

# REFLECTIONS ON SPACE AND SPATIAL SCALES

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## ABSTRACT

This article aims to reflect on the character of space, ontologically as a present reality in the materiality of the social being, and in the theory of knowledge as a philosophical category of analysis of this reality with the diversity of epistemological notions and concepts in the most varied approaches of studies and research. Grounded in dialectical historical materialism, this essay is intended to serve as a contribution to a necessary debate in the critique of geographical studies, and, above all, serve to critique the current social reality. Finally, in the debate against the fragmentation of space and the metrification of spatial scales, we identify the need to analyze the spatial scale based on social practices that produce unequal spaces, resulting mainly from the social division of labor and capital.

**Keywords:** Politics; Production of Space; Spatial Scales.

## RESUMO / RESUMEN

### REFLEXÕES SOBRE ESPAÇO E ESCALAS ESPACIAIS

Este artigo tem como objetivo refletir sobre o caráter do espaço, ontologicamente como uma realidade presente na materialidade do ser social, e na teoria do conhecimento enquanto uma categoria filosófica de análise dessa realidade junto à diversidade de noções e conceitos epistemológicos nas mais diferentes abordagens de estudos e pesquisas. Fundamentado no materialismo histórico dialético, é pretensão que este ensaio sirva de aporte para um debate necessário na crítica aos estudos geográficos, e, acima de tudo, que sirva para a crítica da realidade social presente. Por fim, no debate contra a fragmentação do espaço e a metrificação das escalas espaciais, identificaremos a necessidade de analisar a escala espacial apoiando-se nas práticas sociais que produzem espaços desiguais, resultantes principalmente da divisão social do trabalho e do capital.

**Palavras chaves:** Política, Produção do Espaço, Escalas Espaciais.

### REFLEXIONES SOBRE ESPACIO Y ESCALAS ESPACIALES

El objetivo de este artículo es reflexionar sobre el carácter ontológico del espacio como una realidad presente en la materialidad del ser social y, en la teoría del conocimiento, como una categoría filosófica de análisis de esa realidad en conjunto con la diversidad de nociones y conceptos epistemológicos en los diferentes abordajes de estudios e investigaciones. Fundamentado en el materialismo histórico dialético, este ensayo pretende contribuir para un debate necesario sobre la crítica a los estudios geográficos y, principalmente, auxiliar en la crítica de la realidad social presente. Finalmente identificamos, en el debate contra la fragmentación del espacio y la metrificación de las escalas espaciales, la necesidad de analizar la escala espacial apoyándose en las prácticas sociales que producen espacios desiguales, como resultados de la división social del trabajo y del capital.

**Palabras-clave:** Política, Producción del Espacio, Escalas Espaciales.

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## INTRODUCTION

The year 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the academic-political movement in geography, called the renewal of geographic thought in Brazil. Until the 1970s, geographic studies of space were more restricted to visible, physical, measurable, palpable, and quantifiable aspects (e.g. FAISSOL, 1978). Man appeared as one more element of the landscape, as a data of the location, a further phenomenon of the Earth's surface, and as a resource present in the environment. Some of these indications and critiques in Brazilian geographic thought were presented in the studies of Andrade (published in 1977), Santos (published in 1978), Silva (published in 1983), Moreira (published in 1981), and Moraes (published in 1981), among others from the same period of the late 1970s and early 1980s. These authors proposed a study of space as a social and political construct, a result and a condition of the production of society. The idea of space as a receptacle or mirror was criticized in the analysis that considers space and society in the production and reproduction of the existence of man through the work process.

Nowadays, those who are still based on positivistic approaches to spatial conception understand that objects are, have always been and continue being understood as “things”. Things that need to be precisely described and located. Things that hide the social of their production and reproduction. Where possible, the social itself is transformed into a thing, an isolated object in the movement of history, submitting its analysis through positive statistics and a linear chronology. The reflection in this article will consider that space is still considered as a thing. A thing that can ideally be measured, quantified, unrelated and produced in a non-processual manner by the social.

