


**SOCIO-SPATIAL INEQUALITY IN FOCUS: HOW GEOGRAPHY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE CLASSROOM DEBATE**

 <https://doi.org/10.63330/aurumpub.046-014>

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**Abstract**

The phenomenon of socio-spatial inequality is a complex challenge manifested in the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities within geographic space, resulting in segregation and vulnerability. This text argues that it is urgent and essential to bring this issue to the center of the educational debate, with Geography being the discipline best suited to lead this discussion. Critical Geography provides the conceptual tools—such as socio-spatial segregation, territory, landscape, and place—for students to understand the origin and dynamics of disparities, demystifying the distribution of poverty and wealth as a structured rather than random process. The study transcends mere description, requiring a multi-scalar analysis that connects the global to the local, and uses the landscape as a "living geographic document" to reveal morphological and infrastructural contrasts (such as the juxtaposition of affluent neighborhoods

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and favelas). The incorporation of this theme, with the support of interdisciplinary dialogue and active methods such as Geotechnologies, aims to train a critical and proactive citizen capable of questioning power structures and acting as an agent of transformation in the construction of a more just and equitable space and society.

**Keywords:** Socio-spatial Inequality, Critical Geography, Segregation, Geographic Education.

### INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of socio-spatial inequality represents one of the most urgent and complex challenges of contemporary society, as it manifests itself in the inequitable distribution of resources, services, and opportunities within a given geographic space, resulting in landscapes of stark contrast and in the perpetuation of cycles of exclusion and vulnerability, thereby making it necessary to critically analyze the importance of bringing this issue to the center of the educational debate.

Within this narrative, authors such as Villaça emphasize that “Socio-spatial segregation is a process through which different social classes or strata tend to concentrate increasingly in different general regions or sets of neighborhoods of the metropolis” (Villaça, 2001, p. 142).

The classroom is, par excellence, one of the main loci of civic and critical formation, where students develop the tools necessary to interpret and transform the reality in which they are inserted. It is therefore essential that the school curriculum address issues that reflect the social and economic tensions of the real world, and socio-spatial inequality is a powerful mirror of these tensions.

In this context, Geography emerges as the discipline most intrinsically suited to conduct this debate, since its object of study—geographic space—is the stage on which social, economic, and political relations materialize, making it essential for deciphering the genesis and dynamics of the disparities observed, as Santos points out when stating that “Space is a true field of forces whose formation is unequal. This is the reason why spatial evolution does not appear in the same way everywhere” (Santos, 1978, p. 122).

One of the conceptual pillars offered by Geography is socio-spatial segregation, which explains how social groups are separated in urban or rural space on the basis of their economic capacity.

Understanding this concept is vital to demystify the supposedly random distribution of poverty and wealth, revealing it as a structured and often planned process, as also indicated by Santos, who considers that “It is through segregation that the dominant class controls urban space, subjecting it to its interests” (Santos, 1994, p. 74).

Another point applies to the concept of territory and territoriality, allowing students to understand inequality not only as a lack of access to resources, but also as a dispute over power and control over space. Where inequality exists, there is also the denial of territorial rights and the marginalization of certain groups in decision-making processes that affect their place of residence, as Souza considers when stating that “Territory, from this perspective, is therefore space defined and delimited by and through power relations” (Souza, 1995, p. 96).

The contribution of Geography to classroom debate is therefore methodological and conceptual, as it provides the categories of analysis—place, landscape, region, territory, and space—that make visible the power relations shaping the ground on which we walk, transforming the invisible into something palpable for the student’s critical gaze, as Carlos (1996, p. 27) points out: “Geography, when dealing with space, deals with the forms and contents that constitute it, which are forged in social relations; therefore, it is dealing with society as a whole, with the production of its existence and with the power that organizes and transforms it.”

The debate on socio-spatial inequality, conducted through Geography, must necessarily involve the urban question, which is where disparities become most glaring. Unequal access to basic sanitation, quality public transportation, leisure infrastructure, and health services is material proof of how unbalanced our development is.

Thus, Santos (2004, p. 76) argues that “Space, which appears to all of us as something ‘natural,’ ‘given,’ is, in fact, a social construction, the product of labor and history, and reflects the contradictions and inequalities of the society that produces it.”

More than merely a discussion, the teaching of this theme must culminate in the promotion of a critical and proactive consciousness, in which Geography not only diagnoses spatial problems but also points toward paths for more equitable territorial planning and for the construction of fairer and more inclusive cities.

