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## **Geographical Education as Powerful Knowledge in the Brazilian Curriculum**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to highlight how geography and its epistemological status were organized in the Basic Education curriculum in Brazil, in order to rescue the basic postulates of geographic science. This process was guided by the need to guarantee access to geographic knowledge and its fundamental representations in basic education. The central thesis of this article is to present the force that the epistemological field of geographic science has for education, as well as to reveal the importance that the theoretical-methodological foundations have to understand the different dynamics of societies in a world with constant transformations and contextualize the curriculum as a State policy to address equity and equal access to geographic knowledge. This is a theoretical research inquiry with critical reflection. We present the results of the conception of Geography in the Brazilian curriculum and how we seek to recover the Epistemological Statute as a way to value it in the curriculum, and at the same time, enable students to be able to read the world from their place of experience, understand the dynamics and the different uses of the territories.

**Keywords:** basic education; geographic education; epistemological status; scientific knowledge; powerful knowledge; geographic reasoning.

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this article is to highlight how Geography and its epistemological status (Santos, 1996) were organized in the Brazilian Common Core Curriculum (BNCC – *Base Nacional Comum Curricular*) in Brazil, in order to rescue the basic foundations of geographic science. This movement was guided

by the need to guarantee access to geographic knowledge and its fundamental representations in basic education. The main thesis of this article is to present the strength that the epistemological field of geographic science has for teaching, as well as to reveal the importance that the theoretical-methodological foundations must understand the different dynamics of societies in a world in constant transformations and to contextualize the BNCC as a State policy to ensure fairness and equal access to geographical knowledge.

Brazil started to have a Brazilian Common Core Curriculum (Brasil, 2018) for basic education after 2018, therefore, it is important to highlight right away that making Geography a relevant discipline in this elaboration movement of the national document was an arduous process with many disputes that took place throughout the period of preparation of the BNCC (2015-2018). The document went through three versions and public hearings, in addition to the process of suggestions from civil society there was a discussion seminar, held in São Paulo, with researchers from several universities and the writing group. For us, what was in dispute were the epistemological conceptions of Geography, much more than curriculum theories.

We aimed, in that context, to offer a vocabulary universe that identified Geography and that could serve as a reference for basic education teachers. Geographic vocabulary is understood as a set of terms (networks of categories and concepts) that can be articulated in pedagogical practices, teaching plans and projects, learning paths, adapting them to the realities of each state, region or municipality in the country. We understood, therefore, that making Geography a powerful knowledge should be a necessary principle to have, an assumption for teachers and schools, respecting their diversities and local realities, but ensuring an epistemological status that would place the own collection of Geography at the center, its categories, principles and language (cartography).

### **Context of Educational Policy in Brazil**

The project to build a national curriculum for all over Brazil is not recent, it began to be conceived in the 1988 Constitution and had a second strengthening with the 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education. Brazil is a federative country that is in its seventh constitution. The organization of government in Brazil is carried out from three levels provided for in the Constitution: the union, the state and the municipality.

The duty of the Brazilian State towards education takes effect, according to article 208 of the Brazilian Constitution (Brasil, 1988), guaranteeing fundamental, compulsory and free education, including for those who did not have access at the appropriate age. The objective of the National Curricular Base is to provide national references, based on which minimum contents for basic education will be set to ensure common training and respect for national and regional cultural and artistic values. It is from this constitutional article that, since

1988, the consolidation of a national curriculum has been foreseen in Brazil, in other words the creation of a Brazilian Common Core Curriculum (BNCC), which provides for the minimum contents for basic education.

The normative documents of Brazilian education, subsequent to the Federal Constitution, also ensured the national curriculum, such as the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (Brasil, 1996) which provided in article 9 the need to establish, in collaboration with the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities, competences and guidelines for early childhood education, elementary school and high school. In the absence of a national curriculum, in the 1990s the Brazilian government created National Curriculum Parameters (PCN), which from 1996 onwards became a reference for guiding state curricula and, to a large extent, guided evaluation systems and guided school curricula in the states and counties.

