

BETWEEN RIVERS, ROADS, FORESTS AND CITIES: ways of thinking and doing Urban and Regional Geography in the Amazon (interview with Saint-Clair Cordeiro da Trindade Júnior)

POR ENTRE RIOS, ESTRADAS, FLORESTAS E CIDADES: formas de pensar e de fazer a Geografia Urbana e Regional na Amazônia (entrevista com Saint-Clair Cordeiro da Trindade Júnior)

ENTRE RÍOS, CAMINOS, BOSQUES Y CIUDADES: formas de pensar y hacer Geografía Urbana y Regional en la Amazonía. (Diálogos con Saint-Clair Cordeiro da Trindade Júnior)

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ABSTRACT:

Interview conducted on July 27, 2020, with Saint-Clair Cordeiro da Trindade Júnior, Professor Titular at the Núcleo de Altos Estudos Amazônicos (NAEA) at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA). During the interview, the Amazonian geographer briefly discussed his personal and professional career and how Geography reached him. It carried out reflections on the work of the geographer in the 21st century, passing through the theme of the relationship between development policies and regional territorial ordering, the production of urban space and urban diversity, to the process of strengthening studies in Geography of the Amazon and the effects of large development projects in local realities. Finally, he spoke particularly about the Geographies and Epistemologies of the South with a focus on the Amazon.

KEYWORDS: Amazon. Urban Geography. Regional Geography.

Saint-Clair Cordeiro da Trindade Júnior is a professor in the Graduate Programs in Sustainable Development of the Humid Tropics (PPGDSTU), Public Management (PPGGP), and in the Training of Specialists in the Development of Amazonian Areas (FIPAM), all part of the Center for Advanced Amazonian Studies (NAEA) at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA). His academic work revolves around themes of Urban Geography and Regional Geography in the Amazon, with a focus on regional theory and regionalization, as well as urban and regional planning. He holds a degree in Geography (1986), a degree in Law (1988), a degree in Geography (1989), a specialization in Geographic Analysis Applied to the Amazon (1987), and a master's degree in Development Planning (1993) from the Federal University of Pará (UFPA). He completed his Ph.D. in Human Geography (1998) at the Department of Geography (DG) of the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters, and Human

Sciences (FFLCH) at the University of São Paulo (USP) and conducted postdoctoral research in Urban Policies (2006-2007) at the *Institut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine* (Université Paris III/Sorbonne Nouvelle) and in Regional Geography (2015-2016) at the Laboratory of Regional Studies in Geography (LERGEO), USP. He has been a Visiting Professor at *Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel* (CAU, Germany) and a Collaborating Professor at the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM), the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), the Federal University of Amapá (UNIFAP), the University of the Amazon (Unama), the Center for Higher Studies of Pará (CESUPA), the University of São Paulo (USP), and the State University of Montes Claros (Unimontes). Throughout his academic career, he has published over a hundred articles in national and international collections and journals, as well as several books authored, co-authored, or organized by him, addressing urban-regional issues in general and specifically about the Amazon. He serves on the Editorial and Advisory Boards of important national journals in the fields of Geography, Urban and Regional Planning, and Interdisciplinary Studies, and maintains a schedule of conferences and lectures at various educational and research institutions in the Amazon and Brazil. Over the course of his career, he has received honors and recognitions, including the Eidorfe Moreira Prize for Regional Geography from the Federal University of Southern and Southeastern Pará (UNIFESSPA, 2019); the *Prize-Winning Papers from the World's Planning School Associations from the Global Planning Education Association Network* (GPEAN, 2013); the V Milton Santos Prize from the National Association of Postgraduate and Research in Urban and Regional Planning (ANPUR, 2011); the Pedro Teixeira Condecorative Medal from the Historical and Geographical Institute of Pará (IHGP, 2005); and the I NAEA Master's Dissertation Prize from the Center for Advanced Amazonian Studies (NAEA, 1995). He is currently a Full Professor at NAEA/UFPA, leader of the Study and Research Group on Territorial Planning and Urban Diversity in the Amazon (GEOURBAM), and a full member of the Historical and Geographical Institute of Pará (IHGP). His significant geographic intellectual contributions include the following books authored, co-authored, or organized by him: "*The Urban and the Metropolitan in Belém: (Re)configurations of Socio-spatial and Planning and Management Strategies*" (2019)¹, "*Metropolitan Formation of Belém: 1960-1997*" (2016)², "*School Atlas: Pará, Geo-historical and Cultural Space* (2014)"³, "*Small and Medium-sized*

¹ Trindade Jr., S-C. C.; Santos, T. V. (Org.) O urbano e o metropolitano em Belém: (re)configurações socioespaciais e estratégias de planejamento e gestão. Rio de Janeiro: Consequência, 2019.

² Trindade Jr.; S-C. C. Formação metropolitana de Belém (1960-1997). Belém: Paka-Tatu, 2016.

³ Trindade Jr.; S-C C. *et alii*. Atlas escolar: Pará, espaço geo-histórico e cultural. João Pessoa: Grafset, 2014.

Cities in the Amazon" (2009)⁴, "*Riverside Cities in the Amazon: Changes and Persistences*" (2008)⁵, "*Belém: The City and the River in the Amazon*" (2005)⁶. "*City and Company in the Amazon: Territory Management and Local Development*" (2002)⁷, "*The Amazonian Space: Society & Environment*" (1997)⁸, "*Production of Space and Use of Urban Land in Belém*" (1997)⁹. His extensive body of work resonates within the geographical community, particularly among researchers interested in reflecting on the urban and regional aspects of the Amazonian space.

Fagno da Silva Soares (FSS): Good morning, dear Professor Saint-Clair. I appreciate your willingness for this interview. We have taken as the initial theme of our conversation your personal journey, and subsequently, your professional trajectory. I believe that to understand the figure of the geographer, first and foremost, we must think about the person Saint-Clair. Therefore, we wish to begin with brief accounts, hearing a bit about your life story since childhood, your early readings and interests, and the motivations that led you to choose a career as a geographer, as well as obtaining a degree in Law. So, I ask you, who is Saint-Clair, and what led you to pursue these two fields of study?

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: Good morning, Fagno. Thank you very much for the invitation and the opportunity for this dialogue. First and foremost, I must say that I am an Amazonian, with caboclo blood, born in the heart of the forest and by the river, but who, since the age of seven, has rooted himself in the big city, making Belém one of its main spaces of identity and belonging.

My choice for Geography happened at the age of 16 when I took the entrance exam for the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) in 1983. In fact, I knew I wanted to pursue two degrees, one in teaching, due to the admiration I always had for this profession, and another in Law, due to my interest in the idea of social justice, influenced by Liberation Theology in the youth movements I participated in the outskirts of Belém. As UFPA

⁴ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. *alii*(Org.). Pequenas e médias cidades na Amazônia. Belém: ICESA/UFPA, 2009.

⁵ Trindade Jr., S-C. C.; Tavares, M. G. C. (Org.). Cidades ribeirinhas na Amazônia: mudanças e permanências. Belém: EDUFPA, 2008.

⁶ Trindade Jr., S-C. C.; Silva, M. A. P. (Org.). Belém: a cidade e o rio na Amazônia. Belém: CFCH/EDUFPA, 2005.

⁷ Trindade Jr., S-C. C.; Rocha, G. M. (Org.). Cidade e empresa na Amazônia: gestão do território e desenvolvimento local. Belém: Paka-Tatu, 2002.

⁸ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. *et alii*. O espaço amazônico: sociedade & meio ambiente. Belém: NPI/UFPA, 1997.

