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GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION AS A PHENOMENON OF COMMON CULTURE

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Abstract

The article discusses some aspects of the importance of Geographical education and Geography for the society and its culture. It shows the structure and some typical characteristics of knowledge, and explores the interrelation between knowledge and human potential. The place of Geographical knowledge in the present conditions of globalization and informational society is also referred to.

Keywords: Geography, society, education, culture, knowledge.

Resumo

Neste texto discutem-se alguns aspetos importantes da Educação Geográfica e Geografia para a sociedade e a sua cultura. Nele se apresenta a estrutura e algumas características típicas do conhecimento, explorando a inter-relação entre conhecimento e potencial humano. O lugar do conhecimento geográfico nas presentes condições da globalização e da sociedade informacional é também referido.

Palavras-chave: Geografia, sociedade, educação, cultura, conhecimento

Introduction

"Geography for me is something more than just a profession: it is rather a way of perception of the world."
Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier

In the remote past the object of scientific knowledge of man was the surrounding world. In that time Geography (the description of the Earth) become the base, which allowed

the emerging and development of a number of other sciences – History, Medicine, Ethnography, Physics, Astronomy.

Exactly this is the great merit of Geography and geographers.

Centuries on end science is an occupation of the separate man, imposed by the internal needs of discovering and explanation of all the phenomena of the surrounding world. Along with the changes in economic and social relations, the scientific studies results become more and more product of joint efforts, and science is perceived as a significant *factor* for social development.

The purposeful interest in the spatial factors of development, and especially in its cultural-political aspects, dates back to the remote past. Original base for the researcher's interest were the natural components, structuring the inhabitable world, and the need of acquaintance and description of the spatial political formations, mainly with military and trade purpose.

2. Scientific knowledge – factor for the social development

Three paths lead to knowledge:
the path of reflection – this is the noblest pat;
the path of imitation – this is the easiest way;
the path of experience – this is the bitterest one.
Confucius

Scientific Knowledge begins with the first attempts the world and its composite elements to be presented as comprehensible, explicable and predictable. For this purpose in the millennial civilizational development, a wide range of approaches was used, which lead to different by their subject of research, but closely interconnected scientific branches and schools.

In contemporary world science is important activity, in which some of the countries invest significant amounts of money, in order to achieve economic and social prosperity, in order to search for solutions of the significant problems of modern times, in order to provide conditions for development and upgrade of knowledge that have been amassed by the previous generations.

The tremendous progress of communications and information technologies during the last decades and the connected with it transition from industrial to information society lead to natural changes of the structure of economy and labor market, and to the formation of a new model of economic growth and development, in which a key factor is the quality of human potential.

Thus the socio-economic development emerged and in the search of methods for taking up a leading position in the world economic competition, in march 2000 the member states of the European Union adopted the Lisbon Strategy, in which they set their ambitious task to convert the Union in "the most compatible and dynamic economy in the world, based on knowledge, capable of stable economic growth, with more and better workplaces and better social integration".

Simultaneously with the formulation of this purpose the EU outlined the particular results that the member states have to achieve at the national level in the sphere of *scientific research and innovations*, and which are condition for the accomplishment of the common goal.

Jacques Delors (Delors, 1998) notes: The world educational tendencies are based on four feet:

- *to learn to know,*
- *to learn to be capable,*
- *to learn to live in unison with the others, and*
- *to learn to be*

Geographical education cannot bypass the problems, typical of the education in general, it cannot evade development in unison with the world educational trends. But in order to achieve this function, it has to overcome the existing real contradictions:

- *between traditions and contemporary trends;*
- *between universal and individual;*
- *between the immense amounts of accumulated knowledge and human capabilities to use them effectively.*

Contemporary Geography is one of the most important foundations of scientific knowledge.

The Estonian geographers U. Mereste and S. Nimick note: "The regularities in the development of science as a system of knowledge, eventually lead to internally balanced differentiation and in the same time – to unity of science."

The development of Geography has led to the separation of two major sub-fields in it: *Physical (natural) Geography and Socio-economic Geography.*

Physical Geography studies the processes and phenomena that take place in the geospheres. After its separation in XIX century, it is developing in two directions: particular (or specific) and general.

The founder of Physical Geography Humboldt writes that: "The richness of natural sciences is not in the amount of facts, but in the study of their mutual dependency", that is to say in a system. There is also interrelation and interaction between the separate geospheres, and they are caused by the access and modification of solar energy, the internal energy of the Earth and the gravitational energy.

The main object of study of Socio-economic Geography is the territorial organization of human society and its economic activity. It studies carefully the relation: nature – population – economy, in general, as well as in regional aspect.

Social Geography studies spatial dimensions of civilizational development in global, regional and local scale. Its multilayer horological nature is additionally multiplied by the equivalent significance of the chronological, historical and systematic-structural philosophical methodological approach.

Among the phenomena of complicated interaction is the impossibility for simple and indisputable designation of "this" part of the structure of geographical science. The role of determinants, in this respect, is taken by widely used terms as *social, cultural, humanitarian (humanistic) geography, anthropogeography, socio-economic, economic geography.*

A chrestomathical thesis, that's known by all the geographers, is that the base in Geography is the studying of the community of phenomena, the revelation of similarities and differences between groups, the classifications by these indications, and the development of a typology, that is to say of well-arranged scientific knowledge.

New reality brings forward the significance of *geographical knowledge*, the importance of *geographical erudition as a culture*, as a conduct, i.e. with other accents and new dimensions.

This calls for research and thorough overthinking of the achievements of geographical education in our country and, combining traditions that have preserved their value with innovations, connected with the new realities, for the formation of philosophy for its development.

The contribution of Geography to education, according to the International Geographical Education Charter, is to contribute to the main skills as mathematical, graphical, literacy, and also to the development of personal and social competence, especially for the spatial dimensions of everyday manner of life.

All the phenomena from the objective reality reflect, because reflection is a common characteristic of matter. Knowledge is a type of reflection. But only living phenomena become acquainted with reality, while non-living just reflect it.

