

A MODEL OF RESEARCH PROJECT IN THE EDUCATION IN GEOGRAPHY OF THE BALKAN STATES

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Abstract

Geography, as a subject interprets the knowledge about the Balkans too stereotypy. Using the “common-general” approach in the studying of Europe, a fragmentariness is achieved with a clearly distinguished superiority of the natural-geographical characterization. The problematic areas, so typical for the region, which are object of study of Geography as a science, are only mentioned or missing at all. The interdisciplinarity as a potential for the formation of overall ideas is formal.

When we choose a model, we conform to certain criteria, among which traditions and innovations that preserved their value, global development trends, topical competences in young people.

Under a model most generally we understand a definite construction, in which we include some characteristics of the modeled object, but in the same time here are included some parts of our experience and thinking. Through the model we aim not only to cover as much as possible aspects of the studied object, but also with its help to discover such qualities of the object, which are new to us. Thus the model represents means for reaching presumable and possible truths.

The main questions, that are significant for the development of the present model, are: what is the internal logic of the regional socio-economic Geography – the Geography of the Balkan States; which are its main problems, the main key words showing the educational map, which can be made up; how to solve the dilemma between that, which is classical, which can be accepted as universal, necessary, basic, and that, which is marginal, although important, which can be considered as a novelty, which represents a hypothesis; with the help of which skills would it be realized: through stimulation to individual work, actualization of their experience and creation of conditions for its enrichment, through coping with problems and so on.

Keywords: Geography of the Balkan States, model, research project.

Resumo

A Geografia, como disciplina, interpreta o conhecimento sobre os Balcãs de uma forma demasiado estereotipada. Usando a abordagem "common-general" utilizada no espaço europeu, obtem-se uma visão fragmentada mas com uma superioridade claramente distinta da caracterização natural geográfica. As áreas problemáticas, tão típicas da região e objeto de estudo da Geografia como ciência, são apenas mencionadas ou falham por completo. A interdisciplinaridade constitui, pois, um potencial para a formalização de ideias base.

Quando escolhemos um modelo, este obedece a determinados critérios, entre os quais as tradições e inovações que preservaram o seu valor, as tendências globais de desenvolvimento e as competências temáticas existentes nos jovens.

Sob um modelo mais geral, nós estabelecemos uma construção definitiva, na qual incluímos algumas características do objeto modelado, mas ao mesmo tempo também incluímos algumas partes da nossa experiência e pensamento. Através do modelo visamos cobrir, tanto quanto possível, aspectos do objeto estudado, mas também descobrir as qualidades do objeto, que são novas para nós. Assim, o modelo representa meios para alcançar presumíveis verdades.

As principais questões que são importantes para o desenvolvimento do atual modelo, são: qual é a lógica interna da geografia socio-económica regional - a Geografia dos Estados dos Balcãs; quais são os seus principais problemas, as principais palavras chave que evidenciam o mapa educacional que se pode construir; como resolver o dilema entre essa metodologia, que é clássica, que pode ser aceite como universal, necessária, de base, com o que é marginal, embora importante, que pode ser considerado como uma novidade e que representa uma hipótese; com que metodologia poderia ser realizado: através da estimulação de trabalho individual, a atualização da sua experiência e a criação de condições para o enriquecimento dos jovens, pretendendo-se a capacidade de lidar com os problemas.

Palavras-chave: Geografia dos Estados dos Balcãs, Modelo, Projeto de pesquisa.

1. Introduction

Geographical education has the potential to form correct eyesight for the uniqueness, globality and the internal relations and interdependence in the system "man – nature – society", which has the same basic characteristics and shares the life in our planet. Imposing synonymous resolutions, it stresses upon the uniqueness of human experience, the cultural diversity and the long history of communication between the different groups and communities.

Where is the role of Geography as a science and educational subject in the building of personalities, capable to adapt flexibly to the different social roles and having skills for adequate reactions to the dynamic processes of modern times?

The answer to this question is not simple. Its reproduction in the different stages of the organization of geographical education is multispectral. Synonymy may be searched only in the fact, that Geography (together with the other disciplines from educational field "Social Sciences and Civic Education") has a leading role in the development of students' social culture and in the realization of the civic mission of education.

Through acquiring of the most valuable achievements of social cognition, students get prepared for better orientation, adaptation and realization at contemporary realities; they develop their abilities for active civil participation in social life in the conditions of cultural diversity and globalization.

In ancient times the Balkans were one of the cradles of civilization. The Balkan Peninsula occupies the southernmost part of Europe and is situated in the close proximity of Asia and Africa. This contributes for its transformation from ancient times into a crossroad among the three continents and to go through stormy and crucial events in its history.