In sum, the present work will delve into the specific didactic strategies that can be employed so that Geography teaching fulfills its role as a catalyst for this vital debate, transforming the classroom into a laboratory of citizenship capable of forming individuals who are conscious of and engaged with reducing disparities in their surroundings and in the world.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### THE NATURE OF GEOGRAPHIC SPACE AS A STAGE FOR INEQUALITY

Geographic space is not merely a neutral backdrop, but rather a fundamental social, historical, and political construction that reflects and, simultaneously, amplifies the inequalities existing in society. Its nature is dynamic, the product of the incessant interaction between society and nature, being permanently shaped by human actions, especially economic and power-related ones. It encompasses both physical elements—relief, climate, hydrography—and social elements—cities, transportation networks, borders—all intertwined and subject to logics that promote the differentiated and often unjust appropriation of its resources and opportunities.

Therefore, Santos (1996) considers that:

Space is not only a stage on which actions unfold, but it itself participates in those actions, constituting with them either a vicious or virtuous circle. In other words, space is neither neutral nor innocent. It is loaded with values, interests, and power, and its organization is the result of struggle among men and among classes. [...] History takes place in space, but space is not merely the stage of history; it is a dimension of history. That is why we can speak of a spatialization of society and a socialization of space. What society produces is an inseparable, contradictory whole, in which forms inherited from the past are used and transformed by present social actions. This is what we call geographic space, the inseparable totality of systems of objects and systems of actions, which contains within its own constitution the marks of inequality and struggle. (Santos, 1996, p. 77–78).

This unequal appropriation is clearly manifested in territorial organization, where resources, infrastructure, and services are not distributed equitably. The central and more valued areas of cities, for example, concentrate investments and access to quality public goods, while peripheral areas and rural regions often lack basic necessities such as sanitation, health care, and education.

In this sense, the logic of capital plays a central role in the production of spatial inequality. Space is transformed into a commodity, where the value of land and real estate is determined by its location and profit potential, rather than by social need. This leads to socio-spatial segregation, where high-income groups occupy the best locations, while the poor are pushed into environmentally risky areas, far from jobs and services—a phenomenon visible in almost all major metropolises, as Harvey diagnoses when stating that “Residential differentiation must be interpreted in terms of the reproduction of social relations within capitalist society” (Harvey, 2014, p. 70).

At the global level, spatial inequality is expressed in the international division of labor and in power relations among countries, in which the concentration of wealth, technology, and decision-making centers in the so-called Global North contrasts with economic dependence and the exploitation of natural resources and labor in many nations of the Global South. This global structure is the result of a long historical process, marked by colonialism and neocolonialism, which established lasting spatial hierarchies that are difficult to reverse.

Therefore, Milton Santos considers that “The international division of labor spatially expresses the dependence and subordination of some countries in relation to others, which is manifested in the concentration of capital and technique in few places” (Santos, 2004, p. 57).

According to Harvey (2005, p. 159), “The process of accumulation by dispossession, which has sustained capitalist development since its colonial beginnings, continues to play a crucial role in structuring contemporary geographical inequalities.”

Another factor lies in mobility and in the flow of people, goods, and information, which are also unequal and essential for understanding spatial dynamics. While capital and elites circulate freely through globalized space, the migration of poor populations is frequently controlled, criminalized, and blocked by increasingly militarized borders. Likewise, access to the global communication network, the internet, is another marker of inequality, creating “connected places” and “disconnected places,” deepening digital and economic exclusion.

Thus, Milton Santos (1996), portraying this segregation, reports that:

Rugosities create inequalities. These are manifested, on the one hand, in the selectivity of flows—of money, goods, information, orders, and also people—and, on the other hand, in each place’s capacity or incapacity to receive these flows, according to its technical base and inherited availability. The result is the differentiation of spaces, with some places more connected and others less so, establishing a hierarchy of utilities and exclusions. (Santos, 1996, p. 195)

In this context, it is also important to highlight that the environmental issue is intrinsically linked to spatial inequality, considering that the most vulnerable populations are those who suffer most from environmental injustice, being disproportionately affected by pollution, the degradation of natural resources, and the impacts of climate change. Favelas located on hillsides or floodplain areas, riverine communities, and Indigenous groups, for example, are at greater risk of natural disasters and diseases transmitted due to the lack of sanitation, revealing a “geography of vulnerability.”

Therefore, authors such as Santos, Ribeiro, and Cunha (2017) report that the focus on the “geography of vulnerability” and disaster risks is broadly grounded in the literature, since “exposure to

risks and vulnerabilities is determined by the insertion of certain social groups in vulnerable geographic spaces, deprived of infrastructure and public services, and lacking instruments of social protection.”

