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**ENVIRONMENT AS A SYMBOLIC CAPITAL DISPUTED BY SPECIFIC FIELDS  
CORRESPONDING TO THE STATE:  
REFLECTIONS FROM THE BOURDIEUSIAN SOCIOLOGY**

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**ABSTRACT**

We developed this theoretical essay with the aim of disserting, based on reflections from the Bourdieusian sociology, about the environment as a symbolic capital disputed by some fields corresponding to the State. We considered the environment as a symbolic capital for the following reasons: its existence; its rarely noticeable manifestations; its influence with social agents; arising a desire for monopoly; establishing competition criteria; having its concentrated distribution, and being able to be paradoxical in the choice of its representatives. The fields compete for this symbolic capital because: the field of power wants to ensure that the domination scheme continues; the economic field seeks to maintain the source of raw material for the markets; the juridical field intends to impose a notion of this symbolic capital that the State supports; and, the political field intends to camouflage it in discourses and acts which distort the subject and encourage widespread abstention.

**KEYWORDS.** Environment. Symbolic Capital. Field of Power. State. Bourdieusian Sociology.

**O MEIO AMBIENTE COMO UM CAPITAL SIMBÓLICO DISPUTADO POR  
ALGUNS CAMPOS CORRESPONDENTES AO ESTADO:  
REFLEXÕES A PARTIR DA SOCIOLOGIA BOURDIEUSIANA**

**RESUMO**

Desenvolvemos este ensaio teórico com o objetivo de dissertar, a partir de reflexões da sociologia bourdieusiana, sobre o meio ambiente como capital simbólico disputado por alguns campos correspondentes ao Estado. Consideramos o meio ambiente como um capital simbólico pelos seguintes motivos: sua existência; suas manifestações raramente perceptíveis; sua influência junto aos agentes sociais; despertar um desejo de monopólio; estabelecer os critérios de concorrência; ter sua distribuição concentrada; e, poder ser paradoxal na escolha de seus representantes. Os campos disputam esse capital simbólico porque: o campo de poder quer garantir a continuidade do esquema de dominação; o campo econômico busca manter a fonte de matéria-prima para os mercados; o campo jurídico pretende impor uma noção desse capital simbólico que o Estado sustenta; e, o campo político pretende camuflá-lo em discursos e atos que distorcem o assunto e estimulam a abstenção generalizada.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE.** Meio Ambiente. Crise Ambiental. Problemas ambientais. Capital Simbólico. Campo do Poder. Campo Econômico. Campo Jurídico. Campo Político. Estado. Sociologia Bourdieusiana.

## INTRODUCTION

The environment is a topic whose complexity brings together discussions about natural, ecosystemic, social and economic issues, which are a consequence of capitalism's protection over the world. The set of these problems has formed the expression environmental crisis, an essentially natural phenomenon, but one that survives socio-political debates due to its link, sometimes forced, with the socio-cultural spectrum. Each order of problems that make up the environmental crisis represents several institutions of reality's social construction, which are organised, according to the interpretation of the bourdieusian sociology, in specific fields (Leff, 2008; Plumwood, 2005; Redclift, 2014).

These fields have sought to acquire legitimate authority to represent and indoctrinate spaces endowed with environmental issues, referred to as the environment. Behind this representation, interest is the intention to elect a sovereign definition of environment for capitalism, and guide how the different relations between the environment and capitalism should be approached, disseminated, and defended. In this semantic, political, and ideological game is the State which, by the correspondence established with different fields, has the authority to authorise, legitimise and grant representation, or a prominent position in representation, of how the environment, in its relationship with the capitalism, must be managed, researched, and broadcast (Bourdieu, 2004, 2012; Pellow & Brulle, 2005; Radkau, 2008).

