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GEOGRAPHY AND CAPITALISM: RETHINKING CONTRADICTIONS (*)

...non scordate che siete un proprietario/
a voi spetta solo coordinare/muovere i pezzi sulla scacchiera.

S. Massini, *Lehman Trilogy*,

Beyond contradictions. – This Roman workshop, based on the last book by D. Harvey, *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* (2014), follows the Florentine workshop on T. Piketty's book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. What emerges are topics that are interrelated to each other, argumentations that start being outlined, as well as first answers that are given to the most pressing questions. All of this becomes possible in the name of a eminent problematization of the capitalist relationship: what is the role of territoriality in the genesis and development of that relationship? And how can the discipline of geography – and precisely geographers – makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the role of territoriality, at the theoretical, methodological and empirical-analytic level?

This is not clearly a new set of problems; and what is at stake is the primary, but not occasional, responsibility to critically recover substantial contributions made by our discipline to this field. I think for example of French scholars who reflected on late colonialism, after Brazzaville (especially Suret-Canale) and their fragmented, but not dissolved, heritage; or to new Iberian (against Franco and Salazar movements), «*Bolivarian*» Latin American, anti-imperialist research itineraries. I also think of broad experiences related to scientific journals such as *Antipode* and *Herodote*, without forgetting significant experiences as it was «*Geografia Democratica*» in Italy, or, the tradition of «anarchist geography» that has been able to sustain the emancipatory potential of an openly «political» territorial knowledge (Ferretti, 2007) since its disciplinary institutionalization, in the second half of the Nineteenth century (Capel, 1987).

Yet, this set of problems is linked to new empirical experiences and novel conceptual reflections as it is shown by different studies, including the two books that we have referred to in the Roman and Florentine workshops. Furthermore, if we want to discuss contradictions, although in the context of a critique that I will try to explain later on, it is important to understand both old and new contradictions. Similarly, it is worth grasping the original combinations that originate from what Harvey calls «foundational contradictions» and generate significant impact on what Harvey defines as «the moving contradictions» and «the dangerous contradictions». As Harvey puts it, these contradictions have dangerous effects on the immediate present, «not only for the ability of the economic engine of capitalism to continue to function but also for the reproduction of human life under even minimally reasonable conditions» (p. 126). Considering the «interactive and dynamic» character of these contradictions also due to the multifaceted ways in which they originate and develop throughout time, the issue becomes particularly complex. In this way, the results of these historical contradictions – which are easily recognized as being «economic» crises not only by *mainstream economics*, but also by the media and public opinion – are intertwined with deepest long-term crises¹ that are not necessarily

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considered to be «economic» crises, but they continue developing being incisively aggravated by short-time crises each time. A good example is the environmental crisis that originated before the fall of the Berlin Wall and went through short-time crises, at the same time growing worse, as we know². However, we should remind ourselves, here at the Italian Geographic Society, that all the crises affecting territoriality are long-term ones³; and very few of them are acknowledged as «economic» crises⁴. Actually, some of them are not even seen as a «crisis»: we can think, for example, about land use, a theme on which P. Bonora (2015) is developing a kind of «civil geography» that is becoming more and more present in public debate.

I closed my *Introduction* to the Florence seminary (Turco, 2015) with a call to deserve special attention to the political nature of economy: more specifically, it is a matter of going back to political economy, as Harvey does indeed. This makes sense, above all, since the devices of capital take «politics» as a crucial part of their «technicality». In this regard, it is worth reading newspapers on May 4, 2015 to get a further confirmation of this: the credit rating agencies *Fitch* and *Moody's* «promoted» the *Italicum*, just a few hours after the passage of this controversial electoral law⁵. The typical globalitarian claim of the devices of capital – to take into its hands not only functional means, but also genuine political ownerships – highlights that capitalism undertakes a crucial role in constructing what Foucault calls «governmentality», that is to say a set of social «laws», also including those of them that are not concerned with the economy.⁶