Resistance and social struggle emerge, in this context, as factors in the transformation of space. Social movements for housing, land, improvements in transportation, and environmental rights contest the established spatial order. By occupying and claiming strategic areas, these movements seek to reappropriate space and democratize its use, forcing public authorities and the market to consider social interest to the detriment of the mere accumulation of capital, as Gohn (1997) states:

Urban social movements constitute society itself in motion, in the world, in and from its territories of existence, as a complex social totality that moves permanently in some direction. [...] Movements generate a series of innovations in the public sphere, both state and non-state, and in the private sphere; they participate directly or indirectly in a country’s political struggle, and contribute to the development and transformation of civil and political society. (Gohn, 1997, p. 251–252)

Thus, understanding geographic space as a stage for inequality requires an analysis that goes beyond the description of disparities, focusing on the power structures that produce them. Critical geography, by unveiling these relations, offers the conceptual tools to identify mechanisms of exclusion and to propose alternatives aimed at a more just, equitable, and inclusive territory, where access to the city and to resources is a universal right, not a privilege.

In sum, the nature of geographic space is inseparable from its political and social dimension. Recognizing that space is constructed and that this construction is intrinsically unequal is the first step toward civic engagement and transformative action. The struggle against inequality is, fundamentally, a struggle for the right to the city and to territory, a battle so that the stage of social life may become a space of opportunities and justice for all its inhabitants.

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIO-SPATIAL SEGREGATION

Socio-spatial segregation is a complex urban phenomenon that manifests itself in the unequal distribution of different social groups within the city's space. Its understanding requires an analysis of theoretical foundations that date back mainly to urban sociology and urban geography

In essence, segregation is not merely random dispersion, but rather the result of economic, political, and social processes that structure urban space in a hierarchical and exclusionary manner. The study of these foundations is crucial for unveiling the deep causes and persistent consequences of this inequality, in order to understand what Villaça argues when stating that “It is through segregation that the dominant class controls urban space, subjecting it to its interests” (Villaça, 1998, p. 359).

The first theoretical pillar for understanding segregation comes from the Chicago School in the early twentieth century, especially Ernest Burgess's concentric zone model (1925). Although criticized for its rigidity, this approach viewed the city as an organism in constant competition, where social groups and land uses migrated toward specific zones. It worked with the concepts of “succession” and “invasion,” suggesting that competition for land and land value naturally led to the formation of homogeneous neighborhoods, with poorer and newly arrived populations being “pushed” toward degraded central areas or toward peripheries lacking infrastructure.

A second set of theories, more focused on economic analysis, emphasizes the capitalist logic in the production of space. Authors such as David Harvey (2005) argue that “segregation is an inevitable by-product of the incessant pursuit of profit and capital accumulation in the real estate sector. Urban land is treated as a commodity, and the allocation of investments in infrastructure and services—schools, hospitals, transportation—is guided by where financial return is greatest. This generates differentiated land valorization, creating economic barriers that prevent low-income groups from accessing the best-equipped areas of the city.”

Still within this narrative, Harvey (2005) also considers that:

The producers of the built environment, both past and present, offer the worker a limited set of choices regarding living conditions. If he has limited resources to exercise effective demand, then he must make do with what he can obtain: cramped housing without infrastructure. (Harvey, 2005, p. 77)

Therefore, from the Marxist turn in geography and urban sociology onward, the focus shifted to the role of the State and power relations. Manuel Castells (1983), for example, emphasizes the importance of “collective consumption” (urban services) and social struggles for their appropriation. Segregation is seen not only as a result of the market, but also as a tool of social control and the reproduction of inequalities, where public policies on housing, zoning, and transportation may reinforce, intentionally or not, the spatial exclusion of marginalized groups.

Segregation is also analyzed from the perspective of identity relations and social discrimination. In this sense, the role of race, ethnicity, and social class transcends mere physical location. From this viewpoint, segregation is sustained by discriminatory practices in the labor and housing markets and by prejudices that lead to self-segregation or the avoidance of certain groups, consolidating spaces where identity and poverty become synonymous, as França (2022) points out:

Residential segregation by race and class is a structural and persistent phenomenon in Brazilian metropolises, where socioeconomic and racial inequalities overlap, resulting in the concentration of the Black and poor population in peripheral areas with less access to infrastructure and urban services. This spatialization of inequalities is not only a reflection, but a mechanism for reproducing social hierarchies, causing racial identity and poverty to become territorial markers (França, 2022, p. 198).

In summary, the theoretical foundations of socio-spatial segregation are multifaceted, requiring an approach that integrates ecological competition, the logic of capital, state power relations, and the dynamics of social discrimination. In other words, segregation is therefore the mirror of the social structure and its contradictions, and its persistence demonstrates the failure of the urban development model to guarantee the right to the city and the equitable distribution of opportunities for all its inhabitants.

