

Situation

In common language, situation of an object on the Earth surface is the same as its position. In everyday use, both terms: situation and position, are used indiscriminately. They refer to reference points conventionally designated by means of an explicit reference system, namely geographical coordinates (latitude, longitude).

In geographical discourse, situation defines a relative location in space. For a given place, it is expressed with respect to that of other places whose physical or human properties may influence features of the place itself. Situation is defined through relations with neighbouring and distant environments. While position of a place is strictly determined by its geographical coordinates, definition of its situation depends on its position with respect to other similar or complementary places and thus on its position inside the different networks ensuring its relations with those places. Position of Rouen is totally defined by its geographical coordinates, while its situation results from the combination of positions it occupies on the axis of the Seine river, with respect to Parisian agglomeration, to the sea, to potential hinterland of its harbour, etc. Geographical situation may thus be assessed in terms of relative accessibility to other places. A situation will be commonly qualified as central or peripheral, contact situation, transit situation, landlocked situation, etc.

Moreover, in opposition to position, which is an intrinsic feature of a place given once and for all, situation varies over time. In open spatial systems, societies are constantly revising their assessment of potentialities of each place.

Situation is also to be distinguished from setting, which is the place, the local basis of a settlement, of an activity or of a city. The original setting of Rouen may be defined as a setting of basin bottom on a meander between the river and the concave riverbank escarpment...

See also term [interaction](#)

Bibliographie