

# Toponymy and Historical Cartography: the legacy of geographic names on city of Cabo Frio – RJ

Beatriz Cristina Pereira de Souza\*, Paulo Márcio Leal de Menezes\*

\* Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Geography Department

**Abstract.** The study of geographic names includes the comprehension of many aspects directly associated with geographic space, such as: anthropic occupation, natural elements of landscape, cultural identity, disputes for areas control, among others. The toponyms give identity to the space and reveal defined relations on it, they have been used on diversity historic moments as strategy for many objectives of group responsible for naming such spaces. On this approach, the present study search to make a analysis of the geographic names of the city of Cabo Frio-RJ to establish and to sediment their historic-geographical structure, besides to evaluate their cultural origin. Thus, this paper pretends to realize correlations of the distribution of the names with the pattern of anthropic occupation that is observed in the area. Moreover, the organization of the analyzed toponyms for future entering on Geo-Database of Geographic Names of State of Rio de Janeiro, that is a wide collection of information under construction by the Laboratory of Cartography of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, is also a objective. The city of Cabo Frio is localized on Rio de Janeiro state coast and, currently, stands to be one of the most important touristic pole of the state. In contrast, the choice of this city is justified by the important role of the area in Brazilian history, it received the first portuguese trading post in Brazil, in 1503. For this research, maps and cartographic documents of the XVIII, XIX and XX centuries were analyzed. The results pointed to a historical stability of the geographic names, don't existing significant modifications on them, beyond the prevalence of the names of portuguese origins, that reflects the supremacy of lusitanian spatial occupation in the region and the political legitimation conquered by the group. On this way, it is verified that the toponyms are important cartographic registers which express many local characteristics, extremely significant to the Geography.

**Keywords:** Historical Cartography; geographic names; cultural origins.

## **1. Introduction**

This study aims to enrich and endorse discussions about geonyms from the research of geographical names of the city of Cabo Frio-RJ.

The geonyms, in general, have been little explored in academic research, however its study appears relevant and very important in the context of sciences such as history, sociology, linguistics, philology, anthropology, politics, and especially geography, since, geographical names confer identity to the place and are closely linked to spatial representation of it, having the ability to individualize the space.

The understanding of the motivations that led to certain nominations and their origins reveals a lot about the history of occupation, the economic, cultural and natural aspects of a particular area. Thus, this issue is fundamental in that it assists in building a knowledge that is based on the formation of the place and its evolution to the present. It can be argued that geographical names show the relationships that are defined on the space, being used as a strategy for various purposes.

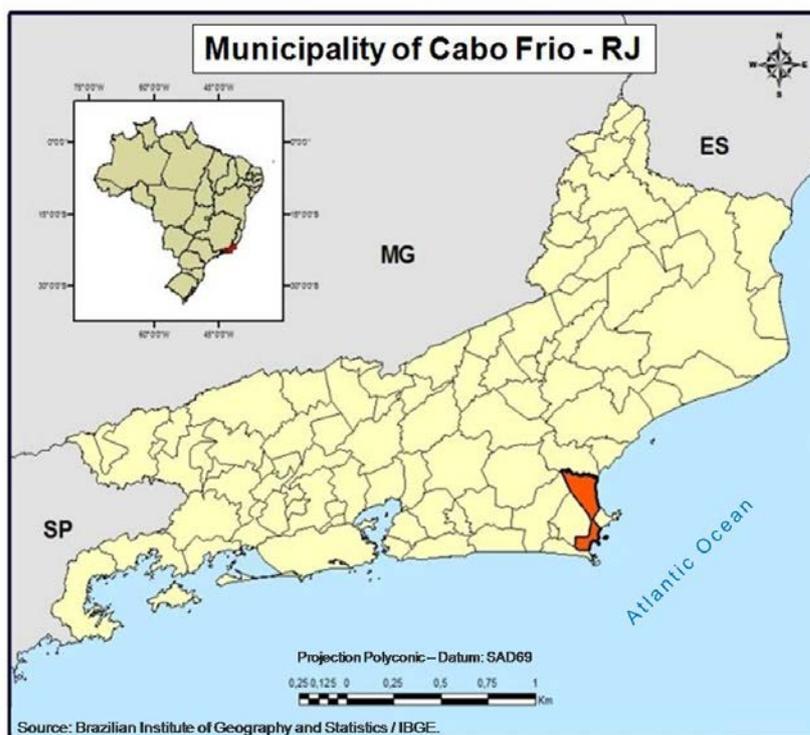
Another important application of this type of study concerns the creation of a spatiotemporal database that promotes the standardization of geographical names, avoiding duplication of data (more than one appointment to the same location) and thus promoting greater efficiency and precision in the use of such information.