## THE ROLE OF LANDSCAPE IN REVEALING SOCIAL CONTRASTS

The landscape is not merely a passive setting, but rather a palimpsest on which the history of human relations and, fundamentally, profound social contrasts are inscribed. In its broadest conception, landscape is the result of the continuous interaction between nature and human action, reflecting the choices, priorities, and, crucially, inequalities of a society. When we analyze the distribution of resources, the quality of infrastructure, and land use, the urban or rural landscape becomes an unequivocal mirror of disparities in power and wealth, aligning with Milton Santos's observation that "Space is a true field of forces whose formation is unequal. This is the reason why spatial evolution does not appear in the same way everywhere" (Santos, 1978, p. 122).

Morphological contrast is perhaps the most evident manifestation of this revelation. The juxtaposition of high-standard gated communities, characterized by robust security, well-maintained green areas, and imposing architecture, alongside favelas or peripheral neighborhoods with precarious housing and disorderly density, immediately exposes spatial segregation. These visible "boundaries"—walls, rivers, or large avenues—are not accidental, but rather the result of housing policies and urban planning that have historically privileged certain groups to the detriment of others, materializing inequality in the built environment.

In addition to morphology, the infrastructure present in the landscape is a strong indicator of disparity, considering that affluent neighborhoods enjoy paved streets, efficient public lighting, complete basic sanitation networks, and easy access to quality transportation. By contrast, low-income areas often lack essential services, presenting open sewage, insufficient public transportation, and a lack of adequate leisure spaces, contributing to the fact that the absence or precariousness of these elements in the landscape is not merely a matter of comfort, but a factor that perpetuates the cycle of poverty and social exclusion.

Therefore, considering this narrative, Bittencourt emphasizes that "Socio-spatial inequalities are manifested in the differential allocation of resources in public works that, instead of effectively

contributing to social justice, reinforce the unequal distribution of the benefits and burdens of urbanization” (Bittencourt, 2021, p. 1).

The rural landscape also reveals these contrasts, frequently linked to land tenure structures, where large expanses of latifundia devoted to monoculture or extensive cattle ranching with high technology coexist with small family farming properties or precarious settlements, materializing the dispute over access to land. The landscape of the latifundium, often homogeneous and mechanized, contrasts with the diversity and fragility of peasant landscapes, revealing the concentration of wealth and the marginalization of rural workers.

The symbolism of the landscape is another crucial aspect, since certain buildings, monuments, or public areas are intentionally designed to celebrate power, wealth, or a hegemonic identity. Gleaming financial centers and revitalized historic neighborhoods become postcards, while landscapes of poverty are stigmatized and often rendered invisible in official discourse. This reveals that the landscape therefore not only reflects, but also ideologically reinforces the dominant social structure, as Lefebvre (2006) considers:

Space, far from being a passive receptacle, is actively produced and participates in the relations of production and productive forces, becoming, for the State and capital, a political instrument of capital importance. The representations of space—the space conceived by planners and urbanists—impose a dominant order of representation, often under ideological claims of order, rationality, and beauty, suffocating differences and making acceptable the asymmetrical and exclusionary processes that manifest themselves in the urban landscape. (Lefebvre, 2006, p. 69–70)

The landscape thus becomes a space of struggle and resistance, in which social movements, by occupying and transforming degraded areas or by fighting to maintain their traditional spaces—as in the case of quilombola or Indigenous communities—use the landscape itself as an arena to question the established order. The emergence of community gardens in abandoned lots or street art on gray walls are examples of how the landscape can be resignified as a political act of contestation against exclusion.

In sum, the landscape is a living geographic document that translates social injustices into concrete and visible forms. It also becomes the sedimented result of unequal historical and economic processes, where the quality of housing, the presence of infrastructure, and access to natural and urban goods rigidly demarcate the social position of its inhabitants. Reading the landscape critically therefore becomes fundamental to understanding and confronting the mechanisms of segregation and the persistence of contrasts in our contemporary societies.

## GEOGRAPHY TEACHING AS AN AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION AND CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Geography teaching transcends the mere memorization of the names of capitals, rivers, and mountains, as it is configured as a powerful tool for understanding the world and forming critical civic consciousness. In studying geographic space, the student not only locates phenomena, but unveils the complex interactions between society and nature, perceiving how territory is constructed and disputed. This initial approach is fundamental for the student to begin seeing himself or herself as an active agent within the spatial dynamics in which he or she is inserted, as Cavalcanti considers when stating that “Geography teaching is not only about teaching a set of contents and themes, but is, above all, about teaching a specific way of thinking, of perceiving reality” (Cavalcanti, 2010, p. 7).