The history of relations between states on the peninsula is full of separations, contradictions, claims and submission to foreign for the region interests. The particular conditions in the geographical structure, the historical development and ethnic structure of the population of the Balkan Peninsula have led to composition of a combination of typical features, specifying the image of residents of this region. The Balkans are a crossroad of cultures. Their position on the peninsula makes them accessible for different influences – economic, political and social. These influences are refracted through the living conditions and the conception of the world of heterogeneous ethnic groups.

In their development Balkan states differ from one another in political, economic and military aspect. Their interrelations are influenced by historical and geographical factors. The Balkans as a territorially differentiated category is a multidimensional concept.

Contemporary Social Geography focuses on the key problems such as: the ethno-cultural image of population and the complicated historically inherited relations with different peoples outside the region; using of the potential for economic development through optimal using of the proximity to states from the Near East, the Arabian world and the Mediterranean lands; further integration of the Balkan states in regional and European scale.

In what extent and how does school Geography respond adequately to the necessities for formation of an overall image of the Balkans, which is called to introduce that element of preserved awareness for belonging to particular space, without which man could not exist completely?

Geography as a school subject in the Bulgarian secondary school interprets the knowledge about the Balkans too stereotypy. Using the "common-general" approach in the studying of Europe a fragmentariness is achieved with a clearly distinguished superiority of the natural-geographical characterization. The problematic areas, so typical for the region, which are object of study of Geography

as a science, are only mentioned or missing at all. The interdisciplinarity as a potential for the formation of overall ideas is formal.

Parallelism in the studying of Europe and the Balkan Peninsula (Fig. 1):

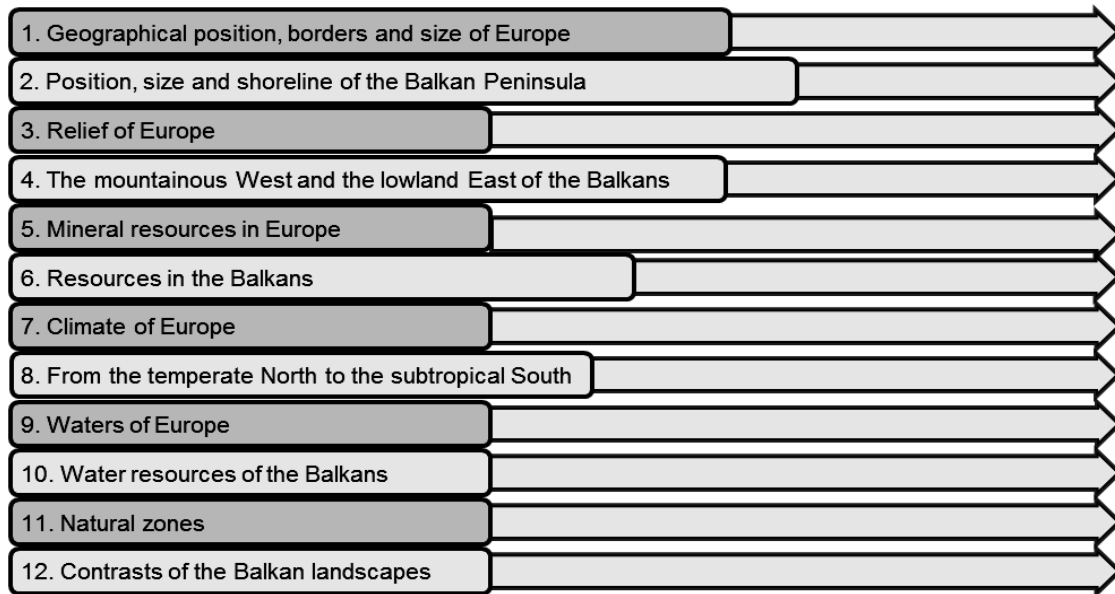


Fig. 1 – Problematic fields in the studying of Geography of the Balkan Peninsula

2. The Model

When we choose a model, we conform to certain criteria, among which traditions and innovations that preserved their value, global development trends, topical competences in young people (Dermendzhieva, 2001, 2010). Under a model most generally we understand a definite construction, in which we include some characteristics of the modeled object, but in the same time here are included some parts of our experience and thinking. Through the model we aim not only to cover as much as possible aspects of the studied object, but also with its help to discover such qualities of the object, which are new to us. Thus the model represents means for reaching presumable and possible truths.

The model includes natural characteristics – attributes of the model of education in Regional Socio-economic Geography. In its development we use as a basis flexible structure, founded on determinate strategy and developed in horizontal and vertical plan.

