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EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE CONCEPT OF THE ¹

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Abstract: This text seeks to present and/or foster a discussion that has stimulated different debates in Geographical Science and related areas, regarding the need to better qualify the concept for the term Environment, which has been used according to different meanings and interests, fostering the need to taper the concept, considering the importance of the correct use of the term Environment in the different Environmental Sciences, especially in Geographical Science. Thus, the term Environment is presented as a single, totalitarian concept for the qualification of the Earth's surface, without the media imperative in current use in contemporary human society, with the aim of fostering epistemological discussions necessary for the consolidation of the term Environment as a totalitarian concept for the representation of the Earth's surface.

Keywords: Environment. Epistemological concept. Geographical Science.

INTRODUCTION

The discussion of this topic is complex and stimulating, since it enters an epistemological and/or semantic area, even ontological associated with the teleological aspect, which crosses different areas of knowledge, mainly philosophical and geographical, where the term '**environment**' is or can be used in different situations and meanings, It is also based on a discussion about the formal 'construction' of the term '**environment**' according to the technical norms of the cultured Portuguese language, ranging from the formal cultured semantic aspects to the usual and popular language, already embedded in regional culture, to the ideological issues imposed by different socio-economic niches.

This discussion has affected the correct use of this term '**environment**' and its different meanings, since it can be used in different socio-historical contexts, sometimes being used to represent the natural aspects of the earth's

surface - more in the sense of '**primitive nature**'; sometimes being used to represent the impacts resulting from the processes of anthropization on this same earth's surface, most of the time making a purposeful separation and/or exclusion, then using the term '**environment**' - more in the sense of '**transformed nature**', coining a double personality of meanings, with a sense of reductionism.

In this context of dubious meanings, based on the conceptual and epistemological framework present mainly in the Geographical and Legal Sciences, we are looking for the various concepts for these two fundamental terms in this study - '**environment**' and '**milieu**', considering the ambiguity and reductionism of their uses at various times and in various contexts present in our culture, whether formal, technical or popular.

THE CONCEPTION OF THE CONCEPT

In an attempt to present technical and/or non-formal foundations, this discussion has sought out different sources of information to present opinions, according to the contexts specified. Thus, based on one of today's most extensive sources for the dissemination of free knowledge, such as Wikipedia (2021), "*Concept* - from the Latin *Conceptus*, from the verb *Concipere*, meaning 'to contain completely', 'to form within oneself', masculine noun, being what the mind conceives or understands: an idea or notion, general and abstract representation of a reality. It can also be defined as a semantic unit, a mental symbol or a 'unit of knowledge'" (<https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conceito>. Accessed on 06/11/2021 - emphasis added), although many criticize the use of this source, out of prejudice and/or preciousness, Wikipedia is widely disseminated worldwide and accepted in information and academic circles as being a reliable source of information today.

In the construction and/or conception of a concept there is a need for a **semantic network**, which is a form of knowledge representation defined as a directed graph in which the vertices represent concepts, and the edges represent semantic relationships between the concepts. In this conception, these networks are considered to be a common form of a dictionary that can be read and understood by the interested party.

In the field of **Ontology** (from the Greek *Ontos* 'being' and *-logia*, 'logical discourse' - altogether, 'science of being') it is the part of metaphysics that deals with the nature, reality and existence of beings, conceived as having a common nature that is inherent to each and every one of the beings that are the object of its study. It is understood as the study of principles and essence, whose dominant idea asserts that all reality proceeds from the *One*, or a manifestation of it or that is reduced to it, in a dialectic² consisting of a process of conceptual determinations that seek to achieve totalizing knowledge (Wikipedia, 2021).

As for the teleological aspect, **Teleology** (from the Greek *Τέλος*, purpose, and *-logia*, study) is the study philosophical of ends, that is, the purpose, objective or finality. In its philosophical sense, teleology refers to the study of the purposes of the universe (Martins Junior; Vasconcelos, 2011).

In the current context, many groups and doctrines continue to use teleological explanations to offer alternative explanations to contemporary so-called 'scientific' explanations.

