LUMEN ET VIRTUS

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY AND ITS RELEVANCE IN UNDERSTANDING GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

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ABSTRACT

An economy to operate needs a financial and monetary system that in the contemporary world has been perfected with a transition that went from the exchange of goods, labor, to gold, currencies and credit securities (all physical) to digital transactions. Global transformations follow a complex dynamic. In this geographical dialogue, the objective of this study is to present how economic geography contributes to the understanding of economic praxis, and specifically points out the characteristics of economic geography. The methodology used deals with bibliographic studies thought in a qualitative way or with the use of dialectics. The main conclusions are that Economic Geography is one of the subareas of Humanistic Geography that works with the spatial identification of productive sectors. Economic sectors and commercial networks in contemporary times; It identifies the global economy with regional development and economic inequalities and the main concepts are linked to the theory of location, the geography of development, globalization and its economic implications.

Keywords: Economy. Spatialization. Productive Sectors. Territory.

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INTRODUCTION

Dealing with economics requires knowledge about the financial political dynamics, not only local, regional or national. With globalization, it is necessary to expand and understand what is happening worldwide. The economic system is complex and unbalanced, seemingly difficult to understand. Economic Geography, however, allows the construction of a simplified model of this reality and makes it comprehensive. Therefore, it is understandable the vision of an economy that is constituted as a system, has a spatial structure and the relations that exist within it do not occur at random, but obey the logic of capitalist accumulation.

Economic geography explores the dynamic relationship between geographic space and the economy. With investigations of the spatial organization of economic activities and the factors that influence regional and global economic development. It is essential to understand how the territory shapes and is shaped by economic processes, as well as to seek solutions to economic inequalities and sustainable development. It is through the analyses that the knowledge of the economic characteristics of a given spatial area and its correlation with global development is achieved.

Newer approaches to economic geography include the analysis of global flows, the role of new technologies in the economic space, and the study of digital and creative economies. There is also a growing interest in how capital, labor, and infrastructures are shaped by cultural and social phenomena. In the economic universe, there is a dispute between the indiscriminate use of natural resources and the proposal of sustainability, and this process began in the 1980s, with the environmental movements that are sometimes confused with the investigative character of Geography.

Although it is not the focus of this study to discuss capitalism and its strength in the global financial market system, it cannot be denied that human society lives a capitalist economy. Before the 1930s it was a mercantile-speculative economy; it becomes an industrial capitalist, with strong influences from the regulatory and producing State. A monopoly and state capitalism marked by the intervention of hegemonic groups. There is no doubt that the economy is the result of a complex historical process, which needs periodization.

Economic periodization corresponds to a political periodization, under the aegis of the global economic system. The formation of this economic system is at the same time social, contradictory and dynamic. It is recognized that the economic models: mercantile until 1930 and the Industrial that went through the twentieth century, migrate to a new universe, the virtual space, the digital world. It draws attention to the fact that, in all

economic periods, segregation and exclusion from the labor market are present in Brazil. To understand economic and social spatialization.

As a branch of Geography, Economic Geography, which studies the spatial distribution of economic activities and the relationship between space and the economy, focuses on understanding how economic factors influence the organization of the territory. In this line of reflection, the objective of this study is to present how economic geography contributes to the understanding of economic praxis. Specifically, it presents economic geography; correlate economic sectors and networks in the contemporary; It identifies the global economy with regional development and economic inequalities.

METHODOLOGY

The present work uses a qualitative methodology of exploratory and descriptive nature, supported by bibliographic research as a central source of data. Therefore, the dialogue is based on the geographical contribution to think about the contemporary economic system. It is not a direct approach to a specific theme, but an indication of the importance of mapping, geographing the Economy theme, which has so concerned Brazilians and other citizens of the world, with the current political conjuncture and global economy.

