



# ***Territory of spiritualities: a look at the subjectivities present in contemporary territorial transformations***

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## **Abstract**

Aiming to bring another look at the theoretical-methodological discussion about the territory, valuing the subjectivities present in the ways in which it is transformed and constituted in contemporaneity, we propose, in this article, to think about the territory from the spirituality of the New Age. Thus, demonstrating that through materiality, there is a highly invisible movement that occurs in the field of ideas, making the territory, undeniably, (i)materiality. The empirical field was based on semi-structured interviews for which the city of Santa Cruz do Sul (RS) was defined as the space/time in which spiritual experiences were the object of the respective study. In the data analysis it was noticed that territorialization in the New Age affects individuals other than just spiritual seekers, which indicates that the territory of spiritualities is not only the landscape that is apparent to our eyes, but it necessarily assumes immaterialities, other subjectivities, and also, still other subjects, producers of other territories: a new dynamic to the movement of totality; therefore, a New Age of territories.

**Keywords:** Territorial approach. New Age. Religiosities. Subjectivities. Territorialities.

## **Resumo**

Tendo por objetivo trazer um outro olhar para a discussão teórico-metodológica acerca do território, valorizando as subjetividades presentes nas formas como ele se transforma e se constitui na contemporaneidade, propomos, neste artigo, pensar o território a partir da espiritualidade da Nova Era. Assim, demonstrando que através da materialidade, há um movimento sobremaneira invisível que ocorre no campo das ideias, fazendo do território, inegavelmente, (i)materialidade. O campo empírico foi pautado em entrevistas semiestruturadas para a qual foi definido o município de Santa Cruz do Sul (RS) como o espaço/tempo em que as experiências espirituais foram objeto do respectivo estudo. Na

análise dos dados percebeu-se que a territorialização na Nova Era afeta indivíduos que não somente os buscadores espirituais, o que nos indica que o território das espiritualidades não é somente aquela paisagem que está aparente aos nossos olhos, mas ele necessariamente presume imaterialidades, outras subjetividades, e também, ainda outros sujeitos, produtores de outros territórios: uma nova dinâmica ao movimento da totalidade; logo, uma Nova Era de territórios.

**Palavras-chave:** Abordagem territorial. Nova Era. Religiosidades. Subjetividades. Territorialidades.

### **Territorio de las espiritualidades: una mirada para las subjetividades presentes en las transformaciones territoriales contemporáneas**

#### **Resumen**

Teniendo por objetivo traer una otra mirada para la discusión teórico metodológica acerca del territorio, valorando las subjetividades presentes en las formas como él se transforma y se constituye en la contemporaneidad, proponemos, en este artículo, pensar el territorio a partir de la espiritualidad de la Nova Era. Así, demostrando que a través de la materialidad, hay un movimiento sobremanera invisible que ocurre en el campo de las ideas, haciendo del territorio, innegablemente, (in) materialidad. El campo empírico fue pautado en entrevistas semiestructuradas para la cual fue definida la municipalidad de Santa Cruz do Sul (RS) como el espacio/tiempo en que las experiencias espirituales fueron objeto del respectivo estudio. En el análisis de los datos se percibió que la territorialización en la Nova Era afecta individuos que no son solo los buscadores espirituales, lo que nos indica que el territorio de las espiritualidades no es solo aquel paisaje que está aparente a nuestros ojos, pero él necesariamente presume inmaterialidades, otras subjetividades, y también, aún otros sujetos, productores de otros territorios: una nueva dinámica al movimiento de la totalidad; luego, una Nova Era de territorios.

**Palabras clave:** Abordaje territorial. Nova Era. Religiosidades. Subjetividades. Territorialidades.

## **1 Introduction**

The theoretical-methodological discussion developed in this article intends to bring a particular look to the territory, valuing the subjectivities present in the ways in which it transforms and constitutes itself in contemporary times. Thus, we propose to think the territory from the New Age spirituality, demonstrating that, through materiality, there is a movement that is extremely invisible and that occurs in the field of ideas, making the territory, undeniably, (i)materiality.

This theme is part of a transformation condition of the religious field in Brazil, where, for some decades, the decline of the religious tradition linked to Catholicism has been observed, in contrast to the diversification of other expressions. If, on the one hand, we have a more conservative movement, with the prominence of neo-Pentecostal Christian experiences, on the other hand, freedom in religious transit, the multiplicity of paths and the syncretism of beliefs seem to establish the most distinct repertoires of religions, religiosities and spiritualities. It is within a field of flexibilities, disarticulations and multivariate crossings that New Age is located.

There seems to be a consensus among researchers in the area that the New Age was outlined in Brazil from the 1960s onwards, among various “counterculture” movements that spread at the time in questioning the political and cultural panorama of this country. In addition to this definition, it is noteworthy that in the scientific

textures we will find different positions, conceptual perspectives and other denominations for the New Age. With the intention of making fit the broadest definitions and views throughout the investigation carried out, we used the name New Age without priori conceptual frameworks. It is in the meaning of building one's own subjectivity that we refer to the New Age; a symbolic system that visually composes the daily life of societies based on new forms of (im)material (and social) construction of spaces.

Given these clarifications, it is worth mentioning that it is not possible to identify the presence of the New Age in official IBGE statistics (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) and, although without a well-defined location in the fields of social life of contemporary individuals, we perceive in the daily walk the visibility of this “phenomenon” that crystallizes in the multiplication of mediation spaces of spiritual knowledge; where, more and more, people from the social cycle present us with different ways of seeking a cure or solution to a problem; of saints and crucifixes in commercial and residential establishments, we also see dream filter, Greek eye, elephants, stones; the saying “Thanks to God” has given way to “Gratitude”; people have been wearing lighter and more casual clothes around places, without selling brands and frequently with some printed message, be it motivational or anti-prejudice; the search for refuges in the middle of nature is evident in the accommodation websites, with proposals that offer simplicity in the experience of tourism, contact with nature and immersion in “doing the fieldwork”; the phases of the moon, which had their “low popularity”, returned to occupy a prominent place in many people's lives; the consumption of more natural foods, vegetarianism and the like. Possibly, not everything is mediated by religiosity, but there is certainly spirituality there, transforming the relationships of individuals in the territory.