Answering the question ***“In what conditions, and at what level of education could the research project be used?”*** we have to note this, which:

- represents an environment for action (for realization of different activities);

- treats students and teachers as personalities;
- covers the current level of development of students on the background of the travelled road of life, as it aims to understand the logic of this road;
- includes the level of professional expression of teachers on the background of their road of life, looking for the logic of this road (as well as on the background of the current socio-cultural context), or in other words – “the path of the teacher” as one of the threads of the road of life, and not only as a professional role.

The created program-model could be regarded as a scenario which should be entirely realized (Dermendzhieva, 2001, 2010). It doesn't restrict the creative work of the teacher and is regarded as an indicator for students, as a peculiar type of cognitive map, a type of staging, an axis around which will be concentrated the activity of teacher, students and their teamwork. This way the independently created model instigates internal motivation for work, amplifies the personal engagement, strengthens stability against difficulties, but brings danger of rejection of other ideas, created on other principles, recognizing different value systems.

The realization of this model of education consists of two points of view:

1. The creation of this program-model (from this point of view is important the level of cognitive competency of teacher, his knowledge, recognition of different ideas, comprehensions, theories, his readiness to use consultations from specialists in the particular field and to cooperate);
2. The realization of the program-model (from this point of view is important the level of methodical competency, connected with the skill to arouse interest with the material he teaches, to include them in the teamwork).

The basic questions that were considered in the process of creation of this model are:

- what is the internal logic of the Regional Socio-economic Geography – Geography of the Balkan States, which are its main problems, basic key words, revealing the cognitive map, which can be made up;
- how to solve the dilemma between this which is classical, which can be considered universal, necessary, basic, and that which is marginal, although important, which can be considered novelty, which represents a hypothesis;
- with the help of which of the approaches will it be realized: through stimulation to self-dependent work, actualization of their experience and creation of conditions for its enrichment, through overcoming of problems and etc.

The one who implements this model of education should be considered entirely and dynamically, that is to say as a personality. The development of creative skills by the stimulation of self-expression and

self-realization as active, with equal rights and free persons, the bringing forward of harmonious and humane interrelations and interactions in the educational process in Geography, are some of the significant priorities and their realization presumes the modeling of the desired result in three main dimensions (Fig. 2):

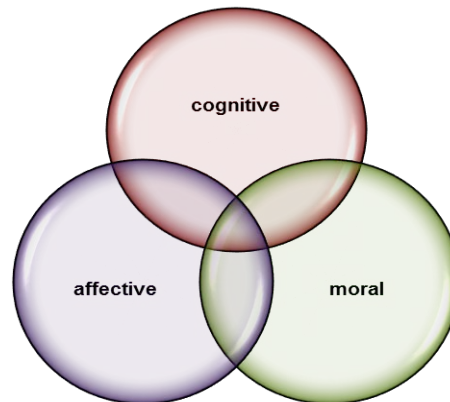


Fig. 2 – Modeling of the desired result

- **cognitive dimension**, revealing itself in: mastering of system of knowledge; usage of the research project as a specific “form” of knowledge, self-knowledge and creative work, of personal reflection and attitude to reality, and also as a system, which provides unity in the development of the mental and logical structures, the creative thinking and expression; conscious and motivated decision and working in “teams” as they learn to “cooperate and coordinate, discuss ideas, to accept criticism and the fact that there is not only one way of solving of a particular problem” (Tedesko, 1994, 13).

- **moral dimension**, revealing itself in: creating of opportunities for development of a system of values, which is in the base of the humane attitude to man and nature; mastering and using of norms and standards of positively oriented behavior, based on the universal values, and providing preparation for a responsible way of living; direction of the efforts to mastering and using of skills for cooperation and partnership, determined by such a basic value orientation, in which the group considers itself a community and cooperates for the expression of personality and creative uniqueness; development of a system of interrelations with a humane determination, which together with geographical knowledge about the regional Socio-economic Geography to cooperate for the right attitude to reality.

- **affective dimension**, which shows itself in: realization and maintaining of the most favorable proportion and unity of the rational and the emotional in the process of formation and development of the personality; analysis and settling of emerging emotional contradictions and conflicts in the context of social and interpersonal relations; direction of efforts to integration of the positive influence of the group, of creative self-expression.

3. Research Project

The synthesis of the specified aspects presumes a wide range of approaches for realization, whose potential possibilities determine such an orientation of usage of the research project in the studying of the Regional Socio-economic Geography. In the specified field especially favorable is the using of activity, in which as significant are recognized: **development of creative capabilities and activation; optimal using of the “group potential”; stimulation of geographical thinking; creation of atmosphere of openness and cooperation; centering on studying through seeking, discovering, group orientation** (Dermendzhieva, 2001, 2010).

