

# THE BRAZILIAN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION MACRO-POLITICAL-PEDAGOGICAL TRENDS

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## Introduction

In late 70's the Political Ecology brought humanities and social sciences contribution to the ecological debate, hitherto guided by a biologics and depoliticized approach concerning environmental problems, which excluded the political and social aspects from the analysis. It has incorporated those elements which the disciplinary looks had omitted in the debate, such as development models, class conflicts, cultural and ideological standards, dominant political injunctions in society, and the relationships between state, society and market.

Regarding the notion of Social Field as defined by Bourdieu (2001, 2004), it assumes a plural space for social agents and conceptual and political positioning, which dispute the operating rules, culture and values definition recognized by the members of a given social universe that was called "field". It briefly comprises a set of domination, subordination and adherence relationships associated to ideological strategies of conservation or subversion of the established order within this social space.

According to Bourdieu (2001, 2004) a Social Field is a relatively autonomous space of forces and social positions, endowed with its own rules and dedicated to the production and reproduction of cultural assets, representations and ways of perceiving reality. It brings together a set of individuals and institutions that establish with each other power and competition relationships for this universe symbolic and material hegemony; founded on the conquest and mastery of legitimized symbolic capital which is acknowledged by all those who participate. As it is a competitive space, the field assumes asymmetric internal relations which derive from the unequal power distribution between dominant

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and dominated groups. Dominants are the ones who define field's legitimate social capital – object of dispute among its participants – and, therefore, the rules of the game. They tend to orthodoxy and end up developing conservation strategies; while the dominated ones tend to heterodoxy and the use of subversion of order strategies (BOURDIEU, 2001, 2004; LOUREIRO, 1995).

Social Field's notion allows one to catch a glimpse of norms, values, interests, symbolic and objective systems that guide a social space, besides, evidently, the conflicts that give the measure of its internal diversity and the social forces dynamics which put it into motion (BONNEWITZ, 2003).

Understanding the internal differentiation of a particular Social Field responds to at least two objectives: analytical order and political order. Analytically, it is a matter of discriminating, classifying and interpreting phenomena or processes which are different among each other, but due to certain similarities or common elements they tend to be confused as a homogenous whole – which is something recurrent in Environmental Education. Thus, differentiation can produce an observed object or process knowledge which is more faithful to reality. Moreover, the analytical task contributes to the deepening of self-reflexivity in the Environmental Education field.

The political nature purpose takes place when analytical decomposition of what has appeared to be a homogeneous whole allows us to see the internal differences and identify the motivations, interests and values that have inspired its different creation, in the case, political-pedagogical trends of Environmental Education. Differentiation provides a cartographic field view, recomposes its complexity and allows the agents to be involved with the possibility of refining their look and, consequently, standing with greater autonomy in social space; by choosing the pedagogical, ethical and political paths which best suit their interests.

It shall be noted that still there is an implicit debate which polarizes two different interpretations regarding the explanation of political-pedagogical currents in Environmental Education: the first one judges that the analysis risks are greater than its profits, because it is understood that typologies simplify reality, loss of sight their dynamism and induce to a estrangement between the social players who share the field.

The other judges that the analysis benefits surpass risk: it would not be an effort to free abstraction, but instead an interpretation of reality bringing positive results. In this matter, Bertolucci et al. (2005), noting the dominance of Environmental Education perception as a homogeneous educational practice, agree that it is necessary to rethink the field, which would imply epistemological and theoretical maturation gains not only field's but also of every political-pedagogical aspect. Field's singularities understanding needs seem to be a one-way street.

By articulating those elements it is proposed a differentiating interpretation of the Environmental Education field in Brazil, although implicit risk awareness in any classification effort of inherently complex realities such as Environmental Education.

