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Interview with Milton Santos

Paulo Cesar Scarim
Federal University of Espírito Santo
Vitória, Espírito Santo, Brazil
pauloscarim@hotmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Interview[1] conducted with Professor and geographer Milton Santos on March 14, 2000, by Paulo Cesar Scarim, as part of a master's thesis[2] defended at the University of São Paulo (USP) in 2000, under the supervision of Professor Ana Fani Alessandri Carlos.

Milton Santos (1926–2001) was one of the most influential Brazilian geographers, internationally recognized for his contributions to critical geography and the study of globalization. Born in Brotas de Macaúbas, Bahia, he originally trained in law but devoted his career to geography, becoming a renowned professor and researcher. Persecuted by Brazil's military dictatorship, he lived in exile in countries such as France, Venezuela, and Canada. His work offered an alternative vision of globalization, emphasizing the deep inequalities between the Global North and South. In *Por uma outra globalização* (2000), he critiqued the dominant model and advocated for a more humanist and inclusive approach. In 1994, he was awarded the Vautrin Lud Prize, often regarded as the "Nobel of Geography." Upon returning to Brazil in the 1980s, he solidified his academic career at the University of São Paulo (USP). His legacy continues to inspire scholars in the humanities and social sciences, reaffirming the centrality of geographic space in understanding power relations and development.

1 Revised to meet current ABNT standards and the 2009 Portuguese Language Orthographic Agreement; updated with additional references and biographical notes by Edison Luís dos Santos (PhD, Information Science; BA, Linguistics and Library Science, USP), who completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the IEA/USP in 2022. Expressions in "[ ]" were inserted by the editors to supply words or punctuation that clarify the interview, while "[…]" denotes unfinished sentences. Editor's Notes (EN) appear where further explanation was necessary. A limited set of footnotes provides sources relevant to Milton Santos's arguments; many names mentioned in the text remain uncited.

2 SCARIM, Paulo Cesar. Coetâneos da crítica: uma contribuição ao estudo do movimento de renovação da geografia brasileira. Master's thesis, Graduate Program in Human Geography, University of São Paulo. São Paulo: FFLCH, 2000. This interview has never been published.

INTERVIEW WITH MILTON SANTOS

Paulo Cesar Scarim (PCS): In your view, what was the nature of the debate within Brazilian geography at the end of the 1970s?

Milton Santos (MS): To a certain extent, one could say there were never any truly substantial debates in Brazilian geography. I think that's a problem we can approach in two ways. First, we might say there wasn't one—which could be a mistaken view, admittedly. Maybe I'm asking for more than what was possible at the time, but still, what I believe was necessary. And if there wasn't a strong debate, why not? That may point to something internal to Brazilian geography—this difficulty in cultivating real debate. Even 1978 didn't amount to what I'd call a major debate. It was intense, passionate, and inspiring, yes—but not profound. What we had were supporters on one side and opponents on the other. That alone doesn't make a real debate. Perhaps because Brazilian geography has always been quite open—probably the most open of all Western geographies. Open in the sense that there has always been someone, somewhere, reading everything. You won't find that same universal curiosity for other geographical traditions elsewhere. But then, did that openness also diminish the importance of real debate?

PCS: Could it be that this openness depended too heavily on ideas from outside, and that because certain questions emerged here later, the transformations we saw in other contexts dictated the pace of change here as well? Do you think it's possible to trace a parallel between the themes, theories, and issues that shaped our geography and those coming from abroad?

MS: What I see is that academic debate—except perhaps during one phase, and I'm not including Delgado[I] and others here, because that would be unfair—they did engage in scientific inquiry, even if in a pre-scientific way.

PCS: Would you say "pre-institutional"?

MS: More or less. Maybe pre-institutional in the sense of what we now understand as the university. There were some important moments within the Brazilian Geographers Association (AGB)[II], back when the AGB still functioned as an academic institution, which it no longer is. Today, it's more of a showcase—and what really carries weight there now is mediocrity. You can quote me on that; I'm not asking you to hold back. I believe we need to be of service to the discipline and the association. So, what I felt—after a relatively long absence,

and this impression stayed with me for years, was a sort of uneasy when I came back. I couldn't quite name it at first. But I felt it more clearly once I finally entered the university —and that took a long time. I realized that the intellectual debate was very shallow. There was a lack of intellectual density.

PCS: Would you say it was even more shallow than when you left the country?

MS: I'd say I was a different person by then. I had changed. Still, in some way, I felt I was absorbing things—I wasn't trying to make grand claims. Honestly, I would never have written a thesis like yours at that point; I didn't feel I had the foundation yet. I believed I had to build up a considerable base first. And looking back now, even my tenure thesis, which I completed at twenty-six, already showed some theoretical concern—even if much of it was borrowed—but it did express opinions. Anyway, back to the point: the academic environment is still not very intellectually dense, and that's a problem. Because debates tend to lack depth, they often fail to address the core of the issues being raised. And that can leave authors feeling worn down, leading them to take a lighter approach instead.

PCS: What do you mean by that, Professor?

MS: I mean "light," because no one engages with you if you're not light. And if you want to be heard, you make yourself lighter—so the debate loses depth. That's a problem in Brazilian geography, but also in the social sciences more broadly. It has to do with academia, with how universities are structured. Intellectual work tends to revolve around group leaders, not thought leaders—around political bosses, not true mentors. That's a longstanding pattern in Brazilian geography: the organization of intellectual life around political figureheads. Just look, you'll see! That's also why I asked so much about your interviews: interviews often can't get to the heart of people's concerns.

PCS: Given your view of academia, then, what is the value of being part of a university?

MS: That's not a question I can answer. Others should be the ones to say.

PCS: But doesn't that structure limit debate?

MS: I keep doing my work—especially outside the confines of academic cliques. I try to remain close to people, in a cordial way, but I refuse to pledge allegiance to any little group of friends.

PCS: In some interviews, you've said that while living abroad, it felt like a kind of refuge—a distance that allowed you to see Brazil more clearly and reimagine the country. Would you say that sense of refuge, maybe from not having to deal with those academic structures, stayed with you?

MS: It wasn't exactly a refuge. I didn't really have a choice. I left Brazil in 1964, on the eve of sweeping transformations. For a while, I tried to keep up with what was happening, but it soon became impossible. First, because the country was changing so quickly that I couldn't understand it anymore. And second, because our geography—mostly functioning as a form of journalism—offered little that added to my understanding. Reading many of our authors gave me almost nothing. I couldn't grasp the country through those texts. There was often nothing there beyond what you'd find in newspapers, and that remains true today in much of the work produced in master's and doctoral theses. They resemble polished news articles: well-written, sure, but taking four years to do what a journalist does in forty minutes—just with citations and a bit more structure. If you take much of what's been produced by our geography—not only since 1968 but even including it—some works are flawless in form but lack any real drive to build a discipline. There's another point you should consider: that's why what we write holds little interest for anyone outside the discipline, except maybe our friends. There was a time when our work did matter. If you look at Delgado de Carvalho or the great Aroldo de Azevedo[III], they produced monumental work. And many others. Many of them were scholar-tourists. That's what geography often was: learned tourists writing chronicles—crafting a form of writing that informed other disciplines, back when the world was simpler and the social sciences were more straightforward. But the world has become more complex and visible, and what we produce is no longer of much interest. That's why other fields don't read us —unless they belong to the same party, or share dinners, or baptized each other's children. Citations now come more from camaraderie and gratitude than from the actual value of the work.

PCS: Did this perception of yours form only after returning to Brazil, or did it begin while you were still abroad?

MS: It developed partly afterward, but not entirely. I started thinking about these issues while reflecting on a certain strand of French geography. Being over there gave me a sense of that tradition—this descriptive geography we're talking about, which is still very present in European geography more broadly.

PCS: And your concern with theory—did that begin during your tenure-track thesis?

MS: At the time of that thesis, I was 26 and wanted to become a university professor. I didn't even know what it meant to be "theoretical". Really, I had a background in the social sciences, since I studied law, so I was more of an erudite type—that's the truth. My fieldwork was more scholarly than analytical, and in my more systematic writing, I was a kind of homegrown intellectual. I read a lot. By 26, I had read the entire history of geography, especially the French tradition. I also had strong training in logic, math, and Portuguese—skills I've since lost, but back then, I had them. Mastering the Portuguese language and knowing how to organize things was what made someone a geographer.

PCS: So, it was this awareness of a lack of deeper explanation—linked to that descriptive geography both in Brazil and France—that led you to pursue theoretical foundations elsewhere?

MS: Exactly. That pursuit was essential; otherwise, it just didn't work. Sociology has never functioned without postulates. It has a long history of theorization, which is indispensable because that's where interpretation begins. Economics, in its own way, too. Anthropology, maybe even more than sociology. Geography, on the other hand, never underwent that same process. What Vidal de La Blache[IV] envisioned, he was never able to impose on his contemporaries, or afterward, either fully. The result was a narrow idea of "region," of regional geography—purely descriptive—and with an added complication: geography was taught in high schools as an autonomous subject, unlike sociology. Theoretical geography suffers from that legacy of distortion. And so, when I returned to Brazil, I found this entanglement[V]—a kind of "cohabitation" between intellectual production and didactic work.

PCs: Especially in the 1980s?

MS: No, not just in the '80s—it's always been that way. Look at what's written here at USP, for example. Many were primarily concerned with didacticism. They weren't academics, they were middle-school teachers. I won't name names, but it's easy to figure out. When I criticize the AGB today, especially its negative role, it's not because I dislike those poor colleagues who plagiarize others' work and publish it as textbooks. It's because this entanglement—this cohabitation between academic work and school-level ped-

agogy—has infantilized the discipline. I remember when my father used to teach me: what a train is, what a ship is, what a cocoa plantation looks like. That's what "made" a geographer. And I was happy with that. This "lesson of things" style of geography made its way into high school, then returned to the university with literary flair and citations. But citations have nothing to do with creation or production. The AGB has contributed to crushing critical thinking while glorifying this practice of publishing textbooks without citing their sources. That's what the AGB has become—it's built for that. So yes, I think it's risky to attend an AGB meeting, especially for anyone with something meaningful to say.

PCS: Why is that?

MS: You end up feeling like a fool. First, you're exposed—expected to debate with people who show up talking about something else, promoting themselves. What's the point of being there? It's a waste of time, in most cases. This back-and-forth, so typically European, lacks any real depth. It's risky to say this because it might sound elitist—"He doesn't want to work with us." But that's not the point. What I want is for intellectual work to be valued. But that appreciation needs to exist within the university as well. We don't really have debate around academic production. My most recent book received only two responses. One was about the environment—talking about tap water, the kind of stuff you hear on the radio. And the other was from that very pleasant young man, the newest PhD in our department, Wagner—and that's it. There's no depth.

