

THE DYNAMICS OF GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE WORKS OF MILTON SANTOS (2008) AND ROBERTO LOBATO CORRÊA (1995)

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Kennedy José Alves da Silva¹, Francisco Welton Machado², Edson Osterne da Silva Santos³, Kaique Marlen da Conceição⁴, Ruan Gabriel Linhares Chaves⁵ and José Manoel Moraes Silva⁶

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we review and compare the works of Milton Santos (2008) and Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1995), which discuss the concept of geographical space, the object of study of geography. In this way, the authors' contributions to the renewal of the science are examined. In his work, Milton Santos encourages us to see space as a social product that arises from man's interaction with the environment. The concept of roughness refers to the marks that form over time in space. These marks are indicative of the importance of mechanisms, information and the reflections of globalization today and its relationship with space. Lobato Corrêa, on the other hand, highlights the importance of territory and territoriality, whereby territory is characterized as a demarcated area that exerts both political and social control. The focus is on the analysis of the relationship between power and territoriality, through the perspectives of the main social actors who shape the organization of space. The issue of multi-territoriality and the construction of identities continues to be discussed, highlighting the various meanings that space harbors, as well as making a comparative analysis of their different approaches. The authors' perspectives offer theoretical and methodological tools for analyzing spatial dynamics, allowing for a more complex and integrated understanding of geographical space in contemporary times.

¹ Specialist in Sustainable Development and Environment (2012), Sociology Teaching for High School by the State University of Piauí (UESPI, 2016), and Natural Sciences, their Technologies and the World of Work by UFPI (2022).

Master's student at the Federal University of Piauí (UFPI), through the Dean of Graduate Studies (PRPG), the Center for Human Sciences and Letters (CCHL), and the Coordination of the Graduate Program in Geography (PPGGEO), Academic Master's in Geography – Class 14 (2024–2026).

E-mail: profkjose@gmail.com

LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6486047277790904>

² Specialist in Development with the Environment (2012–2014).

Master's student at the Federal University of Piauí (UFPI), through the Dean of Graduate Studies (PRPG), the Center for Human Sciences and Letters (CCHL), and the Coordination of the Graduate Program in Geography (PPGGEO), Academic Master's in Geography – Class 14 (2024–2026).

E-mail: wmachado-2011@hotmail.com

LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/3652789785115922>

³ Specialist in Human and Social Sciences and the World of Work (CEAD/UFPI/SEB/MEC).

Master's student at the Federal University of Piauí (UFPI), through the Dean of Graduate Studies (PRPG), the Center for Human Sciences and Letters (CCHL), and the Coordination of the Graduate Program in Geography (PPGGEO), Academic Master's in Geography – Class 14 (2024–2026).

E-mail: Edsonosterne23@gmail.com

LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4318087538278709>

⁴ Licentiate in Geography from the State University of Maranhão.

E-mail: kaiquemarlen87@gmail.com

LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/9041722079548251>

⁵ Licentiate in Geography from the State University of Maranhão.

E-mail: ruangabriellinhares75@gmail.com

LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0938924424844344>

⁶ Licentiate in Geography from the State University of Maranhão.

E-mail: josemanoelcx14@gmail.com

LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/8297487088103418>



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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 30 years, as we entered the 21st century, the concept of geographical space has undergone significant transformations, driven by theoretical and methodological advances. Milton Santos, in his work *Por uma Geografia Nova* (2008), and Roberto Lobato Corrêa, with *Traços de um Território* (1995), played fundamental roles in the renewal of this concept, presenting new perspectives that considerably expanded our understanding of the subject.

This study is dedicated to a comparative analysis of Santos and Corrêa's approaches to geographical space, highlighting their main theoretical and methodological contributions. Focusing specifically on the aforementioned works, the aim was to understand how each author conceived this space and how their perspectives influenced contemporary geography.

Given the differing theoretical views of Santos (2008) and Corrêa (1995), it became necessary to investigate their conceptions of geographical space, the discrepancies between them, and how these approaches contributed to an integrated view of this space in contemporary times. Thus, the central question of this study was: How did the approaches of Milton Santos (2008) and Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1995) differ in the conceptualization of geographical space, and in what ways did these differences influence the understanding of spatial dynamics in the 21st century?

The general objective was to analyze and contrast the approaches of Santos (2008) and Corrêa (1995) regarding the concept of geographical space, aiming to highlight their contributions to the renewal of geographical science. To achieve this goal, three specific objectives were outlined: (I) Investigate the main concepts and theoretical categories of Milton Santos (2008) related to geographical space; (II) Explore the concepts of territory and territoriality as presented by Roberto Lobato Corrêa (1995); and (III) Analyze the implications of the different approaches of Santos (2008) and Corrêa (1995) for understanding spatial dynamics in contemporary times.

