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ANALYSIS OF TERRITORIAL DYNAMICS IN THE COMMUNE OF TABARRE, HAITI (1998 - 2019)

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Abstract

The article aims to analyze the territorial dynamics in the commune of Tabarre, Haiti, during the period from 1998 to 2019, with an emphasis on changes in areas that were previously predominantly rural with agricultural potential. This transformation occurred rapidly in recent years, especially from 1998 to 2019. The study adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing literature review, data collection from the Mairie de Tabarre – Tabarre City Hall, the Ministries of Haiti, and some descriptive statistical analyses based on cartographic data provided by the National Center for Geospatial Information. The mapping results revealed a significant increase in urban areas within the territory of the commune of Tabarre. There is evidence of unplanned urbanization and migration of people from various parts of the country to the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, including Tabarre. This underscores the need to understand better the dynamics of occupation and highlights the importance of using territorial planning instruments to reflect on the future of the commune.

Keywords: Urbanization; Metropolization; Urban Planning.

Resumo / Résumé

ANÁLISE DA DINÂMICA TERRITORIAL NA COMUNA DE TABARRE, HAITI (1998 - 2019)

O artigo tem como objetivo analisar a dinâmica territorial na comuna de Tabarre, no Haiti, durante o período de 1998 a 2019, com ênfase nas mudanças nos espaços em que predominava anteriormente área rural com potencialidade agrícola. Essa transformação ocorreu de forma rápida nos últimos anos, especialmente no período de 1998 a 2019. O estudo adota uma abordagem qualitativa, utilizando revisão bibliográfica, coleta de dados junto à Mairie de Tabarre – Prefeitura Municipal de Tabarre, aos Ministérios do Haiti e algumas análises de estatística descritiva a partir dos dados cartográficos disponibilizados pelo Centro Nacional de Informação Geoespacial. Os resultados do mapeamento revelaram um aumento significativo da área urbana no território da comuna de Tabarre. Evidencia-se uma urbanização desordenada e uma migração de pessoas de várias partes do país para a região metropolitana de Porto Príncipe, incluindo Tabarre. Isso aponta para a necessidade de compreender melhor as dinâmicas de ocupação e destaca a importância do uso de instrumentos de ordenamento territorial para refletir sobre o futuro da comuna.

Palavras-chave: Urbanização; Metropolização; Planejamento Urbano.

ANALYSE DE LA DYNAMIQUE TERRITORIALE DANS LA COMMUNE DE TABARRE, HAÏTI (1998 - 2019)

L'article a pour objectif d'analyser la dynamique territoriale dans la commune de Tabarre, en Haïti, pendant la période de 1998 à 2019, en mettant l'accent sur les changements dans les espaces où prédominait auparavant une zone rurale avec un potentiel agricole. Cette transformation s'est produite rapidement au cours des dernières années, notamment de 1998 à 2019. L'étude adopte une approche qualitative, utilisant une revue de la littérature, la collecte de données auprès de la Mairie de Tabarre, les ministères d'Haïti, et quelques analyses statistiques descriptives basées sur des données cartographiques fournies par le Centre National d'Information Géospatiale. Les résultats de la cartographie ont révélé une augmentation significative des zones urbaines dans le territoire de la commune de Tabarre. Il existe des évidences d'urbanisation non planifiée et de migration de personnes de diverses régions du pays vers la région métropolitaine de Port-au-Prince, y compris Tabarre. Cela souligne la nécessité de mieux comprendre les dynamiques d'occupation et met en lumière l'importance de l'utilisation d'instruments de planification territoriale pour réfléchir sur l'avenir de la commune.

Mots-clés: Urbanisation; Métropolisation; Urbanisme.