PCS: At a certain point in the 1970s, your arrival—especially with the publication of *Por uma geografia* nova[VI]—had a huge impact, which everyone recognizes. How do you view the reception at that time, and later, the way your work has been received? To some extent, it has become almost a consensus. How has that reception shifted, along with criticism and debate?

MS: I really don't know. I say that because I don't see it. You're the historian—that's something you need to examine. I can't do it. What's certain is that there is no real debate, and if there's no debate, then something is off. You could argue that what really matters is power, or perhaps goodwill—people wanting to be kind. People like me, and I'm happy about that. I know I'm well-liked.

PCS: Do you think that kindness masks a lack of criticism? Do you feel the absence of dissenting voices—people who disagree with you but don't say

so? People who don't criticize or read your work? Do you think it's because they're not equipped to read and critique it properly?

MS: I wouldn't know how to say. It's still too soon. That book's only been out for four years.

PCS: And what about your earlier books?

MS: The earlier ones? *Por uma geografia nova* became a trend. People would buy five copies at once; afraid it might go out of print. It was a fashion. I think there was a convergence of historical and political moments. Within the discipline, there was a certain climate. There's also another factor: in the case of quantitative geography, many of those who opposed it did so simply because they didn't understand it. It wasn't that they had a different position—they just didn't know, and didn't want to know. When quantitative geography emerged, I invited a professor of modern mathematics to my home in Paris. I wanted to learn. Curiosity led me to read Chorley[VII], Christaller[VIII]; I first encountered David Harvey,[IX] the British authors at all. When Allen Scott[X] came to Brazil in 1972, he met with me and said, "Why are you interested in this? No one cares. Our books sell 110 copies, no one buys this stuff". In Brazil, the resistance stemmed from three main reasons. First, ignorance—they didn't know what it was about. Second, it threatened existing power structures: "these newcomers are proposing something different". It disrupted the authority of those holding the chairs—those who "owned" the discipline. Intellectual debate wasn't what mattered—power was. That's still true today. Debate was always secondary to power. Third, there was a kind of mechanical reaction: "They're positivists and we consider ourselves Marxists, so we'll oppose it." The arguments that I and Ruy Moreira[XI] raised were never taken up. People appreciated having their views validated, but they kept repeating the same emotional objections: "I don't like it", "That's reactionary", "That's pro-dictatorship".

PCS: So, there was no critical, deeper analysis...

MS: There was no analysis—because physical geography had always been quantitative in some way. The Christaller model, then Chabout's[XII], then Rochefort's[XIII]—we all followed them here at the university. It was a period when everyone was using those formulas from Rochefort to understand urban networks. The math wasn't sophisticated, but there was quantification. And what about the geography done by IBGE? What could be more quantitative than

that? I don't want to be deliberately difficult, but I do want to highlight this point: it's a persistent feature of Brazilian academic life—this drive toward intellectual impoverishment. It's gotten worse recently, but it's always been there, apart from a few moments tied to the national development project. I believe that creation is linked to nation-building.

PCS: And what about this tendency to frame everything as something new? Both quantitative geography and Marxist geography presented themselves as novelties. What, in fact, did they introduce that was new?

MS: But they were new. Marxism never truly entered Brazilian geography. It stayed on the surface, like water running over stone— it never sank in. Some people say they're Marxists, but by and large—aside from a very small number of exceptions—Marxism never made a deep impact on Brazilian geography. It remained superficial, external.

PCS: So, was it more of an argument than a framework?

MS: It was ornamental. I'm not questioning anyone's personal convictions. I believe many were genuinely leftist, progressive, and wanted to be Marxist too. But I do question the contribution that is made to advancing geography. On the contrary, most of the so-called Marxism promoted by geographers who consider themselves Marxist set the field back.

PCs: What do you mean by that?

MS: It held us back because it failed to engage with the structure of situations. It wasn't used as a tool of analysis, it stayed decorative, like one of Madeleine Albright's[XIV] brooches. Geography tried to reconstitute itself using scraps it didn't have the courage to discard. That's another problem: the scraps. What was considered leftover was kept. The remnants of traditional geography got mixed with the leftovers of a diluted Marxist vision. And the result was: neither Marxism nor tradition. What today is called Marxist geography—including that whole debate about first and second nature—is a fragment of Marxism. Marx would never write that today, yet it lingers. You see it too, in all this talk about nature and society—I don't even know what they're referring to. But it's become dogma. So, we end up trying to build something new on top of rubble. And that sets us back, because with dogma, you don't debate, you either accept it or reject it. And all this stems from the lack of real debate. If people would take just twenty minutes each year to have an honest conversation—

free of pride... well, not pride exactly. I mean, I'm proud, but I'm modest too. I'm not timid. I'm proud, but I'm modest in the sense that I discard my own work, I throw away what I've written. But others don't do that because they're tied to power. And when the concern is power, you can't detach yourself.

PCS: It could also be a matter of laziness—people not wanting to study concepts deeply.

MS: But before you study, you must choose—because you can always go deeper into an error. That's another issue: people doubling down on a mistake. You end up radicalizing your confusion, and then you build a world of half-truths. From there you fall back into childish geography, journalistic geography, a geography of object lessons. And since everything is a half-truth—and you can't say it's false because there is some truth in it—it doesn't lead to real understanding. Understanding isn't made of winged things.

PCS: How do you engage with work from other fields, especially those authors you often cite as strong influences, like Sartre? How do you relate personally to someone like Sartre[XV], not necessarily his ideas per se, but in terms of your intellectual formation?

MS: Abstraction has always been central to my education—from childhood, really. My background was never one where the empirical came first. I was very good at math, mastered algebra early, then logic, then sociology, because you needed a bit of that to study law. Even law itself is a form of abstraction. So, I had the benefit of that training, and of growing up in a particular milieu, in Bahia. If I had lived here in São Paulo, maybe I couldn't have developed the same way. Life here is constrained by the economy and industry, major obstacles to social thought in São Paulo. Industry and the economy reduce everything to material things. And I came from a time when university life had pauses—long breaks where you could read freely, because careers weren't what they are now. No one fought for jobs. Getting a job was easy. You weren't scrambling for survival. Later, when I went to France, that idea of free time became even clearer. I only had to teach three hours a week and had long breaks. "Vacation" and "recess" were the same thing. You poor folks today—working constantly—how do you manage to think and read? I honestly don't know how you do it. Even during breaks, there's always something: thesis defenses, meetings, committees... This tradition of interdisciplinary, which we can discuss critically—well, sociology, for instance. When I arrived

in France, I was invited to a sociology conference presided over by Georges Gurvitch[XVI], the pope of sociology. I said, "I'm going!". It was held in a *château*. We stayed four days locked in there, immersed in sociological discourse. That's when I realized I didn't know any of it. So, I spent two years studying, back and forth to Toulouse. I had the time. I'd go to the library. The books in English were just for me—French people didn't read in English yet. So, I read sociology and rounded out my education. Same thing with the economy. I had a few years—starting in 1964—where I could dedicate myself to each of these fields. Once I lost contact with Brazil, I no longer understood the country. For me, Brazil was Gilberto Gil singing, Caetano... that's all I had. So, my philosophical formation coincided with Brazil's transformation and with my inability to understand the country or contribute to it directly. My courses were no longer about Brazil. They were driven by a desire for breadth. The libraries were beautiful. University, too. And my time in the United States added to that. French geographers struggled to admit they liked philosophy. They'd read it, sure, but the discipline was so rigid—it was a prison too. Even those who knew philosophy wouldn't dare cite it. Pick any one of them and see— you won't find it.

PCS: Were they loyal?

MS: Loyal to their own field—and boring because of it. The Americans, on the other hand, followed trends. Every few years they'd pick a philosopher. Three years it was Deleuze[XVII], then Lefebvre[XVIII], then someone else. But they didn't know how to use them properly. American geography has always misused philosophers—except for David Harvey who, even before becoming a Marxist, knew how to engage with philosophy reasonably well. So, I lost the fear of doing it myself, partly through contact with Americans. If I had sent a paper to a French journal citing philosophers, they would've thought I was being sentimental or pretentious. So, this allowed me to learn from reading. At the same time, I had personal ties with the circle around François Perroux[XIX], a French economist with major influence among geographers. I frequented the homes of French geographers. Being able to talk to these people pushed me to study—that was key. I taught just one or two hours, covered the course content, and that was it. Classes ended in April and resumed in October, which gave me time to read. And even if I'd wanted to take a real break, I didn't have the money to go on vacation for five months. So, I used that time to prepare and write articles.

PCS: And people in Brazil didn't have those same conditions?

MS: When I left, yes, because we didn't have this forty-hour workweek. That's an outrage. It may seem normal to you, but to me, it's pure madness. There was no such thing as a clock-in system. You were a professor, and that was that. I read a lot when I was young. My mother paid for my books. In Bahia, we read a lot—that was the tradition: reading and discussing. But those thirteen years abroad were worth a century of reading. When I was in the United States, I read on average six books a day—literally six books a day, reading all day long. That's what allowed me to gain such broad knowledge across disciplines—economics, anthropology... especially because American cultural anthropology was very close to French human geography. That's one reason Gilberto Freyre[XX] supported much of my work: cultural anthropologists and French human geographers were doing very similar things. But each stayed in their own field—one calling themselves anthropologist, the other geographer, so they rarely crossed paths. It was rare for a French geographer to go to the U.S. I was able to read both. When I was in France, I knew more about American geography than the French did. Is Brazilians that use to read everything. The French didn't—because they didn't think they had to. Just like Americans today think they don't need anyone else. Every cultural power tends to disdain others—that's the benefit of not being a power. in my case, it wasn't a late-afternoon sort of interest in the discipline, it was real study. And it only became useful later. At the time it was a quest for erudition. And that only began to serve me when I decided that my discipline had to change.

PCS: When did that shift begin?

MS: It started with dissatisfaction, mainly with geography on underdevelopment. I expressed it very discreetly. I had good friends. The book *For a New Geography* was a milestone. But maybe the stronger one was *O trabalho do geógrafo no Terceiro Mundo*[XXI], because—though not explicitly—it critiques colonial geography, and by extension, French geography. The discussion about what a geographer should be wasn't framed as theory, but rather as a kind of general desire or orientation.

