



## **Toponymy and Cultural Geography: Weaving Threads of Investigation Within the Scope of Interdisciplinarity**

### ***Toponímia e Geografia Cultural: tecendo fios de investigações no âmbito da interdisciplinaridade***

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**Resumo:** A Toponímia é o estudo dos nomes de lugares; baseia-se, entre outros aspectos, na etimologia e nos dados semânticos dos nomes próprios de lugares (elementos físicos e humanos), ao passo que a Geografia Cultural apropria-se das manifestações culturais advindas de um lugar, assim como as crenças, danças, mitos e lendas. Este estudo busca investigar os pontos de interlocução entre Toponímia e Geografia Cultural, considerando que se revelam interdependentes mas, ao mesmo tempo, entrelaçadas na mesma trama no que se refere à amplitude de seus fios de conteúdo interdisciplinar. Assumimos a noção de interdisciplinaridade como o paradigma investigativo. A abordagem de análise metodológica é qualitativa e de caráter bibliográfico. Para realizar esta discussão, serviram de suporte teórico-metodológico os trabalhos de Dick (1990, 1999, 2006, 2007, 2008) e Andrade (2012, 2015, 2017) no campo da Toponímia, e os estudos de Claval (2001, 2002, 2011), Tuan (1979), Corrêa (2009) e Holzer (1999, 2003) no campo da Geografia Cultural.

**Palavras-Chaves:** toponímia; geografia cultural; interdisciplinaridade.

**Abstract:** Toponymy is the study of place names; it is based, among other aspects, on the etymology and semantic data of proper names of places (physical and human features), whereas Cultural Geography studies the cultural manifestations that occurred in a particular place, such as beliefs, dances, myths, and tales. This study aims to investigate points of dialog between Toponymy and Cultural Geography, considering the fact that they are revealed as interdependent and, at the same time, intertwined in the same weft, as regards the range of their threads of interdisciplinary content. We assume the notion of interdisciplinarity as the investigative paradigm. The approach of the methodology analysis is qualitative and of bibliographic nature. This discussion was supported theoretically and methodologically by Dick (1990, 1999, 2006, 2007, 2008) and Andrade (2012, 2015, 2017) in the Toponymy field, and by Claval (2001, 2002, 2011), Tuan (1979), Correa (2009), and Holzer (1999, 2003) in the Cultural Geography field.

**Keywords:** toponymy; cultural geography; interdisciplinarity.

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## 1 Initial considerations

When addressing studies that focus on the lexicon of a language, the researcher clearly learns about culture, history, ways of life, the worldview of the language-speaking community that uses it. The words that constitute a lexical system of a language, according to Andrade (2017, p. 586), “are like a mirror: they reflect the concrete aspects of the world.” Using the lexicon, the author (2010, p. 106) highlights that human beings have always “attributed names to everything around them: to things, to animals, to people, to the physical and cultural space in which they live.” Naming is, for man, “a need for organization and guidance” (ANDRADE, 2017, p. 586).

Upon choosing a name for a place, “man makes use of his linguistic skills, associating aspects of the community’s reality to the denomination, adding to it motivation, convention, and identification” (DAL PIZZOL, 2014, p. 17). Thus, place names are “true historical testimonies of facts and events registered in the most diverse moment of the life of a population” (DICK, 1990, p. 22). In this sense, the linguistic study of place names can be a multi-faceted venture. It can

favor the knowledge “of the meaning and motivation of the place name, by considering the linguistic, social, and cultural relationships that are established between the researched universe and the proper name – the *toponym*” (PEREIRA, 2009, p. 55). Studying the act of naming places, therefore, translates “the thought, the personal and social values of man as a social being of different societies throughout history” (ISQUERDO; KRIEGER, 2004, p. 11).

It is our understanding that the toponym seeks to achieve the existing relationship between man and the toponym itself, according to its denominational motivations. The toponymic studies include, in other words, “the study of the relationships (motivations) that are established between man and the place name” (ANDRADE, 2015, p. 30) and commonly branch out from etymology to “reconstruct the meanings and, later, trace a motivational panorama of the region in question, like an ideological retrieval of the denominator and the preservation of the depths of memory” (CARVALHINHOS, 2002-2003, p. 172). They are, therefore, linguistic, etymological, and geohistorical investigations of a specific place.

As regards Cultural Geography, this type of study broke with the pattern of a supposedly neutral knowledge within geographical studies, and provided a social and active view in a world that is ever-increasingly dominated by the globalization of markets, by the changes in work relationships, and by the urgency of environmental and ethnocultural issues.

Along these general lines, it is suitable to situate the existence of the study of places as a singularity between Toponymy and Cultural Geography. The place is an essential reference in the analyses of both toponymic studies and Cultural Geography. From this point of view, it is crucial that studies that focus specifically on the place-name-individual can include “the names of places resulting from different meanings, viewpoints, and fields of work, since, as they are organized in a dynamic manner, they constantly re-invent themselves in time and space, overlapping with sociocultural, economic, political, and religious values (ANDRADE; NASCIMENTO; REIS, 2014, p. 8).

