



Landfills in Vitória, Espírito Santo, Brazil: The Protagonist and the Creations

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The Municipality of Vitória was originally made up of a chain of 34 islands surrounded by mangroves. Since colonial times, through a succession of landfills, the territory of Vitória has changed significantly, leaving out only a few stand-alone islets that have not been linked to the main island by land filling. In our earlier studies and published papers we identified and demonstrated that the changes in the government's argumentation regarding the Port of Victoria activities have been the main motivation for the successive "necessities" and reasons presented for land filling. Using the earlier research as a source, this study explores the official messages and reports that the executive government had sent to its legislative branch. It approaches issues on the development of Vitória, as related to the several landfills executed along the county borders. It focuses particularly the time period between 1900 and 2000, when such land filling activities acquire a representative proportion when compared to the actual surface of the Island of Vitória, presenting therefore a crucial role in the promotion of accessibility and sanitary conditions for the state capital city and, in more recent times, for the expansion of its territory. During the 1950s a major land filling project was undertaken, adjacent to the port area, forming a level area officially named Esplanada da Capixaba. The official argumentation presented for the works were the expanding port activities and their rising demand for increased space. This was the first time the government admitted the need for land expansion. Before that, the government-given reasons to justify landfills were either sanitation or accessibility. This study includes a brief account on the landfills carried out in the Vitória area, focusing on the Esplanada da Capixaba. It demonstrates that political determination countermanded technical recommendations and task priority in the selection of a location for and the building of the Port of Vitória and the resulting landfills. It reveals that the territorial build-up of Vitória has been guided by political force even when technical recommendations pointed toward the opposite direction. Such actions, resulting from political and administrative intents, be those of economical or social nature, have triggered, a set of interventions whose stated objectives not always were faithful to the original goals for the landfill occupation when it was actually achieved and it can be claimed that all those earthworks and embankments have altered in overwhelming ways the contours of Island of Vitória, imposing to her inhabitants financial, social, and environmental burdens. In short, it can be argued that the environmental problems Vitória now faces are a result of those earlier decisions for land filling within which the Port of Vitória was the main protagonist

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