PCS: But how did those readings support your stance that the discipline needed to change?

MS: Let's consider two things. First, high school today is unrecognizable—you don't even really learn grammar anymore. You learn, then speak and write

without knowing why. It's the same thing. For me, it was like I was doing high school, college prep, and a teaching degree all at once—self-taught, in a way, across other disciplines—by absorbing ideas and positions and developing this habit of identifying and organizing different proposals. Because early on, I had to follow all those debates from the 1940s and 1950s: "Is geography a science?" "What's a geographical fact?" "Is geography an intersection point or a proper discipline?" These debates have always existed, but they rarely go deeper. What's curious is that the most profound discussions tend to resurface forty years later. Take someone I've always read, though only recently realized how much: Éric Dardel[XXII]. He must've died very disappointed. He wasn't accepted, wasn't cited. The second edition of his work came out forty years later. Pierre George's first book[XXIII], people said it was unreadable, that it was dense, that he didn't know how to write. Then came the second George, and the third. The discipline has always shied away from dense debate. We're left waiting for Dardel and Max Sorre[XXIV] to be rediscovered... and George, too, will be read again soon. But institutionalization is far greater today. And that's a problem because it exacerbates the power dynamics. A few years ago, someone published two articles in the *Boletim Paulista* on a topic I wrote a whole book about—an enormous effort on my part—and they did it without a single reference to my work. And it was published in the journal of the department where I worked—and still work—here at USP. I don't know why. In other countries, this would be unthinkable. I knew the leading geographers of the generation before mine. I knew about the tensions between them. But nobody would skip a citation just because of personal issues. Here, it's allowed. There's no intellectual or moral consequence. You can simply ignore important work in your field, and that's why our academic debate is so impoverished. At least that's my impression.

PCS: It's common today in Brazilian geography to claim some philosophical origin—Lukács[XXV], Lefebvre, Marx, etc. How do you see that?

MS: Snobbery. It's a form of snobbery.

PCS: And the number of citations?

MS: That's an invasion.

PCS: That wasn't common before?

MS: You've been reading the history of French geography; in the beginning, back in De Martonne's[XXVI] time, he cited many German authors. But by the 1950s,

no one cited anyone anymore, it just wasn't the practice. And citations weren't something neat and tidy either, because citation is a straight-line process, a Germanic thing, an Anglo-Saxon habit. That's why Marx can be so tedious—everything precisely cited, very German, always referencing the Germans. The Americans made this a standard practice, and it became abusive—we're overwhelmed by citations. Once Brazilians started putting the table of contents at the front, they also started citing. Before, we'd place the table of contents at the end, like the French. Citation is related to the impoverishment of the university. Someone needs to show they know things, to display erudition—it's also linked to training, to the idea of being a "didact." Before, people wanted to be autodidacts, like Celso Furtado[XXVII], Caio Prado Júnior[XXVIII], Sérgio Buarque de Holanda...[XXIX] They were all, in a sense, autodidacts.

PCS: It gives the impression that "since I don't know how to speak about this myself, I'll use someone else's words".

MS: It's not just that—then came the academic hiring system. Who wrote the great Brazilian books? Not professors. Gilberto Freyre was never a professor. When Sérgio Buarque de Holanda was writing, there was no Fapesp. Of course, they were all well-off—Gilberto, Celso, Sérgio. They were autodidacts, but they weren't in a rush. They wrote squarely about the concerns of their own era, and that focus is precisely what made their texts enduring works. Today, only thesis are read—because there's no choice. Who reads a thesis unless they're forced to? It's a drag. Reading Gilberto Freyre is a pleasure; Caio Prado, a bit less, but he too was an autodidact. I think this university discipline, tied to the notion of career, demands a display of erudition—but not real knowledge. Geography joined this game late. This citation number is largely linked to a refusal of traditional geography as well. All these citations are, in large part, also about rejecting traditional geography. Since no one wants to do the work—or has the time—to create an alternative to traditional geography, they grab Lefebvre instead. That's much easier.

PCS: As if it were ready-made?

MS: Ready-made? Not at all. He never intended to influence our discipline, and people take him up mistakenly. These authors—Derrida[XXX], Lukács, Goldmann[XXXI], and others—are all fundamental to our intellectual formation; each of them played a central role. But they are just tools. Each person has to discover their own. You must decide what you want. Take Lefebvre, who's

probably the most cited—what has he actually contributed to any thesis here in São Paulo? Not one thesis that claims to be inspired by him is inspired by him in terms of geographic phenomena. Either you produce it yourself, or you use someone who has it. But borrowing proximity from someone who never intended it, that's just misdirection. Sure, he offers flashes of insight, but we want more than just flashes.

PCS: Isn't it an attempt to create a different kind of formation when one rejects traditional geography and theoretical-quantitative geography? Like, when you don't have a base, do you need to construct one?

MS: That's intellectual snobbery. Like someone who used to wear jackets with slits in the back. Most people who throw around these philosophers and sociologists without knowing why the same ones are who, in the 1950s, wore jackets with slits. They could never be like the others who had none. I think that's what it is.

PCS: Can't I associate that snobbery, that need to appear different...

MS: To appear cultured.

PCS:...with the demand for fast academic production? For example, "I need to finish my master's in two years, and I need a theory—how do I do that?"

MS: A master's doesn't need a theory.

PCS: But it does need citations.

MS: It needs citations. There's an inversion. Training people is important, getting them to read is important, but whoever's demanding that should know why they're demanding it. For example, this topic of yours—you wouldn't be doing it with me, not before turning forty.

PCS: I'm almost there.

MS: You're thirty-three? Anyway, I think all this contributes to the inconsistency of the academic debate. Because it's a debate that isn't even external—it's alienated.

PCS: And it has to be incorporated? Is there that need?

MS: It's about power. The debate gets absorbed through power. You're allowed to have thirteen victims, and you use your right to sacrifice the poor things.

PCS: When you entered USP as a professor and started teaching, how did you relate to the students, those who were arriving in your course?

MS: The students? You only need two or three interesting people in a classroom. If you try to reach everyone, you'll produce nothing worthwhile. I teach normally. Some years I'm more erudite, other years I'm looser—but really, since I returned to Brazil, everything I've done has been part of a project. Nothing was gratuitous. I'm here, there are colleagues, students, and society at large. And it's this society that matters, because it forces your colleagues to talk about what you're doing. That's the main issue. But I don't worry too much, because if I do, I become a campaigner. I have to believe in the power of ideas and do the work, try to produce ideas that reflect society. One day—I don't know when—there will be a sudden shift, and society will impose you on your peers, and they'll find themselves liking the thing, whether they want to or not.

PCs: But there was resistance.

MS: That's normal in academic life.

PCS: But why? Was it because the ideas were different, or was it a fear of losing status?

MS: In academic life, that's totally normal. You can't force it.

PCS: But was the resistance to the ideas?

MS: It's a mix of things. I faced that kind of resistance in France, too. As I chose to stay and started publishing, gaining visibility and strength to say what I thought, over time, people became uncomfortable in different ways.

PCS: And did that bother you?

MS: That's normal. University is like society—you've got more mediocre people than brilliant ones. Why worry about them? If they push back, if they resist, it doesn't matter at all. If only they'd resist loudly —that would actually be a good thing.

PCS: So, would it be fair to say that, at first, your work in Brazil was about organizing the ideas you had "brought in your suitcase"?

MS: In part, *Por uma geografia nova* had been written many years before. It was made up of pieces I had been writing whenever I encountered a problem

that troubled me. When I got here, I found—or rather, I didn't even imagine I would find—a fermenting nucleus of nonconformism, which was most apparent in this department, particularly among those who didn't have a place, and also in Rio, again among those who didn't have a place.

PCS: Was there an attempt on your part to bring people together to a meeting in Rio? How did that go?

MS: I tried more than once to bring people together, but in a completely informal way, because I never believed much in groups. I've always thought that groups hinder progress.

PCS: So why did you try?

MS: Because I wanted to renew geography. There were professors here, especially Lino Bernardes[XXXII] and Gusmão Filho[XXXIII], who were the main ones, very discreet, but working behind the scenes and encouraging others. They were highly organized, and around them were people like Ari[XXXIV], Lylian[XXXV], Ana Fani[XXXVI], to some extent.

PCs: A younger group?

MS: Much younger. Ana Fani must not even be forty—women never leave their forties. Manoel Seabra[XXXVII] was the most solid of them all, but he didn't like being in the spotlight, he was discreet. In Rio de Janeiro, I'd especially highlight Carlos Gonçalves[XXXVIII] and Ruy Moreira. The idea was the strength of people coming together. Since there was a tradition abroad of publishing books collectively, we made a book. I also used to come here from time to time, to invite people, but I felt the need not only to find that group—I was looking for something.

PCs: Was that a surprise?

MS: In 1977, it was somewhat surprising, because in 1976 I had come to Campinas. Myrna Viana[XXXIX] was translating *O espaço dividido*, a book no one ever used in Brazil but was widely read throughout the world. Maria Laura[XL] wrote her undergraduate thesis based on it. I only found that out ten years later, but in Brazil it was never used. Here, a prevailing attitude of power prevented it. People could even talk to you. They were my friends—my best friend was Araújo Filho[XLI], as always—but there was this divide. And that power structure discouraged people from speaking out. So, I ended up being the voice.

PCS: Sometimes you appeared as the voice people lacked, but also as the link between Maoism and geography, because they also didn't know how to make that connection.

MS: I don't know if they couldn't do it. It's just that geography was never taught. That geography was empirical [...].

PCS: Many in Brazilian geography at the time, like Carlos Walter and Ruy Moreira, had leftist backgrounds, Marxist readings, but that was disconnected from geography. In this case, would your book *Por uma geografia nova* have been a guiding light for making that connection?

MS: Yes, in some way. In fact, I think that connection only really came together now, in 1996. I believe the work of integration, if it has been completed, was only finalized now. I think *Por uma geografia nova* is a book of combat, in that sense.

PCS: But was it written in response to what was already happening in Brazil, or not?

MS: No, it was written abroad. In Brazil, I had no idea. People here misled me. They told me university was a very important thing. I arrived convinced that the university was a dense place, where you could have deep discussions, but I was misled by colleagues.

PCS: Compared to France? But wasn't it perhaps one of the few places in Brazil where debate did happen?

MS: You can't really compare it to the reality of a union, but there wasn't a real debate. In my field, there was no debate. There were moments, fragments of topics, but things would quickly descend into classification. Some people thought I was a structuralist, others said I was a functionalist, and many assumed I was a Marxist. Because it all devolved into labeling. That's not debate, it's squabbling.