Forty years after the “renewal”, the Miltonian struggle “for a new geography” continues and it is still necessary to carry out a critique of/ about space, analyzing its ontological and epistemological contradictions, joining a necessary debate in the criticism of geographic studies, and, above all, a critique of the present social reality. In the debate against the fragmentation of space and the metrification of spatial scales, we will identify the need to analyze the spatial scale based on the social practices that produce unequal spaces, resulting mainly from the social division of labor and capital.

Imbued with historical and dialectical materialism, this text analyzes space, highlighting the scalar reading and shows the totality of the phenomenon in its multiple connections. Reality is explained by its mediations and determinations, without mutilating the real. To this end, we begin with an analysis of the artwork *Perímetros* as an introduction to the scalar study of space, in the understanding of how the capitalist production of space has produced multiple spatial scales. Next, in an attempt to think about the insertion of space in social practice, we will inquire how geographic thought in Brazil has carried out a particularizing, fragmentary spatial reflection, outside of social practices. Finally, we will examine how the unequal development of geographic scales is related to political and economic scales, especially the risk of thinking of the local political scale as a space or spatial scale, masking the materiality of the relationships of social re-production of life.

## THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE AND ITS MULTIPLE SPATIAL SCALES

At the 31st São Paulo Biennial, the work *Perímetros*,<sup>1</sup> by the Colombian artist Johanna Calle (Figure 01) was exhibited. This work was unusual in many ways, but one reference stood out: the artist's spatial and trans-scalar understanding. In this work, the artist makes us think about a difficult era and the way society is [re]producing itself in the pursuit of its development and how this movement in search of development has simultaneously become self-destructive. Studying Johanna

1 GUIA 31ª BIENAL DE SÃO PAULO: [as (...) things that do not exist], 2014.

Calle's work, we can reflect on an important question: beyond the recognition (observation) of the work as a whole, it is necessary to think and interpret [the artist's creative process and] the work in its entirety. That is, it is necessary to understand the thought produced in / by her work engendered in the production and reproduction of the social relationships of human existence.



Figure 1 - Exhibition of the work *Perímetros*.  
 Source: LAVOR, 2014.

At first glance, we see two pictures with impressions in a mosaic of leaves, the largest image of a densely alive tree and the smaller one with remnants of dry and dead trunks. As we approach, it becomes evident that the work has been drawn on the pages of notary's deeds, historically used to record rural properties, land use, taxation, or descriptive memoranda of rural properties' locational references and other information related to land ownership. It is only when we get close to the image that we see that it is made of poetic texts typed with protests against the commercial exploitation of land in Colombia and in favor of the rights of the peasant victims by the restitution of their lands, among other related texts.

To apprehend Calle's work with due attention to spatial comprehension and multiple scales would not be to make a phenomenal analysis of the work by the work itself, or of the image by the image, or the intentionality of the work by the artist who created it. In its totality, it is not possible to understand the work or its concept solely with the image of the living tree, but intimately and contradictorily united by its opposite, an image of a dry and dead tree. Moreover, we can not understand the unity of the two trees shown, alive and dead, in itself, but only if we walk a path out of the "trees" phenomenon and orient ourselves in an understanding of the opposing relationships in society. Thus, it is understood that the manifestation of these images in the reality of human existence is not natural or given, but rather it is a historical product of the current economic and political system that is antagonistic to any project of environmental conservation and rights of peasant populations and indigenous peoples, especially in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Far East Asia and the sovereignty of the Palestinian peoples in the Middle East.

From a perspective of multiple scales, in the work presented by Calle, a particular spatial configuration can be experienced, depending on the movement of the field of vision / observation in relation to the image. The greater the distance from the image the better the vision / observation of the work as a whole, whereas getting closer, the better the vision / observation of the poetry presented in the typed texts. Both distant and near, two important spatial configurations, distinct

and of different qualities, can be verified. This is if we exclude the possibility of other intermediate spatial configurations. However, for a good analysis and investigation aiming at a greater spatial comprehension of the presented reality, it would not be appropriate just to observe the work as a whole on a larger spatial scale, nor even on a smaller scale choosing only a typed textual fragment and isolating it, in a displaced analysis of what is beyond the work, even in its entirety. Even because distance is not the founding element of a spatial and scalar analysis, but rather the movement that is made to understand the social content presented in the different apprehensions of reality.