In view of this argument, it is noteworthy that the present work was prepared from a doctoral thesis entitled “Territory of spiritualities: when spiritual experiences condition social relations in the territory”, for which the municipality of Santa Cruz do Sul was defined as the space/time in which spiritual experiences were the object of the respective study.

With the intention of listening to the reports of the individuals' experiences who embarked on a path of spiritual search, the data collection was based on semi-structured interviews, accompanied by audio-recordings of the speeches. A total of 11 spiritual seekers contributed to the empirical research, giving it meaning based on their narratives. We reached them based on their presence/transit in spaces dedicated to the search for New Age knowledge and experiences, all spaces located in Santa Cruz do Sul (RS).

In an attempt to avoid depersonalizing the speeches in order to bring about a closer relationship with the narratives and, even so, preserve the identities of the people we connect with in order to carry out the empirical field, we use pseudonyms inspired by the names of crystals, in view of the strong energetic relationship that is present in spiritual quests.

In this way, we organize the article in 3 more parts, which we start by bringing the reader closer to understanding the concept of territory that supports our discussions; a territory of (i)materialities. In the sequence, we enter into the empirical constructions that the theme of spirituality puts us to think about the territory. We seek to understand the relationship between the subject and their spiritual

experiences, in the transformations that take place in the field of ideas, in cognitive reconfigurations and in the legitimation of a new truth. Given this transformation in the way searchers understand themselves, life and the world, their daily practices are also transformed, resignified, thus implying new relationships in the territory and in the movement of its totality. Finally, in the third part, the work concludes by pointing out that this contemporary spirituality seems to be announcing a New Age of subjects; therefore, a New Age of territories.

## 2 The (i)material territory in Saquet: constructions based on spirituality

Since interests in the theme of the New Age are born within an area of concentration in regional development, it is obviously up to us to tread a different path from those taken by Anthropology, Sociology and Science of Religion, even if, crossing them in various moments. In this way, we intend to understand spirituality from the transformations that it conditions in the territory, from the field of tensions that it excites, from entropy, from the new relationships that appear. For that, we defined the territorial approach as the mainstay of the investigation.

For those familiar with the debates surrounding the term territory, the polysemic arena of concepts that it configures is not new, bringing with it a range of conceptual and methodological paths to support scientific projects and research. Among the different options, we were looking for a concept that would allow us to look at and value the subjectivities present in the forms and ways of constituting a territory. In time, we found in the “symbolic and material appropriation of space” (SAQUET, 2009, p. 89), a perspective to conduct our investigation.

By thus proposing to investigate the spirituality of the New Age, we recognize that the territory is also effective in thought, understood as an immaterial, subjective dimension. That is, the movement of/in the territory also occurs in the field of ideas (SAQUET, 2013). In this sense, nothing is just material, but there is always a material-immaterial relationship, for which Saquet (2013) calls (i)material.

The territory, thus, takes effect from the mediation of “daily, momentary relationships that men maintain with each other, with their inner nature and with their inorganic nature, to survive biologically and socially” (SAQUET, 2013, p. 129). This means that we human beings:

We have fundamental biological and social acts for our reproduction, which is, at the same time, biological, social, temporal, spatial and territorial. In relating to outer nature, man relates to its extension, both objectively and subjectively. It is a natural and social, material and immaterial relationship (SAQUET, 2009, p. 87).

We will call this mediation territorialities. They are “simultaneously, result, conditioning and characterizing territorialization and territory” (SAQUET, 2013, p. 127). In summary, territory and territorialities are both a condition and a result of the constant movement of individuals' daily lives, putting different subjectivities in interaction and moving as a result of them. Movement through which we witness transformations in relationships, the appropriation of nature, the economy, politics, culture, nature. This movement that is,

[...] product of (i)material determinations, of economic, political and cultural forces in unity and in quantitative and qualitative leaps in socio-spatial dynamics. Movement that is relational, procedural and condition of the (im)materiality of our everyday life. The matter and the idea are in constant movement, in which there are overcoming, territorial articulations, internal and external to each territory, discontinuities, fluidity and identity (SAQUET, 2013, p. 22).

This implies recognizing that the subjectivity of individuals is produced by something of a collective nature and external to the subject, which denies their individuality (FOUCAULT, 1985). The individual, in their continuous process of constitution as a subject, is, thus, traversed by elements that are external to him, but, at the same time, are extensions and compositions of themselves. In Brazil, this process of construction of subjectivities is markedly an active field of forces based on inequalities and diversities, as explained by Bacelar (2009).

If, like territorialities, the territory is both a condition and a result of the constant movement of individuals' daily lives (SAQUET, 2009), putting the various subjectivities in interaction and moving as a result of them, it means that we, human subjects, carry out several “concurrent and overlapping” territories (SAQUET, 2009, p. 85). Territories that “can be temporary or more permanent and take effect at different scales” (SAQUET, 2013, p. 128).

Thus, just like the territory of spiritualities in Santa Cruz do Sul (RS), we can also talk about several other territories of spiritualities, since, whatever the object, it also needs to be understood from specific elements to each place and region. In the example of the New Age, we see a phenomenon that is present all over the world, but which, however, presents dissent within it. This is because its qualities are also spatially conditioned (and always located in time).

Territorialization is (i)material, whether in Brazil, England, the USA, Italy, Indonesia, etc., with general aspects linked to the movement of reproduction of society and nature and with specific elements of each place, social group, ethnicity, period, moment. There is an (im)materiality of forms and social relations: one is in the other; the works are in the contents, in the territorialities and these in the works; I cannot imagine that there are forms without relations and relations without forms. The (i)materiality occurs in the E-P-C-N relationship [economy – politics – culture – nature], in the territory, in the territoriality, in life (SAQUET, 2013, p. 160, emphasis added).