The study in question was theoretically based on geographers who work with Economic Geography, which gives the necessary sustainability to show how important the approach to this branch of geography is. However, what is chosen for geographical discussions is found in the theory of Milton Santos. In direct lines, the bibliographic study, punctuated, brings to the reader an overview of the use of the categories of geographic analysis in the economic environment and the concepts addressed are in the theory of location, geography of development and globalization.

The main idea is to list reasons for Economic Geography to be used for approaches to economic processes (production, consumption, distribution of goods and services). Thus, its distribution in geographic space and how space influences certain activities in certain regions, as well as analysis of its effects on local, national and global development. The characteristics can only be explained within the study of policy networks and temporalities. Obviously, economic dependencies have changed in character as development progresses, but they remain not only the supreme characteristic, but also the fundamental cause of strategies.

Currently, the trend is an increasing dependence on digital technologies, as well as cultural ones, as local hegemonic groups continue to try to copy the consumption patterns

of developed countries, at the expense of the labor of the vast majority of the population. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that there is a geopolitical change underway and that this must be studied and investigated in the light of Science, in an explicit search for affirmative for thesis, or even the dialectical presentation of antithesis and synthesis, as Hegel (1996; 2014) teaches.

The suggestion for a geographical study of the area of economics is that of Milton Santos (2014b) who deals with the analysis of the general situation that is based on the operational scheme, which structures a scenario of spatial organization. In the context of Economic Geography, this approach offers an understanding of the causes of the problem and suggests actions aimed at economic development. Cerqueira (2016) and Ximenes (2021a; 2021b) synthesized Milton Santos' "Analysis of the Current Situation" in a way that can better understand what this renowned geographer offers as a methodology.

With a dialectical approach to geographical studies, it is understood that scripts are necessary to be consulted, at least. Chart 1 is a methodological suggestion of how to work with the conception of Economic Geography.

Chart 1 - An Operational Scheme: the analysis of the current situation of Milton Santos

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION	
STUDY SERIES	PHASES
Formal study (statistical and documentary)	1. Spatial distribution of material activities, infrastructure services and human beings.
	2. Flows generated by the activities and presence of a population: roads and means of transport and communication.
Analysis of content	1. A characterization of the evolution of the context and its variables, with the identification of the respective causes.
	2. The distinction between "spontaneous" evolution, derived mainly from market forces, and "directed", or planned, evolution.
	3. The reciprocal effects between the different types of evolution.
	4. The conditions of recent and current developments.
Attempt at periodization to identify trends	1. The characteristics of each period.
	2. The periodization of evolution.
	3. The identification of the nascent trends in each period.
	4. The identification, therefore, of the factors of evolution and the factors of mutation.
	5. The main consequences linked to the preceding items.
Definition of the problem current	1. The geographical concentration of activities and their social, economic, administrative consequences, etc.
	2. External control activities, recent or not, and their social, economic, administrative consequences, etc.
	3. To the prospects of a "spontaneous" evolution, and to its speculative components.
	4. The role of the public power, at its various levels, in this evolution.

Source: Cerqueira (2016); Ximenes (2021)

Within a broad context of the methods that the general panorama must be positioned, in order to better understand the specificity of the theme with an economic,

social, and environmental focus, the one presented by Milton Santos is functional, as proven by Cerqueira (2016) and Ximenes (2021a; 2021b). In a way, the analysis of the current situation seeks to fill gaps that the investigative depth of Economic Geography itself promotes. Thus, it contributes to society in a comprehensive way. The relevance of the proposal offered in this study lies in the fact that it can be replicated and adjusted to new research in different locations.

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

Economic geography emerged in Germany, under the influence of Carl Ritter, as Claval (2005) explains. It became spatialized from the end of the 1850s. Its purpose was to analyze the heterogeneity of economic regions in a period in which the expansion of railroads and steam navigation enabled new opportunities for the introduction of technologies for specialization in production. It arises in a systematized way, as occurred with the macro Geography. The growth of the sub-areas evolved with human thought and, consequently, with the scientific development of the discipline. However, Geography went through a moment of conflicts, where the games of political and economic interests began to infiltrate the Academy.

