit, Lilian Blanck de Oliveira,
Reinaldo Matias Fleuri and Rodrigo Wartha

Introduction

The Brazilian state of Santa Catarina is widely viewed as being the most European of the Brazilian states, due to the nineteenth-century colonisation by European immigrants. Nevertheless, the construction of the regional identity as 'European' implies the invisibility of other sociocultural and ethnic identities that have been historically subalternised or excluded, resulting in inequities that usually remain unrecognised.

In this chapter we analyse how the tourist regionalisation process known as the 'European Valley' updates and reinforces these inequities, thus contributing to the maintenance of a colonial relationship. We base our reflections here on the territorialisation process of the state of Santa Catarina by analysing the colonisation process and the state government's construction of regional divisions. Regionalisation is considered here as a form of territorialisation. The analysis focuses on the symbolic and institutional dimension of territorialisation; the latter is expressed in the drawing of administrative policy boundaries on behalf of the state.

We use the term 'territorialisation' to refer to the process by which the territory has been defined and reified over the course of history, thereby rooting the communities' cultural identities. In our case study, the territorialisation process is described as highly conflict-laden owing to the colonial occupation of indigenous peoples' territories. The conjunction between colonisation and the territorial configuration process resulted in the stereotypical opposition between social groups identified as 'Brazilian' and the people of European descent. Although this process appears to have been completed during the nineteenth century, we illustrate how it is still ongoing as revealed through contemporary tourist regionalisation.

We argue that the tourist regionalisation labelled as the 'European Valley' is a specific form of territorialisation that reifies a naturalised territorial construction which began with a colonisation process characterised by violence against the indigenous peoples of the region. We use reification here in a sociological way meaning 'to give reality', which refers to an understanding of regions not as

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pre-given but as socially and historically constructed. In Santa Catalina (SC) this regional construction occurred in a context of conflict. This reification maintains and updates the relations typical of coloniality, while at the same time reinforcing the invisibility of regional indigenous concerns. From the indigenous peoples' point of view, the fundamental problem is the disastrous effects of the state's flood-control policy as exemplified in the dam built on indigenous territory. The dam's construction and its effect on the indigenous people is just one of the unrecognised inequalities (in this case, an environmental one) represented in the state of Santa Catarina.

Coloniality and territorialisation in Santa Catarina

Brazil is one of the largest countries in the world, occupying almost half of the continent of South America with an area of 8.5 million km². Diversity is a hallmark of Brazilian society. It has more than two hundred indigenous ethnic groups which together comprise about 2 per cent of the population. More than half of all Brazilians are descendants of people from various African countries; while another significant portion of the population is made up of the descendants of immigrants from different continents, cultures and religions.

The state of Santa Catarina (SC) is located in southern Brazil, bordered to the north by Paraná (PR), to the south by Rio Grande do Sul (RS), on the east by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by the Republic of Argentina. It occupies nearly 96,000 km² (1.12 per cent of the country) and is divided into 295 municipalities. With a population of slightly more than 6 million inhabitants (2010), it represents 3.28 per cent of the Brazilian population. In 2010, the gross domestic product (GDP) of SC was R\$152 billion, the seventh greatest in the country and 4 per cent of Brazil's total GDP.

From the beginning of the occupation of Brazil in 1500 until the eighteenth century, Santa Catarina remained little explored. Because it possessed neither gemstones nor other major attractions for the Portuguese Crown, the area remained largely undisturbed, covered by native forest and inhabited by indigenous peoples. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Santa Catarina was divided in two main regions. The coastal cities of Laguna, San Francisco do Sul and Desterro (currently Florianópolis) became important cities for supplying Portuguese ships heading further south to Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay. The second region, called the *Caminho das Tropas* (The Way of the Troops), was one of the major Brazilian economic routes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This important economic route connected the southeast to the south, mainly for trading mules, which were indispensable for the work of the gold mines of Minas Gerais.