¹ In particular, it is worth mentioning here the four big crises of globalitarian capitalism after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989: the crisis of the Asian stock markets, of sovereign debt, of the *new economy*, and of the real estate market crash of 2008, of which «we are not yet out», as it is improperly argued. In this regard, I wish to remind you that the real estate market crash started in the United States because of lightly financial practices that has been applied in a systemic way on a wider scale, affecting the rest of the world, and particularly Europe. It is Europe, indeed, that «is not yet out» of this crisis, at least for what concerns its weakest components (Italy is of course among them) in the globalitarian scenario; whereas the United States have been out of it since a long time ago and their real estate market is rapidly growing at this time. The above mentioned financial practices are permitted by the law of the United States, that is to say one of the cornerstones of globalization, confirming that positive law can be regarded as a relevant institution of capitalism.

² For a critical analysis of the geographical discussion on the environmental crisis, see Castree (2008a and 2008b), McCarthy, Prudham, (2004), McCarthy (2006).

³ However, crises affecting territoriality are characterized by different temporalities, depending on the fact that they are involved in the genesis, development, or the resulting phase of the crisis. Said differently, it depends on what kind of territoriality is involved in the crisis: constitutive, configurative, or ontological territoriality. Mangani's research (2012) on landscape temporality is of great interest in this regard.

⁴ This happens despite there is a number of studies, such as those by B. Secchi (especially 1980), on the building cycle that are not formalized as a part of the debate in *economics* and (perhaps for this very reason?) are not considered as crisis factors or structural elements of the economic cycle neither by the media nor by the majority of public opinion. As M. Tinacci (2008) reminds us, thermodynamic foundations of the economic system, conceptualized by Georgescu-Roegen (especially 1982), have not changed the foundations of *mainstream economics*; although they represent an important achievement in the economic thinking. This could perhaps mean that these approaches have been ignored, but it does not mean that they have been discarded in the light of proper scientific knowledge. As it is known, some ideas of Georgescu-Roegen are taken up by Rifkin (2014), who proposes a reflection in line with the *Zeitgeist* and the needs of new media fast communication, at the same time clearly describing the functioning of the global cultural supermarket termed by Bauman (2011).

⁵ This is the most recent episode that one can quote among the many events that characterize what L. Gallino (2013) does not hesitate to describe as a systemic «attack on democracy». Although attention remains largely focused on the Greek events («Grèce, le coup d'Etat silencieux» is the title of a recent intervention by Kouloglou in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 2015), what significantly contributes to foster the non-economic «extension» of globalitarian capitalism is the TTIP (*Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership*) that «would increase the size of the EU economy around €120 billion (or 0.5% of GDP) and the US by €95 billion (or 0.4% of GDP). This would be a permanent increase in the amount of wealth that the European and American economies can produce every year» (http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/september/tradoc_151787.pdf). On the globalitarian stakes of the TTIP, beyond a kind of «shamanic» references to the «free market» and its «regulatory» capacities, see Jennar and Lambert (2014).

⁶ The problem of the capitalist acquisition of the governmentality goes far beyond the above-mentioned episode, which is, however, of limited «global» significance. Without forgetting what we said about the TTIP in the previous note, it is worth highlighting that this problem has an historical dimension and it is closely joined up with the territorialization process, in the many forms and at the different scales that can be observed. In view of a widespread and consolidated sensibility of

I would like to consider the issue in a more detailed way. We can say that capitalism is the device through which capital does the job: specifically, capital is first accumulated and it is distributed at a later stage. Despite all the efforts that have been made to classify, theorize and empirically analyze the crises of capitalism, also in an historical perspective, the point is that these crises do not change into contradictions, and into the explosive contradictions that should mark the end of capitalism even less so⁷. On the contrary, this can be viewed, without changing the result, as if the capitalistic device were able to contain contradictions, preventing, in this way, their destructive explosion. The capitalist device is able to do this through an incredible (a word that is widely used by Harvey) metamorphic process, by transforming contradictions into crises and at the same time changing situations that might put it in danger into situations that it is generally able to manage⁸. We are not saying anything new here: the Maoist theory of contradictions – introducing the distinction between «antagonistic» and «non-antagonistic contradictions» – had already contributed to highlighting, proposing a internal interpretation of Marxism, on the one hand, the universal character of contradictions that may develop «in the people» as well, and, on the other hand, a possible way of weakening these contradictions by transforming them into «crises»⁹.