The questions connected with the research project, we are seeking answers to are (Fig. 3):

The method of the projects has important place in the education in Geography and Economics, because it requires complex knowledge and skills for the solution of geographical problems through collection, analysis and presentation of information. It is always orientated to self-dependent – individual, group and team, which they carry out for particular time.



Fig. 3 – Questions connected with the research project

In the realization of the projects method in the education in Geography and Economics are considered the following basic requirements:

- presence of significant problems, tasks, requiring integrated knowledge and research approach for their solution;
- the desired results to be of practical, theoretical and cognitive significance;
- application of self-dependent, individual or group work;

- structuring and restructuring of the geographical educational contents in the content part of the project;
- application of a research method, which requires the implementation of particular sequence of actions such as: specification of the problems and the originating from them tasks for research, creation of hypotheses for their solving, discussing the methods of research, discussing the ways for presentation of the final results, systematization and analysis of the received data, distribution of tasks connected with the modeling of the results and their presentation, formulation of conclusions and specification of new problems for study.

In the choice of the research project should be followed the direction to restructuring and generalization around the main ideas, systems of concepts, regularities, modes of activity, explicit presence in the education material of a system of geographical competencies and models of behavior.

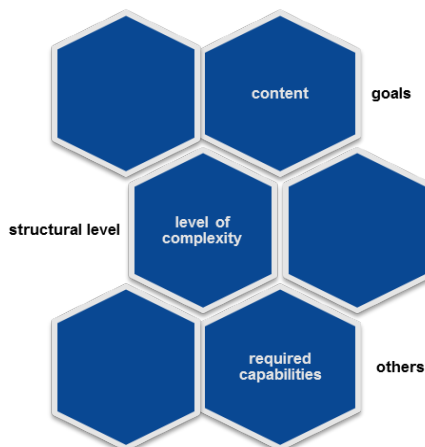


Fig. 4 – Criteria for typology of projects

The research project is a problematic act, realized completely in natural environment. According to J. Beaumont, R., and S. Williams (1983) the project is a “significant practical unification of activity, charged with educational worth and orientated to one or more purposes for understanding, clarification, research and solving of problems; planned and completely fulfilled in natural way, as it is in real life.” The following characteristics of the research project could be distinguished: **stimulation to thinking; priority of problems over principles;** acquiring of **active** character, applying knowledge and skills and, at the end, **development** as a unifying part of the process of education in Geography.

There are several types of projects (Pozo, 1980) (Fig. 4).

Some formulations are even so ambitious that they aim at the solving of real problems. The type of research projects we have in mind is determined by the high level of complexity and from there its

applicability in the last years of the education in Geography. The intellectual maturity and possession of enough skills and knowledge by the student make the application of this type of projects possible.

The last one is characterized by the following (Fig. 5):

The realization of research projects chases the following purposes: **discovering and defining** of significant and solvable, through which are developed and stimulated the sense of commitment and personal responsibility; performing of **self-dependent research activity** (from the specification of the problem to its realization), which gives the possibility the level of difficulty to be thought over entirely, which manifested in the process of research; achievement of **satisfaction** from exercising of complicated activities; providing of **conditions for cooperation** and competition among students.

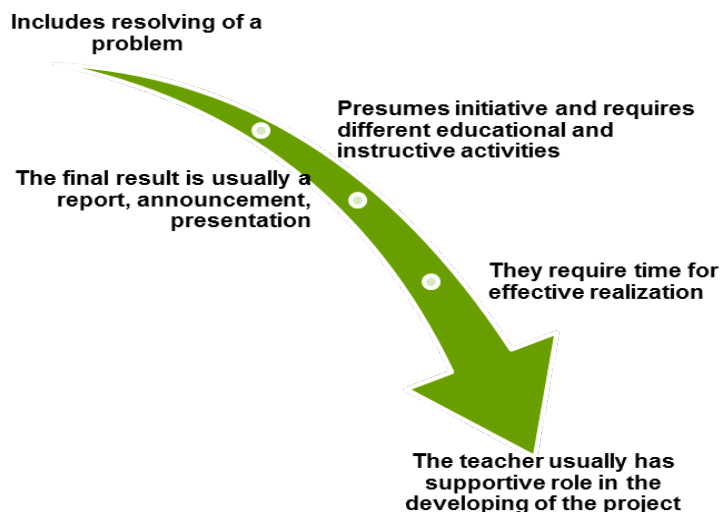


Fig. 5 – Characteristics of the research projects

All this makes possible the achievement of the following purposes:

- To be acquired knowledge: the conceptions, theories, information about the chosen sphere of activity should be overthought and applied;
- To be practiced methodologies: to use wide range of skills – projecting and effective planning of the stages of work; searching for sources, systematic and optional collection of information; analysis of this information; synthesis and formulation of the conclusions; critical testing of own

activity and of the activity of other participants in the project; deciding when an advice should be sought and how to present the conclusions in acceptable form.