By the 1820s, slavery had started to fall out of favour, and some measures against the practice had already been taken in Brazil, although it would not be fully outlawed until 1888. At the same time, the government initiated attempts to attract European immigrants to work on new projects. The influx of European immigrants gave the area a strong background of European colonisation, culture and religion. The legacy of this history is revealed in the cultural diversity of

Santa Catarina, as exemplified by the different languages, identities, traditions of knowledge and territorialities. European colonisation manifests itself through strategies of control over certain areas or space to reach and influence people and resources (Sack, 1986). This control has resulted in the imposition of behavioural rules, modes of speaking, and so on, along with the uses and valuations of nature that construct the landscape, both symbolically and materially.

The territorialisation was decisively determined by the history of colonisation. Territorialisation is implied in the dense ethnic content, which was constructed through a process of conflict, especially in relation to indigenous peoples who lived in the region. According to Bonnemaison and Cambrézy (1996: 13–14, author's translation), the symbolic and cultural load which is present in a territory integrates and constructs the identity of human beings:

We belong to a territory. We do not have it, we do not keep it; we dwell in it, we impregnate ourselves with it. [...] In short, the territory is not just about its functions or possession, but about its being. To forget this spiritual and nonmaterial principle is to be doomed to not understand the tragic violence of many struggles and conflicts that affect the world today: to lose territory is to disappear.

In this conflict-laden process, some histories and cultures were privileged over others via processes of cultural homogenisation that were initiated during colonisation. In the Itajaí Valley in Santa Catarina, oral and written celebrations of the heroism of European immigrants are among the discourses that fill the memory of the people, who maintain relationships, knowledge and regional experiences. This enhances European culture while rendering invisible other groups that are in fact part of Santa Catarina and the Itajaí Valley, such as indigenous peoples, people of African descent, African-Brazilians, *caboclos*, *sertanejos* and *quilombolas* (Oliveira *et al.*, 2014).

The original inhabitants of Santa Catarina are the indigenous Xokleng Laklanõ, Kaingang and Guarani peoples. These were semi-nomadic and, in the case of the Xokleng Laklanõ, moved freely through an area stretching from Porto Alegre (RS) to Curitiba (PR). The movement of pioneers and, later, troops into these areas led to the indigenous populations being fixed in place, mainly on account of the trade carried out by the *trapeirismo*. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, SC had several established cities around this route. However, the current borders of the territory as a state in the Republic were not defined until the twentieth century, after the Contestado War (1912–1916).

In this context, the Portuguese Crown began a violent policy of occupation of the traditional indigenous spaces. King João VI, by Royal Charter (1808), declared war on Xokleng Laklanõ residing in the domains of Lages and Guarapuava (Pereira *et al.*, 1998). In parallel, the government established several groups to advance colonisation and throughout the nineteenth century promoted systematic policies of occupying indigenous territory. The government thereafter enforced multiple policies that aimed directly at defining the population

groups and, in many cases, (re)creating stereotypes and stigmatising cultures. What had previously been officially defensive wars against indigenous populations became wars of spatial occupation (da Cunha, 2009) aimed at imposing a colonial cultural vision.

To replace slave labour, the government acted to attract European immigrants. In 1824, the first groups of German immigrants arrived in São Leopoldo (RS) and, in 1829, a large contingent settled in San Pedro de Alcántara (SC). Both cities were close to their state capitals to provide them with agricultural support. From 1870 on, Italian immigrants began to arrive. Dos Santos (1998) indicates that the indigenous people who occupied the southern region of Brazil at the beginning of colonisation were gradually driven into the interior by the threat of diseases and *bugreiros* (hunters of indigenous people).

In Brazil, the creation of laws relating to land ownership and the replacement of slaves with European immigrants occurred throughout the nineteenth century. These moves aligned with the interests of large landowners, mainly coffee producers in the southeast, who held their production base on large properties using slave labour. The land and labour force have always been considered from the economist's bias of development of the territory and its integration into the market economy, a view that was emerging in that century. This strategy conceived the stages of economic development in land policy and the management of the labour force to be inseparable (da Costa, 1979).

