

TERRITORIAL APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT AND THE CHALLENGE OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL METHODOLOGICAL INSTRUMENT: DOSSIER PRESENTATION

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Since the second half of 2020, a group of more than thirty researchers from twenty universities in Brazil, Portugal, Spain and Argentina have carried out an investigation to propose and validate a methodological instrument that will suit the territorial perspective of analysis. The aim is to contribute to the elaboration of territorial diagnoses that favour the prospecting of innovative and sustainable development alternatives, being territorial heritage the reference. It is the research project "*Territorial heritage as a reference in the development process of territories or regions*"². With complementary purposes and in parallel to that, there are two other ongoing research initiatives, under the coordination of members from the same research group: (i) *Territorial heritage as a reference in the development process of territories or regions: epistemic-theoretical assumptions and proposal for a methodological instrument* (PPGDTS-UFPR); (ii) *Territorial heritage as a reference in the development process of territories or regions: a study in three regions from Rio Grande do Sul* (FAPERGS).

The research team was formed throughout 2020, motivated by activities coordinated by the Ibero-American Network of Studies on Territorial Development and Governance (REDETEG), in partnership with the Brazilian Network for Research and Management in Territorial Development (RETE), which included the hosting of thematic seminars, with the participation of experts as speakers through virtual meetings.

The first stage in the execution process of the research in reference was dedicated to mapping the epistemic-theoretical-methodological assumptions that would meet the territorial perspective of analysis, in order to guide the preparation of methodological procedures which would be a foundation for the recognition and analysis of socio-economic-cultural and environmental contexts, with a view to prospecting innovative and sustainable alternatives for territorial development. Thus, it was epistemologically understood that the New Systems Theory, the Complexity Theory, the Historical-Dialectical Materialism and the theoretical perspective of Decentralisation and Decoloniality should serve as epistemic fields in the analysis and territorial prospecting³.

Considering the territorial perspective of analysis, each of the epistemic fields provides implications of theoretical and methodological nature in relation to the object of research - the territory -, as summarized in Table 1.

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³ The approach on epistemic fields is made in Dallabrida, Rotta and Büttendebender (2021).

Table 1: Epistemic fields and their implications for the object of analysis

Epistemic Field	Implications in regard to the object of research
The New Systems Theory	The territory requires analysis as a set of components (socio-economic-cultural-environmental) and variables organised variables, interdependent and integrated.
The Complexity Perspective	It requires an understanding of reality from its various interrelated dimensions, in an attempt to overcome disciplinary or sectoral approaches when analysing complex realities such as the territory.
Historical-dialectical materialism	Historical and social interpretation of reality, in an effort to capture the articulations of problems, analyse developments and trace the connections between territorial phenomena and territorial situations.
The Decoloniality perspective	The perspective of decoloniality implies that decolonialising the theory is one of the steps to bring about autonomy and territorial power.
The decentralisation perspective	The decentralisation perspective proposes territorial planning and management in a way it converges towards overcoming practices, in which territorial plans or strategies take as a reference the most dynamic sectors to the detriment of the peripheral ones.

Source: Compiled by the authors, based on Dallabrida, Büttenbender and Rotta, 2021)

Each of these epistemic fields suggests a series of principles, which have implications for the analytical perspective, as well as methodological implications. There is a summary in table 1.

Table 2: Principles, analytical perspective and methodological implication in the territorial analysis and territorial prospectation