For almost 20 years, the PCN, were the basis of the curricular structures of the Brazilian states. What was taught in textbooks did not always match the evaluation systems, and in addition to this problem, which is already quite serious and complex at its core, we had another problem, which was the increase in inequality of access to school knowledge among public schools and private, and access to higher education (Libâneo, 2016).

However, private schools were much quicker in adapting to assessment systems and producing their curricula based on national assessments. Therefore, it was identified that the absence of the Brazilian Common Core Curriculum could further deepen the inequalities in access to knowledge in the country, since not all young people and children would have the guarantee of a curriculum committed to quality, equity and the development of fundamental skills.

Considering the regulatory framework of Brazilian educational policy, the BNCC is a document for a country that seeks to preserve regional and local heterogeneities, but also contribute to the reduction of numerous territorial inequalities to ensure equity. A political pact is then constituted between different federative entities in the search for equality and solidarity, preserving the specificities of each place in a democratic way, assuring a unique identity to the document that is prepared by the states and municipalities.

### **The Path of the Brazilian Common Core Curriculum (BNCC)**

The writing of the BNCC started in 2015 and ended in 2018. The process was permeated by many political conflicts, exchanges of education ministers, and mainly, the process was marked by a coup (blow) in democracy by the National Congress with the replacement of President Dilma Russef. The reform of secondary education in Brazil has been elaborated since 2016 during the

illegitimate Temer government, in a context of a political-legal-mediatic coup<sup>1</sup> of the State and in line with the Proposed Amendment to the Constitution no. 55 (PEC 55), which implemented the freezing investment in the social area for 20 years from 2017, impacting health and education, removing the responsibility for guaranteeing social rights from the State. In this context, the reform of secondary education was authoritarian imposed by means of a Provisional Measure.

In a troubled political context, the project to elaborate a guiding curriculum for Brazilian education, undertaken by the State (and not by a government), had three versions over four years and went through six different ministers of education, having been concluded with the homologation of the document by the National Council of Education in 2018 (Brasil, 2018).

During the elaboration process of the BNCC, a fundamental issue was to highlight the relevance of Geography in the basic education curriculum based on the essential foundations of the epistemological status of geographic science. The foundations of geographic science form the statute and these can be worked on and operated by different theoretical views. Dedicating to a Marxist, positivist or phenomenological Geography (to name only these three theoretical views) should not change the scientific statute of Geography. In other words, the goal of rescuing the basic foundations of geographic science was not just to reaffirm a geographical reading of the world, but mainly to give centrality to what is in fact important and immutable, that is, the principles, categories and concepts of geographic reasoning.

Although this debate on the foundations of geographical status is not something new (Hartshorne, 1978, La Blache, 2001; Lacoste, 1976; Ratzel, 2019; Ritter, 1833/2018), it is a fact that bringing together the categories of analysis, concepts and geographic principles that constitute the Epistemological Statute of Geography was made for the first time in Brazil with the BNCC.

The BNCC is organized for Elementary Education (initial and final years) into thematic units, fields of knowledge, skills, and competences, with the aim of highlighting themes and contents that allow the development of geographic reasoning in schools. For high school, the BNCC is organized by area of knowledge, with Geography being part of the area of Applied Human and Social Sciences<sup>2</sup>, along with Philosophy, History and Sociology. The BNCC, for both

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<sup>1</sup>Term used by Jessé Souza, for further details see: SOUZA, J. A radiografia do golpe: entenda como e por que você foi enganado (The X-ray of the coup: understand how and why you were deceived.) Rio de Janeiro: Leya, 2016.

<sup>2</sup>The organization of the secondary education curriculum by areas was due to the amendment of law No. 13.415/2017, which amended the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education and established a change in the structure of secondary education,

primary and secondary education, defines the essential learning that all students must develop throughout basic education – progressively and by areas of knowledge (Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Human Sciences and Social Applied).