Knowledge, in the utmost degree, is gained by people. It is one of the main types of human activity. Through knowledge people collect data (facts), process it and use it afterwards to meet their needs and interests.

Knowledge exists in different types. More important are:

- *Worldly* – it is knowledge about the surface, about the evident things, about that which can be perceived by objective senses, which can be learned from life experience.

- *Artistic* – it is knowledge, which presents, reproduces, shapes reality through artistic images, and the cognitive results are presented to us through feelings and emotions.

- *Scientific* – this is only theoretical, only consistent logical structured knowledge. It is directed to the revelation of the real regularities of phenomena form the objective reality. Its purpose is to make these phenomena predictable, recollectable, usable.

Scientific knowledge has three basic characteristics: it uses scientific categories and logical constructions, it is a subject to the requirements and rules of formal and dialectical logic as a science about thinking, uses scientific methods for examination of the objective reality.

Scientific knowledge is theoretical knowledge. It is knowledge about the essence. It generalizes, systematizes the cognition.

The most complicated scientific knowledge is the *geographical knowledge*. It has sophisticated and in a mediocre way restored (reconstructed) object of knowledge. That reflects to the scientific methods for studying that Geography uses. It forms its scientific arsenal of methods and approaches from many other sciences: sociological methods, logical methods and others.

3. Geography and Society

“Geography is such as geographers make it.”
Richard Hartshorne - "Perspective on the Nature of Geography"

Purpose of contemporary Geography is to make up a comprehension of the Earth, as for entire working system – in such a way, as an organism functions. People are part of it and Geography should help them live in the best accordance with it, without harming it. Thus it contributes to the deciding of the fate of mankind. Classical is the definition: “Geography is a science about the structure of the geographical sphere and the rules for formation, spatial distribution and development of this structure” (Bagrov, 2005, pg. 19). One of the most popular definitions is also: “Geography is a natural and social science that studies spatial differentiation of Earth’s nature, and spatial organization of society at three levels: global, regional and local.” (Bagrov, 2005, pg. 26).

On the basis of its object, Geography is thought to be holistic (about the world as a whole), horological (showing spatial relations), and chronological (because of the changes during times). It is also considered to be a transitional science, forming at the border between the natural and the social bloc of sciences, and serving as a peculiar bridge between them. Because of that, it has a potential for synthesis and integration. Its object of study is the

environment of social development (oikoumenos), that is to say geographical environment and social space, and its methodological base – the spatial (horological) principle.

In order to be determined the place of Geography today, it is very important to be defined its scientific center, that is the problem of territorial organization of society. The "triune" nature of contemporary Geography (territoriality, complexity and concreteness), should be complemented by two other characteristics: integrality and globality. The necessity to include the principle of globality is predetermined by the fact that all the contemporary global changes (energy, demographic, ecological, resource) initially reveal themselves not on the global, but on the lower geographical levels – regional and local.

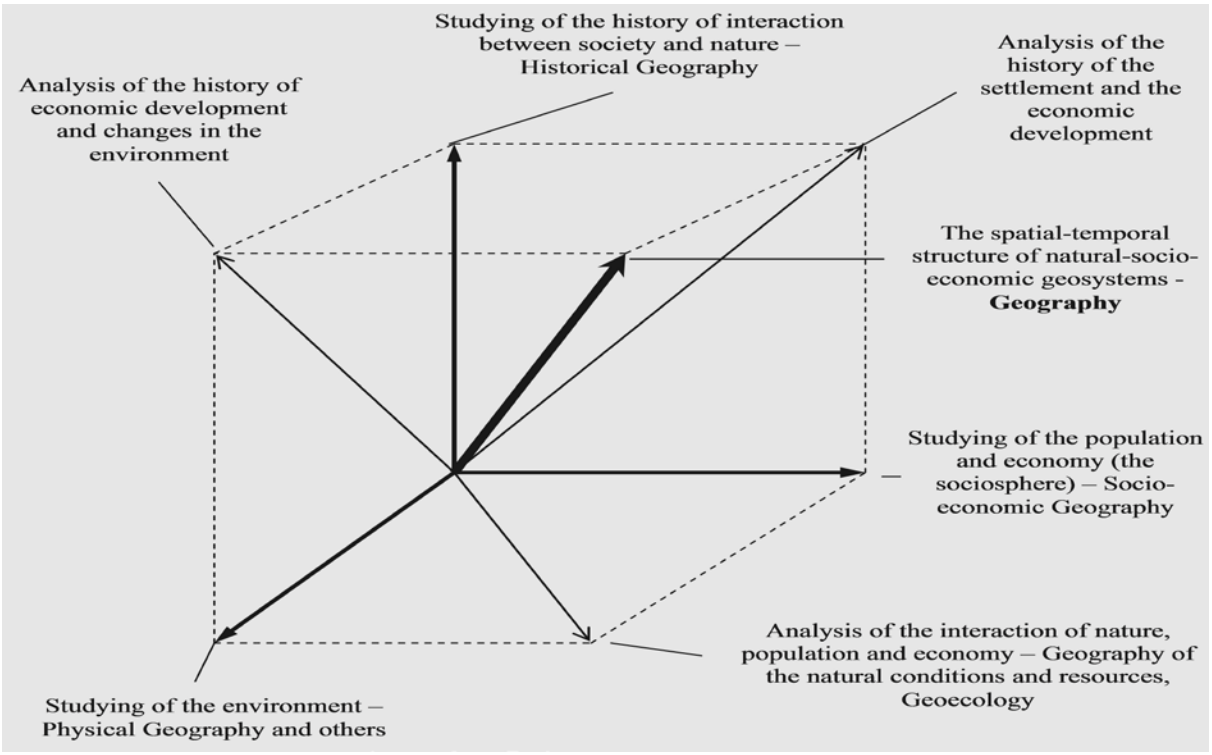

Fig.1 Logical Structure of the Trinity of Geography (Golubchik, 2005)

What actually is Geography? It is bearer of a specific cognitive approach – the spatial systematization and the search for the cause-and-effect connections, explaining spatial relations. If History studies the development of societies chronologically, Geography puts the stress on the ***space*** parameter, not as an end in itself, but as a spatial philosophy of the surrounding world.