It is not a question of understanding capital at different levels, but of recognizing that phenomena occur on different scales. They have strengths and weaknesses that deserve to be addressed, listed from them, extracting the economic essence, whether micro or macro (local, regional, national or global). Santos (2014b; 1998) leaves as a methodological legacy for looking at economic arrangements, the need to understand the networks of interaction and the webs of productive dependence.

An example is the region of Zona da Mata do Guaporé in Rondônia, with high agricultural production in more than 11 municipalities, to serve the industrial sector of meat production in Rolim de Moura, which has the international market as its main production destination, exporting to Asia, the Middle East, Africa, among other destinations. As well as the improvement of coffee production technologies, which in the 1980s and 1990s used a significant number of land and with the introduction of new technologies and improved techniques, began to use fewer hectares and produce more beans per coffee tree.

One of the concerns of Geography scholars is the dilution of the discipline in related areas, which could be considered as a loss of its identity as an area of knowledge. However, the search for an identity did not allow for a dissociation of the principles, categories of analysis, objective and object of study of Geography. Space continued to be the starting point for geographic research, even with the transitions that occurred during the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the twenty-first century, with hybrid problems, water, for example, became the subject of economic disputes (CARAMELLO at al. 2021; XIMENES, 2021c).

Geography transited through several ideological currents: in the nineteenth century there was Environmental Determinism and Possibilism; in the twentieth century, three more currents emerged, the Regional Method, the New Geography, also known as Pragmatic Geography and/or Quantitative Geography, both of which are countered by the successor current, Critical Geography. To discuss economics in the broad sense of Geography, it is worth bringing an author from a decade ago. As it is Humanistic Geography, the issues of physical aspects are left in second place, however, it deals with one of the oldest areas of study of Geography and involves vast content with direct influence of the human being.

CORRELATION OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY: ENVIRONMENT AND CAPITALISM

A planet endowed with natural resources, economically extracted, has measurable consequences for both the physical and human sciences. Among them, Geographic science stands out, which focuses on understanding the dynamics of interaction and anthropogenic exploration of nature. The planet, society, and consumption have become so strong that scientists preliminarily point to a proposal for a new geological era or the period called by the Anthropocene Working Group the Anthropocene, because of what they classify as the "Great Acceleration".

Understanding the interfaces of capitalism or of socialism itself planted in the conquest of economic power in the twenty-first century, brings consumption as the first need to be analyzed through a range of interactions of geography as a science with others that accept the challenge of being instrumentalized for the reading that is necessary. The diversity of the categories of analysis of this science leads it to dialogue with other disciplines, which equally seek answers to the problems listed by its researchers. Which, sometimes, portrays the questions and anxieties of society.

The questions are diverse and come from different areas of knowledge. Multidisciplinarity in geography comes from its origin, and geographical epistemology shows that the Earth is only complete if all sciences are involved in the construction of its history, in the search to understand geographic space and the phenomena that occur on it. In this impasse, it becomes opportune to mention society as producers of second natures, as Molina and Toledo (2013) point out, which brings the rescue of the term Social Metabolism.

After decades of oblivion, the concept was rediscovered in the late 1970s by economists who reinvented it without knowing its origin. It was only in 1997 that Marina

Fisher-Kowalski published a chapter in the Handbook of Environmental Sociology (REDCLIFT; WOODGATE, 1997), where he highlighted the concept as an "emerging star" in the analysis of material flows. In this way, the social metabolism correlated to Economic Geography can be interpreted in several ways. As a continuous exchange of energy and materials between the natural environment and social structures, as well as between different societies, it follows a cultural logic that defines its dynamics.

This constant flow of resources is central to economic geography, as it influences the spatial organization of economies, the distribution of natural resources, and the impact of human activities on ecosystems (XIMENES; LOCATELLI, 2016). The line of study of Geography that deals with economics spatializes the economic conditions on Earth. It deals with the relationship between the physical and biological factors that produce natural resources and flows of matter. The focus is on the spatial aspects of economic activities at the most varied scales. As well as taking care of the study of the conditions and techniques that determine the production process and mode of transport.