⁹ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Produção do espaço e uso do solo urbano em Belém. Belém: NAEA/UFPA, 1997.

allowed studying two degrees, provided one was a bachelor's and the other a teaching degree, I decided to take the entrance exam initially for a teaching degree, and the following year, I would take the one for Law, as it was, at the time, one of the most competitive courses in the institution. The challenge was deciding which teaching degree to apply for, as I was drawn to the courses of History, Literature, and Geography, revealing the influence of humanities on me from that moment in my life.

The choice for History was the first to be discarded when I remembered some displeasures from a performance evaluation in that subject, still in high school. I later ruled out Literature. Despite being fond of good readings and always concerned with good writing due to having excellent Portuguese teachers, I still had difficulty accepting some grammatical rules that, to me, made little sense. The decision for Geography, therefore, was partly due to the process of elimination. But not only for that, evidently. I undoubtedly enjoyed handling classical maps and the globe, which seemed like true works of art to me; I thirsted for information about countries, their "geographical features," their cities, places, and, especially, their people. However, it was a work on Economic Development Geography that came into my hands at the end of high school that made me decide to pursue a degree in Geography.

In addition to that, in everyday life, I was encouraged to explore spaces mediated by geographical scales, and my world expanded from the Mouth of Arapiranga, in the Municipality of Bujaru, where I was born, to other places where I used to travel within my own region, which, for me, has always been immense. From a very young age, I was attracted to the knowledge of places, which made me aspire to explore other landscapes and spaces; a reason that even led me to leave, still a child, my place of origin to study in Belém, a city that, in 1974, when I arrived, was beginning its process of metropolitanization. That's how, at the age of seven, I left the interior of the Amazon and separated from my parents and siblings with the aim of attending the third grade of elementary school, considering that this level of education in my place of origin was limited to the first two initial grades, attended in a multigrade class, in an improvised classroom on the veranda of my stilt house, with very dedicated teachers, whose qualification for this role was having completed only primary education.

FSS: Professor Saint-Clair, how did Human Geography find you? Tell us a bit about the theoretical influences you had during your undergraduate studies in Geography, in your master's in Development Planning at NAEA/UFPA, in your Ph.D. in Geography at USP, and in your entry into teaching. Which theorists dominated the academic scene in Geography, and how did this affect you professionally? Which geographers and/or other

intellectuals played an important role in your initial formation and throughout your academic journey?

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: After enrolling in both courses at UFPA, what I sought for my education became increasingly clear. In Law, my aim was to find foundations that would allow me to understand and act in society in light of social justice and equality because, among the issues that troubled me, were those related to the process of segregation and the difficulties of access to housing and the precariousness of urban life; issues that were largely mobilized by my life experience in the outskirts of Belém and through the movements of the Catholic Church, focused on the demands of impoverished populations, in which I participated. However, the positivist nature of the Law course at the time meant that many of the answers and tools I sought in this education were, in reality, provided by my education in Geography, a science that, during the 1980s when I was a university student, was undergoing a true academic revolution in Brazil.

As a student at UFPA, I experienced the diffusion of the so-called Critical Geography, notably of a Marxist nature. In my undergraduate studies in Geography, I had access to knowledge that served as the foundation for my education through the guidance of a few professors locally committed to that movement and various classmates dedicated to an effective transformation of geographical science.

At this point, an important role in my education came to be played by Professor Maria Eunice Soares Penner, who later supervised my thesis in the Full Degree Teaching in Geography. Drawing from her experience at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), where she had pursued a master's degree in Geography under the guidance of Professor Manuel Correia de Andrade, she introduced me to important discussions and presented works by her own advisor, as well as by Josué de Castro, Yves Lacoste, Milton Santos, among other intellectuals, geographers, and non-geographers, who, at that time, were beginning to be more widely disseminated in Geography training courses in Brazil. Professor Janete Marília Gentil Coimbra de Oliveira, who was my undergraduate teacher and later supervised my specialization in Geographic Analysis Applied to the Amazon at UFPA, had also been a student of Manuel Correia de Andrade in the UFPE master's program and similarly influenced me to follow a more critical line of thought within this science.

The most important books that became the foundation of my education at this time reached me through these professors, and thus, I had access to prominent works that became a constant presence in my education, especially those of Milton Santos, which captivated my attention from the very beginning, and I began using them as references

in my academic work. It was through these readings that I got to know, even, Marxist theory, which led me to delve deeper and better understand some principles of social justice that I had been introduced to since my adolescence, given the proximity I had with Liberation Theology.

Another important element in my educational process relates to my participation in events organized by the Brazilian Geographers Association (AGB), both at the local and national levels, as well as my political involvement within the student movement and student representations within UFPA.

Before enrolling in the master's program and after completing the Law degree, I returned to the undergraduate program in Geography to take courses in the bachelor's program. Only then did I continue my postgraduate education at the master's level, undertaken at NAEA in Development Planning. It was at this point that, in addition to Marx's own work, I was able to read other classic authors in Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, History, etc., deepening my critical scientific training and developing a taste for interdisciplinary approaches. During this training, I had the privilege of being intellectually guided by Professor Roberto Lobato Corrêa from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). At the time (1989-1993), he collaborated with the master's program at NAEA, accepting me as his advisee. It was during this period that I extensively explored Miltonian theory, to the extent that I had the gratifying presence of Milton Santos at my master's defense. My appointment as a permanent professor at UFPA occurred during this period, still during the master's, when I took the competition in 1989 for the Regional Geography position. Prior to that, I had already taught classes as a substitute professor at this institution, as well as for children and adolescents in elementary and high school, in both state and private schools, and in evening supplementary classes for adults in public schools.

For the Ph.D., as I was already a permanent professor in the Geography department at UFPA, I felt the need to resume specific training in Geography and delve into one of the authors I had read little until then, the French philosopher Henri Lefèbvre. This led me to pursue a Ph.D. in Human Geography at USP, where there was a prominent group of professors working with this author, and where I had always wanted to study. There, I had the privilege of being supervised by one of the main figures in contemporary Brazilian Geography, Professor Sandra Lencioni. In addition to being a profound connoisseur of Marxist thought and, especially, Lefebvrian thought, she had another characteristic that greatly attracted me—working at the interface of Urban Geography and Regional Geography, something that had already caught my attention since the specialization, where I was captivated by the Regional Theory classes taught by Jan Bitoun from UFPE,

who was my professor at UFPA at that time. Later, during the master's, with the guidance of Professor Roberto Lobato Corrêa, and discussions of regional planning and development with my NAEA professors, such as Edna Castro (sociologist), Francisco de Assis Costa (economist), Heraldo Maués (anthropologist), Jean Hébert (economist), José Marcelino Monteiro (economist), Lindalva Teixeira (sociologist), Luís Eduardo Aragón Vaca (geographer), Rosa Acevedo (historian), Samuel Sá (anthropologist), and my dissertation co-supervisor, Professor Auriléa Abelém (sociologist).

Although the readings of Henri Lefèbvre had begun during the master's program, it was undoubtedly at USP, from the year 1994 onwards, that I deepened my knowledge of this author's work, which became one of the main inspirations for my current reflections on urban and regional space. The conducive environment within the Laboratory of Urban Geography (LABUR) and the Graduate Program in Human Geography (PPGH) – led by professors such as Sandra Lencioni, Ana Fani Carlos, Odette Seabra, and Amélia Damiani, whom I was a student of – favored this process of education in the productive atmosphere of USP. I also attended classes by renowned professors, including Milton Santos, Maria Adélia Souza, Amália Inês Lemos, Flávio Villaça, Murilo Marx, Ricardo Toledo Silva, Philip Gunn, Celso Lamparelli, and collaborating professors such as Octavio Ianni and Renato Ortiz; the latter two from the University of Campinas (Unicamp).