In this orientation, we can reflect on the character of space, ontologically as a reality present in the materiality of the social being and gnosiologically as a philosophical category of analysis of this reality together with the diversity of epistemological notions and concepts in the most varied areas of study and research in the human and social sciences. In the philosophical analysis of space, the central issue is in the production and reproduction of the social relationships of human existence, that is, production, dynamic and contradictions of different activities and social practices. The ontological [re]production of social relationships in the capitalist mode of production is made to exist in the materiality [of time] of productive and unproductive labor to capital and free time, including leisure, rest and the different forms [of time] of non-work. Geographic space is social space in production,

[...] it is the space of men and is confused with society itself and like it, it is also a historical materiality. It is where the desaminizados dehumanized men record their antihistory: of greed, the unrestrained power of the dominant group, always mediated by money, within and between social classes; of selfish political practice; of the economic exploitation by a higher social “being” over another, lower one in a true hierarchical range, where we are what we are worth, for the money we have (RIQUE, 2010, p.

It is clear that this centrality of the spatial issue, which arises in its study, research and thought, in the most different conceptions of method and independent of methodological positions, discards the possibility of sticking to a speculative and common-sense explanation of space. If, when aiming to carefully investigate and reflect, space is not essentially [in intimate contradictory unity] understood in the reproduction of the social relationships of production, space is being placed as an object, an “exteriority” formed by a set of things, which can be metrically localizable, and thus is fixed, stable, natural and perennial. This speculative, common-sense Cartesian space will be dealt with in more depth in the next item.

The development of thought about space cannot supplant the understanding of time, of nature, among other categories and concepts proper to the study and conception of space. To understand space without time is incongruous, after all, the basic condition of the existence of all beings is space and time, in a single and indivisible relationship. Time as a movement of historical materiality, of the movement [re]producing the relationships of the existence of the social being. It does not occur in a chronological and linear succession of past, present and future, or have a beginning, middle, and end. Temporal beginnings and ends must be understood as mere abstractions, often based on religious beliefs as the prerogative of the conception of circumscribed time, and which do not find a sure foundation in reality. In short, there is a single movement “society and nature live the past in the present, through the remnants that were once dominant, and the projections of the future. At a given historical moment, society and nature have not yet freed themselves from what has been and are already being prepared for what will be” (ANDRADE 1993, 21).

In the reasoning for a theory of the unequal development of space in the capitalist mode of production, the geographer Neil Smith provides important reflections on the production of space and multiple spatial scales, but at the heart of his reflections Smith offers a theoretical project within which “the issues and developments can be understood as parts of a world, which is far from being innocuous when considered in its unity and not as might be thought by examining the fragments”



(SMITH, 1988, p.13). This means that for Smith, the theory of unequal development, among other spatial theories, does not explain the logic of development or spatial understanding in the isolation of fragments, such as development specifically in Brazil, or any other spatial and scalar fragment. According to Smith (1988), three basic scales arise with the capitalist production of space: urban space, the nation-state and global space.

This is a dynamic process; however fixed the scales may appear, they are subject to change, and it is through the continuous internal determination and differentiation of the spatial scale that the capitalist development of space is organized. The key point is not simply to consider spatial scales as given, no matter how self-evident they may seem, but to understand the origins, determination and internal coherence and differentiation of these scales as already contained in the structure of capital (SMITH, 1988, p 197).

According to Smith, capital produces distinct spatial scales which represent and manifest the geographic expression of oscillatory and contradictory tendencies for the differentiation and equalization and the mobility and circulation of capital. Smith argues that it is not possible to study problems placed in determined scales devoid of an analysis within and between the other primary scales. Spatial scales are in constant motion, permeability and penetrability. Urban and national scales are products of an increasingly concentrated and internationally centralized capital. The very concept of a regional scale, or rather, the constitution of regions, is circumscribed as an element of political appropriation based on trans-scalar support.

Therefore, for our studies, research and reflections, we need to understand that nothing remains how, as, or where it was, be it urban space, a nation-state, or the increasingly globalized global space, concentrated and centralized by capital. Space and its multiple scales simultaneously move, modify, develop, wilt, and rejuvenate themselves. Both are in production. Thus, we must constantly carry out a scientific mediation of the knowledge of the composition of spatial particularities together with a rigorous examination of the set of such singularities in their universality. The singular-particular-universal tri-dialectic principle must be a basic requirement to grasp the spatial question in its essentiality.

