


# UNEVEN AND COMBINED DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZILIAN GEOGRAPHY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE THEORY IN ITS RECEPTION AND APPROPRIATION

DESENVOLVIMENTO DESIGUAL E COMBINADO NA GEOGRAFIA  
ACADÊMICA NO BRASIL: UMA ANÁLISE DA TEORIA EM SUA  
RECEPÇÃO E APROPRIAÇÃO

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RECEPCIÓN Y APROPIACIÓN

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## // ABSTRACT

Among the most varied dimensions of academic work, theoretical-methodological rigor must represent one of the pillars of knowledge production that aims to reveal the contradictions of the geographical development of capitalism. And the search for this rigor necessarily involves a robust theoretical framework that must support our writings. Thus, our general objective is to analyze the presence of the theory of uneven and combined development in Geography writings in Brazil, highlighting who is referenced as a source for the theory. We consider that this theory is frequently cited in texts in our area and understanding how it is referenced helps us to refine and improve our analyses. Regarding methodological aspects, we carried out a bibliographic review on the theory, highlighting its importance for geographic studies, a systematic review with 663 texts in the area and semi-structured interviews with intellectuals who helped us understand processes of reception and appropriation of this theoretical construct by Geography in Brazil. We grouped the systematic review data into four dimensions: a) mentions of Trotsky; b) mentions of authors from the international Trotskyist movement; c) mentions of critical intellectuals of Brazilian social thought; and d) mentions of Anglo-Saxon geographers. In short, we highlight some weaknesses in the reviewed texts, as an important portion using the theory without any referencing or associating it with authors who do not work exactly with this theory. Even so, we emphasize the power that this theory has for the critical and totalizing analysis of the Brazilian territory.

**Keywords:** uneven and combined development; Leon Trotsky; Michael Löwy; David Harvey; Neil Smith

## // RESUMO

Das mais variadas dimensões do fazer acadêmico, o rigor teórico-metodológico deve representar um dos pilares da produção do conhecimento que se propõe a desvelar as contradições do desenvolvimento geográfico do capitalismo. E a busca por esse rigor passa, necessariamente, por um robusto referencial teórico que deve lastrear nossos escritos. Assim, nos colocamos no sentido de analisar a presença da teoria do desenvolvimento desigual e combinado nos escritos da Geografia no Brasil, destacando quem é referenciado como fonte para a teoria. Consideramos que este constructo teórico é frequentemente citado nos textos de nossa área e entender como ele é referenciado nos ajuda a lapidar e refinar nossas análises. Quanto aos aspectos metodológicos, realizamos uma revisão bibliográfica sobre a teoria, destacando sua importância para os estudos geográficos, uma revisão sistemática com 663 textos da área e entrevistas semiestruturadas com intelectuais que nos ajudaram a entender os processos de recepção e apropriação desse constructo teórico pela Geografia no Brasil. Agrupamos os dados da revisão sistemática em quatro dimensões: a) menções a Trotsky; b) menções a autores do movimento trotskista internacional; c) menções aos intelectuais críticos do pensamento social brasileiro; e d) menções a geógrafos anglo-saxões. Em suma, destacamos algumas fragilidades nos textos revisados, como uma parcela importante que usa a teoria sem qualquer referenciamento ou associando-a com autores que não trabalham exatamente com esta. Ainda assim, ressaltamos a potência que essa teoria tem para a análise crítica e totalizante do território brasileiro.

**Palavras-chave:** desenvolvimento desigual e combinado; Leon Trotsky; Michael

## // RESUMEN

De las más variadas dimensiones del trabajo académico, el rigor teórico-metodológico debe representar uno de los pilares de la producción de conocimiento que pretende revelar las contradicciones del desarrollo geográfico del capitalismo. Y la búsqueda de este rigor implica necesariamente un marco teórico sólido que debe sustentar nuestros escritos. Así, nos propusimos analizar la presencia de la teoría del desarrollo desigual y combinado en los escritos de Geografía en Brasil, destacando a quiénes se hace referencia como fuente de la teoría. Consideramos que esta teoría es citada frecuentemente en textos de nuestra área y comprender cómo se referencia nos ayuda a afinar y perfeccionar nuestros análisis. Acerca de los aspectos metodológicos, realizamos una revisión bibliográfica sobre la teoría, destacando su importancia para los estudios geográficos, una revisión sistemática con 663 textos del área y entrevistas semiestructuradas con intelectuales que nos ayudaron a comprender los procesos de recepción y apropiación de este constructo teórico por parte de la Geografía en Brasil. Agrupamos los datos de la revisión sistemática en cuatro dimensiones: a) menciones a Trotsky; b) menciones a autores del movimiento trotskista internacional; c) menciones a intelectuales críticos del pensamiento social brasileño; d) menciones de geógrafos anglosajones. En definitiva, destacamos algunas debilidades en los textos revisados, como una parte importante utilizando la teoría sin referenciarla o asociarla con autores que no trabajan exactamente con ella. Aun así, destacamos el poder que esta teoría tiene para el análisis crítico y totalizador del espacio brasileño.

**Palabra Clave:** desarrollo desigual y combinado; Leon Trotsky; Michael Löwy; David Harvey; Neil Smith

## INTRODUCTION

One of the main efforts of the academic way of life is to seek a robust theoretical and conceptual foundation in our investigative process. Every day, we deal with theories, concepts, and categories of analysis that, in dialogue with a solid methodological framework, can help us critically understand the reality under analysis. In the context of scientific geography in Brazil, we use several concepts, categories, and theories to support our interpretations. By limiting our investigative interest to geography based on historical-dialectical materialism, we can highlight different theoretical and conceptual frameworks, such as valorization, spatial production, land rent, and financialization. We consider, however, that we often come across texts in our field that rely on these frameworks with little or no indication of the source from which we draw a particular term as a reference.

With this concern as a key focus, we present in this article part of a doctoral research project developed in the Graduate Program in Human Geography at the University of São Paulo. In the thesis, we focused on uneven and combined development, aiming to analyze how this theory was received by Brazilian geography. Analyzing hundreds of publications that mention the theory, we identified some singularities and gaps that we consider pertinent to present in this text. Thus, our overall objective here is to analyze the presence of the theory of uneven and combined development in Brazilian geography writings, highlighting who is cited as a source for the theory. Given the objective boundaries of the article, we grouped our data into four dimensions: a) mentions of Trotsky; b) mentions of authors from the international Trotskyist movement; c) mentions of authors from what we call critical intellectuals of Brazilian social thought; and d) mentions of Anglo-Saxon geographers. The selection and organization of the authors highlighted here derived from our database, which also includes a series of mentions of Brazilian geographer authors, a summary already published in another journal (Marques, 2023).

Regarding the research's methodological procedures, this investigation drew on both primary and secondary data. In this regard, we undertook a bibliographical survey of the theory,

considering both the original debate and its developments throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, particularly in the context of academic geography.

Regarding the primary data, we conducted a systematic review. According to Petticrew and Roberts (2006, p. xiii), there are several purposes for this type of in-depth survey, among which we highlight the analysis of theories already established in our academic circles, the summary of the current state of these theories, and new horizons possible from systematization.

In our research, we conducted a semi-automatic search on Google Scholar using the descriptors "uneven and combined development" and "geography." We produced an initial automated list of thousands of publications, which was manually refined by excluding duplicate texts, articles written by non-members of the analyzed community (at least one of the authors had to have a Geography degree, either undergraduate or graduate), and some inconsistencies within the platform's own database. Finally, we excluded texts prior to 1997 to generate a historical series of publications that we used for other aspects of the research. We thus arrived at a total of 663 Geography publications in Brazil that mention the theory of uneven and combined development, including books, book chapters, articles, conference proceedings, doctoral theses, master's dissertations, and undergraduate monographs. The survey was systematized using Zotero and Microsoft Excel software. Further details of the systematic review and our database can be found in Marques (2022). Furthermore, we conducted interviews with seven leading researchers who have been investigating topics related to geography in Brazil for years, aiming to understand aspects of the reception of the theory of uneven and combined development over the past few decades; excerpts from these interviews were incorporated throughout our analysis.