## Environmental Education as a Social Field

It is considered in this reflection that Environmental Education can be simultaneously understood as a subfield derived from the environmental field and also as a relatively autonomous one. This is due to the fact that Environmental Education has historically taken its identity and formation most significant institutional and symbolical elements from the environmental field. On the other hand, when we analyse its relationship with the educational field, its purpose, culture, knowledge, schooling spaces and practices, we note that Environmental Education has its own characteristics ascribing it with a specific *ethos* relatively distinct from the environmental field. (LIMA, 2011; CARVALHO, 2001; CRESPO, 1998).

Observing Environmental Education from a Social Field view it can be stated that Environmental Education is composed of a diversity of players and social institutions which share a core of ordinary values and rules. These players, however, also differ in their environmental issues conceptions and political, pedagogical and epistemological proposals which they stand up for addressing environmental problems. These different social groups vie for the field dominance and the ability to guide it according to their interpretation of reality and their interests ranging from trends to preserve or transform social relations and the relationship that society maintains with its environment. It shall be noted that the above mentioned trends to social preservation or transformation express a multiple positions representation along an imaginary axis polarized by those two trends, never a binary and manichean scheme which would only reduce analysis.

Thus, the Social Field notion adds to Environmental Education analysis ideas of plurality, diversity and a dispute over this universe legitimate definition and the right to direct praxis' course of professional practice. It also adds the perception of motion and coexistence between trends vying for hegemony dynamics in this field. From this perspective we explore the position of groups which make up the field, their relationships with each other as well as trends to order reproduction and transformation. This dynamic analysis is the substrate from which the macro-political-pedagogical trends analysed herein emerge.

Environmental Education in Brazil illustrates this process as it appears to the large non-specialized public, as a single object, although it is constituted as a field of knowledge and internally diverse practices. While it is homogenised, the variety of pedagogical, political, ethical and epistemological features that define the concepts and practices of Environmental Education is reduced. On the other hand, for environmental educators close to the field guiding nucleus<sup>1</sup> or belonging to the first generations of this professional area, the Environmental Education field is already recognized as multifaceted, composed of numerous political-pedagogical currents, even if facing strong interfaces among some of them.

It is not possible to accurately delimit the foundational moment from which the perception of distinct political-pedagogical currents emerged in Environmental Education. But the debate on the topic reveals that in early 90s this realization began to spell out in speeches manifested in this field. Loureiro and Layrargues (2001) have recorded that

from the 90s the Brazilian Environmental Education would have abandoned the initial predominantly conservationist profile and recognized the environment social dimension. From that moment on, it was no longer possible to generically refer to Environmental Education without qualifying it, i.e., without declaring filiation to a political-pedagogical option which makes a clear reference to the knowledge and educational practices performed. Czapski (2008) considers that in the country the debate about Environmental Education concepts emerged in Environmental Education networks in 2003, within the discussion context of the proposal, formulated by the physicist Fritjof Capra, that Ecological Literacy should be adopted as a public policy in education by the Brazilian Government. Several academic studies, such as Sorrentino (1995), Brügger (1994), Carvalho (1995; 2002), Leonardi (1997), Guimarães (2000), Layrargues (2003), Lima (1999; 2003), Loureiro (2007), Machado (2010), Torres (2010), among others, intensify the reflection on the dynamics and diversity of this social field in Brazil, giving further testimony to the recognition of the political-pedagogical currents existence in the everyday of Environmental Education.

Having justified the need to understand the current Environmental Education field dynamics in Brazil and to differentiate its main trends, we will further observe its main features on this paper.

## **The macro-political-pedagogical trends of Environmental Education**

Environmental Education emerged in the context of a recognized environmental crisis in the late twentieth century, and was structured as a result of the demand that led human beings to adopt a worldview and a social practice capable of minimizing environmental impacts. Realizing that Environmental Education comprises a multidimensional educational universe which revolves around the relationships between individual, society, education and nature, it has been demanded further information deployed in successive analysis and theoretical contributions of increasing sophistication, making this educational practice much more complex than one might imagine.