If this interpretation is correct, it is important to push the reflection forward along some peculiar lines. First of all, the focus moves from contradictions to crises. Crises are understood as the ability of discernment and judgment, and the ability, more precisely, to make appropriate decisions when facing something unexpected or undesired. The objective and logic power of any contradiction (even just its «dialectic» power as Harvey puts it) is moderated through an exercise of evaluation that redefines its own rules: who decides that there is a crisis? What type of crisis are we talking about¹⁰? Who is contributing to its solution? And what are finally the very interests and cultures based on which new social arrangements are defined and the rules of the game are re-defined?

Following this shift of focus, actors maps become central, on the one side, as they change and reorganize themselves at every crisis (in this sense, the crisis can be regarded as a great opportunity for social reconfiguration, as well as the emergence of new forms of power and leadership). On the other side, what becomes also crucial is the crisis management mechanism, which works on both

ancient studies on these issues (Turco, 2016), new attention is increasingly devoted to later periods of history, such as the Medieval period (on which – besides a classic as it is Brunner, 1983 – I would like to mention at least Somaini, 2012), or the long-term transition scenarios (Romano and Vivanti, 1978). To understand the core of the argument and go back to the contemporary scene – specifically regarding tactical and strategic alliances between the institutions of globalitarian capitalism and state entities and their governments (for all, the IMF) – it is worth mentioning «intrusions» that have very serious impacts on politics, which are harmful for the autonomy of politics (and for any historical consideration); as it can be understood reading though a J.P. Morgan's report according to which the anti-Fascist Southern Europe Constitutions could be a problem for a good functioning of the economy (<http://issuepedia.org/mw/wikiup/7/72/JPM-the-euro-area-adjustment--about-halfway-there.pdf>).

⁷ Even Harvey's «dangerous contradictions» seem to be more dangerous for «human survival» than for «the economic engine of capitalism».

⁸ An illuminating example – in understanding capitalism ability to provide tools for fostering a cultural metamorphosis from contradictions to crisis, limiting the adverse traits of crises while valuing the argumentative and documentary power of the «critique» – is offered in Boltanski and Chiappello (2011).

⁹ Mao's thought about contradictions is primarily outlined in his 1937 philosophical essay «On Contradiction» (*Selected Works*) and in his 1957 essay «On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People» (*The Little Red Book*). The transition from a type of contradiction to another one is not predicted at all and it is not always possible, as the social and political cataclysms of the Chinese Cultural Revolution have clearly demonstrated.

¹⁰ For example, a crisis (and what kind of crisis...) is described in the information that I get from the press (*Repubblica*, 23/5/2015, p. 17), while I was finishing this paper and clearly connected to Expo 2015 Milano. It was written that 1,300 MT of food are worldly produced of which 670 MT are lost. I'm not talking about world hunger, undernutrition, malnutrition, or food vulnerability according to international politics or to what I would like to call a kind of «moral» debate: on these issues, it is worth consulting the latest FAO report on global food insecurity that has been recently published (<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Etat%20de%20l'insecurite%20alimentaire.pdf>). Rather, I refer to the technical (dis-)abilities of the globalitarian capitalist system: specifically, I refer to its structural functioning, both on the internal (production/distribution) side of the system and the external side of it considering its relations with other social devices, and particularly politics. In short, despite not mentioning the paradox of the butterfly's wings, I think it is worth relating, maybe through a kind of *fuzzy* mathematical correlation, 670 MT of lost food to migrants landings in Lampedusa.

accumulation and distribution under capitalism. Regarding accumulation, crises are managed by «inventing» new forms of capital¹¹, which in turn produce new capitalist devices. Regarding distribution, crises are managed by putting at stake, for example, what can be considered as weak positions in the distribution of surplus (profits, incomes, difference between exchange value and use value) and in that of the total value, namely the new accumulated capital added to the capital that was already available.