In the aforementioned terms, a territory will never be, par excellence, one, but an apprehension that contains within itself other dimensions and scales; which, concomitantly, is in relation and in relation to other scales and dimensions: always a space-time-territory.

Note that the New Age is present in the non-religious, in spiritists, in multi-religious belonging, in Catholics. There is not necessarily an incompatibility between religious affiliation and New Age practices and spiritual experiences. Which effectively means that many seekers recognize themselves in some religion, or non-religion, or even within the multi-belonging category that aggregates different belongings. Not being a religion, they do not appear in the IBGE Census statistics. And, not restricted to religion, they transit through different fields. There is a

movement there that is historic. We mean that, in each temporal location, an accumulation of times will be contained in itself that is not linear: it is about times that coexist (or rhythms) in a unit (SAQUET, 2009). Therefore, historicity is circumscribed in space. In other words, these inequalities (rhythms – slow and fast) indicate that time is spatially articulated, making the territory a “space-time-territory” (SAQUET, 2009, p. 83).

This means that New Age spirituality did not emerge by chance, loose in time and space, just as the implications of its existence are not limited to the scope of the investigation. In addition, its emergence in this clipping or any other is circumscribed in a story that embraces multiple dimensions and scales, which coexist and also overlap and where, in each time and space, we will have a different result. This makes us see the subject as centrality (SAQUET, 2009).

## 2.1 Territory of spiritualities: the subject as centrality

When we look at the New Age through these territorial lenses, we can say that the realization of the territory of spiritualities will be a result (but also a condition) of the transformation of subjects, spiritual seekers. But after all, what makes the individual start a spiritual walk?

Prompted to reflect on their own motivations, each of the interviewees demonstrated an effort to respond to the statement as clearly and promptly as possible. Some individuals had a “forced” initiation by stressful situations, resulting in moments of entropy in their lives. However, other individuals, during the interviews, gave greater prominence to predispositions – but this does not mean that tensions were necessarily absent.

And, although both situations seem to mark a certain moment of initiation of the individual on a path of spirituality, in reality there is, behind this promptness, an extensive (and intense) process marked by attempts at deterritorialization and reterritorialization, “since there is no exit from the territory, that is, deterritorialization, without, at the same time, an effort to reterritorialize elsewhere” (DELEUZE, 1988, p. 4). And its inverse is also true.

Therefore, deterritorialization needs a certain asymmetry in the field of tensions to incite it, while reterritorialization presupposes predispositions (subjective and/or structural) to take effect. Now, it is predispositions that condition the “place”, the direction of movement.

In the light of Deleuze and Guattari's thesis (1995), Saquet (2013, p. 110) explains that deterritorialization refers to “change, transformation, separation, disconnection”, but always based on “a concern with what is lived”. Here we have a fundamental aspect of understanding the human individual (and the territory); the subject as experience.

Among tensions and predispositions, it seemed to us that the life experiences of the interviewees converged to a genuine feeling of non-belonging in relation to society's modes of subjectivation or to the legitimized status of truths. In Agate's narrative (2020) we evidence not only the predisposition to seek new answers, but also the culture of fear in the face of the different (and, also, its boldness in the face of the unknown):

I was always looking, I think at the age of 20 or so it was the first time I went to a Spiritist Center. [...] and I was afraid of what was going to happen there because it was something different and I liked it a lot because it talked about this issue that life is not just one, you know, and that at least made me like this... wow , All right then! So it's not like being born, lived, died, it's over. It's always bothered me a lot that I had to live this little life, you know, of working, getting up, showering, having breakfast and working, going home, sleeping, going to work the next day... there had to be something else (Agate, 2020).

And similar statements appeared during the interviews: “I was always different, you know...”, claimed Sapphire (2020); “it already showed my rebellion” said Vivianite (2020). Even though individuals had this perception, they needed an existential journey (each at their own pace) to discover the real meaning of this conflict.

In this regard, it should be noted that every individual is born immersed in a culture in the most varied forms, be it family, religion, etc.; all this together. That is why Ruby (2020) guarantees that life “are mental patterns”, and the hegemonic patterns of culture in the world condition human beings to “mental prisons”. These prisons Deleuze and Guattari (1995, s/p) call strata:

The strata substantiate the diagrammatic matters, separate a formed plane of content and a formed plane of expression. They take expressions and contents, each in turn substantialized and formalized, in double-articulated pincers that ensure their independence or their real distinction, and make reign a dualism that never ceases to reproduce or redivide itself. They interrupt the continuums of intensity, introducing ruptures from one stratum to another, and within each stratum. They prevent the conjunctions of the line of flight, they crush the peaks of deterritorialization, either by operating the reterritorializations that will make these movements completely relative, or by attributing a negative value to some of these lines, or by segmenting them, barring them, obstructing them, precipitating them into a kind of black hole.

A clear example is found in the perception of Celestite (2020):

[...] there came a time when [...] I was living a life that most of society considers normal, annulling my essence in order to be accepted by people, trying to be different from what I was, from what I am in essence to be able to please society, to be accepted in my groups, at school, in other places I went to and then, since then, I started taking antidepressants. I was taking antidepressants for 15 years to fill this hole, this existential void that was nothing more than I was annulling my essence and creating masks, trying to be a person I wasn't... (emphasis added).

These dialogues are repeated among the interviewees, as in the speech of Tourmaline (2020):

I felt at that time that I had lived a lifetime fulfilling standards and prerequisites and this fulfillment of standards and fitting into these little boxes took me to a place where I was unhappy, where I was bitter, where I was heavy, where that I was complaining and I wasn't feeling complete.

With several clashes, none of the interviewees remained in the religion consecrated by their parents during childhood, among which 91% came from Catholic families. The demarcation of ruptures with Catholicism is significant, but not limited to it, so that at the same time that there are confrontations with religious “ideologies”, we perceive that the reterritorialization of spiritual seekers is also legitimized in the sphere of religion.