The proposal of this study is to identify in what way these fields articulate/intersect, clearly taking into account their objects of study: place names. This investigative dialog will assume an interdisciplinary character. What is substituted is a thought that is “disjunctive and reductive for a thought that is complex, in the original sense of the term

*complexus*: what is woven together” (MORIN, 2003, p. 89). The present study is divided into four sections. The first section unveils a discussion on interdisciplinarity as systemic and complex knowledge. The second proposes a reflection on the historical-linguistic aspects. The third stage discusses the paths toward the consolidation of Cultural Geography. Finally, the fourth section, divided into two parts, presents a discussion on the notion of place as a category and its relationship of convergence with Toponymy and Cultural Geography. In this subsection, we promote a discussion regarding place names and to what extent this study is related to Legal Documents (PCN and DCN).

## **2 Interdisciplinarity: systemic and attuned knowledge**

To reflect upon interdisciplinarity is to emerge at the points of agreement/disagreement among the various fields of knowledge (scientific, cultural, philosophical, literary, etc.), upon considering new horizons, new viewpoints, and new theoretical and methodological approaches geared toward the questioning of knowledge and of human valuation. One “[...] theoretical-methodological approach in which the emphasis concerns the work of integration of the different fields of knowledge, a true work of cooperation and exchange, open to dialog and planning” (NOGUEIRA, 2001, p. 27). In this panorama, the PCN depicts that interdisciplinarity presupposes:

An integrating axis, which can be the object of knowledge, a project of investigation, a plan of intervention. In this sense, it should result from the need felt by schools, teachers, and students to explain, understand, intervene, change, prevent something that challenges an isolated discipline and attracts the attention of more than one viewpoint, possibly many (BRASIL, 2002, p. 88-89).

Interdisciplinarity appears as “a possibility to enrich and surpass the integration of the elements of knowledge” (ANDRADE, 2012, p. 207). In this respect, we take a stance that differs from the disciplinary approach, and which thus surpasses the Cartesian worldview, based on a linear, reductionist, and unarticulated perspective of knowledge and of sciences, given that the disciplinary borders and cases “become compartmentalized and hinder contact, circulation, and dialog with other disciplines, hampering interdisciplinary movements and resisting new theories coming from abroad” (JAPIASSU, 2006, p. 34).

The linchpin of this study is, immeasurably, attuned, systemic, integrated, connected, dialoged, since we assume the bias of the interdisciplinarity as a perspective of teaching and, above all, of research: as an investigative paradigm, characterized “by the use of elements or resources from two or more disciplines for the operationalization of an investigative procedure” (SILVA, 2011, p. 597).

We seek to contribute to the construction of an interdisciplinary view for the study of place names, as regards the epistemological questions of Toponymy and Cultural Geography. In particular, the axis that integrates, connects, and dialogs is the notion of place. This is a concept that is common to both fields, but that is here analyzed from the vantage point of their particularities and dialogs. It is our opinion that place can establish a non-fragmented sense regarding place names in the two fields of knowledge.

### **3 From Lexicology to Toponymy**

Lexicon comes from the Greek *λεξίον*, which means “word”. According to Antunes (2012, p. 27), the lexicon of a natural language can be understood as a repertoire of words from a language. The author stresses that “the words are the raw material with which we construct our language actions.” Lexicology, discipline containing the lexicon of languages, in a complete and integrated manner, “has the word, the lexical categorization, and the structuring of the lexicon as the basic objects of study” (BIDERMAN, 2001, p. 16). Lorente (2004) affirms that the academic tradition, especially in Europe, frequently identifies Lexicology as the study of the internal, formal, and semantic structure of words.

Naming “is an activity that is inherent to man” (CARVALHINHOS, 2008, p. 1), in which the individual classifies beings and objects and, concomitantly, organizes itself. *A priori*, it means to identify something as an object and implies that the referred thing be placed within a specific determined category, that is, any particular object is a member of a general class or representative of such a class. The lexicon of a language is precisely linked to the naming process. And Onomasiology, found within the field of denominations and designations, follows the semantic process of naming. Carvalhinhos (2007, p. 2) emphasizes that “the proper name has the function of registering social attitudes and postures of a given people, their beliefs, professions, region of origin, among other

aspects,” primarily considering that “the proper name finds its origin in historical, Biblical, or modern sources” (2007, p. 7).