In 1850, a few days after the promulgation of the Eusébio de Queiroz Law that prohibited the slave trade, the Land Law was passed, establishing purchase as the only form of access to land. This law was conceived for colonisation and for the deployment of immigrants and settlers (an official category, synonymous with *peasant*, and in the south assumed to refer to individuals of European origin), as well as for the consolidation of properties, thereby establishing all the legal structures and the land development pattern (Seyferth, 1974). Both laws were formulated in the context of the structure of the National States, whose borders defined population distributions that gave immigrants a large majority. This resulted in the demand for new laws to ensure domination and control over population and territories.

By creating a land market and encouraging the expansion of settlements by Europeans, the Brazilian government increased the differences between the existing populations and the settlers, triggering conflict and disputes. The consolidation of Santa Catarina as a state took place in the context of this political and administrative structure, where the presence of European settlers, through government action on land sales, came gradually. It led to the expropriation of indigenous traditional territories and the initiation of new regional development processes, with new concepts of nature and natural resources, new agents and new territorial configurations.

From the sociocultural point of view, this conjunction between colonisation and the territorial configuration process resulted in the stereotypical opposition between social groups identified as 'Brazilian' and '*de origem*', which in this context means 'of European origin'. Those who were '*de origem*' identified

themselves as descendants of European immigrants, specifically of Italians and Germans. This was opposed to other ethnic groups, generically called 'Brazilian', which included indigenous peoples, people of African descent and mestizos (people of mixed racial descent), also known as *caboclos*.

The groups that identified themselves as '*de origem*' introduced a revised view of the history of the area, in which immigrants, 'full of spirit, vigor, health, intelligence and faith, implanted [...] religion and progress everywhere where it is established' (Dall'Alba, 1987: 152, author's translation). This historical narrative endorses the notion of a pioneering conquest of the region, which strengthens the self-esteem and the spirit of unity among the '*de origem*'.

The attributes given to this group were essential in establishing an intervention plan for the environment they found because the 'natural barriers' demanded tenacity and commitment. The problem was that these characteristics were celebrated, as opposed to the traits assigned to the 'Brazilians', who were represented as 'lazy', 'lacking fibre', 'discouraged', 'slow in thought and speech' and 'shy', or as typifying 'rustics' and 'hicks' (Thomé, 1992). This belittling of the original and native ethnic groups went as far as identifying them with barbarians, legitimising their extermination or assimilation to civilisation. The migration policy also had a racial component, insofar as it promoted the whitening of the population. This was aligned with Brazilian imperial policy intended to stimulate miscegenation so as to increase the proportion of white people.

The cultural festivals and landscapes defined in this process are exalted even today for the purposes of tourism and to affirm the identity, serving as a factor that demarks the Italian-German cultural territory in Santa Catarina. Those moments of celebration strengthen the sense of belonging. The appreciation of the traditions, insofar as it reflects a sense of the group, also updates the coding of the differences held to exist between 'Brazilians' and the '*de origem*'. One of the territories with the most pronounced ethnic demarcation is the Itajaí Valley (Vale do Itajaí).

Regionalisation, regional vocations and the 'European Valley'

The above-described regional development process that has been taking place since the time of the colonial construction reflects a system of social relations and conflicts, consolidating economic and political orders consecrated by and reproduced by the state. This system is constituted in economic, political and cultural patterns, which link economic arrangements to sociocultural values, supported by normative and symbolic parameters.

From an environmental point of view, this has resulted in the transformation of the landscape and the appropriation of resources, both supported by socially defined conceptions of nature. The term 'patterns' refers to a set of practices that tend to be routinely reproduced (Giddens, 1989) and are associated with a territory that, in turn, is also a product of these practices. These economic and political-cultural patterns are connected with a 'region' that indicates the specific geographic area in which they operate and from which the means of their reproduction is obtained (Theis, 2008).