In summary, beyond this introduction and concluding remarks, this article is organized into four sections. In the first, we present a theoretical debate on the theory of uneven and combined development, beginning with how key authors in the texts reviewed unravel their understanding of the contradictory development of capitalist relations, emphasizing intellectuals such as Leon Trotsky, Michael Löwy, David Harvey, and Neil Smith. In the second section, we address the presence of Trotsky and authors from the Trotskyist movement in the texts reviewed in the

systematic review, as well as writings that address the theory without any reference. In the other two sections, we present both a synthesis of critical intellectuals of Brazilian social thought (such as Francisco de Oliveira and José de Souza Martins) and that referring to Anglo-Saxon geographers (such as David Harvey, Neil Smith, and Doreen Massey)<sup>1</sup>.

## THE THEORY OF UNEVEN AND COMBINED DEVELOPMENT IN GENERAL AND IN THE PARTICULARITY OF GEOGRAPHY

Leon Trotsky's most elaborate conceptual construction on uneven and combined development appears in the first chapter of the book *The History of the Russian Revolution*, entitled *Peculiarities of Russia's Development*.

The development of a historically backward nation necessarily leads to an original combination of the various phases of the historical *processus*. The described orbit takes on, as a whole, an irregular, complex, combined character [...] The unevenness of rhythm, which is the most general law of the historical *processus*, is evident with greater vigor and complexity in the destinies of backward countries. Under the whip of external needs, backward life finds itself forced to advance by leaps and bounds. From this universal law of uneven rhythms derives another law that, for lack of an appropriate name, we will call the law of combined development, which means the approximation of the various stages, the combination of differentiated phases, the amalgamation of archaic forms with the most modern. Without this law, taken, of course, in its entirety, it is impossible to understand the history of Russia, as in general that of all countries called to civilization in the second, third, or tenth line (Trotsky, 2017 [1930-1932], p. 33-34, italics in the original).

Undoubtedly, this passage best expresses Trotsky's conception of development. Here, Trotsky's reading highlights the relationship established between the two pillars of theoretical elaboration: the uneven nature of the process mixed with the combined/contradictory nature of

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<sup>1</sup> We understand that other important authors could be cited as sources for this debate, among which we highlight the American geographer Edward Soja and his concept of geographic value transfer. This was a point highlighted by the reviewers of this article. However, this author is not mentioned as a source in the texts surveyed in our systematic review. Therefore, we only focus on the Anglo-Saxon geographers directly mentioned in our data set.

development. This interpretative effort by Trotsky moves toward understanding that the development of nation-states, based on the Russian example, does not occur through fortuitous and random actions, but is conditioned by historical determinants. Thus, from a geographical perspective, the entire process of territorial formation of nation-states, marked by the inequality of capitalism, conditions the current production of space through a combination of these determinants that converge in associations between archaic forms and the most modern.

Beyond this more elaborate synthesis by Trotsky in *The History of the Russian Revolution*, it is possible to identify in some of his works the process of establishing the theory of uneven and combined development over the years, in an effort by the author to understand the reality of the time in light of the already existing debate on the uneven development of capitalist relations within Marxist writings. In this sense, it is important to note that Trotsky not only understood the need to interpret the development of capitalism as unequal, but was also clear that this was a "law" developed from the Marxist-Leninist legacy (Trotsky, 1957 [1928], 2010 [1930]). The quote below provides one of the passages in which the author is most explicit in this regard.

First, it is more accurate to say that the entire history of humanity is governed by the law of uneven development. Capitalism finds various parts of humanity at different stages of development, each with its own profound internal contradictions. The extreme diversity in the levels achieved and the extraordinary inequality in the pace of development of different parts of humanity during the various epochs serve as capitalism's starting point. Capitalism only gradually gains control over inherited inequality, breaking it down and altering it, employing its own means and methods. In contrast to the economic systems that preceded it, capitalism inherently and constantly aims at economic expansion, penetration into new territories, overcoming economic differences, and converting self-sufficient provincial and national economies into a system of financial interrelations. In this way, it achieves rapprochement and equalizes the economic and cultural levels between more advanced and more backward countries. (Trotsky, 1957 [1928], p. 19, our italics)

In this approach, it becomes clear how the author understands the law of uneven development as an indispensable foundation for reflecting on the relationship between the



universal and the particular in the territorialization of capitalist relations around the world. The inequality inherited by the new mode of production is directly reworked, in a way never before seen in human history. We also draw attention to the last section of this excerpt, as this debate on the relationship between countries considered "more advanced" and countries considered "more backward" will be another very important point in Trotsky's approach to the relationship established between the national question and international determinants, demonstrating how the theory developed by the author has an intrinsic multiscalar debate. In truth, all the efforts this author made throughout his reflections on the particularities of the development of capitalist relations in Russia were permeated by a multi-scalar interpretation. This means that Trotsky always understood that a correct understanding of the process of national development involves the complex relationship between internal (national) and external (international) determinants. It was in the interpretation of this relationship that Trotsky would find the basis for the notion of combination. Thus, from the writing of Results and Perspectives, a 1906 text, we already see considerations by the author that would lead, over the following decades, to the understanding of development as uneven and combined. When commenting precisely on this relationship between his country and other nations with more advanced development of capitalist relations, the author indicates that

[It is] difficult to say what form Russia's social development would have taken under the exclusive influence of its internal tendencies if it had remained isolated. Suffice it to say that this did not happen. But Russian social life, built on certain internal economic foundations, was not without influence and even pressure from the external historical-social environment. When this social and state organization, in the course of its formation, came into conflict with other neighboring organizations, the primitive nature of economic relations and the comparatively high development of its adversaries played a decisive role in the resulting process. The Russian state, born on a primitive economic basis, entered into relations and conflict with state organizations built on higher and more stable foundations. (Trotsky, 2025 [1906], n.p.)

From these writings, we see how Trotsky's approach to Russia's historical development takes into account that each country is not in a bubble, that is, it does not develop independently

of other parts of the world. Quite the contrary, the author identifies relations between countries as a fundamental determinant for understanding the Russian national question. This notion, conceived by Trotsky, matured over time and became one of the foundations of the notion of combined development. One of the first moments in which this debate appears more explicitly is in the introduction written in 1930 by the author for the German edition of the book *The Permanent Revolution*. In opposing Stalin's view of international relations in capitalism in its imperialist phase, Trotsky (2010 [1930], pp. 161-162) states that "it is false that the world economy is simply a sum of national parts of the same type. It is false to say that specific characteristics are 'merely supplementary to general characteristics' like warts on a face. Thus, Trotsky argues that national particularities "represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process." Thus, the author does not understand the national in spite of the international, but rather as determined by it. And the term combination appears in his work precisely as the materialization of what we might call, broadly speaking, the aspects of the whole that determine the part in its particularity.

These ideas matured over the years and emerged most clearly in the book *The History of the Russian Revolution*, as mentioned above. In this book, the author develops an analysis of the formation of the Russian nation, viewing it as a particularity of a more general historical development. Thus, he considers Russia's unique aspects in their relationship to the broader determinants of a country situated among (and sometimes in conflict with) many other nations developing more rapidly in the face of the consequences of the territorialization of capitalist relations, particularly in Europe.

From Trotsky's writings to those of other intellectuals who delved deeper into the debate on uneven and combined development, the centrality of this theory for analyzing the imperialist relations implemented by capital across the globe is clear. As Löwy (1998 [1995]) points out, this theory pays specific attention to the development of countries with peripheral economies, where the relationship between inequality and combination is even more evident. Considering a scalar analysis, it is also important to emphasize the relationship established between the local and the global. The combined nature of the theory also encompasses an amalgamation of



processes occurring at the local level (such as the social organization of regional dominant groups) and at the global level (such as technological advances).