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Because it is an interest of several fields, which merit of representation depends on the recognition of the State, we have characterised the environment as a symbolic capital based on the State's authority capital (Bourdieu, 2012, 2014; Goldman, 2001; Meadowcroft, 2005). We have developed this theoretical essay with the aim of disserting, based on reflections from the bourdieusian sociology, about the environment as a symbolic capital disputed by some fields corresponding to the State. We have considered bourdieusian sociology as a reflexive reference for this debate. In order to guarantee the viability of the developed discussions, we have selected, among the various fields that correspond with the State, the field of power, the economic field, the juridical field and the political field.

### **BOURDIEUSIAN SOCIOLOGY: CONCEPTS, THEORIES, SYMBOLIC CAPITAL, STATE AND ITS CORRESPONDING FIELDS**

Pierre Bourdieu has based his contributions on a field, habitus, and capital conceptual triad. The relations between these and others concepts have allowed theoretical contributions that challenged objectivism and subjectivism limits.

The field is in a socially constructed reality, and it is a microcosmic section of that reality. It exists through a habitus, and it houses practices and activates strategies in its different agents. Every field is a field of power, a social field, a field of forces and a field of struggles. Field of power, because the incorporated structures (habitus) organise themselves in a dispute over something (object, interest, theme). Social field, because the conflict awakens in the agents and structures the desire for possession, care, control and representation. Field of forces, since coalitions emerge from the shared common interests over what is under dispute. Field of struggles for the disharmony and heterogeneity inherent to the attempts to dominate the topic under discussion (Bourdieu, 2001, 2004, 2009, 2011, 2012).

The configuration of the field is submissive to its respective habitus, endowed with incorporated inertia, by which social structures generate mental structures. They own shapes according to situations that vary in time, place and distribution of power. The different thematic combats that move the field are interested in the appropriation and redefinition of their specific capital. Three large families of capital contribute to the inequality implicit in the field: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. Economic capital is valued using monetary units and physical goods. Cultural capital: presupposes the internalisation of culture (incorporated); admits, through material appropriation, the transferability of culture (objectified); and it refers to the set of owned titles (institutionalised). Social capital:

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includes personal relationships as resources (individual), and it mentions social integration (collective) (Bourdieu, 2004, 2012).

The capitals are not retained in the economic, cultural and social typology, as they can assume other configurations and labels according to the field under analysis. This configuration is organised based on a concentrated distribution of capital linked to the historical relationship of forces between agents and institutions. The combination of interest capitals results in a dominant division characteristic of the field. Conservation strategies aim at the field's autonomization and are typically dominant. Subversion strategies strive to differentiate the field and characterise the dominated ones (Bourdieu, 1983, 2012, 2013).

The articulation between the concepts of field, habitus and capital, among other characteristics of the Bourdieusian vocabulary, was intended for a sociological project interested in organising a theoretical triad configured from clarifications about action, practice and power.

For Bourdieu (2011), the action comprises the ability to adjust durable provisions, the habitus incorporated during the agent's socialisation, in the context faced. The theory of practice, which is also a theory of action, is built from the interrelationships between habitus and real-world situations, from which complementary discussions about the logic of practice and practical sense are constructed (Bourdieu, 2009). The logic of the practice reveals that the opposition principles used to classify the elements are ambiguous, and the practical sense understands the game behind the adaptation to this ambiguity (Bourdieu, 2009, 2011). Power is symbolic because it is not necessarily seen or explicit in its structural constitution and formation of a worldview. Symbolic power influences the adjustments of durable dispositions (action) without being noticed, to the point of making them previously structured for the exercise of life (practice) (Bourdieu, 2012, 2014).

Among the countless debates resulting from the sociological analysis that connected the conceptual triad to the theoretical triad, the reflections on symbolic capital stand out. This capital relies on a cognitive basis that assesses the coherence of guarantees quality and quantity offered by a social agent in a practical domain built by a relationship between the logic of practice and practical sense. The possession of symbolic capital represents any capital or several types of capital which is no longer perceived and recognised as capital, strength, power or exploitation capacity. This symbolism adds legitimacy to this or these species of capital (Bourdieu, 2001, 2007, 2009, 2011).