Essential to the regional development process were some regionalisation practices in which symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1993) is exercised by planning officers, whether state or non-state. For these planning officers, some references are usually taken as given elements, reifying them, although they are the product of historical, economic, cultural and landscape transformation processes in which different social actors had relationships, often conflictive. In this process, borders are designed starting from an abstract and conceptual scheme of the region, giving concrete contours that cause the mental construction of the planners to become understood as a real entity with intrinsic existence.

These practices of regionalisation inadvertently favour essentialist understandings, ignoring the fact that the ontological status of these regions derives from the very act of regionalisation. These operations have been crucial to the process of reification of the regions in Santa Catarina, which was complemented by the imputation of specific functions and features, and which are in turn appropriated or incorporated by agents with power to shape the territory by their practices.

Regionalisations are a particular way of symbolically exercising power to draw boundaries between geographical areas from points of view that are functional for the agents with specific placements in the social space. Such operations constitute territorialisation practices that are more effective the more convincing they are in selecting the material and cultural geographic references that give them empirical support, and the greater the recruitment of interests and identities that find themselves included under this definition.

In Santa Catarina, these regionalisation operations are diverse, and have been based on different logics and intentionalities, some of which refer to the national scale and others to the state scale. In both, the relationships and interest systems do not necessarily coincide. The most widespread official regionalisation in Brazil, incorporated into the national system of statistics – and as a consequence providing fundamental support to decision making and implementation of federal public policies – is the regionalisation of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). This institution divides states into meso-regions and micro-regions based on generic economic and social similarities. With respect to Santa Catarina, this division gathers the 295 municipalities in six meso-regions, which are divided in their turn into micro-regions.

Another important regionalisation that articulates the national point of view of agents with state-wide perspective is the River Basins regionalisation of the National Water Agency (ANA) and the National and State Councils of Water Resources. Within the administrative boundaries of the state of Santa Catarina lie ten hydrographic regions, covering 17 basins and their respective Basin Committees (National Water Agency, 2014). Some other common forms of regionalisation that strictly relate to the area are the geo-economic regions and the tourist regions. The geo-economic regions divide the state into seven parts, and the tourist regions into nine parts. The geoeconomic regionalisation does not have any official definition, but is usually used both for policy implementation and by economic agents associated with the activities that are identified on the objective basis of that regionalisation.

The region considered here is the Itajaí Valley, dubbed the 'European Valley' by the tourist industry. The Itajaí Valley is the sole regional division that appears in all of the abovementioned regionalisation operations. This region is considered therefore as an administrative meso-region, a river basin district, a geo-economic region and tourist region. In other words, it appears justified on various bases, including the physical, economic and cultural aspects. It thus produces a strong conjunction of agents that have their interests included and, in turn, leaves little opportunity for agents whose positions in the social space do not support this regionalisation.

The name of the Valley comes from the river Itajaí, which was the access route of European immigrants. This river drains the region and is formed from the fusion of the South Itajaí and Western Itajaí rivers. In its course, it also receives waters from its tributary the North Itajaí. At the point of the Itajaí–Mirim confluence, it begins to be called the Itajaí. For the municipalities that compose the Itajaí Valley, the river has played a key role since the time of colonisation, and continues to play such a role in the present for the development of economic activities in the region. The colonisation of the Valley began with the city of Itajaí, which was the first municipal cluster. It was followed by the establishment of the Blumenau colony and later by the formation of the settlement in Rio do Sul, municipalities in the Itajaí Valley, larger rivers of the Itajaí basin, and the state and federal roads crossing the region (Figure 16.1).

The tourist regionalisation that labels much of the contemporary Itajaí Valley as the 'European Valley' was defined by the State Board of Tourism, following the guidelines of the National Plan for the sector. This plan has employed the tourist region as the structuring axis of the national policy through the Tourism Regionalisation Program: Routes of Brazil. It is a management model that combines the notion of territory with local clusters as a way of ordering, promoting, qualifying and diversifying the touristic opportunities offered (Bortolossi, 2008; Ministry of Tourism, 2004). According to Beni, this operation consists of the 'organisation of a geographic space into regions for the purposes of planning, managing, promoting, and integrating in order to share the tourist activity' (Beni, 2006: 30, author's translation).