However, there is a common aspect that should be considered referring both to accumulation and distribution. That is to say that an unsatisfactory distribution causes a bad accumulation. This means that if capitalism is focused on distribution too much, while it is not enough concerned with accumulation, it will not be able to support capital in the best way because it fails to guarantee the proper conditions for the accumulation of capital over the medium period, and especially over the long period, beyond its illusory short-term *performances*. Everyone remembers that Ford raised wages of his workers to allow them to be able to buy the cars that they produced. However, the matter is much more complicated than expected, especially considering that an inefficient capitalistic relationship in terms of distribution: i.) has a strong influence on what we can call, taking up Lefebvre's words, the «State mode of production» (Lefebvre, 1977), at the same time undertaking a relevant role in the crisis of the Welfare State; ii.) reduces chances of any real political action, as politics cannot act on the economy using «political» tools but it is obliged to use legal and normative tools¹².

In the light of these considerations, the political sense of the economy should be reaffirmed starting with the conditions of a crisis apparition and the ways in which it is managed (accumulation/distribution) through a continuous definition and re-definition of actors maps. Therefore, the need for a political economy that simultaneously implies overcoming «rarefied» self-referential forms of economy – which, as the Queen of England has even noted¹³, are useless to analyze and foresee the actual dynamic development of the economy – can be precisely referred to the attempt to re-attribute the responsibility to society, and mainly to its wider forms of representation, for processes that define:

- i. A sense of crisis;
- ii. An accumulative crisis management;
- iii. Finally, the distributive crisis management.

This could be done in the context of variable shifting forms of government that are, in any case, firmly linked to democracy, and where inviolable rights are firstly respected and not only conditions of appropriation but also of orientation of «social value» – taking up Harvey's word – are regulated. This social value must be protected in itself and also because of its «remunerative» value as capitalist accumulation can occur thanks to it.

Beyond constitutive territoriality – If I were to say what part of Harvey's book I felt closer to my scientific concerns, I would say «Uneven Geographical Developments and the Production of Space». It is Chapter 11 included in Part Two devoted to «The Moving Contradictions», which provide «much of the energy and much of the innovative zest in the co-evolution of both capital and capitalism and opens a wealth (and I use that word advisedly as meaning a potential flourishing of human capabilities rather than of mere possessions) of possibilities for new initiatives»¹⁴.

¹¹ For example, the «conversational capital» for the Web 2.0 and later framework; or the territorial capital, which we will consider later in this essay.

¹² It is possible to observe, once again, that the focus of the capitalist relation is moved more and more to the realm of law, and particularly to international law, as what we are considering in the globalitarian capitalism.

¹³ The episode dates back to November 2008 and is well known: visiting the *London School of Economics*, Elizabeth asked, with refined candor, why distinguished scholars had not foreseen the credit crunch running over Europe that was worrying her so much. What is less well-known, however, is that a debate has been started, in response to the question posed by the Queen, by British economists in the following months, referring to a deficit of «imagination» as cause for the lack of provision for the financial crisis.

¹⁴ It is worth considering that Harvey points out here that the word «wealth» is used «advisedly as meaning a potential flourishing of human capabilities rather than of mere possessions» (p. 218).

This Chapter made me think a lot. The concept of uneven development is central. It is true, however, that this concept is not new in the «geographical» analysis of capitalism, starting with Rosa Luxemburg at least. Yet, Harvey's work paves the way for new perspectives on uneven development, at least for those who are committed to building plural visions of territoriality as well as a complex conceptual understanding of the process of territorialisation.

