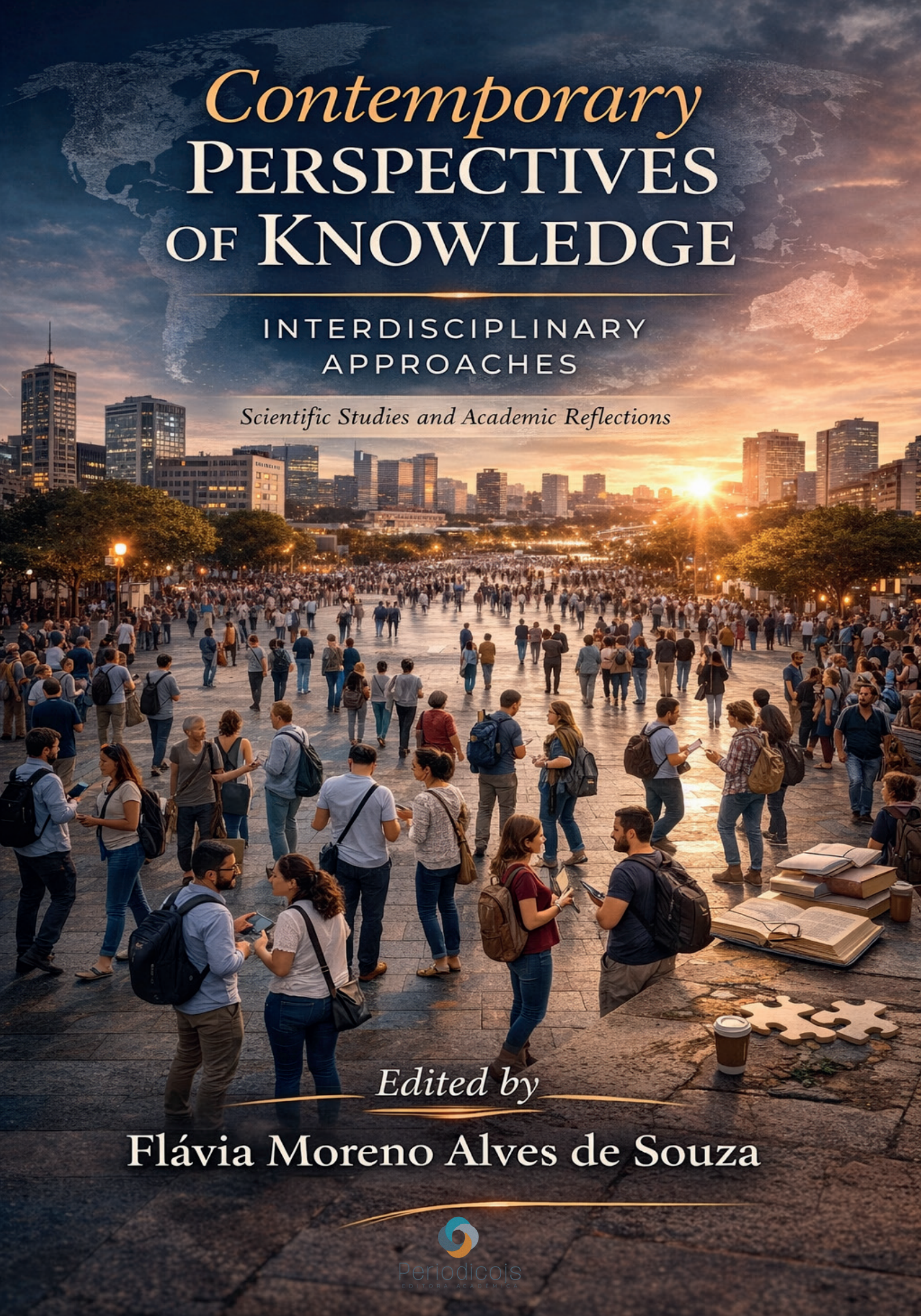




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Chapter 20

THE PORT OF SANTOS AS A MIRROR OF INTERNATIONAL COMPLIANCE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW



THE PORT OF SANTOS AS A MIRROR OF INTERNATIONAL COMPLIANCE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Carina Gonçalves Martins¹

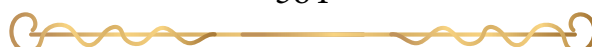
Abstract: This article presents a systematic literature review on compliance in export operations from the Port of Santos and its impact on cargo detentions at international borders, notably in the United States and the European Union. The central premise is that border rejections are not isolated events at the destination, but rather reflections of systemic compliance failures originating in Brazilian shipping processes. Through the analysis of regulations such as the ISPS Code, the WCO's SAFE Framework, and the Brazilian Federal Revenue Service's AEO Program, the study demonstrates the causal relationship between documentary and operational integrity at the port of origin and the fluidity of global trade. The objective is to show how improving internal controls at the Port of Santos can significantly reduce disruptions in the international logistics chain, positioning compliance as a strategic pillar for the competitiveness of Brazilian foreign trade.