The promotion of tourism in the European Valley exalts the characteristics and customs of European settlers, emphasising the German and Italian, as well as the natural beauty favourable to ecotourism, adventure tourism, and so on. This is expressed as follows on the website of the state government:

The cultural heritage of the German, Italian, Austrian, Polish and Portuguese colonizers is the great mark of this region of Santa Catarina, located in the Vale do Itajaí (Itajaí Valley). Famous for hosting the largest German festival in the Americas, the Oktoberfest of Blumenau, the Vale Europeu has many other attractions: from the typical architecture to the cuisine, celebrated in great style during the October Festivals; from the purchasing routes in the towns and cities of the Santa Catarina textile industry region to the religious celebrations which take place in several of its municipalities; from ecotourism to rural tourism. Choose your route and have a good journey.

(Santa Catarina, 2014)

More specifically, another website expresses the official historical discourse on the origins of these attractions:

The Itajaí Valley was colonised by European immigrants, particularly Germans, who founded Blumenau in 1850. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Italians settled near the existing German settlements. The descendants of these people preserve the customs of their ancestors in their culinary traditions, architecture, folklore, dances, and festivals. The privileged nature of the region provides numerous options for ecotourism and adventure tourism. (Santur, 2014)

The omission of any reference to the indigenous peoples who inhabit(ed) this valley, with their own conceptions of nature, values and ways of living, is not accidental. It simply reaffirms the conception that the tourist regionalisation of the European Valley consecrates.

For this reason, the European Valley is a regional designation whose implications go far beyond the planning of tourist activities. It consumes and consecrates the reification of the region as possessing characteristics which, although they are imputed and the product of historical and conflict-laden relationships, appear as self-evident and naturally given, and are therefore received as 'vocations'. The so-called regional vocation refers to the idea that, in a region, one supposed intrinsic tendency prevails as an unavoidable potential for a certain activity, supposedly determined by the territorial characteristics, natural or cultural, which results in their supposed 'vocation'.

Such reification takes place because an abstract representation of the region is accepted and incorporated by economic and political agents, which holds symbolic power to spread their representation as a natural and an historical reality. In other words, such representation of the region denies that it is derived from power relations and landscape transformations due to conflictive historical processes. In fact, the occupation of the European Valley entailed the modelling of the landscape based on the concepts, values and needs of the settlers. This took place through the delimitation of plots of land according to European systems, deforestation, and the 'cleansing' and gardening of areas near villas. Marcos Mattedi (2001), referring to the views of nature that were dominant throughout the Itajaí Valley's development process, emphasises that, for the settler, the local nature appeared as a clear threat, as an enemy to be subdued through deforestation, the removal of certain species and the elimination of the *bugres* (indigenous people). Despite this, the landscapes constructed in this way are now considered as evidence of the 'touristic potential' of the region, whose territorial configuration enables a balanced way of conciliating agricultural and non-agricultural activities with industry and services, attracting urban populations by their 'natural amenities' (da Veiga, 2000).

According to Kate Soper (1996), the most serious consequence of the abstraction of the role of human agency in the production of a space that is exalted