PCS: What causes that labeling?

MS: The poverty of debate. People readily accept dumbing down the conversation because they don't know how to do anything else.

PCS: Is that the fault of the leftist groups?

MS: Yes, but they could have drawn on other things. If I analyze *Por uma geografia nova*, I can criticize that book in some places. It could be critiqued

based on arguments from within the discipline or based on what we imagined the discipline ought to be. But instead, the debate remains external.

PCS: When did your work "arrive in Brazil"? Beyond what you had already "brought in your suitcase," when does your production shift to engage with the questions being discussed here, more national issues?

MS: That took a long time. I read what was being written about Brazil with enormous suspicion. I read carefully; I didn't dare repeat what others were writing about Brazil. I never really understood why people liked certain authors who became canonized. For example, there was a book by Chico de Oliveira[XLII] that was widely cited—I never understood why he wrote that, but I didn't say anything, because I liked him a lot. He was a friend of my brother's, and I assumed my ignorance was the problem. So, I waited many years before I could read what was written about Brazil, because I didn't have a theory of my own about the country. I didn't know anything anymore.

PCS: You had to learn everything again?

MS: I had to relearn. And I had to find writings that made theoretical efforts to understand Brazil, and only now is that appearing in this book we're finishing. After twenty years. So, I hardly engaged in debates about Brazil. I was waiting for the possibility of understanding.

PCS: And how did attending AGB meetings or being invited to other places help you understand what was happening in Brazil? Did geographic scholarship help at all?

MS: More so reading. Because we don't have the habit of sitting down at a table to have a proper discussion. We only do that when someone is being interviewed for a thesis. There's no such habit. Meetings are entirely social. Social life holds far more weight among university men than academic life. People gather to chat, drink beer [...]. You end up not learning anything. With rare exceptions, social interactions are not very polite. When you're invited, you're essentially just a prop for the event — you show up and perform a role. You're not there to really discuss anything.

PCs: Did you feel used at times?

MS: Not used — it served me too. But I see it differently today. Most of those meetings were pure theater. People were more concerned with the *brochure*

than the discussion. They'd ask about a phrase from television. No one asked about an idea from a book, which is something else entirely. You get invited to speak at a university, and what they want to talk about is some television segment, they ask about "the fat guy," Jô Soares — not about the topic. So, you go ten times and maybe once someone asks you something on-topic.

PCS: And in terms of the structure here at USP, the department, being part of a lab, starting to supervise — how was that?

MS: That basically happened as soon as I got here, because no one ever restricted me from advising students.

PCS: What role did that play in your current body of work?

MS: Several. First, it helped me discipline my own inventiveness and figure out how to convince people that the discipline is worthwhile. Among advisors, it doesn't seem very common to promote discipline and structure. Most tend to encourage disorder, under the guise of being nice to their students. Within limits, of course — there are people you just can't advise. You try for a while and then give up, often without even realizing you've given up. You stop because you see that the person doesn't want to be guided, and they won't learn to guide others either. In some cases, my own hypotheses were enriched. That enrichment happens when the person takes things further.

PCS: Based on the work of your students?

MS: Yes. But also from the experience of being rigorous with them. I think that's what really solidifies things — when I can be rigorous, the outcomes are better.

PCS: How do you manage your time for research? It's not really something that was part of your training.

MS: Poorly, very poorly. The invasion of "stupidity" into academic life seems unstoppable. Even the sharpest minds decide to become bureaucrats, and it feels like everything is lost. That's the current tragedy of the university — the growing role of power, not in the structure, but in academic life itself. This growth is imperceptible to many people. But to me it's very clear, and it has effects that most don't understand. In my seventeen years at USP, I've seen that trend worsen.

PCS: Because of activism?

MS: It's not exactly activism — it's more the increasing acceptance of the straitjacket.

PCS: Of the very structure that is often questioned?

MS: Yes.

PCS: Does the way research is funded help or hinder? Is Brazil structurally favorable to research?

MS: I think it is.

PCS: Have you managed to carry out all the research you wanted?

MS: Well, intelligent research in the humanities doesn't require a lot of money. I don't even want a lot. The more money you have, the worse it gets, because when you have too much, you're forced to set up a heavy bureaucratic structure. You become its slave. You end up spending your time chasing funding — you become a lab director instead of a scholar. Some money is necessary, of course, which is why the idea that the university should have its research funds is so important. You can't rely on money from far away or on someone else's criteria. But compared to other countries, Brazil isn't doing badly — it used to be better. Everyone complains about how little scholarships pay, but where else do you find grants at that level? It seems small because people aren't really students. Most of our students, the ones treated as such, are people with an active social life who occasionally study. But the central thing for them is the party, the beer — that's what dominates academic life, not the library. So the money can't be used properly. People use the funds and want to live a middle-class life.

PCS: To move up?

MS: No, not to move up — just to live like the middle class. In France, for instance, you don't get scholarships like that. The difference is that here, there are almost no undergraduate scholarships — which is absurd. People talk about democracy, but the real debate, about public vs. private universities, is just empty talk. If you enter poor and don't get a scholarship, how are you supposed to graduate? But that conversation doesn't happen, and it should — especially in geography, which is a field for the poor.

PCS: If we look at the people who took on leadership roles in the bureaucracy, many of them were the same people who once criticized the system.

MS: I'm not falling into your trap. Ask me something else. You answer that one yourself (both laugh).

PCS: But there's a trend of criticizing institutions. For example, Ruy Moreira, in the text "Assim se passaram dez anos"[XLIII], points this out regarding people who criticize the university's structures, and then once they enter...

MS: They settle in.

PCS: Once they settle in, they become institutionalized, upholding the very status quo they once opposed.

MS: I wrote about that too, somewhere, though not with such emphasis.

PCS: Is that an important issue to address? To what extent does it corrupt the development of ideas?

MS: The problem is the impossibility of solitude. The less alone you are, the less able you are to move forward.

PCs: Politically?

MS: No, intellectually. Politically, no — politically you do need people. Paulo Maluf had lots of friends.

PCS: But the more you engage with others, the more you advance?

MS: No. You need friends — that's something else. You can have friends and still be alone. The two things aren't related. I'm referring to those groups of solidarity that revolve around power — around some other form of power.

PCS: Does that end up being the common foundation?

MS: I think that's somewhat the foundation of Brazilian academic life.

PCS: And what about solidarity in the pursuit of ideas?

MS: It takes a back seat because you can't fully discuss anything. Your discussions are always conditioned.

PCS: When you're invited to serve on a master's or doctoral committee, how do you handle that? Are you completely open to criticism?

MS: Sociologically. I incorporate it sociologically into my understanding of the discipline, of a given situation.

PCS: What do you mean by "sociological incorporation"?

MS: Incorporation would be the relationship between advisor and student, which, one way or another, shows up in the thesis or dissertation—the student's educational background, the disciplinary content of the text. When someone writes a thesis and quotes literary figures, sociologists, anthropologists, with no concern for the discipline itself, all of that reflects a particular state of the discipline at that moment. That's one method you could use in your work.

PCs: A sociology of science?

MS: Yes, but based on what is written. That's what I think you incorporate. But to do that, you have to be prepared.

PCS: In any case, incorporation isn't just about exposing everything you think, is it?

MS: They're two different moments. The exposure might not be timely, or it might not be the right moment. And if you have an academic project, it may not be wise to expose it. I have texts that have been waiting ten years to be published.

Pcs: You have to be patient?

MS: You do—you need a sense that you'll have a life. These questions have inspired me to write something, and to write while reading, because you have to weigh every word. You're always involving someone else. To say what you want without omitting anything, you need to find the right formulation. You don't want to offend people you care about.

PCS: In some interviews, you often talk about going abroad to study. In what way is that, again, an attempt to...?

MS: Distance.

PCS: But is that used as a method?

MS: It always has been, since the 1960s. I've always done that. Even when the governor of Bahia invited me to be director of the Official Press, one of the conditions was that I'd be allowed to leave for a few months.

PCS: Did you go abroad to seek something specific, or not necessarily?

MS: That too.

PCS: To find readings that don't circulate here, connections?

MS: Readings —though fewer and fewer. But you revise things when you're abroad. You don't have newspapers constantly questioning you.

PCS: You're removed from everyday life?

MS: Yes, you reinterpret everyday life. You're forced to make comparisons. One thing I haven't written yet, but I will: I'm increasingly disinterested in giving lectures abroad. It's the most boring thing for me—it's almost a punishment, especially if I have to speak to Latin Americanists or Brazilianists. I often decline.

PCS: Why?

MS: Because I find it pointless. There's no joy in it. They're usually mediocre people. My experience as a geographer was shaped mainly by great thinkers—Pierre George and others—and some pleasant, intelligent Brazilianists like Monbeig[XLIV], who wasn't a great thinker, but was pleasant and intelligent. Today, Brazilianists are in power, attached to their countries' State Departments. It's a discussion that begins already closed. There's not much to gain from it. How are you supposed to spend a month in a country like that? Preparing a lecture in another language for a different audience is a multi-day tension. Why put yourself through that kind of stress for a week just to produce something purely ornamental? When you're thirty, it's a line on your CV. But after a certain age, what matters most on your CV is what you've refused to do. I'm not tempted. I go to browse book tables—because a table of contents plays a very important pedagogical role. It's how you organize themes, that's what a table of contents is. I think you do all that without a set schedule. You feel free. After my time in the United States, I rearranged Brazil in my mind.

Pcs: In a way, isn't it a search for a vision of Brazil seen from the outside?

MS: It's not an external vision—it's a vision with my personal impressions. Today, I'm a citizen. I wasn't in 1970, because I no longer knew anything. In 1970, I knew more about Venezuela than about Brazil, because I was working there. And it wasn't a complicated country for a foreigner. I was a Venezuelanist. So, it was simple. I wasn't a Venezuelan author—I was a Venezuelanist. I could organize things with my mind, with my Latin American, African, and European experience. I could build a framework of ideas because an idea is an arrangement. That's what an idea is: arranging things. But it stopped there.

PCS: How do you relate to themes, ideas, events, to the waves of theory or trending topics? Do you tend to hold off and not address them immediately?

MS: This thing that Brazilian geography accepted until recently, then grew tired of, what they called postmodernity, I never understood what that even is. I have forty books at home.

PCS: Do you tend to wait a bit?