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INTRODUCTION

Haiti, located in the Caribbean region, shares the island of Haiti with the Dominican Republic. Unlike Brazil, a federal republic, Haiti is a unitary state. The country is divided into 10 geographic and administrative departments: North, Northeast, Northwest, l'Artibonite, Center, West, South, Grand'Anse, les Nippes, and Southwest. In addition, the Republic comprises Arrondissements[1], Communes, and Communal Sections (RÉPUBLIQUE D'HAÏTI, 1987). In Haiti, as evidenced in the commune of Tabarre, the characteristics related to territorial dynamics represent some of the main challenges faced by governments, manifesting as a broad set of multidimensional issues. As highlighted by Bernardin (1999), the adversities faced by Haiti largely stem from historical and sociopolitical factors that have led to inadequate spatial organization, intensifying disparities and regional imbalances that have accumulated over time. The author argues that these problems are intrinsically linked to the unequal distribution of population, economic activities, infrastructure, and facilities throughout the territory.

Other elements that demand specific attention are quite extensive, such as natural disasters and the phenomenon of rapid urbanization. As pointed out by Salomon et al. (2022), the unchecked and unregulated expansion of the peri-urban area of the Port-au-Prince agglomeration resulted from a transformation in lifestyle and inadequate land-use management, driven by rapid and uncontrolled urban population growth. Initial studies indicate that the commune of Tabarre, created in 2002 without adequate territorial planning, experienced a remarkable urbanization process between 1998 and 2019, intensified after the January 12, 2010 earthquake. This urbanization was driven by the rapid growth of neighboring populations and other cities in the country, occurring without the proper use of essential tools for territorial planning to foster local development. As noted by Robert (2014), Tabarre is a recent peripheral commune due to its location outside the historical center of the Port-au-Prince agglomeration and is undergoing intense urbanization dynamics contributing to its transformation into a new centrality. This situation is aggravated by the transformation of spaces formerly allocated to agriculture during the study period.

The objective of this article is to analyze the territorial dynamics in the commune of Tabarre, Haiti, from 1998 to 2019. Like all communes in the country, Tabarre has the right to administrative and financial autonomy, to the extent of being elevated to the category of Haitian communes capable of aspiring to self-sufficiency, especially regarding the operation of the Municipal Chamber and the provision of basic services. Therefore, considering Articles 66, 73, and 74 of the 1987 Haitian Constitution, which were not repealed by the 2011 constitutional amendment (RÉPUBLIQUE D'HAÏTI, 1987), the local authority is one of the main planning actors with the competence to manage its territory. In this regard, the administration of this commune since 2013, through its Local Technical Agency (LTA), supported by the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Collectivities (MICT), has been attempting to implement certain alternatives to better utilize land and provide concrete solutions to the various socio-environmental problems the commune faces. It is also undertaking the process of diagnosing its territory with a view to developing its Communal Development Plan (CDP), which should include the establishment of a Local Urban Development Plan (MAIRIE DE TABARRE, 2013).

The adopted methodological procedures included a literature review relevant to the topic. Subsequently, data from the Haitian Institute of Statistics and Informatics – Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique (IHSI), the Tabarre City Hall (Mairie de Tabarre), and various Haitian ministries were mobilized to analyze issues related to the territorial dynamics of the commune. In addition, articles by some researchers were consulted, as well as field data collected in 2020 in the Tabarre region, with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of the territory's transformation. It is worth noting that statistical data present in maps provided by the National Center for Geospatial Information – Centre National d'Information Géospatiale (CNIGS) were also used.

TERRITORIAL DYNAMICS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE COMMUNE OF TABARRE

In Haiti, population distribution across the territory does not follow state-defined territorial planning, particularly regarding urban planning regulations. For instance, the population of

Port-au-Prince, the capital of the Republic of Haiti, has grown rapidly (LUCIEN, 2007). According to Théodat (2013), this population growth was driven by two main factors: rural exodus and suburban expansion. The rural exodus, a continuous and longstanding phenomenon, initially directed migrants to nearby rural areas such as Grands Bois and Coupe. Within the city limits or the urban area, the average urban growth rate is around 5%. This migratory flow toward the capital is mainly linked to the centralization of public spending and the concentration of basic services such as education, health, and recreational activities (THEODAT, 2013). The commune of Tabarre, as part of the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, exemplifies the problems of territorial distribution and dynamics in Haiti.

