



# STATE OF THE ART DESIGN: REFLECTIONS, MEANING, OBJECTIVE, STRUCTURE AND EXAMPLE

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**Abstract** - The purpose of this review article is to reflect on the state of the art as a methodological tool, describe its meaning, present its objectives, present notes for its elaboration, propose a structure and finally present an example of construction. The methodology of the text is oriented, from the parameters of the interpretive paradigm and the use of the hermeneutic method to understand and interpret the arguments proposed by Bojacá (2004), Jiménez (2006), Baeza (2008), Guevara (2016), Saldarriaga (2019), Duque (2021), Rivas (2023), among other authors, who conceptualize and theorize about the state of the art as a methodological instrument.

**Keywords:** State of the arts, research and methodological tool.

## INTRODUCTION

The scientific research process is built through a series of elements or phases, which the researcher must take into account when establishing knowledge about a reality that occupies his or her interest. The state of the arts is an important piece in that process.

Generally, the state of the art is known as a type of documentary research related to the way in which different researchers or authors have treated a given topic in recent times. In other words, it is the search, reading, analysis and interpretation of the bibliography found in relation to a problem that you want to investigate.

In this document, a subjective study is carried out in which initially we reflect on the state of the arts, describing its meaning, its objectives and its characteristics; In the second instance, a strategy for its writing is proposed and finally, an example of its design is presented to the reader.

### 1. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The methodological framework with which this text was approached is oriented from the guidelines of the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative approach, with the use of the hermeneutic method, an important tool to interpret the arguments proposed by Bojacá (2004), Jiménez (2006), Palacio and Múnera (2007), Baeza (2008), Guevara (2016), Saldarriaga (2019), , Duque (2021), Ramírez and Aliaga (2022), Rivas (2023) among other authors, who conceptualize and theorize about the state of art as a methodological tool.

### 2. REFLECTIONS

The state of the art studied from the thought of Jiménez (2006), Garcés, Patiño and Torres, (2008), Guevara (2016), Saldarriaga (2019), Duque (2021), and from my own point of view, is a form of documentary research that allows the study of accumulated knowledge within a specific area. Its origins date back to the 1980s, a time when it was used as a tool to compile and systematize information, especially in the area of social sciences; However, to the extent that these studies were



carried out in order to take stock of research trends and as a starting point for decision making, the state of the art was positioned as a method of investigation of the investigation itself.

According to Duque (2021), designing a state of art is a task that the researcher does to review and evaluate what exists to project towards the new, the result of the diagnosis of what is missing, what is not well proposed, which denotes shortcomings, that is incomplete, that does not persuade, that is disturbing, that is, an extremely necessary activity to be able to have a balance of the scientific literature on the problem of interest.

It is important to highlight the contribution of Rivas (2023), who maintains that a state of the art is not simply a list of texts with short summaries of each one, but rather involves the selection, analysis and, if possible, interpretation of the most relevant parts for the investigation. In addition, a system of parameters for discarding and including the consulted texts must be established to guarantee the systematic and reproducibility of the process.

The well-crafted state of the art gives validity to any research; This part of the work not only provides an overview of the existing knowledge on a specific topic, but also serves the researcher as a reference to build epistemic knowledge about the problem.

Authors such as Bojacá (2004), Palacio and Múnera (2007) and Baeza (2008) argue that the state of affairs, as it is also known, has several objectives. Below are the following:

- Create spatio-temporel reference parameters and identify authors
- Demarcate the object of study and the relationships with other objects of study. This allows identifying categories and auxiliary categories about the problem being investigated.
- Increase knowledge about the problem in order to cooperate with compelling arguments that help justify and define the significance of the research.
- Identify gaps in the scientific literature.
- Identify the methodologies implemented to address the problem.
- Expose interpretations and critical positions on the problem and create a new position.

Martinez (2010) and Rivas (2023) present important notes for the elaboration of the state of the art, among them the following:

- A defined theme
- An identified topic in relation to the problem
- An elaborate approach
- A research question / hypothesis / general objective
- Have read several scientific articles, books or reports related to your research problem or analysis category (10, 20 texts), recently published in an observation window of no more than 10 years.
- From each document read extract the following:

(Author, year of publication, title of the text, objective of publication, theory that supports the problem, methodology addressed and results).

- From the documents read, select which are the most relevant and which will be referenced in the state of the matter.
- The researcher must know that the state of the art is not a list of texts with short summaries.
- Fragments of the texts consulted should not be copied directly. The important thing is to select and analyze those parts that are considered relevant.
- Taking into account all the previous input, start with writing the state of the art.

### 3. STATE OF THE ART STRUCTURE

The state of arts must have the following structure

- Title (related to the problem discussed)
- Introduction: (the topic of the writing must be clearly expressed). It must be built keeping in mind the research question or hypothesis or general objective. It is advisable to tell the reader who the authors are and the methodology with which their state of the art will be addressed.
- Crux or development: (in this part of the document, the main argumentative load will be included). The author must convince the reader of his idea, thesis or opinion, through the presentation of his arguments, analysis and interpretation of them. In the same way, it will be here where you must



include documentary references to research books, scientific articles, degree theses and other materials that contribute to defending your argument.