Even though it has a diffuse and collective nature, symbolic capital may become something objectified, codified and even bureaucratised by the State. The authority to establish the code unification, norms standardisation and the routing of behavioural protocols makes the State,

simultaneously, an agent and instrument for constructing social reality. Suppose formally; the State is the only one that can symbolically guarantee the different types of capital value. In that case, that same State is the only one with the legitimate possession of an authorised capital that authorises, in a sovereign way, to say what an individual is (Bourdieu, 2008, 2011, 2014).

Recognised as symbolic capital, this capital of authority is reserved and accumulated in the State, which is nothing more than a stage of this capital dispute and concession. A translator of the State's almost magical effect and the miraculous symbolic effectiveness, logical conformism sums it up as a form of social integration that, simultaneously, provides conditions for the symbolic and social order production and reproduction. The State's structural apparatus converts social integration into a logical integration. There is an interdependent relationship between the State's domination and those who have appropriated it or can appropriate it through symbolic capital concession/accumulation (Bourdieu, 2012, 2014).

By a series of structured (State's field representatives) and structuring instruments (social agents' habitus representatives), there is an official consensus and ordinary senses that turn actions and practices dogmatised by the State's symbolic power into daily elements (Bourdieu, 2001, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014). A power socially built by the autonomy of the fields and capital corresponding to the State. For this theoretical essay, we have privileged fields with debates pertinent to the theoretical relations possible to be established between the environment, symbolic capital and the State. In this sense, the field of power, economic, juridical, and political, are discussed in sequence.

The field of power rests its reflections on the similarities of class habitus, identified by the social structure of socialisation. When prioritising the study about positional space responsible for the agents' representative properties, Bourdieu (2012) has added greater complexity to the field of power because those who have the authorisation to exercise power are not easily identifiable, as they are, at the same time, uncertain and multipositional. The power field has its struggles to gain authority to establish the relative value of capital capable of providing power in other fields. However, history has reserved the State a monopoly on the authorised exercise of physical and symbolic violence and the responsibility to monitor and, if necessary, change the relative value of the capital types. This specific issue makes the field of power interrelated with the State (Bourdieu, 2004, 2012, 2014).

Bourdieu (2012) has used the economic field to expose his realistic view of capitalism. His critical analysis begins with considerations about the social and political colonisation violence and extends to the "globalisation" process in recent decades. From his perspective on the social construction of the economy, Bourdieu (2012) has accessed destructive and

expansionist capitalism. Fundamental to the economy, the State has created the conditions for the dominant economic order legitimation, from the institutional to the individual level. Using its structural equipment, the State has granted autonomy to the economic portion of social reality. It has made everyone participate in the *illusio* (false sense of belonging to the game installed in the field) of maximising individual gains. Therefore, the magic of symbolic capital held by the State has disguised the struggles inherent in the economic field in an endowed and promoting stability law (Bourdieu, 2012, 2013, 2014).

The effects of the officialisation and certifications that the State promotes have consolidated its magic. It metaphors the "force of the law", admitted as a jurists' invention, also known as the State's nobility. Due to the disputed interests internally and in other fields, this description shows the juridical field relational attribute. In this context, the law is an adjunct to the formalisation and formation of power relations, which, in turn, are built to be the cause and consequence of symbolic domination installed in society. Law and State live an interdependence relationship because, while the latter enshrines and guarantees the state of things, the other converts this state of affairs into states of fact. The intimacy between State and law, governed by the State nobility, disguises political biases in a disinterested, unpretentious discourse that claims to privilege the general at the expense of elitist economic desires (Bourdieu, 1986, 2012, 2014).

Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 2012) is more interested in the social space in which political elites confront each other than politics. It is an environment in which participation, in terms of socialisation and social position, is unevenly distributed, revealing competition inherent to the political field. In the ongoing strategy of imposing a legitimate vision of the social world, those who have access to the policy seek to differentiate themselves by having social competence for politics and their methods of producing speeches and acts. Through this distinction, citizens are disconnected from politics and called upon to abstain from opinions or conform themselves to their representatives' decisions. Based on this scenario, Bourdieu (1981, 1993, 2014) has discussed the universe of rules, beliefs, and roles characteristic of politics by the denaturalisation of political institutions and the State itself by involving agents and strategies that speak for everyone.