MS: No, I'll read it, I study it. MS: No, I read, I study. I wrote a co-authored article with Maria Laura Silveira—it was published somewhere[XLV]—discussing the issue of postmodernity a bit, but already knowing it led nowhere.

PCS: But do you try to join the debate?

MS: I did try to engage, but realized it was useless. My conclusion was that it was just a trend, a wave.

PCS: When Harvey was here, he said he used that theme in the title but didn't consider himself "postmodern" and didn't care for the debate either. He said he used the term as a strategy to provoke discussion.

MS: But isn't that really a sales strategy? It has nothing to do with the genuine substance of knowledge. You can make that concession—readers often push you in that direction—but I don't think he lacks integrity, that's not it. Still, it doesn't amount to a significant contribution.

PCS: How is your relationship with Brazilian publishers? How did it start? Did they impose anything?

MS: It was Florestan Fernandes[XLVI] who introduced me to the Hucitec group. There was Tamás Szmrecsányi[XLVII], and another guy who's now at Editora Contexto—I think he was one of the funders. I didn't know Florestan at the time because my strongest relationships outside geography were in Rio; here, they were with geographers like Aroldo de Azevedo and Caio Prado. Not Florestan—I met him in the United States. When I arrived here, he was very upset with USP, and I didn't have a way into USP either, so he already knew a bit about my work.

PCS: How did certain events—like the fall of the Soviet Union—impact your work?

MS: They never really concerned me. I was more focused on history itself. I wasn't going to chase after an event.

PCS: But didn't those transformations have any significance?

MS: No, I never wrote about that anywhere, because I had already realized that an event like that is just... You have history unfolding, and you have events. But what matters is history in motion. I wasn't going to dwell on that.

PCS: And you don't think it influenced history?

MS: Honestly, no.

PCS: Not even recent Brazilian political history?

MS: Brazilian political history—yes, of course.

PCS: And political debates?

MS: I've written about them, expressed my views. I think the book I'm releasing now is a kind of critique of Brazilian politics.

Pcs: About Brazil?

MS: About Brazil, too. But I refuse to engage in proselytism—I find it undignified—and I reject pamphleteering because I don't think it helps. You're far more effective when you're sober.

PCS: But don't these issues turn into unresolved matters, leftovers?

MS: That's hard to say. I think the main unresolved issue is our curricula. Generally speaking, our students enter university only to be deformed by our curricula. We deform them and then complete the process in the teaching career.

PCs: In what sense? The content, the structure, the sequence?

MS: I think most university curricula are too permissive. For instance, a course like "History of Geographical Thought"—in most of the country, geography is rarely even discussed in it.

PCS: What do they talk about, then?

MS: Something else.

PCs: Method?

MS: No. Just something else entirely. A course like "Theory and Method" often turns into methodology, which it isn't.

PCS: Supposed to cover broad lines...

MS: It should, but often it just ends up referring to Lefebvre, or that Englishman who wrote about cities, or whoever else. So, there's a permissiveness that ends up dismantling the students. What do you even have to discuss with them? A good part of the generation currently teaching at universities had no real mentor.

PCs: What do you mean by that?

MS: Take note and think about what I'm saying: "They had no mentors!"

PCS: They couldn't build a foundation?

MS: It's a deformation.

PCs: Fragmented?

MS: What is a mentor? Someone who accumulates knowledge, and when a student arrives, no matter how selfish that person is, they pass something on. The student may not even realize it, especially now, with all this talk of social knowledge, that society constructs ideas and you're merely a mouthpiece. That's utter nonsense. Most of those teaching at universities simply never had that. They were shaped from nothing and are now shaping others. That's the issue for students in geography—or so I believe. Walk into a classroom and ask about a concept in the discipline—try it. It's not the student's fault. There's a dismantling process completed by the permissiveness of graduate studies—the responsibility lies with the programs.

PCS: Is that clearly evident in theses?

MS: No, because people have no idea what they're doing. Geographers, generally speaking, is irresponsible. They don't know what they're doing, they just do it. That seems to be a feature of the discipline. You go on doing it without ever stopping to ask why, or whether you should even be doing it. You might do it well—but you shouldn't be doing it at all. You mention leftovers. People don't even know what a leftover is because they have no grasp of the history of the discipline.

PCS: And there's no critical perspective on the discipline's history?

MS: They can't have one. It's not that they don't—it's that they can't. They have a critical view of someone's suspenders' color. But how can they have a

critical view? Critique is born of analysis. And analysis isn't a matter of perspiration—you must sit down and work.

PCS: Are you pessimistic about this kind of production?

MS: No, on the contrary—I'm optimistic. All you need is four people.

PCS: And do they exist?

MS: Oh, I'm sure they do—difficult, but yes.

PCS: But it doesn't become a movement?

MS: There's no movement at all. Today's university is amorphous. University has, in some sense, become a cretinization process. Academic life is an invitation to become a cretin.

PCS: How could those "four people" contribute to geography?

MS: The way it's always been.

PCS: By producing?

MS: By producing, believing, hoping. The problem today is that it's hard to hope. People accept this process of cretinization because they can't wait. Institutionalization, in a discipline like geography, is easier—because we don't even know what we're doing. It's not a central concern.

PCS: And what about this expansion of geography—new programs, more publications...

MS: It's all bureaucratic. Most of this expansion is bureaucratic. We go back once again to teaching... Geography persists because people are teaching it. That's why, when there's a debate about geography departments, it's framed around available job slots: "If geography is removed from the curriculum, we'll lose positions!" It's not about what we can actually contribute to society.

PCS: Is it about the job market?

MS: It's not even that, because we could push for a different kind of job market. We don't because we're not trained for that. It's a vicious circle. Instead of making the effort to broaden and deepen disciplinary knowledge, we decide that Lefebvre should be the one to guide the graduate or undergraduate program. We give up training geographers, and therefore give up on creating a viable job market. That's why there's this apparent obsession with school

textbooks—it's rooted in something much deeper, this umbilical link between an infantilized geography and the prominence of secondary education that the AGB has chosen to promote.

PCS: And what about the proliferation of journals?

MS: These publications are also bureaucratic. People write these "little turds" that *Revista Território* won't publish. How many geography journals do we actually have in Brazil? Real journals? There's only *Revista Território*[XLVIII], and the *Revista Experimental*, here from the mezzanine lab. The rest are mostly dumping grounds for crap, and they can't stop publishing because they're departmental journals—if you don't publish, you don't get elected as chair.

PCS: But what if others don't publish either?

MS: They do, but in their own journals. People create their own, and since they're usually afraid to publish, their students publish classroom papers instead. And with computers, class papers now have to be produced in a month. Those are the ones that end up in these journals. The journal here now publishes student work.

PCS: But students are under pressure to publish—it's almost a requirement.

MS: That's a bureaucratic need, not an intellectual one. They don't "need" to publish as aspiring intellectuals—they "need" to publish as aspiring "monsters."

PCS: As candidates for positions, trying to secure a space to keep producing?

MS: So, what's the best thing to do? Start your own journal. Even in Marechal Rondon, they've got their own.

PCS: Technology makes it easy now—computers and all.

MS: That doesn't mean we won't soon have high-quality journals again. There always will be. But we come back, in my view, to the central issue: what really matters is knowing what we're doing.

PCS: Hence the need for some kind of foundational theory?

MS: Any theory, but you've got to have something. Otherwise, we'll keep doing journalism.

PCS: That's your project, then?

MS: I think it's obvious. But I hold no political power—I gave that up a long time ago.

PCS: And you don't need it?

MS: Not anymore. I'm not forty, fifty, or sixty. For those who are, it's a different case.

PCS: Do you think you've managed to build a School?

MS: A diffuse one. Because building a School in a new university like ours is complicated. You've got the embryo of a School with Professor Aziz Ab'Saber[XLIX], another with Carlos Augusto[L]. But in human geography, you mostly find circles of friends supporting each other. It's not really a School, because there's a confusion between prestige and power.

PCs: And in your case?

MS: My case is a geographical accident, not an example to follow. I came back here at fifty with a body of work already behind me. I was never fully accepted.

PCS: But today we can see something like a "miltonsantian" line—people trying to understand your work, studying it.

MS: In that case, it's happening at the margins. You nibble around the edges, and you've got to have the strength to wait, with faith that the work is worthwhile. But it's not a School—it's diffuse, let's say.

PCS: Still, it can be located.

MS: Well, there are the girls here, poor things, they're my victims—but they agreed to be. Among them is someone wonderfully mad, like Professor Adélia de Souza[LI]. But there are others outside the discipline, too.

PCS: And that reception—especially from outside geography—is very positive, isn't it?

MS: I think so. But it's because to be interdisciplinary, you first have to be disciplinary. If you don't have a framework, you don't know what you're doing, and no one will listen to you. If you know what you're doing and have the patience to wait, as everyone must, then you'll find interlocutors.

PCS: And the fact that you've received awards?

MS: That was important. I wouldn't know how to weigh it exactly. But I think it's mostly due to my presence at USP. I've been coming here almost every week. I teach in a classroom with over 300 students, and only two are truly interesting. I think that's what it is. I've never made concessions— I don't recall ever doing so. That's probably it. Then the prize came, and with it, TV shows—Programa do Gordo, Roda Viva—and since most journalists are lazy, they always want to talk to the same people.

PCS: And did that change anything—did it open doors, bring new invitations, make things easier?

MS: In some ways, it did change things and made them easier—but it also risks leading to a kind of "celebrity syndrome".

PCs: For example?

MS: There are many possible pitfalls. One is giving in to the media—constantly inventing nonsense to grab headlines, because headlines thrive on novelty. Another is yielding to the easy route, having to compress everything into fifteen seconds. And that bothers me, because more and more I'm invited to speak not about what I work on, but about what I say—even within geography itself. They ask me to talk about something else.

PCS: In the kinds of questions the media raises, is it common for its interests to also become the interests of geographers?

MS: Because they're easy. Since geographers are trained easily—it's a discipline that wants to be easy, easy in the sense of light, journalistic—that's what they absorb, so the demand is never for complexity. The main categories I've proposed are usually met with silence.

PCS: Geography today could be a paradigm for the world because it's always been universal. Only now, that universality is concrete, so it could be...

MS: Put to the test.

PCS: How can that be communicated to people? Because it's not well understood—even within geography. It's a complex issue, because in the 19th century we had biology, natural history; in the 20th, economics, economic organization, progress and development. How can geography be structured into people's lives, into how they think? Why is it a paradigm? Is it because the world was built on a geographic foundation, or because geography aspires to provide that?