- **Conclusions:** (The writer must close the entire argumentative chapter that has been opened, and this is where the particular opinions and suggestions are located as a solution to the previously opened problem. The conclusion can also include a brief synthesis of what was discussed, acting in parallel to the introduction, but including the solutions that have been given, so that the reader finishes his reading with a clear idea of the problem discussed. In this section the author must make a description, or analysis, or in the best cases, an interpretation of current research positions in relation to theories, methodologies and results.
- **Bibliography:** (texts, articles, documents used throughout the document)

### 3.1. How to organize the background in the state of the art?

References can be cited taking into account spatial or chronological order:

- **Spatial order:** in this order the documents published in the contexts can be cited from the universal to the local.
- **Chronological order:** Documents can be referenced taking into account chronological order, published from the oldest dates to the most recent, regardless of space.

## 4. EXAMPLE OF STATE OF THE ARTS (ORGANIZED CHRONOLOGICALLY)

### 4.1. Urban social imaginaries as a tool to interpret problems in Latin American cities

This section aims to give an account of the current state of the topic Urban social imaginaries, which has the following research problem; How have urban social imaginaries interpreted the problems in Latin American cities? The methodology with which this section is addressed has been oriented from the parameters of the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative approach, with the use of the hermeneutic method to understand and interpret the arguments proposed by the different experts on the subject.

According to researchers Martínez, Castilla, González and Manjarrez (2023), urban social imaginaries are considered as:

*The structure of the social building based on socially constructed mental schemes, which function as a system of interpretation, where institutionalized imaginary meanings crystallize a natural perception of the world. Configurators and structurers of reality, they determine and create a perception of what is accepted as such, ensuring the repetition of the same forms that regulate life in society (Martínez, Castilla, González and Manjarrez, 2023, 952).*

This means that urban social imaginaries are a theoretical and methodological tool that has helped interpret social problems in several cities. In the Latin American case, in the last decade, authors such as: Santillán (2015), Gómez and De Aguiar (2015), Vergara, Rozas and Zunino (2017), Segovia, Basulto and Zambrano (2018) have stood out. Lindo (2019), Mora, Aliaga, Diz and Gutiérrez (2019), Murillo (2019), Martínez (2021), among other authors.

Santillán (2015), in his text titled “Urban imaginaries and socio-spatial segregation. A case study about Quito”, presents a subjective and interpretive work in which it is explained how space becomes a determining element that gives meaning to intra-urban borders and, in this way, imaginary productions allow reconstruction, at the symbolic level, the tensions that social and spatial inequalities entail.

Another work that is worth referring to is carried out by Gómez and De Aguiar (2015), who analyzed the origin, meanings and consequences of the imaginary of fear, which is:

*A mixture of real violence and subjective perception of society has become the way of living in the contemporary Latin American city, turning it into a space of fear and insecurity, a situation enhanced by the real estate market and the media. (Gómez and De Aguiar 2015. P.41).*



Gómez and De Aguiar (2015) argue that the imaginary of fear is not only a manifestation of fear of violence and insecurity, but also, when mixed with the other, a denial of the heterogeneity, diversity and sociability that have always been characterized in Latin American cities, especially Salvador de Bahía (Brazil) and Monterrey (Mexico), thus causing manifestations of architectural isolation and segregation, which make it increasingly difficult to achieve a concept of real urban sustainability.

Vergara, Rozas and Zunino (2017), in their research titled "The urban imaginaries and the architecture of Puerto Varas. Crossroads between the local and the global", they managed to explain how in this city in the south of Chile, urban imaginaries coexist, among them: a "green and local" imaginary, another "progressive and developmental" and the third and last, the imaginary "tourist". The three make an interesting, representative and determining mosaic to achieve urban development.

Another important contribution is presented by researchers Segovia, Basulto and Zambrano (2018). In their work, they make an analysis of the imaginaries and representations through the study of journalistic articles in three cases belonging to three areas of events in Chile, such as: the student movement of 2011, the drug-crime association and the Chilean conflict. -Mapuche, all of the above analyzed from the proposal of the social construction of reality by Berger and Luckmann (1976).

*These authors argue that the notions of social representations and imaginaries refer us to differentiated levels of analysis with regard to the construction and interpretation of social reality. Representations lead to a plane of the apparent, while social imaginaries constitute the founding plane of meaning of society (Segovia, Basulto and Zambrano, 2018, 79).*

An exploratory work is the one contributed by Mora, Aliaga, Diz and Gutiérrez (2019), who carried out a study on cannabis consumption in the Zonal Planning Units (UPZ), of the town of Suba, (Bogotá - Colombia), from young residents. This qualitative (subjective) and interdisciplinary (sociology, anthropology, psychology, law) research had as its purpose the analysis of existing alternative discourses in the face of an extremely well-founded meaning about drug consumption. Speeches related to profane links with local economies and the rapid process of transculturation towards the capitalist economy.