This study is relevant as it provides a critical analysis of the contributions of two of the most important Brazilian geographers, whose works were fundamental to the understanding of contemporary geographical space. Furthermore, it contributes to the theoretical and methodological development of geography by comparing and integrating different perspectives on space, promoting a more complex and integrated understanding of spatial dynamics.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted through a qualitative approach, beginning with an in-depth bibliographic review of the works of Milton Santos and Roberto Lobato Corrêa. Subsequently, a systematic comparative analysis of both authors' approaches was carried out, aiming to understand how each conceptualizes geographical space and the implications of their perspectives. The application of



content analysis techniques enabled the extraction and contrast of the main arguments and theoretical categories, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of spatial dynamics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

MILTON SANTOS: DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT OF SPACE

In his work, Santos (2008) revolutionized the concept of space by situating it within the context of the renewal of geographical science, becoming one of the most influential figures in Brazilian geography. For Santos (2008), space is not merely a passive backdrop for human activities, but rather a dynamic result of complex interactions between society and the environment. He emphasizes that space is not limited to being superficial; on the contrary, it is a constantly changing environment in which social, economic, and cultural relations intertwine, mutually influence one another, and evolve over time.

Santos (2008) argues that understanding space as a social product is fundamental to capturing its true essence. Over time, human communities are shaped by aspirations, conflicts, and changes that leave their marks on space. Highlighting the constant transformation of space, Santos not only describes its progression but also presents a critical perspective that challenges static and limited views. He contends that this dynamic approach is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of geographical space, which cannot be reduced to a one-dimensional view.

Furthermore, Santos (2008) underscores the importance of technology and information in driving spatial changes in the era of globalization. Technologies spread rapidly and information flows constantly, redefining not only physical boundaries but also the ways in which different parts of the world interact and connect. In this scenario, space is not merely a passive container of these changes, but rather a dynamic environment in which new forms of social and territorial organization emerge. The author emphasizes the need to understand how these technological advances and information flows influence the structure and dynamics of contemporary geographical spaces, where multiple forces interact and are continuously reconfigured.

By providing a solid theory of geographical space, Santos (2008) encourages us to reflect on our connection with the environment in which we live. His humanized and dynamic view of space constantly challenges geographers and academics to explore the complex interactions that determine how we experience the world. The author argues that understanding space is not limited to grasping its physical and functional configuration, but also involves recognizing the narratives, meanings, and social relations that permeate it. This approach not only enriches our academic understanding but also empowers us to act more informedly and responsibly in the management and conservation of the environments we inhabit.



Space in Motion: Keywords Defining the New Era (roughness, dialectics, technique, information, and globalization)

Santos (2008) introduced a significant contribution by exploring the concept of roughness in the geographical environment. This concept goes beyond simple physical characteristics of the terrain; it encompasses the historical and cultural evidence left over time as a result of human interactions. The roughness of the terrain is not merely a physical trait, but a visual indicator of multiple eras of human occupation, revealing how societies have shaped and been shaped by the environment throughout history. For Santos (2008), understanding roughness is crucial to grasping the current configuration of space and its dynamics, allowing us to visualize layers of history and the transformations that have occurred. This deeper understanding of the relationships between society and environment is facilitated by the analysis of roughness, which invites us to recognize space not merely as a static backdrop, but as a palimpsest—a surface that has been erased or overwritten to be reused—where different times and processes continuously intertwine, influencing the landscape and its meanings.

Santos' (2008) proposal regarding space highlights its simultaneous condition as both medium and product of social relations. He argues that this dialectic is essential to understanding the various contradictions and dynamics that characterize geographical space. The author challenges the limited view of space as a static setting, encouraging its consideration as a field of continuous interactions, where social relations shape and are shaped by the physical environment.

It is crucial, according to Santos (2008), to understand the complexity of the contemporary world through the interdependence between social and spatial processes. This implies recognizing how human activities not only transform the physical landscape but also influence the social and economic organization of places. By adopting this dialectical approach, the author alerts us to the need to examine the contradictions emerging from interactions among different actors and interests within geographical space, offering an integrated understanding of contemporary spatial dynamics.