Therefore, it is evident that there is a dialectic present in the relationship between spiritual seekers and the sphere of religion, but there is also a broader field of tensions that will even be found in a hidden way in other relationships. This aspect leads us to assume that, in fact, tensions (and entropy) refer to the sphere of power; they constitute a process engendered by asymmetrical power relations (FOUCAULT, 2006). In this way, although the more objective response of the interviewees indicates a more or less clear moment of change in the subject, the life stories show that the deterritorialization/reterritorialization of individuals is, in fact, not a moment of transition, but a process. This process, long and diffuse, complex and “invisible” because it essentially implies a subjective movement.

By bringing the investigation to the field of ideas, we go beyond the outlines that restrict us to origins or even to geographic-cultural movements. In this sense, New Age territoriality cannot be deterritorialized when it responds to a reterritorialization in the sense of leaving one type of symbolic-material appropriation for another. That is, it is, rather, thought that deterritorializes and reterritorializes itself (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1992). Therefore, the “territory also means thought, social and even cosmic, natural and psychosocial relations; deterritorialization and reterritorialization, especially at the level of thought” (SAQUET, 2013, p. 111).

### 3 Spiritual experiences and movement in the field of ideas

We define working with spirituality as being “the set of searches, practices and experiences such as purifications, ascetics, renunciations, conversions of gaze, changes in existence, etc., which constitute, not for knowledge, but for the subject, for the very being of the subject [...]” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 19).

To develop his thesis on self-care (*Epimeleia heautou*), Foucault recovers the notion that was introduced in ancient philosophy by Plato, creating a dialogue between Alcibiades and Socrates (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 4). This idea of self-care “accompanied, framed, founded the need to know oneself” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 11) in order to have access to the truth, since “One cannot govern others well, one cannot transform one's own privileges into political action on others, into rational action, if one is not concerned with oneself” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 48).

While philosophy and spirituality constituted, in unity, the construction of Ancient thought, it is worth mentioning that the idea of self-care was disqualified in modern philosophy, so that knowledge was legitimized as the valid way to access the truth; not a knowledge of oneself in the same sense that it had for the Greeks and Romans, but a scientific knowledge whose method was legitimized as a path to truth (FOUCAULT, 2006). In view of the above, we provoke a reflection on how does the spirituality experienced in contemporary times enable a displacement in the field of ideas?



Now, initiation into a path of spiritual quests enables individuals, spiritual seekers, to access new types of knowledge that can occur, for example, through readings, intersubjectivities, spiritual experiences, astrological consultations. It is a transformative relationship of the subject configured in the search to know oneself, in the sense of what Tourmaline (2020) explained:

I often say that it feels like another life, you know, after I woke up to this world because everything has changed for me and I feel like a completely different person. So the existence of spirituality in my life made me look at everything from another perspective. So, like that, it changed, it transformed my whole way of existing, of dealing with everything.

When the subject discovers that there is another system of truths to (re)build themselves as a subject, recognizing themselves in that space, more and more they move in this search. In this way, the disengagement from the “old world” permeates, firstly, the absolute transformation of oneself, of how that subject is inserted in the world and relates to it.

This is why we often find references in New Age scientific publications to the search for self-knowledge, self-knowledge in the ancient meaning of the term. In this perspective that Agate (2020) prefers to call the search for truth, and, in the words of Celestite (2020), it would be a rescue of the essence, since the dynamics of the searches allow the individual to know themselves from what they are in essence, breaking a relationship of subjection with governmentality: “there are so many things [...], but I took several courses and I think that each one of them helped me a lot in my path of... this search for self-knowledge, this search for the rescue of my essence, for the rescue of knowing who I really was to appropriate it from there” Celestite (2020).

In line with these reports, Foucault (2006, p. 20) explains that, “when effectively opened, access to the truth produces effects that are certainly consequences of the spiritual procedure performed to reach it, but which, at the same time, are something else and much more: effects that I will call 'the return' of the truth on the subject”.

There are several possibilities, forms and ways of establishing a relationship with spirituality, with the transformation of oneself. Some more autonomous and others highly mediated. However, there needs to be something more to the individual's relationship to their experience, a connection, an affinity. That is, the resonance of mediation spaces, the popularization of content in social media, books, courses; a “festival” of elements scattered among contemporary societies are not enough to provoke changes in the sphere of thought, as we perceive in Nuummite's report (2020).

I remember that I had bought some books a few years ago [...]. I had bought some books that, at the time, didn't make any sense to me. I started reading and thought: my God, I didn't understand anything! And I left them, I let them go. I left them in my office and, at that time, when I was dissatisfied, restless, I went to get these books and then, really, things started to make a little more sense and I understood that I could look for them, go after them. And then, at the time, we already had several courses available on the internet, the digital world was booming and I had this energy, and this search, and this curiosity to go after it. So I ended up

buying my first course, you know, which had a more spiritual bias, in that period, in 2009.

When we talk about spaces for spiritualities mediation, New Age knowledge or subjectivation components, we need to have a clear perception that they are an important mean for introjecting and legitimizing new truths in the territories, however, they need to make sense for the subjects. As long as the knowledge accessed is not introjected (individual process), whether through spiritual experiences, reading or any other means, it will not be enough to cause changes in the field of ideas, as explained by Foucault (2006, p. 19-20). ) when talking about spirituality:

[...] the truth is never given to the subject by a simple act of knowledge, an act that would be grounded and legitimized by being the subject and by having this and that subject structure. It postulates the need for the subject to modify, transform, move, become, to a certain extent and to a certain extent, someone other than themselves, in order to have the right to [the] access to the truth. The truth is only given to the subject at a price that puts the very being of the subject at stake. For, as they are, they are not capable of truth. I think this is the simplest but most fundamental formula for defining spirituality. This entails, as a consequence, that from this point of view there can be no truth without a conversion or without a transformation of the subject. This conversion, this transformation [...] can take place in different ways. Let's say very roughly (this is also a very schematic overview here) that this conversion can take the form of a movement that pulls the subject out of his status and current condition (ascension movement of the subject themselves; movement by which, on the contrary, the truth comes to them and enlightens them. Let us call this movement, also very conventionally, in whatever sense it may be, the eros (love) movement. In addition to this, another great way in which the subject can and must transform themselves to gain access to the truth is through work. Work from self to self, elaboration of self to self, progressive transformation of self to self in which one is responsible for a long labor that is asceticism (ascesis), Eros and asceticism are, I believe, the two great ways in which, in Western spirituality, we conceive the modalities according to which the subject must be transformed in order, finally, to become a subject capable of truth.