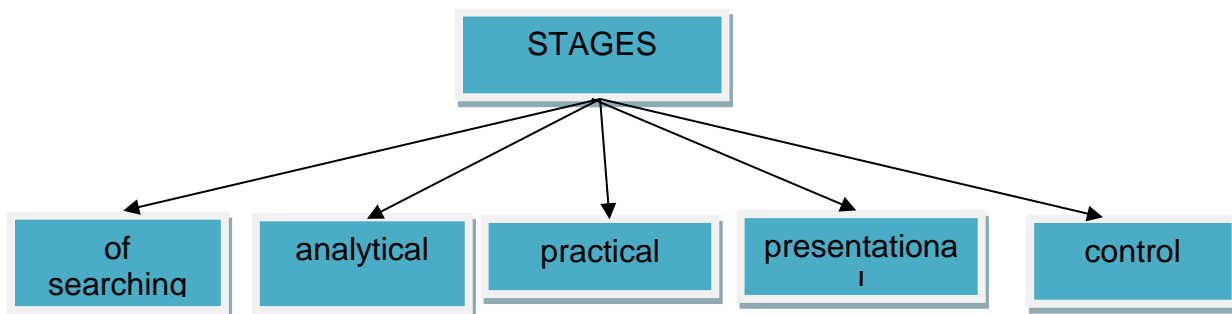


Fig. 6 – Technology of application of the project method.

- And finally: the possibility to face moral questions, concerning different dimensions – to be revealed the values of social factors, moral dimensions of own decisions in the realization of the project and etc.

The stages and the contents of the research projects may be most generally presented in the following way:

- Definition of the problem – choosing of a common thematic field; choosing of orientation (applied research or not); making of bibliographic reference on the problem; final specification of the problem and its range; presentation of hypotheses and purposes; making up of written plan for working.
- Presentation of the methodology – details of the used methods and other instruments.
- Collecting of the data – planning; studying of the data.
- Processing and analysis of the data – work with information (verification, statistical processing drawing of graphs, maps and others); examination of the results.
- Writing down and presenting (report, announcement, paper).

It must include (Fig. 7):

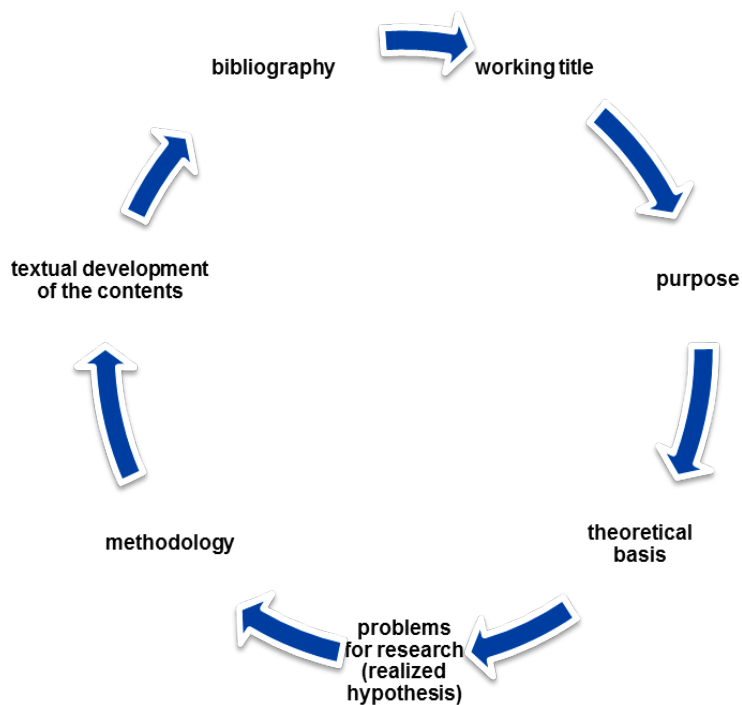


Fig. 7 – Exemplary structure of report, announcement, paper

The planning of the research project presumes (Fig. 8):

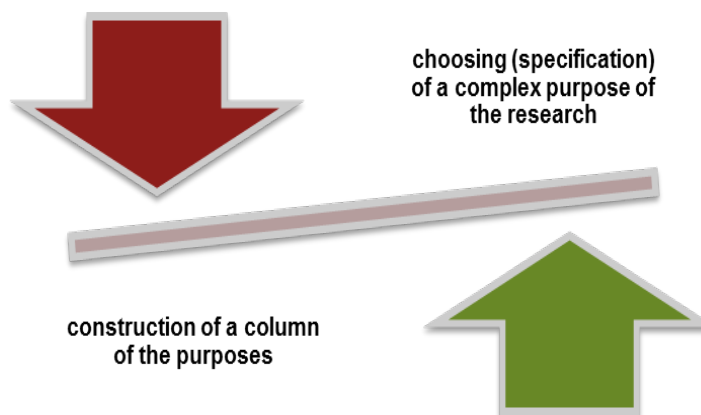


Fig. 8 – Planning of a research project.