The optimal spatial organization of the life of society, based on the depletion of resources, of human and technological capabilities in a particular country or region, is a permanent task for Geography and the connected with it applied fields.

The fundamental character of geographical knowledge is expressed in its primarity and immanence.

The pragmatics grows as a social significance, because of the fact that daily, each person, during his whole life makes ***decisions of geographical character***. A task of Geography is these decisions to be conscious, not intuitive.

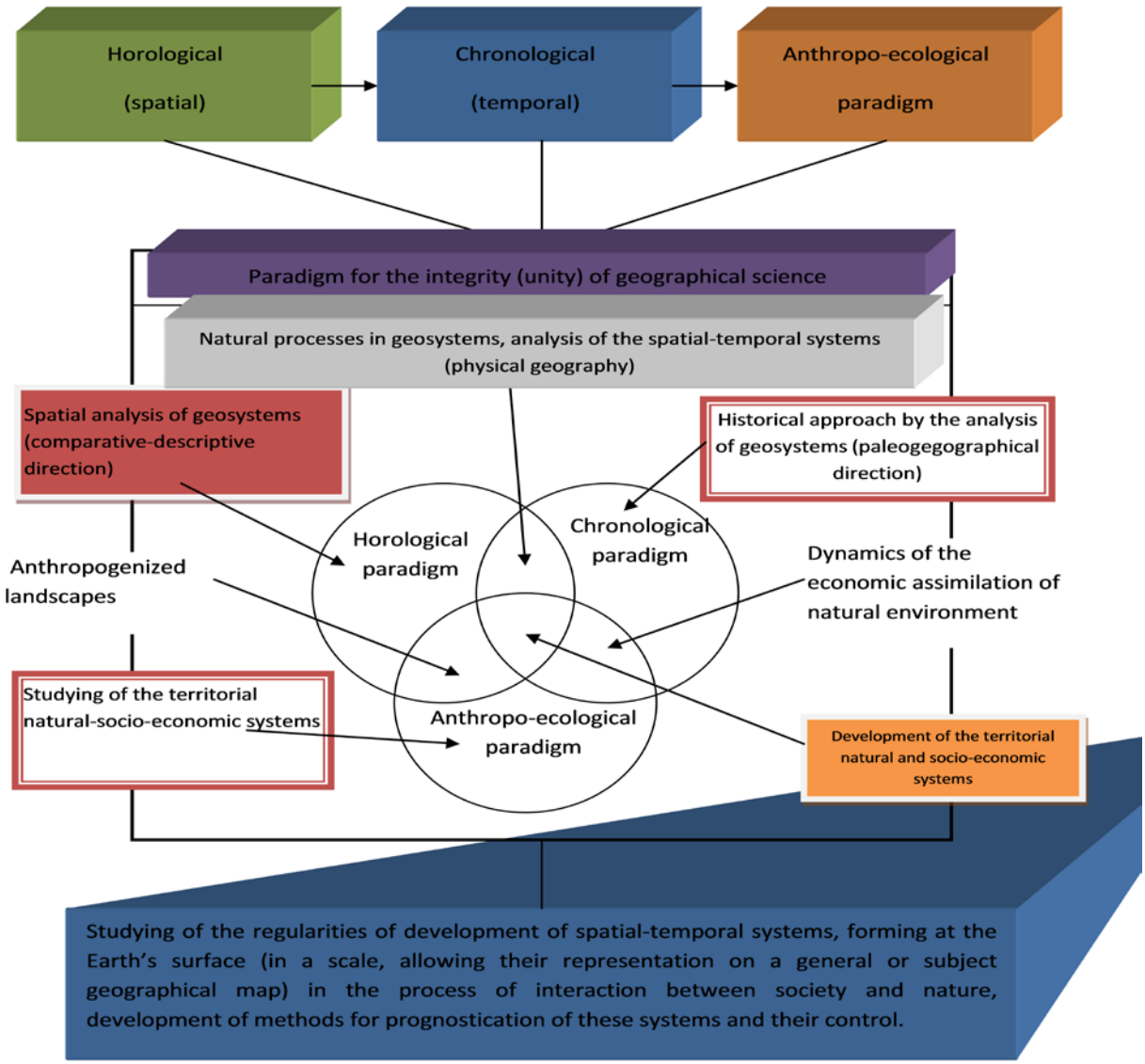

Fig. 2 A conception of the Integrity of Geography (Golubchik, 2005)

In that sense its logical center moves from the entireness in the system of scientific knowledge (related mainly to the geographical image of the world), to the formation of ***geographical culture*** as a goal and expected result.

According to the dictionary, the potential is: "A combination of the needed means, sources and others for the realization of a particular objective, which are ready to be used." (http://rechnik.info).

In the dictionary of synonyms, it is compared to the terms – strength, power, capacity, capability, resources.

We would make a balanced list of **educational potential** in the following fields, necessary for:

- personal realization and development in life ***(cultural potential)***: the key competencies should give the people chance to achieve their personal aims, created by their personal interests, intentions and desires for learning during the whole life;
- active civic attitude ***(social potential):*** the key competencies should give everyone the possibility to participate as an active citizen in society;
- professional realization (employment) ***(human potential)***: the capacity of every person to get a good job at the labor market.

In "Geography of the Story" by Barry Lopez (Lopez, 2009, published on http://granta.bg) is specified: "And because I believe in the metaphorical strength of Geography, in the capability of "Physical Geography" to operate with what man have built, as much as "Cultural Geography" to explain most esoteric ideas, such as the atomic structure, I feel free to use the phrase "Geography of the story", to note not only one, but two things. First, that the details of the natural history of a particular area can serve as a matrix for a story, not worse than other conception systems, as psychology for instance; and second, that the good story has a consecutively developed and integrated geography, in which separate elements of the text interact with one another in a natural way".

Geographical knowledge has the capability to satisfy different needs, that is to say in its characteristics and interactions it has and shows a value aspect.