For Santos (2008), technique and information play fundamental roles in the construction of contemporary geographical space. In the era of globalization, these elements introduce new technologies and flows of information that profoundly reconfigure spatial relationships. Contrary to the idea of global homogenization, Santos (2008) argues that globalization promotes disparities and spatial diversity, where different times and methods coexist.

Therefore, a precise analysis of contemporary geographical space must not only consider global uniformity but also how local dynamics articulate with global influences, creating a complex mosaic of practices, cultures, and forms of territorial organization.

Santos (2008) emphasizes that technical changes are not superficial; they fundamentally shape the ways in which societies organize themselves territorially, influencing the social and economic dynamics



of places. In parallel, information accelerates flows and connects regions of the world, creating an intricate network of interactions that transcend geographical and temporal boundaries. This dynamic combination of technique and information reveals an ever-evolving environment, where transformations are driven by technological advances and new forms of global connectivity, challenging geographers to understand and anticipate the changes shaping the contemporary world.

Space: A Set of Objects and Activities

Another central issue in Santos' (2008) work is the conception of space as a dynamic set of physical elements and interactive activities. Santos argues that geographical space is not merely a static backdrop for human activities, but rather a living environment where complex interactions occur between physical infrastructures, technological artifacts, and the social actions that permeate them. This systemic approach allows for a more integrated understanding of space, considering both tangible elements—such as roads, buildings, and natural resources—and intangible aspects, such as cultural values, social practices, and systems of meaning that continuously define and transform space.

For Santos (2008), this holistic perspective reveals that geographical space cannot be reduced solely to its physical dimension, but must be understood as a complex network of relationships between material objects and the human activities that animate them. These interactions not only shape the physical landscape but also deeply influence the social and economic organization of the communities inhabiting these spaces.

Thus, by adopting a view that considers the dynamic interaction between material and immaterial elements, Santos offers a robust conceptual framework for exploring the multiple dimensions of contemporary geographical space.

Santos (2008) suggests that space should be understood as a set of interactive and overlapping systems. These systems are not limited to tangible geographical objects such as cities, roads, and rivers, but also encompass the dynamic activities occurring within these spaces. Among these activities are human migrations, economic flows, cultural practices, and other forms of social interaction that continuously shape the geographical environment.

For the author, the relationship between these systems is not merely linear but results in complex and interconnected spatial patterns. These patterns reflect the structure and organization of geographical space across its multiple layers and scales. By studying these patterns, it is possible to gain a clearer understanding of the socio-spatial dynamics that characterize different regions and localities around the world (Santos, 2008).

This systemic approach proposed by Santos (2008) not only emphasizes the interconnection between physical elements and human activities but also recognizes the importance of considering



history, culture, and power relations that shape space. Thus, by integrating geographical analyses with sociocultural and economic perceptions, Santos offers a robust theoretical framework for understanding the complexities of contemporary geographical space and its transformations over time.

ROBERTO LOBATO CORRÊA: DEFINITION OF SPACE

In his book published in 1995, Corrêa presented a distinct perspective on the concept of space by introducing the ideas of territory and territoriality. Corrêa argues that geographical space should not be viewed simply as a static landscape, but rather as a dynamic environment in which people live, interact, and build complex relationships.

Central to his approach is the notion of territory, which goes beyond physical boundaries and includes the practices and meanings that people attribute to these spaces. Territoriality, in turn, refers to the strategies and behaviors adopted by individuals and groups to claim, control, and organize territories according to their needs and interests (Corrêa, 1995).

Corrêa (1995) emphasizes that understanding geographical space requires a deep analysis of power relations and the strategies of social actors operating within that space. Social, economic, and political interactions play a crucial role in the ongoing transformation of these territories. By considering these dynamics, it becomes possible to grasp not only the physical configuration of space but also the social and cultural processes that shape it over time.

For a more comprehensive analysis, Corrêa (1995) highlights the importance of investigating the territorial practices of different social groups, as these reveal how spaces are lived, used, and contested. The dynamics of power, therefore, not only influence decisions about space usage but also shape identities and relationships among communities within a specific geographical context. Thus, by introducing the concepts of territory and territoriality, Corrêa (1995) expands the understanding of geographical space, emphasizing its multifaceted nature and the multiple layers of meaning that make it a rich field for geographical and social analysis.

Moreover, Corrêa (1995) defends the idea that territory is not simply a physically delimited space, but a collective construction that is constantly evolving through dynamic interactions among the individuals and groups who inhabit it. He emphasizes that territorialization practices are fundamental to understanding how social actors establish control, influence, and organization over space. These practices are not limited to physical demarcation but also involve the imposition of cultural, political, and economic meanings upon the territory.