When considering the spread of the theory of uneven and combined development, we must give due prominence to the Trotskyist movement. From an international perspective, the figure of George Novack is undoubtedly the most noteworthy. This American philosopher would, after Trotsky's death, become one of the greatest intellectuals of the movement that revolved around the Russian author's ideas. Beginning with *Uneven and Combined Development in History* (1988 [1957]), Novack systematized Trotsky's main contributions to the debate on the development of capitalism. From the 1940s onward, Novack would play a significant role in the debate on the theory of uneven and combined development, defending the assumptions raised by Trotsky and opposing any attempt to deconstruct its principles. This occurs, for example, in the debate he had with David J. Romagnolo (1975), a stern critic of Trotsky's ideas, including the theory of uneven and combined development. In the quote below, we have a fragment of a text Novack wrote in the 1970s in response to criticisms raised by Romagnolo in the journal *Latin American Perspectives*:

Romagnolo insists that “the focus of historical materialism is on internal development, while that of the law of uneven and combined development [is] on external relations” (1975: 18). Such a rigid dichotomy between internal and external relations is unjustified for the era of capitalist expansion that unfolded on a global scale. It is even more inadequate regarding the development of Latin America in post-Columbian times, when external forces led by the Iberians invaded the continent, subjugated and plundered its inhabitants, and radically altered previous economic and social relations. The clash and conjunction of their ways of life and work left an indelible mark on all of Latin America. (Novack, 1976, p. 101)

Beyond defending the theory of uneven and combined development, Novack plays a fundamental role in the intellectual movement of the theory precisely because he has a broader view of the theoretical construct. Thus, in addition to disseminating, to a certain extent, this author is also responsible for a certain production of the theory's outlines, mainly by systematizing it and presenting it explicitly in his writings, although he always states that it is a

production derived from Trotsky (Novack, 1988 [1957]). Besides the merit of having been one of the main disseminators of the theory of uneven and combined development, Marcel van der Linden (2007) argues that Novack was also responsible for important developments in the way the law came to be interpreted. In this sense, Novack not only disseminated but also produced and intellectually systematized the theory, emphasizing its universality in relation to human history and even biological phenomena. Furthermore, this author was a significant influence on another figure who was fundamental to the intellectual movement of the theory of uneven and combined development: Ernest Mandel. According to van der Linden (2007, p. 150), although rarely cited by the European author, Novack was a great enthusiast of his early writings.

Mandel was unequivocally one of the leading figures associated with the international Trotskyist movement, which gained prominence in academia, primarily through his debate on the development and crises of capitalism in its late period (Mandel, 1982 [1972]). Drawing on the theory of imperialism, this author develops his analysis of the particularities of this new historical moment that humanity experienced in the second half of the 20th century and how countries' development occurs differently within this context. Mandel (1970, p. 22) understood imperialism as a "[...] combined form of social development, amalgamating the most backward and most modern forms of economic activity, exploitation, and sociopolitical life, in varying forms, in different countries." Thus, this author's view of imperialism is grounded in the Trotskyist conception of combined development. His entire analysis of the particularities of countries' development in the context of late capitalism is grounded in understanding it as uneven and combined. In fact, van der Linden (2007, p. 152) draws attention to the fact that Mandel was, in fact, the first author on the European left to analyze reality from the perspective of the theory of uneven and combined development.

Thus, unlike other Marxist theories, the one we analyze here only began to be more widely disseminated in academia in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the work of Mandel. Prior to this, the theory of uneven and combined development was largely confined to the international Trotskyist movement. Thus, it is possible to affirm that, after Trotsky's (2017 [1930-1932]) major analysis of Russian reality, Mandel's work *Late Capitalism* (1982 [1972]) will be the first major

reflection on capitalist relations from the perspective of the theory of uneven and combined development, taking into account not only the author's profound reflection but also its influence on academia in the Humanities and Social Sciences, including in the Brazilian context. In several passages of the book, Mandel indicates how the theory (which he also calls "law") is fundamental to understanding the development of monopoly capitalism. From the various passages in the text, we chose one that summarizes the author's reading well.

The capitalist mode of production did not develop in a vacuum, but within a specific socioeconomic structure characterized by significant differences, for example, in Western Europe, Eastern Europe, continental Asia, North America, Latin America, and Japan. The specific socioeconomic formations—the "bourgeois societies" and capitalist economies—that emerged in these different areas during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, and which, in their complex unity (along with the societies of Africa and Oceania), comprise "concrete" capitalism, reproduce in varying forms and proportions a combination of past and present modes of production, or, more precisely, of varying, past and successive stages of the current mode of production. The organic unity of the capitalist world system in no way reduces this combination, which is specific in each case, to a factor of merely secondary importance in the face of the primacy of the capitalist traits common to the system as a whole. On the contrary: the capitalist world system is, to a considerable degree, precisely a function of the universal validity of the law of uneven and combined development [...]. (Mandel, 1982 [1972], p. 14, author's italics)

This author's vision and all of his writings on uneven and combined development were of paramount importance in the theory's reception in academic contexts such as Brazil. Mandel plays a crucial role in the circulation of theoretical constructs like the one we study: a theory that emerges in a non-university environment and is only later received and appropriated by academic debate. This author, recognized as an important figure in the European Trotskyist movement, is also recognized as a renowned academic and thus ends up being a central source, along with Trotsky, for the theory of uneven and combined development, sometimes cited more than Novack himself.

It is also worth mentioning the importance of the Franco-Brazilian Michael Löwy, highlighting two arguments that are important for considering his contribution to the reception and appropriation of the theory in the Brazilian context. First, as an exponent of the international Trotskyist movement, Löwy has always been a staunch defender of the interpretation of development as uneven and combined, since his first writings in the 1970s (Löwy, 1975). Thus, and due to his continuous contact with the academic environment of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Brazil, Löwy has been an important reference in this regard. Second, it is essentially from this author that we have in Brazil the use of the spelling "theory of uneven and combined development" instead of "law of uneven and combined development," appearing in this form in Löwy's work since the 1980s in his book on the theory (2015 [1981]).

As we will see, this Franco-Brazilian author has proven to be a very important source for the debate on the contradictory development of capitalism in academic geography in Brazil, comparable to geographers such as David Harvey and Neil Smith. In *Limits to Capital*, the English author's first major work based on the historical and dialectical materialist method, Harvey not only develops his idea of uneven geographic development but also presents an initial theoretical understanding of the term, engaging with theories of imperialism and capitalist crisis. To summarize his argument on the term, the author offers the following reflection, connecting the notion of uneven geographic development with that of spatial fix in the book's introduction. The author understands that the analysis of

[...] geographical mobilities of capital and labor shows how the contradictions of capitalism are, at least in principle, susceptible to a "spatial adjustment"—geographical expansion and uneven geographic development resist the possibility of a capitalism prone to contradiction in its own right. This leads directly to the "third cut" in crisis theory, which deals with the formation of crisis in its spatial aspects. Under this heading, we can approach the problems of imperialism and inter-imperialist wars from a new perspective. We see once again that the search for a "spatial fix" for the internal contradictions of capitalism simply ends up projecting them, albeit in new forms, onto the world stage. I argue that this allows us to construct a framework for theorizing about the historical geography of the capitalist mode of production. (Harvey, 2013 [1982], p. 39, our italics)

In the same vein as highlighting the contradiction between the tendency toward universalism in forms of capitalist reproduction and the unequal production of space, Harvey argues that this contradictory relationship sustains the territorial expansion of capital while simultaneously exacerbating the intensity of its crisis. "Therefore, it is important to recognize that territorial and regional coherence, at least partially discernible within capitalism, is actively produced rather than passively received as a concession to 'nature' or 'history'" (Harvey, 2013 [1982], p. 527). Thus, understanding the capitalist production of space implies reading unequal geographic development as its foundation. And, riddled with contradictions, the capitalist economy imprints a spatial organization marked by a development that exacerbates inequalities through the dialectical overcoming of past inequalities.