## THE ENVIRONMENT SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Each culture develops its world from countless inspirations drawn from nature. This world is socialised, reorganised and transformed into a material manifestation of the social structure that depends on it and lives with it. Through its relationship with the social, nature is established as the cause and consequence of human beings' myths, rhetoric, beliefs, and

persuasions (Burch Jr., 1971). The most varied interests dedicate to apprehending natural phenomena to re-signify them as cultural objects and reinterpret them as cultural ideas (Bennett, 1976). The appropriation of the natural by the social and the cultural made nature and environment come to have definitions resulting from the socially constructed reality of the places where the debate about them occurs (Spector & Kitsuse, 1973; Taylor, 2000).

In its understanding and definition, recognising the environment as a socially constructed creation implies not accepting it as something given but as a reflection and socially constructed configuration of the world (Soja, 1989). To this end, there are negotiations, renegotiations and impositions of symbols and meanings so that the nature and the environment notions come from the social construction of reality. The symbols and cultural meanings shared in the groups translate human desires into the environment conception, which makes it possible to say that the social construction of the environment reveals the concept of the symbolic environment (Greider & Garkovic, 1994).

Symbolic environments are social constructions arising from human meanings granted to nature and the environment. It is a set of values and beliefs converted into definitions and ways interested in reducing the environment and nature to the human imagination. The symbolic environment is a cultural projection elaborated by human self-references on the notions of nature and environment. The cultural heritage of a group or a collective, based on their respective symbols, as well as their interpretations of objects and the physical conditions of nature, has the power to transform the natural environment into a symbolic environment (Greider & Garkovic, 1994; Leff, 2008; Taylor, 2000).

In this social construction of the environment, there is the imposition of the symbolic environment, a struggle between nature, the environment, culture and human beings. Men and women fight to impose and sustain an environment definition which is informative about their habits, tastes, interests, customs and behaviors. The human beings' oscillation simultaneously eases and weakens the definition of the symbolic environment since it submits the social construction of the notion of the environment to the subjectivity of the countless socioeconomic interests related to this debate (Fuchs, 2017; Greider & Garkovic, 1994; Redclift, 2014).

### **ENVIRONMENT IN DISPUTE: A SYMBOLIC CAPITAL UNDER STATE'S TUTELAGE**

The macrocosm, the socially constructed reality, represents the environment, which, in turn, is also in its respective microcosmic cuts. It is possible to affirm that the environment establishes relations, direct or indirect, with all fields of the social space and the social world.

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As the environment is an object of dispute between different fields corresponding to the State, there is, according to this interest, the organisation of incorporated structures. This characteristic makes the environment impose itself as a complex theme that motivates, in different fields, the installation of a field of power. As a result, agents and structures in various fields own, control, represent and dominate the environment. Therefore, due to the need to gather more power concerning the environment, the fields' social nature is grouped into affiliations organised by shared interests regarding the referred object of dispute. These positions, assumed as the fields of force of countless fields interested in the environment, do not peacefully coexist since the object for which they fight intervenes, voluntarily and involuntarily, in the interests of these different fields (Bourdieu, 2004, 2012; Buttel, 1987; Dunlap & Catton Jr., 1979).