In this sense that reterritorialization is, in the context of this research, effective from a process within which a stress field is necessary to cause the displacement of the subjects, but some predispositions that may be of an institutional and/or subjective nature also need to be present. Those that we call institutional would be the components of subjectivation, relevant in the process of placing New Age knowledge in proximity and awareness of individuals, in circulation in the social body. But they are the subjective predispositions, that is, those characteristics essentially inherent to the individual, such as connection, awareness, sensitivity, rebelliousness and other vocations of this nature, which are defining in the introjection of a new apprehension of the truth.

The meaning of experiences is experienced in a very particular way and is directly related to who the subject is at that moment. It has a relationship with the way the seeker feels and is open to their experience, a relationship that goes beyond the (rational) capacity for explanation.

It is on this broad path of seeking self-knowledge, between knowledge and experience, that spiritual seekers transform their way of looking at, understanding and inserting themselves in the world, giving new meaning to their relationships. The transformation of the individual, in this way, is rather a transformation in the perspective of his gaze.

Beyond the more particular relationship of individuation of spiritual seekers, there is an intersection from which their ideas converge. They are essentially articulated with the resignification of oneself, as explained by Tourmaline (2020):

I am very sorry and I really believe that we are as if it were a fractal of the Divine, as if there was a single consciousness that was fragmented and this fragmentation is because this single consciousness wants to live different experiences, so that's why it is fragmented so that it can have this wider range of infinite experiences that it needs to live. So I believe that we are all a fragment of this greater consciousness that we will call the creator, God, the Divine anyway... and that we are experiencing this life as part of this consciousness, you know, and I believe that this whole relationship of people, of the human, I believe that this human form is just another experience, it is just another experience to lead us to learning and development but that, in essence, we are this fractal of God, we are this soul, this Divine. I believe that He dwells in us and that we are this little piece of the divine inhabiting a physical body to experience, to grow, to evolve, you know. That said, I also believe that because this human experience is just a shell, just an experience, our interaction with the Divine, with the transcendental is happening all the time and I believe that as we evolve as a soul and then the more we connect and awaken this part of the divine that is within us, the more we are able to perceive these interactions with what we do not see. And I believe that we are in this physical body in a limiting experience, we don't have all our senses and all our potential awake, you know, in this shell. So, the more we develop, the more we are able to awaken these potentials and are able to perceive the influences of what we cannot see. This is something I really believe in.

In other words, Nuummite (2020) shared her insight:

I understand here that we are in this physical, mundane experience, with several issues like that to be worked on, dealt with, you know, but with an essence that is not tangible, you know, with an essence that is our soul and our soul already comes from other experiences and other experiences, right. So, our body, in my understanding, is like a vehicle, like, for us to be here fulfilling our mission, you know, and so, from that perception, you know, then understanding the problems that appear to us as challenges and as constant improvements, you know, individually and also collectively, but as something relatively small compared to everything our soul has gone through. So this space-time is a school space anyway, you know, of learning, because after our disincarnation, you know, after our death, my experience, even, you know, of regressions, is that we are really going to another plan, right, thinking in terms of soul, of spirit. And finally, we must learn what must be learned there, some come back soon, some stay there longer and some never come back, right, as a soul.

In this way, the human body is a vehicle (Nuummite, 2020), a shell (Tourmaline, 2020), or even an Avatar (Celestite, 2020), indicating that, far beyond a physical body, we are pure immateriality, part connected to a greater whole.

Therefore, Blende (2020) warns that we need to see the existence of this immateriality in all relationships:

The functioning of our body, right, is not only physical, right. We are a cogwheel and the main thing that rules all of this is our vital energy and above that, there is the spiritual. So, trying to somehow include this in our daily assessments broadens this view. This breadth to see things... like in the health area, which is my area, right, anyway... we see that pain from renal colic only as renal colic, as what is traditionally done, right... no! The first thing, who has this renal colic, how does all this gear work, this whole body, you know. How is this vital energy... and above that, the spiritual, right? So I think that all of this gives us a range of experiences, a way of seeing the things that surround us. And also like that, for me it gave me greater peace of mind, greater acceptance... even in the way of dealing with people, you know, not judging... it even gives us an inner peace, you know, like, like the way that you understand and that it relates to everything, right (Blende, 2020).

When asked what this vital energy would be, Blende (2020) explained:

Vital energy is a force, a non-material force that maintains life, that keeps the organism alive. It is a dynamic process, the opposite of what we think of our organism, what we study, right. We study each organ with its functions and the way it works. We study this way, right?! But what unites them all to work together in harmony? Each one with its function but in an integrated way? So for me and within homeopathy, which is what I study the most, this energy means a dynamic balance and the alterations of this energy that will cause an imbalance in the organism, which, then, is the true cause of diseases, illnesses... it adapts the way it can, you know, with the changes, with what each organism brings with it, the changes, the external stimuli. It is this force that integrates the whole organism.