By considering the social relations and power structures involved in the formation and transformation of geographical space, Corrêa's (1995) approach provides a deeper and more sophisticated understanding. He argues that it is through these lenses that we can grasp the complexity of territorial



dynamics, in which conflicts, negotiations, and resistance continuously shape both physical and symbolic landscapes. Territoriality, therefore, not only reflects the physical occupation of space but also reveals the strategies and aspirations of various social actors who compete and collaborate in the construction of territory.

This integrated view of space, territory, and territoriality proposed by Corrêa (1995) challenges more simplistic and static approaches in geography, encouraging a more contextualized and sensitive analysis of the social and cultural dynamics that permeate the geographical environment.

Through this perspective, Corrêa (1995) offers a highly relevant contribution to contemporary geography. He not only introduces social, political, and economic elements into the analysis of space but also demonstrates how these aspects are essential for a comprehensive understanding of territorial dynamics. By integrating these elements, Corrêa significantly enriches the academic debate, providing deep insights that are fundamental both for research and for the practical application of the geographical discipline.

By recognizing that territory is not merely a physical setting but a product of human interactions imbued with meaning and power, Corrêa (1995) challenges traditional approaches that overlook the complexity of social and political relations in the configuration of geographical space. His analysis broadens the horizons of geography by highlighting how territorialization practices reflect and shape identities, aspirations, and conflicts across different spatial scales.

Thus, Corrêa's (1995) work not only offers a robust conceptual framework for understanding territory and territoriality but also inspires geographers and scholars from related disciplines to explore more deeply and critically the contemporary spatial dynamics. His ideas continue to be a source of inspiration and an essential starting point for those interested in unraveling the complex processes that define our geographical environments.

Geographical Space, Territorial Delimitation, Dimensions, and the Presence of Multiple Territories

A territory is more than simply a physically delimited space; it represents a defined and controlled area by social groups, within which specific activities are carried out and power strategies are applied. Territorialization, in turn, refers to the processes through which individuals and groups establish control, influence, and organization over this territorial space. According to Corrêa (1995), these actions are not limited to the physical demarcation of territory but also involve the imposition of symbolic meanings and social representations that assign value and identity to space.

By emphasizing this perspective, Corrêa (1995) highlights the complexity of territory as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon, shaped by social, political, and economic interactions over time. He argues that understanding territory requires not only the analysis of its physical and geographical



characteristics but also a deep investigation into power relations, occupation and resistance strategies, and the symbolic representations that permeate these processes.

According to Corrêa (1995), territory is a space laden with meanings and disputes, in which different social actors engage in territorialization practices to assert their identities, interests, and forms of control over space. These practices are not only physical—such as the demarcation of borders and the construction of infrastructure—but also symbolic, through which cultural and political meanings are established that legitimize territorial claims.

In examining territorial dynamics, Corrêa (1995) emphasizes the importance of considering the strategies of occupation and resistance that shape territory. For him, understanding territory goes beyond analyzing its visible forms; it is essential to explore the underlying power relations, negotiations among social groups, and the processes of adaptation and transformation that occur over time.

In this context, the notion that territoriality can vary across different scales—from the local to the global—is discussed. Corrêa (1995) asserts that different social actors, such as individuals, collectives, organizations, and governments, possess distinct ways of perceiving and utilizing space. This results in the simultaneous existence of multiple territories and territorialities. By considering the interactions and conflicts among different scales and actors, the perspective of multi-territoriality enables a more detailed analysis of contemporary spatial dynamics (Corrêa, 1995).

Contemporary society is marked by the characteristic of multi-territoriality—the coexistence of various territories that shape identities and social relationships. This condition demonstrates the complexity and interaction of different spatial logics, in which diverse forms of territoriality coexist. Corrêa (1995) argues that this approach offers the opportunity to understand spatial relationships more deeply, taking into account both the various actors involved and their territorial strategies.

Thus, Corrêa's (1995) work provides a comprehensive view of contemporary territorial dynamics, emphasizing the importance of considering multiple scales and diverse forms of territoriality in the analysis of geographical space. His contributions are fundamental to understanding the power relations, identity, and control that permeate territories, enriching both academic and practical debates in political and social geography.

Space: Power and Control

Another central aspect in Corrêa's (1995) work is the connection between territoriality and power. He maintains that territorial control is an essential way of exercising power, encompassing both resources and the resident communities. Territorial power manifests in various forms, ranging from direct physical domination of space to symbolic and ideological influence, capable of shaping the perceptions and actions of individuals and social groups.