All the moving, accumulated, and distributed capital that has some link with the environment will have their relative value changed in the face of fluctuations in this order. International agreements, environmental accidents, social slaughter, cultural interventions and economic crises are some examples that portray the power that the environment has to reduce the potential for domination of different types of capital, whether in an objectified or an incorporated state. Changes in the amount of currency or the exchange rate, real estate depreciation, and devaluation of publicly traded shares affect economic capital. The disseminated scientific information, the offered pedagogical orientations, and the educational debates developed on the environment subject have repercussions on incorporating cultural capital related to this theme. The appropriation, through the consumption of materials about the environment, whether in the form of books, films, documentaries, music, or scientific papers, among others, helps to objectify the cultural capital of this theme. The training, specialisations, certifications, and titles in topics related to the environment corroborate the institutionalisation of this topic's cultural capital. Environmental changes, causing different levels of uncertainty, echo over the information circulation, the materials development and consumption, and specialisations related to the environment. The impact of the relative value of cultural capital is related to this topic. Due to the controversies, it brings together, the environment encourages social integration based on simultaneously gathered and scattered relationships. These relationships are the social capital related to the environment by being recognised as resources. The dismantling and the configuration of new social relationships demonstrate the change in the relative value of social capital related to the environment (Bourdieu, 1983, 2009, 2012, 2013; Harte, 1995; Pretty & Ward, 2001).

The spaces with environmental problems represent the environment, which contains economic fluctuations, social pathologies, environmental disorders and several other issues that make up the environmental crisis. Social agents suffer the effects of this crisis and



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incorporate practices and strategies characteristic of each field involved in the dispute for the environment. Memories and experiences are deposited in bodies and structured in the minds of agents, who develop practices adaptable to the vulnerability of the power fostered by the environment. The incorporation in the body and the structuring in mind inform a habitus about the environment inculcated in the social agents, in the structures and, consequently, in the different fields that dispute this object (Bourdieu, 2001, 2009, 2011; Graumann & Kruse, 1990; Plumwood, 2005).

The habitus is the element by which action, practice and power meet themselves in the field. Therefore, the environment involves numerous categories of perception and demands an adjustment ability concerning the different scenarios that present themselves from the agents and structures. In summary, the environment demands action from agents and structures. The environment does not demand a new way of acting for each situation, but it also recognises the constant threat to any stable context. Therefore, there is certain predictability and routine in the actions performed by the agents and the structures. The more routine and similar the actions required by the environment, the greater the possibilities of them involuntarily becoming reproductions of properties from social groups and social position structures (Bourdieu, 2011; Di Chiro, 2008).

Between habitus and the social world, there is an interdependence translation by the concept of practice. The environment arises from this relationship between body, mind and the social world. For agents and structures to act concerning the environment demands, they must develop an orientation to the adjustments that will be applied, memorised and incorporated. Therefore, actions related to the environment depend on the practical sense built by agents and the structures regarding this theme. The habitus related to the environment also establishes intermediation with the structure of the relationships in which it participates. By the embodiment of the most varied fields, this mediation intends to establish a reproduction system for everything related to the environment. This reproduction system is allowed, and unquestioned installation reveals the environment submission to the symbolic power of one or more of the fields interested in this dispute. In any field, the ownership and freedom of symbolic capital guarantee the exercise of symbolic power (Bourdieu, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014; Pellow & Brulle, 2005; Radkau, 2008).

The characteristics described so far summarise that the environment: has a relationship with all fields; motivates the installation of a field of power in each of these fields; it encourages agents and structures, from the field in which they operate, to dispute it; encourages groups of agents and structures based on shared interests to respect them; intervenes in the interests of the several fields linked to it; changes the relative value of the related capital; it is incorporated in the body and structured in the mind of social agents; demands, from agents

and structures, an adjustment-oriented capacity to the different scenarios that arise; reproduces the properties of social groups and the structures of social positions supported by it; it is built by the relationship between body, mind and social world; it depends on the practical sense developed about itself by the agents and structures; and, it is submitted to the symbolic power of one or more fields interested in representing it.