The result is that the development of capitalism's spatial economy is beset by opposing and contradictory tendencies. Spatial barriers and regional distinctions must be broken down. But the means to achieve this goal involve the production of new geographic differentiations that create new spatial barriers to be overcome. The geographic organization of capitalism internalizes the contradictions within the value form. (Harvey, 2013 [1982], p. 528)

Thus, capital reinforces existing differences in spatial organization, in a process that involves overcoming, eliminating, intensifying, and rearranging. In this sense, the author considers that the location of various capitalist enterprises reveals itself as an "active moment" in the development of capitalist relations (Harvey, 2013 [1982], p. 497). In short, based on the author's reflections in *Limits to Capital*, the notion of uneven geographic development gradually became a structuring element in his writings, appearing, with varying degrees of theoretical depth, in most of his published texts since then.

In a more recent publication, Harvey (2016 [2014]) presents uneven geographic development as one of the structuring contradictions of the capitalist mode of production. Thus, both its uncontrollable dynamics and the possibilities for overcoming it are associated with uneven geographic development—as well as with other contradictions.

Periodically, capital must break free from the limits imposed by the world it has itself constructed, or it runs the mortal risk of becoming sclerotic. In short, the construction of a geographic landscape favorable to capital accumulation in one era becomes the shackles of accumulation in the next. Capital, therefore, must devalue much of the fixed capital in the existing geographic landscape to build an entirely new landscape with a different image. This triggers intense and destructive local crises. [...] The principle here is this: capital creates a geographic landscape that satisfies its needs at one point, only to destroy it at another and facilitate further expansion and qualitative transformation. Capital unleashes forms of 'creative destruction' upon the earth. (Harvey, 2016 [2014], p. 146)

This creative-destructive nature of capital, or creative destruction in Harvey's terms, is directly associated with uneven geographic development. Indeed, the very foundation of development under the aegis of capital is based on destruction, which is a condition for circumstantially overcoming the structural crisis. The capitalist mode of production needs to create and destroy simultaneously and in concert so that its logic of uncontrollable accumulation continues.

Just to get a sense of the presence of the theory of uneven geographic development in Harvey's writings, we can mention some of the very different topics that have been the subject of the author's research, where the theory appears to a greater or lesser extent. Whether discussing the foundations of the capitalist economy (Harvey, 2011 [2010], 2018 [2017]), the particularity of imperialism in the 21st century (Harvey, 2005 [2003]), or neoliberalism (Harvey, 2008 [2005], 2009), the theory of uneven geographic development appears in Harvey's texts as a structuring apparatus for his spatial analysis.

While we can already point to several Portuguese-language references on Harvey that are important sources for Brazilian geography, the same cannot be said for Neil Smith. This Scottish author is still rarely translated in our country, which limits much of the mention of him to his main book, *Uneven Development*<sup>2</sup>, which was originally his doctoral dissertation at Johns

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth highlighting, however, the recent effort to make Neil Smith's texts available in Portuguese, such as the dossier *Neil Smith and the history of Anglo-Saxon Geography*, published in the journal *Geografias da UFMG* (Souza Neto; Bomfim; Lira, 2021), and the recently released collection *Neil Smith and his revolutionary Geography*, organized by Cruz et al (2024).



Hopkins University, under the supervision of David Harvey. In this work, Smith's purpose is to reflect on uneven development by considering the contradictions evident in the capitalist mode of production, drawing on a profound dialogue between Marxist assumptions and the debate on space as capitalist production. Thus, he analyzes the production of nature and the production of space as conditions for interpreting the geography of capitalism. In this context, the author emphasizes one of the main points that underpin the contradictory mode of capitalist development: inequality. Smith (1988 [1984], p. 151) indicates that "spatial inequality has no meaning except as part of a whole that is the contradictory development of capitalism." The capitalist mode of production develops on an already differentiated material basis, but from this base, it is consolidated by the reproduction of social relations that exacerbate differences as inequalities. These are clear in the landscape and reveal a contradictory process in which

[...] the contradictory tendencies toward differentiation and equalization determine the capitalist production of space. In action, this contradiction that arises at the heart of the capitalist mode of production is inscribed in the landscape as the existing pattern of uneven development. (Smith, 1988 [1984], p. 151)

Regarding the tendency toward equalization, the universal process of territorialization of capital is evident, implying the transformation of all social, economic, cultural, and other relations, according to the logic of capitalist reproduction. Everything tends to become a commodity, and regarding the production of space, we witness a dialectical process of social production with private appropriation. But the tendency toward equalization is established on differentiated bases that, rather than being nullified, are incorporated into the dynamics of exchange value. In this regard, he states that "uneven development is, at the very least, the geographical expression of the contradictions of capital. The geographic fixation of use value and the fluidity of exchange value translate into tendencies toward differentiation and equalization" (Smith, 1988 [1984], p. 217).

In this author's words, the 20th century represented precisely the century of uneven development. Thus, all global processes of modernization of capitalist relations of production

were organized around the establishment of a perverse and unequal logic on a scale unprecedented in social history. "Globalization, then, is merely the latest stage of uneven development, succeeding the three-decade postwar era. Thus, globalization appears as an increasingly pure form of imperialism" (Smith, 1997, p. 182). In this text, when analyzing the various promises of overcoming poverty presented to countries throughout the 20th century, Smith points out how all of them, sometimes cloaked in development discourse, sometimes associated with the construct of modernization, were nothing more than mirages compared to what we are truly witnessing today in the 21st century: a context of increased contradictions and a worsening of uneven development unlike any other society has ever seen before.

In one of his latest texts, this author revisited his book *Uneven Development*, in the context of its third edition in the United States. In addition to offering a series of reflections on the potential and limitations of his work, Neil Smith provocatively argued for always considering the approach to uneven development as something in process, which necessarily implies taking into account the historical issue and the changes taking place globally.

Today, the evidence seems overwhelming that disinvestment and underdevelopment create the opportunity for their opposite, the flood of capitalist investment and (re)development—indeed, creative destruction in a strictly geographical register. In all this, there is no way to pretend that nothing is happening, as some have recently attempted. With a few notable and not necessarily bearable exceptions, the leaders of almost every country—rich and poor, from New York to Lagos, London to Brasília, Beijing to Pretoria—have subscribed to the hypnotic addiction of neoliberal ideologies. Here we need to ask difficult questions about how even national liberation movements have transmuted into a socially divisive and sometimes violent neoliberalism, and this inevitably leads us back to Frantz Fanon and the limits of such national liberation movements. So, what is going on here with regard to uneven development? If the seesaw theory no longer seems so empirically applicable, what are we to do about Sub-Saharan Africa? To a large extent, this region remains an outsider, still widely discriminated against in the world of global finance. This may even seem to be the enigma of uneven global development. (Smith, 2011, p. 263)

Thus, one of this author's merits is precisely his ongoing quest to recontextualize theory in light of new space-time scenarios. Understanding uneven development as a geographic dimension of the contradictions inherent in the reproducibility of capitalism implies considering how its social relations manifest themselves in the most diverse territorial contexts. When we consider the first moment in which the author develops his understanding of the theory of uneven development in greater depth, namely, the transition from the 1970s to the 1980s, we see how the issue of crisis theory was central to the debate in Anglo-Saxon Radical Geography, appearing both in David Harvey's texts and in Smith's own seminal book.