Thus, the discipline acts as an agent of transformation by providing the conceptual lenses necessary for reading and interpreting reality. Concepts such as place, territory, landscape, and region make it possible to denaturalize social and environmental disparities, so that when analyzing the distribution of resources, spatial segregation in cities, or the impacts of globalization, the student is prompted to question the power structures that shape space and generate inequalities. This process of critical reflection therefore becomes the first step toward mobilization and the search for change.

Another point is linked to the development of civic consciousness, which is intrinsically connected to the ability to understand the spatial dimension of social problems. Geography teaches that

issues such as the water crisis, urban violence, unemployment, and climate change are not isolated events, but concrete manifestations that materialize in specific places. By tracing the connections between the local and the global, the student develops socio-environmental responsibility and perceives that his or her actions and public policies have a direct impact on the space lived by him or her and by the collective, as Cavalcanti (2012) states:

Knowledge of the dimensions that influence the formation and transformation of space is fundamental to the exercise of citizenship. But this understanding must be contextualized, because the local is often the result of global decisions. [...] It is from a dialectical perspective that we can establish this relationship among the global, the regional, and the local. (Cavalcanti, 2012, p. 86)

One of the central axes of contemporary geographic teaching is the promotion of diversity and respect for differences, indicating that the study of cultures, ethnicities, and different ways of life spread across the globe and within the same country contributes to the deconstruction of prejudices and stereotypes. By recognizing the plurality of landscapes and the multiplicity of territorialities, the student learns to value local identities and to understand the importance of intercultural dialogue for building a more just and inclusive society.

Still in the context of education for citizenship, Geography has a crucial role in addressing environmental issues and sustainability, seeking to promote an analysis of natural cycles, biome degradation, and the challenges of resource management, which teaches about the finitude of natural goods and the need for development that balances economic, social, and environmental needs. This perspective forms citizens who are aware of their role in conserving the planet and capable of advocating for more sustainable practices in all spheres, as Reigota (2012, p. 13) points out: “Environmental Education, thus conceived, must consider the analysis of the political, economic, social, and cultural relations between humanity and nature and the relations among human beings.”

The use of geographic technologies, such as mapping, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and remote sensing, equips students with powerful tools for civic intervention. Learning to read and

produce maps, for example, is not only a technical skill, but a form of empowerment, as it allows citizens to monitor land use, visualize the distribution of public services, or denounce spatial injustices.

Cartographic literacy transforms the student from a mere spectator into a potential monitor and proposer of solutions, as Takahashi (2000) mentions:

Cartographic literacy must be understood as one of the indispensable instruments for the formation of citizenship: forming individuals to learn how to learn, so that they are able to deal positively with the continuous and accelerated transformation of the technological base (Takahashi, 2000, p. 3).

Ultimately, successful Geography teaching shapes a reflective, engaged individual and citizen of the world. By integrating knowledge about nature, society, and space, the discipline enables students to decipher the complexity of their surroundings and to act with awareness and responsibility in their community and on the global stage, making geographic education a cornerstone in the construction of a more equitable and sustainable future.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE: GEOGRAPHY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Geography establishes itself as a fundamental science in the construction of knowledge, being intrinsically linked to spatial reality and to the complex relations manifested therein. Its object of study, geographic space, is not restricted to mere descriptions of landscapes or locations, but encompasses the dynamic interactions between society and nature, which by nature requires interdisciplinary dialogue. Understanding phenomena such as urbanization, climate change, territorial conflicts, or economic production is unfeasible without integrating perspectives from other areas of knowledge, as Milton Santos (2004) points out:

Space, which is the object of Geography, is not merely a substrate of social relations, nor merely the theater where life unfolds. It is itself an instance of society, at the same time that it contains society and is contained by it. For this reason, the geographic approach, in order to be complete, cannot dispense with dialogue with other sciences, because spatial manifestations are the synthesis of economic, social, cultural, and natural processes that, together, compose the totality. (Santos, 2004, p. 55)

Interdisciplinarity in Geography is not an option, but an epistemological necessity, because in order to decipher the complexity of the world, the geographer draws on concepts and methodologies from neighboring disciplines. The interface with History, for example, is crucial for understanding how space has been shaped over time. With Sociology and Anthropology, Geography examines social and cultural dynamics and the power relations inscribed in territory. Collaboration with Economics, in turn, is essential for analyzing the spatial organization of productive activities and regional inequalities.