These attributes demonstrate that the environment has transversality, which prevents its perception and recognition in all the positions it occupies, interferences it makes, and manifestations it causes. Due to the environment's amplitude and complexity, the agents and structures' objective apprehension fail to discern their strength, power, and exploration capacity. Such properties give the environment the status of symbolic capital since, as it is a multipositional phenomenon, different fields, using their respective agents and structures, at least know about their existence without measuring its relevance and potential impacts. Other fields see opportunities and threats that create the desire to own the environment. As many shares this interest, a dispute scenario for the environment opens. The monopoly or privileged use of ambition, and dominance competition, are qualities that consolidate the environment as symbolic capital. Like any capital, the environment turns the fields with power over it into unfair spaces, divided between dominant and dominated ones, because its distribution is not concerned with equality, equity and justice principles. Anyone who has the guarantees and requirements properly declared as relevant to their dispute is entitled to compete for this symbolic capital. The risk of this competition lies in the paradoxical aspect of symbolic capital. To grant power to those who challenge dominant interests, propose a standardised definition of the environment that threatens the logic of the fields interested in owning it, or even bureaucratise this capital to disadvantage the "naturally" privileged ones of this game. The fulfilment of requirements and precautions which justify the candidacy to its competition, its unfair distribution, and the fear of granting it to those who challenge the dominant logic reinforce the environment as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2001, 2007, 2009, 2011; Greider & Garkovich, 1994).

The qualities that make the environment a symbolic capital are: it is not perceived, and it is not recognised in all its positions, interferences and manifestations; innumerable fields know of its existence; it influences different positions in different fields; the fields want to monopolise it or have some privilege over it; it demands the supply of requirements and precautions so that candidates to have it can compete for it; it has distribution unevenly; and, it runs the risk of being made available to those who do not represent or who challenge the dominant interests. To prevent the system from delegating powers over the environment to anyone who may offer risk to the logic of installed domination, it is necessary that the authority responsible for recognising this symbolic capital and managing it be under the

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responsibility of a legitimate mode of domination with society. For this reason, the environment, as symbolic capital, is submitted under the State's tutelage.

The State defines the criteria and the guarantees to be presented by those interested in competing to access symbolic capital. The State has a monopoly on the authorised exercise of all forms of violence. It builds to those under its protection, a logical conformism sustained by blind obedience to its domination. The State uses the critical approaches to achieve a logical conformism regarding its definitions and environmental decisions by abstaining from those under its control. To this end, the State uses its social order reproduction systems and its institutions of the social construction of reality to organise how social integrations about the environment should be. The accompaniment of this symbolic order occurs through an interdependence relationship established between the State's structural apparatus of domination and those who appropriate the State. These, who are the State's representatives, determine the rules of the game, which will define who should or should not have more power over the environment as symbolic capital. What the State intends, through its respective logic of domination, is to multiply consensuses and ordinary senses about the environment in such a way that these messages shape the agents' mental structures and produce a structural social world according to the interests that the dominant ones have over this symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2012, 2014; Frank et al., 2000; Scholte, 1997).

The State, in addition to the criteria and guarantees, houses the decision favorable to the competition for the environment. There are many fields interested in possession of this symbolic capital, among which there is the field of power, the economic field, the juridical field and the political field.

Every field is a field of power, including field power. At the same time, the State is in the field of power, is the field of power and holds the field of power concerning its authority to define symbolic capitals and their respective distributions. In this field of power, the State and the ones passed by the State's endorsement have the authorisation to own symbolic capital. According to the State, those who participate in honor, position and distinctive properties essential to the dominant interests over the environment will cohabit the field of power. The elected ones are the class representatives, that is, defenders of their class' interests in the environment. However, to disguise this domination shared with the State, these class representatives negotiate with other classes at their different levels and give the impression that the made decisions prioritise the relationship between the environment and all classes. In summary, the field of power disputes the environment as symbolic capital to ensure that the current domination scheme continues to prevail for the State and the elected class representatives. Such representatives make an objective mention of their respective fields. Although instabilities occur and challenge the field of power, it tends to remain since

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it has the authority to define which capitals will provide power in other fields. The economic, juridical, and political fields stand out in this desire to share, together with the State, the field of power that holds the symbolic capital under discussion (Bourdieu, 2004, 2012, 2014; Davidson & Frickel, 2004; Goldman, 2001).