Against this background, this study aims to perform an analysis of the geographical names of the municipality of Cabo Frio-RJ to establish and consolidate its historical and geographical structure, in addition to assessing the cultural origin of it. This way, it intends to make correlations of the name distribution with the patterns of human occupation that took shape in the area. Secondly, we aim to organize the toponyms analyzed for future inclusion in the database of Geographic Names of the State of Rio de Janeiro, which consists of a comprehensive collection of information under construction by the Cartography Laboratory of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

## **2. Characterization of the Study Area**

The study area chosen for this research is the municipality of Cabo Frio, located on the coast of the state of Rio de Janeiro, but specifically in an area called the Lakes Region (Figure 1). Currently, the city stands out for being part of one of the main tourist centers of the state, and thus having its

economic dynamism guided by activities related to tourism such as hospitality and gastronomy.



**Figure 1.** Location of the municipality of Cabo Frio.

Despite recent economic growth that occurred in the city, the main reason for the choice of Cabo Frio is the fact that this location has been chosen for the installation of the first Portuguese factory in Brazil in 1503 by Amerigo Vespucci. Thus, functioning as a trading post that moved products and serving as a support point for shipping and customs, the area was strategically important during the colonial period.

Originally, the area was inhabited by tribes of Tamoios and Goitacás Indians, belonging to the Tupi branch, who showed enough resistance to Portuguese ruling, managing to remain present until the second decade of the seventeenth century.

During the economic cycle of the Brazil-wood (sixteenth century), Cabo Frio stood out as the main point of loading timber to Europe. This intense trade

that settled there attracted the interest of other European nations that began to compete with the Portuguese for the dominance in the region. We highlight the marked presence of Dutch and French smugglers.

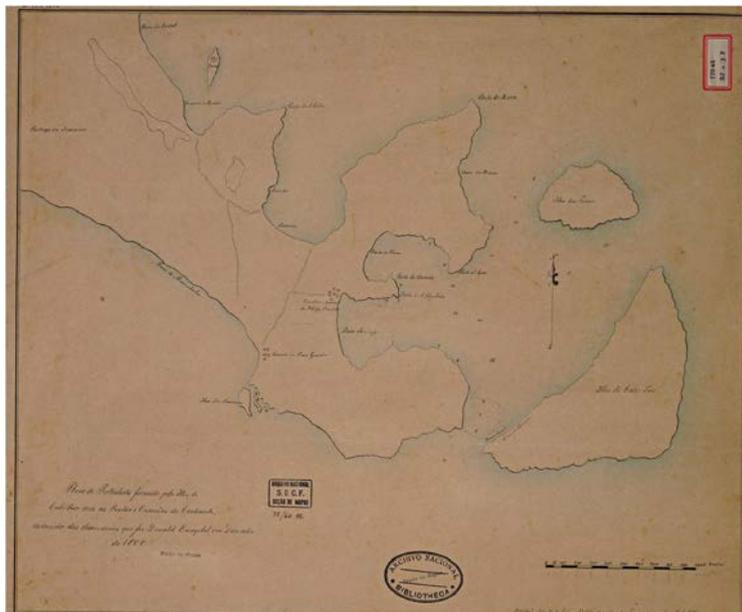
Even in the colonial period, Cabo Frio had another extremely important factor for the Lusitanian strategies of territorial occupation: its prime location near the city of Rio de Janeiro. Thus, owning the territorial control of the coast that point meant greater protection against invasions in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Given these explanations, it is noticeable how Cabo Frio is a town full of quirks about their occupation and development, showing the presence of various ethnicities that, throughout history, disputed territory, helping to create a rich backdrop for the study of geography names.