My experience at USP largely encouraged me to delve deeper and better understand Henri Lefèbvre's philosophy and its importance in shaping Brazilian urban geographical thought. This thought was responsible for defining, within USP, one of the main expressions of the Uspian School of Geography, later identified by Professor Maurício de Abreu (UFRJ) as the Marxist-Lefebvrian approach to Brazilian urban geography, in the context of which I was educated. I was able to return to this academic environment more recently when I conducted a second postdoctoral internship at the Laboratory of Regional Studies in Geography in the years 2015 and 2016, also under the guidance and interaction of Professor Sandra Lencioni.

In France, my involvement in the Institut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine (IHEAL) at Université Paris III (Sorbonne Nouvelle) was crucial. I conducted my first postdoctoral internship there in the years 2006 and 2007. I highlight the significant interaction I had with Hélène Rivière D'Arc, who supervised me during the internship, and with Martine Droulers, both from the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), who work at that renowned Institute. The institute, in turn, pays significant attention to Brazil and the Amazon in its debates and research.

FSS: While we recognize the importance of a holistic perspective, it is acknowledged that geography is an extremely broad science and often appears fragmented. In your academic journey, notably, you have navigated the paths of Urban Geography. What other areas pique your interest?

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: I joined UFPA as a professor to teach Regional Geography, as I mentioned, and for many years, I worked, among other disciplines, with Regional Theory and Regionalization in the undergraduate Geography program. I also taught Economic Geography in various humanities programs (Geography, Social Sciences, Tourism, and Economics). Before that, I had served as a substitute teacher in Human Geography disciplines, especially Economic Geography and Geopolitics. My background in Development Planning at the master's level and Urban Geography at the doctoral level led me to focus on Urban Geography and Urban Planning and Management disciplines. These have, therefore, in addition to Regional Geography, been the main areas in which I have worked, especially at NAEA, where interdisciplinary perspectives are central to postgraduate education. This provides me with the opportunity to bridge Urban and Regional Geography, Urban and Regional Planning, and Law, particularly Urban Law, State Law, and Public Management. In this capacity, I have been working as a lecturer, researcher, consultant, and supervisor for academic projects in the field of urban and regional planning, discussing interdisciplinary perspectives on topics related to cities, urbanization, and urban diversity in the Amazon. Additionally, I engage with issues related to urban and regional development, urban planning and management, and urban law and its connection with territorial planning.

FSS: Your works bring together reflections on Urban Geography and Regional Geography in the Amazon and have been crucial in understanding the process of regional urbanization. They reflect on an Amazon that is post-1960 – a period that definitively underwent changes in its socio-territorial configuration, especially in its eastern and southern portions – and another that is pre-1960 – still relatively unaffected by territorial policies for regional development and the effective integration of this region into Brazil – marked mainly by traditional economic activities and riverine transportation, as seen in riverside cities. In 2011, you were awarded the V Milton Santos Prize in the Article category for the work "Cities in the forest: the 'big objects' as expressions of the techno-scientific

*informational milieu in the Amazonian space*¹⁰ by the National Association of Postgraduate and Research in Urban and Regional Planning. In this article, you differentiate and characterize "cities in the forest" and "cities of the forest." Could you elaborate on this and share your thoughts on development without losing the distinctive features of the "cities of the forest"?

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: Regarding the V Milton Santos Prize you mentioned, I owe much of that recognition to the encouragement of Professor Mónica Arroyo from USP, who kindly invited me to participate in a tribute to Milton Santos at that institution. On that occasion, I was able to revisit the systematization of the results of a research project on cities in the Amazon that I had somewhat set aside due to the limited interest it had sparked in the academic forums I had participated in. The tribute to Professor Milton, however, encouraged me to resume this study for presentation at the mentioned event, far exceeding my expectations in a positive way. First, because it was published as an article in the Journal of the Institute of Brazilian Studies (IEB) at USP. Second, because it received the V Milton Santos Prize from ANPUR. Finally, it was the only work¹¹ by a Brazilian researcher awarded to be part of the 5th edition of "The best scholarships in urban and regional planning from around the world" by the Global Planning Education Association Network (GPEAN). It was in this article that I first established the differentiation between "cities of the forest" and "cities in the forest," which later had several developments and repercussions.

Even considering that indigenous populations did not leave records of settlements that could materially characterize large urban civilizations in pre-Columbian Brazilian Amazon, it cannot be said that "cities of the forest" do not exist. They do exist and have a cabocla nature. Moreover, they are complexly mixed in their identities. Prior to the 1960s, they do not polarize into binaries – white versus indigenous, urbanity versus rurality, form versus content, etc. – since they are hybrid, transversal, and multifaceted.

They make up an urban microcosm, synonymous with adaptations, resistances, and interactions. Nature and culture together constitute a kind of "caboclo urbanism" in these cities, composed of simple forms that differentiate and complex contents that enchant. Perhaps because they do not definitively fit into large global circuits of production and

¹⁰ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Cidades na floresta: os "grandes objetos" como expressões do meio técnico-científico informacional no espaço amazônico. Revista do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, São Paulo, v. 51, p. 113-137, mar./set. 2010.

¹¹ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Towns in the forest: the "large objects" as expressions of the informational technical-scientific environment in the Amazonian space. // Hibbard, M.; Freestone, R.; Sager, T. O. (Ed.). Dialogues in urban & regional planning. New York: Routledge, 2013. p. 142-160.

consumption, they somehow maintain strong roots and connections with the surroundings, both from an economic and sociocultural perspective, translating into their interior part of the dynamics that occur in the heart of the forest.

Quite different from these are the "cities in the forest." The logic that governs these cities implanted in the Amazon to meet the demands of large corporations is responsible for the diffusion of more modern economic activities within the region and for true ruptures with the regional past, that which predates the 1960s, and with the attributes and values of the forest. Highly connected to global circuits through large and medium-sized corporate entities they support, these so-called modern urban spaces take on the profile of what Milton Santos¹² called "economic cities," oriented towards the market, and "corporate cities," as they are subject to the command of one or more companies that place local life in total dependence on their existence, associated with economic activities such as electricity production, mineral exploitation, and agribusiness.

"Cities of the forest" and "cities in the forest," however, are merely ideal types. The former are remnants and resistances of urban life from the past that are undergoing change; the latter are specific and insert particular spaces into extralocal circuits. In light of this, it remains to reflect on the future condition of our cities, which can turn to primarily meet the local citizen demands and respond not primarily to the corporate interests that govern the region, but rather to those related to populations that establish strong bonds of experience and belonging with the regional space.

They would be, in fact, cities focused on meeting the demands of the people who inhabit and experience the forest as a biome, evidently, but also as a social space, with its social relations and economic and cultural practices. Considering this possibility means, primarily, avoiding a rupture with nature, expressed in the daily interaction inherited from many years and that often safeguards the resources that are part of it.

Therefore, they are not postulated as model cities, to be created from futuristic designs and outside local reality, as some of the "cities in the forest" were conceived, but rather cities that, in fact, already exist in some way, and whose contents, objects, and spatial forms have been underutilized or even made invisible in public policies focused on the regional space.

The recognition of citizen experiences and practices, translated into urban spatial forms that reinforce these contents of sociability and quality of life already existing, will ensure cities more articulated with the region than with extralocal spaces; more focused, therefore, on ensuring rights for those who live in them or depend on them than on

¹² Santos, M. A urbanização brasileira. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1993.

globalized economic markets. In other terms, they would be urban spaces primarily designed for the region, for those who live in them, and for the local and regional populations that depend on them immediately and directly; therefore, they could be called "cities for the forest"¹³.