The contemporary development of the geography-society relation is impossible without its sociologization. That presumes reformation of Geography in structural and contextual aspect, which provokes the necessity of stressing on some spheres of activities:

1. Analysis of the global problems of society from the geographical point of view.
2. Stressing on the problems of the Geography of world culture and civilizations.
3. A comparative characterization of the questions of the world science and education.

4. An objective assessment of the world ethnical and religious space through explanation of the genesis and nature of a number of processes as a territorial range and transformation, buffer zones or conflict zones, homogeneity and heterogeneity of the types of space, alteration and influence of ethnoses and religions on the rate and range of social processes.
5. Characterization of the main values and the way of life in the contemporary world (introvert and extrovert psycho-geographical behavior, feeling of nationality or marginalization, individualism or collectivism and so on).
6. Analysis of the nature and display of the process of globalization, parallel to the characterization of the national state.

4. Geography and education

"The great objective of education – that's not professions, but actions" Ivan Batakliev (Batakliev, 1937) notes that "…the school is obliged to: make the student acquainted with the ***natural and social environment***, in which he lives and works; to cultivate in him habits for ***scientific thinking and critical attitude*** to everything; to cultivate in him independence, initiative and social feelings…" (Batakliev, 1937, pg. 16). He works out some of the ***essential characteristics*** of Geography. According to him, it "helps for the creation of the ability of ***prognostication and hope***… Geography helps for the development of the ***searching spirit***, instigates ***discoveries***. Later on, it contributes in great extent for the development of ***mind, of thinking***… The main features of the educational significance of the new Geography are in the fact that geographical education is received not only by memory, but also by ***reasoning***. Geographical education should create in students ***geographical culture*** and habit of geographical reasoning, which leads to logical ***thinking***" (Batakliev, 1937, pg. 18).

Referring to Penk, Ivan Batakliev writes: "Students have to study not only what Germany comprises of, but also ***what people created*** in it. If the Dutch say "God created the sea, and we created the coasts", then the German may say: "God created space, and the Germans made Germany out of it" (Batakliev, 1937, pg. 20).

The contents of education and educational activity are possible sources of "provocation" and formation of interest. The study of continents and oceans is connected with the acquaintance of ***countries and regions***, of peoples and cultures. The richness of the factological material and the diversity of single concepts are combined with the development of the concrete-graphical and causal thinking, with the mastering of skills for logical memorizing. Each new chapter and topic rouses interest in students, cause curiosity and desire for knowledge of the manner of living of people around the world, and the

characteristics of unknown natural objects. The preservation and development of the shown interest, its transformation into permanent characteristic of the educational activity of the student, depends in a great extent on the teacher, on his pedagogical mastery.

The studying of Natural Geography, of the natural outlook of the Earth, means mastering of educational contents of theoretically-generalizing character. The knowledge that can be distinguished by higher levels of complexity and abstractness is harder to be acquired, but its comprehension contributes to the explanation of a number of processes, phenomena, regularities, which surround us and can be seen in the world around us.

The recognition of laws of nature, controlling the development of natural objects, phenomena, and processes, is very important for everyday life and for the practical activity of people.

Exactly the practical-applicable value of knowledge, the significance of global processes and phenomena for the life and activity of man, is a possible direction for the provocation of interests. Another possibility is the inclusion of ecological problems. The questions of preservation of natural environment, of the rational usage of natural resources, suppose discussions, analysis, assessment, speaking, that is to say an active participation in educational activity, and this reflects favorably on cognitive interests.

The studying of ***the world space in global and regional aspect*** is typical for the course in Geography and Economics. Having in mind the tendency to economization of the geographical education, it is necessary a number of economic concepts to be comprehended and realized, of common production processes, of special features and peculiarities of economic policy. The permanent mastering of knowledge is facilitated by the engaging of the problematic approach, which during studying is favorably combined with age characteristics: stronger developed abstract thinking, capabilities to make general conclusions, theoretical realization and assessments, formation of models of overall behavior and activity, personal interest in socio-political life. The problematization of education engages emotionally and intellectually, which leads to the showing of interest.

The mastering of ***knowledge about the home country and place*** increases the intellectual and emotional activity, because it is directly connected with geographical reality, in which the person lives. Knowledge of the close, surrounding us objects and phenomena is interesting, because in many cases it is sensuously perceptible and practically applicable. Cognitive interests are stimulated by actualization of educational contents through the usage of various methods of education, by including them in educational activity.

An important condition for the realization of critical thinking in geographical education is the educational contents. It is characterized by wide coverage, complexity, actuality and treats global problems of the development of the system: natural environment – man –

society. It provides a good instructive base for the application of critical thinking about the problems of nutrition of the population, environmental protection, shortage of resources in the conditions of globalization and sustainable development, for the settling of regional racial and ethnical conflicts, for identification of the causes of different natural risks, for the overcoming of the consequences of the demographic problem, for discussion of the contemporary socio-economic and political events. Geographical educational contents help for the realization of personal civil responsibility and provoke the need for taking right decisions.

Of especially great interest are the challenges of our time, defined in the International Charter on Geographical Education: dynamics of the population, the problem of food provision and famine, migrations and urbanization; diseases, crime, inequality between sexes; disappearance of plant and animal species, deforestation, erosion of soils and expansion of deserts; natural disasters; toxic and radioactive wastes; atmospheric pollution; pollution of waters; global warming of the climate ("greenhouse effect"); ozone holes; depletion of resources; land usage; ethnical conflicts, separatism; globalism.

All of these problems are connected with Geography. Conflicts that they create are challenge to geographical education and give the opportunity to arise hope, belief and ability to work for a better world.

However, it is necessary to note that in Bulgarian schools is studied the subject, not the science Geography. The studying of the scientific base of Geography in universities suppose an adequate reaction, concerning the contemporary natural, socio-economic, cultural and geopolitical processes, which taking place in particular times, put the base of the cyclic historical run, characterized by high extent of regularity.