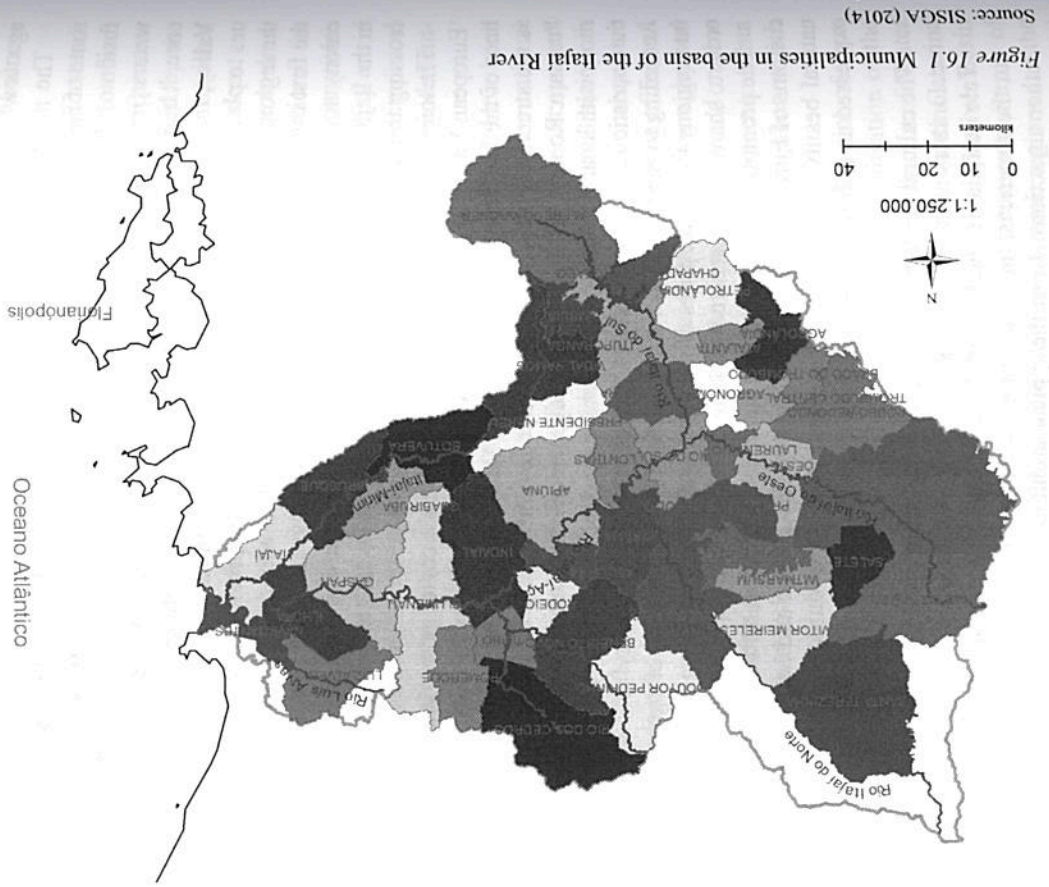


Figure 16.1 Municipalities in the basin of the Itajaí River

Source: SISGA (2014)

as 'natural' or 'traditional' is the neglect of the social relations, often conflict-laden and exploitative, from which the environment was established and that are marked in the physical territory. Indeed, much of what the tourist impulse exalts as the scenic value of the landscape, or tries to promote as experiences associated with a more harmonious order of a traditional lifestyle, is in fact a product of class, gender and race relations, which are usually disregarded in the formal constitution of such regions, or when the virtues of the landscape are exalted.

The exaltation of the European Valley for tourism therefore has a political effect, involving a rhetoric that obscures much of the landscape that is known for its attractiveness for tourism. It takes this form because of centuries of human activity in the material sense. It is the product of a history filled with violence and arbitrariness. This includes not only the historical buildings, but also much of the landscapes of scenic value and 'natural nooks and crannies'. This leads to an uncritical and anachronistic legitimisation of the historical process that defined this situation. This happens through the dimming of unworthy aspects of the historical process and the invisibility of the submitted and subjugated subjects in that process.

This naturalisation and the concealment of conflict in the production of the landscape mingle very well, paradoxically, with a certain rhetoric of environmental common sense that reduces the problem of sustainability to energy efficiency issues, technological innovations and (especially in the Itajaí Valley) environmental control through infrastructure projects. This common sense focuses on the metaphorical and abstract conflict between the rights of the present and the future generations, ignoring the existing conflicts between co-present subjects. These subjects are the ones who suffer the environmental inequality that results from the disproportionate exposure to the risks due to their different ability to escape from the sources of these risks (Aceselrad, 2010). This unequal distribution of environmental impacts tends to reproduce the social inequalities of Brazilian society (class, ethnicity, gender, and so on). From the territorial point of view, this dynamic is associated with the operation of the land market, which leads to harmful practices being located in devalued areas. In turn these are treated by state planning and regionalisation operations as 'sacrifice zones' (Bullard, 1994, cited in Porto, 2013, author's translation), in which people are forced to live in dangerous or degrading conditions and exposed to major risks.