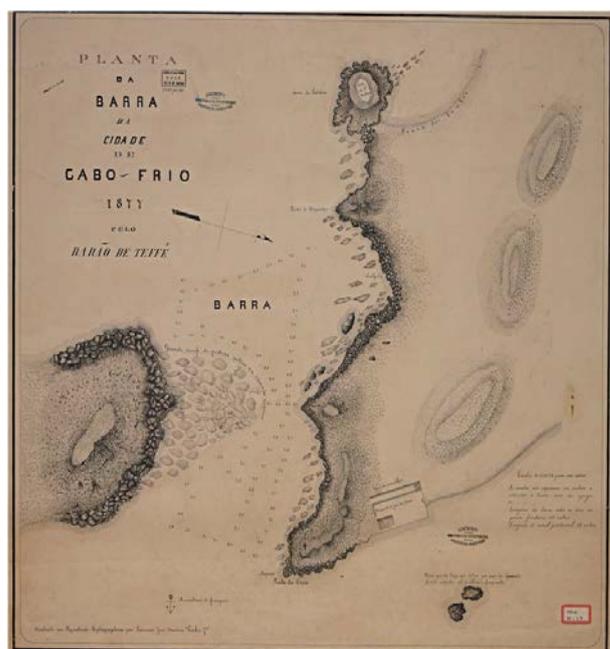
### **3. Materials e Methods**

In order to complete this study it was initially done a literature collection so that it could be gathered as much information as possible on the conceptual discussion and study area, from data on the historical occupation of the place, natural and economic aspects to maps related to the city of Cabo Frio. This phase included a dense documentary research to acquire cartographic documents from different historical moments in order to conduct a study of the historical and geographical geonyms ascertaining changes, extinctions and appearances thereof. It is noteworthy that obtaining historical material is one of the main difficulties for the research.

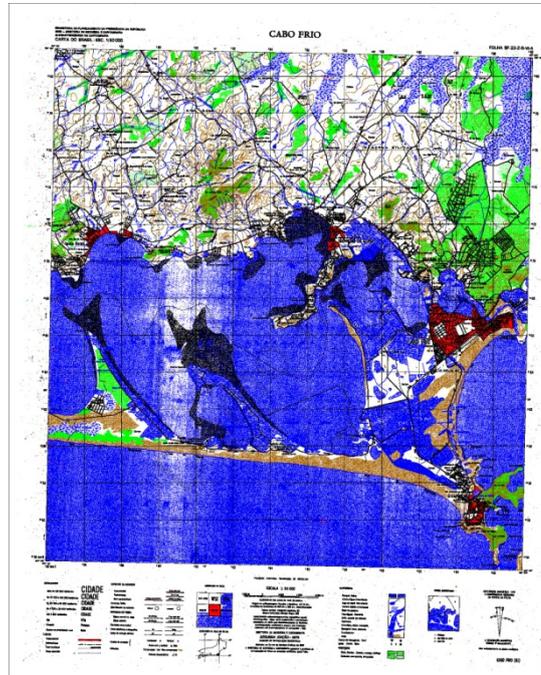
We analyzed maps of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, these are exemplified in Figures 2, 3 and 4, respectively.



**Figure 2.** Map of the eighteenth century. Source: National Archives.



**Figure 3.** Map of the nineteenth century. Source: National Archives.



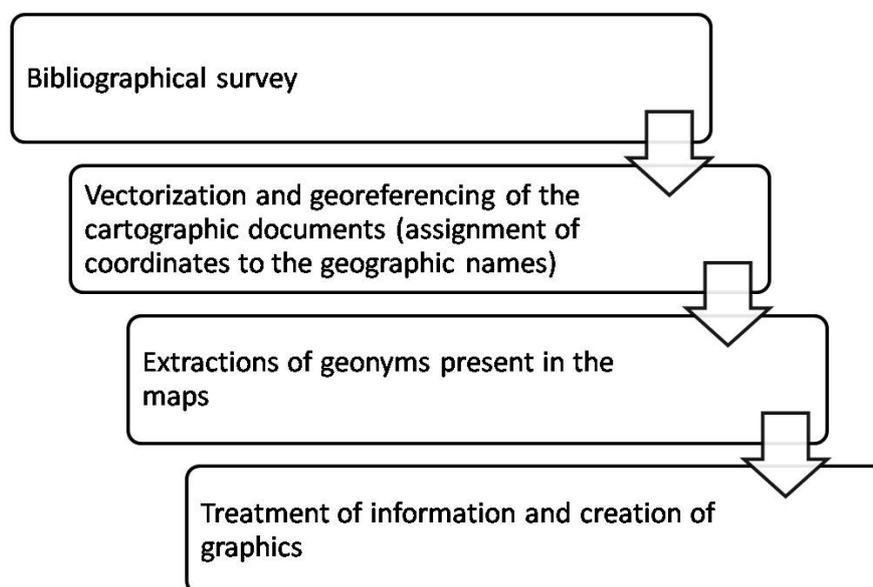
**Figure 4.** Topographic Charter (twenty-first century). Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics / IBGE.