On figures 9, 10, and 11 are presented principle schemes of a graph of the purposes. Regarding the concentration of studies are possible the following variants:

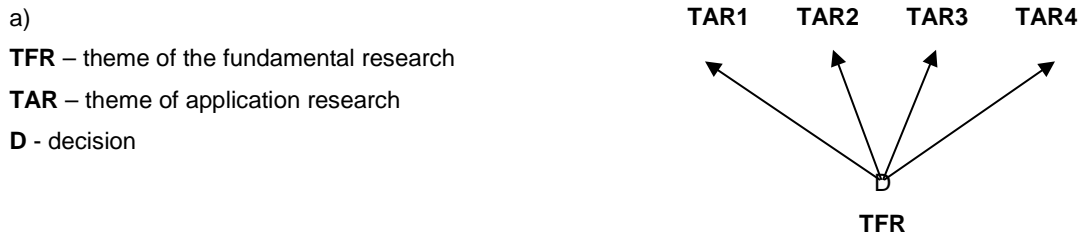


Fig. 9 – Multivalence usage of results from fundamental researches.



Fig. 10 – Unification of partial themes.

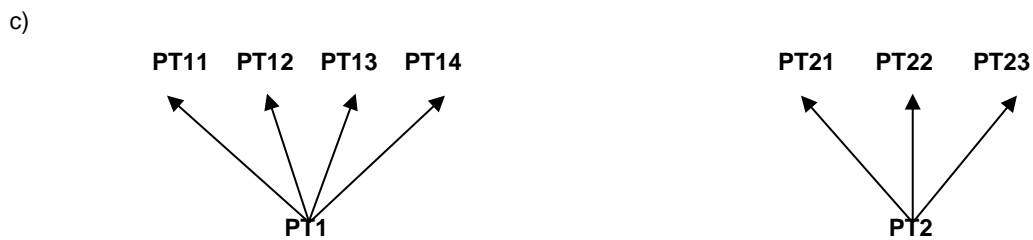


Fig. 11 – Common processing of separate partial themes

The presentation of the scientific research is subordinated to the following general **scheme** (Fig. 12):

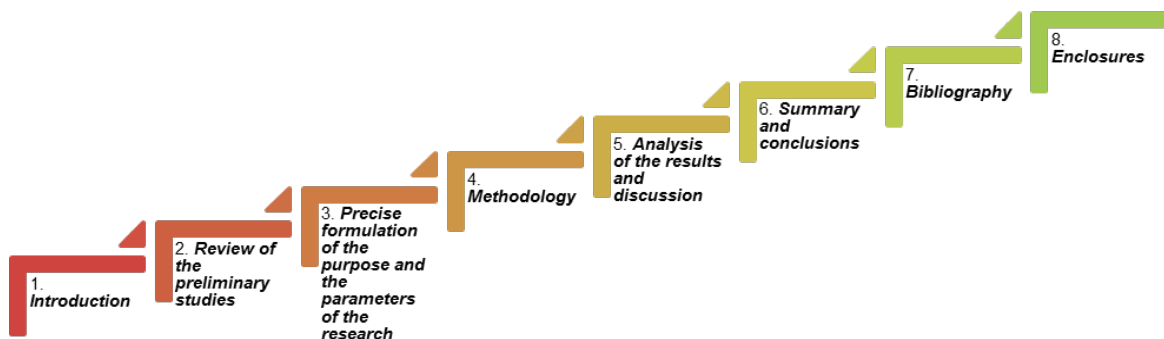


Fig. 12 – Stages of a scientific research

1. **Introduction.** Specification of the problem which will be researched and outlining of the significance of the research. Short presentation of different parts.
2. **Review of the preliminary studies.** It is necessary in order to be clarified the base of the research, examining the theory, methodology and the achieved discoveries about the researched problem. That is to say to be proposed opinion on the problem. This part may be in two forms: general review of the bibliography on the theme, organized as “historical” review; thorough assessment of the moment with focus on the basic conceptions.
3. **Precise formulation of the purpose and the parameters of the research.** After this the concrete purposes and borders of the research should be clarified. The hypotheses that have been made should be compared to the preliminary presented basic theory, and the way they will be proved (supported) should be chosen.
4. **Methodology.** A description of the research of the problem, used techniques and methods, and why they were chosen should be made.
5. **Analysis of the results and discussion.** In a systematized way should be presented the text results from the research.
6. **Summary and conclusions.**
7. **Bibliography.**
8. **Enclosures.**