## SPACE OUTSIDE OF SOCIAL PRACTICE AND ITS PARTICULARIZING FRAGMENTATION

The critical thinking of the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre continues to be one of the major theoretical foundations in geography for the problematization of social space. The whole foundation of the issue described above, for example, is entirely based on the Lefebvrian theoretical project on Spatial Production. By denying a positively speculative, contemplative, systematizing space, outside of social practice and the critique of active politics, in the historical development of his thought Lefebvre emphasizes that the knowledge of space implies the critique of space itself, as “the knowledge sought here is not directed at the space itself, nor does it construct models, typologies or prototypes of spaces; rather, it offers an exposition of the production of space” (Lefebvre, 1991: 404).

For Lefebvre, the following issues are present in studies of space and need to be widely considered: “what is the theoretical status of the notion of space? (...) what is the insertion of space (represented, elaborated, constructed) in social, economic or political, industrial or urban practice? Where and when does the conception of space act?” (Lefebvre, 2008: 40). Among his attempted answers or reinforcement with more questions, Lefebvre exposes hypotheses that he feels are consistent with the different conceptions of cogitating the materiality of space.

The first hypothesis points to space as an ideal representation and rational logical construction. In this hypothesis, space is locatable, just as concepts, objects, groups and individuals are located. Excision, assembly, visibility, location and abstraction, lead mathematical logic and philosophy (especially phenomenology and epistemology) to rescue, establish and constitute the essentiality of space. "This hypothesis implies the liquidation of historical time, as time lived and, incidentally, in an unequal way (...). It also has a tendency for abstract 'scientificity', for 'absolute' knowledge consisting of an inventory of the past and inscribed in the present space" (LEFEBVRE, 2008: 43).

In the second hypothesis, "social space is a product of society, verifiable and dependent, above all, on an empirical description before any theorization" (LEFEBVRE, 2008: 44). In this hypothesis, space results from functionality, it is the fruit of labor and the division of labor itself, being the place of objects produced or the set of things that occupy it. According to this description, space is product.

A third hypothesis can be presented, coinciding parallelly between the last two hypotheses, presenting space as an intentionally manipulated political instrument.

It is a mode in the hands of "someone", an individual or collective, that is, of a power (for example, a State), of a ruling class (the bourgeoisie) or of a group that can both represent global society and have their own objectives, (...) in this hypothesis, the representation of space always serves a strategy, being at the same time abstract and concrete, thought and desired, that is, projected (LEFEBVRE, 2008, pp. 44-45).

From the perspective of defending functional and instrumental space, directly linked to the reproduction of the means of production, of which the labor force is part, this third hypothesis is the one that most suits the exploitation of the capital-labor relationship, whose major problem is how to [re]produce conditions of productive work and a greater extraction of unpaid labor, through the global increase of the organization by consumption.

Taking up and orientating these three previous hypothetical theses to the highest consequence, the fourth hypothesis reinforces that space is fundamentally linked to the reproduction of the relationships of production, but not limited to the issues of the production of things and their consumption, going beyond, understanding that "the whole space becomes the place of this reproduction, including urban space, leisure spaces, educational spaces, everyday life, etc." (LEFEBVRE, 2008, p.49). For a better precision of the issue, space needs to be dialectically analyzed as a materiality at once abstract and concrete, homogeneous and fractured, connected and disjointed, associated and dissociated, united and fragmented, ordered and disarticulated, immediate and mediate. However, "nature, like space, with space, is simultaneously shattered, fragmented, sold in fragments and globally occupied. It is destroyed as such and reorganized according to the demands of neo-capitalist society" (LEFEBVRE, 2008: 54).

Lefebvre's pertinent inquiry undermines the hypotheses of an absolute, ideal, phenomenological, and metrically logical space, as in practice it is being absurdly cut up and "sold" in parcels by a social project based on the capital-labor relationship. In this perspective, the general problem of space requires that studies, research and reflections break with the subordinate ferocity of the cutting up and shredding of space in which the researcher is obliged to choose the best intervention scale for their studies. In this case, either the global or the particular escapes social reality. "When the current problem is to overcome these fragmentations, given their deplorable results, the problem is therefore to determine the junction, the articulation of these two 'levels', the micro and macro, the next order and the distant order" (Lefebvre, 2008: 30).