The superstructural character of such a type of knowledge increases the educational potential of Geography. Its actuality makes Geography not only explanatory-theoretical, but also practically-applicable science. And its sociologization pushes it in the sphere of multilayered scientific interrelations, leading to the arranging of accents. Thus academic Geography strongly needs thorough philosophical look towards the traditional global problems of society, as well as to the realization of the nature and display of the entire globalization process and a number of its forms – globalism and regionalism, liberalism and communitarianism, intercultural dialogue and world terrorism, multiculturalism and individual pragmatism, protectionism and world economy, and so on.

The professor in political sciences in the Sorbonne Pierre Birnbaum (Birnbaum, 2008), contrary to the statements of the German philosopher Herman Cohen, who divides nationalism to "western" and "eastern", makes out another classification – "state" and "cultural". Where are the differences between the two types of nationalism hidden? The answer is in his book "Geography of hope", 2008, published by the University of Stanford.

The first one, writes Birnbaum, is created by capitalism; the second one is successor to the eternal tradition of patriotism. The first one is reaction to the antinational power of world networks. The second one has always existed and because of that there is hope, that it will go through capitalism, even globalization.

In the condition of contemporary neorevolutionism grow the germs of cultural ecology, especially the relations culture – civilization – progress, religion – politics – Geography, Political Geography – Geopolitics – Electoral Geography and so on.

In the International Charter on Geographical Education are differentiated three classes of goals: ***knowledge and comprehension, skills, relations and values.*** Among the presented skills are those of taking of decisions, sorting out of problems, cooperative teamwork, demonstration of the corresponding behavior in concrete situations. Emphasized is the significance of Geography for education in the spirit of *internationalism, environmental protection and development.*

Geographical knowledge is in the base of the perception of the world. It influences significantly the style and the practical activity of every man, especially in the cases, in which they are personally important. Every man, daily, and everywhere, during his whole life solves three problems on everyday life, state or global level:

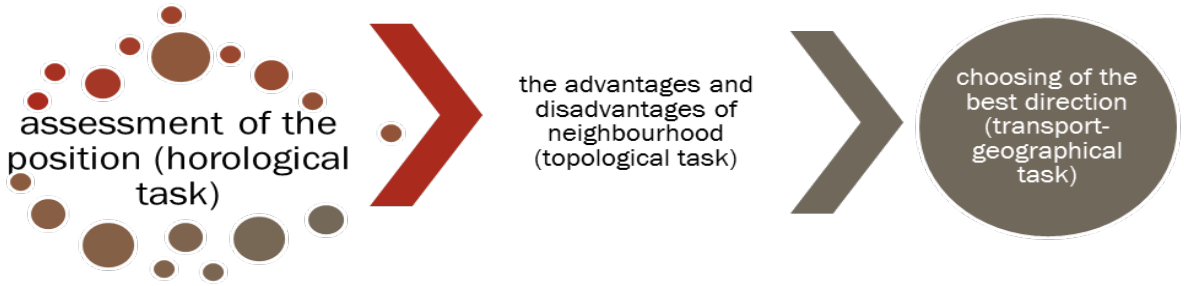

Fig. 3 - Geographical knowledge and the perception of the world.

Some may think that this is insufficiently, but is it more or less to be able to calculate fraction numbers, or square root in the times when some people use a calculator to compute 2 + 2?

Is it less to know the Maxwell's principle (*about the separation of molecules by speed and energy*) or the Le Chatelier's principle (if in a balanced system is exerted external

influence, such changes occur in it, trying to minimize the external influence), when you would hardly ever need to use them in your life?

Is it more or less to know exotic plants and animals, when you have the chance to visit a zoo or at the worst an internet site?

The basic geographical knowledge can be presented in the following way:

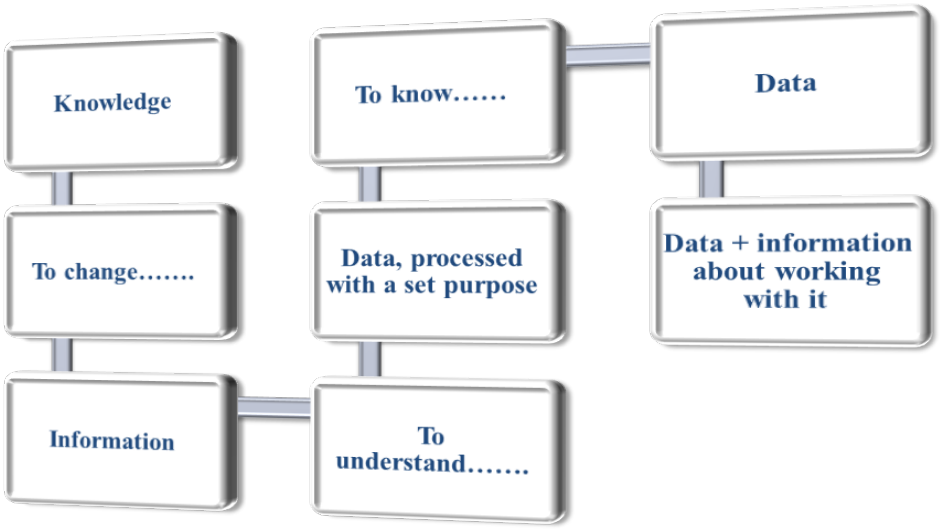

Fig. 4 - The basic geographical knowledge (Dermedzhieva, 2001, pg. 46).

Very accurate is the statement of the English philosopher Francis Bacon: "***knowledge is equal to power***".