Harvey brilliantly understands the process of territorialisation in its constitutive dimension and describes the particular role that this process undertakes in the capitalistic relationship¹⁵. However, it seems that Harvey ends up ignoring the other articulations of territoriality (Turco, 2010). What results from this is the reduction, in an implicit or explicit way, both of the «configurative» and «ontological» territoriality to their forced (and therefore misleading) «constitutive» dimension only. This is shown by the inaccurate language that is used in the book, where words lack conceptual meaning as they are not recognized as «existential realities», as layers of the world. That is to say that words are not regarded as relevant but also essential «references» for the «development of human capabilities». Thus, «words» cannot become «concepts»: not only are they not problematized in the sense of a theoretically significant definition¹⁶; but they are also not problematized one another. For instance, words such as «landscape» (geographic), «place», «environment» (spatial), «space» (geographic), «spatial competition», and, of course, «production of space» are used as they were synonyms and they are (almost) completely interchanged. The «geographical landscape» seems sometimes to take on the role of «inclusive totality»¹⁷ and becomes territory *tout court*¹⁸. The «environment», to which Harvey properly devoted much attention, is also «reduced» to «nature»¹⁹. This last is certainly involved in any conceptualisation of environment that one should propose, but nature is not sufficient by itself to express the cultural values and social meanings as well as the transformative practices and policies that play a relevant role in environmental configurations (Faggi and Turco, 2001; Turco, 2014)²⁰.

Based on this, Harvey describes the success of capital and its successful operations by proposing his own geographical theory of capitalism. Among these successful operations, crisis generation and management are of essential importance. Said differently, what is important is a possible resolution of the crisis capable of maintaining and consolidating the needed conditions for the further development of capitalism. In its essential composition, the circularity might be the following:

CRISIS²¹----→TERRITORY²²----→ UNEVEN GEOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT²³----
→ POLITICAL REORGANISATION²⁴----→CRISIS OVERCOMING²⁵

¹⁵ For further information on this, see at least Harvey, 2005 and 2011.

¹⁶ In this regard, it is worth considering that any proper theoretical investigation is also a risky task because any scientific discovery might imply conjectural elements that can falsify the research achievements, according to Popper's falsification scheme.

¹⁷ On this, see the first page of Chapter 11: «Capital strives to produce a geographical landscape favourable to its own reproduction and subsequent evolution...The geographical landscape of capitalism...is, however, rendered perpetually unstable...The contradictions...are all writ large and given material form in the geographical landscape...How the landscape evolves affects capital accumulation...» (p. 146).

¹⁸ Or, we should perhaps say «space», a concept that is more appropriate for Harvey's language, which is based on H. Lefebvre's work (1974) regarding this argument (as well as several others).

¹⁹ Harvey does not certainly simplify the conceptual meaning of environment as many geographers and social scientists have been doing, but still he exceeds, in my opinion, the limit allowed by analyses such as those mentioned above: Castree's or Quaini's work (1974, especially Chapter V) that Harvey does not unfortunately know, but also Foster's research (2000), which Harvey knows and quotes.

²⁰ It is after all the ability to move from a conceptual perspective on environment reduced to nature to a novel viewpoint based on configurative geography that characterizes the few successful attempts of our discipline to contribute, from different ideological and political positions, to the public debate on climatic change and other «environmental» topics (Peet, Robbins and Watts, 2011; Brunel and Pitte, 2010).

²¹ «Crises are essential to the reproduction of capitalism» (p. ix).

²² It is what Harvey calls «geographical landscape»: «The independent manner in which the geographical landscape evolves plays a key role in crisis formation» (p. 147).

²³ «Without uneven geographical development and its contradictions, capital would long ago have ossified and fallen into disarray» (p. 147). The uneven development is partly a result of the «combinatorial evolution» of technologies and of

Harvey's contribution to further reflection on the topic is particularly relevant with regard to the phases of transition from one word/situation to another one in the schema. These words/situations are not neutral, but they represent the places where the actors dynamics of the crisis are activated and develop: they are characterized by the highly accelerated and flexible emergence of new players, new interests, new strategies, and new tactics. And also new territoriality emerges²⁶.

Of course, this last point is fundamental because it stimulates both my geographical expertise and, more specifically, what my attention is currently focused on, that is finding a way to overcome the interpretative hegemony of constitutive territoriality while developing reflections and analytical tools related to the other articulations of territoriality: the configurative and ontological ones. It is important to remember that we are considering two particular and irreducible components of geography. They are active worlds that are built, exploited, used by human societies; they are «*medial bodies*» with a phenomenological autonomy, which play a crucial role in the circle of social functioning and reproduction. By bringing these two other articulations of territoriality into the foreground, it is possible, I think, to make an authentically «geographic» contribution to the analysis of the «capitalistic relation», and of the development of the relations between capital and capitalism – which is the historical device for the functioning of capital – at the same time shifting attention from the analysis of contradictions to that of the crisis.