FSS: Now, tell us about your research investments in cultural territoriality within the intra-urban space of small cities, especially in what you have referred to as "regional urban diversity" in the Amazon and the relationship of this proposition with the disruptions, changes, and continuities observed in the Amazon since the second half of the last century.

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: The notion of urbanodiversity is based on the argument of the uneven and differentiated production of space; therefore, it is inspired by the idea of socio-economic¹⁴ formation, socio-spatial formation¹⁵ and social production of space¹⁶. It is not, therefore, a proposition based solely on cultural arguments. Through it, the economic, political, and ideological-cultural dimensions of urban life are taken into account as part of a dialectical triad. It is about helping to think about the city and the urban in the region in line with the idea of an urban, plural, unequal, and diverse Amazon, which is a way of engaging, based on other theoretical-methodological foundations, with notions such as biodiversity and sociodiversity. The idea is to provide a counterpoint, from a thinking perspective, to the view of a homogeneous region that has always been reserved for the Amazon, while simultaneously being a political project through which the inequalities and differences of urban life present in this region are announced. It is, therefore, a matter of expressing political, ideological, and theoretical opposition "against indifference"¹⁷ with which this region is often treated in various domains of knowledge and practical action, which end up facilitating the intentions of capital and the instrumental State.

Contrary to the path taken by territorial policies focused on the Amazonian space, especially since the second half of the last century, this suggests a reading of urban diversity, considering both the geography of uneven development¹⁸ and the geography

¹³ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Pensando a modernização do território e a urbanização difusa na Amazônia. Mercator, Fortaleza, v. 14, n. 4, Número Especial, p. 93-106, dez. 2015.

¹⁴ Marx, K. O capital: crítica da economia política. São Paulo: Bertrand Brasil, 1988. Livro I, vol. I, e Livro II, vol. III.

¹⁵ Santos, M. Espaço e sociedade. 2ª. ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1982.

¹⁶ Lefèbvre, H. La production de l'espace. Paris: Anthropos, 1974.

¹⁷ Lefèbvre, H. Le manifeste différentialiste. Paris: Gallimard, 1970.

¹⁸ Smith, N. Desenvolvimento desigual. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1988.

of difference¹⁹. On the other hand, it advocates for a critical analysis of the interaction established between elements such as city-region, rural-urban, society-nature, and economic practices-sociocultural practices, drawing attention to plural ways of understanding the urban and alternative proposals for thinking about development or, at the limit, even denying it, if that is the case.

In this sense, the emphasis is on the coexistence of multiple, unequal, and differentiated times and spaces, prioritizing the "analysis of rhythms" imposed by a plurality²⁰ of subjects defining urban life in the Amazon. This is a way of counteracting a hegemonic model of public policies that insist on denying the particularities and singularities of this region in the name of building modern, homogeneous, progressive, and competitive cities, denying the regional past, the legacies of its indigenous populations, and making them increasingly distant from local and regional ecological and sociocultural potentials, as has happened mainly after the 1960s.

This is the idea that the notion of urbanodiversity translates. It implies recognizing not only diverse types and designs of cities, which are also important, of course, but above all, dialectically relating socio-spatial forms and contents, giving visibility to urban centralities beyond the economic aspect. It involves small and medium-scale economic practices that are essential to regional life, sociocultural elements relevant to local cities, differentiated and creative urbanisms dialoguing with nature and the history of the individuals producing daily life, hybrid contents articulating rural and urban life, and forms of cooperation and sociability envisioning another idea of urbanity, more humane and less unequal. These concerns point to a new way of thinking about development, focused essentially on human dignity.

It was in view of these concerns that the Research Group on Territorial Planning and Urbanodiversity in the Amazon (Geourbam) originated, registered with CNPq under my coordination. The development of ideas corresponding to this notion, especially attempts at new conceptualizations and a theory more focused on the region, also takes shape in a discipline called "Urbanization and Urbanodiversity in the Brazilian Amazon," which I offer at the master's and doctoral levels in the Sustainable Development of the Humid Tropics Graduate Program. These ideas have also been addressed in research coordinated by me in recent years and in master's dissertations and doctoral theses of students I have supervised at the Nucleus of High Amazonian Studies.

¹⁹ Harvey, D. *Justice, nature & the geography of difference*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

²⁰ Lefèbvre, H. *Éléments de rythmanalyse: introduction à la connaissance des rythmes*. Paris: Éditions Syllepse, 1992.

FSS: In recent years, you have brought the debate about the importance of medium-sized cities to the Amazon, especially in the state of Pará. One focus of your reflections, as seen in "River Dreams": academic memoir and geographical paths of an intellectual trajectory in the Amazon²¹, relates to the economic and political centralities that shape new territorialities, as seen in Santarém and Marabá. These cities, with their economic production, socio-environmental impacts, urban-regional development policies, etc., become showcases for government projects and stages for conflicts in the Amazon. In this sense, tell us more explicitly about the so-called medium-sized cities in the Amazon, as well as their role in the debates about the creation of the states of Tapajós and Carajás, which were the subjects of your studies.

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: Following the discussions conducted within the Network of Researchers on Medium-Sized Cities (ReCiMe), of which I am a member, medium-sized cities are considered non-metropolitan urban centers whose nature and profile are not restricted to a specific population size, although it is included. They are defined notably by their importance and respective roles in the regional scenario, characterized mainly by the relative density of facilities and activities that serve not only local demands but also result from combinations of influences and determinations from different scales, including the global level.

For the Amazonian context, I have sought to reflect on the nature of these cities, reaffirming that, for this region, they should not only be defined by a certain population size but also cannot be recognized primarily through the diffusion of innovation and territorial modernization. Instead, understanding the weight assumed by the "fixed" and "flows"²² within the regional context is crucial. In other words, unlike many Brazilian medium-sized cities, the density and modernization of the "fixed" elements in these cities have not necessarily been the factors responsible for conferring importance and dynamism in recent years. Instead, it is primarily the convergence of "flows" that defines them as true "nodes" in the circulation of goods, people, information, political demands, and capital due to a certain minimum availability of infrastructure and a relative technical density of economic, social, and political activities that tend to concentrate at a specific point in the vast regional space.

²¹ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. "Sonhos de rio": memorial acadêmico e percursos geográficos de uma trajetória intelectual na Amazônia. Belém: NAEA, 2016.

²² Santos, M. Metamorfoses do espaço habitado: fundamentos teóricos e metodológicos da Geografia. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1988.

Thus, if the population level, linked to the understanding of medium-sized cities, does not help us alone to define and understand medium-sized cities, similarly, the technical density of the territory and its degree of modernization, usually associated with economic attributes, seem insufficient to situate the diversity of these cities in Brazil and, more specifically, in the Amazonian region. In this way, I have sought to draw attention in more recent works to other forms of centrality²³ and importance of these cities that can help understand their roles in the Amazonian space, taking into account the specificities of the region in the Brazilian territory, while simultaneously thinking theoretically and conceptually about medium-sized cities for the entire national and South American space.

One form of centrality that deserves more attention is that of a political nature. This is not confined only to official state and federal institutions and bodies linked to the political decisions made in them, as is the case with the capitals of some Amazonian states that have reinforced their importance in the region by becoming seats of federal territories and later states of the federation, such as Macapá, Boa Vista, and Porto Velho. It is important to note that, in the Amazon, unlike other regions of Brazil, there are several medium-sized cities that have the status of state capitals. In addition to those I mentioned, we also have Rio Branco and Palmas, which have important political centralities in the socio-spatial context in which they are inserted.