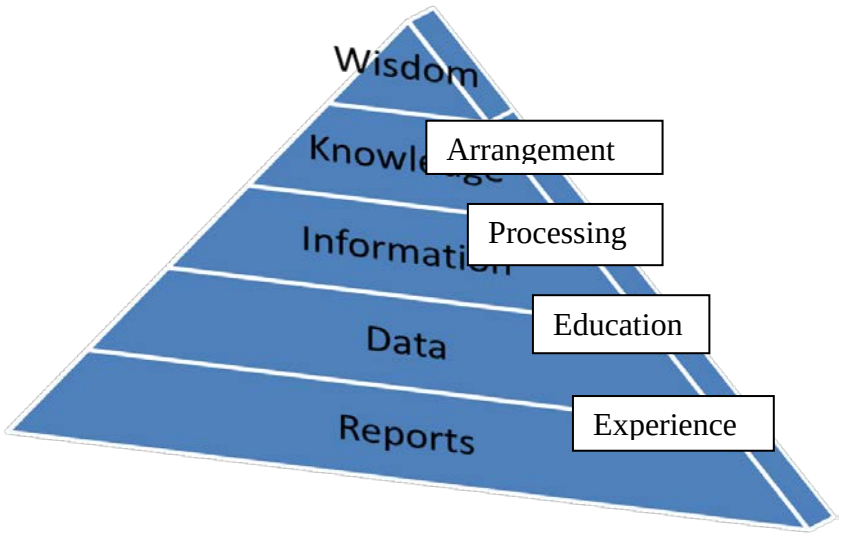

Fig. 5 Codification of concealed knowledge (Dermendzhieva, 2010, pg. 67)

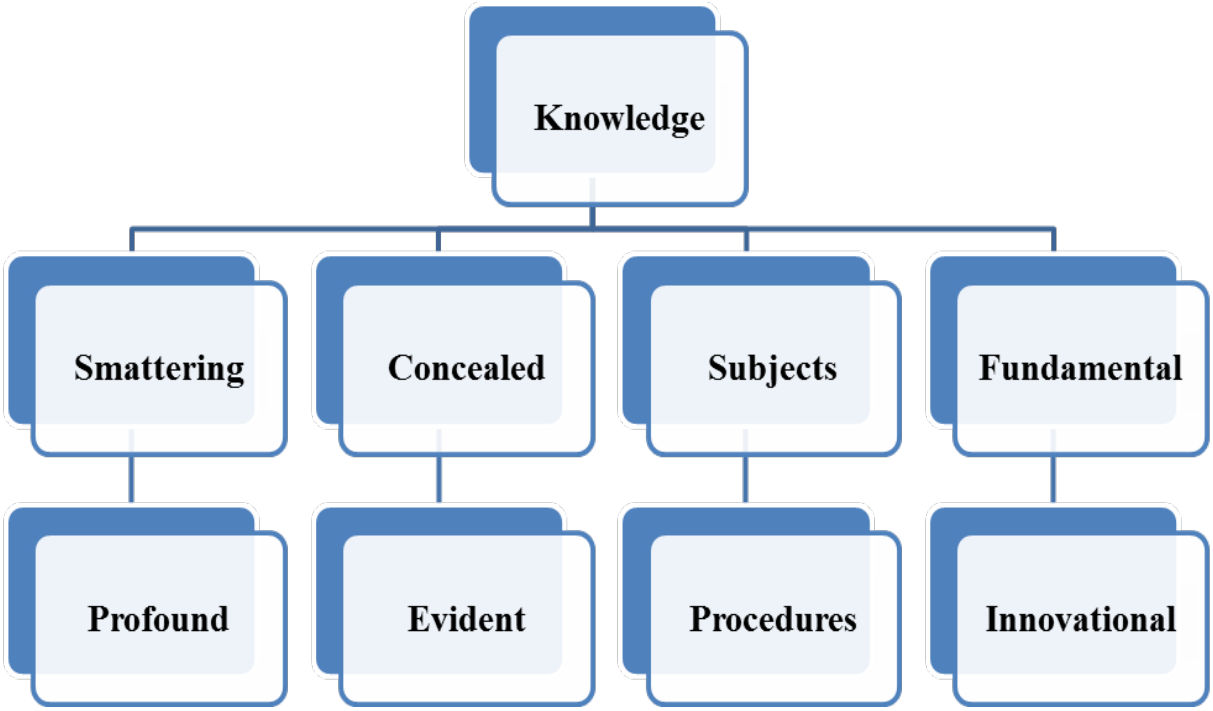

Fig. 6 - Pyramid of knowledge (Dermendzhieva, 2010, pg. 89)

The introduction of modern technics of education, the invasion of modern technologies in the educational process (information and communication technologies), the world globalization and the complication of the problems of man and society, impose new, modern methods of education.

One of the most important conditions refers to the goals and priorities of the contemporary education system. They are directed to personally-orientated education and needs of specific qualities related to skills:

- for adaptation to the changing ***life situations***; for self-dependent mastering of knowledge and its application for the settling of various problems; for critical thinking while dealing with vital problems through the usage of modern technologies;
- for generation of ideas and creative thinking; for realization of various contacts and communicativeness with different social groups, in different fields and situations;
- for development of personal intellect, moral and culture.

Education stands up against the necessity to form, develop and stimulate the interest to the educational content and educational activity. The activation of cognitive interests is condition for overcoming of alienation and reluctance to study, for acceptance of knowledge

as a way of building of the necessary qualities of the person in contemporary world – awareness, rich culture, creative initiative.

5. Geographical thinking and the globalization of society

"There is a principle, which is an obstacle in front of every knowledge, an argument against each reason, and inevitably destines man to ignorance – this is the advantage of self-confidence over searching."
Herbert Spencer

The spatially-temporal dynamics of present days imposes ***geographical culture*** as an important component of the common one. It is determined by V. Maksakovsky in a broad sense as "necessary for every citizen of contemporary civilizational society", (Maksakovsky, 2007, 386) although there is no unanimous position on the contextual range of the concept. It is perceived as the main goal of geographical education".

Geographical culture is accepted as a ***method for transformation*** of geographical environment, as well as people setting up the geographical values. It is in the ***base*** of structuration of educational contents of contemporary geographical education. It has the task to build the ***mental*** peace of everyone and to incorporate it to the ***values*** of world civilization, to form the character as a person, resident of the Earth, person-citizen, person-creator, person-explorer, person with high moral culture.

Geographical culture in the informational society of XXI century as a "part of the common culture ***for understanding and reasonable activity in geographical space***" – real and (or) cyberspace, actually is ***geographical informational (digital) culture*** and means "the extent of individual ***perfection at work*** with the necessary geographical information: *receiving, decoding, preserving, processing, systematization, creation of new knowledge, its transmission as information and its practical usage*".