Keywords: ports; mirror; compliance

Introduction

The Port of Santos, recognized as the largest port complex in Latin America, handles approximately 29% of Brazil's trade flow (AUTORIDADE PORTUÁRIA DE SANTOS, 2025). Its economic relevance places it at the center of discussions on efficiency and security in international logistics. However, the complexity of port operations and the growing demand for global compliance have exposed vulnerabilities that manifest as detentions of Brazilian cargo at international borders.

¹ Specialist in Foreign Trade and Port Compliance



The maxim “the border is the mirror of the port of origin” reflects the central thesis of this work: compliance failures that generate detentions at foreign customs are, to a large extent, rooted in shipping and control processes at the port of origin. This article seeks to analyze the existing literature to demonstrate this causal connection and propose ways to strengthen port compliance in Santos, based on international regulations and empirical market evidence.

Methodology

This systematic literature review followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The selection process was structured into four phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

The search was conducted in national databases (SciELO, IPEA Repository) and global databases (Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar), using combined descriptors such as “Porto de Santos,” “port compliance,” “supply chain security,” “ISPS Code,” “AEO,” and “border rejection.” Studies published between 2015 and 2025, in Portuguese and English, were selected.

Selection Flowchart (Methodological Summary)

Phase	Description	Results (Estimated)
Identification	Records identified through database searches and institutional sources.	145
Screening	Records after removal of duplicates and title/abstract analysis.	82
Eligibility	Full-text articles read to verify adherence to the theme of compliance and the Port of Santos.	34
Inclusion	Studies included in the final qualitative and quantitative synthesis.	18

Inclusion criteria focused on works discussing the relationship between port security, regulatory compliance, and technical barriers to trade.



The Compliance Ecosystem at the Port of Santos

The Santos Port Authority (APS) implemented a Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) Superintendence, which is responsible for defining guidelines and managing operational risks (AUTORIDADE PORTUÁRIA DE SANTOS, 2025). This structure is fundamental to aligning port operations with integrity and transparency requirements.

Maritime security is governed by the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code. The literature indicates that the proper application of the ISPS Code is crucial to the reliability of operations and to avoiding disruptions that generate reputational and financial losses (ASARIOTIS; BENAMARA, 2013).

The Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Program of the Brazilian Federal Revenue Service, aligned with the WCO's SAFE Framework, represents an advance in trade facilitation. AEO certification provides agility in customs processes and reduces the percentage of cargo selected for inspection channels (RECEITA FEDERAL DO BRASIL, 2025). The Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) between Brazil and the United States, signed in 2022, is a milestone for supply chain security (U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION, 2022).

Empirical Analysis of Border Detentions

Cargo detentions at international borders serve as direct indicators of compliance failures at the origin. The table below synthesizes the main reasons for rejection observed in the literature and in institutional reports (RASFF and CBP).



Table 1: Comparative Summary of Detention Reasons (EU vs. US)

Region	Main Reasons for Detention/Rejection	Impact on the Logistics Chain
European Union (RASFF)	Aflatoxin contamination, salmonella in meat products, pesticide residues above the MRL.	Total rejection of cargo, destruction, or compulsory re-export.
United States (CBP)	Documentary non-compliance, suspected forced labor (WRO), ISPS Code violations, tariff classification errors.	Detention for rigorous inspection, high fines, and significant delays.

Studies point out that information exchange between customs authorities, intensified by the AEO MRA, aims to improve risk management, but primary responsibility for compliance remains with the exporter and the logistics chain in Brazil (LAWSOFBRAZIL, 2026).

Discussion: The Analytical Perspective of Field Practice

Qualitative analysis of practical evidence demonstrates that compliance should not be seen merely as an additional cost, but as a strategic asset for competitiveness. The integration between academic theory and port operations reveals that the critical points in shipping — such as seal integrity, the accuracy of customs declarations, and sanitary control — are the same ones that determine success or failure at the destination border.

Unlike a purely bureaucratic view, modern compliance at the Port of Santos requires robust coordination among multiple actors: operators, freight forwarders, shipowners, and regulatory agencies. Anticipating risks and correctly interpreting international regulations are key elements to ensure the fluidity and security of Brazilian exports.



Conclusion

The Port of Santos functions as the main thermometer of Brazilian foreign trade. Failures that result in detentions at foreign customs are reflections of integrity deficiencies in processes at the origin. Strengthening governance, rigorously applying the ISPS Code, and expanding the AEO Program are essential steps to mitigate these risks.

The maxim “everything rejected at the border was born from an error that already existed at the Port of Santos” serves as both a warning and a call to action for everyone involved in the logistics chain. Full compliance is the only path to ensure the competitive advantage and sustainability of Brazilian exports on the global stage.

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