It being one of the sciences within Lexicology, Onomastics is related to the study of the origin and changes in the proper names, mainly referring to the locations and people. Ramos and Bastos (2010, p. 87-88) assert that the origin of Onomastics is related “to the first philosophical speculations about the name and, in the West, is intimately linked to the Greek-Latin grammatical traditions, given that the distinction between the common and the proper name begins to be developed by Dionísio de Trácia, the first Greek grammarian.” Nonetheless, the authors (RAMOS; BASTOS, 2010, p. 88) reiterate that their scientific treatment began with the “advent of Linguistic Structuralism, in the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century,” a moment in which one gave priority to “the focus on the science of signs, semiotics, and semiology, within which Onomastics began to be considered a chapter.”

Onomastics focuses on two main areas of study: Anthroponymy and Toponymy. The first discipline is dedicated to the anthroponymic sign through the denominal motivation of individual proper names, surnames, and nicknames. Due to its coverage and universalist nature, the anthroponomastic lexicon has been the object of study in a wide range of scientific fields, including: Philosophy, History, Law, Religion, and Literature. By contrast, Toponymy focuses on the study of the toponymic lexicon by means of the proper names of places. According to Dick (1990), its object of study is the toponym (place name).

Onomastic-toponymic studies in Brazil, which began in the twentieth century, were based on the registering of etymologically written Indian names, and were associated directly with the studies of the Tupi language. The logs of Indian names produced by Levy Cardoso, in 1961, are of great importance, with the publication of the work *Toponímia Brasileira* (1961), which specialized in the Brazilian toponyms of the Amazonian region, especially those of Caribbean and Arawak origin. But it was with the research performed by Professor Carlos Drumond, in 1965, with his work entitled *Contribuição do Bororó à Toponímia Brasileira*, examining the origin of Indian names through the Tupi language and Brazilian Toponymy, that the position of toponomastic studies in Brazil began to take on a systematized nature. The development of Brazilian Toponymy occurred, in fact, with the works from Professor Maria Vicentina de Paula do Amaral Dick, one of the main references for

toponymic research in the country. According to the theory of Dauzat, and being advised by Drumond, Dick continued with the investigations concerning toponyms, creating methodological categorizations for her motivation.

Dick (1990) deals with the idea of toponymic motivation focused on the investigation of the motivations that led to the emergence of a specific toponym. In general, such motivations can be associated with the sociocultural circumstances in which the denominator is inserted, that is, with the sociohistorical context in which the naming occurs. In her study, the author classifies the different motivations in toponymic taxonomies, which can be either anthro-cultural or physical. These taxonomies raised by Dick (1990) “allow one to interpret the names with greater precision from the semantic point of view” (DICK, 1999, p. 143). Overall, her studies seek a sociohistorical retrieval contained within the names of a given people, community, region, place. In the current toponymic studies, this taxonomy has been (re)discussed by researchers in the field in an attempt to attend to the very dynamic of the results of studies in the field.

The toponyms can, in their formation, receive influences that can come from the linguistic, geographic, cultural, historical, social, ethnic, and ideological conditions. They can even stem from semantic, lexical, and morphosyntactic transformations when compared to other lexical units (indigenous and Portuguese languages). These can carry with them “a value that goes far beyond the very act of naming” (ANDRADE; NASCIMENTO; REIS, 2014, p. 15), and as terminological units, “chronical” of a people, “reflect the preservation of the sociocultural and sociogeographic facts in a determined space and time of a community” (ANDRADE; NASCIMENTO; REIS, 2014, p. 15). For this reason, to study them is to intertwine time with the memory of the place; it is to reveal geographies imprinted upon the landscape; it is to understand the cultural traits buried in the day-to-day life. Toponymy, therefore, unveils itself as an interdisciplinary discipline that feeds off of and is fed back by threads from a wide range of fields of knowledge.

#### **4 The paths of Cultural Geography**

Claval (2001) identifies Germany and France as the mark of the first phase of Cultural Geography studies. The period from 1890 to 1940, in which the research was mainly about cultural landscape and ways

of life, resulting from the relationship between society and nature. The second period extended from 1940 to 1970, when regional Geography took the stage, and the preference was given to studies on locational logic and urban studies, among others. The field work was, for the most part, substituted by statistical inferences; nevertheless, Cultural Geography pressed on.

The 1970's "was an arena of epistemological, theoretical, and methodological clashes, in which a critical Geography, along with different subfields, emerged, which, in the 1980's, would partially converge to generate the so-called renewed Cultural Geography" (CORRÊA, 2009, p. 2). The renewal of Cultural Geography occurred after the 1980's (CORRÊA, 2009), when specialized periodicals emerged, such as: 'Géographie et Cultures', in France, created by Paul Claval, in 1992, and, in the same year, the magazine, *Ecumene*, in England. In the United States, in 1994, cultural studies begin to organize themselves around the *Journal of Cultural Geography*. The later creation of *Social and Cultural Geography* came to expand the possibilities of publishing texts on Cultural Geography. Thus, little by little, the work and research on Cultural Geography had various periodicals and publication channels opened to them.