Corrêa emphasizes that understanding territoriality requires an analysis of the strategies and practices employed by social actors to control and organize space. These strategies may include physical demarcation of boundaries as well as the use of symbols and narratives that reinforce legitimacy and control over a given territory. For him, territorial power is not limited to physical occupation but also involves symbolic and discursive disputes that are fundamental in the construction and maintenance of territorial identity (Corrêa, 1995).

By exploring the intersection between territoriality and power, Corrêa (1995) offers a profound analysis of the social and political dynamics that shape geographical space. His approach enables us to understand how different social actors use territory as a means to assert identities, establish relations of domination or resistance, and influence the living conditions of local communities. This perspective broadens our understanding of the complex interactions between space, power, and society in contemporary times.

Corrêa (1995) also highlights the relevance of scale in assessing territorial power and domination. He asserts that the dynamics of power and territorial strategies of social actors are influenced by a variety of geographical scales, from the local to the global. Considering both local and global aspects in the formation and transformation of geographical space allows for a more comprehensive understanding of spatial relations through a scaled approach.

Space: Identity and Representation

Corrêa (1995) offers a profound exploration of the themes of identity and representation within geographical space, emphasizing that space is not a neutral backdrop but an environment imbued with symbolism and social representations. For Corrêa (1995), territorial identities are not static; they are dynamic, emerging from the practices and representations of individuals and groups who assign unique meanings and values to the places they inhabit.

Image and narrative play fundamental roles in this process of forming territorial identities. According to Corrêa (1995), symbolic representation not only reflects but also constitutes power relations within geographical space. The way a place is represented directly influences perceptions and social interactions within it, shaping both collective and individual identities over time.

By examining represented spaces, it becomes possible to understand not only how identities are initially constructed but also how they are contested and transformed through social, political, and cultural dynamics. Corrêa (1995) emphasizes that representations are not merely passive reflections of reality; they are active agents in the continuous construction and reconstruction of territorial identities.

Therefore, Corrêa's (1995) analysis of identity and representation offers a critical and in-depth perspective on how geographical spaces are shaped and how meanings are attributed to them. This



reflects an essential approach for understanding the complexity of social and spatial relations in contemporary geography.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE APPROACHES OF MILTON SANTOS AND ROBERTO LOBATO CORRÊA

There are different approaches and conceptualizations of geographical space among authors and geographical schools. When comparing the concepts of Santos (2008) with those of Corrêa (1995), the differences between the authors also become evident. Santos focuses on the complexity and dynamism of space, understanding it as shaped by various products—social, economic, political, cultural, among others.

Corrêa (1995), on the other hand, views space as a manifestation of power and territoriality, which organize and reorganize both the physical space and the identities that inhabit it. For Santos (2008), geographical space has a systemic nature, in which everything that occurs is interconnected, with antecedents and consequences that reflect interactions in the world.

Santos (2008) emphasizes the dialectic between the local and the global, and between technique and information—categories that are crucial in the processes of transformation in contemporary society. In contrast, Corrêa (1995) highlights territory and territoriality as fundamental elements of geographical space. He argues that territory is not merely a physical space, but also a symbolic and social space, laden with meanings and symbolism. Territoriality, in turn, expresses the practices and strategies through which social groups seek to control and organize territorial space, thereby configuring power and territorial identities.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the works of Milton Santos and Roberto Lobato Corrêa reveals that both authors offer complementary and enriching perspectives on the concept of geographical space. Santos emphasizes the dynamic complexity of space, highlighting how social, economic, and cultural interactions continuously shape the environment. Corrêa, on the other hand, focuses on the central role of power, territoriality, and identity in the configuration of space, underscoring the relationships of control and meaning that permeate territories.

The research objectives, which included comparing the approaches of Santos and Corrêa, were achieved, resulting in a deeper understanding of each author's contributions to the renewal of geographical science. The main findings demonstrate that while Santos invites us to view space as a social product in constant transformation, Corrêa draws attention to the political and social implications of territorial configuration.



The contributions of this research are significant, as they provide theoretical and methodological foundations for a holistic understanding of geographical space and the processes that constitute it. Moreover, the comparison between the two authors enriches academic debate, offering tools for more complex analyses of contemporary spatial dynamics.

For future research, it is suggested to further investigate the intersection between Santos' and Corrêa's approaches, especially in the context of globalization and new technologies. Additionally, studies that address the practical implications of these theories in geographical practice and territorial planning may yield new insights and further contribute to the understanding of spatial dynamics in a constantly changing world.



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