The problem about ***geographical thinking*** isn't new, but it remains actual and leading in teaching. That is because of the high extent of abstraction, while revealing significant features of thinking on one hand, and because of the complicity of following up the interrelations of the highest rank, as between intellect and skills, on the other.

The search for correlation between these two basic segments of human mentality turns into practical base for bringing out the regularity, that through the development of geographical thinking one can influence the common ***intellectual level***.

Geographical conceptions shouldn't be memorized, but studied, to be ***understood*** and to stimulate thinking. Geography represents systematical examination of ***ideas and***

problems, rational searching of truths, strenuous effort to get into the world. This puts too complicated tasks and requirements to its teaching.

In educational practice appeared the principle of humanitarian pedagogy, directed not to the formation of personality, but to its free creative development. This idea, in the context of the globally developing world, is closely related to the perception of rising collision in the relations of the system "human – society – nature".

Never, until now, have humankind realized so clearly that the belief in supremacy over nature is an illusion; that the discovering of the way to the Cosmos would not solve the problems of the population which only for one generation increased 2,5 times, that the Planet may not bear the strenuous burden, result from human activity. It hasn't realized that the avoiding of global catastrophe is possible only with the joint and coordinated actions of all the scientific fields, on all the levels of studying, creative work and discovering.

At this moment greater public recognition gets the idea that one of the indicators of progress of our society may and must be the combination of natural resources potential, which we as society are ready to hand down to our successors, and the capability to provide stable and sustainable development of natural processes and appropriate environment for habitation. In this context is the necessity of education connected with the global problems of modern times. And that logically corresponds to the idea of "geographical" realization of the processes of social development and finding of creative solutions for natural development and progress.

Geography has a leading role for the solving of many of the **world problems of mankind**. There is no other science, which can connect the results of all the other sciences so well, and to direct them to the solving of common problems, concerning the whole planet. Such problems are the changes in climate, the depletion of natural resources of the Earth, the overpopulation, the decreasing of soil fertility and many others. Because of this, Geography has a leading role in the studying and solving of the global problems of mankind.

The success in the development of a science is closely connected with the importance it has, and for the development of the particular country, that is to say it is of ***national significance***. Especially important is the usage of geographical knowledge in difficult situations – recovering after natural disasters, military, political or economic crises. Geographical studies have important place for the taking of decisions of national importance, concerning the best way of using of national resources; the prognosis of consequences of the building of different types of technical equipment; the improvement of transport, economic and communication connections between the separate regions, and many others.

And is the ***individual*** Geography less significant for the life of man?

We can't leave behind a unique characteristic of Geography – it is natural, but in the

same time it is also a social science, which bridges the natural environment and the material, and mental environment, created by man. This dualism of Geography facilitated its deep differentiation, which left behind the processes of internal scientific integration.

All the events that take place in society have geographical dimensions. The necessities of man of geographical knowledge have been changing; the functions of Geography as a science have also been changing.

Today the mankind have a lot of important practical tasks to deal with, in order to make life better, as in the same time preserve its home – the planet Earth. Geography successfully helps in these efforts.

6. Geographical image of the world in the informational society

"Don't believe in form. Believe in contents. Look for Geography where no one supposes it may be. Look for it even in yourself!"

V. Maksakovsky

The final result of the development of geographical knowledge is the geographical image of the world – one of the most common concepts in Geography.

What actually is included in the concept of "***scientific image of the world***"? It is perceived as a systematized and whole idea of the world in the form of combination of fundamental conceptions of contemporary science, which have practical, as much as theoretical and philosophical significance. Parallel to the common scientific image of the world exists separate particular science images.

Universally accepted is the fact that the scientific image of the world is nothing else but a picture, and being such it is subjective, that is to say it depends on the level of knowledge of the world as a whole. The image as a picture is only a part, an element of the view of life, under which we understand knowledge of the world, supplemented by orientation of values, principles, positions. The different generations of people have different geographical image of the world. It is peculiar and multilateral. It is a whole perception of the planet in its spatial-temporal unique definiteness.

V. Preobrajensky (Preobrajensky, 1986) states: "The geographical image of the world is not just a combination of continents and people, of world and man; it is realization of the place of man in the world. The future is in that."

Geographical space is a key concept for geographical science, which changes its form and content. The nature of geographical space now is multilateral and multiaspect.

Within the framework of geographical space important role has territory, which serves as peculiar environment, as well as complex resource and operative basis.

Territory determines the other more particular geographical objects, characterized from the point of view of territorial division, density, equality of distribution, geographical position. Besides this, territory unites objects (through the relations between the last, between the objects and the territory itself) in types of taxons. In their nature simple and complex geographical objects characterize territory; they "saturate" it with different qualities and indications, for instance resource availability, extent of assimilation.

Undoubtedly determinative indication is the quality as an operational basis of the activity of mankind and life in general.

Besides this, the "spatial" resource of territory has the quality to serve as a "focus" of many other resources, discovered as well as potential.

Many of the contemporary geographers, relying on the fact that "assimilated" territory is an object of Geography, approach to it as an analysis of a geosystem.

The whole bloc of geographical knowledge is now in the bosom of geoinformatics and GIS-technologies.

In contemporary society the information that is used for the revealing of the objective relation between phenomena and processes, has twofold quality. It can be an important resource, actively influencing and determining one or other particular situation in the development of territory. And in the same time the informational environment itself can be an object of geographical research, new modern knowledge. In other words, we have to be ready for the fact that geographical space, representing the objective fundament of Geography, can be gradually displaced by informational space.

According to Jacqueline Garnier "the sphere of the interests of the geographer - this is the immediate surrounding world, which not only enriches its experience through the necessary information, but also inspires it".