Big names in Geography contributed to the systematization of the cultural approach; among these, Friedrich Ratzel (German geographer and ethnologist) and Vidal de La Blache (French geographer) stand out. More recently, Yi-Fu Tuan (Chinese-American geographer) and Anne Buttimer (Irish geographer) have stood out as researchers who have contributed to give Cultural Geography its own identity. In the words of Holzer (2003, p. 114), "these authors [are] pioneers in the use of the concepts of place and the living world."

Corrêa and Rosendahl (2005, p. 97) explain that the aspects of culture, over a long period of time, were addressed in regional studies, but they "were not given priority, nor were people aware that culture, in its multiple manifestations, could be the core theme of research." In Brazil, according to Corrêa and Rosendahl (2005, p. 97 e 98), the cultural heterogeneity of the country, much like its synamism and its innumerable historical processes involving society and nature, contributed to awakening interests in the cultural dimension of space. Its implementation did, of course, generate criticism and controversy; nevertheless, in 1993, NEPEC (Nucleus of Studies and Research on Space and Culture) was



formed in the Geography Department of the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), an active center in the production and diffusion of Cultural Geography in Brazil, which still directs its studies toward existing relationships between space and religion, space and symbolism, and popular culture.

Over time, the cultural dimension began to gain ground in geographic studies, as Bonnemaïson (2002, p. 86) postulates:

Today, new attention is given to the intransigence of the cultural fact. This is no longer seen as the vague and fluid superstructure in which one attempts to close a highly materialist conception. The culture today tends to be understood as a real aspect, a system of symbolic representation that exists within itself and, if we go to the limits of reasoning, as a ‘worldview’ that has its coherence and its own effects on the relationship of society with space.

For Suertegaray (2001), the geographic space is pinpointed as “single and multiple” and is conditioned to the different categories, which are: Landscape, Territory, Place, and Environment.

Milton Santos (2006, p. 66) reveals that the notion of *landscape* has been appropriated by other definitions, such as surroundings, habitat, and ecosystem. It is associated “with the set of forms that, in a given moment, express the heritage that represents the successive relationship located between man and nature.” We can see in Santos (2006) that landscape is “transtemporal, joining past and present objects, a transversal construction” (p. 67), which is characterized by [...] “a given distribution of object-forms, resulting from a specific technical content” (p. 67). By contrast, the *space* constitutes “always a present, a horizontal construction, a unique situation” (p. 68), which results from “the intrusion of society in these object-forms” (p. 68). In light of this reasoning, it can be noted that, according to Santos (2006), the existing difference between landscape and space: “the landscape is, thus, a material system and, in this condition, relatively immutable: the space is a system of values, which are permanently transformed” (p. 68).

Suertegaray (2001, n.p.) elucidates that the concept of territory is, historically, associated with the idea of domination-appropriation or associated with the notion of nature and society configured by a limit of the extension of power. Based on Santos and Silveira (2001) *apud* Blum (2014, p. 30), the means through which to transform a space into

a territory, within the geographic scientific tradition, is related to the materialization of networks of power that dominate, bring about changes, and reproduce themselves in society (SANTOS; SILVEIRA, 2001 *apud* BLUM, 2014, p. 30).

In this sense, space and territory, as well as landscape and space, are not equivalent terms. From the vantage point of Raffestin (1993, p. 143), “space comes before territory,” that is, the formation of territory is only possible if there is the presence of geographic space. To territorialize space, from Blum’s point of view (2014, p. 31), surpasses the “perception that the social and power relations are applied in the social groups that inhabit a specific space.” Returning to the idea from Raffestin (1993, p. 144), the territory is “the prison that man builds for himself.”

For a long time, the concept of *place* was treated in Geography as a self-explainable term. However, more recently, it was revived as an essential concept, being analyzed in a more comprehensive manner in geographic sciences (SUERTEGARAY, 2001, n.p); it became a locational reference for an important category of analysis. The place, in the geographic perspective, understood as a point in space, refers to “a geographic treatment of the living world,” manifested through “a day-to-day life shared among the widest range of people, companies, institutions – cooperation and conflict are the basis of life in common” (SANTOS, 1997 *apud* SUERTEGARAY, 2001, n.p.). Therefore, when we think about the relationship between space and place in Geography, we situate the notion of place as space “[...] embodied through experiences, ambiguities, and human values, which show distinct level of specificities” (MELLO, 2011, p. 7). This addresses the lived and experienced geographic space, incorporated as the home, the city, the region in which one lives. From the place, the individual constructs bonds that are “affective, social, cultural; it protects their mysteries, refuge, confinement; it is their cosmos” (ANDRADE, 2015, p. 32).