Principles	Analytic perspective required	Methodological implications
Interdependency	The different dimensions of reality not only have their own form of organisation, but are also interrelated. This requires an analysis from their various interrelated dimensions	Consider the interdependence of variables.
Integration	It is necessary to recognise the links and connections between different problems and potentials.	Consider the possible links and connections.
Multidimensionality	Objects or phenomena have several facets and must be considered from several points of view.	Variables need to be multidimensionally analysed.
Multidisciplinary	Complex realities, such as territorial context, do not allow monodisciplinary interpretations, implying an effort to overcome disciplinary or sectoral approaches.	The variables must allow analyses that transcend the disciplinary view.
Anti-reductionism (holism)	Objects and phenomena need to be understood in an integral way, and cannot be separately explained by the properties of their parts.	Prioritise the vision of the whole over the parts.
Plurality (pluralism)	It implies an equitable consideration of the subject's knowledge and cosmovision, and the different possible interpretations of reality	Considering views or interpretations, even if not dominant.
Incompleteness	Reality has a dynamic character, and it is necessary to analyse the characteristics displayed and their possible evolution.	Analysing possible future developments of phenomena and characteristics perceived at the moment.
Incertitude	The analysis of an object or phenomenon demands much more projection of scenarios than definitive answers or proposals.	
Contradiction	Different perceptions are not necessarily reflected, it may only result from the disparity between the concepts used in the description of the object or the interpretation of the phenomenon.	Evaluating options that contradict the momentary perception of reality may be an option.
Totality	Despite its particularities, the analysis of a spatial cut (territory, region or municipality) does not fully explain a reality, as it is part of a spatial totality, which is explained by the interrelation of the parts.	Assess reality in a contextualised way (regional, national, and worldwide).

Historicity	A set of antecedent factors has conditioned the current situation of an object or phenomenon with future trends. However, its future situation can be redirected by new spatial and temporal conditioning factors	Evaluating reality according to possible historical conditions (yesterday/tomorrow).
Autonomy	The analysis of a given reality should consider the deconstruction of essentialisms, or dominant conceptions, allowing alternatives that favour autonomy and territorial power.	General indicatives serve as referents and not as determinants, by allowing the expression of specificity.
Decentralisation	The analyses and alternatives prospected in a given spatial context need to consider the perspective of dynamic and peripheral sectors in an equitable manner.	All dimensions of local reality need to be considered equitably.
Relationality	Territory is a field of relations (society x nature, individuals x societies), therefore structured in the form of networks.	Considering variables in their relational dimension.
Inclusion (social and spatial)	Solutions and alternatives should pay close attention to inclusiveness, both social and spatial.	When proposing alternatives, prioritise the one that serve the largest number of beneficiaries, both personally and spatially.
Equanimity	Territorial resources, goods and services require equitable social redistribution, tending towards the construction of less unequal societies.	
Innovation (territorial smartification)	Solutions and alternatives need to acknowledge technological and socio-technical innovations in the current stage of civilisation, and future perspectives shall be equitably enjoyed.	Alternatives to solve challenges must meet the perspective of innovation and creativity.
(Environmental) Sustainability	All the stated principles, the guidelines and alternatives suggested should be directed towards the preservation and enhancement of life in all its forms of expression.	Proposed alternatives must have uninterrupted replicability, respecting life in all its forms of manifestation.

Source: Compiled by the authors, based on Dallabrida, Rotta and Büttenbender (2021) and Dallabrida et al. (2021a)

In Dallabrida et al. (2021a), progress was made, resorting to the main conceptual categories used in publications dealing with territorial studies, in addition to making reference to the methods of approach and procedure, highlighting that: (i) territorial approach has the territory conceptual category as central, constituted by the interrelation of its multiple dimensions, synthesized in the territorial heritage category; (ii) territorial approach needs to assume the conceptual category known as territorial development as a new "multidisciplinary scientific paradigm", which allows to encompass the plurality of interests and motivations present in the territory; (iii) as a result, it is urgent to advance in the adoption of methodological approaches and procedures that, necessarily, favour the inter-fertilisation of knowledge and the triangulation of methods.