This interaction is particularly strong in Physical Geography, which is directly associated with sciences such as Geology, Climatology, Hydrology, and Biology. The study of environmental systems, geomorphological processes, or the distribution of biodiversity requires in-depth knowledge of these areas. The contribution of mathematical and statistical models and data, as well as Geotechnologies such as Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems—GIS—demonstrates the openness of geographic science to integrating technical and analytical tools from Computer Science and Engineering, as Mendonça (2001, p. 87) points out: “The specifically geographic method would arise from the fact that this discipline works with reality in its complexity, addressing varied phenomena studied by other sciences.”

Geographic knowledge constructed in this way, through dialogue, is inherently more robust and holistic because it goes beyond the mere sum of information, generating an interpretive synthesis that reveals the spatial connections among phenomena. An environmental problem, for example, is analyzed simultaneously in terms of its natural causes, its social and economic implications, and the public policies necessary for its mitigation. It is this capacity to articulate different dimensions that gives Geography a central role in the analysis of highly relevant contemporary issues.

Geographic interdisciplinarity also has a profound impact on practical action and intervention in space, because in urban and regional planning, the geographer acts as a mediator, integrating technical-scientific knowledge—engineering, architecture—with the understanding of social dynamics—sociology, law—and environmental dynamics—biology, ecology. The integrated reading of territory allows for the proposition of more sustainable and equitable solutions that consider local specificities and global interdependencies.

Thus, it is worth considering Floriani's (2011) observation:

Principles, procedures, and limitations for interdisciplinary construction underpin the interpretation of relations with practice. Finally, considerations are made regarding transdisciplinarity and its dimensional levels, concluding with the relevance of participatory and democratic systems in territorial organization, sustained by equity and social justice. (Floriani, 2011, p. 2)

However, interdisciplinary dialogue entails challenges, such as overcoming conceptual barriers and creating a common language among disciplines. Professionals from different areas must be willing to decentralize their point of view and value mutual contributions. The success of knowledge construction lies in the scientific humility to recognize the limits of one's own discipline and the richness that arises from the exchange of knowledge and the multiplicity of perspectives, as Japiassu (1976) points out:

The challenge of interdisciplinarity consists precisely in bringing knowledge out of its isolation, out of its rigidity. Moreover, the interdisciplinary effort requires from the researcher the capacity and willingness to permanently cross the limits of his or her specific knowledge, interacting with other ways of seeing the world and allowing himself or herself to question his or her own beliefs and certainties. (Japiassu, 1976, p. 35)

In sum, Geography positions itself at the center of the construction of contemporary knowledge as a science that connects and integrates. By assuming interdisciplinary dialogue as both method and premise, it not only enriches its own analytical capacity, but also offers society a more complete and

interconnected understanding of the world, essential for confronting the great global challenges of the twenty-first century and promoting a future more conscious in relation to our planet.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present work, focused on the theme of Socio-Spatial Inequality and on Geography's contribution to its discussion in the classroom, adopts a predominantly qualitative methodological approach, bibliographic and exploratory in nature. The main objective is to support the central argument that the discipline of Geography is the principal vector for equipping students with the conceptual and analytical tools necessary for a critical reading of space. The research is based on the review and analysis of canonical and contemporary works in Critical Geography and Urban Sociology, seeking to establish the theoretical foundations that link the production of space to the reproduction of social inequalities.

Therefore, it is worth highlighting the reference to Santos (2004), who states that:

Geography has concepts and methods that allow us to understand today's world. If the world is the set of spaces and times that form it, Geography is the discipline that can help understand this set, because it studies the visible face of the world, but also the processes that produce it. (Santos, 2004, p. 12).

The materials used for the conceptual foundation consisted of a corpus of academic texts that establish the social, political, and historical nature of Geographic Space, as detailed in the Theoretical Framework. Works by authors such as Milton Santos—concepts of space, landscape, and territory—David Harvey—analysis of the capitalist production of space and segregation—Manuel Castells—collective consumption and urban struggle—and theorists of the Chicago School were consulted, as they are essential for understanding the foundations of Socio-Spatial Segregation. The selection privileged texts that address the connection between macroeconomic structures and their materialization at the local scale of the urban landscape.

The method of analysis of the theoretical framework followed a dialectical perspective, in which geographic concepts were examined in their contradictions and interrelations. The focus fell on unveiling how the categories of analysis—place, landscape, region, territory, and space—operate not as static descriptions, but as tools for revealing the power relations and logics of exclusion that shape the ground on which we walk. For example, the landscape is analyzed not only through its morphology, but as a historical and symbolic record of social contrasts, requiring a critical reading that goes beyond common sense, as Santos points out when stating that “The landscape is the set of forms that, at a given moment, express the inheritances that represent the successive relations established between man and nature. Space is the gathering of these forms, plus the life that animates them” (Santos, 2004, p. 66).