We noticed that there is a deconstruction of the idea of physical body / organism versus mind / psyche and a construction of the idea of “immaterial bodies”, pure energy and fully connected to the totality. The relationship with the body, with the care of the body, including the “material” relationship established with the “physical body”, the Avatar, is re-signified. In line with the recognition of an (im)materiality of bodies, Ruby (2020) emphasizes that “we need to put good, physical things, too, inside us”. And care for the body also presumes care for bodies, for the whole. A joint movement for the purpose of evolving and ascending. In this way, bodies are only distinguished by the intensity of their vibration and the movement of their flows.

Understanding the body as an energetic fractal also undoes that reference to incarnated existence versus life after death. Everything is in unity, in simultaneous existence, including times and spaces. “But is there only one universe?”, teases Sapphire (2020). “No, there are many universes,” she replies. “And it has other dimensions,” he adds. In this way, time is a myth, an invention of man, as Tourmaline (2020) explains:

Time is a convention of our limited consciousness within this physical body, you know, as human beings. So it was something conventional and very much based on rational concepts that are limiting, you know. So I believe that time is actually a great illusion and that we don't know what it's like to

live a non-time perspective. I believe in the multiverse, in multiple realities, I believe that there is no such thing as a past life, a future life... that this is all happening at the same time, I really believe in parallel realities and I think we are connecting with these realities all the time that we just don't realize. And as we move forward and as we expand our awareness, we become more prepared to be more and more aware of this and I believe that there is a future... let's call it the future, in another reality, a superhuman that they can already understand... maybe not in the human format that we know but that they can already understand that they can have a correlation of a parallel reality, of the past and future... .. I don't know if I made myself it clear, okay, this is a very complex subject, a lot of madness but I really believe it's real so I believe that as we develop and evolve we will break these patterns and these things that we've always taken for granted, we're going to start questioning that and that refers to our notion of time, our notion of space, our notion of realities and of the universe, so I believe that in short, that the time here in the way we live in this linearity is a great illusion and that sometimes it holds us much more but it is necessary right now for our process of evolution so in the experience that we are here, in flesh and blood, we need linear time to grow but I believe that it is a great illusion and that everything is happening at the same time and that this interaction between us, human, flesh and blood, with what we do not see, be it energy or others spirits, whether influences or transcendental... it's happening all the time.

This idea of unity also deconstructs the reference that life ends with the event of death, essential for legitimizing engagements for a better world. It is not about thinking exactly about the world that we will leave for our grandchildren, but the world that we will leave for ourselves and, still, the information that we will be registering in the Book of Life for the next Avatar.

It is from these new understandings that spiritual seekers re-establish their relationships and their new mode of insertion in the world, creating different agencies that will condition the cognitive contamination of many individuals who have not necessarily gone through a deeper process of transformation.

Now, we can understand that individuals do not seek, in principle, a radical transformation of the subject; they seek more specific answers or solutions, so that the transformations that occur in the sphere of their own subjectivity are the result of the spiritual transit that begins and is perpetuated in the search for self-knowledge; an eternal construction of itself. This is where the new subjectivity modeling system is created. In this way, we can say that the engagement of different individuals in their particular quests for self-knowledge creates new cognitive demarcations, thus legitimizing a new system of truths: a joint movement in the field of ideas!

### **3.1 New Age Territoriality: (i)material appropriation of space and the announcement of a New Age of territories**

The search for self-knowledge is an important means of transforming the subject in the field of ideas, however, it is not enough to consolidate a new mode of subjectivation; an example of this appears in Emerald's dialogue (2020):

Yes, you change yourself, it even becomes boring in the eyes of some... there are not many people who had the courage to assume this more spiritual life, I know, like, half a dozen that I can say, like, who are really assuming because it gets very difficult on a daily basis for you to have a separate, differentiated life.

The greatest difficulty encountered by search engines is possibly breaking the most direct ties of the capitalistic system. Recalling Jade's speech (2020): "I had all this eagerness for all of this, of wanting all of this [a spiritualized life], but civilization, everyday life, the surroundings, the family... that brought back that reality of working, earning money and having a car, a house, you know..." (emphasis added). Now, "it is not enough to state that the subject is constituted in a symbolic system. It is not only in the game of symbols that the subject is constituted. It is constituted in true practices [...]. There is a technology of self-constitution that permeates symbolic systems when using them" (FOUCAULT, 1995, p. 275).

In this sense, we also need to understand how the subject inserts himself in the world and acts from what he has become, that is, in the set of his new "symbolic and material forms of appropriation of space" (SAQUET, 2009, p. 89, emphasis added). Therefore, the New Age territoriality is a result, but also a sine qua non condition of this new type of subjectivity.

Based on this assumption, we register that the first spaces that were established in Santa Cruz do Sul for the mediation of spirituality symbolize one of the most relevant territorialities of the New Age. This is because it allowed seekers to live, in practice, the truths introjected by their spiritual experiences.

When Sapphire, Nuummite, Blende, Jade, Tourmaline, Emerald, Agate and Onyx (and possibly several other subjects who were not addressed in this investigation) decided to make spirituality their profession, they deterritorialized their bodies from the condition of submission to salaried capitalist work. They refunctionalized their workforce, de-alienating them by asserting themselves as masters of their time and their own lives, in line with what Tourmaline (2020) reports: "My routine is also a very changeable routine, I don't have a constant routine". Although some habits are established, we realize that there is, to a certain extent, inconstancy that demonstrates that non-work time is not structured around its becoming, as he continues:

One of the things I always try to keep, regardless of the moment in life I'm living, is to have a piece of the morning for myself so like this... waking up before, well before anything I need to do... waking up, getting up calmly, stretch, breathe in the morning, make a coffee calmly because I love having breakfast so I consider this a moment of mine... so I prepare a nice cup of coffee, with things that I like to eat, that I feel will nourish me, that will make me feel good, being able to do it very calmly, with a lot of presence, being there paying attention, enjoying my food and then I like to have at least a whole hour in the morning to myself. So in that one hour, sometimes I'll watch something that makes me feel good, sometimes I'll listen to a song that makes me feel good, sometimes I'll read a book that makes me feel good... So it depends a lot, okay... my routine, as I told you, is very inconsistent but this is a sacred moment like that every morning that I need and I feel that completely changes my day because I like to wake up little by little and have time for myself in the morning (Tourmaline, 2020).

