

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF FIELD ACTIVITIES IN URBAN AREAS FOR GEOSCIENTIFIC EDUCATION**

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Selecting areas for fieldwork in so-related geological disciplines is governed by teaching conceptions, as well as science, geology and field conceptions, predominant in the involved community; by the role given to field study in curriculum elaboration and in developing abilities and educational attitudes; and by teaching fore-structures, such as access conditions, equipment, support material, costs and available cash, which are often decisive in the choice process. These fore-structures, the geological characteristics of the area and their relationship with the professor's interest subjects and with the discipline content are usually made explicit. The theoretical approaches remain as a hidden choice factor. Priority has been traditionally given to unoccupied areas bearing geological diversity and many rock outcrops. We discuss in this text how to base such a choice, defending the extension of the fieldwork conception toward urban areas as an effective strategy to: establish an investigative context for geological and technogenic processes; adopt inter-disciplinary approaches for reality analyses; develop intellectual operations which help to structure geological reasoning; establish the inter-relations between geological knowledge and present social and environmental problems; raise questions concerning current concepts and methods in geological investigation; develop abilities and desired formation characteristics, important to the geoscientist; and develop a critical and cooperative attitude. The field activities performed within the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais State (Brazil) are also discussed, and include: adopted criteria for area selection; methodology and produced materials during and after field work; students' previous representations and conceptions; and resulting conceptual and behavior changes.