As for the territorial heritage category, we assume the meaning expressed in Dallabrida (2020a), as the set of assets and resources, material and immaterial, which have accumulated throughout history in a given territory, resulting from historical processes of socioeconomic and cultural construction and reconstruction in the relationship with the surrounding environment. It results from the interactions between its six dimensions: (i) productive - financial resources, land, machinery, equipment and infrastructure; (ii) natural - the natural landscapes (which have or have not undergone anthropisation processes), soils, minerals, fauna and flora; (iii) human and intellectual - the know-how, academic and professional training, knowledge and creativity; (iv) cultural - values and codes of conduct, cultural assets and corporate culture; (v) social - socially shared values, forms of association and social networks locally established; and (vi) institutional - public and private institutions of a social, cultural, political or corporate nature. These dimensions are the subject from the six articles in this dossier.

In terms of theoretical basis, the research assumed an axiomatic structure based on four categories, namely: territory, governance, heritage and territorial development, as summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Territory and territorial dynamics of development

Source: Developed by the authors (2021)

It starts from three categories - nature, society and culture - which encompass the constitutive bases of territory in a broad conceptual understanding. The other elements of the axiomatic structure can be understood on the basis of the following integrating synthesis: (i) a starting category, the territory, as a socio-territorial structure in which its parts interrelate; (ii) territorial governance as a category of intermediation, a process representing how different interests/intentions are confronted, with the purpose of building convergences regarding the territorially desired future; (iii) a resulting category which comprehends that every structure, temporally and historically constructed, takes on a form, represented by the territorial heritage in this case; (iv) a category of functionality, which understands that the confrontation between different future projects results in spatial configurations, administratively demarcated (municipalities, regions, countries) or by identity relations, anchorage and belonging to a place (territories), as a function of the form, which we call territorial (or local/regional) development, and is a part of the desired utopia and its momentary concreteness - representing the possible reality. This axiomatic structure represents the territorial dynamics of development, meeting the territorial perspective of interpretation and analysis.

Besides the epistemic-theoretical-methodological contributions already mentioned, the research proposed to take the first steps in the purpose of structuring a "multidimensional methodological matrix" during the year of 2021. Thus, the research team was divided into six groups, coinciding with the dimensions of the territorial heritage, with the purpose of deepening the theoretical reflection on each dimension, explaining their components, suggesting analysis variables and indicating appropriate methodological procedures for the investigation of this dimension in the

context of territorial heritage research. This reflection process resulted in six texts, which are part of the present dossier: (i) *Territorial approach to development: a methodological look at the cultural dimension and its components*; (ii) *Territorial approach to development: a look from social dimension*; (iii) *Territorial approach to development: natural dimension and contributions to diagnosis and prospection of scenarios*; (iv) *Territorial approach to development: theoretical and methodological references from the productive dimension*; (v) *Territorial approach to development: a look from the institutional dimension of territorial heritage*; (vi) *Territorial approach to development and its human and intellectual dimension: a theoretical and methodological proposition in the light of Amartya Sen and John Thompson*.

The purpose behind the elaboration of the six articles is that they inspire new reflections and contributions for future advances regarding the theme. The texts as a whole can be conceived as theoretical-methodological references with a view to structuring a "multidimensional methodological matrix" for diagnosis, analysis and territorial prospection.

The research carries on. Over the next two years we intend to finalise the structuring of a "multidimensional methodological matrix", adequate to the territorial perspective of analysis. The aim is to contribute to the elaboration of territorial diagnoses which favour the prospecting of innovative and sustainable alternatives for development, taking as a reference territorial heritage. Once structured, it will be validated by its application in socioeconomic, cultural and environmental realities, in territorial areas to be defined in the investigation process⁴.

Finally, we bear in mind that guiding territorial analysis and prospection based on the epistemic-theoretical-methodological principles mentioned here, require a high degree of complexity, almost a Herculean task. The group of researchers involved in the present research process took up the challenge to theoretically and methodologically reflect and advance in their research practices, in order to meet the demands of territorial approach to development. This was just a little walk; there is still a long way to go in an uninterrupted learning process.

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⁴ A text, still in press, proposes guidelines in the relationship between State and society, in articulation processes focused on territorial planning and management, in order to contribute to the construction of "capacities to strengthen territorial governance practices". (DALLABRIDA et al., 2021b).