G. V. Patton and D. S. Sawicki (Patton, 1986, 96) describe the following scheme of a report after a practical research of a **regional political analysis** (Fig. 13):

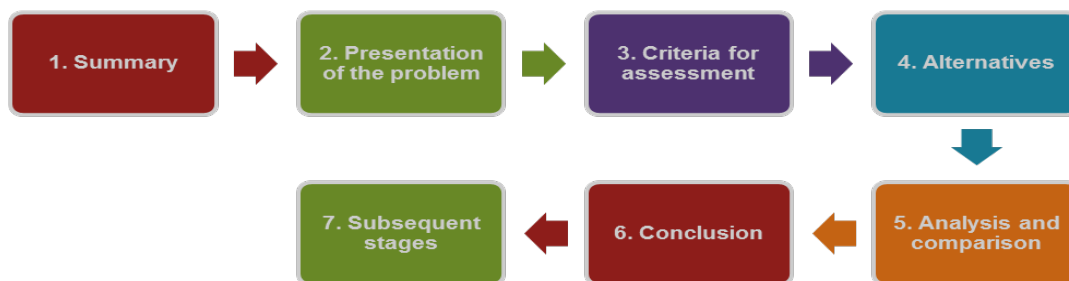


Fig. 13 – Scheme by Patton, G. V., D. S. Sawicki. (1986). [Patton, pg. 96]

1. **Summary.** The report should begin with a short summary (up to 1-2 pages), which in synthesized way presents the structure and contents of the research.

2. **Presentation of the problem** in a way in which it will be most intriguing for the audience – by using maps, schemes, graphs, anecdotes and so on.
3. **Criteria for assessment.** The adopted criteria (demographic and others) for assessment should be described and clarified. Special attention should be paid to the essence of the political processes.
4. **Alternatives.** The alternative points of view and positions should be described and grouped by types and level of coincidence.
5. **Analysis and comparison.** The way of analyzing of the different alternatives should be explained. In order to be done this statistical data, mathematical formulas, scenarios and other suitable techniques should be used. The changing of the alternatives in definite parameters should be proved. The alternatives should be generalized and compared. After an objective analysis the inappropriate should be excluded and the others should be worked out in details.
6. **Conclusion.** The conclusions should be presented and on their basis some recommendations should be made.
7. **Subsequent stages.** The eventual need of subsequent research should be specified. Particular problems that need further analysis should be outlined.

The criteria for assessment of the educational project include: completeness, expedience, correspondence to the problem, originality, method of presentation. During the project work the most important thing is the working process, not the final result. The stages are: choosing of the problem or studying of the given task; analyzing of what is known and what is unknown; formulation of assumptions (hypotheses) for the possible variants for resolving of the problem; one of the assumptions is chosen for which are presented evidences; the project is modeled and it is presented in an appropriate form.

The stages of the classical project are (Fig. 14):



Fig. 14 – Stages of the project

One of the possible decisions for final product of the educational activity is the scientific geographical work, which in its nature represents a type of work on particular theme, in which is revealed the character of one problem. As every scientific work it has: **I. Introduction; II. Exposition, which includes: thesis, evidential part and facts; III. Conclusion.** The composition of a scientific geographical work presumes: research of literature sources; working out of a plan-conspectus, containing the basic information from them in a logical sequence; making up of a plan-thesis, which covers the processed information, logically structured (well-arranged) with the basic (key) questions on the theme and the most significant on each of the questions; developing (writing down) of the theme following the plan-thesis – with possibly most complete and thorough (analytical and problematized) presentation of the contents (textual, graphical, tabular) and with expression of personal opinion on the problems.