Then there was the vectorization of historical maps acquired by associating the geographic features present in cartographic documents to the consistent geometric features (polygon, line, point). The next step corresponds to the georeferencing of cartographic documents, in which geographical coordinates are assigned to features based on the Brazilian systematic mapping. It is at this stage that the geographical names are inserted to the concept of geonym since they can be located in space by their coordinates.

With the completion of this process, it starts extracting geonyms present in maps. This stage allowed the research on the motivations of names, their modifications over time, their meanings, etc., Allowing also the future feeding of the space-time database with multiple inputs such as location, date, map and geographical name. This step will be refined through the last methodological procedure that is the reambulations.

Besides all the treatment described, the geographical names were also organized so that classifications that were necessary for the subsequent creation of illustrative graphs of results regarding cultural origin could be made.

The methodology described is simplified in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** Methodology.

#### **4. Conceptual Approach**

In this section, we intend to discuss and debate various theoretical and conceptual aspects involved in researching on geographic names. Initially, we point out that this type of study falls within the science called Onomastics whose object of analysis are proper names. This science is divided into two kinds of research: one focused on the names of people - Anthroponymy - and one for the names of places - the Toponymy. It is in this second branch, specifically, that the discussion about the theme of this article develops.

Furtado (1996) states that toponymic science occupies, effectively, the study of names of places, towns, peoples, nations, as well as the rivers, hills, valleys, etc., it means, geographical names. The toponyms directly express relationships between man and geographical space since the act of naming is essentially human, establishing a cultural link, directly related to the occupation, possession and knowledge of area named. Accordingly, Fernandez says:

*“The geographical name or toponym goes beyond the mere addition of words that matter to identify a certain element of the landscape; it achieves enormous*

*transcendence actually, because this name brings implicit in its wake, several factors and meanings bestowed by man.” (FERNANDEZ, 1987 apud SANTOS, 2008)*

Seeking to better understand the implications that the appointment of a name to an area has, Dick (1990) develops the notion of toponymic motivation consisting of the research of impulses that led to the emergence of the toponym. The motivations, generally relate to the socio-cultural circumstances in which the denominator was integrated, therefore, the historical context in which the appointment occurs. The cited author classifies the different motivations mentioned in toponymic taxonomies that can be not only of anthro-cultural nature but also of physical nature. These taxes allow to be made early inquiries about the emergence of the toponym and contribute in an essential way to analyze the toponymic motivations.

It is essential, however, for considerations of this research, that toponyms are capable of location in space, ie having geographical coordinates of identification. This attribute makes the geographical name to acquire a new skill, being characterized as geonym. Houaiss mentions that geonym provides the definitions of toponym with the addendum that it will be considered from a past or contemporary geographical feature capable of graphical representation and obtaining their spatial coordinates. (HOUAISS, 1999 apud SANTOS, 2008)

Considering these aspects, it turns out that the study of geonyms covers an area of knowledge which aims to address the regulatory, etymological, linguistic, historical, cultural, among others aspects, involving naming of places.

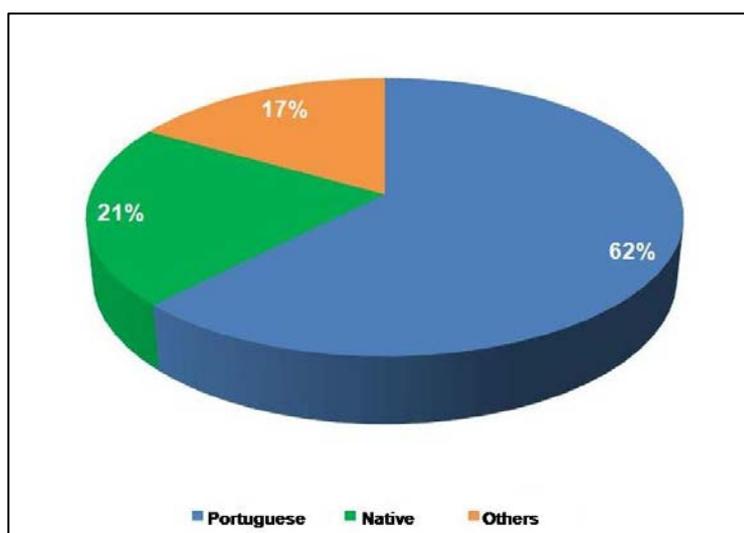
## **5. Results**

The results of this research can be divided into three groups:

- Etymological Analysis of toponyms;
- Meaning of geographic names;
- Historic and Geographic Structure of Geonyms.