Thus, it is possible to affirm that, more than simply connecting Marx's writings with the academic production of Geography, these authors' efforts also involved a proper interpretation of the historical moment of capitalism they were experiencing, with an emphasis on the issue of capitalist structural crisis. Thus, we see that the reception of theories of uneven development in both Harvey and Smith can be seen as a search by Geography intellectuals to unravel the contradictions of capitalist development that were becoming more acute in the last quarter of the 20th century.

In Smith (1986, 1988 [1984]), this concern is embodied in a concern with the contradiction established in the relationship between the processes of homogenization of capitalist relations around the world (capital as a global leveler) and the processes of differentiation that both precede and are reproduced by capitalist relations themselves (capital also as a differentiator). The author is also concerned with the processes of investment and disinvestment in various parts of the world (Smith, 1982), and how this materializes globally in the movement of capital actively producing space at different scales, among which he highlights the urban, the nation-state, and the global (Smith, 1988 [1984]). Based on this debate, also in dialogue with Harvey's (2013 [1982]) notion of spatial fix, Smith presents the notion of the “*vaivém do capital*” or “*gangorra do capital*”, which varies depending on the translation (seesaw of capital, in the original).

Having presented some of the main discussions surrounding the theory of uneven and combined development, beginning with Trotsky and authors of the international Trotskyist

movement, and the appropriation of the debate on uneven development in capitalism by Harvey and Smith's Geography, we now turn to the results of the analysis of the empirical data gathered in our investigation. As we will see, the Brazilian geographical community draws on a wide variety of sources when using the term "uneven and combined development," some of which we have not included in this section of the article, given the objective limitations of the text<sup>3</sup>

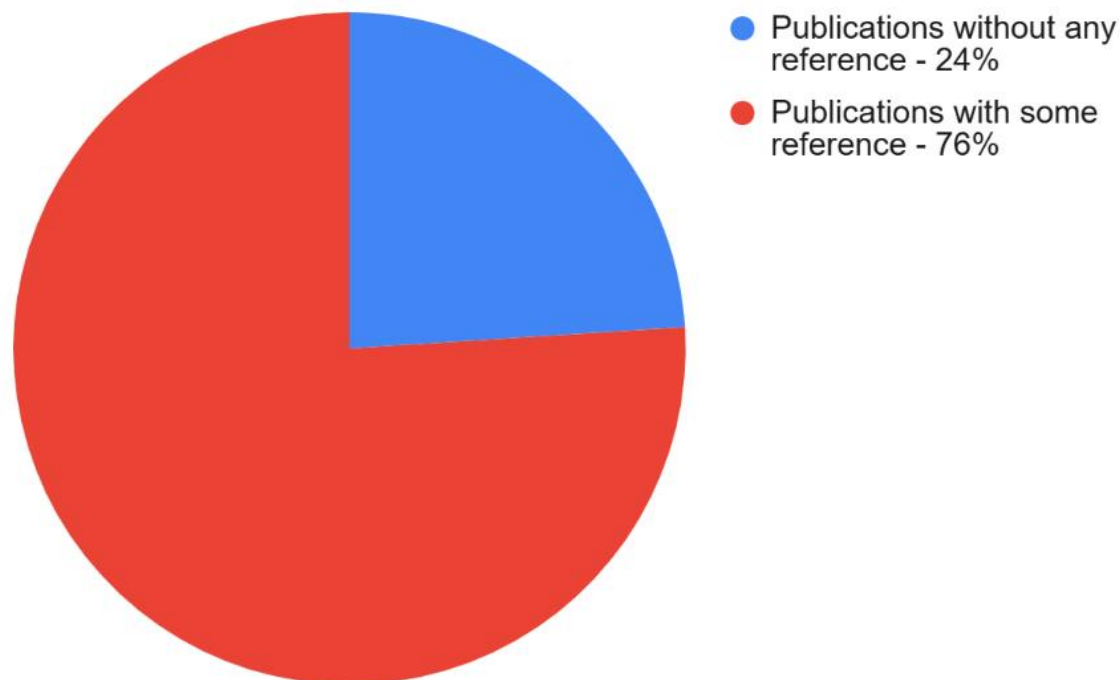
## THE PRESENCE OF L. TROTSKY AND AUTHORS OF THE TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT

Just to revisit some points already mentioned in the introduction, we reviewed a total of 663 publications of various types (books, book chapters, journal articles, conference proceedings, doctoral theses, master's dissertations, and undergraduate monographs). All of these publications are available online and were the result of a systematic review. In this universe, the first piece of information that caught our attention during the survey was the frequency of identified texts that mention the expression "uneven and combined development" without, however, citing a single author as a reference for the theory. After completing the review and systematizing the data into a graph, we obtained the following result in this regard (Figure 1).

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<sup>3</sup> In this article, we chose not to delve into Massey's interpretation of the theory of uneven development due to the journal's text length limits. Nevertheless, we emphasize the uniqueness of the author's formulations, even though, of the three Anglo-Saxon authors we highlight, she is the least mentioned in Brazilian Geography. More details about the author's perspective can be found in Marques (2022). We also consider that, given the scarcity of publications that use and analyze the writings from this early period of Massey's intellectual trajectory (between the 1970s and 1990s), we are producing a book chapter that will address the topic in due depth.

**Figure 1.** Geography publications in Brazil that mention “uneven and combined development” with or without indication of references to the theory, between 1997 and 2020.



Source: Systematic Review, 2022.

Although the vast majority of writings present some reference to the theory of uneven and combined development, we find it deeply problematic that nearly 1 in 4 Brazilian Geography publications that mention the theory do so without citing any author as a source. We believe this initial finding already provides a good representation of how the theory of uneven and combined development has been largely received by Geography in Brazil.

In our view, the data shown in Figure 1 point to a scenario in which a significant portion of publications that mention the term "uneven and combined development" do so without properly exploring the theory's complex intricacies. In other words, it's safe to say that a considerable portion of the Brazilian geography community uses this construct merely as jargon, an expression that has crystallized or become popular in the field's writings, without, however, exploring the theory's true explanatory power through the authors who produced it throughout the 20th century.

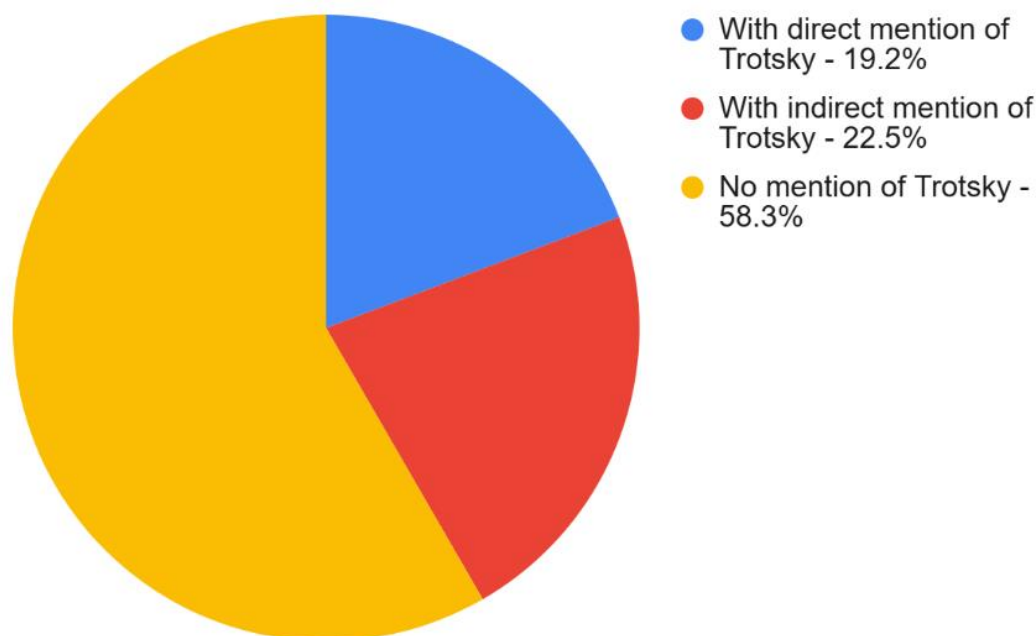
Let us now move toward a more detailed understanding of who is actually cited in Brazilian geography writings when mentioning the theory of uneven and combined development. In other words, we sought to identify the authors cited as sources in the texts reviewed when discussing the theory. To this end, and for obvious reasons, our analysis focused only on the 76% of publications that cited an author as a source—504 of the 663 texts reviewed.

