

## GEOGRAPHICAL IMAGINATIONS AND SPATIAL PRODUCTION OF THE UNARE RIVER BASIN

### Introduction

Territorial formation is in constant developmental flux. This formation process ensures

political, economic, and cultural control over geographical spaces. However, a geographical space is not a territory in itself. The existence of a territory means someone exercises sovereignty over a given geographical area. At the same time, geographical space is not merely an empty container with an arrangement of things, but the product of a society, and a dynamic process inherent to a society's reproduction and transformation. In this sense, geographical spaces are social products, not only in our minds as social constructions, but as the physical world outside of them.

Following Lefebvre (1991), the concept of geographical space as socially produced implies the existence of a set of spatial practices—gestures that produce the space in everyday life. Spatial practices and spatial representations (scientists, planners, and managers space, often reflected in maps) combine in what Lefebvre calls representational spaces (or space of representation). This author prefers to call these geographical imaginations: myths or convictions on which references s giving meaning and sense to the political use of space are built. These geographical imaginations, together with territorial juridical formations and policies, constitute the basis for a group or social system to appropriate and produce its space, at the expense of others. The ecological, economic, and cultural success within the global system and the viability of the latter influences the sustainability of spatial practices related to a geographical imagination.

Warlike and peaceful contacts between civilizations generate processes of exchange, imposition, and resistance relative to spatial conceptions and practices on multiple scales. These

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