The distances between one point and another, available labor influence the decision-making of economic and business public policies, as much as climate, flora, fauna, water, energy sources and political-social factors. The entire economic context can be mapped by geography, from a socioeconomic perspective. Milton Santos (2011; 2012; 2014a; 2014b) elaborated the relationship between geographic space, economy and society in many of his works, with emphasis on the influence of natural, social, economic and political factors in the organization of territory and decision-making, especially in his works on globalization, urbanization and the use of territory.

It is understood that Economic Geography is considered a sub-area of Human Geography. However, it is emphasized here that the classification and ideological and economic positioning of this line of Geography does not influence the objective of this chapter, which is to present and reflect on Natural Resources and Environmental Resources from the spatial perspective of Economic Geography. Neither human nor physical. The objective is to list both resources and the look at it is geographical, with space as the main category of analysis. In this context, conceptually, two terms are used throughout the text, which, although they are similar, have different connotations in this study, as follows:

a) Natural Resources — is everything that human beings can exploit commercially and can be renewable or non-renewable (VENTURI, 2006).

b) Environmental Resources — They are "[...] the atmosphere, inland, surface and underground waters, estuaries, territorial sea, soil, subsoil, elements of the biosphere, fauna and flora. (Text given by Law 7.804, of 1989)".

In an integrated reading of Natural Resources and Environmental Resources, Economic Geography brings the human being as a rational agent of the productive process who appropriates them for his own or even collective interests. What is judged is that every productive dynamic uses these resources at some point in its cycle. However, what concerns this study is to draw attention to the resources listed, from a spatial perspective, as well as the understanding of the differences and singularities of both, recognizing that there is an environmental history that needs to be rescued along with the economic reading of the environmental appropriation of a given geographical space.

Economic Geography, as George (1967, p. 18) pointed out, "[...] has as its object the study of the forms of different products worldwide" and, in regional and local domains, as well as, Harvey (2005), Corrêa and Rosendall (2010), Videira (2011), Santos (2011; 2012) and Moraes (2009) highlight that production has a whole unique structure. In its acuity, it contributes to the mosaic of contemporary economic geography. This, in the same proportion that information and technology have become dynamic and indispensable.

The economic and social development of a region comes from the culture of using both endogenous natural resources and exogenous entrepreneurship that act as a true predator in search of regional natural resources, with the use and occupation of the soil, space and maximization of these resources. The meaning of cultural economic development is highlighted by Corrêa and Rosendahl (2010), who explain that the economy and its dynamics are linked to cultural factors and culture is commodified over time. Public policies aimed at the expansion of the economy and fiscal modernization are the driving force behind the State's intervention in regional development.

A "relative" is opened here, because the need to orient oneself about the definition of Economic Geography is imposed. To this end, Pierre George is brought in, from the years 1967, who presents the objective and definition of this area of geographical study. The importance given to such distant literature is due to the basic consistency of the discipline. According to the author,

> Economic Geography aims to study the forms of production, as well as the location of the consumption of different products worldwide. It is essentially a human science or, more precisely, a social science, in the sense that the processes of production, transport and exchange, transformation and consumption of products are the result of human initiatives, which owe their characteristics and efficiency to the forms of

> organization that come from the past proper to each human group. (GEORGE, 1967, p. 9).

Geography has several sub-areas of knowledge, which deals with physical, social and economic issues, taking into account the growing relevance of cultural factors. For each sub-area, the methodology applied in the study is different, hence the difficulty in studying Geography as a whole, however the research is feasible.

In the 1990s, Egler (1991) discussed Economic Geography at scale, which contributes to this study. It is imperative to understand the ecumenical dynamics of capitalism while attending to local specificities. At this point, the author establishes differences between geographic scales and/or levels of spatial analysis. In the same vein as Milton Santos, Egler proposes the measurement of human development and inequality in power relations in its territorial dimension with the objective of mapping production (development and distribution).