“Time for yourself in the morning”; the expression highlights this new relationship that the spiritual seeker establishes with work, although paid. In this perspective, the media was pointed out, during the interviews, as a great manipulator of the promotion and manipulation of these standards of truth, as well as a culture of consumerism, appearing in a very imposing way in Celestite and Nuummite's reports. The latter explained:

These are all questions that the media poses for us to be accepted, right? And this is a form of manipulation so that we work incessantly to produce, to be able to consume more and produce more. That madness of work, work, work, where you don't have time for yourself (Nuummite, 2020).

Therefore, the new relationships with work assume, concomitantly, a re-signification in the sphere of consumption, in the relationship with money, as Emerald (2020) explains:

You no longer see money as your source of happiness and then you end up not chasing it like everyone else does, because you don't need it. You need to buy things to live, but you don't desperately need that. Then, generally, you can't reach high standards because it's not the focus... it's your focus that changes.

Celestite's narrative (2020) adds:

It was also one of the things that changed a lot because nowadays I give much more priority to my time, to quality sleep and quality food, to have time for myself, even if I don't have that much financial resources, like that, but I don't need to have it because I don't need to consume excessively like I used to, because I don't follow these social standards anymore, you know, not so much. Of course I consume, I buy clothes, I like to dress up, I'm vain but it's not that crazy. [...] I don't need to be showing off to be accepted, I accept myself as I am, that's more important to me... I accept myself as I am and I'm happy the way I am.

With these narratives we realize that, even with the introjection of New Age truths, the consolidation of a new mode of subjectivation would be limited if individuals had not established a rupture with their previous social form of work. In other words, this rupture seems to be a fundamental element for several other forms of appropriation of space to have been re-signified in the New Age, since alienated work conditions the routine and habits of individuals. From the new relationships with work and consumption (and the media), other territorialities are possible, such as the configuration of a new relationship with food: “You know, I make my food, I eat my food...”, reports Jade (2020); “I'm trying to make it at home, with products I know, so I go to the organic fair every week, we have a vegetable garden at home, we have an orchard” (Blende, 2020). Celestite (2020) adds that we should “take great care of what we put on our skin”. She explains that “our skin is like our mouth, everything we go through it absorbs as if it were eating”. In this sense, we noticed a tendency, among some searchers, to “stop using these perfumed oils and creams” (Celestite, 2020), which are marketed by the perfumery industry, and start producing their own cosmetics with ingredients taken from nature, or even acquire them from craft productions. This relationship further strengthens the discourses of forest

preservation, since it is where various elements are found for body care and as raw material for handicraft production.

In this sense, medicine now seems to prioritize prevention. And it also greatly replaces the use of drugs manufactured by the pharmaceutical industry, as well as the search for conventional medical and therapeutic care, as confirmed by Turmaline (2020): “today I can no longer do conventional therapy”. In this way, medicine appears in the form of Integrative and Complementary Practices, food, plants, homeopathies, florals, crystals, contact with nature; less stressful jobs and healthier social relationships:

So today I feel much more aware of my emotions, feelings, you know... I feel much more aware of the energies... both mine, the other's, and the spaces... and I really avoid living together and staying in places that I perceive to have a low energy vibration... something that I really didn't pay attention to and neither the knowledge nor, you know, for that (Nuummite, 2020).

There is, therefore, greater respect for oneself, avoiding behavior that society expects, avoiding spaces and living with people who are not good for them, just to please others. In summary, there is a deconstruction in relation to external impositions, which is reconstructed in respect and self-care, as shown in the speech of Nuummite (2020):

By recognizing himself as a fractal, the seeker comes to understand that he should not live the life that others want, bringing the focus to himself, but a “self” that is part of a greater whole. In this way, self-care is also caring for the whole; therefore, presumes self-responsibility for acting.

I've always had maybe a big influence on what the family thought was right, what the family understood as being the best or good for me. It was always something that I valued a lot and I think that with this more spiritual search I understood that I have all the answers inside of me and that basically I need to respect myself because not always what I want for my life is what my family thinks it's better and I think it's almost like taking the reins of your life and understanding that the decisions and choices and the path I'm going to take will impact my life so I always try to connect with myself, with my truth .

We also perceive legitimated territorialities under the discourse of the sacred feminine, corroborating with that perception of the body as a fractal integrated into a greater whole. Among them, Sapphire's report (2020) appears: “I stopped using disposable pads, using cloth, no longer producing garbage and, when washing, I return my blood to the land where it belongs, and not to the trash”.

The concern with the care of the environment and the search for a greater connection with nature implied changes also in the real estate market, even if timid when observed in relation to some of the culturally consolidated products, such as the advance of condos, the spread of twin houses and vertical buildings, strategies for optimizing real estate capital accumulation. In this sense, we observe a real search for residences in urban spaces that have large patios, as Agate (2020) told us:

In this process [...] we moved in 2019 to a house where there is a lot of nature, although it is within the city. And I became crazy about plants



because I'm planting a lot of things. We have a garden and I'm creating a tea garden to bring birds, to bring butterflies, to create harmony...

Sapphire (2020) also highlighted that her house, although located in an urban area, has a large patio, full of trees, as does Jade (2020): “This year I'm here in a small house in the city, so I have a vegetable garden, I have orchard, I have bush”. The residence, therefore, is also constituted as a space for the production of food, medicinal plants, for restoring the balance of fauna, for building a particular microclimate. Emerald (2020) highlighted: “I already put the apartment up for sale [...], I'm going back to a house and preferably in the middle of a little forest, I need the bush”. A similar movement, although timider, is also perceived in the search for rural housing.