### **Geography of the Brazilian Common Core Curriculum (BNCC)**

An important aspect that should be highlighted in the BNCC is the concern with organizing conceptual systems and themes to ensure student learning possibilities at school. This changes the meaning of teaching Geography practiced until then in Brazil, as we consider endorsing the overcoming of the physical and human dichotomy and the construction of geographic reasoning, making it meaningful knowledge with an application in the analysis of world readings.

When the focus is on learning, ensuring the process of building geographic reasoning, knowledge earns power because it is appropriate for the student. In this way, a geographic education is proposed as powerful knowledge that is guided by the idea of building and solving learning problems, stimulating spatial thinking in order to develop geographic reasoning (Ascensão & Valadão, 2014; Castellar, 2017, 2018; Duarte, 2018; Pereira, 2018;).

With these assumptions, it is necessary to analyze the meaning of geographic science, its goal, and how it can be articulated with the student's life to ensure a powerful geographic education that makes sense for learning. It seeks to give specificity to the content and show how, why, for what, and for whom Geography should be taught. A point to be highlighted is to understand the spatiality of the phenomena from the technical objects and their functions in the locations. This means that it is a question of subsidizing geographic analyzes that allow unveiling, based on their locational attributes, the reason for the occurrence of events or phenomena. That is, to understand the central question of geographic education which, in our view, is to answer, “why are objects and actions the way they are, and are they where they are?” (Lacoste, 1976; Gomes, 2017; Santos, 1997, 2017). Cartography, understood as the language of geography, stands out in the BNCC as a thematic unit, with specific skills and can also be understood as a transversal theme since it is an inseparable content of the objects of knowledge of Geography.

The development of geographic reasoning is promoted not only by the principles of analogy, connection, differentiation, distribution, extension, location, and order, but also by the categories and concepts of geographic

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extending the minimum time of the student in school from 800 hours to 1,000 hours a year, defining a new curricular organization among other changes.

thinking: place, territory, region, nature, landscape, daily activities, scales, among others that promote the understanding of geographic space (Castellar et al., 2021).

The BNCC considers that the pedagogical dimension is fundamental for its implementation, and this is precisely one of the greatest challenges for teachers: changing the culture of teaching practices in the classroom. That is why we defend the idea that teachers need to be encouraged to have an intellectual life, based on the inseparable repertoire between the epistemological statute and the teaching methodologies and strategies by the teacher, imposing itself as a collective challenge.

### **The Foundations of Geographic Reasoning**

The epistemological statute of Geography is composed of networks of categories and structuring concepts, marked by epistemological and ontological reasons, developed since the 19th century, it seems necessary to present, albeit briefly given the format of this text, the foundations that support us in the geographic science classics so that we can consolidate our understanding of geographic reasoning and, above all, present and share the theoretical paths we are following (Castellar et al., 2021).

Reflection on Geographical Reasoning is relevant for geographic education as it seeks to overcome the idea of the trio 'Nature, Man and Economy' and resume epistemology through the method and object of geographic science. Studying Geography should be a possibility to understand the world we live in based on multiscale relationships: from local to global, from world to place, and in different temporalities.

In the Early Years (which correspond to the children school age between 6 and 10 years old) Geography is presented with an emphasis on the study of living places, on the notions of belonging, location, orientation, ordering from the student's place as well as the experiences of experiences. In the Final Years (which correspond to the school age of children between 11 and 14 years old), the perspective of analyzing and reading the world expands and becomes more complex, seeking to understand and explain the global scenario at its political-economic, social, environmental, social, and cultural interrelationships at different scales (spatial and temporal). The high school (younglings between 15 and 17 years old) we focus on improving and refining geographical reasoning against issues of reality that are imposed on the world and can be perceived in places. The geopolitical dimension of the analysis assumes centrality in geographic education.

It is expected that the student can develop geographic reasoning by establishing relationships and spatial connections that allow understanding, patterns and spatial arrangements and the reason for actions and objects, seeking to understand where they are and how the events, processes and phenomena studied are. In this way, Geography, as proposed by Santos (2017), must be

attentive to analyze the social reality based on its territorial dynamics, based on concepts that allow the understanding of the inseparability between objects and actions. For Santos, the object of study of Geography is the geographical space understood as "an inseparable, supportive and also contradictory set of systems of objects and systems of actions" (Santos, 2017, p. 68).