Environmental inequities in coping with floods

Since the beginning of colonisation, immigrants have had to deal with the threat of flooding in the Itajaí Valley. This was a recurrent phenomenon but did not prevent European settlement of the area, which has had to cope with the effects of flooding on increasingly large scales.

The main way found to 'solve' the problem was through structural engineering projects, especially the building of dams. These began to be constructed in the 1960s and were planned in the Alto Vale do Itajaí region, since the dynamics of the flooding were then understood to be related to the rainfall in that region.

It was decided that three dams would be built in the cities of Ituporanga, Taio and José Boiteux, which at the time belonged to the municipality of Ibirama. The construction of two of these (the South Dam in Ituporanga and the West Dam in Taio) began in the 1960s and was completed in the 1970s. On the other hand, the North Dam in José Boiteux (Ibirama) was begun in 1972 (during the military dictatorship in Brazil) and was not completed until the 1990s. The municipality that benefited the most from these structural interventions was Blumenau.

In the past, Blumenau hosted the colony, and covered almost the entire territory of the Valley. Today, however, the city has a much smaller territorial extension due to the creation of several municipalities, but still preserves the greatest economic and political importance of any in the region (Kohls Schubert, 2014). This project has effectively undone the work of setting up the indigenous territory that had been reconstituted and reorganised in an atmosphere of difficulty and hostility, but which had nonetheless been successful in re-establishing the existence of indigenous communities with their own culture and ways of living.

The construction and subsequent use of the North Dam – Brazil's largest dam for flood control – drastically and irreversibly changed the lives of the Xokleng Laklanõ people. Although the project 'affected over 900 hectares of indigenous land, [...] their best lands, representing 95 per cent of their fertile land for agriculture' (Pereira *et al.*, 1998: 66, author's translation), the indigenous population was excluded from any decision process regarding the dam. No studies of environmental or social impact were done and to date, compensation for the land occupied by the dam waters has not been paid in full. The dam creates problems for the Xokleng Laklanõ people in a number of different areas. This second historic loss of territory is now added to the problems of non-demarcation of the land, the difficulty of getting along with the settlers, timber extraction and problems with health and education.

In 1978, the first flood on indigenous land 'occurred due to the construction of the North Dam' and 'for the first time, the community [of the Xokleng Laklanõ people] realised the full extent of the drama caused by this engineering project. The reaction that followed was mostly one of panic and disorientation' (Müller, 1987: 53, author's translation). The North Dam occupied not only the best agricultural area, but also the flat land of the people, the location of huts, houses, etc.; thus, it brought not only material losses, but also social and cultural losses. The union of the Xokleng Laklanõ people was historically grounded in that territory, where their experience was guided in a close relationship promoting relationships and interactions for generations. The North Dam caused the loss of the Xokleng Laklanõ people's best land and the social disintegration of the group.

Today, among their multiple claims, there are two urgent demands: the demarcation of the indigenous land and compensation in relation to the North Dam. Indigenous land currently covers an area of 14,000 ha, which should be extended to 37,000 ha (Pereira *et al.*, 1998). By not demarcating this (which would require indemnifying the settlers who have been using these lands for generations), the government creates a problem, because it supports the expectations of both sides

and prevents the effective creation of public policies for the development of the indigenous settlement.

In this context, Walsh (2012) defends the intercultural perspective that is configured as a political, social, epistemic and ethical project of transformation and decoloniality. For the author, interculturality will only have meaning, impact and value when taken critically as actions, projects and processes that seek to intervene in the restructuring and reorganisation of the social foundations that racialise, undermine and dehumanise – that is, in the very matrix of the coloniality of power so present in today's world.