In this framework, the concept generally corresponds to a representation in a language or symbology established under the current context. The term can be and is used in many areas of knowledge, such as Geography, Socio-

logy, Mathematics, Astronomy, Statistics, Philosophy, Cognitive Sciences, and in Physics, Biology, Economics, Chemistry, Informatics, among other areas of formal and/or popular knowledge, which in contemporary times is being assimilated by the mass media, imbuing new perceptions and uses to this epistemological issue of the term **environment**, often in a biased, ideological and even marketing way.

Continuing the sense of reasoning, it can be said that **Concepts** can be universal in that they apply equally to all things in their extension, so concepts are carriers of specific meanings. For example, a single concept can be expressed in any number of languages: the concept *Dog* can be expressed as *Cão* Portuguese, *Hund* in German, *Hond* in Afrikaans, *Dog* in English, *Perro* in Castilian, *Gos* in Catalan, *Hundo* in Esperanto, *Txakur* in Basque, *Chien* in French, *Can* in Galician, *Cane* in Italian, *Canis* Latin, *Inu* in Japanese, among other forms and their respective languages. The fact concepts are, in a way, language-independent makes translation possible; words in several languages 'mean' the same thing because they express the same concept.

It is also stated in general that a **concept** is a sentence (judgment) that says what a thing is or how it works. The concept, as what-it-is, is the expression of a predicate common to all things of the same kind. These common predicates or attributes are arrived at by analyzing various things of the same species. Considering that man is a being endowed with rationality, considering that rationality is the predicate common to all men. In more enlightened language, the Concept is 'an a priori synthetic judgment', so concept is not the same thing as definition. The expression 'real definition' is generally used as a synonym for concept.

2. **Dialectic** is a word that originates from the Greek term 'Dialektiké' - 'Dia' represents interaction, exchange and 'Letiké' has the same root as 'logos', thus meaning word, reason or concept, configuring the art of dialog, the art of debating, persuading or reasoning, where there is a debate of different ideas. Dialectics is also a way of philosophizing, and its concept has been debated for decades by various philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Marx and others. Dialectic is the power of argument (<https://www.significados.com.br/dialectica/>).

Trying to establish new knowledge on the subject, for Aulete (2011, p. 368), concept is “[...] what is conceived about something or someone in thought, in the idea, way of thinking about something”. Another definition of concept is: “[...] the formulation of an idea about an object or theme by means of words.” (Borba, 2011, p. 315).

For Oliveira (2015), when studying ‘**concepts of nature, environment and environment**’ in Biology textbooks approved in the National Textbook Program - PNLD of 2012, and based on Japiassú and Marcondes (1996), from the point of view of Philosophy, the term concept is defined as follows:

A key term in philosophy, a concept is an abstract and general idea under which we can unite various elements. It is only partly synonymous with idea, a vaguer word which designates everything we can think of or which contains a personal appreciation: what we can think of something. As an abstract idea constructed by the mind, the concept includes, as elements of its construction: a) comprehension or the set of characters that make up the definition of the concept (man: animal, mammal, biped, etc.); b) extension or the set of particular elements of the beings to which this concept extends. Understanding and extension are in an inverse relationship: the greater the understanding, the smaller the extension; the smaller the understanding, the greater the extension (Japiassú; Marcondes, 1996, p. 49).

Continuing along this line of interpretation, we can also draw on Abbagnamo’s (1998) considerations, where the term concept can be understood as follows:

In general, any process that makes it possible to describe, classify and predict cognizable objects. Thus understood, this term has a very general meaning and can include any kind of semantic sign or procedure, whatever the object to which it refers, abstract or concrete, close or distant, universal or individual, etc. (Abbagnamo, 1998, p. 164).