Objects are understood as all materiality produced by men and actions refer to human actions. It is this imbricated set of action of materiality in human social practice, which forms the geographic space. But as geographic space is abstract, in Geography what we study and try to understand is how the territory is used. To understand the use, we cannot fail to understand and interpret the category of landscape and the spatial concepts of arrangements, territorial configuration, and spatial patterns, which help us to know why things are where they are and are as they are. The possibility of overcoming the 'Nature, Man and Economy' trio in geographic education lies in assuming that teaching must be guided by the centrality of the object of geographic science: the geographic space.

### *Classic Thinkers*

Due to its philosophical dimension, as a category, it is not possible to understand space from a single perspective, as its understanding is subordinated to the specific thinking of each era, choices of theoretical matrices, conceptions of science and the world, among other variables to be discussed, that each researcher joins. In other words, the BNCC is not limited to a single concept, the theoretical-methodological choice must be made by each teacher, textbook author, curriculum and evaluation writers. And to understand the theoretical and epistemological dimension of geographic science, it is important to rescue the classic thinkers of Geography in teacher education.

#### *Alexander Von Humboldt*

One of the first scholars to dedicate himself to the episteme of geographic knowledge was Alexander Von Humboldt, who emphasized that the most important thing was understand, in geographical analyses, the existing connections between man and natural elements. By observing, describing, comparing and analyzing, Humboldt was outlining a method and realized that everything was interconnected and related, therefore, everything was connected, in a certain place (location). Humboldt understands that nature is a network with several threads interrelated and systemically organized. Any break in the network would weaken the system, and this applies to geographic analysis, which in other words means saying that a geographical reading for Humboldt should contemplate the relationships and connections of man with his surroundings (nature).

The classic works of Geography were initiated and motivated by the concern to define the object of science and from this understanding to trace paths and trajectories that dialogue with the meaning of Geography. The first definitions



of Geography find cohesion in the etymological sense of “description of the Earth” (Humboldt, 1875; Ritter, 1833/2018) but we observe that there is clearly, an early need to clarify the differences between the pure, abstract, concrete sciences and mainly the differentiation of Geography with History and Geology.

### *Carl Ritter*

This is the case of Ritter (1833/2018), for whom Geography assumes from the beginning the task of understanding the relationships in/of space on the earth's surface:

The Geographical Sciences (geographische Wissenschaften) have to do specially with the spaces of the terrestrial surface (Räume der Erdoberfläche), insofar as these are constituted on earth matters (whether [such surface] is linked to any kingdoms of nature and endowed with any forms) ; [they have to do], therefore, with descriptions and relations of the simultaneity of localities (Nebeneinander der Örtlichkeiten), both in their more specific occurrences and in their more universal telluric phenomena. Through this, they differ from the Historical Sciences (historische Wissenschaften), which have to unveil, investigate and present the sequentiality of events (Nacheinander der Begebenheiten) or the succession and development of things in the singular or in the whole, from the interior and to the outside. (p. 142)

It is in Ritter's (1833/2018) work that we identify the importance that the study of relations between man and the different phenomena that appear in space has for Geography:

Spaces (Räumen), times (Zeiten), forms (Gestalten) and formations (Formen), spatial constitutions (Raumerfüllungen) in their constructions and organizations on the planet itself – always unique and even in its values – do not remain the same in their relations with the globe thought as the home of the human species (Wohnhaus des Menschengeschlechtes), but their relative values vary, in reality, with the progression of millennia and centuries. (p. 145)

The power of Ritter's work is not only in the emphasis on the study of space and the relationships that are established on the earth's surface, but we also find in this author a concern to cut out reality when he points out that geographical investigation takes place from a scalar cut, which is part of a whole.