Located in the West Department of Haiti, the commune of Tabarre covers an area of 28.46 km² and has a population of 130,283, with a density of just over 4,550 inhabitants per km². It includes two Communal Sections: First Bellevue and Second Bellevue (INSTITUT HAÏTIEN DE STATISTIQUE ET D'INFORMATIQUE, 2015). Its geographic coordinates are between latitudes 18° 36.572' and 18° 32.192' North, and longitudes 72° 18.322' and 72° 13.177' West. It borders the commune of Croix-des-Bouquets to the east, Pétion-Ville to the southeast, Delmas to the southwest, and Cité-Soleil to the northwest (Figure 1).

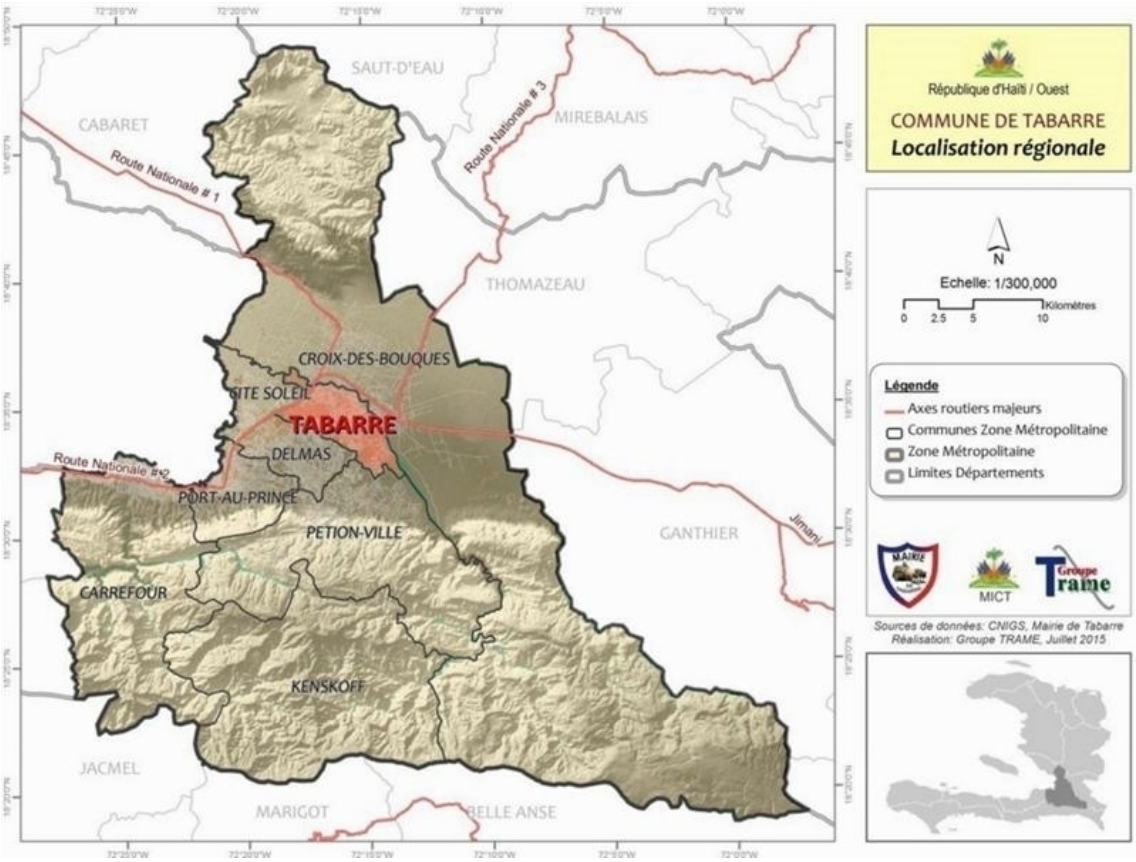

Figure 1 – Geographic location map of Tabarre. Source: Mairie de Tabarre (2013).