An initial moment of searching for an universal conceptual definition can be seen in the historical trajectory of the Brazilian Environmental Education, which is common to all individuals involved in the educational praxis, that, in a moment later, tends to be abandoned by the growing awareness of the plurality views diversity of players who shared the same universe of activities and knowledge. This field's inner multiplicity finding has naturally led to new efforts in order to differentiate this universe of knowledge, pedagogical practices and positions, epistemological and political which had interpreted the relations between education, society, built and natural environment and sustainability. Today it is clear that it was impossible to formulate an Environmental Education concept comprehensive enough to involve the entire spectrum of the field; but it is also clear that these different conceptual proposals were nothing more than the search for interpretive and political hegemony of this socio-educational universe. The multiplicity of conceptual proposals reveals this internal diversity, which in the foundational phase of Environmental Education could not yet be perceived, only in the field consolidation phase it could be

understood; i.e., the target, already differentiated in it, have not changed; the perspectives and viewpoints on it are the ones that were changed and refined.

In an early time, Environmental Education was conceived as a fundamentally conservationist knowledge and practice, i.e. an educational practice that aimed to the awakening of a new human sensitivity towards nature, developing the logic of “knowing to love, love to preserve”, guided by an “ecological” awareness and based on ecological science.

This is probably due to the fact that the natural environment degradation was the most visible face of the environmental crisis in its early period; as this could also be due to the fact that environmental sciences at that time were not yet mature enough to understand the complexity of relations between society and nature. Environmental problems were perceived as side effects of an unavoidable modernization project, which could be corrected either by the diffusion of environment information and education, or by the use of technological development products. Several authors (CARVALHO, 1989; CIMA, 1991; LIMA, 2011; DIAS, 1991) show that the institutionalization of Environmental Education primarily occurred through the environmental, and not through the educational system. Both from the political and symbolic standpoint and the institutional point of view, Brazilian Environmental Education inherited the most significant part of its identity and historical achievements from the environmental field. The approach to the educational field and the product of this relationship only unveiled itself later from the 90s: just in 1991, on the Rio Conference’s eve, the Ministry of Education established a permanent working group, designated as the Coordination of Environmental Education, to develop a proposal for their work in the formal Environmental Education area, which was later consolidated as the current General Coordination of Environmental Education. Another indicative of this late relationship was the establishment of the Working Group on Environmental Education, within the Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education, in 2005. This set of conditions has reinforced an “ecological” view of environmental problems, as explained by the absolute predominance of natural scientists in the Environmental Education field instead of humanities and social sciences professionals. It is also important to remember that the Brazilian political context of authoritarianism and curtailment of democratic freedoms, which marked the military period from 1964 to 1985, prevented the insertion of political ideas in the debate and environmental practices. To Lima (2011: p 149):

“The conservationist interpretation and discourse, which had won the Environmental Education field hegemony in Brazil in its initial period, was victorious, among other reasons, because they became functional for the dominant political and economic institutions, managing to address the environmental issue through a natural and technical perspective that did not question the established order”.

Over time, environmental educators realized that, just as there are different conceptions of nature, environment, society and education, there are also different conceptions of Environmental Education. It was no longer seen as a monolithic pedagogical

practice, and began to be understood as plural, assuming different expressions. In this process, the development of this educational practice and its respective area of expertise branched into several possibilities according to the perceptions and formations of its protagonists, with the social contexts in which they were inserted and also the changes experienced over time by the environmentalism itself. After all, if the Education field bears various pedagogical trends; if the environmentalism field has developed a variety of schools of thought throughout its more than forty years; if the concept of Society includes different approaches, it is not difficult to imagine that the confluence of these numerous interpretive bundles which have shaped Environmental Education would produce a wide spectrum of possibilities of conceiving the relationship between education and environment. Inevitably, it was a matter of the field maturation time before that possibility became a reality.

In practice, this means that there are many possible ways to design and deliver the means and ends of Environmental Education. Depending on this complex set of circumstances, some players choose a particular path, while others choose a different path: some believe that the development of sensitivity in relation with nature is determinant; others believe that it is essential to know the ecological principles organizing life. Some have strong expectation on self-knowledge and the ability to change individual's own behaviour in relation to nature; others are safe to affirm that it is necessary to contextualize the environmental problem with its social and political dimensions, among other possibilities.