Fig. 7 Informational potential (Bagrov, 2005)

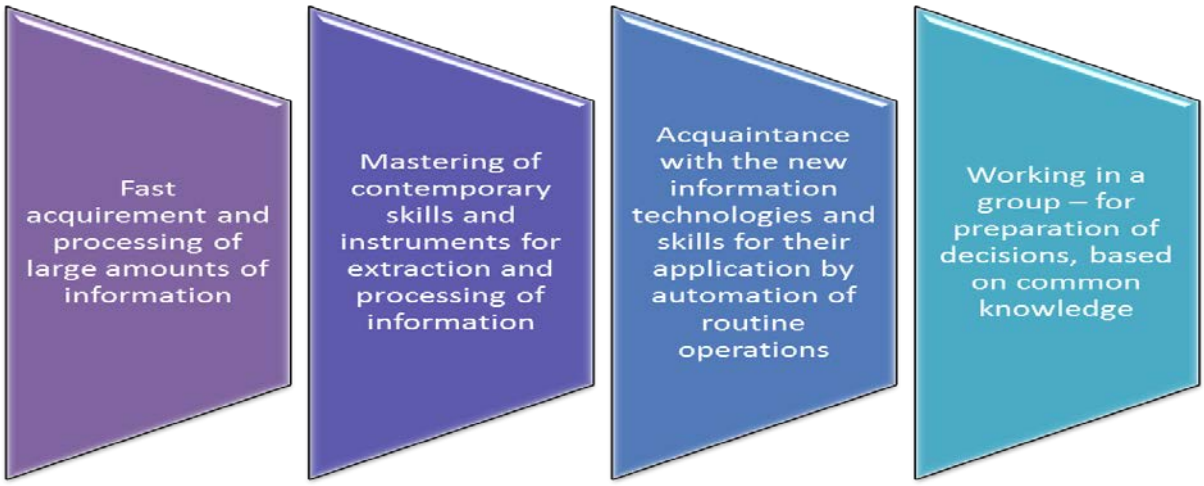

Fig. 8 Typical characteristics of informational culture (Bagrov, 2005, pg. 63)

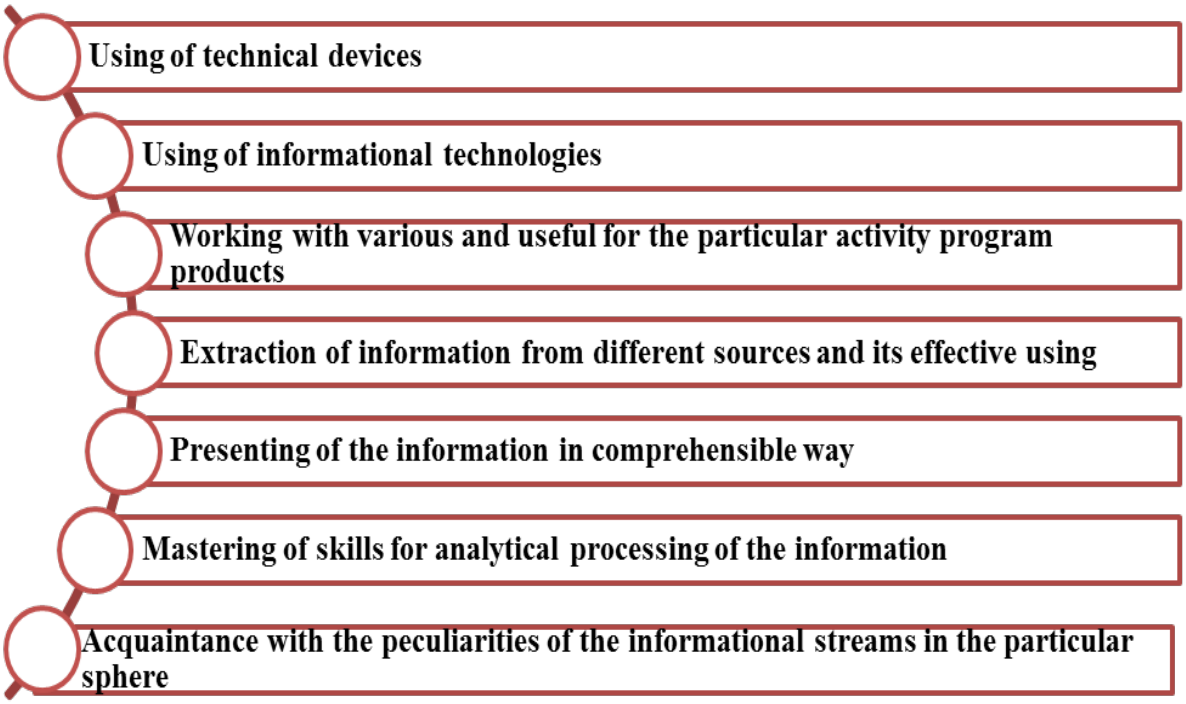

Fig. 9 Skills, connected with informational culture

D. Armand (Armand, 1975) writes: “It is possible for the generations to witness the origin of Informational Geography, dealing with description of the accessibility of population to different means of mass and professional information, informational receptivity of population, informational security of schools. The dividing of the Earth surface into districts will take place according to such grounds, we do not have any idea of now.”

In his exceptionally interesting book “Geography of Bliss” the American journalist Erick Weiner (Weiner, 2012) gathers culture, geopolitics, psychology and provokes inevitable excitement in the reader. *Is there any relation between where exactly on the geographical map are we and our happiness, and can happiness be measured by numbers?*

Traveling around the world, the author tries to find the answer to the question “Where exactly are people happiest?” Visiting different countries (Holland, Switzerland, Iceland, Moldova, Bhutan and others) and coming across different cultures, meeting different people, he makes the conclusion that wherever you are, there is no such a thing as personal happiness, because happiness is always interwoven at 100% with other people, and we have to rejoice it and appreciate it.

Conclusion

So, diving deep into the geographical science or irresponsibly wading along the coasts of the vast geographical ocean, we get to the conclusion that: “There is no path. Man makes the path by himself, while he walks.”

Because if Pierre Birnbaum writes about Geography of hope, we emphasize on the necessity of hope in geographers. Without it, there is no light. There is no path.

Let us finish with the insights of the great wise man Confucius: “If you give man a fish, you will feed him for a day, but if you teach him to catch fish, you will feed him for a lifetime.”

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