In view of the dialogue that we have been building up to this moment, we emphasize that the spiritivities, at the same time that they effect a territory, also create enunciation agencies, implying in the resonance and strengthening of the territory of spiritualities. Under this logic, even those individuals who decided not to “take risks” in transforming spiritual experiences are influenced.

In this way, the occult mobilization, the visibility of the phenomenon, and a third movement of cognitive contamination of individuals who are not spiritual seekers (or, to a certain extent, are strangers to the universe of spirituality) make up the New Age territorialization process in Santa Cruz do Sul (RS). And we would say more, the force of its dissemination and its statements has been legitimized in such a way as to provoke transformations even in elements of the territory that assert themselves in capitalism itself, conditioning changes in some of its capitalistic configurations.

To exemplify, we can say that, within that same “market” created by spiritual seekers who became mediators of spiritual experiences, the most distinguished individuals in society, without realizing it, refunctionalize the pharmaceutical/chemical industry and modern medicine (medicine, psychiatry, psychology, nutrition) when acquiring alternative therapies, astrological consultations, crystals, florals, yoga classes, meditation, etc. In other words, the consolidation of mediation spaces (including those of support and supply) make up part of the process of territorialization of the New Age and, as such, also have their share of action in the re-signification of some relationships (even if they presuppose the financialization of their products and services).

In addition to these spaces established by spiritual seekers, with a genuine spiritual purpose, we will find other spaces that very possibly were not created with any direct connection to spirituality, but still condition New Age territorialities. They are disseminated throughout the municipality of Santa Cruz do Sul, inciting new modes of subjectivation. We can mention the popularization of fairs for organic products; health clinics that promote sales of therapies on collective purchasing sites; the traditional educational institutions that started to offer courses in the universe of Integrative and Complementary Practices and homeotherapy; the gyms that offer meditation and yoga classes.

In this way, although pesticide-free food, yoga, meditation, therapies and the like are sought after by fads, their benefits, in addition to conditioning a new habit to the individual's life, will help to avoid, at some point, turn to the pharmaceutical industry, for example.

Now, the territory is not just a neutral geographic receptacle where companies, collectivities and individuals operate, but it assumes the role of actor in socioeconomic-cultural processes (BEDUSCHI FILHO; ABRAMOVAY, 2003). “Therefore, there is complexity and heterogeneity in/of the territories, internally and between them, substantiated from nature-society relations” (SAQUET, 2018, p. 483).

We perceive, therefore, a living relationship, of movement, of intersubjectivity, of the material-immaterial. Of not only being built, but of being him, the territory, a builder. A space in which ways of being and acting are produced, forms of sharing existential references, which makes possible the parallel existence of multiple territories (and on multiple scales of relationships): articulated, overlapping, superimposed, coexisting territories, in combination.

#### 4 Conclusions

New Age spirituality cuts across multiple dimensions of subjects' everyday lives; in some, more actively, in others, covertly. It excites a very varied stress field; in either situation, subjectivities are produced. Therefore, territorialization in the New Age affects individuals who are not just spiritual seekers – either by exciting a field of tensions, or by propelling a cognitive contamination, or by establishing new orders in relationships and, even, reconfiguring elements of capitalism itself. Which indicates that the territory of spiritualities is not only that landscape that is apparent to our eyes, but it necessarily assumes immaterialities, other subjectivities, and also, yet, other subjects, producers of other territories: a new dynamic to the movement of totality.

Would it be, in this way, something more than the territory of spiritualities? We believe it could be a New Era of territories. Not necessarily built by subjects admittedly spiritual seekers, but also by other subjects who, in one or another aspect of their lives, are re-signifying some of their relationships, appropriated in New Age statements.

In these terms, it should be noted that there is a market in the making that appropriates New Age statements to reproduce itself on a capitalistic basis and a clientelism stimulated by marketing; however, the outcome of this process is not entirely negative. If, on the one hand, capitalism is served, on the other hand, transformations are conditioned to some modes of subjectivation of that society averse to the “madness of spiritual experiences”. Not limited to this, other transformations in the same sphere of capitalism are encouraged. For example, suppose that, taking advantage of the “veg” food fad (vegetarianism, veganism and the like), an individual undertakes to trade these foods. Certainly, many of its consumers have not been touched in the depth of a spiritual experience about the essence of the relationship between food and the body, an energetic whole. Many others will simply be looking for gluten-free and/or lactose-free foods. However, everyone (entrepreneurs and consumers) will be contributing to the non-incentive of intensive livestock farming that impacts not only the environment, but the primitive accumulation bases of this chain. Obviously, this movement will not have the strength to affect a national market that is focused on exports, but even so, the existence of different and “disconnected” “veg” movements scattered around the

world strengthen enunciative expressions at a global level, conditioning transformations in the long term, in a Next Age, perhaps.

Similarly, the legitimization and strengthening of statements that support a healthy, more natural and responsible diet also causes changes in commercial relationships, for example, between restaurants and their suppliers, replacing the purchase of food in large chains by producers regional. This change not only values the regional social capital, but conditions a whole positive relationship that results from the shortening of this supply chain.

As it could not be otherwise, the media is an important element in this process of legitimizing statements, especially as we find ourselves in a highly technological-communicational period of history. Its perverse function is not only subverted by the spiritual seeker, as we saw earlier, but it seems to us that it itself has been “deceived” by New Age statements.

In this perspective, we can say that the existence of the territory of spiritualities does not make it exclusive (and even “prison”) of spiritual seekers, but rather, its effectiveness results in the construction of a new basis for the production of subjectivities. By creating new statements, the territorialization of individuals in the New Age also puts these statements into circulation among other territories, conditioning a new dynamic to the movement of totality. In other words, using a “New Age language”, we are talking about a cartography composed of singular rhythms. If we had a mechanism for photographing Planet Earth by a satellite with “energetic” monitoring, I believe we would be visualizing the alteration of its vibration. Obviously, we cannot presume what this implies in terms of connectivity with the whole, (re)connectivity in the universe, but it seems to be announcing a New Age for us. Of subjects. Of territories.

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