The economic field is responsible for perpetuating destructive and expansionist capitalism globally. It counts on the State's indispensable assistance since this, due to its structural strength and institutional robustness, makes the social insertion of the economy convert into an economic order. By guiding all agents to achieve maximum accumulation from their income, the State and the economic field hide the struggles of this space behind a false promise of stability. Environment, as symbolic capital, matters to the economic field due to its need to use the resource to its advantage. The economic interest in the environment has a link to the natural sources of raw material and the concern of restriction that prevents growth within the dominant parameters. Given this possible scenario, the economic field seeks to structure the agents' minds through messages that submit the environment to financial prosperity. However, by obeying the rule of inequality in the fields, the disproportionate distribution of capital is known. That is, there is a predicted concentration of much under the power of a few. In this sense, for the economic field, beyond guaranteeing raw materials and avoiding restrictions, the environment, as symbolic capital, is essential to be allocated to the possession of a few (Bourdieu, 2012, 2013, 2014; Giddings et al., 2002; Meadowcroft, 2005).

The juridical field is a State's nobility construction, which invents the notion of law and the very notion of the State. Law and State need each other, as this relationship legitimises their symbolic domination: without the seal of law, the State does not convert things into fact; and, without the guarantee of an order by the State, the law is unable to make this order a reality. The environment, as symbolic capital, is of the juridical field interest so that it may create, based on the designs shared between the State and its respective nobility, a legitimate and official notion of the environment. By possessing this symbolic capital, the juridical field aims to impose its view of the environment as a fact guaranteed by the State's order (Bourdieu, 1986, 2012, 2014; Sagoff, 2007; Wilkinson, 2005).

The political field formation contains agents and structures that consider themselves distinct from the others because they claim to have the social competence to produce discourses and act representative for everyone. The political field has the authority to impose a social worldview guaranteed by the State and legitimised by the juridical field. By simulating a generalised speech, the political field establishes a connection with the society that makes it simultaneously abstain and distance itself as much as possible from politics. The environment, as symbolic capital, is relevant to the political field because of its interest in

converting that into a symbolic instrument of the collective representation. The environment, as symbolic capital, through this partnership between the State, law and politics, is politically promoted as greater good and politically managed according to the interests of the dominant ones. The political field, in short, wishes to possess the environment as symbolic capital, to cover it with inviting discourses and acts which impose a mistaken notion of the theme and, consequently, foster a widespread departure from political issues linked to the environmental concerns (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 2012; Connelly et al., 2012; Elliott, 2004).

### **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: ABOUT THE SENSE OF THE GAME**

We have developed this theoretical essay with the aim of disserting, based on reflections from Bourdieusian sociology, about the environment as a symbolic capital disputed by specific fields corresponding to the State. We have defined the environment as a symbolic social construction conceived from shared interpretations about this macrocosmic space endowed with environmental problems. We have understood that the environment is a symbolic capital for: its existence; its manifestations, which are not always noticeable; its influence with social agents; arising a desire for monopoly in several fields; establishing competition criteria; having its distribution concentrated; and, being able to be paradoxical in the choice of its representatives. We have interpreted the State as responsible for defining attributes to be fulfilled and guarantees that must be presented by those interested in competing for the chance to access the environment as symbolic capital.

The environment, as symbolic capital, was considered to be under the State's tutelage. Countless interests lead the fields to compete for this symbolic capital: the field of power wants to guarantee that the domination scheme continues to prevail; the economic field seeks to maintain the source of raw material for the markets and to guard against possible harmful restrictions; the juridical field intends to impose a notion of this symbolic capital that the State supports; and, the political field intends to use this symbolic capital as a symbolic instrument of the collective representation. This is the scenario between the environment, the State and the fields that correspond to it in this matter.

It is a game that is only possible because the agents in the field of power, the economic field, the juridical field, and the political field attribute meaning to environmental issues, making it a disputed object. The conflict caused by the environment is within each field and between the fields interested in it. From the internal struggle of the fields, the respective dominants will measure forces among themselves to conquer a position in the field of power, whose representation belongs to the State, a great holder of the environment as symbolic capital.

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