MS: I think it's both. There's a constant pursuit—that's what I'd call the historicity of the discipline. At any given moment, one discipline rises to prominence: psychology in one moment, sociology in another. And today, territory is the given—on one end, wealth, where corporations carefully choose where to organize themselves: on the other, everyday life. The problem is that geographers aren't making the effort to "geographize" everyday life. They just borrow concepts from sociology and imagine that they're doing geography.

PCS: But to become a paradigm, doesn't it have to be socially accepted?

MS: I don't use the word "paradigm" anymore. I used to, but now I'm not even sure what it means.

PCS: So how would you describe it?

MS: It's not about a paradigm. The point is to build a system of concepts. I remember talking about this when I discovered the English thinkers—Chorley, Haggett[LII], even Harvey. I found them amazing back in the 1960s. But I stopped using the word "paradigm." I never used it again. That's not how it works.

PCS: So, is it more about being a philosophy for the world?

MS: Geography isn't a philosophy—it's a "mini philosophy." Transcending the immediate, moving beyond the contingent—that's what matters: overcoming the contingent.

PCS: So, it's about creating a system of ideas that enables us to understand the world-system.

MS: It's a generalization.

PCS: But for it to function that way, doesn't it have to be socially recognized?

MS: It's the opposite. You build the system first. Only then is it recognized. Because if the system is recognized too early, it can stagnate. It has stopped evolving. Recognition is like a poll from *DataFolha*—what can you do with that?

PCS: So, this desire for recognition isn't the main thing.

MS: No, that's not it. You have to believe in it. You must produce something that you think brings you closer to truth.

PCS: But what's the guarantee?

MS: Why do you want a guarantee?

PCS: No guarantee at all?

MS: You don't need that.

PCS: Worrying about that becomes a straitjacket?

MS: That's the problem with today's universities—they want everything guaranteed. "What's the deliverable?" they ask. But nothing comes out of it.

PCS: In the short term?

MS: It's very hard these days. I do what I do now—at seventy-three years old—because I'm no longer interested in offering solutions. But try telling someone in Vitória that you're not interested in solutions. That's not my job, and never has been. Still, it's hard to say that nowadays.

PCS: They might say: "If you don't offer solutions, you're of no use".

MS: They'll think you're a...

PCs: A scholar?

MS: Exactly. And part of it's the institution's fault. In geography, the issue always loops back to teaching, which really complicates things. Has AGB ever asked itself what will happen if Normal Schools are created? That's the plan, after all. Has AGB reflected on that?

PCs: I don't think so.

MS: What about your university?

PCS: Also no.

MS: And this one?

Pcs: I don't know.

MS: I do. It hasn't. All they talked about was whether there'd be three or four classes per week, whether it would be introduced in sixth grade... Geography lends itself to that, because of its empiricist heritage.

PCS: But that's only part of the story, right? In some sense, geography has also been universalist, it tried to explain the world, to give the world an image, didn't it?

MS: That's always been the case. But empiricism was what drove it. Think of Humboldt[LIII], Vidal de La Blache, and all the others.

PCS: But for geography to do that, it has to be mature. At some point, it has been.

MS: Between young and mature, young is better.

PCS: But at one point, you said Brazilian geography today is mature...

MS: I don't know.

PCS: That it had reached maturity.

MS: I say that to encourage people. But I don't really think so.

PCS: Judging by this interview, it seems not.

MS: I say it every chance I get, because it helps people feel some faith. But my deeper experience tells me it's not mature, because it lacks deeper debate.

PCS: And your intellectual journey? In *Por uma geografia nova*, you outlined a project, and now in *A natureza do espaço*, we see the idea of its realization[LIV].

MS: I think that project couldn't be the same one twenty years later.

PCS: So, what was left behind? What became stronger? Or is the project ongoing?

MS: That's hard to say. Recently someone did an exegesis of my work... A lot has been reviewed.

PCS: Was that more due to your own changes or changes in the world?

MS: Both, I think.

PCS: Things that no longer make sense?

MS: They might make sense on their own, but not within the system. I think that's it.

PCS: Many people say that systems theory is outdated, and that critical geography tries to overcome it. But in your case, it seems clear that the purpose

of a system of ideas is to offer tools to understand the world-system. Is that systems theory?

MS: No. It's interesting—Marx spoke of system, and later the term "systems theory" emerged. I introduced that notion to French geography. I studied in the United States without really knowing what it was, but some Brazilian colleagues there were captivated by it. I remember buying a book that was being studied at the time—I bought ten copies and handed them out. That's when I discovered the idea of a system, which was also being worked on in math courses at the Polytechnic School. Unfortunately, when it entered geography, it took on this American positivist connotation. And with the superficiality of much of the 1978 debate, the word "system" came to be equated with positivism, the generals, the CIA. Sometimes someone would stand up and ask, "If you're a critical geographer, why are you talking about systems?" There were always some young people asking that kind of question. In fact, that kind of suggestion was planted in the head of some guy who drags himself around the halls here, slouched against the walls... What's his name again? He writes textbooks. Someone commissioned him to ask me unpleasant questions. He teaches here—he's a textbook millionaire. He got that job by asking uncomfortable questions. That was the level of questioning at the time.

PCS: In 1978, in your book *Por uma geografia nova*, the concept of totality was very important. And it still is today.

MS: Especially today.

PCS: But it's a concept that's less commonly used now than it was back then.

MS: It wasn't even used back then. People talked about it, but they didn't really use it.

PCS: Was it an important topic in France at the time too?

MS: In France, it always has been. But the notion of totality is more complex there. First of all, it doesn't belong solely to Marxism, it's a philosophical issue, not a Marxist one. Marxist totality is just one possible way of approaching that problem. I think my last book is really about that: division of labor and all that—those are attempts to empiricize totality. That's what I tried to do. But in my view, that empiricization wasn't possible before. So, I can't blame others for that. It just wasn't historically possible. You could do it intellectually, but not historically. The historical conditions, the

empirical universality, weren't there yet. That's why the place has become so central today.

PCS: Do you think the renewal movement fulfilled its role?

MS: I think it fulfilled several roles. The first was influencing other social sciences.

PCS: Geography influenced them?

MS: Yes, ours did.

PCS: Which other disciplines?

MS: Sociology, anthropology. This year (2000), I was invited several times by psychologists. So yes, I think it had an effect. I also think the movement opened up space in public opinion, especially that. I believe it brought new students into geography. The rector of the University of Brasília once told me, "A lot of students come here wanting to study geography because of those new ideas." Sometimes it's superficial reading, not deep, but there has been a major shift—though it came more from the outside than from within, I think. That's why there's no power struggle. When you influence psychology, there's no power game. When you influence sociology, no power game. But inside your own discipline, there is.

PCS: Let's say that 1978 gave the movement a push, accelerated things. Has that momentum now run out, faded, grown old?

MS: I don't know. To answer that, you'd have to study everything else. That's what it would take.

PCs: But your personal opinion?

MS: I wouldn't know what to say. I'm too involved. I think it played a big role. I wish it had played an even bigger one, but it was significant. So—are you still planning to write this thesis, or are you waiting for more "*intellectual nibbles*"? (laughs).

PCS: In your opinion, where today are the main lines, groups, centers, or labs that might actually bring about this kind of geography?

MS: I don't have an answer. I've even asked some people for help thinking through the critiques—I didn't feel competent. I'm still waiting for their responses. Mónica Arroyo[LV] gave me some suggestions yesterday. I'm still wait-

ing. I really couldn't say. And we can't confuse things either—urban geography is a line? Is Agrarian geography a line? And now there's tourism, gender studies, environmental folks, the "ONGistas." Is that it? I don't know if that's it. There must be groups—I personally like the one in Presidente Prudente, which seems interesting. Florianópolis too.

PCS: But is it hard to pinpoint?

MS: It's hard—for me, at least, right now. I've been channeling my energy elsewhere. I want to go back to studying geography as it really is.

PCS: Is there a parallel between this period from 1978 to now in geography and Brazilian history?

MS: There must be.

PCS: At that time, there was the opening, transformations, all that momentum for change—and then in 1989 came the retreat of social movements, the shift in themes. Today we see a certain eclecticism, a proliferation of tendencies, the idea that no single dominant trend exists. Can we make that kind of parallel?

MS: I couldn't say. You're talking about society from the top down, from the perspective of the people in power.

PCS: Wouldn't people from below show something else? A continuity?

MS: I have the impression that something else is germinating among them, something we can't yet grasp. That's my sense.

PCS: But is geography trying to see that?

MS: No.

PCS: For example, what about Professor Adélia Aparecida de Souza's research on practices of solidarity?

MS: Ah, yes —once she carries it out, then yes.

PCS: But don't these efforts signal that what you're proposing is starting to influence geography?

MS: Yes, yes... But that can only be achieved through totality. You can't study the poor in isolation, nor flatter them. That's the problem: geographers either openly flatter the rich or try to flatter the poor—then they end

up making pamphlets: “Geografia dos Sem Terras,” “Geografia dos Sem Tetos,” with banners in hand. But anyone on the street can do that. What’s expected of us is something else. You don’t need to make noise in the street, that just creates confusion. And it’s much easier, because once you join a social movement, the Workers’ Party crowns you Intellectual of the Year, and you’re instantly elevated.

PCs: But do you agree that there is a need for action?

MS: Our action is in the idea—what more do you want? What kind of action? If you’re not up to the task, then step aside. I can’t swallow this “action” story. You’ll do it now and then, but that’s not your job.

PCS: Is that a different reading of Marx’s famous phrase?

MS: I think “thinking” is more important.

PCS: And that is an action.

MS: It is. But since people don’t want the work of thinking, they become activists. Sometimes it works out—Bernardo Manzano[LVI], for instance, started out clueless but eventually found his footing. But it’s rare to see these “Bernardo’s type” metamorphoses. Usually, people lose their way.

PCs: Thank you very much, Professor.

MS: I think your project will yield little result. I believe your advisor made a serious mistake by letting you pursue it.

PCS: I’m a bit stubborn.

MS: You can’t afford to be stubborn—you’re a student. You won’t come back to this later. If I were in your position, I’d focus on studying geography properly.

PCS: Its production?

MS: Yes, its production. Take Vidal de La Blache, for example—there’s a ton of remarkable articles of his that aren’t in books. Compiling those would be a tremendous contribution. Because in doing that, you wouldn’t be digging through the history of the discipline.

PCS: But that is the history of the discipline.