### *Max Sorre*

Sorre (2003) concerned with elucidating the definition and place of Human Geography defines that:

Geography is the discipline of terrestrial spaces. In the first place, its originality lies in the nature of the objects it describes (...) and cartographic representation is a specific instrument of expression and

investigation. Geography draws, comments and compares maps. Secondly, the man of Geography is the man of connections and sets. Close connections between elements of local combinations (relief, climate, vegetation, man-made works), remote connections between facts of all kinds on the surface of the Earth. (...) This imperative is, together with the concern for location, the foundation of the unity of Geography. Through the unity of Geography we acquire the consciousness of the unity of our terrestrial universe. (p. 138)

The first problem of Human Geography pointed out by Sorre (2003) is to elucidate the relations between man and the environment, from the spatial angle. For this author, it is a reciprocal relationship since, through technology, men modify the natural environment, while adapting to it.

Sorre (2003), when returning to Humboldt, begins his reflection on human Geography, emphasizing that “the man of Geography is the man of connections and sets” (p. 138)

The first problem of Human Geography is to elucidate the relations between man and the environment, from the spatial angle. It is a reciprocal relationship, since through technology men modify the natural environment, while adapting to it. We recreate our environment at every moment while we are subjected to it. With the exception of a few cases, each day becoming rarer, the image of the environment we describe represents a considerable part of human effort. She finds herself humanized by a game of mutual actions. This game is, properly speaking, the subject of Ecology, the science of relations between living beings and the environment, according to Haeckel. In large part, Human Geography presents itself as an ecology of man. (p. 138)

### *Élisée Reclus*

For Reclus (1866/2015) geographic studies should start from questions that investigate the why of things and could present the relationship and differentiation between places and phenomena. Therefore, the idea of problematizing teaching can be observed in Reclus' work, as well as the geographical principles of relationship and differentiation.

Reclus (1866/2015) dedicated himself to thinking about the teaching of Geography. With criticism of mnemonic geography, he proposes a Geography where the student should be contemplated from the method to be taught to the development of activities. Understanding that the student had to be at the center of the learning process, he defends the need for geographic walks so that the student could be taught to look, observe and learn the reality that surrounds him. For Reclus, teaching needed to be contextualized. It is important to highlight that Reclus' studies place teaching as an issue that deserves investigation, dedication and attention.

### *Friedrich Ratzel*

Contemporary Ratzel of Reclus is dedicated to the study of the space of life. Life is understood as a confrontation of internal and external sums. According to Ratzel “When the nature of a space [Raum] is restructured, it is also always transformed as a space of life [Lebensraum].” (Ratzel, 1988, p.110). We observe the importance and dedication that Ratzel gives to the idea of dispersion as the basic foundation of geographic studies. Ratzel does not dedicate himself to defining Geography but presents relationships that reveal the importance that spatial order has for geographic study.

Studying Geography or dedicating oneself to thinking geographically is evoked in Ratzel's work when he even points out the need to think, reflect, investigate and understand the:

- Spatial influence
- Spatial issues
- Spatial impacts
- Spatial relationships
- Spatial displacements
- Spatial phenomena
- Spatial expansion
- Spatial portrayal
- Spatial differences
- Spatial processes
- Spatial representations
- Spatial needs
- Space requirements

In clear opposition to studies of nature and environment, Ratzel points out that Geography is dedicated to understanding the relationships and connections between Society-State-Territory and assumes spatiality as the center of geographical investigation. Ratzel is concerned with understanding flows from dispersions. It is noted that not only the studies of territory that we carry out today are tributaries of Ratzel, but also the studies on the spatiality of phenomena. This author, in just one text, evokes in different ways the importance that the study of spatiality has for the geographical understanding of territory studies.