The term environment is polyssemic, that is, it contains a “plurality of conceptions and concepts, present in scientific, political, and cultural interpretations [...]” (MENDONÇA, 2001, p. 118). It can, for example, designate “all that surrounds or involves living beings”; “a set of material, cultural, psychological, and moral conditions that involve one or more people” (HOUAISS, 2007, electronic version). To think about the environment in Geography, according to Suertegaray (2004, p. 196), is to consider:

The nature/society relationship, a complex and conflicting set that results in a long process of socialization of the nature of man. This is a process that, at the same time that it transforms nature, it also transforms human nature.

Similarly, Cavalcante (2006) *apud* Cavalcante and Santos (2013, p. 2) confirms that the environment is “a (re)produced environment, as the result of human actions accumulated upon the natural environment.” He adds that its “components reflect, above all, a complex and dynamic interaction among the historical, sociocultural, economic, and environmental processes” (p.2). In this point of view, the environment is the product of the dialectic, systemic, and complex relationship of society and the natural physical aspects of a given space.

According to the ideas of Suertegaray (2001), the geographic space, therefore, proves to be dynamic, given that it can “be read through the concept of landscape and/or territory, and/or place, and/or environment; without denying that each one of these dimensions is contained in all of the others” (SUERTEGARAY, 2001, n.p.). One such example is “landscapes contain territories, which contain places, which contain environments, valuing, for each one, all of the possible connections” (idem, *ibidem*, n.p.).

Cultural Geography, as a subfield of Geography, therefore seeks to learn and understand human interactions with nature and their role in the ordination of space. In this light, it attempts to investigate human attitudes (such as art and music) related to the physical and social environment. This is only possible because the culture is “a medium through which the individual or the group makes space, and the way of living and acting within it, intelligible” (OLIVEIRA; SILVA, 2009, p. 2). The starting point of Cultural Geography is, therefore, the confirmation that the social space is laden with a subjective and cultural notions.

For Cultural Geography, the geographic names (also known as toponyms) can translate, in addition to cultural and ethnolinguistic strata, as historical and geographic facts of a people who inhabits or has inhabited the geographic space-place. In this sense, a geographic name is remarkably an exceptional testimony of human history (FONSECA, 1997, p. 20, *our translation*). In Cultural Geography, the concept of the geographic name is associated with the ontological dimensions, with the aspects of territorial domination, as well as with the emergence of identities and meanings for a given place. In this perspective, the concept

of place discussed in Cultural Geography walks side by side with the notion of place in Toponymy, bearing in mind that the names of places “are not factors that are strange or unrelated to historical, cultural, and social contexts, when considering the ontological substances of their environment, together with their meaningful burden” (ANDRADE, 2015, p. 166).

## **5 Toponymy and Cultural Geography: the place as a web of relationships**

As a naming subject, man plays a role in the naming of the place: “it is he who established the parameters for the selection of motivations, be they by natural or human forces” (ANDRADE, 2015, p. 29). When naming places, we establish a cultural link, “directly associated with occupation, possession, and knowledge of the named place and area” (ANDRADE; NUNES, 2012, p. 201). Thus, like any other human activity, it is “the act of the naming of places that can undergo a scientific investigation and systematization” (ANDRADE; 2012, p. 205).

Geographic name and toponym can be considered terms, but they should not be understood, respectively, as synonyms, as each one covers areas of knowledge, fields of work, and different theoretical and methodological specificities. The geographic name appears as a normalized and standardized toponym, which is used as a geographic reference in map logs (SANTOS, 2005 *apud* BATISTA, 2011, p. 31), which are specific of geographic studies, particularly of Cultural Geography. Place, in common sense, has a social position and a spatial localization, but, for Tuan (1979, p. 409), the place “has spirit” and “personality”, and there is a “sense of place”. The place in Tuan (1979) is associated with the idea of belonging, and is thus related to the biographic identity of man with the aspects and elements of his lived and experienced space. We understand “belong” as that which is part of or stems from; that is peculiar or particular to; that is related or linked to something, such as an object or a place (HOUAISS, 2007). In this sense, the sense of belonging is related to “the feeling of a bond, relationship, dependence, connection, with a given place, group, history” (ANDRADE, 2015, p. 37). A house, as a home, for example, expresses the affective relationship of the individual with his/her place; a subject that resides in a house for a long period of time will most likely develop affective, personal, or cultural bonds, that is, feelings of belonging within the space.

Regarding this relationship – man and his physical space – Tuan (2012) discusses, in his book, the term, “Topophilia”, as a neologism that configures, in a broad sense, the affective bond of a human being with the place, primarily considering “the perception, attitudes, and values involved in the relationship between human beings and the environment (COSTA; ROCHA, 2010, p. 38). Tuan (2012) refers to Topophilia as being “affective bonds of human beings with the material environmental” (2012, p. 135), that is, the affective bond that unites people to places (HOLZER, 2003, p. 117). In this view of place is the space in which the individual finds him/herself within the environment in which he/she is a part. This does not include any and every location, but rather that portion of space that has an affective meaning for a person or group of people (CAVALCANTI, 1998 *apud* COSTA; ROCHA, 2010, p. 37). The place, in this sense, is the result of meanings constructed by experience, that is, they address affective references developed throughout our lives.