Continuing Oliveira’s (2015) reasoning, in this context, he says that Caygill and Cabral (2000) mention that the word **concept** in German is ‘*Begriff*’ and indicates the participle of the Latin verb that is defined by ‘*concupere*’ which refers to the idea of ‘*taking for oneself, welcoming and retaining, giving shelter*’. These same authors provide the following definition: “[...] concepts are roughly defined by Leibniz and his followers as any ‘representation of a thing’ and classified according to their degrees of clarity, precision, completeness and adequacy.” (Caygill; Cabral, 2000, p. 62), in agreement with Oliveira (2015) and others, it can be said that a concept expresses a form of definition that is suitable for certain purposes. In this sense, before stating whether a concept is right or wrong, it would be more correct to express whether or not it is suitable for a certain context or a given intention. Thus, the concept of **environment** should be used in the broad sense of the different aspects present on the earth’s surface, according to the perception of the whole of the desired context.

THE AMBIGUITY BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Due to the ambiguity and diverse uses of the terms **environment** and **environment**, there is a need to present some considerations aimed at demystifying the different uses of these terms, often in a mistaken way and/or even in a biased and politically incorrect way.

In this sense, initially, according to Portuguese language dictionaries, such as Houaiss (2004, p. 183), **Environment** is “1. [what] surrounds or envelops on all sides and constitutes the environment in which one lives; 2. [it is] everything that surrounds or envelops living beings and/or things; environment; 3. enclosure, space, ambit in which one is or lives; 4. set of material, cultural, psychological and moral conditions that involves one or more people;

[...]. The term *milieu*, according to Houaiss (2004, p. 1883) is “1. [that] which or which is twice as small as the unit; 2. Part of a thing that is equidistant from its edges, its beginning and end, its extremities; [...]; 8. [the] set of material and circumstantial elements that influence a living organism; 9. social group, such as that established by family, profession, economic class, geographical context, etc? to which a person belongs; [...], at which point it should be pointed out that there is no term ‘**environment**’ spelled out in most Portuguese language dictionaries, but rather two distinct terms - first we have the term *environment* and then comes the term *milieu*, with their respective meanings/concepts, as shown above, which has provoked discussions about the real meaning of the term”, considering that there are still epistemological and/or technical differences regarding these uses and meanings.

Continuing this line of thought, according to Henry Art (1998), in the *Dictionary of Ecology and Environmental Sciences*, the term “**Environment** - Set of conditions that surround and sustain living beings in the biosphere, as a whole or in parts of it, encompassing elements of climate, soil, water and organisms”. The term “**Environment** - The sum total of the surrounding external conditions within which an organism, condition, community or object exists. The environment is not an exclusive term; organisms can be part of the environment of another organism” (Art, 1998, p. 339), setting up an ambiguity of definition, since in the end, it considers the environment to be “as a whole” and the environment to be derived from the “surrounding external conditions”.

According to the *Glossary of Ecology*, published by the Academy of Sciences of the State of São Paulo, jointly with the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development - CNPq, (1987), it also follows Art’s reasoning (1998):

ENVIRONMENT - 1. set of conditions that surround and sustain living beings within the biosphere, including climate, soil, water resources and other organisms. 2 It is the sum total of the conditions that act on organisms. Environmental factors are physical-chemical, soil, climate, water and biotic (p. 7).

ENVIRONMENT - Set of all the surrounding external conditions and influences that interact with an organism, a population or a community. (Art, 1998, p. 122-123 - Emphasis in original).

According to Henri Friedel (1987), in the *Dictionary of Ecology and the Environment*, the use of the term **environment** is more complex and is divided into two perceptual fields:

Environment. In a strict sense, the term *environment* does not designate an objective reality (what actually surrounds an animal or plant), but a subjective reality: what the animal is aware of and can react to, what can influence its behavior. A species’ environment is its sensory universe. [...]. But it is in another sense of the word that the *environment* is, in some countries, a ministerial department. It is then the objective human environment, perceptible or not by our senses and seen in its beneficial aspects (oxygen, pure water, healthy food...) to be preserved, or in its harmful aspects (pollution, noise, destruction...) to be combated. (Friedel, 1987, p. 21-22. Emphases added).

This perception is based more on the subjective and contextual aspects observed as being beneficial to life on the earth’s surface, as well as the aspects resulting from the different processes of occupation and anthropic transformations of natural resources, from an eminent perspective of socio-environmental responsibility.