Each object of study and research, every phenomenon of the world that surrounds us, has specific peculiarities that only pertain to the object, be it the object of study of geographic science, or even specifically the object of agrarian geography or structural geomorphology, for example. It is impossible to find two absolutely equal objects of study; however small, there will be some

difference. Simultaneously, there are no objects [or phenomena] that have no common traits with other objects [and phenomena]. No matter how many objects [and phenomena] are distinguished by original and incomparable peculiarities, they are all material, and therein lies the generality inherent to them all. Interconnected, generality exists only in particularity and through particularity. Every particular is simultaneously general. The association of the general and the particular raises awareness of the material unity of the world in its diversity.

In reality, it is precisely the case that most studies and research in the human sciences, and more specifically in the studies [and in the thought] of Geography in Brazil, do not posit as the centrality of space this necessary contradictory unity of the materiality of the reproduction of social relationships of re-production of human existence and its conception engendered in the multiple spatial scales.

This issue was one of the problematizations presented in the reflections of the geographer Alexandrina Luz Conceição on geographic thought in Brazil, when analyzing the National Meetings of Geographers between 2004 and 2014. For Conceição (2014), in the studies proposed by Geography in recent years, even for the category of space that tends to present a theoretical Marxist foundation based on the movement of the capital of production relationships, space is still predominantly remains descriptive, Cartesian and functional. It is worth noting that this is a spiraling growth trend that is advancing in the recent history of geographic thought in Brazil.

Most often, the concept of space is assumed to be synonymous with place or territory, and often, without critical epistemological support the category space is indicated - or even associated - with cyberspace, as a scalar measure. Sometimes it loses its explanatory gnosiological validation and takes on the classical positivist explanation synonymous with area and extension (CONCEIÇÃO, 2014, 119).

Even after the renewal movement of geographic thought in Brazil, with the opening of a critical geography undertaken by Brazilian geographers until the present day, “criticism itself tends to lose its political content and its guarantee becomes assured by the use of the categories of Critical Geography as if, for example, speaking of spatial ontology, or of a technical-scientific-informational environment, was in itself a guarantee” (MENEZES, 2016, p.392). In analyzing the ways in which the category of labor was inserted in the geographic critique, for example, the geographer Sócrates Oliveira Menezes, in the same critical direction of Conceição, emphasizes that

The loss of the dialectical totality of labor [in geographical thinking] not only made it vulnerable to the synthetic and conciliatory reductions that made it possible to forge the main theoretical perspectives, so important for the positivization of the new intended epistemology, but also grounded the composition of a structurally critical geography marked by fissures that expose its internal contradictions (MENEZES, 2016, p.11).

From a reading of the / on the spaces and times of the geography of destitution, Conceição still concludes that

when the real is decontextualized in an attempt to account for scientificity, the conditions and contradictions of reality are abstracted, which results in the substitution of theory for methodology, representing the apologetic character of the affirmation of the discourse of the negation of history and consequently of the freezing of the real to the natural. In this sense, geographic discourse, although presenting itself as an announcer of the contraposition, remains limited, frozen, and mythicized, in a feedback and traps itself in an eternal return (CONCEIÇÃO, 2013, 37).

This problematization that Conception makes of the geographic thought in Brazil has been manifest, for example, in the categorical and conceptual studies of space by the geographer Ruy Moreira. This is significantly important research in many studies in Brazil and that, explicitly, has

been reflected in the conflicts and overcoming of the “space of capital” in his propositions. Even with a theoretical Marxist foundation such as that of Smith and Lefebvre, Moreira has followed the same coherence of Lefebvre’s second hypothesis of space. Moreover, Moreira’s starting point is that the category of space is used when the aim is to reach a comprehension of the whole, in contrast, for him, to the use of the category of territory to apprehend a singular point of that whole. The spatial action opposing the structure and the territorial action opposing conjuncture, affirming that space is to the structure what the territory is to the conjuncture (MOREIRA, 2016).