As this internal diversity became visible, the analysis sought to discuss this phenomenon, turning Environmental Education into a self-reflexive study object that thinks its own practice and development.

With the intention of representing reality more faithfully, new denominations were created to differentiate this educational practice, which already included in its name a qualifying adjective: environmental. In this sense, the analysis identified Environmental Education with various denominations: Humanist, Conservationist, Systemic, Problematical, Naturalist, Scientific, Moral, Bio-regionalist, Sustainability, Criticism, Ethnographic, and Feminist, among other possibilities in national and international contexts (SAUVÉ, 2005). In Brazil, the first attempt to classify internal currents has probably been effected by Sorrentino (1995), which have identified the existence of four strands: conservationist, outdoor, related to environmental management and ecological economics.

This Environmental Education self-reflexivity may have promoted a change in its course: the *conservationist* side is no longer the more recurrent one, at least among environmental educators next to the field counsellor nucleus, cropping up two other sides: the *critical* side is emerging as an alternative capable of performing the counterpoint to the conservationist side; and the *pragmatic* side, a not yet so clear derivation from the conservationist side, that is primarily nourishing itself of the urban industrial waste problems in the cities, as one of the themes which are increasingly used on pedagogical practices.

Thus, in the early 90s, environmental educators, who used to share a socio environmental look, were dissatisfied with the way that Environmental Education had

been following, and they began to differentiate two options: a *conservative* and an *alternative* option. Materialized by the pragmatic and conservationist macro-trends, they have thought that the conservative option was limited, as they understood that the predominance of educational practices that invested in children in schools, in individual and behavioral actions inside a domestic and private ambit, under so-historic, apolitical, and oriented by contents and norms, did not exceed the hegemonic paradigm which tends to treat the human being as a generic and abstract entity, reducing humans to the condition of originators of the environmental crisis, disregarding any social clipping.

Initially labelled as an “alternative”, it is against these conceptions that the criticism and the construction of another option were structured, just because it represents a response to what was being practiced by many environmental educators, also officially (CARVALHO, 1989). It was not enough to fight for another culture on the relationship between human and nature; it was also needed to fight for a new society. This aimed not only to promote sectoral reforms, but a multidimensional renewal capable to change knowledge, cultural and ethical values, social relations, institutions and policies. Not coincidentally, Brügger (1994) drew attention to the difference between education and environmental “Dressage”, signalling the dissatisfaction with the behaviourism prevalence in pedagogical practice.

This perspective maturation re-signified the identity of the “alternative” Environmental Education, affixing new adjectives to it: critical, transformative, popular, and emancipatory. This is because this pedagogical option has nourished itself from Freire’s thought, and also from the principles of Popular Education, the Critical Theory, the Political Ecology and from Marxist and Neomarxist authors who preached the necessity to include in the environmental debate the understanding of social reproduction mechanisms and to affirm that the relationship between human being and nature is mediated by sociocultural relations and historically constructed social classes. They bring a pedagogical approach that problematizes the relation between social and environmental dimensions. By this perspective it was not possible to conceive the environmental problems dissociated from social conflicts; after all, the environmental crisis did not express nature’s problems, but social problems manifested in nature. The causes of environmental problems were originated in social relations, in the models of society and prevailing development.

However, in elapsing of the 90s, there was a growing international stimulus to the methodology of local environmental problem solving in Environmental Education activities, which has come accompanied by the individual responsibility in environmental issues discourse, as the result of the “each do their part” logic as a contribution from citizens to the environmental crisis confrontation. This resulted in a behavioral change incitement in consumption habits, providing a vigorous impetus to pragmatic macro-trend, which has gained a strong support from environmental educators. Thus, the attention previously focused exclusively on issues like garbage, separate collection and waste recycling, widens to a Sustainable Consumption concept. And as this pedagogical perspective does not provide contact opportunities with natural environments (a conservationist side pedagogical practice prerogative), the educational agenda practiced in urban environments turns away from the purely conservationist dimension and approaches to the production and

consumption sphere, although it continues to be exclusively dedicated to environmental resources, without any relationship with social and economic dimensions.