We organized this part of our exhibition based on the main authors mentioned, considering names that stood out individually (Leon Trotsky) or groups of authors that, grouped together, also represent an important portion of the studies, such as authors of the Trotskyist movement (George Novack; Michael Löwy and Ernest Mandel), critical intellectuals of Brazilian social thought (Caio Prado Júnior, Florestan Fernandes, Francisco de Oliveira, José de Souza Martins and Marxist Dependency Theory), in addition to the three geographer authors who stood out in the reception of the theory of uneven development in Western Geography (David Harvey, Neil Smith and Doreen Massey).

Let's begin with Trotsky's presence in Brazilian geography writings that mention the theory of uneven and combined development. With a reasonable share, this author is easily the most frequently mentioned. However, one aspect caught our attention when we began our systematic review: many texts mentioned Trotsky without necessarily referencing the Russian author's writings. This led us to make a subdivision specifically in this case. Let's analyze the results in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Mentions of Trotsky in Brazilian Geography publications that address the theory of uneven and combined development, between 1997 and 2020, among those that mention any author



Source: Systematic Review, 2022.

The first thing we should note about this graph is the lack of mention of Trotsky. Let's emphasize that we are dealing here only with texts that cite an author when referring to the theory. We see that almost 60% of the writings do not link the theory of uneven and combined development to Trotsky. This means that most of the texts surveyed either failed to mention the intellectual origin of the theoretical construct or perhaps were not even aware that the author cited as a source is not the founding basis of the theory they cite. Obviously, the more the theory of uneven and combined development is structural to the analysis undertaken by the authors of the publications, the more common Trotsky's presence becomes. Still, it is intriguing to draw a broader picture in which the vast majority of texts that discuss "uneven and combined development" do not mention Trotsky in their writings.

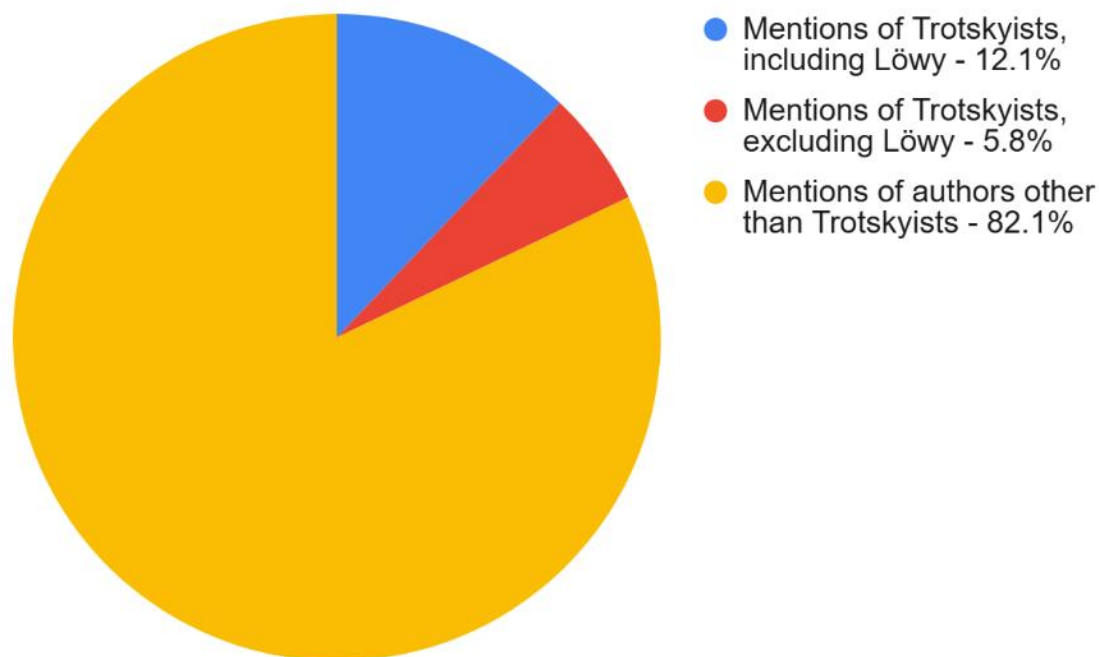
Another striking point is the remaining 41.7% of publications that mention the Russian author. More than half of these merely mention Trotsky without citing at least one of his studies that addressed uneven and combined development. In these cases, citations of Trotskyist

authors, especially Löwy, are very common as the primary source for the debate. Trotsky appears only indirectly as the creator of the theory, but the geographers who wrote it did not directly refer to the original writings. Among Löwy's texts, we highlight that the most cited in this context is an article of only eight pages, in which the author essentially introduces the theory (Löwy, 1998 [1995]). In other words, a significant portion of the texts are based on an article that only addresses elementary points of the theory, making it insufficient for those who truly intend to delve deeper into the debate.

In any case, it is worth noting that approximately 1 in 5 Brazilian Geography publications that mentioned the theory of uneven and combined development directly cited Trotsky, with or without direct fragments from the author's writings. This tends to indicate that this segment of our universe made an effort to seek the foundations of the theory in the Russian author's original works. Among the books mentioned, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (Trotsky, 2017 [1930-1932]) stands out, the first text by Trotsky that presents more explicit syntheses on the notion of combined development in relation to uneven development, as already discussed.

It's also worth noting that only a few dozen publications mention Trotsky in isolation. More commonly in the writings reviewed here, this author's debate appears in dialogue with other authors, a considerable portion of whom are linked to the Trotskyist movement. Figure 3 presents the participation of Trotskyist authors in the universe of publications considered.

**Figure 3.** Mentions of Trotskyist authors in Brazilian Geography publications that address the theory of uneven and combined development, between 1997 and 2020, among those that mention an author



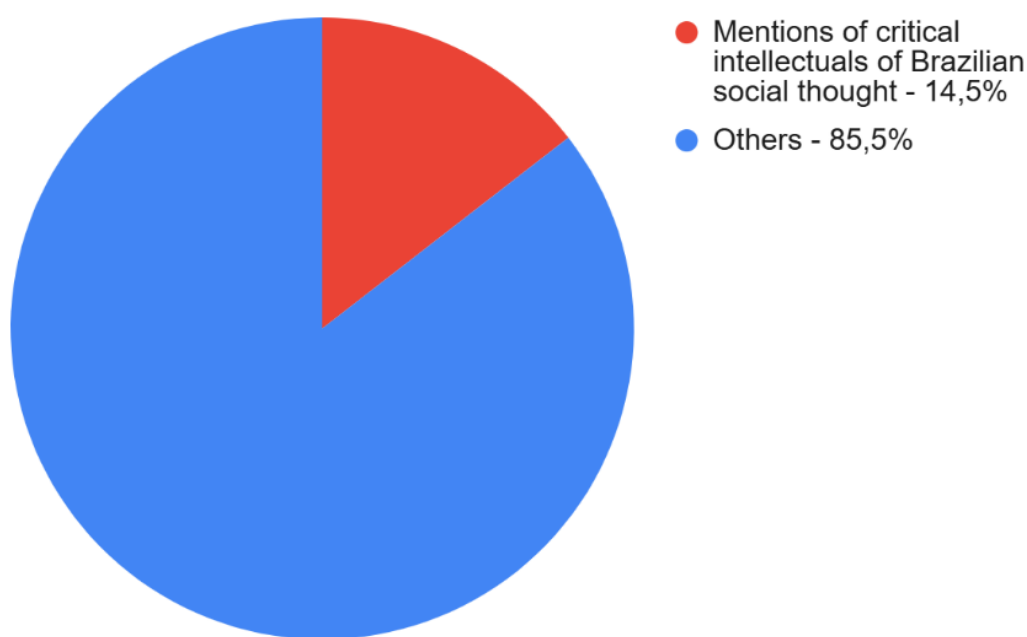
Source: Systematic Review, 2022.