Thus, methodologically, Moreira has long been moving away from his own dialectical materialist theoretical foundations, where space begins to be understood euhronically, within the respective logic of the temporal moment analyzed from the set of the parts of the whole. Affirming space and territory as a mirror and antithesis, for Moreira

Space and territory are, first and foremost, a complex of locations. Each location is one position relative to another, and the whole of the locations is a set of positions, which makes the whole of the arrangement a mosaic of domains. (...) The territory is cut out of the domain, dividing and ordering the existential whole of space on a chessboard (MOREIRA, 2016, 217).

This understanding resembles what is currently affirmed in studies and reflections in Geography in Brazil. Space [and territory] as a complex of locations. Or, as the geographer Milton Santos affirmed, space can be analyzed as “a system of realities, that is, a closed system formed by things and the life that animates them, assuming a legality: a structuring and a law of functioning” (SANTOS, 2008, 27). For Santos, as for Moreira nowadays, among other Geography researchers, to think of space is undoubtedly associating it in a dual manner, on one side, a certain arrangement of objects [geographic, natural objects and social objects], on the other, the life that animates them, society in “movement”. In addition, analysis increasingly tends to cut space into isolated categories, scales that do not dialogue with each other, increasingly cloistered objects of study, and ever more fragmented scientific propositions.

The work of the geographer Ana Fani Alessandri Carlos (Space-time in the metropolis, 2001) is a reference for the study of space as totality of relationships and is averse to the fragmented and metric analysis. For this author, “space is a condition, medium and product of the realization of human society in all its multiplicity. Reproduced through an uninterrupted historical process of the constitution of the humanity of man, this is also the plan of reproduction” (CARLOS, 2001, p.11). Although her work is based on the study of urban space, notably the metropolis, its approach does not admit an isolated spatial cut, involving

three scalar levels in the plane of world space, points out the virtuality of its continuous reproduction process, on the plane of location, exposes the realization of human life in the acts of daily life, as a mode of appropriation that is realized by the use, through the body; at the level of the metropolis it illuminates the perspective of understanding the city as a human work, a materiality produced throughout history, revealing itself as mediation between the other two levels (CARLOS, 2001, p.12).

## THE DANGER OF THINKING OF LOCATION AS A SPACE OR SPATIAL SCALE

Since the 1980s, and more precisely in the 1990s, there has been a movement in economic, political and cultural thought, aiming to understand what was happening in the world as a manifestation of globalization. In this movement, two main fractions developed different considerations



to explain globalization. The former aimed its explanation more in the immediate and visible, assimilating it as a system of economic and cultural exchanges established at increasing speed and involving more and more distant “locations”, causing the interdependence of the whole world. The latter did not deny the first wave of thought on globalization but elevated its considerations to other levels. In addition to the recent accentuation of the internationalization process of the world, in the approximation and temporal and spatial confrontation between previously considered self-sufficient nations and countries, which should now also yield their borders to the logic of accumulation of wealth increasingly operating on a world scale .

The geographer David Harvey (1993) analyzes this historical period, identified by economic and cultural thought on globalization, as truly the attempt to theoretically express the productive restructuring of capital that has occurred [at least] since the 1970s, and in Brazil from the 1980s. This historical period has its foundation in the convergence of a chain of productive, financial and technological transformations, highlighting the complex transnationalization of the production of goods, the expansion of financial markets that escapes the regulation of certain national norms, and the revolution of the technology transmitting data by electronic means.

In this historical period, economist Wilson Cano (2011) estimates that the effects of the changes undergone by the model of economic growth, in force after the 1980s, caused profound changes to the determinations that affect the development project in Brazil. The brutal rise in interest rates on foreign debts and the financial crisis in the national productive sector and the consequent budgetary impact on the exacerbation of debts in the federal units and municipalities, according to Cano, led to the beginning of economic decentralization and the inter-regional migratory flow. Moreover, based on the neoliberal prescription prescribed since the Washington Consensus, “national and regional development policies have been phased out, with the growth of the infamous Fiscal War involving practically all the FUs and many municipalities in the same state, with the purpose of attracting investments from one area to another” (CANO, 2011, p.37).