Beyond these formally established political activities due to their conditions as seats of state governments, political centrality is also reaffirmed in these and other cities in the region because they host important political forces, associations of producers and services, union representations, class organizations, and various social categories that project actions and movements of a political nature, making them showcase territories for the interests of political agents and, from them, establishing intentions of new territorialities at the sub-regional level. Examples of these interests include proposals for the creation of new states in the federation, such as Carajás (southeastern Pará), with a possible political headquarters in Marabá, and Tapajós (western Pará), with a possible political headquarters in Santarém; realities that I studied in more detail in a research project funded by CNPq. This same type of centrality seems to be present in other cities in the Amazon, such as Altamira, in southwestern Pará, where there is a proposal to create the state of Xingu; in the southern part of Maranhão, where territorial fragmentation is also postulated with reference to the city of Imperatriz; and in the far west of the Amazon, where the constitution of the Federal Territory of Alto Solimões is sought, which has

²³ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Por outras centralidades: pensando especificidades e particularidades da cidade e do urbano no Brasil. *In*: Serpa, A.; Carlos, A. F. A. (Org.). Geografia urbana: desafios teóricos contemporâneos. Salvador: Edufba, 2018. p. 249-266.

Tabatinga, together with Letícia, its "twin city" on the Colombian side, as an important regional center in Pan-Amazonia, given its border economic and political condition. These processes make us think about the importance of cities in the region whose prominence, in addition to the economic dimension, extends to political strategies that directly impact the current forms of territorial planning present in the regional context; something that has already happened before, when the state of Tocantins was created, which now has the city of Palmas as its capital.

FSS: How do you assess the growth of academic production in Geography and Regional Development in the Amazon in recent years, considering your experience as an urban geographer in this region?

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: I evaluate it very positively. Several situations have contributed to this. First, the migration of many professionals from the region to pursue master's and doctoral degrees at important Brazilian and foreign universities; this fact has resulted in a strong profile of postgraduate-educated professors and researchers who have enhanced scientific production in Amazonian educational and research institutions. Additionally, the expansion of public universities throughout the Amazon has occurred through the establishment of new educational institutions by previous governments and the extension of campuses of existing institutions to places where it was not previously imagined they could reach. For example, there is a campus of the Federal University of Amapá (UNIFAP) in Oiapoque, on the border with French Guiana, and there are campuses of the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Roraima (IFRR) in the small town of Bonfim, on the border between Brazil and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

Similarly, new Geography training programs have emerged at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, accompanied by the generation of new knowledge and, consequently, academic dissemination in scientific journals, thematic collections, and books presenting results of in-depth investigations that have become references for understanding the region. Especially in Urban Geography, it is gratifying to note the presence of groups led by professors from the region itself or those who came from outside and are now scattered throughout the various sub-regions of the Amazon.

This is interesting because various topics in Urban Geography are addressed in different research profiles. In addition to metropolitan studies, which include the realities of Belém, Manaus, and São Luís, there are several studies focusing on small and medium-

sized cities, the city-countryside relationship, the roles of various centralities in the context of the Amazonian urban network, etc.

This set of research and productions became possible due to the number of individuals with academic titles in the region, the presence of institutions engaged in teaching and research across different sub-regions, and, especially, the crucial role of public institutes and universities (federal and state), located or clustered in cities of different profiles and sizes throughout the entire Amazon, beyond the regional metropolises.

FSS: In your prolific geographical production, we highlight a set of reflections on different types of cities in the Amazon²⁴. You have advocated for an Urban Geography grounded in theoretical and conceptual contributions from Critical Geography, with an emphasis on interrelated socio-spatial forms, functions, structures, and processes, in a perspective clearly influenced by Milton Santos since we are, after all, homo geographicus²⁵. In this sense, what is the importance of Urban Geography in understanding the Amazon in the 21st century?

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: Cities have been spaces of protagonism for various actors in the region and are the locus par excellence of problems and conflicts within it. They also serve as channels for struggles originating from all corners of the Amazon. Like in the rest of Brazil, they have been references for new economic, political, and sociocultural dynamics and for the diffusion of new processes at the territorial level, due to a new scope of the "urban society"²⁶ caused by the "planetaryization of the urban."²⁷ It is, therefore, essential to consider them for the region, understanding how the phenomenon of urbanization present throughout the country reproduces in them, but above all, it is crucial to pay attention to the particularities of this phenomenon at the regional level.

²⁴ The discussion is present in articles such as: Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Cities and centralities in the Amazon: from different territorial arrangements to the process of diffuse urbanization. *Cidades, Presidente Prudente*, v. 12, p. 305-334, 2015; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. From "cities in the forest" to "cities of the forest": space, environment, and urban diversity in the Brazilian Amazon. *Papers do NAEA, Belém*, v. 321, p. 1-22, 2013; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. An urbanized forest? Legacy and developments of a theory about the meaning of the city and the urban in the Amazon. *Espaço Aberto, Rio de Janeiro*, v. 3, p. 81-100, 2013; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. The city and the river in the Amazon: changes and permanence in the face of sub-regional transformations. *Terceira Margem Amazônica, Manaus*, v. 1, p. 171-183, 2012; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Territorial differentiation and urban diversity: elements to think about a national urban agenda. *Cidades, Presidente Prudente, Urban Studies Group*, v. 7, n. 12, p. 227-255, Jul./Dec. 2010.

²⁵ Sack, R. D. *Homo geographicus: a framework for action, awareness, and moral concern*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

²⁶ Lefèbvre, H. *A revolução urbana*. Belo Horizonte: Humanitas, 1999.

²⁷ Lefèbvre, H. *Dissolving city, planetary metamorphosis*. *Tr. Brenner, N. Implosions/explosions: towards a study of planetary urbanization*. Berlim: Jovis, 2014. p. 566-570.

Urban Geography can help weave a more plural, less ethnocentric and geocentric reading of Brazil's territorial diversity by considering Amazonian cities within a particularized socio-spatial formation. This, of course, requires investments in empirical studies, field surveys, knowledge of local realities, etc., capable of revealing the profiles and landscapes of these cities. Still, it is also necessary to account for their contents by understanding their different subjects and socioeconomic contexts responsible for producing such particularities at the territorial level. In this sense, categories such as form, function, structure, and process²⁸ can help think about general movements and their specific manifestations.

For this, the exhaustive number of empirical studies and typological frameworks about these cities is not enough. Concurrently with this, the regional reality demands an effort of conceptualization and theorization capable of reading the urban-regional reality in a way that not only replicates schemes and formulas known to other Brazilian cities but also can account for differentiated realities like the Amazon, which reproduces a trend of homogenization of national urban life but also reveals many specificities.

Taking the current legal framework of urban planning in Brazil as a reference, for example, one immediately notes the mismatch between the urban planning instruments provided in legal documents and the plurality of regional demands that arise and are not always accommodated by these documents, even when components of more progressive agendas. This is an undeniable way of how the regional reality is not fully captured by national urban legislation.

But this difficulty is not limited to legal regulations. Even with all the observed advances, our capacity for theorization and conceptualization is still far from understanding the differentiated forms of urban space production mediated by the regional scale. That's why, in this case, I have advocated for the concept of urbanodiversity to think about the city and the urban not only in the Amazon but also in Brazil as a whole. Thus, Urban Geography in the Amazon has much to contribute, not only empirically but mainly theoretically and conceptually.

FSS: Tell us a bit about your research on the urban and regional impacts resulting from large-scale projects, such as in the cases of Belo Monte in Altamira and Tucuruí, both in the state of Pará.