In the *Geological-Geomorphological Dictionary* (Guerra, 1954, p. 24; 284), the term “**ENVIRONMENT** - the same as *physical environment*”; “**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT** - is the same as natural environment, that is, charac-

terized by the various physical and biological elements. Landforms, rocks, soils, rivers, climates, vegetation and fauna are all elements of the physical environment.” This definition seeks to present a totalitarian perception of the environment, where man survives both biologically and socially.

According to Troppmair (2012), life on the globe, which develops in the biosphere, depends on a series of physical, chemical and biological conditions - such as light, heat, humidity, different gases in the atmosphere, wind, soil - with its varied physical and chemical properties, local conditions of topography, latitude and longitude, In short, “**Environment** - the complex of physical, chemical, biological and social elements and factors that interact with each other with reciprocal reflexes, directly and often visibly affecting living beings”. (Troppmair, 2012, p. 7 - emphasis added).

Looking for a foundation more in the legal scope, Caixeta and Ferreira (2019) and Caixeta (2020), considering this epistemological and semantic context, analyzing the words ‘**environment**’ and ‘**ambiente**’ - whose meanings can be surroundings, space, place, that which surrounds, the enclosure, set of conditions where one lives, since when the words come together and form the expression ‘**meio ambiente**’, they consider that in the Portuguese language **it can be considered a redundancy**, as Amado (2017, p. 17), [...] some understand that the expression “environment” is redundant, and can refer to “surroundings”, trying to give a characterization of a broader concept, generally used to reinforce a politically correct and “oversized” idea of the issue.

Thus, in the current context of scientific and cultural development, the most logical thing is to simply use the term **environment**, in the **sole sense of encompassing all the components present on the earth’s surface**, and which are in constant processes of inte-

raction, including the social activities developed by man, **with a view to his socio-environmental survival, in a totalitarian perception of the environment**.

According to Rodrigues (2018), seeking a justification for this issue, the author explains that this conceptualization is present in Brazilian legislation, more specifically since Law 6.938/1981:

The Brazilian legislator’s conceptualization of the environment seems to have been strongly influenced by the conceptualization of the environment proposed by the International Council of French Language, since there is a huge coincidence between the texts: “The set, at any given time, of physical, chemical and biological agents and social factors susceptible of having a direct or indirect, immediate or mediated effect on living beings and human activities.” (Rodrigues, 2018, p. 73, emphasis added).

Also according to Caixeta (2020), when he states that, according to Rodrigues (2018, p. 74), it is certain that the concept expressed in Law 6.938/1981 is not an exquisite clarity for the individual who is unfamiliar with technical language. Thus, in an attempt to translate the concept into common language, the aforementioned author states that it can be said that ‘**protecting the environment**’ means protecting the ‘space’, the ‘place’, the ‘enclosure’ that houses it, in other words, the **entire environment** - the totality that allows and conserves all forms of life on the earth’s surface, considering that this space is not something simple, being the result of the combinations, relationships and interactions of the different factors that are located in it and that form the biotic and abiotic systems - the environment, configuring the terrestrial ecosystem, the environment of anthropic action.

According to CONAMA Resolution 306/2002, in its Annex I - *Definitions*, Item XII, “The environment is the set of conditions, laws, influences and interactions of a

physical, chemical, biological, social, cultural and urban nature, which allows, shelters and governs life in all its forms". This is a broader concept, but it is fraught with epistemological ambiguities, making it difficult for the general public to understand.

When dealing with the issue of linking the environment to space and/or place, this discussion is also linked to the fundamental concepts of Geographical Science, which also has 'space' and 'place' as its epistemological basis for study - in other words, **the earth's surface**, which, in Kalesnik's (1958) conception, is the '*Landschaft-sphère*', where the transformations resulting from these interactions occur on this surface, under different perceptual scales of the environment. Furthermore, Santos (1997, p. 273) states that "Each place is at the same time the object of a global reason and a local reason, coexisting dialectically", in other words, the transformations that have been taking place in modern human society result from changes in the space produced by the technified and dominant socio-economic system, in other words, in the environment, under the protection of permissive and non-dialectical legislation.