In the context of territorial dynamics, urbanization is recognized as one of the key elements in modifying territories; however, its progression varies from country to country. In many cases, cities are established before the population arrives, allowing for the implementation of infrastructure to meet community demands. According to Harvey:

> "Urbanization should establish certain institutional arrangements, legal forms, political and administrative systems, hierarchies of power, etc. This also grants objectified qualities to the 'city,' which may dominate everyday practices, restricting later courses of action" (our translation). (HARVEY, 2005, p. 170).

In 1998, urban space in Tabarre occupied 25% of the area, while agriculture and other non-urban activities dominated the remaining 75%. As shown in Table 1, this scenario changed significantly in subsequent years, with urbanization reaching 60.11% in 2002 and surpassing 90% by 2019 (LUC, 2020). Two key periods marked the major urban change in Tabarre: its official creation as a Haitian commune in 2002 and the year 2010, after the January 12 earthquake. Changes during both periods occurred in a disorganized manner. Influenced by natural demographic growth and the migration of people from the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, residents built informal neighborhoods with high housing density and no urban planning.

The impact of urbanization on territories varies considerably depending on how the phenomenon unfolds. When properly planned and implemented near the urban center it depends on, urbanization aims to make controlled use of space for infrastructure development, such as paving, sewage systems, water distribution, and housing. However, based on cross-referenced data and field observations, and inspired by Pulliat (2007), it can be observed that urban development in the study area is characterized by poorly ordered growth, resulting in a highly dispersed urban fabric increasingly distant from the main urban center.

Between 1998 and 2019, the metropolitan region of Port-au-Prince underwent unplanned urban expansion, significantly impacting peripheral cities like Tabarre due to its proximity to the capital. The images below (Figure 2) depict scenes of urbanization in Tabarre.

Figure 2 – Urban construction dynamics in the commune of Tabarre. Source: Junior Jean Baptiste (2022).

In the case of Tabarre – and in Haiti generally – the weakness of regulations governing agricultural areas has led these lands to be the first affected by urban expansion. Although intended for agricultural use, local authorities lacked the means to control the processes and impacts of urbanization, especially on the agricultural sector.

The main impacts of this land-use change include the reduction and loss of agricultural land, which has driven up land prices. This has led to lower agricultural productivity and heightened environmental vulnerability (LUC, 2020), resulting in food insecurity. In this context, the agricultural sector is unable to meet basic needs or create additional opportunities.

A survey conducted in the first half of 2019 by the National Food Security Coordination – Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire (CNSA) revealed that 50% of families dedicate more than half of their budget to food. In the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, 29% of families were in a state of food insecurity in 2016 (CNSA, 2016). In addition, water insecurity must also be noted, both for agriculture and for urban demands.

Haiti's territorial configuration, including that of Tabarre, underwent numerous transformations between 1998 and 2019 due to unplanned urbanization and demographic influx from various cities in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan region. The data below (Table 1) present the evolution of urban area during the period.

Year	1998	2002	2014	2019
Total Urbanized Area (ha)	725,00	1.711	2.407	2.567
Percentage (%)	25,00	60,11	84,57	90,10

Source: CNIGS (2023) data, adapted by the authors.

Table 1 – Total area and percentage of urban area in Tabarre from 1998 to 2019. Source: CNIGS (2023) data, adapted by the authors.

In 1998, the total urban area was 725 hectares (25%). By 2002, 1,711 hectares had become urbanized, representing 60.11% – an increase of 986 hectares. This expansion was driven by the settlement of new residents in areas formerly covered by vegetation and agriculture. In 2014, the urban area rose to 2,407 hectares, or 84.57% of the territory, showing intensive human activity and construction. By 2019, the urban area reached 2,567 hectares, or 90.10% of the total area.

The case of Tabarre illustrates the challenges faced by many developing regions, where unregulated growth can compromise not only the environment but also quality of life, food security, and local economies. It can be said that territorial dynamics are also linked to changes in the economic life of the commune.