²⁸ Santos, M. Espaço & método. São Paulo: Nobel, 1985.

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: From my experience as a professor in the undergraduate Geography program, as a supervisor for thesis projects in the UFPA campuses located in the interior of Pará, and as a collaborating professor in postgraduate courses at UNIFAP and UFAM, I was able to, to a large extent, understand *in loco* the regional and urban diversity of an Amazon with many times and spaces and rapid transformations. As part of these "Amazons"²⁹, there are those sub-regions more directly impacted by the presence of large projects or "large objects"³⁰. In this Amazon, I taught classes and supervised Undergraduate Thesis Projects (TCCs) in municipalities like Breu Branco and Tucuruí (where the lake and the Tucuruí Hydroelectric Plant are located), Marabá (directly affected by the Carajás Project), Oriximiná (which hosts the Trombetas Project), Abaetetuba (directly affected by the Albras-Alunorte project), and Altamira (impacted by the Belo Monte Hydroelectric Plant).

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Contact with these realities led me to study some of these projects. Thus, after my Ph.D., I started my research studying company towns³¹ in the Amazon. The systematization of the study of these cities, in partnership with other researchers associated with the research groups of Professor Maria Célia Nunes Coelho (UFRJ) and Professor Gilberto de Miranda Rocha (UFPA), made us reflect on the nature of the urban phenomenon that manifests in them, highlighting their realities, always linked to major economic and infrastructure projects, which I later identified as the best expressions of "cities in the forest," artificialized and little integrated into local history and geography, as seen in Tucuruí (Permanent Village), Barcarena (Cabanos Village), and Parauapebas (Carajás Citadel), linked, respectively, to the Tucuruí Hydroelectric Plant, the Albras-Alunorte Complex, and the Carajás Project. Other cities, where I also conducted field visits, repeat the same patterns observed in the realities mentioned above, as seen in Balbina Village, in the state of Amazonas, and in Serra do Navio, in the state of Amapá. All these

²⁹ Porto-Gonçalves, C. W. *Amazônia, amazônias*. São Paulo: Contexto, 2001.

³⁰ Santos, M. *Os grandes projetos: sistema de ação e dinâmica espacial*. In: Castro, E. M. R.; Moura, E.; Maia, M. L. S. (Org.). *Industrialização e grandes projetos: desorganização e reorganização do espaço*. Belém: EDUFPA, 1995. p. 13-20.

³¹ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. *Estado e gestão do espaço urbano na Amazônia: a experiência das cidades-empresa*. In: Carlos, A. F. A.; Lemos, A. I. G. (Org.). *Dilemas urbanos: novas abordagens sobre as cidades*. São Paulo: Contexto, 2003. p. 136-145.

projects, their cities, and their impacts stem from territorial planning policies with strong developmental biases. Today, similarly but in a neodevelopmentalist perspective, similar impacts are happening again. The Belo Monte project is an example of this. Resistance delayed the implementation of this project and redefined it compared to what was foreseen in the late 1980s. Even so, there were many damages, whether due to capitalist interests focused on the region or due to the role reserved for the Amazon in the civilizational process embedded in contemporary (post-) modernity. Hence, the reason our research still concerns these unresolved issues. Reflections on the city of Altamira and its relationship with the Belo Monte hydroelectric plant were undoubtedly a response to this challenge. They resulted from a partnership with Professor José Antônio Herrera, a professor at the UFPA campus in Altamira, when we sought to relate the actions associated with a concept of region updated from the perspective of capital to new ways of conceiving space present in today's neodevelopmentalist policies. As a result of the foray into this reality, I was able to supervise some undergraduate students, master's, and doctoral students. I want to highlight Suelem Cardoso's³² dissertation, which addressed the indigenous population impacted by the Belo Monte project in the city of Altamira, as well as Michel Lima's³³ thesis, which studied the same project and the same city, in addition to two others (Tucuruí and Marabá), addressing the city-river relationship from the perspective of the commons principle³⁴, showing the changes that the hydroelectric complex caused in the territories influenced by the waters. All these reflections resulting from my incursions into these sub-regions heavily affected by large projects show not only the impacts of these major projects but also the local responses to them in various forms of resistance that question and redefine them, but still remain as damaging as in the past.

FSS: Professor, recently, you have been working with contemporary critical thinking in interpreting the Amazon, which you referred to as "Geographies of the South"³⁵,

³² Cardoso, S. M. A cidade dos invisíveis? Indígenas e impactos de políticas neodesenvolvimentistas em Altamira, sudoeste paraense. 2018. Dissertation (Master's in Development Planning) – Graduate Program in Sustainable Development of the Humid Tropics, Center for High Amazonian Studies, Federal University of Pará, Belém, 2018.

³³ Lima, M. M. Territórios de uso comum na Amazônia: relação sociedade-natureza e modernização do espaço. 2020. Thesis (Ph.D. in Socioenvironmental Development) – Graduate Program in Sustainable Development of the Humid Tropics, Center for High Amazonian Studies, Federal University of Pará, Belém, 2020.

³⁴ Dardot, P.; Laval, C. Comum: ensaio sobre a revolução no século XXI. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2017.

³⁵ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Dos geografismos às geografizações: pensando a região e o regional a partir das "geografias do Sul". Confins [En ligne], Revue Franco-Brésilienne de Géographie, Paris, n. 44, n. p., mar. 2020. Disponível em: <http://journals.openedition.org/confins/26814>.

making reference to "Epistemologies of the South"³⁶ a term coined and developed by the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos and advocated as a theoretical and epistemological alternative from the global South to the dominant paradigms of modern science. In this sense, from your perspective, what would these "Geographies of the South" be? How to consider the contributions of an alternative Geography to understand the Amazon region in the face of the globalized world?

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: Initially, it is necessary to explain what led me to this discussion currently. It arises from the need to systematize theoretical and methodological contributions from Brazilian geographical thought and the interpretation of the Amazon within them. Several research projects have been developed in this direction, including the project "The Amazon and the geographical understanding of Brazilian space: territorial diversity, public policies, and new spatial configurations," coordinated by Professor Maria Goretti da Costa Tavares (UFPA), a result of the partnership between the Graduate Program in Geography (PPGEO) at UFPA and the Graduate Program in Human Geography (PPGH) at USP, with the support of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) and CNPq, through the National Program for Academic Cooperation (PROCAD-Casadinho). As part of this program, the project "The urban and the regional in the geographical understanding of Amazonian space: readings and approaches in perspective" was included, developed at USP under my responsibility and funded by CNPq with a postdoctoral scholarship. Through this project, I highlighted the importance of the USP School of Geography, reviewing several studies whose analytical themes referenced the Amazon³⁷. Also supported by CNPq, through a research productivity scholarship, the project "A geographical perspective: the Amazon in the approach to space as a social instance" adds to the previous ones, reinforcing the concern for a critical reading of the Amazon, this time in light of Miltonian theoretical contributions³⁸. And, more recently, I

³⁶ Santos, B. S.; Meneses, M. P. (Org.). *Epistemologias do Sul*. São Paulo: Cortez, 2010.

³⁷ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Uma região em questão: a Amazônia nas lentes da escola Uspiana de Geografia. *In*: Costa, J. M. (Org.) *Amazônia: olhares sobre o território e a região*. Macapá: Editora da UNIFAP, 2017. p. 199-255; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. "A tua mais completa tradução": uma escola, uma região e uma interlocutora. *Geosp – Espaço e Tempo (Online)*, São Paulo, v. 20, n. 3, p. 462-480, 2016; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. *Amazônia: leituras geográficas em perspectiva*. *Papers do NAEA*, Belém, n. 355, p. 1-17, dez. 2015.