The first one aims at showing the marks left by the various processes of spatial occupation that occurred in the ancient Cabo Frio by analyzing the cultural origins of geographic names currently present on topographical maps of scale 1:50000. The toponyms were classified according to their etymological origin, into three groups: Portuguese, native (indigenous) and others (exogenous).

This analysis showed that the toponyms of Portuguese origin are majority, representing more than 50% of geographical names present. Following these, the native toponyms showed predominant and, finally, the less representative class was of names from other etymologies. This pattern is shown in Figure 6 and in Table 1.



**Figure 6.** Graph of representative toponym classification regarding the etymological origin.

Origin	Quantity
Portuguese	97
Native	33
Exógena	26
Total	156

**Table 1.** Toponyms analyzed according etymological origin.

The second group of results refers to the study of the meanings of geographical names. This type of assessment involves the historical moment in which the appointment was made and the toponymic

motivation that drove it. We chose two names very important historically and culturally in the area: Cabo Frio and Araruama Lake.

The term "Cabo Frio" first appeared in 1506 on the map of Kunstmann III, but dates from 1504 when of the trip of Gonçalo Coelho, being of Portuguese origin. Its composition is a typical toponymic phrase, where "Cabo" (Cape) is a generic term referring to geographical accident and "Frio" (Cold) the specific term that refers to a peculiar characteristic of this feature that is located on a cold coastline amid a hot zone due to the local wind regime, particularly in the northeast direction and a sea current existing in the region. This name has its toponymic motivation based on meteorotoponym, ie, a characteristic climate boosted its denomination. This geographical name has not changed throughout history and became the name of the factory, later, the municipality in which it is located, prevailing until today.

The second rated name, "Araruama Lake", according to the toponymic taxonomies established by Dick, was motivated by characteristics of physical nature. As in the previous case, this geographical name is constituted by a toponymic, wherein "lake" is a generic term referring to a hydrographic feature and "Araruama", the specific term. Its origin is indigenous, more specifically, from the Tupi language and its proper term means "Land of Parrots" thus describes a feature of the landscape. The toponymic motivation which it is inserted is zoo-toponymic once it refers to fauna aspects. This name has not changed throughout history. The designation of such lagoon has become the name of a municipality in the region.

The last set of results concerns the evaluation of the historical-geographical structure of geonyms. We tried to identify disruptions and changes in appearances and appointments of new toponyms. From the comparison of historical maps relating to different times (XVIII, XIX and XXI centuries) it was revealed the absence of significant changes in geographic names for the historical period evaluated. The only changes found were related to the spelling. Table 2 shows some examples of this situation.

Toponymy	
Past	Present
Praia da Maçambaba	Praia da Massambaba
Restinga de Areroama	Restinga de Araruama
Praia dos Hanjos	Praia dos Anjos
Ponta do Harpoador	Ponta do Arpoador

**Table 2.** Comparison between geonyms in different historical moments.

## 6. Final Thoughts

With the results of this research, it was revealed Portuguese sovereignty since the current names, mostly, have this origin. This reflects the intense spatial occupation Portuguese in the region and also the political legitimacy achieved by the Lusitanian. In this case, we note that geographical names have political nature, analyzed through history, and materialized in the territory.

Note also that despite the native tribes have lost a large share of political representation and cultural expression under Portuguese rule on them around 1616, the geographic names with this ethnic origin remained in considerable quantity. This occurrence may be associated with the representation of the physical aspects of the place, that is, an interesting description of the landscape. When investigating portions of the territory in which these names were concentrated, it was found that they prevailed in areas farther from the coast, this may reflect the fact that, in these places, the massacre of the Indians have occurred later. It is needed, however, more detailed analyzes to consolidate such claim.

As for the analysis of geonyms in its historical and geographical perspective, it was found that there is stability in the appointments found in documents of the XVIII, XIX and XXI centuries. This naming maintenance over time highlights the loss of both political and economic importance of the city of Cabo Frio, that with the decline of trade in Brazil wood, was no longer strategic for the relations established in Brazilian territory. The choice of geographical names that had their meanings pointed out in this article reflects the situation of immobility of the geonyms through time.

Overall, this study sought to point out that Geonomastic, ie the study of geonyms, is an efficient way of fishing the past and memory of the place,

showing patterns of spatial occupation and local linguistic diversity and giving higher quality for the cartographic information.

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