As distinct from colonialism – the political and economic domination of one people by another anywhere in the world – *coloniality* describes the pattern of relationships that emerges in the context of European settlement in the Americas and which has become a modern and permanent power model. Coloniality penetrates into almost every aspect of life and locates itself, among other places, in power relations and by imposing conceptions of nature based on a binary division of nature from society that denies the ancient relationship between biophysical, human and spiritual worlds, treating the landscape with merely instrumental conceptions.

Conclusion

The European colonisation process that configured the territory in the state of Santa Catarina, especially in the Itajaí Valley, is today a consequence of coloniality, given the pattern of relationships that tends to perpetuate in the context of the modern management of nature and landscape.

On one hand, the flood control strategy emphasises infrastructure projects, focusing on minimising the occurrence of flooding in the city of Blumenau by sacrificing other areas, especially those occupied by indigenous peoples. On the other, the exaltation of European identity and of the cultural landscapes associated with it are politically and economically consecrated through the regionalisation of the European Valley, which, beyond being a merely tourist regionalisation, reaffirms the historical subordination of the colonised populations. The reifying of the territorial construction takes place through a violent colonisation process. This reification updates the relations of coloniality while reinforcing the invisibility of regional indigenous issues and reproducing historical environmental inequities.

The North Dam has irreversibly altered the daily life of the Xokleng Laklanô people yet they were not permitted to participate in the decision process. This project not only took their best agricultural areas and their houses, but also disregarded their conception of nature and landscape that involves a long-standing relationship between biophysical, human and spiritual worlds. Their worldview encompasses ways of life and knowledge systems that deeply rely on a spiritual and social-cultural relationship with nature, which underlies the construction of the landscape from their own cultural perspective. The conception of coloniality, reaffirmed by the control of nature through infrastructure projects and

the exaltation of the European Valley, is praised from the state, with only a few voices advocating greater reflexivity, these essentially being located in academia and social movements.

This analysis focuses on territorialisation via processes of symbolisation – the labelling of the area as European Valley – and institutionalisation. The touristic regionalisation has been described as a practice of territorialisation where power is exercised. This exercise of power took place in the form of drawing administrative policy boundaries with far reaching consequences: these policies and planning exercises do not represent the interests and cultural values of the population as a whole, as they exclude those of the indigenous population.

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17 Conclusion

Territorialisation, a challenging concept for framing regional development

Elena Battaglini, Lummina Horlings and Joost Dessein

Several strands of literature highlight the regional dimension of development processes: neo-institutional economics, the study of regional versus national competitiveness, the theory of comparative advantages and the focus on industrial districts. Despite a body of studies that, until the first half of the twentieth century, had not taken the variables of time and space in their analysis of development into account, places are taken in their specificity as the founding element for describing (and for some authors, interpreting) the constraints and opportunities of regions for their historical, cultural and socioeconomic conditions. The neoclassical theory of growth, based on the model of the Nobel laureate Robert Solow, expunges the spatial variable and is then gradually questioned in favour of the so-called endogenous regional development approach (Stimson *et al.*, 2011).

Over time, places take on the role of a favourable (or unfavourable) environment for business, making the creation of external economies (or diseconomies) possible, and giving rise to specific forms of cooperation between companies and developmental actors. At least some authors assert that development and innovation in certain successful regions are not produced by the assertion of a single company but rather by the competitiveness of the entire territory as expressed through the synergies between institutions and socioeconomic actors. These synergies are the basis of the processes of accumulation of knowledge and the dissemination of information and opportunities useful for supporting development in the context of effective planning (Battaglini, 2014).

Debates on regional development have described the relevance of social networks, proximity and organisational models to point to the importance of cooperation and trust between actors on the regional scale. Since the 1950s scholars seeking the roots of local competitiveness have progressively shifted their emphasis to the less material aspects of development. The central role initially attributed to the presence of infrastructure (1950–1960) was subsequently assigned to exports (1960–1970), to endogenous development, to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and to districts (1970–1980). Later, it shifted to innovation, to technology transfer, to innovative milieux (1980–1990), to the learning economy of intangible factors and collective learning (1990–2000) and finally, to relational capital and local culture (from 2000 to the present day).