From the proclamation of Haiti's independence on January 1, 1804, until the beginning of the American occupation on July 28, 1915, most of the Haitian population (95%) consisted of peasants living in rural, agriculturally productive areas (CASTOR, 1988). Peasant life was organized in the rural space around the Lakou system, defined as:

> "An agglomeration of small huts – todi or ajoupa in ayisyen idiom – amid self-sufficient mixed-crop farms, governed by family ties and the morality of equality and reciprocity within vodou religion, which has African roots" (our translation). (MONACÉ, 2021)

The American occupation brought significant changes to family structures, including the separation of family members due to land saturation and the lack of formal land titles, which led to rural exodus (MONACÉ, 2021). Haiti's 19th-century economy, centered on coffee production, did not keep pace with population growth, resulting in overuse of agricultural land. Despite subsequent changes, Haiti remained largely an agricultural country. However, the lack of effective public policies exacerbated the situation, forcing peasants to become wage laborers in Haitian cities or resort to seasonal migration to other countries as a means of family subsistence.

Local authorities and the national elite failed to establish agricultural industries comparable to those in other countries in the region (MONACÉ, 2021). Consequently, the transformations in rural areas led to a gradual decline in agricultural contribution. Data from the IHSI (2009) show that the agricultural sector represented between 22% and 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), whereas after the Proclamation of Independence, the economy relied almost entirely on agriculture, which was defined in the first Haitian Constitution, in Article 21, as the "first good and the noblest of professions" (EMPIRE D'HAYTI, 1805). We can see that Haiti's economy has been reshaped by the agents that

make up the national circuit and that today, Haiti can no longer be considered an essentially agricultural country. The urbanization phenomenon clearly demonstrates the diminishing agricultural capacity of the nation. In past decades, Haiti's economy was largely based on agricultural activities.

Currently, the economic dynamism of the commune of Tabarre is increasingly moving away from agricultural activities, and this new reality can be observed in the commercial exchanges with neighboring communes in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince and the transportation of goods from the United States and the Dominican Republic. In fact, territorial dynamics vary from one region to another and are shaped by distinct factors. Given the evident economic dynamization of the commune of Tabarre, it is essential to understand the main factors influencing territorial change.

Considering the previously mentioned data, we can succinctly affirm that the territorial evolution of the commune of Tabarre, in the Haitian context, reveals a picture of rapid and unregulated urbanization, mainly driven by migration toward the capital, Port-au-Prince. The absence of planning and control over urban expansion has led to the formation of precarious settlements, significantly affecting agricultural areas and regional food security. The territorial transformation observed from 1998 to 2019 indicates a substantial increase in Tabarre's urban area, distancing the commune from its agricultural roots. This shift is accompanied by economic challenges, as commercial dynamics and interactions with neighboring communes indicate a transition from an agricultural economy to one focused on urban and commercial activities. The case of Tabarre underscores the urgent need for more efficient territorial and urban policies to address the impacts of unregulated urbanization and ensure more sustainable development for the region. Thus, it is important to identify some of the main factors influencing the territorial dynamics in Tabarre.

FACTORS OF TERRITORIAL CHANGE IN THE COMMUNE OF TABARRE

The commune of Tabarre, in Haiti, faces a complex dynamic of territorial change driven by various interconnected factors. In this context, we highlight five fundamental elements shaping the spatial evolution of this region: demographic explosion, conurbation and metropolization of cities, lack of urban planning, agents of spatial production, and natural disasters. Each of these plays a crucial role in the transformation of Tabarre's territory and merits analysis.

A) DEMOGRAPHIC EXPLOSION

Demographic explosion refers to the population growth in a given territory, taking into account birth and death rates (CNSA, 2019). This population growth is accompanied by migration from other cities or rural areas in search of opportunities or services offered in attractive urban centers. According to IHSI, Haiti's total population in 2021 was estimated at 11,905,897. These estimates consider people aged 15 and over (IHSI, 2021). According to Ronceray, the migration of Haitians from the provinces to the capital intensified in the first half of the 20th century. This situation led to the implementation of the first urban planning laws in 1937 (RONCERAY, 1979).