Thus, even assuming the risk of producing a partial and incomplete framework, we could say that currently there are three macro-trends as political-pedagogical models for Environmental Education. As we have seen, each of these macro-trends has a wide variety of positions more or less close to the ideal type considered.

The *conservationist* macro-trend, which is expressed through the conservationist, behaviourist, Ecological Literacy, self-knowledge and sense-perception outdoor activities currents, rests on the principles of ecology, the appreciation of the affective dimension related to nature and the change of individual behaviour in relation to the environment, based on a cultural change claim which relativizes the anthropocentrism. It is a historical tendency, strong and well established among its exponents, updated under the expressions linking Environmental Education to the “green agenda”, such as biodiversity, conservation areas, certain biomes, ecotourism and agro-ecological experiences. It does not seem to be the field hegemonic tendency in the first decade of the 21st century, besides it presents a limited potential to be added to the forces fighting for social transformation, as it is far distant from the social and political dynamics and their respective conflicts.

Throughout the text we have already explained what characterizes the conservationist current, although we have not characterized the Ecological Literacy current and what makes both of them conservatisms’ representations. Briefly we can say that it is a pedagogical proposal formulated by Capra (1996) in association with other educators and scientists, based on the knowledge defined as basic ecological principles, namely: interdependence, cycling, partnership, co-evolution, flexibility and diversity; and in the transposition of these principles to a morality applied to social systems oriented by the logic of a systems thinking (LAYRARGUES, 2002a).

These are conservative representations of education and society as they do not question the existing social structure in its entirety, only seeking sectoral reforms. They point to admittedly relevant cultural changes, but that can hardly be achieved without also becoming the economic and political foundations of society. How to separate ecology, culture and politics? Individual, society and nature? Technique and ethics? Knowledge and power? Environment, economy and development? By adopting an ecologist perspective of environmental issues, conservationism and conservatism are merged because: they lose sight of social, political and cultural dimensions which cannot be separated from their genesis and dynamics; they do not incorporate class positions and different responsibilities of the social players enmeshed in crisis; they reduce the environmental phenomenon complexity to a mere matter of technological innovation; and, finally, because they believe that market principles are capable of promoting the transition towards sustainability.

The *pragmatic* macro-trend, which covers, in particular, the currents of Education for Sustainable Development and for Sustainable Consumption, is an expression of the “environmentalism of results”, contemporary pragmatism and market ecology under the neoliberal hegemony established worldwide since the 80s, and in the Brazilian context since the Collor de Mello’s Government in the 90s. This pragmatic scenario is characterized by the dominance of market logic over the other social spheres, the ideology of consumption



as a main utopia, the concern with solid waste growing production, the technological revolution as the last frontier to progress and the privatistic inspiration which is evidenced in terms as green consumption and economy, socio-environmental responsibility, certifications, clean development mechanisms and productive eco-efficiency.

The pragmatic macro-trend has its roots in the production and consumption patterns which came from the post war period, and could present a critical reading of reality by taking advantage of the critical potential of social, cultural, economic, political and ecological dimensions in the reflection on the standard of trash generated in the current production model. However, its trajectory has ideologically pointed to a pragmatic bias (Layrargues, 2002b), acting as a compensatory mechanism to correct production system “imperfections”, based on consumerism, planned obsolescence and disposability of consumer goods. It is due to the fact that this system provides a significant increase in waste generation, which necessarily must be recycled to maintain its viability. Thus, this macro-trend that responds to the “brown agenda” as an essentially urban-industrial trend, ends to converge to the notion of Sustainable Consumption, which is also related to saving energy or water, carbon market, “green technologies”, to the decline of the “ecological footprint” and other dynamic conservatism expressions that operates superficial, technological and behavioral changes to ensure that everything remains the same.