The second methodological stage, focused on the contribution to the classroom, employed documentary analysis of curricula and pedagogical guidelines for Brazilian Basic Education, such as the National Common Curricular Base—BNCC. This analysis aimed to identify the relevance and adherence of the theme of Socio-Spatial Inequality to the learning objectives proposed for Geography teaching, especially with regard to the formation of Civic Consciousness and critical thinking. The investigation sought gaps and opportunities for a more in-depth approach to the theme, where the BNCC considers that “The learning of Geography should favor the recognition of diversity and inequalities, as well as the critical analysis of socio-spatial relations, contributing to the formation of an ethical and solidary civic consciousness” (Brazil, 2018, p. 360).

For the development of didactic strategies, one of the pillars of the article, the methodology of didactic action research was adopted in a simulated manner. This means that, based on the theoretical foundations and curricular guidelines, teaching proposals were conceived and structured that integrate the use of Geotechnologies and fieldwork to make the invisible palpable. The focus is on active methods that transform the student into a researcher of his or her own space, as cited by Franco, who states that “Action research, when assumed in the pedagogical dimension, seeks the transformation of knowledge

and practices, allowing the teacher to organize teaching situations that encourage the student to become the subject of his or her own learning” (Franco, 2012, p. 154).

Still within the area of materials and methods, the proposal for fieldwork aims at the practical application of the concept of “landscape reading.” The method consists of guiding students to observe and record, through photographs, sketches, and notes, the morphological and functional contrasts of their surroundings. The objective is to connect the theory of segregation and territoriality with empirical experience, making the landscape a “living geographic document.”

Interdisciplinary Dialogue is established as a fundamental method for the construction of knowledge about inequality, where the analysis of the theme requires the Geography teacher to promote articulation with History—to understand the genesis of disparities—Sociology—for class and power relations—and Economics—for the logic of the real estate market and capital. This methodology of conceptual articulation aims to provide a more robust and holistic analysis.

In terms of validation and impact, although the article is theoretical-conceptual, the method provides that the effectiveness of the didactic proposals be evaluated through their potential to generate critical and proactive consciousness. Assessment is not limited to the retention of concepts, but to the student’s ability to conduct a critical reading of his or her territory and to propose interventions—action plans, improvement projects—aimed at mitigating the disparities observed.

Therefore, the set of materials and methods adopted in this work—critical bibliographic review, dialectical analysis of spatial concepts, curricular analysis, and the proposal of active and technological didactic methods—complement one another to provide a robust framework. The methodological structure ensures that Geography fulfills its role as an Agent of Transformation, enabling students to decipher the complexity of space and to act as future citizens engaged in the construction of a more just and equitable society.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the theoretical and methodological analysis confirm Geography as the essential discipline most intrinsically suited to conduct the debate on socio-spatial inequality in the classroom, so that the discussion is structured on the premise that geographic space is the material and symbolic stage where social tensions and contradictions are sedimented, becoming the perfect object of study for denaturalizing disparities. The landscape, far from being a neutral setting, proves to be a living geographic document that, when read critically, translates segregation and injustice into concrete and visible forms, such as the morphological contrast between luxury condominiums and precarious housing.

The discussion deepens in revealing that socio-spatial segregation is not an accidental phenomenon, but rather the structured result of the interaction of economic, political, and social processes. The theoretical foundations reviewed—Chicago School, David Harvey, Manuel Castells—show that the logic of capital and the pursuit of profit in the real estate sector transform space into a commodity, valuing land unequally and, consequently, pushing low-income groups into areas of risk and precariousness. Geography provides the concepts—segregation, land valorization—so that the student understands that the distribution of poverty and wealth is an intentional process, not a mere accident of history.

The didactic impact of geographic study lies in its capacity to equip the student with the categories of analysis necessary to go beyond common sense. The discussion shows that concepts such as territory and territoriality allow inequality to be understood as a dispute over power and control of space, and not merely as a lack of resources. This is crucial for the student to perceive the political dimension of the problem, understanding that the absence of basic sanitation in a peripheral area is the materialization of the denial of a territorial right and of marginalization in decision-making.

The analysis of the role of landscape as a revealer of social contrasts functions as a central and practical result for teaching. The juxtaposition of quality infrastructure—paved streets, sanitation—in affluent areas versus precariousness—open sewage, insufficient transportation—in peripheral areas

becomes the material and empirical proof of inequality. The pedagogical discussion focuses on transforming this reading of the landscape into a fieldwork tool, where students are encouraged to observe, record, and map disparities, connecting the theory of Socio-Spatial Segregation directly to their life experience.