MS: Not quite—it’s too recent. ●

ENDNOTES

I *Carlos Miguel Delgado de Carvalho* (1894–1980) was a geographer, historian, and diplomat born in Paris and raised in Rio de Janeiro. Trained in law, he emerged as a pioneer of scientific geography in Brazil. His landmark Geografia do Brasil (1929) transformed geography education by replacing purely descriptive accounts with systemic analysis. As a diplomat, he represented Brazil at the League of Nations, integrating geopolitical perspectives into international relations. His intellectual corpus—including História diplomática do Brasil (1959)—and his dedication to teaching shaped generations of scholars, laying the groundwork for Brazil's critical geography. He died in Rio de Janeiro in 1980 and remains revered as a founding figure of the nation's academic geography.

II Founded on 17 September 1934 by the French scholar Pierre Deffontaines—joined by Rubens Borba de Morais, Caio Prado Júnior, and Luís Flores de Morais Rego—the Brazilian Geographers Association (AGB) is a non-profit civil society organization. It unites geographers, educators, students, and like-minded scholars committed to advancing the scientific, philosophical, ethical, political, and professional dimensions of geography, thereby furnishing society with rigorously geographic critiques of its pressing problems.

III *Aroldo Edgar de Azevedo* (1910–1974) grew up in São Paulo, earned his degree at the University of São Paulo (USP), and trained under Pierre Monbeig. He soon emerged as a leading voice in Brazilian physical and regional geography. Over three decades as a full professor at USP, he produced landmark texts—most notably Brasil: a terra e o homem (1964), whose blend of scientific precision and accessible prose made it a national touchstone. He pioneered geomorphological research, devised Brazil's first natural regionalization (1940), and edited the Revista Brasileira de Geografia, mentoring successive cohorts of scholars. Widely regarded as the architect of Brazilian physical geography, Azevedo died in São Paulo in 1974 while attending the 20th International Geographical Congress.

IV *Paul Vidal de La Blache* (1845–1918) stands as the father of modern geography in France and the leading figure of the French School of Geography. Rejecting the environmental determinism dominant in his day, he forged an innovative synthesis of physical and human geography. His signature concept, "possibilism," holds that the natural milieu furnishes a range of opportunities for human action without rigidly dictating social organization. *Tableau de la Géographie de la France* (1903) illustrates this view, portraying France's regional diversity and the dynamic interplay between landscape and human activity. A tireless champion of the discipline, he founded Annales de Géographie (1891)—still a flagship journal—and mentored a cohort that included Lucien Gallois, Emmanuel de Martonne, and Albert Demangeon. His humanistic, integrative vision shaped French and global geography throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

V A group of individuals living together; shared household; amicable cohabitation; common-law union; concubinage [from Latin *contubernium, -ii]:* camaraderie among soldiers sharing a tent; friendship; intimacy. Priberam Dictionary of the Portuguese Language, 2008–2025, https://dicionario.priberam.org/.

VI SANTOS, Milton. *Por uma geografia nova*. 1ª ed. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1978.

VII *Richard Chorley* (1927–2002) was a British geographer pivotal to the twentieth-century transformation of the discipline. A leading voice in the "new geography" or quantitative revolution, he pressed for a more theoretical, scientifically rigorous approach. His work on quantitative methods, systems theory, and geomorphology remains foundational.

VIII *Walter Christaller* (1893–1978) formulated central place theory to explain the spatial distribution of settlements and services. By introducing the notions of central places, urban hierarchies, and spheres of influence, he provided a lasting framework for understanding geographic organization. Although trained in human geography, his ideas also reshaped physical-geographic studies of natural-resource allocation and rural land use.

IX *David Harvey* (1935-) is a British geographer and social theorist widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in contemporary human geography and Marxist thought. His analyses of urbanization, capitalist dynamics, and spatial relations show that space is not a passive backdrop but is produced—and continually reconfigured—by social and economic processes.

X *Allen John Scott* (1938-): geographer and professor of public policy at the University of California, Los Angeles; his main research interests include economics, industrial location, social theory, and urban geography.

XI *Ruy Moreira* (1948-) is a Brazilian geographer celebrated for advancing critical geography and reshaping geographic thought in Brazil. A retired professor at Fluminense Federal University (UFF), he has published extensively on the epistemology of geography, urban and political geography, and geographic education. His scholarship adopts a reflexive, critical stance, challenging traditional theoretical and methodological foundations and proposing new ways to conceptualize the relationship between space and society.

XII *Georges Chabout* (1909-2007): was a French geographer who specialized in geomorphology and regional analysis. His work foregrounded the interplay between natural and human factors in landscape formation, with research spanning landscape evolution, erosion processes, and the roles of climate and tectonics in shaping landforms.

XIII *Michel Rochefort* (1927-2015) was a French geographer noted for his analyses of cities, their regions, and urban networks.

XIV *Madeleine Albright* (1937-2022) was an American politician and diplomat best known as the first woman to serve as U.S. Secretary of State, a position she held in the Clinton administration. Born in Czechoslovakia, Albright and her family fled the Nazi occupation and resettled in the United States. That refugee experience profoundly shaped her worldview and fueled her lifelong commitment to advancing democracy and human rights.

XV *Jean-Paul Sartre* (1905–1980) was a French philosopher, novelist, playwright, and critic, and a central voice of existentialism. In *L'être et le néant* (1943) he probed freedom, responsibility, and the essence of human existence. Beyond philosophy, he produced novels such as *La nausée* (1938), politically engaged plays like *Huis Clos* (1944), and numerous essays, securing his place as one of the twentieth century's most influential intellectuals.

XVI *George Gurvitch* (1894-1965), a Russian-born sociologist who spent most of his career in France, ranks among the century's most original thinkers in the sociology of knowledge. Dubbed "the pope of sociology" in his day, he taught at the Sorbonne and founded Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie, among other contributions.

XVII *Gilles Deleuze* (1925-1995) was a French philosopher whose work transformed contemporary theory across the humanities and social sciences. Drawing on thinkers from Spinoza and Nietzsche to Bergson and Kant, he developed concepts such as "rhizome," "difference," and "becoming," challenging binary and hierarchical structures and advancing a dynamic, pluralist view of reality.

XVIII *Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991),* a French philosopher, sociologist, and Marxist theorist, revolutionized understandings of space, urban life, and social dynamics. In *La production de l'espace* (1974) he argued that space is a socially produced, meaning-laden construct that mirrors power relations and societal contradictions—a thesis that profoundly influenced human geography, urban sociology, and planning.

XIX The circle around François Perroux (1903–1987) became one of France's most influential intellectual networks in the postwar decades. Perroux's theories of regional development, economic growth, and "pôles de croissance" (growth poles) reshaped economic geography and regional planning, offering geographers new tools for analyzing the spatial dynamics of economic activity.

XX *Gilberto Freyre* (1900–1987) was a seminal Brazilian sociologist and writer whose *Casa-grande & Senzala* (1933) recast national formation through the lenses of miscegenation and Afro-Brazilian culture, challenging prevailing racist theories. Though later critiqued for romanticizing patriarchal slavery,

Freyre's trilogy—completed with *Sobrados e mucambos* (1936) and *Ordem e progresso* (1959)—remains indispensable to debates on Brazilian identity. He coined the notion of "lusotropicalismo," a concept that continues to provoke scholarly discussion.

XXI SANTOS, Milton. *O trabalho do geógrafo no Terceiro Mundo*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1996.

XXII *Éric Dardel (1899-1967):* French geographer. Publishing *L'homme et la terre: nature de la réalité géographique* (1952), cited by Max Sorre and rediscovered in the 1980s as an important phenomenological work.

XXIII *Pierre George* (1909-2006) ranked among the most prominent French geographers of the twentieth century. A Sorbonne professor, he brought a socially engaged, critical lens to human and urban geography, weaving social, economic, and political threads into a cohesive spatial analysis.

XXIV *Maximilien Sorre* (1880-1962), a pioneering French geographer of human ecology and biogeography, studied under Vidal de la Blache and taught at Montpellier and the Sorbonne. In works such as *Les fondements biologiques de la géographie humaine* (1943), he redefined the study of society–environment relations, anticipating ideas of environmental vulnerability. His studies on disease and climate (medical geography) remain touchstones. A member of the Institut de France, he trained generations of geographers, bridging the natural and human sciences. He died in Paris, leaving a body of work that is foundational to twentieth-century French geography.

XXV *Georg Lukács* (1885-1971) was a Hungarian philosopher, literary critic, and Marxist theorist widely regarded as one of the twentieth century's most influential thinkers. Born in Budapest to an upper-middle-class Jewish family, he first engaged with German idealism before converting to Marxism in the wake of the 1917 Russian Revolution. Appointed commissar of education in the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919), he went into exile after its collapse, producing his major works abroad. *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) revolutionized Marxist theory by introducing the notions of reification and class consciousness, effectively inaugurating what became known as Western Marxism. Returning to Hungary in 1945, he endured Stalinist persecution yet continued to publish seminal texts, including *The Young Hegel* (1948) and *Aesthetics* (1963). An emeritus professor until his death in 1971, Lukács left a legacy that shaped the Frankfurt School and literary studies and is celebrated for his dialectical analysis of culture and capitalist society.

XXVI *Emmanuel de Martonne* (1873-1955), Vidal's foremost disciple, became a towering figure in physical geography. Educated at the École Normale Supérieure, he later taught at the Sorbonne, reshaping physical geography through pioneering work in geomorphology and climatology. He introduced the Martonne aridity index and authored the landmark Traité de géographie physique (1909), a standard reference for decades. As secretary-general of the International Geographical Union (1931 – 49), he spearheaded the first international classification of natural landscapes. During World War II, he led France's intellectual resistance to the Nazi occupation. His Atlas de France (1934) and Carpathian studies remain essential texts, cementing his reputation as a father of modern physical geography and the foremost carrier of the Vidalian tradition worldwide. He died in Sceaux, leaving an extensive scientific and pedagogical legacy.

XXVII *Celso Furtado* (1920-2004): a leading Brazilian economist, developed the theory of underdevelopment while at CEPAL in the 1950s. He created SUDENE (1959), served as Brazil's first Planning Minister (1962–63), and authored the landmark Formação econômica do Brasil (1959). Furtado's humanist critique of structuralism and his advocacy of development policies still shape Latin American economic thought.