Adding these other forms of territoriality to the «ordinary» reflection in geography allows us to describe the role of space in the changing model of capitalism in a very different perspective from its previous description. These new forms of territoriality are, indeed, not only examined and mentioned in rhetorical perorations, or mobilized in ethical or aesthetic claims, but they should also be conceptually and empirically regarded as stable components of society and its territorial configuration. As meaningful «uneven developed» qualities of a same space, where they coexist, these other forms of territoriality compose the territory of that space. Furthermore, these other forms of territoriality can be considered as stakes of conflicts concerning the economic, political, cultural, as well as legal, technological and religious domains. In this way, geography can no longer be reduced to be a «tool» of capital included in the capitalist device (as it is for constitutive territoriality), while it is revealed that it is also technically unable to play this role. On the contrary, geography is shown to be a (non-replaceable) force of change, capable of affirming its own logic that cannot be replaced by any other logic. I acknowledge the assertive nature of what I am saying; and it will be certainly important to get back to these arguments later in this essay: I will start with the next paragraph and will go on later throughout the paper.

The capital of geography and «its» capitalism. – The capital of geography is the world's territoriality. Said differently, it is the social work – that has been «carried out» on Earth, on its physical and natural structures – which determines the way of «being-human-on-Earth» by now (Berque, 1996). This is due to the fact that the territorial quality of the terrestrial space is not only the result of processes of transformation carried out by human societies and cultures, but it is also the condition for a further development of the process of territorialization and, specifically with it and through it, of human life itself. In other words, one can say that our planet has not only a physical-natural destiny but it has also a human and historical destiny, exactly because of the territorialization process.

«molecular processes of capital accumulation» and it is partly a result of specific policies of the «capitalist State». As Harvey points out, «If the state did not already exist, then capital would have to create something like it to facilitate and manage its own collective conditions of production and consumption» (p. 149).

²⁴ «Dominant classes and hegemonic class alliances can form and lend a specific character to political as well as to economic activity within the region» (p. 149).

²⁵ From the capitalist point of view, this means the conservation and consolidation of the conditions of accumulation: «This is a key means by which capital periodically reinvents itself» (p. 147).

²⁶ For an analysis of Italy «inside» the crisis with particular regard to the territorial ferment of crisis and the metamorphosis of «molecular capitalism», see Bonomi (2013).

As geographers have long known, even if they have not always been willing to draw the consequences of it, the world's territoriality is historically constructed through human action (Raffestin and Bresso, 1979). It is an action composed by specific and not replaceable reflection and practices, which reveal and sustain a particular expression of human action, that is territorial action. This is a socially organized action through more or less formalized institutions as well as a culturally oriented action according to more or less defined technical criteria²⁷. This is an action characterized by a plural temporality, by spatial distributions that express both paratactic and liminal spatial configurations (Turco, 2010a), and by a not necessarily linear causality. Finally, this is an action that always has symbolic results, even when the outcome takes the form of a material object, of a construction, or of a physical location (for example of a workplace). This is a crucial aspect: any theory of value that refers to the «geographical fact» cannot help but consider its essential symbolic nature. If this symbolic dimension is neglected, the value of the geographic capital will express improper, inconsistent, or simply false information, irrespective of the measurement system that is used. Embracing a critical geographical vision of capitalism, this undoubtedly contributes to extend the list of Harvey's contradictions.

Thus, the world's territoriality can be regarded as a process originating and occurring under two essential conditionalities of the planet, precisely of the world in its cosmological relation. On the one hand, there is the nature and, on the other, the space. Although geography is constantly related to these two planetary conditionalities, it can not be confused with them. Plato warned us a long time ago about a conceptualisation of human acts in the world as *chôrismos*, as spatialisation. According to this conceptualisation, geography would be reduced to be a location map, a calculation of distances, and, in the best scenario, a frame for locational networks without spatial origins and *raison d'être*. What we can call the naturalistic *reduction* ignores, in its turn, that nature has a long human history (Moscovici, 1977), and it is therefore incorporated into geography (Bertrand, 2002). Accordingly, taking the naturalistic turn would be liable to reduce complex issues (such as human emotionality, or model of behaviour expressing social interests in nature) to the analysis of the physical components of nature, although they are regarded from an ethical or normative viewpoint.