As for the fundamental concepts of "Environment", Article 3 of Law No. 6.938/1981, which "Provides for the National Environmental Policy", more specifically Section I, establishes this precept:

Art. 3 - For the purposes of this Law, the following definitions shall apply:

I - environment, the set of conditions, laws, influences and interactions of a physical, chemical and biological nature, which allows, shelters and governs life in all its forms; (Brazil, 1981).

This process culminated in the presentation of the objectives of the 'National Environmental Policy', as specified in Articles 4 and 5 of Law No. 9.938/1981, which specify the responsibilities of the federal entities: Union, States and Municipalities, aimed at

preserving environmental quality and maintaining ecological balance, with a view to the balanced perpetuation of the components of the environment. In this context, Rodrigues (2018, p. 75) states that "The major problem with the definition of the environment in Article 3, I, is that the legislator was too abstract and broad [...]" Thus, it is considered that this legal definition has imposed an inappropriate use of the term, in disagreement with the real concept of the environment, which must be in a totalitarian and unified way.

With this in mind, it should be noted that the 1988 Federal Constitution institutionally ratified, more specifically, the legal definition of the term '**environment**', which can be found in "Article 225. Everyone has the right to an ecologically balanced environment, which is a good for the common use of the people and essential to a healthy quality of life, imposing on the public authorities and the community the duty to defend and preserve it for present and future generations", which states that the **environment** is a "good for the common use of the people" and is essential to a healthy quality of life, imposing on the public authorities and the community the duty to defend and preserve it present and future generations. It can be seen that the legislators of the time (1980s) embarked on a worldwide fad at the time, using the more restrictive term "Environment", to the detriment of using the term "Environment", in a more totalitarian sense, for the perception of the earth's surface, falling into the geopolitical fallacy of environmental sustainability.

It should be noted that, in general, the academic world, including Geographical Science, was oblivious to this discussion at the time, resulting in this confusion of concepts to express the perception of the totalitarian aspect of the earth's surface, both the physical and the social aspect - the environment, the consequences of which is this exclusionary ambiguity in the use of these conceptual terminologies.

Another aspect to consider is that, in general, the term **Environment** should not be interpreted as synonymous with **Nature**, and it is up to the subject to understand what the differences are - and how they are constructed according to different socio-political interests, and this is one of the issues that can help to elucidate this debate in the context of environmentalism.

Epistemologically, what is **nature**? According to the *Houaiss Dictionary* (2004, p. 1998), “**Nature** - 1. the material world, especially that in which human beings live and which exists independently of human activities; 2. the set of elements (seas, mountains, trees, animals, etc.) of the natural world.” Also, according to the *Dictionary of Ecology and Environmental Sciences* (Art, 1998, p. 365), “**Nature** - 1. generic term designating organisms and the environment in which they live; the natural world.” In a more general analysis, it can be said that the concept of **nature** is close to the concept of **environment**, in an **ecosystemic and totalitarian perception** of the earth’s surface.

The term **nature** is a key term in philosophy and a category of analysis throughout the history of knowledge. It has been assimilated into Geographical Science as a category of analysis of the earth’s surface, and dates back to archaic societies, whose myths sought to give meaning to life and explain its origins, and are the so-called cosmogonic myths that are present in practically all peoples (Paiva, 2007), from antiquity to the present day.

In agreement with Lencioni (2008), who takes a stance on the issue:

Whether the term *environment* is pleonastic or not - a subject that is often discussed in geographical areas and which will not fail to come up here - and whether the phenomenon to which it refers can be named simply as *environment* or as *environment*, it would not alter the characteristics of the phenomenon itself. For a concept to exist, it needs to be defined, it needs words and

a form of language. However, attributing identity between the word and the concept is a mistake. A serious mistake, because if a word can have several meanings, a concept, in theory, cannot. (Lencioni, 2008, p. 112 - emphasis added).