Thanks to phenomenology, the interest in the direct experience of places was developed through Cultural Geography (CLAVAL, 2002, p. 20). In this geographic approach, the concern is “to define the place as an experience that refers, essentially, to the space as it is lived in by human beings” (HOLZER, 1999, p. 70). Insisting on the sense of places, on the importance of lived experience, on the humanized world, Claval (2011, p. 11) adds that the focus of Cultural Geography is the spatial experience: “experience of the place in the research about the lived space.” The place is studied through the subjective relationship and connections established between the subject and the space (COSTA; ROCHA, 2010, p. 37). Thus, the notion of place is constituted in Cultural Geography as a primitive space that involves our desires, experiences, thoughts, feelings, and anxieties.

Recognizing the geographic and cultural specificity of the places produced and maintained by the human action is, therefore, the common thread of Cultural Geography, which seeks to learn and understand human interactions with nature and their role in the ordination of space. Its theoretical and scientific root is clearly associated with the recognition of places and landscapes as products of intentional human activity.

According to Claval (2001, p. 55), “[...] the places do not have only a form and a color, a functional and economic rationality. They are replete with meaning for those that inhabit and frequent them.” For this reason, the author ponders that, with studies on Cultural Geography, it

is possible to understand “the profound logic of ideas, ideologies, and cultures to see how they shape the experience that people have in the world and how these influence their actions.”

Moreira and Hespanhol (2007, p. 51) use the ideas from Buttimer (1985), which expresses that each human being is surrounded “by concentric ‘layers’ of lived space, from the living room to the home, to the neighborhood, city, region, and nation” (BUTTIMER, 1985, p. 178). And this space concerns the forces of production, such as maintenance and development of a human group. We stress the notion of production as a way of life, incorporating the culture within this human production. Thus, beliefs, dances, myths, rituals, legends are integral parts of the productive process and can reflect on the naming actions of this group, such as in the act of naming places.

According to Andrade (2015, p. 31-32), the episteme of toponymic studies shows the place in a “dimension of an analytical category: motivational, historical, linguistic, ideological, social, identity.” And with Cultural Geography, the idea of place can be conceptually broadened and extended “as the experience of the lived and affective world, a place as part of a whole.”

Through the discussion of “place” in Cultural Geography, it is possible to understand that the place goes beyond the mere view of localization and individuality of space, and this is different from the geographic category of “space”: the place is closed, intimate, and humanized, whereas the space would be any portion of the earth’s surface, broad and unknown. Thus, place is contained within space. The place becomes the lived space, replete with its own and particular meanings that are culturally conveyed (COSTA; ROCHA, 2010, p. 52).

## **5.2 Legal documents and place names**

Studies of place names are of particular significance for the understanding of communities and peoples. Regarding the didactic-pedagogical context, we believe that they are understood as being essential to the student’s teaching-learning process. We share the idea, for example, that when the school allows students to immerse themselves in the reality that surrounds them, this notably contributes to the understanding of the local culture and identity by eliciting sociohistorical aspects.

In the realm of teaching, the National Curricular Parameters (PCN in Portuguese) and the new Curricular Guidelines for Basic Education (DCN in Portuguese) are considered legal documents that are pivotal and a channel for advice and provide guidelines for referrals and discussions that guide schoolwork. The present study sought to understand to what extent the notion of place is presented in these documents that guide basic education.

The PCNs were drawn up to advise teachers in the search for new approaches and methodologies.<sup>1</sup> Replete with national references to educational planning, the PCNs of Geography within Elementary Education (BRASIL, 1998, p. 15) propose a pedagogical work that seeks to achieve the “expansion of the skills of elementary students to observe, discover, explain, compare, and represent the characteristics of the place in which they live, as well as the different geographic landscapes and spaces.” This legal document (1998) points out some aims outlined by Elementary Education: “to get to know and give value to the plurality of the Brazilian sociocultural heritage” and “to get to know the essential features of Brazil in social, material, and cultural dimensions as a means through which to progressively build the notion of national and personal identity and the feeling of belonging to the country” (BRASIL, 1998, p. 7). Brazil is a union of sociocultural diversities, which upholds the core reasoning of the PCNs (1998); in this perspective, the teacher should try to work with the regional heterogeneities, since the PCNs (BRASIL, 1998, p. 110) stress that, for Elementary Education, the teacher can “try to work with the regional heterogeneities, without fragmenting the geographic analysis, so as to discuss how the unequal development of the Brazilian regions emerged within a broad sociocultural, and not only economic, point of view.” According to this document, it is hoped that students would build a repertoire of knowledge about the formation of the nation:

They get to know the features of different Brazilian landscapes, discovering the issue of human and natural diversity that has profoundly marked Brazil: the human concentration and depopulation of specific regions, the cultural and climatic

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<sup>1</sup> Information retrieved from *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* (INEP). Available at: <http://provabrazil.inep.gov.br/parametros-curriculares-nacionais>. Retrieved in September 2016.

differences, and its socio-environmental influence, the vegetation and rugged terrain in the different landscapes, the cultural formation and its socio-environmental relationships (BRASIL, 1998, p. 114).