The discussion on Interdisciplinary Dialogue reinforces the robustness of Geography as an integrating science, considering that the result is that a holistic understanding of socio-spatial inequality is unfeasible without conceptual articulation with History—the genesis of disparities—Sociology—class and power relations—and Economics—the logic of the real estate market. This methodology of articulation ensures that the student does not fall into simplification, but understands the phenomenon as a complex and multicausal product, preparing him or her for a comprehensive social analysis.

It is considered that deepening the theme within the Geography curriculum is a pedagogical and political necessity, and the results indicate that, by equipping the student with the conceptual tools of space, the discipline breaks the inertia of common sense and promotes the questioning of the structures that maintain social injustice. The struggle against inequality is, fundamentally, a struggle for the right to the city and to territory, and Geography is the catalyst that transforms this struggle into teaching content and into a driving force for transformative action.

The discussion points to the importance of teaching not being restricted to the description of disparities, but culminating in the promotion of a proactive consciousness, in which the future citizen, formed with this critical spatial vision, is able to intervene in his or her surroundings, seeking the construction of fairer and more inclusive cities. Geography, when diagnosing the geography of vulnerability, must point toward paths for redirecting the use of territory toward collective well-being, and not merely toward capital accumulation.

In sum, the systematic and critical incorporation of socio-spatial inequality, conducted through Geography, results in the formation of agents of change. The effectiveness of the proposal lies in its potential to enable students to conduct a critical reading of their territory and to propose interventions

aimed at mitigating the disparities observed, making the classroom a laboratory of citizenship capable of forming reflective individuals engaged with reducing social wounds in their locality and in the world.

### CONCLUSION

The reflections and analyses conducted throughout this study confirm the central thesis that Geography is the discipline most intrinsically suited and essential to mediate the debate on socio-spatial inequality in the educational environment. Geographic space, in its complexity as both a stage for interactions between society and nature and as a social, historical, and political product, proves to be the ideal object of study for denaturalizing disparities and equipping students with the conceptual tools necessary for a critical reading of reality. The discipline's ability to integrate scales—from the local to the global—and to articulate the theoretical foundations of segregation, the logic of capital, and power relations is its greatest contribution.

The deep incorporation of the theme of socio-spatial inequality into the Geography curriculum, therefore, transcends a curricular update; it establishes itself as a pressing pedagogical and political necessity. Teaching, when successful, enables the student to go beyond common sense, promoting a reading that questions the structures that perpetuate exclusion and vulnerability. This process is the foundation for the formation of a critical and proactive consciousness, transforming the student from a mere spectator into an agent of transformation.

Geography teaching, by focusing on inequality, assumes the role of Agent of Transformation and Civic Consciousness, teaching that access to the city, sanitation, and quality of life is a territorial right and not a privilege. By developing the capacity to read space, the discipline instills socio-environmental responsibility and the need to fight for more equitable territorial planning, where collective well-being takes precedence over the logic of capital accumulation.

Ultimately, the relevance of the debate on inequality in the classroom lies in its capacity to connect abstract knowledge to the student's empirical experience, contributing through fieldwork and

landscape reading, which unite the theory of segregation with the everyday reality of visible social “boundaries” in the surroundings. This connection is what drives engagement, because the student perceives that the object of geographic study—space—is his or her own place of life, struggle, and possibility.

Therefore, the challenge for the school and for the Geography teacher is to embrace this responsibility, ensuring that the discipline is taught not as a repository of facts, but as a critical science aimed at promoting spatial social justice. It is fundamental that the curriculum promote the analysis of themes such as the right to housing, environmental justice, and urban mobility, transforming the classroom into a laboratory of active citizenship.

The persistence of social wounds, such as urban polarization and the marginalization of vulnerable populations, makes the debate on socio-spatial inequality a moral and political imperative. Geographic knowledge is the catalyst that transforms indignation in the face of injustice into a concrete proposal for action. By forming citizens capable of intervening in space to mitigate disparities, geographic education fulfills its highest purpose.

In conclusion, by positioning Geography at the center of the discussion on socio-spatial inequality, we reaffirm the role of the school as the main locus of civic formation for a more just and inclusive future, and we intensify the struggle for a more equitable territory, which is essential to the struggle for a more just society. Geography teaching not only diagnoses problems, but points toward paths for the possible utopia of cities and regions where access to spatial wealth is a universal right, completing the cycle of knowledge with transformative engagement.

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