This discussion can also be corroborated in the opinion of Gonçalves (1989), in his critique of the concept of the **environment**, where he proposes that human society should have a vision of the **environment as a whole**, in other words, that we should consider it in its many facets, and that it is no longer possible to conceive of the environment as equivalent to the natural world. The environment as a whole, as he refers to it, implies privileging man as the subject of transformations in the complex ecosystem, without denying the tensions in the most different dimensions. This perception can be directed towards the question of an ecologically balanced and integral environment that interacts and is responsible for the dynamics of all forms of life on the earth’s surface, forming ecosystems and landscapes.

Back in the 1970s, the French geographer Jean Tricart (1975) already expressed his concern about the complexity of the use of the term **environment**:

The environment is in fashion [...]. For some, to talk about it is to forget inaction. For others, the imprecise term is convenient, as it allows for superfluous verbiage. To tell the truth, it is very poorly defined and generally leads nowhere. It is therefore necessary to make a methodical effort to better delimit the problems, to put them in more precisely defined terms. This effort is indispensable both internally, to give the discipline a better understanding of its subject, and externally, to facilitate disciplinary work. This is particularly imperative for everything to do with the environment, whose various aspects are addressed by numerous specialists from different backgrounds. The risk of cacophony and incomprehension is great (Tricart, 1975, p. 5).

This perception enables an ecodynamic understanding of the different subsystems that make up the environment, where the abiotic components interact with the biotic components, with the process of technogenesis provided by anthropic actions, in stable, unstable and *intergrade* actions - the study of landscape dynamics, as proposed by Tricart (1977), conceives three distinct ecodynamic units: (a) *stable environments*, where pedogenetic processes supplant mechanical processes in the evolution of the model; (b) *intergraded environments*, or transitional environments, where morphogenesis and pedogenesis act mutually in the dynamics of the landscape; (c) *strongly unstable environments*, characterized by the predominance of morphogenetic processes over pedogenetic ones, whether due to natural factors or anthropogenic causes, culminating in a dynamic and complex terrestrial ecosystem, which is called the environment. This systemic approach to geographical manifestations is an important analytical method for studying the environment, which must be understood in a single, integrated way.

Permeating this complex discussion are different social movements, such as environmentalism, which is a broad political, social and philosophical movement that advocates various actions and policies in the interest of protecting aspects of nature that remain in the natural environment, or restoring or expanding the role of nature in this **environment**, having coined the use of this term '**environment**' in this perceptive context, losing the sense of the totality of the earth's surface - the lithospheric, hydrospheric, atmospheric and biotic environments, plus energy - as the living environment of living beings, including the human species, which promotes socio-environmental actions to transform this totalitarian space, as Drew (1986) shows us very well in Figure 1.

INTERCONNECTION AND INTERACTION OF THE MAJOR GROUPS IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

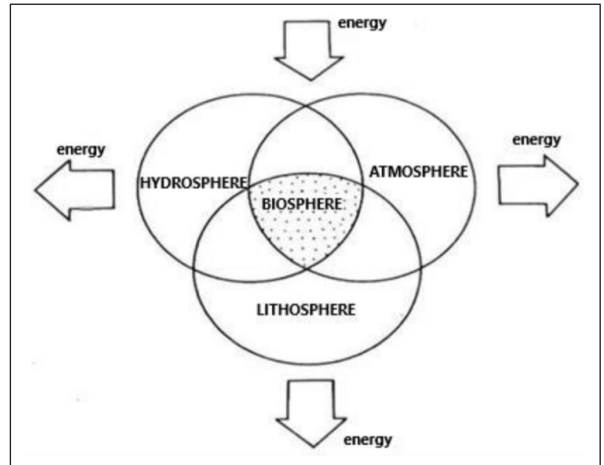


Figure 1 - Graph of the Terrestrial Natural System

Source: Drew (1986, p. 21).

The totalitarian and ecodynamic perception of the Earth's surface (the space/environment) must be seen as a phase of the action exercised by the subject (socialization) on objects (the physical environment), since **action is reciprocal between places and people and will always be mutually transformative**.

In the current socio-cultural context, we must avoid using the media and ideological hypocrisy of "sustainable environmental development", considering that human society already knows that wherever there is anthropic intervention, impacts are generated. Faced with this fact, we need to stick to the real paradigm - **implementing responsible socio-environmental actions** aimed at maintaining the natural aspects of the earth's surface, assuming the reality that every human action has an impact.