In this regard, the emptying of thinking and projecting [national or regional] development, both in universities and research institutes and in public planning agencies, ignited the strategy of thinking of location as a possibility of direct mediation with the global, in a constant transition without frontiers for the sale of industrial sites held by globalized financial capital. Moreover, “it should be added that in this movement, the old ideas of planning and development were replaced by the policies of the APLs (Local Productive Arrangements), a name invented in Brazil to replace, with fragility, those of Clusters” (CANO, 2011, 38).

Proposed incentives for the locale and locally-oriented projects or planning “would suffice to meet the ‘demands’ of globalization, this new imperialism of ‘sharing of chosen locations’, adjusting, adapting and submitting to this inexorable ‘fatality’ to become (...) receptive and conquering the confidence of the most powerful economic agents” (BRANDÃO, 2004, p.10). For the economist Brandão (2004), if, on the one hand, the concept of territory as a location or place was [re]valued, on the other hand, a complete banalization of structural issues occurred, consolidating a new development pattern constructed ideologically at the local ambit, wholly denying the conflicts, the domination of certain social classes over the others, the active character of the State and the multiple determinations covered in transscalarities.

Localist interpretations, which are rampant today in intellectual and political environments, bring a vision of an exaggerated local endogeny, not recognizing this social complexity. It places in the will of the “crucial social actors” of a given territorial cut all the requirements of overcoming underdevelopment. (...) Perhaps the most serious shortcoming, ultimately, of the up-to-date literature on local and regional development is that it totally neglects the fundamental issue of hegemony and political power (BRANDÃO, 2004, 27).

Cano (2011) and Brandão (2004) argue that policies need to be developed that surpass the pact between local elites and national governments, which block the civilizational advance and block the processes of social inclusion and citizenship building. For both, there is no better or worse scale, no good or bad, but all have instruments that must be used in a trans-scalar perspective. In an economic-political analysis, as in the studies of Cano and Brandão, it is possible to construct an explanation using the location as a scale [of development]. In liberal economic evaluations, there is an effort to explain the location as an area [incubator of micro initiatives], which is established alongside other localities, in different entrepreneurial and governance networks.

The choice of the level of scale elected to carry out the actions and focus of planning is, therefore, loaded with interests that reveal their relevance in the production of space. In this sense, Smith's (2002) theorizing about spatial difference and geographic scale in structuring space is fundamental to understanding social relationships and allows us to go beyond the idea of taking the location as concrete and the global as general. For this author

The differentiation of geographical scales is established and establishes itself through the geographic structure of social interactions. With a concept of scale as produced, on the one hand, it is possible to avoid the relativism that treats spatial differentiation as a mosaic, and on the other it avoids the reification and the uncritical division of scales that reiterates a fetishism of space. In other words, it should become possible to insert "rules of interpretation" that allow us not only to understand the construction of the scale itself, but also the way in which meaning translates between the scales (SMITH, 2002, p.141).

Under a spatial analysis, as opposed to geographic studies reinforcing local development or territorial development (territory as a location or area), or even in opposition to the understanding of space and territory as a complex of locations, it would be inaccurate to reflect on the location if it were not placed in contradiction and the need for it to be overcome explained. This is not to say that in geography, for example, we should not express space, location or localization in studies. However, we need to realize that spatialization is different from localization. Spatialization is the materialization of social relationships, location is a mathematical abstraction in the attempt to delimit a Cartesian space (x, y) on the Earth's surface.

This adversity of localist theories with a critical reflection of space [in production] is basically due to the conceptual character of location, its different explanations and political actions destined by it. In this understanding it is necessary to question the cut-out concept of location as an isolated part of a whole, a fixed point, not extensible, a certain circumscribed area. No movement or history is allowed. So, location is thought of as eternal, natural. There is no relationship with an internal subject, the verb will be triggered by an external subject in the act of locating. Instead of asking where, how, why, or for whom certain social relationships are spatialized, studies on location ask where, what and how particular areas or social phenomena are also located in certain areas.