This perspective presents an environment devoid of human components, as a mere collection of natural resources in process of depletion, alluding to waste combat and amending the garbage paradigm which happens to be designed as waste, i.e. which can be reinserted in the industrial metabolism. It leaves aside the unequal distribution of development processes costs and benefits and results in promoting sectoral reforms in society without questioning its foundations, including those which are responsible for their own environmental crisis.

Thus, within the neoliberal context in which the market economy imposes its logic and values, in which the pattern of electronic goods consumption emerges as a well-being factor and a symbol of modernity, in which the environmental crisis exposes its decisive challenge through the threat of climate change, the intersection of these vectors appears to shape a specific context to the rise of *pragmatic* macro-trend, producing new and controversial senses of identity for Environmental Education and emerging as the political-pedagogical project frankly hegemonic nowadays.

The Environmental Education pragmatic macro-trend represents a way of adjustment to the neoliberal context characterized by a State shrinkage, which affects the set of public policies, including the environmental policies. This Environmental Education is the expression of the Market, insofar as one appeals to the individuals’ common sense to sacrifice a bit of their comfort standards and summons the companies’ responsibility to retain a fraction of their benefits on behalf of general governance.

The pragmatic character brings two complementary features: first, the absence of a reflection that enables an articulated understanding of the environmental problems causes and consequences. This lack of reflection stems from the belief in the neutrality of science and results in a superficial and depoliticized perception of the social relations and their interactions with the environment. Second, the unbridled search for feasible actions

that bring results oriented to a sustainable future, though within a limit not exceeding the boundaries of political realism, economic viability, *status quo* conservation, which fits in Environmental Education from the perspective of the “end activity” (LAYRARGUES, 1999). This framework reduces the chances of facing the crisis politically.

The particular case of Education for Sustainable Development has raised some controversy in the field, since when northern hemisphere governments, multilateral organizations and UNESCO itself have opened a debate proposing the replacement of Environmental Education by Education for Sustainable Development. This debate, which had begun in the context of Rio 92, deepened after the Johannesburg Conference in 2002, when UNESCO proposed the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development during the period from 2005 to 2014<sup>ii</sup>. Although there are many criticisms to the proposal, in short we can say that they emphasize: the ambiguity and contradictions that characterise the proposal for sustainable development; the imposition and low participation in which UNESCO’s proposal was built; the perception that education should promote freedom and autonomy of individuals, instead of setting a particular purpose, whatever it is; the resistance to emptying the Environmental Education historical identity traces that link to such democratic struggles and the ideals of human emancipation; the differences in socio-educational contexts among the countries of the northern and southern hemispheres; and the suspicion that the proposal was motivated by development interests linked to neoliberal hegemony (LIMA, 2003; CARVALHO, 2002; JICKLING, 1992).

The pragmatic and conservationist macro-trends represent two tendencies and two moments of the same line of thought which is being adjusted to the current economic and political injunctions in order to acquire this modernised neo-liberal and pragmatic face, as it is characterized nowadays. The pragmatic macro-trend represents an evolutionary derivation of the conservationist macro-trend, insofar as it is an adaptation to new social, economic and technological context and which have in common the omission of social injustice and inequality processes. Both trends are behaviourist and individualistic, but the conservationist one is a naive and skewed version of groups mostly linked to natural sciences, whose reason to understand the environmental crisis this way is due to the fact that they do not make a sociological reflection on the environmental issue, and sometimes because they understand that, politically, it is better not to mix politics and ecology, and in this case, we refer to players ideologically interested in avoiding a conflict perspective while addressing the issue. Now, this conservatism needs to adapt to technological and economic changes and also to market pressures for “cosmetic” changes within the order. All this happens within a context of a discursive dispute inside the field that will delimit what is permitted and what is forbidden to say on this subject, as well as which players and discourses are legitimate and which are not. Thus, the context that delimits the pragmatic aspect of Environmental Education is defined by market capitalism; and the possible changes must conform to these limits, never beyond that.