³⁸ Oliveira, H. M. P.; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. A Amazônia em Milton Santos: região, globalização e meio técnico-científico-informacional. *In*: Pezzuti, J.; Azevedo-Ramos, C. (Org.) *Desafios amazônicos*. Belém: NAEA/UFPA, 2016. p. 193-224. (Série Desenvolvimento e Sustentabilidade); Leite, G. C. S.; Oliveira, H. M. P.; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Um pensamento, uma região: o legado teórico miltoniano e a compreensão do espaço amazônico. *In*: Mercês, S. S. S.; Gonçalves, M. V. (Org.) *Natureza, sociedade e economia política na Amazônia contemporânea*. Belém: Editora Naea, 2018. p. 69-

have been developing the project "Geographies and epistemologies of the South: Amazon, critical perspectives in perspective," also supported by CNPq with the same type of funding, which seeks to understand how the Amazon has been comprehended from two different approaches.

Therefore, the idea is to position the interpretations of the Amazon within different conceptions of contemporary critical thought. This is because, with the proliferation of research on the region, the approaches seeking to interpret it have been very diversified. In Human Geography, in general, such positions range from the phenomenological perspective, through various Marxist nuances, to the more recent post-modern, post-structuralist, and post-colonial or decolonial tendencies, as preferred. Seeking to engage with these interpretations justifies the research.

As in recent years, decolonial thought has asserted itself as an important approach in Brazilian geographical science, especially in the reading of the Amazonian space, with "epistemologies of the South" being one of the theoretical supports for this type of interpretation, I have sought to show that, even from a differentiated methodological perspective, some assumptions raised by this form of interpretation were already present, in a certain way, in some intellectuals of Brazilian Geography. This is the case with the propositions of Milton Santos³⁹, who some time ago emphasized the need for the construction of a "decolonized" Brazilian geography, and whose concerns and reflections were based on decentering, trans-scalarity, and the geographization of social processes. In the case of Milton Santos, there are interesting reflections on the Amazon in some of his studies, as shown in my own works⁴⁰ and others I have guided, such as the master's dissertation of Helbert Oliveira⁴¹ and Gabriel Leite⁴².

90; Leite, G., C. S.; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Meio técnico-científico informacional e fluidez territorial na Amazônia brasileira. *Boletim Goiano de Geografia*, Goiânia, v. 38, n. 3, p. 516-533, set./dez. 2018; Trindade Jr., S-C. C.; Leite, G. C. S. Metrópole e economia urbana na Amazônia: olhando Belém na perspectiva da teoria dos circuitos. *E-Metropolis, Revista Eletrônica de Estudos Urbanos e Regionais*, Rio de Janeiro, n. 36, p. 6-18, mar. 2019.

³⁹ Santos, M. *Novos rumos para a Geografia brasileira*. /r: Santos, M. (Org.). *Novos rumos da Geografia brasileira*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1982. p. 209-219.

⁴⁰ Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Uma leitura da Amazônia a partir da obra de Milton Santos: contribuições da Escola Uspiana de Geografia. *Papers do NAEA*, Belém, n. 366, p. 1-17, 2017; Trindade Jr., S-C. C. Dos geografismos às geografizações: pensando a região e o regional a partir das "geografias do Sul". *Confins [En ligne]*, *Revue Franco-Brésilienne de Géographie*, Paris, n. 44, n. p., mar. 2020. Disponível em : <http://journals.openedition.org/confins/26814>.

⁴¹ Oliveira, H. M. P. *A noção de região em Milton Santos: contribuições para pensar a Amazônia*. 2019. Dissertation (Master's in Development Planning) – Graduate Program in Sustainable Development of the Humid Tropics, Center for High Amazonian Studies, Federal University of Pará, Belém, 2019.

⁴² Leite, G. C. S. *Por um ordenamento cívico do território: uma reflexão crítica sobre o planejamento urbano e regional a partir da obra de Milton Santos*. 2019. 499f. Dissertation (Master's in Development Planning) – Graduate Program in Sustainable Development of the Humid Tropics, Center for High Amazonian Studies, Federal University of Pará, Belém, 2019.

As a pretext to engage with the propositions of "epistemologies of the South" by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, I have named these contributions, as other authors have suggested before, through the metaphor "geographies of the South." Therefore, it is an approach that does not confuse itself with Boaventura de Sousa Santos' proposition but brings reflections that, on other philosophical and epistemological foundations, seek to contribute to the understanding of the social condition of the "global South" in the current period. It is more of an opening for a dialogue about the Amazon, as a region that is doubly decentered, than an attempt to fit it into a theory or epistemology as a way of defining it better.

Thinking about the Amazon in its condition as a peripheral region is a challenge that is situated on two main scales of processes and a sense of totality. On one side, in relation to the center of capitalism in the world; on the other, in relation to the so-called concentrated region in Brazil, which reorients our situation concerning the north and the south, respectively, beyond our absolute locations. This possibility of shifting perspectives and problematizing current issues from the Amazon, whether in relation to the so-called global North or the Brazilian South, can enrich our geographical explanations regarding the world and Brazil, thereby opening up possibilities to construct more alternative geographies and readings about space in its relative and relational sense, as David Harvey⁴³ proposed regarding these two concepts.

FSS: Some urban thinkers discuss the need for a "new urbanity" to refer to a more organic and supportive city. It is true that there are some examples of solidarity in Brazilian cities. However, it is very common to see the reproduction of negative patterns from metropolises, even in small and/or medium-sized cities. In the city of Açailândia (MA), for example, with an approximate population of 115 thousand inhabitants, the presence of bike lanes is not seen, there is no encouragement for quality public transportation, sanitary and waste issues are not adequately addressed, and the homeless population increases (especially due to Venezuelan migrants), among other problems. The question that arises now is: is a new urbanity possible within the capitalist system? How could one avoid reproducing metropolitan problems?

⁴³ Harvey, D. A justiça social e a cidade. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1980.

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: The process of metropolitanization⁴⁴ of space is a reality in Brazilian territory, and its consequences as well. The Amazon is no exception. Even the riverside communities in the region are immersed in the consumer society, as Professor Sandra Lencioni⁴⁵ pointed out, as they are not effectively isolated from the world. Therefore, metropolitan problems are disseminated in various forms in different expressions of urban or non-urban ways of life. In any case, I believe it is possible to think of a new urbanity. In the face of this, it remains to reflect on the future condition of our cities, focused on meeting, in the first place, the local citizen demands, leading us to metaphorically speak of "cities for the forest." In this direction, it is important to point out some elements so that we can think about such cities for the Amazon.

Firstly, as we have already mentioned, there is a need to consider the relationship between the city and its surroundings, so as not to promote its distancing from nature. Nature should not only be seen as a form to compose landscapes that, in a play of presence and absence⁴⁶, present it as a mere specter but essentially should be seen and conceived in the everyday interaction with the subjects who produce the urban, expressing a historical heritage from our ancestors who, in many ways, taught us to safeguard natural resources.

This possibility of interaction, on the other hand, requires designing architectures and landscapes capable of defining another urbanism associated with this centuries-old relationship between man and his environment, considering, among other things, local materials, the seasonality of water, the climatic type, the functionalities established through daily experiences, and also aesthetics, translated into spatial forms, colors used, and local cultural identities or those brought to the region and blended into them. This other urbanism could also lend itself to the possibility of less overwhelming tourism and more learning for those coming from outside with internal daily practices and experiences.