In Tabarre's case, population growth is occurring disproportionately in relation to space availability and the population's economic development. This results from the centralization of economic activities and internal migration. Still according to IHSI, 2009 estimates indicated a population of 130,283 in Tabarre, with a population density of 4,587 inhabitants per square kilometer – evidence of significant urban concentration (IHSI, 2009). Given these elements, we can affirm that the commune's demographic growth has negative consequences. This unregulated growth is incompatible with sustainable urban densities. Tabarre has been particularly affected by the agglomeration of Port-au-Prince and the demographic expansion of the urban zone.

B) CONURBATION AND METROPOLIZATION OF CITIES

Conurbation occurs in urban centers where two or more cities grow and develop so closely and intensely that it becomes impossible to distinguish one from the other. According to Villaça (2001),

conurbation occurs when a city absorbs neighboring urban centers and develops intense socioeconomic links with them. The term is widely used in urban geography to describe the rapid growth of cities and the concentration of infrastructure. It is also essential in analyzing urban networks (SANTOS, 2000).

In Haiti, the phenomenon of conurbation is expanding, especially among cities near the capital, including Tabarre. In this case study, Tabarre and other major cities in the metropolitan area encircle Port-au-Prince's urban core, characterized by accelerated growth, rural migration, and lack of territorial planning.

Port-au-Prince can initially be seen as the "mother" city, exerting influence over surrounding cities through its concentration of resources, services, and goods, thereby encouraging the occupation of new territories and stimulating collective and economic life. Thus, the integration of city territories or the creation of new informal urban areas – bidonvilles, in the Haitian context – is facilitated by poor public governance, making these spaces increasingly attractive for people from other parts of the country. This domination stems from a historical desire to construct the national territory around Port-au-Prince. The city has benefited from decades of centralized command functions and has a significantly higher budget compared to other cities in the country.

According to Lucien (2018), this centralization trend is explained by two main factors: the abolition of budgetary autonomy for communes and regions in favor of Port-au-Prince, and the establishment of a preferential customs tariff to attract major national exporters to the capital (LUCIEN, 2018). Port-au-Prince was also favored during colonial administration due to the promotion of parishes in the south and the search for better ports for establishing economic and political control (THEODAT, 2013).

In this sense, the territory of Tabarre's commune is influenced by Port-au-Prince and the other major cities in its metropolitan area. Metropolization is characterized by the concentration of activities and populations in large cities. Port-au-Prince's national weight in Haiti exemplifies a typical metropolitan region, underscoring the need for effective decentralization. According to Milton Santos (2010), a metropolis is an urban organism with a complex set of functions capable of meeting the needs of the urban, national, or regional population. The Brazilian geographer notes that in the developing world, one can also speak of "incomplete metropolises" – large urban agglomerations in which most essential services exist, but specific economic constraints prevent the production of goods or installation of services demanded by a growing segment of the population.

The commune of Tabarre is geographically peripheral in relation to other cities in the metropolitan region. The influence of these cities can be understood through their high urban density, demographic growth, and the limited availability of land for construction. In the context of metropolization, Tabarre is highly attractive for establishing businesses and facilitating transportation to other cities – a consequence of centralized government policies. In the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area alone, 55% of the urban population lives, and it hosts the majority of public investment and basic infrastructure, over 50% of hospitals, more than two-thirds of banks, 80% of electricity capacity, and more than 70% of manufacturing industries (BERNADIN, 1999). It continues to concentrate metropolitan command functions and remains highly attractive, particularly after the January 12, 2010 earthquake.

C) LACK OF URBAN PLANNING

The concept of planning – whether urban, individual, or personal – is highly complex, as it involves anticipating the future and making projections with considerable risk. Souza (2010) states that planning is future-oriented and involves attempting to simulate the course of processes to solve problems and maximize benefits. It is important to distinguish between planning and management, as both are essential tools for promoting sociospatial development, improving quality of life, and increasing social justice (SOUZA, 2010).

Planning and organizing urban space are common-sense actions in all the experiences analyzed, including that of Tabarre. Planning and land-use regulation should always be carried out within the framework of centralized or local territorial policies. However, there is no master plan (plan directeur). According to interviews conducted in 2020 with municipal officials as part of a research project, the

commune had not yet developed a master plan due to lack of financial resources and sociopolitical instability (LUC, 2020).