Therefore, the world's territoriality is an extremely complex process that can be described, like all processes, as a «state of affairs». I would like to take up and further here the theme of the triple articulation, through which territoriality can be understood, that I have been exploring in my research especially for the last ten years. As previously said, these three articulations of territoriality express different forms of its existence. These are plural forms. Despite being closely interwoven and overlapped, these forms are however independent of each another, both at the level of thought and of practices.

First of all, we can mention constitutive territoriality, which entails a basic shaping of the earth's surface in order to establish a control over the world through symbolic procedures (that do not affect the materiality of the territory but they can change its meaning, sometimes also in a deep way), material acts (reification) and organizational acts (structuration). This form of territoriality is the most mentioned by public opinion, the media, and in extra-disciplinary academic fields. And this is what functions better both in capital devices and, thus, also in the capitalist relation. The prevalence of «constitutive» territoriality is not a casual event and has its own history. It dates back to the disciplinary institutionalisation of Geography, as Capel (1987) brilliantly demonstrated and as we have repeatedly explored regarding some aspects that are particularly relevant for the arguments proposed in this essay (Berdoulay and Turco, 2001)²⁸.

²⁷ In this direction, a first groundbreaking contribution in Geography is by P. Gourou (1973), who devotes all the First Part of his geographical compendium to «techniques», whereas he relegates to the Second Part a description of «physical conditions», changing, in this way, a classical scheme. Although Gourou's authority in the field of Geography, there isn't any geographical research program that have been launched on this crucial issue.

²⁸ Actually, constitutive territoriality intellectually relates to the «geography of common sense», generating not only amusing misunderstandings since ancient times, as Aristophanes describes, for example, in *The clouds*, but also what can be regarded as actual semantic transactions based on the ordinary language that is used. On this issue, which would deserve

A second form of territoriality – that, as I previously said, is certainly not less important than constitutive territoriality to which it is closely interrelated – is configurative territoriality expressing the ways in which we perceive the territory and experience it. Configurative territoriality can be considered as a universal form, even if temporally and spatially differentiated, and it involves – mainly but not exclusively – the three configurations of landscape, place, and environment. It is worth pointing out, in my opinion, that the configurations of territoriality are particularly important for us because they concern emotions and, particularly, the broad and still largely unexplored field of configurative emotionality. This last includes «aesthetics», but it cannot be limited to it, generating feelings such as pleasure, satisfaction, fulfillment, serenity, and peace. Although they are universal, these configurations cannot be taken for granted; they represent, like other dimensions of territoriality, a social construction and also a cultural achievement. Finally, these configurations, even if they entail an intimate and personal dimension, are historically developed according to social and cultural conditions that should be carefully reconstructed.

It is worth insisting on saying that the configurative articulation of a geographical totality cannot be considered as a «part» of constitutive territoriality and it cannot at all be «reduced» to it. This is the most common mistake that is made in the scientific field, in the field of planning, and of course in the geographical analysis of capitalism, where configurative territoriality is not given analytical or actual autonomy and it is often considered instead as a component of constitutive territoriality.

Finally, ontological territoriality concerns the deeper meaning of *homo geographicus*. It concerns «the human-being-on-earth». It interrogates the origin of the world (cosmogony) and man's place in this world (geography). It concerns territory as a keystone for understating life in general and human life in particular²⁹. From an ontological point of view, there is a fundamental distinction between the world and the nothing that was before the world (as it is written in the biblical *Genesis*, for example), or between a pre-human world (that was unsuitable for human life) and a human one (as it is told in Senufo cosmogony in West Africa, for example).