In total, almost 18% of the writings considered draw on authors from the international Trotskyist movement. Among these, we highlight the presence of citations to Ernest Mandel, George Novack, and Michael Löwy. In Figure 3, we made a point of emphasizing the presence of the latter author. Löwy's importance in the reception of the theory of uneven and combined development in the Humanities and Social Sciences in Brazil is undeniable, and this presence is also evident within Geography, especially in comparison with other authors. As a Franco-Brazilian, Löwy has also played an important role in bringing the debate on the theory into Portuguese, although it is important to consider that his main book on the theory is rarely cited (Löwy, 2015 [1981]). This is in contrast to what happened with his short article published in the journal *Outubro*, as already mentioned.

## THE PRESENCE OF AUTHORS OF BRAZILIAN CRITICAL SOCIAL THOUGHT

We consider, however, that in Figure 3, we did not include all the texts that cited Brazilian authors who reference Trotskyism. Thus, only texts that mention Brazilians in conjunction with one or more authors of the international Trotskyist movement appear in blue or red. This is because we have included a separate graph below (Figure 4), specifically highlighting the presence of authors such as Florestan Fernandes and Francisco de Oliveira in a group we call "critical intellectuals of Brazilian social thought."

**Figure 4.** Mentions of critical intellectuals of Brazilian social thought in Geography publications in Brazil that address the theory of uneven and combined development, between 1997 and 2020, among those that mention an author



Source: Systematic Review, 2022.

In this elaborate excerpt, we made a point of searching in the texts for the links that the geographical community has made between the theory of uneven and combined development and authors such as Caio Prado Júnior, Florestan Fernandes, José de Souza Martins and Francisco

de Oliveira, in addition to paying close attention to possible correlations with intellectuals of Marxist Dependency Theory.

Although this grouping is quite diverse, we can observe the strong presence of some authors. Initially, it's worth highlighting the opposite: those who are generally not mentioned. Both Caio Prado Júnior and the authors of Marxist Dependency Theory (we only identified mentions of Ruy Mauro Marini and Theotonio dos Santos) appeared in only three texts and therefore cannot be considered primary sources. In almost all cases, the mention occurred in dialogue with other Trotskyist authors or with Trotsky himself. Regarding Florestan Fernandes, the author's mention was also very low, only slightly higher than those previously cited. However, we consider it necessary to highlight the excellence of Fernandes's uneven and combined reading of capitalist development. In this sense, we consider it prudent to point out that this author is still largely unsuited to Brazilian geography when addressing the theory of uneven and combined development.

Among the most cited authors, we highlight two: Francisco de Oliveira and José de Souza Martins. This also converges with what we found in our interviews. Costa (2019), for example, stated that

Chico de Oliveira was the most widely read non-geographer by critical geographers. If you ask me, "Which non-geographer influenced all Brazilian regional theory, all conceptions of Brazil?" I'd say: Chico de Oliveira. [...] José de Souza Martins and Chico de Oliveira—if you didn't read them, you were excommunicated.

Specifically, regarding F. Oliveira, it is necessary to emphasize the strong presence this author had in our systematic review. Almost half of the publications in this group directly or indirectly cite his writings, with two of his books standing out: *Crítica a razão dualista* (2003 [1972]) and *Elegia para uma re(li)gião* (2008 [1977]). As one of the authors who most clearly highlights the Trotskyist origins of the theory of uneven and combined development, F. Oliveira played an important role in the reception of the theory not only in Geography but across all the Humanities and Social Sciences in Brazil. In several of our interviews, this author was

consistently cited as one of the great references who, from the 1970s onward, was vital to theory in Brazil. We highlight some excerpts below.

the time. In Brazil, Chico de Oliveira is the man who internalized this discussion well. (Costa, 2019).

"*Elegia para uma re(li)gião*" had a big impact on me. "*Economia da dependência imperfeita*". These works helped to critique structural dualism. So the idea of uneven and combined development overcomes the idea of dualism, that vision of Jacques Lambert, who recognized the difference but didn't articulate it. The very idea of uneven and combined development helps to overcome this, and Chico was a bridge to that. (Porto-Gonçalves, 2021)

My great intellectual reference in Brazil [...] is Chico de Oliveira. [...] His vision of the Northeast, which he brought to us through the book "*Elegia para uma re(li)gião*" is the most profound geographical reading I know. [...] Chico is my matrix for one reason: he has a spatial dimension to the reading of Brazil that not even Geography people had until recently, and that we now have because of him. [...] Chico is the one who best allows me to work with this notion [of uneven and combined development]. (Moreira, 2021)

The second author who stands out in this analyzed portion of the data is José de Souza Martins. Although he was an important precursor of the Lefebvrian perspective with his Capital study group, which contributed to the formation of important names in Urban Geography and Regional Geography in Brazil (such as Amélia Damiani, Ana Fani A. Carlos, Odette C. de L. Seabra, and Sandra Lencioni), almost all of the mentions of Martins in the publications surveyed can be understood as belonging to the field of Agrarian Geography. The main reason for this is related to this author's centrality in the work of Ariovaldo U. de Oliveira. This geographer is a fundamental figure in the reception of the theory by Geography in Brazil (on this, see Marques (2023)), thus Martins ended up being read as an author who works with the uneven and combined perspective of capitalist development. However, Martins in several passages of his work makes it clear that his perspective is that of uneven development, not dealing with combined development, using for this purpose the writings of Lenin and Lefebvre as a reference (Martins, 1981, 2006, 2010 [1979]).