From this point of view, more than merely understanding the geographic space, the essential element is that the students perceive that there is a cultural, social, and historical diversity within our country, in addition to the climate, the vegetation, and the rugged terrain, and all of this should be valued within each regional specificity. And to this “each element should be observed, described, related, compared, questioned, and interpreted, considering the diverse geographic aspects of the Brazilian landscapes and territory” (BRASIL, 1998, p. 112).

The PCNs (BRASIL, 1998, p. 61) propose that teachers work with “the subjective dimensions of geographic space and the symbolic representation that the students make of them,” so that the students can perceive themselves as “actors in the building of landscapes and places” and so that they can understand that these landscapes and places “result from multiple interactions between social work and nature, and that they are full of symbolic meanings, stemming from the affection born within them.”

The document seeks to give value to the attitudes and procedures that the students can acquire by studying their day-to-day lives with Geography. By observing, describing, questioning, and representing the multiplicity of landscapes and places, they will understand their role as supporting actors in the processes that are constantly transforming these landscapes and places (BRASIL, 1998, p. 62).

In the manner, the students will be learning a geography that “gives value to their experiences and to others while, at the same time, they will be not only learning to give value to their place, but also transcending the local dimension in their search for the world” (BRASIL, 1998, p. 62).

According to PCNs (BRASIL, 1998, p. 58), the concern to integrate the place in geographic studies as a thematic axis is related “both to opportunities that they offer for the student’s day-to-day study, as well as to the possibility of thinking about Geography within new lines of thought.” In this approach, the teacher will be able “to work with the



student's day-to-day life, with all the burden of affection and that from his/her imaginary, which is born from one's experience in the places" (p. 59). In this approach, the PCNs (BRASIL, 1998, p. 60) suggest some items as parameters for geographic studies in the classroom:

- The place as a lived experience of man with the territory and landscapes;
- The imaginary and the representations of day-to-day life: the meaning of things and places joining and separating people;
- The place as the mediate and immediate lived space of man in his interaction with the world;
- The world as a plurality of places interacting amongst themselves;
- Citizenship as the awareness of belonging, interacting, and feeling a part of the people and the places.

In this sense, it could be observed that the notion of place in Geography can go "far beyond the mere view of the localization and individuality of the space: added to this are perception, meanings, characteristics, and cultural heritages of the individuals" (COSTA; ROCHA, 2010, p. 52). These authors add that the place is "[...] the lived space, replete with its own and particular meanings that are culturally conveyed." And through the place, what can also be considered in the teaching-learning process is "the perception of the individual, the symbols, the religiosity, the values, and the collective identities" (p. 52). It is for this reason that the PCNs (BRASIL, 1998) consider the geographic studies about the place through relationships and subjective connections established between the subject and the space to be relevant, since the concept of the place for the student "can be formed and/or understood as a space of experience, where one's existential needs, one's interactions with objects and people, one's stories of life are inserted" (GIOMETTI; PITTON; ORTIGOZA, 2012, p. 36).

The DCNs (BRASIL, 2013) are also principles, procedures, and fundamentals geared toward Basic Education that guide and direct the curricular planning of the schools and the teaching systems in the municipal, state, and federal spheres. These guidelines also associate the image of the place with the identity relationship established between the individual and the geographic space that has been lived, experienced,

and achieved. This represents a relationship that validates the feeling of belonging and affection among the place, its name, and the individuals that interact within this space. The place, in this document, is associated with ontological dimensions, in other words, it is related to the aspects of territorial domination, as well as to the emergence of the identities and meanings for the place. For the DCN (BRASIL, 2013, p. 438), the Earth as a place “is much more than the possibility of attachment; first, it is the condition for the existence of the group and of the continuity of its symbolic references,” as Leite (1991) notes:

The Earth is a common heritage of the communities that see them as such due to the ethnic factors, inbred logic, preferential marriage, rules of succession, and other arrangements. The condition of communal and indivisible possession is the central point for this comprehension. Invested by its own history, it becomes a territory, and upon it, the groups construct their territoriality (LEITE, 1991, p. 31).