From an ontological point of view, the world became a human entity not so much for its own characteristics, which are nevertheless important (because human beings can inhabit it thanks to them: they can breathe, they can eat, ...), but it is essentially due to the fact that human beings actually assume the responsibility to inhabit the world³⁰. It is precisely this responsibility to be expressed as territorial action and to be able to capitalize what the earth offers to human beings. This means to give rise to the process of territorialisation (that is a unitary process), in all its different forms, which act, however, separately and autonomously within their historical process of Earth's territorial shaping.

In this workshop, we will talk of ontological territoriality again. Yet, I would like to point out that it is far from common sense geography and is totally counterintuitive, even if today's struggles for territory are mainly carried out in the name of ontological territoriality and are not so much based on constitutive or configurative territoriality.

If this is the «capital» of geography, the human patrimony that is essential for Earth's life and future as well as for the different spatial scales at which human life concretely occurs, what is «its own capitalism»? To put it differently, what are or can be the capitalist devices of geography that are able to maximize the *performances* of its capital? What capitalism would be able to optimize wealth accumulation processes viewed, taking up Harvey's perspective, as a way to implement opportunities of human development, human flourishing, and human self-realization in social context? It is of course difficult to find an answer to these questions and there is not much to say at the moment. Yet, a research program could be launched on a topic that is so crucial in the geographical discipline from now on. What is absolutely

much more attention, see Geus and Thiering, 2014. It is important to add that strategies – for «defending» geography carried out through ministerial «reforms» aimed at shaping again the role of the discipline as a school subject – exploit the relation between constitutive territoriality and the geography of common sense, getting from this relation their paradoxical dialectic that has an apparent immediate success, but it is ineffective over the long period.

²⁹ On this, it is important to refer to Plato's chora according to which territory is a «matrix» of world's intelligibility.

³⁰ Furthermore, this is due to self-determined awareness and an ethics of responsibility, or, said differently, this expresses the human completion of divine plans (staying in the religious and sacral field).

strategic is a shift in perspective. By considering territoriality as the integrated outcome of all its layers of reality, territory stops *ipso facto* being a simple tool and shows itself to be a «medial body» (Berque, 2000) with its autonomy of life and existence, with its analytical substance, strategies, and decisional capacity that will all contribute to the formation process of a «new» capitalism. This last is based on particular ideological patterns, institutions (especially legal and normative ones), technologies, and languages.

But of course the symbolic components of the territory cannot be estimated as they are based on configurative emotionality and ontological axiologies. However, once they are freed from being mere tools and obtain again their historical character of communitarian energy, being considered as motivational powers, territorial symbolisms will do their job, as they have always done, that is claiming, undertaking and strengthening their role in social dynamics³¹.

It is generally known that capitalism, and especially present globalitarian capitalism, is able to exploit constitutive territoriality adopting its very logic of appropriation and its «reductionist» methods because of an inappropriate theory of territorial values³². In the light of this, it should be widely understood that globalitarian capitalism is one of the biggest waster of wealth. Once again, it is a capitalism that is no more able to grant capital interests. This is a capitalism that can no more be reformed. This is a capitalism that can be changed only by politics. Only politics can succeed in doing that for a certainty or it can take at least a chance to do that.

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³¹ This is maybe done taking identity shortcuts.

³² Accordingly, uneven development should be considered, taking up Harvey's main argument, not only at the level of constitutive territoriality but it should be investigated, as already said, also with regard to different forms of territoriality. This would allow capital devices to act, in their turn, on this innovative type of geographic uneven development as well as on their «independent» modes of evolution in order to foster ongoing processes of accumulation, or, to bring about new processes.

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SUMMARY - A workshop was held in Rome in May 2015 based on David Harvey's last book *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism*. Considering different research perspectives on the topic, this essay proposes a change of perspective in the analysis of the capitalist relation moving from the concept of contradiction to the concept of crisis. Embracing this novel perspective will only be possible understanding the process of territorialization in its broad articulation. Above all, this will imply to move beyond constitutive territoriality while bringing other articulations of the territoriality into the foreground, especially configurative and ontological territorialities. This allows reflecting on the globalitarian capitalistic relation in a specifically geographical perspective.