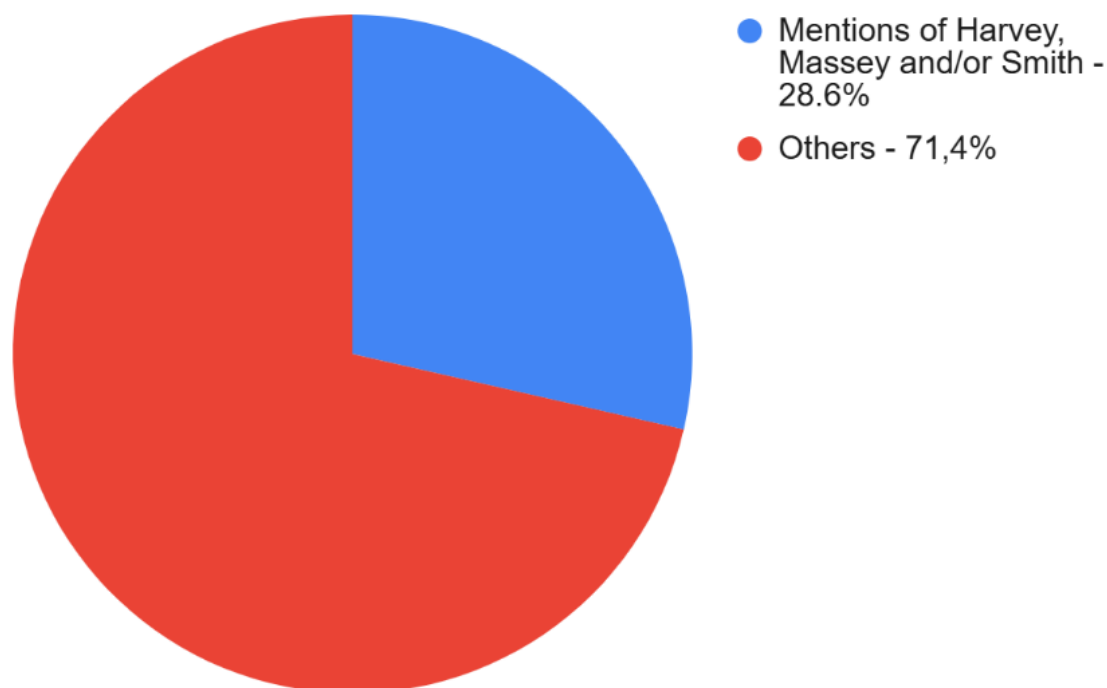


We believe, however, that part of this association also has to do with Martins's recurrent use of the notion of capitalist production of non-capitalist relations of production as an interpretative key to understanding the re-creation of the peasantry in Brazil. It is common to see in Brazilian Geography publications that this notion is one of the possible indications that Martins studies with the perspective of combined development, given that there would be an amalgamation of the new (capital) and the old (the peasantry) in development. Without delving too deeply into possible interpretations of this interpretation, what is important for us to emphasize here is that this notion of capitalist production of non-capitalist relations of production stems from the writings of Rosa Luxemburg, as Martins himself emphasizes, and not from Trotsky. Although we recognize that there are clear connections between what is put forward by both intellectuals, even due to the dialectical principle of unity of opposites that constitutes the method that both Rosa and Trotsky use, it seems inappropriate to treat them as one thing, especially since not even Martins himself does so.

## THE PRESENCE OF ANGLO-SAXON MARXIST GEOGRAPHERS

This same authorial exercise of attributing the theory of uneven and combined development to authors working from other Marxist development perspectives is also evident when we consider the next figure, where we group together all the publications that use the texts of Harvey, Massey, and Smith as sources for the theory we are analyzing (Figure 5).

**Figure 5.** Mentions of David Harvey, Doreen Massey and/or Neil Smith in Brazilian Geography publications that address the theory of uneven and combined development, between 1997 and 2020, among those that mention any author.



Source: Systematic Review, 2022.

Of the three groupings we created (Figures 3, 4, and 5), the latter presents the highest percentage. This means that neither Trotskyist authors nor critical intellectuals of Brazilian social thought (especially Francisco de Oliveira) are more present as sources of the theory of uneven and combined development than these three Anglo-Saxon authors of Geography: Harvey, Massey, and Smith. We consider, however, that neither Harvey nor Smith draw on Trotskyist development theory to develop their reflections. Massey, in turn, is the closest to this perspective, but even so, of the three authors, he is the least cited in publications (only 6 mentions in a universe of 144 publications).

It's curious to note how the vast majority of texts acknowledge that Harvey and Smith are not the original constructors of the theory, but argue that they were responsible for a geographical interpretation of uneven and combined development, something Trotsky would not have done. Specifically, Harvey is often associated with the concept of uneven geographical development, as if it were derived from the Trotskyist theoretical construct. However, at no point

in Harvey's work is there any connection between what he writes and Trotsky's legacy, other than their common basis in Lenin's theory of imperialism. As for Smith, it is intriguing to note that, even though the Scottish author makes it clear that he sees the idea of uneven and combined development as limited, several Brazilian geography authors treat him as an intellectual responsible for addressing the theory from a geographical perspective. It is worth noting that the book that is the main source for the texts citing Smith (*Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*, 1988b [1984]) is precisely one of the writings in which the author most clearly clarifies his position on the limits of Trotskyist development theory.

Regarding Harvey, we would like to consider how this author, who has published a vast number of books and articles, should be analyzed in greater detail, something that is not exactly the focus of this article. The interviews we conducted clearly reveal the diversity of views on the English author. Mamigonian (2019), for example, who is from a generation slightly earlier than the other interviewees, as well as A. Oliveira (2019), reinforce the idea that the Harvey that was read in the 1970s was essentially the same as that contained in *Explanation in Geography*, a book from Harvey's theoretical moment. Costa (2019), in turn, emphasizes that he recognizes some advances in the English author's writings, especially with *Social Justice and the City*, but that he is not exactly an author whose founding reference was the 1970s and 1980s. Silva (2021) understands that Harvey was a revolution in the 1970s with *Social Justice and the City*, as he was a well-known author who brought a markedly critical reading to urban studies. Finally, we also highlight the reflection of Conceição (2021), who was introduced to Harvey's theoretical work during her undergraduate years but only really began to delve into the author's studies in the 1990s with the publication of *The Condition of Postmodernity*.

What we're interested in emphasizing with these very different perspectives on the issue is how the same author is disseminated and received so differently in different historical moments and geographic contexts. The idea of outlining this brief, extremely differentiated panorama of the reception of a single author's work helps us realize how complex the issue we're addressing is when we delve into some details. And several determinants influence this process, such as translations. It's worth noting, in this regard, that Harvey's first major work

dealing with the concept of uneven geographic development, *Limits to Capital*, only received a Brazilian edition in 2013, although it was originally published in English in 1982. *The Condition of Postmodernity*, one of the author's biggest bestsellers in Brazil, was written after this book, although translated before<sup>4</sup>. And these intricacies demonstrate how different the receptions of the work are in different decades. It's no coincidence that Harvey has become an important reference for the debate we are analyzing here in the 21st century, following the publication of several of his texts in Portuguese by Loyola and Boitempo.

## CONCLUSIONS

Uncovering the processes of reception and appropriation of a given theory is always a long process, with numerous twists and turns and no linearity. This greatly helps us understand how different fields of scientific knowledge deal differently with the most diverse theoretical and conceptual contributions. Regarding the theory of uneven and combined development present in Brazilian Geography, this article presents only some data derived from a systematic review that can help us paint a picture of a tangled landscape of sources and authors.

It's worth highlighting both presences and absences in these results. Regarding the latter, we were struck by the high number of texts surveyed that mention the theory of uneven and combined development without providing any source, or only mention Trotsky without citing even one of his works as a reference. This seems to us to be a significant weakness and could be a relevant investigative avenue for researchers wishing to analyze the presence of other theoretical contributions in Geography and the Humanities and Social Sciences in general.

Regarding the presence of authors, we highlight five. Trotsky himself is by far the most cited, which indicates a certain referential basis in a significant portion of the texts analyzed. Also noteworthy are non-geographical authors: Löwy and F. de Oliveira, intellectuals who have

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting, as the reviewers of this article rightly point out, that before the translation of *Limits to Capital*, we had in 2004 the Portuguese version of *Spaces of Hope*, originally published in English in 2000. This is another good example of how the translation and publication processes are important for us to think about the reception and appropriation of theories and concepts.

always rigorously associated theory with the Russian author's writings and are fundamental sources for some of the texts analyzed. Among the non-Brazilian geographers, we highlight Harvey and Smith. The former, with his theorizing on uneven geographic development, has proven to be a fertile intellectual source for critical publications within and outside the field of Geography. Smith, a writer of refined theoretical and conceptual elaboration, is still an author who needs to be translated more into Portuguese and thus contribute more to the debate on the contradictory development of capitalist relations in Brazil. We emphasize, however, that neither of these authors deal specifically with the theory of uneven and combined development and are often mistakenly associated with it.

Finally, we would like to emphasize the full power of the theory of uneven and combined development for analyzing capitalism in realities such as Brazil. We believe that, although frequently mentioned, this theoretical construct remains underexplored in academic writings within our geographic community. Therefore, we would very much like this article to be understood not only as a summary of a research study, but also as an invitation to further theoretical and methodological exploration and refine our critical frameworks.

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