Bernardin (1999) suggests that Haiti's territorial planning system should be inspired by Walter Christaller's theory of central place hierarchy, which is based on a functional urban and rural plan that defines an organized network and service provision compatible with the significance and level of different urban and rural centers, aimed at improving living conditions in the medium and long term. However, when closely examining Haitian reality, the absence of master plans in Tabarre and other communes is evident. Since gaining autonomy in 2002, Tabarre has lacked such a plan, resulting in unregulated land exploitation and the unchecked spread of human activity throughout its territory.

This is especially evident in the aftermath of the January 12, 2010 earthquake, which revealed Haiti's vulnerability to natural disasters and the authorities' inability to act. The population of Tabarre has the right to occupy the territory, but not indiscriminately. In the realm of planning, it is possible to mobilize resources appropriately by applying suitable frameworks. Achieving social justice requires an appropriate form of social, political, and economic organization. However, various constraints hinder local authorities in Tabarre and elsewhere in Haiti from advancing territorial planning.

D) AGENTS OF SPATIAL PRODUCTION

The current trend of territorial change is tied to capitalist production in cities, and its activities are not without spatial impacts. According to standard procedures for officially recognizing a commune, the state should first install basic structures and infrastructure before population arrival. Without this, it becomes very difficult to manage the mix of industries and housing in risk-prone and environmentally sensitive areas.

From an analytical standpoint, we adopt the distinction between capital factors operating in urban space for profit (rent, interest, etc.) and capital in general, which views space as a drain for surplus capital and for producing use values (HARVEY, 1982). Carlos, Souza, and Sposito (2020) argue that space production – whether in the urban network or between cities – is not the result of an invisible hand, a Hegelian state viewed as a supra-organic entity, or abstract capital emerging from outside social relations. Rather, it is a consequence of the actions of concrete, historical social agents with their own interests, strategies, and spatial practices – agents who bear contradictions and generate conflict among themselves and with other segments of society (TABARIN, 2017). This analysis also applies to the commune of Tabarre.

Initially, the Toussaint Louverture International Airport was located entirely outside the urban area of Port-au-Prince. However, with the regions' urban expansion, this dynamic changed (MAIRIE DE TABARRE, 2013). The lack of state planning made the airport a magnet for settlement, resulting in unregulated construction around it.

The presence of various export-oriented factories belonging to large companies contributed to shaping Tabarre into a dynamic commune. Numerous structures, such as banks, commercial complexes, security companies, and state and international institutions were established. Tabarre is home to: the residence of former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the Aristide Foundation University (UNIFA); the Delimart Clercine supermarket (2007); the U.S. Embassy building in Port-au-Prince (2008), housing all American government agencies; L'hôpital nos Petits Frères et Sœurs (1989); and the Valerio Canez store (2010). These institutions spread across the area and significantly transformed the commune's urban landscape.

Once established, these institutions are important for Tabarre in terms of services provided to the population. It can be said that these various agents contribute significantly to the dynamism of Tabarre's territory – both negatively and positively. On the negative side, these urban production agents destabilize the ecosystem, reduce agricultural land, and increase flood risk due to the absence of an urban plan. On the positive side, they contribute economically and financially, for example, by generating tax revenue for Tabarre.

E) NATURAL DISASTERS

Natural disasters hinder development and are a major factor in increasing vulnerability, poverty, and inequality. These disasters – cyclones, hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes – have significant consequences for resources and the environment. However, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) considers that many extreme natural events are largely related to the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations (INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE, 2007).

Tabarre is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. This fragility is predictable when considering Haiti's geographic location in the Caribbean basin and the limited disaster response measures taken by the Haitian authorities. The earthquake of January 12, 2010, exacerbated this vulnerability by destroying the limited infrastructure and worsening conditions for survivors. Tabarre is located downstream from Pétion-Ville and Delmas, along the left bank of the Grise River. The region has experienced severe disasters, such as floods, due to its geomorphology – particularly during Tropical Storm Laura in 2020, which caused a dozen fatalities across several communities, including Tabarre (OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, 2020).