Lindo (2019), in his work called "Urban imaginaries of waiting, temporalities and territorializations", carries out a subjective, theoretical and methodological investigation, where he reflects on the phenomenon of "waiting", taking the metropolitan area as a territorial reference. From Mexico City. In this work, the researcher analyzes everyday practices, with mobility and the spatial and temporal dimensions that make up the urban imagination. About her work the author argues that:

*The great physical distances that occur in metropolitan areas contribute to emphasizing the repeated presence of waiting in various modalities and in different circumstances. In part, this occurs because extensive daily trips necessarily entail waiting situations. However, the expectation of metropolitan life is not only generated around daily spatial mobility, it is also related to other issues, for example, the large volumes of inhabitants concentrated in metropolises contribute to numerous urban managements integrating different forms ways of « waiting » In the same way, the timed lifestyle, typical of metropolises, produces waiting patterns in relation to the start of certain activities. On the other hand, current metropolises are no strangers to another style of waiting, closely related to hope: waiting for a neighborhood to improve, waiting for a certain infrastructure project to be completed, waiting for the public transportation system to improve, among many others. (Lindo, 2019, 43).*

Urban imaginaries in relation to waiting can be interpreted as a mediating agent between a hurried urban way of life built in the present time, which rejects waiting, but cannot eradicate it; and integrates it in a way that also lives projected into the future, with spatial fantasies and heterotopias of other urban spaces or residential places. (Lindo, 2019).



Another work referenced in this state of the art was the doctoral thesis of Javier H. Murillo, (2019). This author works on the imaginary from Bogotá literature, in a historical context. In this document the author tries to give an account of the modernizing process he lived in Bogotá between 1910 and 1938, and he does so based on the interpretation of the capital's novels written during that time, and the discovery of the urban imaginaries present in these narrative texts. It uses 15 novels as a corpus, emphasizing *El criminal*, by José Antonio Osorio Lizarazo, and “*De Poetas a Conspiradores*”, by Simón Pérez y Soto. Through these texts, and with a transversal view that includes the history and urban sociology of the city, the ways of life of the capital of Bogotá during the period and its projections are configured in the current life of the city (Murillo, 2019).

The sociologist Martínez (2021), in his doctoral thesis, carried out a study that aimed to analyze the urban social imaginaries related to closed residential complexes in the city of Valledupar, taking into account the symbolic universes affected by identity and social relations in neighborhood life. The research methodology was oriented, from the parameters of the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative approach, the use of the ethnographic method, as well as the analysis of the theoretical arguments proposed by Berger and Luckmann, (1986), Castoriadis (1989), Pinto (2004, 2005), Baeza, (2004), Carretero, (2011) Martínez, (2011), among other authors.

Finally, it can be said that urban social imaginaries is a relatively new term, which has been used by the social sciences, especially sociology and anthropology; with authors such as: Gómez and De Aguiar (2015), Santillán (2015), Jaramillo (2017), Segovia, Basulto and Zambrano, (2018), Murillo (2019), Martínez (2021) among other authors who have currently been concerned with using social imaginaries as tools to interpret the reality and problems of the city.

Analyzing this state of the art, it can be said that the definitions and theorization of urban social imaginaries are closely linked to the hypothesis of “the social construction of reality” proposed by Berger and Luckmann (1989); thus marking the tendency to affirm that imaginaries are collective constructions.

Within the referential research presented in this document, some attempts to develop a methodology for studying social imaginaries are also evident, proposing qualitative studies using methods of collecting and analyzing information such as ethnography, Grounded Theory, demonology and discourse analysis.

This document offers a sample of the possible counterpoints, connections and discussions that open up in the field of urban social imaginaries to study social problems in Latin American cities. It can be said that it is an article that navigates between movements and conceptual cautions about temporalities, territories and scales, symbols and catastrophes, borders and inequalities, neighborhood identities and drug consumption; pretending that in this itinerary new routes of inquiry can be opened that bring us closer to interpreting questions about Latin American cities and urban life.

## CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, it can be said that the state of the matter is the search, reading and study of the related bibliography on the topic being investigated, it is a document of critical approach to the research that precedes the problem being studied, as well as it enables the author to design an initial balance of the theoretical and methodological development of the formulated problem.

The state of the question must be constructed in a good way, with a correct choice of authors and research works, there must be clarity about the main theoretical and methodological problems in which the problem is located.

Finally, it can be stated that this article is a pedagogical resource, where it is possible to make a significant contribution to the state of the art as a methodological tool; The objectives of the state of the matter are presented to the reader, notes for its elaboration are presented, a simple structure for its writing is suggested and an example of its construction is presented (using urban social imaginaries as a problem as a tool to interpret problems in Latin American cities). This means that this document is a proposal on how to write in a simple, systematic and productive way.



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