XXVIII *Caio Prado Júnior* (1907-1990) was a versatile Brazilian historian, economist, and social thinker. His *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo* (1942) reframed colonial history around external exploitation, by defining the *sentido da colonização*—the guiding orientation of Portuguese rule—as the central axis of Brazil's historical formation. A heterodox Marxist, founder of Editora Brasiliense, and briefly a Communist Party legislator, he penned classics such as *História econômica do Brasil* (1945) and *A revolução brasileira* (1966), despite censorship and imprisonment under the military regime.

XXIX *Sérgio Buarque de Holanda* (1902-1982), Brazilian historian and essayist, authored the seminal *Raízes do Brasil* (1936), which introduced the concepts of the "cordial man" and patrimonialism. A journalist, literary critic, and professor, he later directed USP's Institute of Brazilian Studies. The father of musician Chico Buarque, he went on to author additional landmark texts—*Caminhos e fronteiras* (1957) and *Visão do paraíso* (1959)—that reenvisioned Brazil's colonial past. His enduring legacy is a critical, original conception of national identity that continues to inspire successive generations.

XXX *Jacques Derrida* (1930-2004) was an Algerian-born French philosopher and the leading exponent of deconstruction.

XXXI *Lucien Goldmann* (1913-1970), a Romanian-French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, developed "genetic structuralism," viewing cultural works as responses to class-specific historical contradictions. A disciple of Lukács and professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, he bridged literary criticism and social theory while steering clear of both economic determinism and aesthetic formalism.

XXXII *Lino Bernardes* (1925-2003), earned his doctorate at the University of Lisbon and became a full professor at the University of São Paulo (USP), specializing in regional geography and urban studies. A member of the Associação dos Geógrafos Brasileiros, he trained generations of geographers from the 1960s to the 1980s. His seminal *A industrialização de São Paulo* (1960) and other works on industrialization and spatial restructuring in São Paulo introduced methodological innovations that still inform critical regional analysis.

XXXIII *José Marinho de Gusmão Filho* (1930-2010), also a USP professor, focused on agrarian geography and regional planning. His doctorate at USP led to influential research on rural development and land reform, notably *Estrutura fundiária e desenvolvimento agrícola* (1975). As a government consultant in the 1980s, he helped design colonization policies in Amazonia, and his critique of "conservative modernization" in the countryside shaped subsequent scholarship.

XXXIV *Ariovaldo Umbelino de Oliveira* (1947-), professor and PhD at USP, became Brazil's leading analyst of agrarian conflicts, social movements, and capitalist agriculture. His *A agricultura camponesa no Brasil* (1991) and Jabuti-winning *Modo capitalista de produção e agricultura* (2004) underpinned his advocacy for land reform; he advised the MST and public agencies and remained the country's foremost critic of latifundio and land grabbing.

XXXV *Lylian Zulma Doris Coltrinari,* professor and PhD at USP, focused on geomorphology.

XXXVI *Ana Fani Alessandri Carlos* (1949-), a USP professor and CNPq researcher, stands among Brazil's foremost theorists of critical urban geography. In *A cidade* (1994) and *Espaço-tempo na metrópole* (2001), she fused Marxism and phenomenology to analyze capitalist production of urban space, illuminating segregation and commodification in São Paulo. She remains active in urban-reform and social-movement debates.

XXXVII *Manoel Seabra* (1930-2011), professor and PhD at USP, focused on economic geography.

XXXVIII *Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves* (1948-2023) achieved international renown for his work in political geography, political ecology, and territorial studies. A UFF professor with a doctorate from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, he analyzed territorial conflicts, social movements, and environmental justice—especially in Amazonia—most notably in *A globalização da natureza e a natureza da globalização* (2006).

XXXIX *Myrna Thereza Rego Viana* is a contemporary geographer specializing in urban geography, territorial planning, and public-policy analysis. Based at the Federal University of Goiás, she bridges geographic theory and practice in studies of mid-sized cities, metropolitan restructuring, socio-spatial inequality, and democratic territorial governance.

XL *Maria Laura Silveira*: PhD at USP whit the thesis *Um país, uma região. Fim do Século e modernidades na Argentina* (1997). Collaborated on several research projects with Professor Milton Santos. Currently, she is a professor at Autonomous University of Buenos Aires.

XLI *José Ribeiro de Araújo Filho* (1939-2019): geographer and historian at USP (1941), completed his PhD in 1950 with the thesis "A baixada do Rio Itanhaém: estudo de Geografia Regional". Obtained his tenure with the thesis "Santos, o porto do café" in 1967. He became a full professor in 1971 and professor emeritus in 1981.

XLII *Francisco de Oliveira* (1933-2019), a sociologist and economist renowned for his critical analyses of development and peripheral capitalism. Born in Recife, he conducted research at the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP) and taught at the University of São Paulo (USP), shaping generations of social scientists. His most celebrated book, *Crítica à razão dualista* (1972), dismantled the dichotomy between backwardness and modernity in Brazil, becoming a classic of Latin American social theory.

XLIII MOREIRA, Ruy. Assim se passaram dez anos: a renovação da geografia no brasil no período 1978-1988 (The renewal of geography in Brazil, in the period between 1978-1988). *Caderno Prudentino de Geografia,* Presidente Prudente, v. 1, n. 14, p. 5-39, jun. 1992.

XLIV *Pierre Monbeig* (1908 – 1987) was a French geographer celebrated for his studies of Brazil, becoming one of the twentieth century's foremost "Brazilianists"—foreign specialists on the country. Regarded as a founder of modern geography in Brazil, he lived and worked there for many years. Pierre George and Pierre Monbeig illustrate two major currents in French geography: whereas George excelled in social and urban geography on a global scale, Monbeig focused on regional and agrarian studies, exerting a profound influence on Brazilian geography.

XLV Milton Santos and Maria Laura Silveira collaborated on several publications, notably *Brazil: Territory and Society at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2001). They also co-edited *Territory: Globalization and Fragmentation* (São Paulo: Hucitec/ANPUR, 1994).

XLVI *Florestan Fernandes* (1920-1995): Brazilian sociologist, ethnologist, and politician. A radical critic of racial and social inequalities, he is the author of many works that are essential for understanding Brazil.

XLVII *Tamás József Károly Márton Szmrecsányi* (1943-2017): was a Hungarian-Brazilian economist and historian specializing in economic history and industrialization. A professor at the University of Campinas (Unicamp), he distinguished himself through studies of Brazilian development and energy. His publications include *The Role of the State in Brazilian Industrialization* (1994). Szmrecsányi died in Campinas in 2017.

XLVIII Brazilian academic journal devoted to geographic inquiry, with particular emphasis on urban geography, territorial planning, and public policy. Established in 1996 by the Laboratory for Territorial Management (LAGET) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), the journal emerged as a forum for critical debate on urbanization, regionalization, and socio-spatial transformations in Brazil.

XLIX The "school" of Professor Aziz Nacib Ab'Sáber (1924–2012) refers to the intellectual and scientific legacy left by one of the most important Brazilian geographers and scientists of the twentieth century. Ab'Sáber was a central figure in physical geography, geomorphology, and environmental studies in Brazil, and his influence reached far beyond academia, shaping public policy and heightening environmental awareness throughout the country.

L *Carlos Augusto Figueiredo Monteiro* (1927-2022) was a geographer and climatologist who pioneered urban-climate studies in Brazil. Trained at the University of São Paulo (USP), where he later taught, he devoted himself to analyzing the climatic impacts on cities and devised innovative methods for environmental research. His book O *clima urbano* (1976) became a cornerstone of Brazilian physical geography. As a researcher, he helped consolidate geographic climatology in Brazil.

LI *Adélia Aparecida de Souza* (1944-) is a full professor at the University of São Paulo (USP) specializing in urban and regional geography. Her research—centered on metropolization, productive restructuring, and socio-spatial inequalities—has produced incisive critiques of Brazilian urban development, particularly in São Paulo. The author of titles such as *Metrópole e urbanização brasileira* (2002), she incorporates political-economy perspectives into geographic analysis. A mentor to generations of geographers, she has taken an active role in debates on urban planning and public policy, contributing decisively to the consolidation of critical geography at USP.

LII *Peter Haggett* (1933-2025) is a British geographer who pioneered quantitative geography and spatial analysis, revolutionizing the discipline in the twentieth century. An emeritus professor at the University of Bristol, he distinguished himself by developing locational models and methods for studying epidemic diffusion, thereby integrating geography and public health. His classic *Geography: A Modern Synthesis* (1972) became a global methodological touchstone. Awarded the Vautrin Lud Prize—often dubbed the "Nobel of Geography"—in 1991, his interdisciplinary approach has influenced everything from urban planning to disease-control policy. A member of the British Academy, Haggett remains a central figure for understanding the spatial organization of societies. His intellectual legacy combines scientific rigor with practical applicability, shaping generations of researchers.

LIII *Alexander von Humboldt* (1769-1859) was a Prussian naturalist and explorer widely hailed as the "father of modern geography" for his interdisciplinary approach. His expeditions through Latin America (1799 – 1804) revolutionized scientific understanding of climate, ecology, and physical geography. He published the monumental *Cosmos* (1845 – 1862), a synthesis of contemporary natural knowledge that introduced concepts such as "isotherms" and the "interconnection of ecosystems." A staunch critic of colonialism and an advocate of empirical observation, he influenced Darwin, Goethe, and generations of scientists. Humboldt died in Berlin, leaving a legacy that laid the foundations of environmental geography and biogeography.

LIV SANTOS, Milton. *A natureza do espaço:* técnica e tempo, razão e emoção. 4ª ed. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2006.

LV *Maria Mónica Arroyo*: PhD in Human Geography at USP with the thesis T*erritório brasileiro e mercado externo: uma leitura do Brasil na virada do século XX* (2001), supervised by Professor Milton Santos. She is currently a professor in the Department of Geography and in the Graduate Program in Human Geography at USP.

LVI *Bernardo Mançano Fernandes* (1965 –) is a Brazilian geographer specializing in agrarian geography and socio-territorial movements, internationally recognized for his studies of the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST). A professor at São Paulo State University (UNESP) and a CNPq researcher, he developed seminal concepts such as "peasant territorialization" and "struggle for land," through which he analyzes the dynamics of agrarian conflicts in Brazil and across Latin America. The author of benchmark works, including *Formação e Territorialização do MST no Brasil* (2000), he has collaborated with organizations such as the FAO and Via Campesina. Honored for his contributions to agrarian reform, Fernandes remains actively engaged in mentoring a new generation of critical researchers.

ARTICLE EDITOR

Cláudio Luiz Zanotelli
Federal University of Espírito Santo
Vitória, Espírito Santo, Brazil
claudio.zanotelli@ufes.br

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