The landscape (the environment) transforms the observer, just as the observer (subject) can transform the landscape - **this is the totalitarian perception of the environment**.

PERCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to study and understand space/environment, it is necessary to perceive the relationships inherent in these systems. Without this overall perception, it is impossible to work on the earth's surface.

In this process of understanding the earth's surface, Eyles (1988), in his work: *'Geographical Interpretation of the Globe: Qualitative Approaches in Geographical Research'*, shows us the importance of the **"analytical method"** in this perceptive process. The method of analysis is fundamental for conducting the different perceptive processes in understanding the relationships that occur on the earth's surface and that transform the environment, always from the perspective of an ecosystemic, totalitarian vision that provides the perception of the environment in an integral and totalitarian way.

Overall, the fundamental task of research is to discover the nature of the social world for an understanding of how people act and give meaning to their own lives on the earth's surface - abiotic, biotic and socio-economic interrelationships.

What matters, in this case, is how and why we act or behave in this or that way. What leads us to such behaviors and/or reactions in the different socio-historical processes of occupation of the earth's surface.

However, in the perceptual process, the total perception of the environment (place) is linked to some fundamental aspects that guide the assimilation of information:

- Biological aspects of the subject - physical aspects of the five perceptive senses - hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch;
- Psychological conditions of the subject - cognitive aspects;
- Cultural aspects of the subject - their life experience;

- Observer's point of view - enables the field of observation of the place; and
- Observed scale - these are the scalar limits.

This set of perceptual factors enables the different life experiences of individuals on the earth's surface, necessarily considering their different physical, landscape, socio-historical, ideological, moral and cultural contexts in assimilating and surviving in the environment.

What can be observed is that, as subjects broaden their knowledge, they move away from the unitary conception of reality: the greater the specialization (verticalization of knowledge), the greater the possibility of differentiating languages, leading to an increasingly particular nomenclature - the emergence of sociocultural neologisms, among which the term **"environment"** has emerged, purposely causing disquiet between different levels of knowledge and cultures.

Our position, in this context, is that the use of this graphic form is a linguistic reductionism, and therefore unnecessary. There is a controversy in Terminology about the use of the terms concept and notion. The risk of cacophony and incomprehension is great, very great, if we continue to use this term **"environment"**, invented in the midst of ideological, media and fragmentary hypocrisy.

From the above, the simple use of the term **Environment** - from the Latin *'Ambiens/ambientis'*, with the sense of involving something, from the perspective of being the set of universal natural substances/elements (minerals, water, air, biota, energy), circumstances or conditions in which a certain object exists or in which a certain socio-economic action takes place, that is, carried out by man in his different historical (technification) and cultural contexts - **this is the totalitarian environment that is present on the earth's surface.**

The use of the expression ‘**environment**’ becomes pleonastic, in the sense of talking about the natural environment, the natural surroundings, the earth’s surface. Thus, one or two words would be enough to make sense of the text. In addition, the word ‘environment’, despite its use as a noun, acquires other functions (adjective or adverb) when added to another noun or position in the sentence, meaning half or fraction of it, as in the various popular adages. Therefore, in common usage, the word ‘**half**’ is unnecessary or, at the very least, an expletive. However, the form is very widespread and accepted without further question in human society, especially in Brazil, where unfortunately little is generally read or studied.

In the use of the term **environment**, it is necessary to ensure that arguments against the use of the term in its entirety, without the **environment**, are not based on confused and ill-defined conceptions, based on teleological or even ideological aspects, otherwise they will result in flawed reasoning and consequent distrust in traditional academic circles.

Finally, it should be noted that in Geography and other related areas, it is recommended that only the term **ENVIRONMENT** be used, as it is a single and complete term, considering its completeness and epistemological simplicity, respective concept and perception of the totality of the earth’s surface - the object of study of Geographical Science. **There is only one environment, which is all-encompassing, single and totalitarian, in other words, simply the environment.**

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