The *critical* macro-trend, in turn, agglutinates the currents of Popular Environmental Education, Emancipation, Transformation and Environmental Management Process<sup>iii</sup>. It is also supported on the critical review of fundamentals which have provided the domination of human beings and capital accumulation mechanisms, seeking for the

political confrontation of inequality and environmental injustice. All those currents, with some variations, are built in opposition to conservative trends, looking for politicizing and contextualizing the environmental debate, and questioning the contradictions of development and society models.

It can be said that the critical Environmental Education in Brazil was driven by a complex historical and political context in which, after two decades of military dictatorship, emerged democratization; new social movements expressing new conflicts and demands including environmental issues; a favourable environment to receive and organize the Rio Conference in 1992 and the maturation of a conscience and a social-environmental culture that articulated development and environment, disciplinary knowledge in new syntheses and struggles of ecological and social militancy which had been separated, until then, due to misunderstandings on both sides.

As the same with environmentalism, there is a strong sociological and political bias in Environmental Education *critical* macro-trend, and as a result of this perspective, key concepts such as Citizenship, Democracy, Participation, Empowerment, Conflict, Environmental Justice and Social Transformation are introduced into the debate. Not surprisingly, the emergence and consolidation of this macro-trend coincide with movements in Political Ecology as a possible interpretation of environmentalism.

In addition to this political concern, Critical Environmental Education tends to combine it with the complexity thinking, as it realizes that contemporary issues, such as environmental ones, do not find answers in reductionist solutions. Hence comes its potential to redefine the meaning of false dualities which the Cartesian paradigm inserted into relationships between individual and society, subject and object of knowledge, knowledge and power, nature and culture, ethics and technique, among other dualities. Recently, critical environmental thinking sectors have understood that reductionisms are impoverishing, including the sociological and political ones. By this complex perspective it becomes not only possible but necessary to incorporate individual, cultural and subjective issues that emerge with contemporary societies' transformations, the political notion meaning redefinition, the private sphere and everyday life politicization expressed in the new social movements and in the genesis of environmentalism itself. The political and social dimensions of education and human life are fundamental to their understanding, but they do not exist separated from the individuals' existence, of their values, beliefs and subjectivities.

The magnitude of the challenges and uncertainties that we have been experiencing in high modernity does not support reductions; on the other hand it requires openness, inclusion, dialogue and ability to see what is new and to formulate responses beyond current knowledge. On educational experience, learning and changes are inseparable: it is not possible to learn something new without changing the point of view or, conversely, change a reality without finding out something new with and about it. Hence came Einstein's conclusion that "no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew" (EINSTEIN apud STERLING, 2001).

Due to these reasons, we have found out that Critical Environmental Education has grown significantly over the past decade, notably in academic, and has shown great

vitality to go out of the condition of counter-hegemony and occupy a central place in the field, currently occupied by pragmatic macro-trend.

## Final considerations

Observing the multiplicity of players, ideas, pedagogical practices and political positions as well as the dynamism that articulates these elements, one's reflection may identify three macro-trends living and vying for symbolic and objective hegemony of the Environmental Education field in Brazil. These macro-trends work in reflection as weberian ideal types with didactic, analytical and political purposes. These ideal types seek to express three axes which structure the field studied here, around which a plurality of pedagogic conceptions and policies on Environmental Education gravitate, as well as the possibilities to conduct it in the context of contemporary environmental crisis. To a large extent, those three macro-trends which were identified and named here – *conservationist*, *pragmatic* and *critical* – in spite of small nuances, keep strong conceptual and epistemological alignment and similarity with those found by Tozoni-Kings (2004) in the Environmental Education field, respectively the *natural*, *rational*, and *historical* trends; and also in the environmental field by Alier (2007), respectively the “Cult of Wilderness”, “Eco-efficiency”, and the “Environmentalism of the Poor”, which points to a common analytical perspective shaping up.

Firstly, the analysis notes that if environmental educators in general did not make any reference to internal differences in their performance space by the time of field initial formation, this is no longer possible to be done nowadays. After the 90s, it became recurrent the use of adjectives to qualify Environmental Education types to which educators were joined, against which they were opposed to and for whatever reasons they performed them.