Finally, based on the theoretical critique of the methodological [and method of] cutting up of social space, we can identify that not all geographic analysis is unrestrictedly consistent with geopolitical and geoeconomic scales, among others, but they are based on and surpass them. An analysis based on a local or regional scalar cut, for example, is directly associated with an analysis of political and economic intervention, whether public, state or private, and which, in essence, is in line with the capitalist production of space. In spatial analysis, in connection with the critique of the process of capital production, the unequal development of geographical scales [national, urban, global, for example] lies in contradictorily dialectical relationships with political and economic scales [from both local and regional production scales, and scales of reproduction of human existence]. Thus, in the most diverse research objects, we emphasize that the materiality of the social re-production relationships of life must be developed in geography as the reflexive procedural unit founding the analysis of space.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the historical period in which this essay is written, there has been a movement of political, social, scientific and philosophical setbacks directed towards a capitalist [re]production of space under the aegis of the commodification of social relationships on the multiple spatial scales. In relation to this and the other elements present, it is opportune to deepen our reflections on space, analyzing its materiality in the social relationships of existence and [re]production, as a criticism of the intentional attempts of explanations founded under a particularizing fragmentation, a-historical and objectified.

In geography, when we are dealing with spatial scales, we tend to examine them only from the methodological and geometric perspective of the distances or extensions of certain spaces and fields of study, and do not examine the scales starting from the social practices that construct them, social practices that produce spatial inequalities resulting mainly from the social division of labor and capital. It is worth emphasizing that spatial scales do not originate from the human need for their own existence but are produced by the need for the processual systematization of the development of capitalism and of a capitalist production of space that is increasingly concentrated and centralizing. In the different spatial scales, the manner in which the relationships of property, production and power are manifested differ, but the content is the same.

As Virgínia Fontes (2012) proposes, we must learn to think on multiple scales simultaneously, to understand the dynamics of the expansion of capitalism alongside the dynamics of the expansion of the crisis of capital, to understand the national encapsulation of social struggles alongside the international growth of capital. In this direction, Fontes (2012) argues that “we need to understand the ways in which the whole bourgeoisie not only controls the state, but seduces, convinces and entices an expressive part of the working class” alienating them ideologically and physically, morally and economically exploiting and oppressing them at national and international levels. Similarly, as a theoretical reference that highlights the spatial dimension of the capital accumulation process that occurs spatially unequally and operates at different scales, Harvey points out that it is necessary

[to] learn to combat capital on both spatial scales simultaneously. However, in doing so, one must also learn to coordinate potentially contradictory policies in themselves, at different spatial scales, for often hierarchical spatial systems (...) which make satisfactory political sense on one scale do not do so on another (...). However, the choice of spatial scale is not “either this or that”, but rather “not only ... but also”, although the latter option entails confronting important contradictions (HARVEY, 2006: 217).

In order to think about multiple scales simultaneously, it is also necessary to overcome the isolated mathematical logic of cartographic representations that we have based ourselves on to analyze space. The imagination of a cartographically located North and South should not be the only boundaries between different and unequal spaces and scales. We know that while the northern imperialist winds dominate and exploit, the dominated and exploited southern winds are still the ones that move mills. However, while hygienist walls are raised to render the favelas and a poor black population in the “north” of the city of Rio de Janeiro invisible, in the “south” a large, mostly macho, racist and heteronormative middle class clamors for the prison lash in an appalling social apartheid; but it is in the same “south” of Rio that repressive forces climb daily into the slums of Rocinha and Vidigal like slave hunters still hunting and repressing quilombos. While in Brazil, today’s masters continue walking on the bodies of the vanquished in the spaces of destitution, in the image produced of Brazil, borders in the most different representations of space (in the spaces conceived) still separate and exclude knowledge, land and work.

As Johanna Calle has shown in her work *Perímetros*, it is imperative that we leave the disciplinary bonds of dividing space into pieces for the globally fragmented study of the use of capitalist

usurpation and exploitation, and to think of significant transformations to overcome the present societal order for the workers in the countryside and the city. To analyze space in its totality is to conceive of the movement of society as a changing, historical process in which objects and elements are not fixed but are in movement and transformation. In the contradiction of thinking about society, nature, history, politics, economics and philosophy, the analysis of space must be the foundation in the transformation of the way of thinking itself and in the revolutionary expression of the transformation of society.

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