Here, the aim is to take into account the cultural aspect, associated with other elements that define the various local spaces within the region. In this sense, the potential of these cities can be translated through significant heritage elements that are present in them with a certain force of permanence. Differently, the economic model that dominates

⁴⁴ Lencioni, S. Uma nova determinação do urbano: o processo de metropolização do espaço. *In*: Carlos, A. F. A.; Lemos, A. I. G. (Org.) Dilemas urbanos: novas abordagens sobre a cidade. São Paulo: Contexto, 2003. p. 35-44.

⁴⁵ Lencioni, S. Casas do Brasil: habitação ribeirinha na Amazônia. São Paulo: Museu da Casa Brasileira, 2013.

⁴⁶ Lefèbvre, H. La presencia y la ausencia: contribución a la teoría de las representaciones. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006.

regional territorial planning tends to standardize these cultures under the pretext of their valorization and to insert local spaces into more competitive economic circuits.

An example of this is the "boi-bumbá" culture, which is present in various locations in the regional space and translates a legacy of Northeastern migrants who headed to the Amazon in cycles and various trajectories of mobility since the peak of rubber extraction. Such legacies tend to be erased by these globalized, standardized cultures. Besides that, cities should serve as spaces to support certain demands of their surroundings. Here, we refer to various services and activities that can be distributed to places where market flows are not so favorable.

Another particularity of our Amazonian cities is the presence of indigenous populations, extractive workers, small farmers, etc., who produce the urban or have many of their daily demands met in small and medium-sized cities near their places of economic production and sociocultural reproduction. Therefore, they need specific services installed in these cities, as well as, sometimes, accommodation spaces close to the services they need, as is the case with indigenous populations.

In this case, these populations create regular flows related to their demands, reaffirming centralities of a civic nature in these supporting cities, confirming their strong connection to the forest, suggesting also a civic-territorial planning, focused on citizenship, as opposed to a primarily economic planning⁴⁷. In this case, these are diverse sociocultural demands and economic practices of little or no interest to capital, defining centralities that go beyond those of the dominant economic nature, and can even be defined as socioterritorial centralities.

FSS: Finally, in your opinion, what are the practical and also theoretical dilemmas and challenges to be faced by urban geographers in the Amazon in the 21st century?

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: Dear Fagno, from an empirical perspective, I believe that the Amazon is a vast and still relatively unexplored research field. There are spaces and demands for various studies, and perhaps this is one of our main challenges in understanding it. However, in the wake of this challenge, another one arises. Not every research truly addresses the demands of the populations that inhabit and experience the region daily. More than any concern for studies that cover the entire Amazon by our researchers, we need studies committed to its specific issues.

⁴⁷ Santos, M. O espaço do cidadão. São Paulo: Nobel, 1987.

Until recently, for example, there were few Amazonian geographers concerned with certain crucial issues for our region. Many of these research demands were met by professionals from other fields who became references for us geographers in understanding the Amazon. I still wonder about the almost absence of geography professionals dedicated to studies of its fluvial geomorphology, biogeography, and Amazonian climatology, for instance.

In urban studies, perhaps we don't face this dilemma as much, as there are researchers dedicated to understanding our cities in their broad diversity, although what we have is still insufficient. In other branches of Human Geography, however, this trend may still be too lacking, such as in Population Geography, Health Geography, Transport Geography, and other branches crucial to understanding the socio-spatial particularities of the Amazon.

From a theoretical perspective, I think the challenge is different. Just as the Amazon has been thought of as an economic frontier of capital, as proposed by Bertha Becker⁴⁸, and as a sociocultural and otherness frontier, as proposed by José de Souza Martins⁴⁹, today, there emerges a kind of "intellectual frontier" in the region, where scientific production is expanding very positively. This was only possible because the number of geography professionals with degrees increased and because of the dissemination of teaching and research institutions and undergraduate and graduate geography programs throughout the region.

I have no doubt that critical thinking and theor – those that reject intellectual divisions of labor and forms of understanding oriented towards the state, technocracy, and the market⁵⁰ – especially in Human Geography, dominate the knowledge disseminated in the region. However, as this expansion progresses, I think there is also, even within critical thinking, a kind of alterity of knowledge, not always so healthy, revealing a desire to territorialize here and there a form of approaching geographical knowledge that is intended to be dominant. While, on the one hand, this is good because it heralds the plurality of thinking, on the other hand, the fact that they present political projects very close or even undifferentiated, the degree of sophistication of abstract thinking that animates heated theoretical-methodological debates, and, in a way, very interesting, seems to have unfortunately distanced possibilities of more joint actions that,

⁴⁸ Becker, B. *Amazônia*. São Paulo: Ática, 1990.

⁴⁹ Martins, J. S. *Fronteira*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1997.

⁵⁰ Brenner, N. *Espaços da urbanização: o urbano a partir da teoria crítica*. Rio de Janeiro: Letra Capital, 2018.

in my view, are necessary to combat the destruction of the region by a "common enemy"; destruction that has not abated, especially in recent years.

Therefore, I think that, in this sense, besides proposing conceptualizations and theorizations that allow a better understanding of the Amazon and Brazil in their diversity, something that is necessary and challenging, our main dilemma has been to interact more effectively, based on the different knowledge produced in the various "Amazons," and, mainly, to establish a more scientifically constructive intellectual dialogue between different methodological frameworks. A dialogue that can convert itself not into a single thought but into a political project with more common horizons, without having to give up our worldviews and our conceptual and theoretical differences and preferences.

FSS: Professor, it was a great pleasure to navigate through the rivers of Urban Geography in the Amazon as we entered the geographical workshop of Saint-Clair Cordeiro da Trindade Júnior and traveled together through this geobiography and the paths of the Amazon space with optimism and a great geographical competence. Thank you very much!

Saint-Clair Trindade Jr.: I thank you for the kindness of interviewing me and for giving me the opportunity to talk about my region and the Geography that I think about and put into practice in my daily life. Thank you very much!

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RESUMO:

Entrevista realizada em 27 de julho de 2020, com Saint-Clair Cordeiro da Trindade Júnior, Professor Titular do Núcleo de Altos Estudos Amazônicos (NAEA) da Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA). Durante a entrevista, o geógrafo amazônico tratou brevemente de sua trajetória pessoal e profissional e de como a Geografia o alcançou. Realizou reflexões sobre o ofício do geógrafo no século XXI, passando pelo temário da relação entre as políticas de desenvolvimento e o ordenamento territorial regional, da produção do espaço urbano e da urbanodiversidade, até o processo de fortalecimento dos estudos em Geografia da Amazônia e os efeitos de grandes projetos de desenvolvimento nas realidades locais. Por fim, falou particularmente das Geografias e Epistemologias do Sul com foco na Amazônia.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Amazônia. Geografia Urbana. Geografia Regional.

RESUMEN:

Entrevista realizada el 27 de julio de 2020 a Saint-Clair Cordeiro da Trindade Júnior, profesor titular del Centro de Altos Estudios Amazónicos (NAEA) de la Universidad Federal de Pará (UFPA). Durante la entrevista, el geógrafo amazónico habló brevemente de su trayectoria personal y profesional y de cómo la Geografía llegó hasta él. Reflexionó sobre el papel del geógrafo en el siglo XXI, abarcando la relación entre las políticas de desarrollo y la planificación territorial regional, la producción del espacio urbano y la diversidad urbana, y el proceso de fortalecimiento de los estudios en Geografía Amazónica y los efectos de los grandes proyectos de desarrollo en realidades locales. Finalmente, habló particularmente sobre las Geografías y Epistemologías del Sur con foco en la Amazonía.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Amazonas. Geografía urbana. Geografía Regional.