Then, the analysis defines the macro-trends which have been identified in their trajectories and characteristics, observing their movements on a discursive, theoretical and political dispute by the field hegemony; and, in this regard, it noted that the conservationist macro-trend, which had detained hegemony at the time of the field founding, has lost ground to the pragmatic and critical macro-trends. It recognises that the conservationist and pragmatic macro-trends represent two moments of the same evolutionary lineage which had been updated as a result of transformations in the contemporary world; such as the multidimensional globalization, the technological revolution, the bankruptcy of real socialism, the retreat of the State regulatory action, and the advancement of ideologies and pragmatic policies identified with the logic of the market and neoliberalism. It also observes that if an arm of conservationism had evolved towards pragmatism, the other arm had been updated toward formats that point to Environmental Education focused on biodiversity, ecotourism, conservation units and certain biomes.

Due to the lack of researches and studies, it is always difficult to diagnose discursive hegemonies in Environmental Education. We know that critical forces have conquered a significant space inside the field, but these forces are constantly eroded by the dominant pragmatism which tends to convert and to displace educational intentions to the pragmatic

sense of market. The formation of labour and also the employment and consumption generation tend to use education as a means of social rise and economic logic reproduction. In this way, the main purposes of promoting citizenship, a public sphere and political education end up being hampered.

## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Collective of players involved with the reflection, discussion and publication of papers on Environmental Education which, as for the cultural capital they hold, end up ultimately influencing and often setting the pedagogical, epistemological and political courses of the field as a whole

<sup>ii</sup> To follow the discussion on this topic see, e.g., LIMA, 2003; CARVALHO, 2002; SAUVE, 1999; MEIRA 2005 and JICKLING, 1992.

<sup>iii</sup> It is important to mention here that we are specifically making reference to Quintas e Gualda (1995) understanding, which establishes prevalence over the political dimension of environmental management, which is an important distinction concerning the meaning attributed to Environmental Management in many undergraduate courses in the country that give to the administrative dimension a quite expressive importance.

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# THE BRAZILIAN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION MACRO-POLITICAL-PEDAGOGICAL TRENDS

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**Resumo:** O presente artigo apresenta as macro-tendências que definem a atual diferenciação do campo da Educação Ambiental no Brasil, e as interpreta por meio do diálogo com a literatura da área e com o apoio dos referenciais da Ecologia Política e da noção de Campo Social de Bourdieu. A reflexão identifica três macro-tendências disputando a hegemonia simbólica e objetiva do campo da Educação Ambiental no Brasil: *conservacionista*, *pragmática* e *crítica*, que funcionam como tipos ideais weberianos com fins didáticos, analíticos e políticos, embora não tenham a pretensão de esboçar uma representação objetivista da realidade.

**Palavras-chave** – educação ambiental, correntes político-pedagógicas, campo social.

**Abstract:** T. The reflection identifies three macro-trends competing for symbolic and objective hegemony of Environmental Education Field in Brazil: *conservationist*, *pragmatic* and *critical*, which functions as Weberian ideal types for didactic, analytical and political purposes, although they don't expect to draft an objectivist representation of reality.

**Keywords** – environmental education, political pedagogical trends, Social Field.

**Resumen:** Este artículo presenta las macro tendencias que definen la diferenciación actual del campo de la educación ambiental en Brasil, y trata de interpretarlas a través de un diálogo con la literatura del área y con el apoyo de las referencias de la Ecología Política y de campo Social de Bourdieu. La reflexión identifica tres macro tendencias que coexisten y compiten por la hegemonía y por el objetivo simbólico del campo de la educación ambiental en Brasil: *conservacionista*, *pragmática* y *crítica*, que actúan como tipos ideales weberianos con fines didáticos, analíticos y políticos, sin pretender esbozar una representación objetivista de la realidad.

**Palabras clave** – educación ambiental, tendencia político pedagógica, campo social.

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