### *Alfred Hettner*

If for Ratzel the central category is the territory, for Hettner it is the region. Geography is, for Hettner, the science of the spaces of the Earth's surface in clear approximation with Ritter's Geography. In Hettner (2000) we find the definition that joins both Gomes (2017) and Santos (1997) to the theory that Geography is the science of the where of things:

The consideration of the historical development of geography as a science shows us that at all times reference was made to the knowledge of the different spaces of the earth, and that over time only the method of study changed, due to the progress of scientific results. Methodologists who have not lost touch with scientific development

have always placed the point of view of spatial organization in their preferred place. Ritter's geography is undoubtedly dominated by this conception, which he refers to when he calls geography the science of spaces and when he deals with its function. After the methodological confusion introduced in geography by Peschel, at the same time that it provided revolutionary transformation to physical geography, F. von Richthofen returned to emphasize the true point of view of geography, calling it the science of the earth surface, referring to the solid surface. Immediately after Richthofen, Marthe broadened this concept and strongly emphasized the chorological point of view, albeit in a mistaken sense, calling geography the science of the where of things. In Richthofen's subsequent lectures, in Leipzig, a geography conception is presented in which is configured the program of current geography, adjusting Marthe's concept and accepting Ritter's positions, since the concept of earth surface has lost its restricted sense and it includes the solid earth crust, water, atmosphere, flora, fauna and man. (p. 143)

Hettner's contribution to composing the foundations of the epistemological statute is fundamental, not only because it points to the need to investigate the where of things, but also highlights that the importance of studying space is presented from the connection, distribution and ordering of phenomena. Although Hettner's semantics are different, it is a fact that his ideas place man at the center of geographic processes.

### *Richard Hartshorne*

Like Hettner, Hartshorne considers that the task of explaining the characteristics of Geography starts from empiricism, moving towards the definition that Geography is the study of the differentiation of areas, a study introduced in 1925 by Sauer (2000). The place along with the region assumes a leading role in the work of Hartshorne (1978) and it is in this author that the principles of differentiation, connection and relationship of phenomena strengthen the epistemological statute.

When Hartshorne dedicates himself to reflecting on the idea proposed by La Blache of Geography as sciences of places, he contributes to the idea of spatial arrangement, because for this author, the place is not a mere localizable space, but a spatial arrangement, composed of places with distinct qualities and potentialities that reveal the totality of their characteristics. We find in Hartshorne the principles of analogy, connection, relation, arrangement, and distribution of phenomena to understand a place and/or region.

### ***The Epistemological Statute of Geography of the BNCC***

Different conceptions of geographic space result from different epistemic nuclei, object views and theoretical, methodological and also political

orientations that have been elaborated throughout the history of Geography. There are those who bring a vision of space as a structure, object of planning and organization, product, condition, medium, ecumene, perception, expression, among others.

And then, we have Santos (1997) who presents the geographic space formed by an inseparable, solidary and also contradictory set of systems of objects and systems of actions, which underlies the perspective of the BNCC.

The Epistemological Statute of Geography is formed, therefore, by the set of principles, categories and concepts adopted in the course of the history of the thought of geographic science. In this way, the Epistemological Statute involves a consistent construction of an intellectual system that allows, analytically, to approach the empirical reality and, also, its opposite direction. Thus, the geographical statute is not consolidated by theoretical perspectives, but by an epistemic set of fundamentals that allow approaching the object of science.

What we study and must teach is, or should be, supported by the foundations of geographic science. This idea, which seems obvious to us, was misguided in Brazil in recent years, especially when the theoretical current affiliated with historical-dialectical materialism assumed to be its own epistemological status. Marxism is one of the many ways of understanding the contradictions of the world, but it is not the only one, by assuming it as a central theory, the epistemic foundations of geographic science were largely forgotten, since Brazilian research anchored the geographical reading in the dynamics of society and not in geographic space.

By considering Geography as an autonomous way of structuring thought, we resume the study of the principles that should sustain science and recover the set that anchors science and that can make it powerful, such as the concepts, categories and principles that allow understanding, reading and analyze phenomena in space.

When considering that Geography has an epistemological statute, the question that appears in the sequence is how to explain, teach and problematize issues in the daily life of the classroom that allow the development and consolidation of this way of thinking about the world.

Through the study of Geography, students are expected to be able to read and understand reality spatially, understanding the space in which we live and its relationship with others based on geographical situations (Santos, 1997; Silveira, 1999). Thus, we interpret that the geographic study that is based on the scientific statute of Geography must follow the path taken by Silveira (1999) and by Sorre (2003) when he indicates that:

All analyzes of the medium are dominated by spatial considerations.