UNDERSTANDING THE USE OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

The study of the role of space in economic life also has scholars of the twenty-first century who deserve to be highlighted, such as Milton Santos, Harvey and, more recently, Claval. In this context, it is worth mentioning Claval (2005), who according to the author gave the recognition of the economic space until the end of the eighteenth century. Initially, the studies were focused on the production of wealth and the socioeconomic reality. With the mapping of production, at the end of the 17th century it was already known that productive activities were concentrated on the coast and on rivers with the possibility of navigation. In the 18th century, the map presents the exchange of wealth as fundamental in the economic circuit.

In the work "The Wealth of Nations", Adam Smith (1996) highlights the importance of geographical observation by illustrating how the specialization of labor is restricted by the extension of markets. This concept can be related to contemporary reality, where globalization and communication technologies expand the interconnection between different regions, allowing nations to exploit their comparative advantages. Smith also argued that the wealth of nations derives from the action of individuals, the initiative of entrepreneurs, and the autonomous functioning of markets.

Smith's point of view is still relevant, as global economic dynamics are influenced by factors such as international trade policies, foreign investments and technological innovations that shape productive structures and competitiveness between countries. In this way, contemporary economic geography can be understood as an analysis of the complex

interactions between resources, markets, and human behaviors in a world in constant transformation.

Spatializing the economy is necessary, important to understand the movement of man in space. Fact! But Milton Santos, when spatializing the economy, published in 1979, the first edition of the work entitled "Spatial Economy". At the time, Santos (2011) already pointed to the importance of Economic Geography, without belittling Man and Nature. He points out that the Economy, through its agents, is concerned with capital and leaves the Human Being relegated to a third way in which they are nothing more than mere statistics.

In the early days of civilization, there was a human being prisoner of a limited space, who, with the passage of time, reached intrinsic freedom and searched for new horizons (SANTOS, 2011). On this journey, productive dynamics develop, and with the new means of production, the capitalist system emerges. In 1979, the first edition of Milton Santos' Spatial Economy (2011) was launched, which is perceived to portray the reality of the twenty-first century.

In this context, Santos (2011, p. 138) highlights that the productive forces brought about a profound "[...] division – social as well as geographical – of labor, which separated man from the means of production; the ownership of these escapes more and more from the direct producer to concentrate in the hands of the owners of capital". In analyzing the current situation, an even greater force can be perceived in the geohistoricity of the social and economic formation in Brazil. Harvey (2005) also presents studies that corroborate Milton Santos, saying that the accumulation of capital arises from the internal and individual force of the productive subject.

Now, if it is convenient to attribute to the individual the problem of capital accumulation in the spatial context, it is also what Lamoso (2011, p. 113) explains is the formation of territory. For the author, economic causes are anchored in space, "since there are no a-spatial processes and when they are anchored and transformed by the combination of physical, biological and human variables, they are territorialized, defining the territory as used space". Population growth in the world can be considered responsible for the changes that have occurred on a global scale.

In this line of understanding, Harvey (2013) corroborates with the explanation that there was a "[...] a considerable revolution of an ecological, political, economic and social nature" throughout the Planet. The clashes arising from the struggle for nature that arose after World War II involve forms of thought that converge the ideas of capitalism that, in the period, added to the construction of the Republican system of governing, still in the shadow of the empire.

At the end of the 1979s, Santos (2011) was already talking about new needs of capitalism for real development, of a theory of space placed at the service of capital. What it implies in bringing Santos' pondering is the fact that what was new, "remains" new, after almost 40 years of its first edition. Without wanting to take possession of the writing of the noble scholar of Geography, but rather taking possession of the knowledge that he skillfully left as a legacy to the following generations.

Santos (2011, p. 19) writes that "[...] Since World War II, a growing number of economists have become interested in problems of space, while geographers have been more concerned with economic problems." This geographer questions himself about this type of economy and adds that the economy, by serving capital, had to free itself from Man, banishing him from his transactions. Relegating it to "a statistical average". In the same way, the economy abandons the social space, because it is transformed by human beings.