The author points out that the territoriality presupposes the “identification and defense on the part of the group: presupposes the historical and cultural tradition constructed over time.” According to DCN (BRASIL, 2013, p. 439), the land “should not be perceived only as an object in itself, of work and of individual ownership, since it is related to the dignity, ancestrality, and collective dimension.” Regarding the territory, the DCNs (BRASIL, 2013) stress that it is related:

To a lived space and one of profound meanings for the existence and sustainability of the group of close and distant relatives that recognize themselves as a collective, as they have lived there for generations and generations, as they have transformed the space into a place. A place with a name, a strong reference in the imaginary of the group, building notions of belonging. It address a space acquired by residence, by interaction, which gains importance from a traditionality formulated upon serving as a support for the existence of a group of people who are related by affinity and blood or even by a cosmological affiliation (BRASIL, 2013, p. 439).

The place, from this point of view, cannot be understood without being “experienced” or lived, as Tuan (1979) very correctly postulates. According to the DCNs (BRASIL, 2013, p. 440), it refers to a geographic-

cultural space of collective use, of “economic and social needs, of cultural and political needs” of the human being. In the words of Leite (1991, p. 31), it presupposes “a historical and cultural tradition built over time.” In this sense, the DCN (BRASIL, 2013, p. 439) emphasizes, through considerations put forth by Milton Santos (2007), that it is impossible “to imagine a concrete citizenship that does without the territorial component, since the value of the individual depends, to a large degree, on the place in which one is.”

These legal texts view the categories of geographic space (landscape, territory, environment, and place) associated with the lived experience of man (socio-spatial view). This experience of the social space, according to Santos (2010, p. 38), happens when “the individual is inserted in the space, appropriating oneself of it, and participating in its modifications, and can, in this manner, define oneself within the society as an active agent of transformation.” Otherwise, the space “is configured as geometric and mere landscapes that participate indirectly in the life of the subjects, composing scenarios that are far beyond their comprehension” (SANTOS, 2010, p. 38). It was noted that these documents have in common the subjective relationships established between man and his environment and, in this sense, understand that “the concept of place is born of the experiences and refers to the affection that man cultivates, through interactions, within the space in which he inhabits (SANTOS, 2010, p. 38).

## **6 Final Considerations**

In this discussion, place and culture were understood as being intertwined in the same web, inseparable concepts. We see in both Toponymy and Cultural Geography the complexity of the relationships that involve the act of naming places, given that the toponyms or geographic names can reveal elements of the origin, etymology, worldview, social and identity memory, as well as the process of dynamicity of place names. Therefore, this study sought to shed light on the points of interlocution between these two interdisciplinary fields, considering the complex and relationship aspects present in the scientific knowledge of these areas and in school life. We understand that reflecting on the interdisciplinary act makes advances in teaching possible, given that such progress can allow for the execution of new research projects that, in some way, can

correspond to this new emerging paradigm for education (ANDRADE, 2012, p. 219). In the onomasiologic process, we surmise that the study of place names is an act of pulling the wide range of threads from the ball of knowledge in an attempt to understand the elements that involve them, since the wide range of knowledge can revive the colors of memory and of local identity. This relationship can establish the non-fragmentary sense surrounding place names and/or geographic names.

Cultural Geography conceives the geographic space as a social space, with the place being the fruit of “the sum of the symbolic, emotional, cultural, political, and biological dimensions” (BUTTIMER, 1985 *apud* SANTOS, 2010, p. 57). This geographic aspect is focused on the studies of the “relationships between the culture and the social life, the transmission of the knowledge and the rules of conduct, the relationship of the individual with society, as well as the articulations and relationships between culture and power” (COSTA; ROCHA, 2010, p. 38). Understanding the place within the cultural geographic perspective thus presupposes the revival of traditions and memories of a group through dogmas, beliefs, myths, dance, culinary arts, among others.

Dick (2008, p. 179) points out that, after having been baptized, the places gain a “soul”, “they become entities capable of meaning and of conveying their meaning: ‘name’ and ‘place’ join, from that point on, constituting the same identity, referenced and capable of being referenced.” The place, according to Andrade (2015, p. 30), refers “to the point of space, to the contour itself, it becomes linked to the place/name/denomination/reference relationship in a transparent manner.” These “carry with them their own and particular features that allow them to discover, in the majority of cases, in addition to physical aspects, the way of seeing the ideas, the point of view of the people of a specific era” (CASTIGLIONI, 2008, p. 23).

In this light, cultural geographic studies can substantiate the studies of Toponymy when embracing the anthropolinguistic, geohistorical, sociocultural, and socioeconomic aspects of a place name. Or, possibly, the inverse: Toponymy can contribute with the studies of geographic names in Cultural Geography.

We would like to highlight that this discussion has not been fully concluded, and it is thus open to other viewpoints and new readings. Our intention is to continue with these studies, with a strict focus on the context of teaching, considering the Cultural Geography approach

within the scope of toponymic studies, always thinking more specifically about possible didactic-pedagogical proposals for the teaching-learning of disciplines, such as the Portuguese Language, Geography, and History.

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