Since there has been a Human Geography, the notions of situation and area of extension of phenomena have been put in the foreground. The situation can be absolute, determined by geographic coordinates,

latitude, longitude, altitude, or relative, described in relation to other characteristics of the geographical design - degree of continentality, enclave situation, position facing circulation currents, etc. The idea of an extension area includes that of a limit, which is inseparable from it and which presents different degrees of determination, from the linear limit to the limit zone, with its ranges of degradation (the same being true for Natural Geography). (Sorre, 2003, p. 140)

The geographical situation is not just a section of the territory but a continuous area, where a set of relationships is also established (Silveira, 1999).

### **The Geographic Situation as a Methodological Procedure**

Analyzing a geographic problem requires a method and a methodology associated to a kind of representation, correlations, distribution, extension, and a geographic situation that can be defined by a geographic scale, location, and existing connections. In this way, it surpasses the contemplation and the mere simplified description of the phenomenon, surpassing geography mnemonic teaching. Thus, the geographical situation, as stated by George (1975):

it is the result of a set of actions that oppose, moderate or reinforce each other and suffer the effects of accelerations, brakes or inhibition by the durable elements of the environment and the sequels of previous situations. This situation is mainly characterized by the total data and specific factors of a space portion, that is, except in the extreme cases of margins unoccupied by man, an ordered space, an inheritance, that is, a humanized space. (pp. 20 - 21)

It is in this context that we present another important point for the method beyond the geographic situation, the location, or even the location system, which helps to answer part of the central question “why are things where they are?”. The principles and categories contribute to support the analysis and reinforce the interrelationships of all natural physical elements, the spatial arrangements of objects and existing connections in the territory, reinforced by absolute and relational location. In this sense, Silveira (1999) points out that:

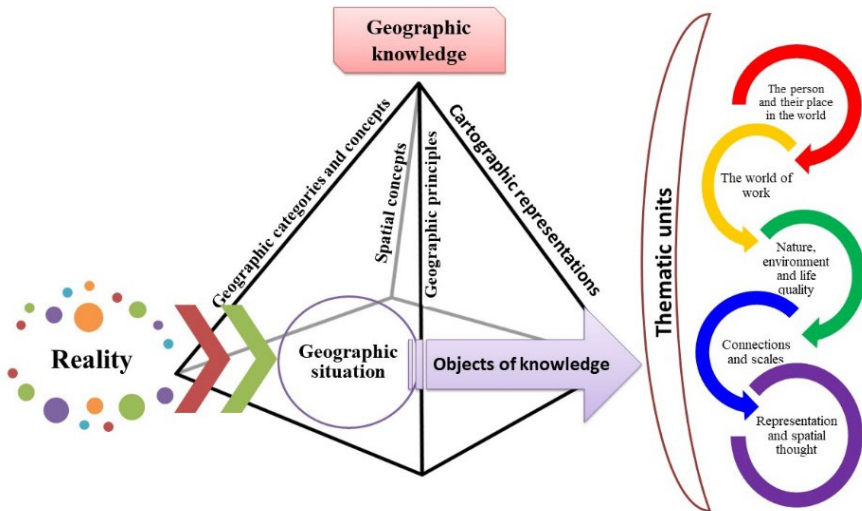
we can recognize in a *geographic situation*: technical objects, actions, norms, agents, scales, ideologies, speeches, images, which are diverse in the historical process and in the places [...] thus, the situation reaffirms the specificity of the place and, methodologically, appears as an instance of analysis and synthesis. It is a category of analysis because it allows identifying problems to be researched and, thus, understanding the technical systems and actions in place. (pp. 26-27)

The geographic situation enhances the differentiation study between places through the hierarchization of the problems, and the cut that will be made

(geographical scale). A geographic situation can contain numerous problems, it is the definition of the scale that establishes and/or configures the problem to be investigated. For Santos (1997, p. 97) “the geographical situation is given by a systemic set of events.”. Starting from this, an integrated analysis of the phenomena and the spatial arrangements configured from the technical objects and action systems is defined.