The growing population in Tabarre significantly increases vulnerability due to various human factors, including housing built in protected areas, high-density construction practices, the absence of alert systems, and lack of awareness regarding seismic risks.

In summary, the factors driving territorial change in the commune of Tabarre are complex and interconnected. The demographic explosion – driven by migration from other regions – generates disproportionate growth relative to space and economic development. Conurbation, largely due to the centralization around Port-au-Prince, increases pressure on Tabarre's territory, shaping its urban and demographic dynamics.

The lack of a master plan, due to financial limitations and sociopolitical instability, contributes to unregulated development, while agents of spatial production – such as institutions and companies – have both positive and negative impacts. Moreover, vulnerability to natural disasters, aggravated by the 2010 earthquake, poses a significant challenge for the population. Together, these factors present a complex landscape requiring integrated approaches and effective policies to address territorial challenges and promote sustainable development in the region.

CONCLUSION

This article analyzed the territorial dynamics in Haiti, particularly in the commune of Tabarre, between 1998 and 2019, aiming to present the elements that shaped the major transformations that occurred. Notably, it addressed the unplanned urbanization that converted agricultural areas into urban land, and the migration of people from different parts of the country to the metropolitan region of Port-au-Prince, including Tabarre. Among other aspects, it emphasized the intensification of these processes following the 2010 earthquake, which further highlighted the absence of planning and strategic actions.

The study shows that the territorial dynamics in the commune of Tabarre, Haiti, reflect a series of challenges and transformations that significantly affect spatial distribution, urban development, and the local economy. Rapid demographic growth, conurbation and metropolization of cities, lack of urban planning, agents of spatial production, and natural disasters emerge as interconnected factors shaping the evolution of this territory.

Demographic explosion, driven by migration from other regions in search of opportunities in the capital, contributes to population growth in Tabarre, increasing pressure on space and resources. Conurbation and metropolization, particularly in relation to Port-au-Prince, intensify unregulated urban growth and the centralization of economic activities, exacerbating planning and development challenges. The lack of urban planning stands out as a significant concern, evident in the absence of a Master Plan to guide the commune's development. This results in uncoordinated territorial exploitation and inadequate infrastructure to support rapid urban growth, as seen in the consequences of the 2010 earthquake. Agents of spatial production, including large companies and state and international institutions, play a key role

in transforming Tabarre's urban landscape. Their presence contributes to economic development but may also produce negative effects such as the loss of agricultural land and increased environmental vulnerability. Tabarre's territorial configuration from 1998 to 2019 shows a trend marked by increasing urban area, indicating a substantial transformation in land use. The commune's economic dynamics also reflect a shift from an agricultural economy to one oriented toward commerce and services, revealing ongoing changes in its economic life.

In short, Tabarre's territorial dynamics underscore the importance of planned and sustainable approaches to urban development that consider the population's needs, the preservation of agricultural areas, and the promotion of food security. The case of Tabarre illustrates the challenges faced by many regions in developing countries, where unregulated growth can compromise not only the environment but also quality of life, food security, and the economy. Understanding these challenges is essential to guide effective policies aimed at achieving more equitable and sustainable development. Finally, it is advisable to examine other strategies and alternatives for local development based on public policies that seek the well-being of the population. To achieve this goal, the Mairie de Tabarre should develop a Master Plan that sets guidelines for rational land use and effective resource management.

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NOTE

1- A possible translation for "arrondissement" in Brazilian Portuguese or English would be "distrito" (district), thus indicating a small peripheral town connected to the territory or a subdivision of a municipality's territory. However, in the Haitian context, this term does not carry the same meaning as "district." In Haiti, as stipulated by Article 75 of the 1987 Haitian Constitution (RÉPUBLIQUE D'HAÏTI, 1987), "the arrondissement is an administrative division that may encompass several communes," as exemplified by the arrondissement of Léogâne, which includes three communes: Léogâne, Grand-Goâve, and Petit-Goâve" (our translation).

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