In this context, Ximenes, Araujo and Teixeira (2024) and Moraes (2009) expose that economic evolution with the use of the Environment has two major followers: producers and consumers. Both are responsible for local economic development and from then on it becomes macro. The author explains that the category of producers are all those who use natural inputs, including those who use industrialized products that use natural resources, such as fuels, minerals, fauna and flora, gases of various types.

In general, the observation is that the Human Being is no longer the main subject in the economic scenario. In this context, it is permissible to bring Milton Santos (2011) who complements by saying that it is through production that anthropic transformations take place for the purpose of generating wealth. Therefore, human being and space are inseparable and mutations occur constantly and continuously in social and economic evolution. Just as Santos (1998) points out about the technical-scientific-informational environment that is the reason for rapid changes in space.

Economic geography starts to seek in the methodologies employed by economics, a methodological basis feeding a multidimensional look necessary for this subarea of geography. It overcame the approaches of geographical determinism, seeking to understand the distribution of economic phenomena in the organization of the territory. To this end, geographers increasingly began to use theories, formal models and analytical methods from Economics, which resulted in new perspectives for research in the geographical area.

With the purpose of composing a system of interactions that contributes to the spatialization of Capital, Accounting is a support for environmental management. Public policies, in the context, use information on costs, assets and environmental liabilities to

make decisions that move the entire Earth. The socioeconomic situation does not allow a setback in environmental issues, they have become problems of contemporary humanity.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Geography is a science that studies the characteristics of the Earth, describes the surface, that is, it studies space and the phenomena resulting from human actions. The transformation of natural space into geographical space takes place, precisely, by human action on "natural things". In the meantime, the search to understand what happens to space is what leads to understanding other categories of analysis of Geography, such as: place; landscape; territory; and, region.

Economics is included in this study because it is part of the movement and human appropriation on Earth. It would be in this study the intellectual movement of survival. It is necessary to interpret the past, to understand the theories, to observe the present, to understand the economic arrangements it is necessary to understand the historical context of appropriation of the space in focus of analysis by the researcher. It deals not only with consensus, but with the interpretation of facts in comparison to natural phenomena. Important factors in economics are necessary to observe and highlight in Geography, hence the importance of quantification in Geography in a broader perspective: that of the scientific approach as a whole.

This quantification contributes in such a way to research in the economic area that the structure is given by several aspects and with disciplinary interdependencies. Sometimes, when thinking about Geography and Economics, one tends to elevate one's thinking to sustainability and the economy, directly, focused on natural and environmental resources. However, the economic geographic study deals with a general context, from which the economic branch that the researcher intends to study is directed. As an example, Accounting is pointed out here, the space it has in the financial movement in the market and how this interferes in human life.

Contemporaneity shows society's demand that companies act within the principles of ecological ethics and, above all, respect fauna and flora. Ecologically correct thinking is necessary, but what is needed are attitudes that lead to socio-environmental actions. The cultural change that economic society has had in recent decades is visible, however, there are still gaps that should have already been filled with environmental policies that curb the irresponsible use of Nature.

The researcher, in addition to restlessness, needs the instrument that provides the opportunity to structure his journey in the search for answers. In this sense, Geography

Economics, responsible for assimilating the logic of production. The logistics of the distribution of economic activities and their influence on different spatial scales, becomes a theoretical and methodological approach stimulating research in areas such as accounting, economics, environmental law and the professional in the area of environmental expertise and auditing. As well as managers from different sectors, among others, who seek to correlate the economic with the social on a spatial scale.

Therefore, the search for knowledge that contributes to the academic journey is a mission that is worth to the researcher a positive balance that, sometimes, the recognition of merit only comes in memorian. But the researcher does not stop. He can't stop. Take the example of Descarte, a philosopher who put his own methods under consideration and discovers that he needs to change to achieve greater knowledge about "things".

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