The geographic situation presents us with a methodological path, since it is understood as a starting and ending point for geographic analysis, to elaborate a problem that must necessarily contain evidence of the phenomenon that will be analyzed, by the students, assuming its complexity and, consequently, the articulations between the principles of geographic reasoning. According to Gomes (2017) the question that Geography addresses to the phenomenon is that it allows dialogue with why things are where they are and are as they are.

Thus, geographic education has an epistemological statute that is structured by the edges, the base and the apex of the pyramid (Figure 1). Each and every study on geographic space is carried out in an intense symbiosis of processes that consider the episteme of science, the principles of geographic reasoning.



**Figure 1.** Pyramid of Geographical Knowledge at BNCC. Created by the authors.

The Pyramid of Geographical Knowledge (Figure 1) is structured from 4 lateral edges that together form the faces of the pyramid, which in this representation is assumed by geographic categories and concepts, spatial

concepts, geographic principles (location, extension, connection, causality, analogy, differentiation, distribution, arrangement and order) and cartographic representations, it is this set of edges that structure the apex of the figure that is geographic reasoning. But it is only possible to exercise geographic reasoning because the geographic situation is found in the base/structure. The geographical situation is formed in the learning process from the dynamics of reality. It focuses on the geographic situation and reality, and it is from this set of processes that geographic education presents the world to the student. The contents studied by Geography are objects of knowledge that derive from this arrangement between the geographic situation, categories, concepts, cartographic representation reflected on the principles of geographic reasoning.

The geographic situation allows understanding a certain event that comes from reality, as shown in Figure 1, from the interactions between the systems of objects and actions. Thus, a proposal that stimulates the elaboration and re-elaboration of knowledge through key concepts, aiming at the problematization of geographic situations, is enhanced. Understanding a geographic situation requires the construction of geographic knowledge that takes place through the set of principles, categories, concepts, and cartographic language.

By appropriating the geographic contents in a meaningful and logical way, the students come to understand the reality that is being studied, schematizing, and consciously acting on them, proposing attitudes that enable the relationship between the contents to solve the problems presented in the geographic situation, developing criticality, argumentation, and autonomy. Thus, school geography becomes powerful from the curriculum that focuses on the geographic situation, since it requires the understanding of reality, mobilizing from the epistemological status of geographic science (Young, 2009; Young & Lambert, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

Geographic education based on the Brazilian Common Core Curriculum is oriented towards recovering the epistemological status of geographic science as a way of valuing it in education, and at the same time enabling students to read the world and reality from their place of experience, relating other scales of analysis and understanding the dynamics of systems of actions and objects, and the different uses of territories.

A powerful Geographical Education is based on geographic reasoning grounded by the statute of science and also by the use of a logic - dialectic - argumentative, propositional and inferential, which is the result of the connections made by the subject with the surrounding world, from a vocabulary specific, strengthening geographic knowledge in the curriculum and in the lives of youth and Brazilian society. Recontextualizing Geography means strengthening it, not dissociating it from its languages and its epistemic nature.



Returning to the central thesis of this article, we present the importance that the epistemological field of geographic science has for teaching us, as well as revealing the importance that the theoretical-methodological foundations have to understand the different dynamics of societies.

By recovering the classics and resuming the fundamentals of Geography, we believe that we are empowering geographic education so that we can answer the question of why things are where they are and why things are the way they are. This question is central because it allows us to understand geographic space from different events, processes and/or phenomena.

In this process, Young's proposition (2009) gains strength, that the teaching of Geography needs to be studied with conceptualization to also understand the geographic method, and not remain only with the experiences of the lived but deepen them.

We believe that it is through recovering the indissociability of theoretical and methodological foundations that we will enable students to read and understand the world and make teaching Geography an activity that is simultaneously creative, rigorous, meaningful, useful, inclusive, emancipating, and powerful.

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