The main purpose is the stages of research activity to be correctly identified (Fig. 15):

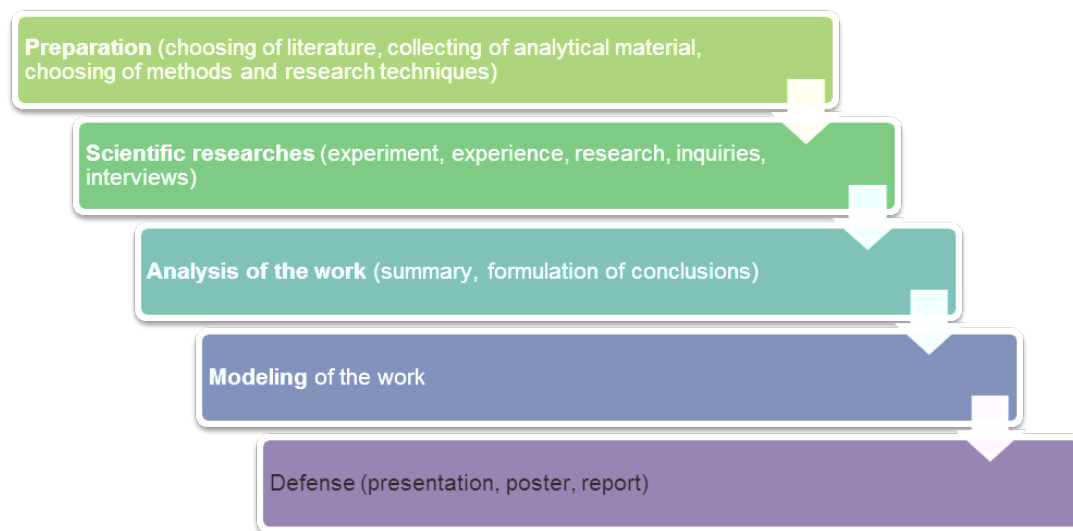


Fig. 15 – Stages of research activity.

4. Model of a research project on theme “Politico-geographical and Geopolitical Aspects of the Balkan Regional Cooperation”

We propose a model of a research project on theme “**Politico-geographical and Geopolitical Aspects of the Balkan Regional Cooperation**” (Fig. 16).



Fig. 16 - A model of a research project on theme.

The theme can be elaborated through the revealing of the possible sources of common regional interest. That supposes a thorough analysis of some aspects of the Balkans as regional space. In the course of the research the character and acquired the contents of the following concepts should be reminded: *ethnonational structure*, *confessional structure*, *state structure* (Fig. 17).

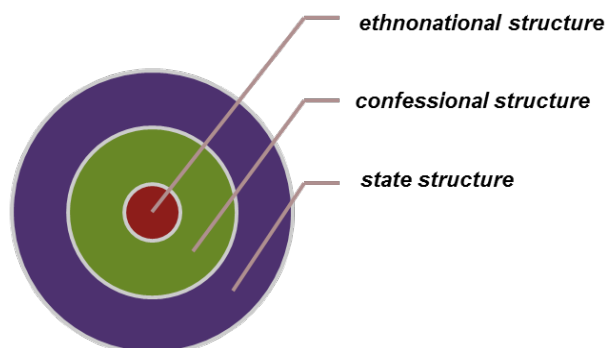


Fig. 17 - Some contents of the research.

After a discussion on preliminarily outlined problems, the following conclusion should be made: there is an ethnonational structure, which is determined by the complicated interweaving of nations and ethnoses. There is a specific confessional structure, which includes Christianity (Orthodoxy and Catholicism) and Islam. The third face of the region is the state structure, which doesn't cover and cannot be covered by the first and the second. There are actual and inherited contradictions among the three structures that were mentioned, there are also big differences among the positions of the Balkan states to these contradictions, there is an "usage" of these contradictions by geopolitical powers. Most unconditionally these differences are expressed through the nation-state interrelation and through the opposition between Islam and Christianity. In a synthesized form is presented the essence of Samuel Huntington's theory about the clash of civilizations.

The research takes place on **two** levels. **The first** one is connected with the characterization of the nation-state relation. In the states on the Balkan Peninsula, the ethnonational structure historically, in the process of formation of nations, didn't get an adequate state-political structure.

The work on the first level is focused on clarification of the following significant moments:

- Analysis and comment on the fact that the ethnically modeled national-state ideology was posing the comprehension of the state as a uni-national state of ethnical type, which generates aspiration for ethnical homogenization. We should conclude that this is one of the separating Balkan factors and one of the reasons for the underdeveloped consciousness for Balkan community and common Balkan regional interest.
- Realization of the circumstance that the outlined tendencies in the development of the ethnonational processes and especially of the interweaving of ethnical and regional problems of the Balkans problematize the stability of most of the Balkan states. Here should be noted the reasons for the war in Bosnia, for the unrest in Kosovo, and also a parallel should be drawn with the "Cypress variant". Serious ethnic problems exist in almost all of the Balkan states, including Turkey.
- Exploration of the party and parliament practice in the states of the Balkan Peninsula, in result of which the conclusion will be made that in all of the states in the region exist ethnical parties, which together with the state structures obviously or secretly have pretensions to govern and in significant extent they "govern" their minority. Typical of these parties is that they aim to act as leaders of territorially differentiated masses of the population. On the basis of the results from the last parliamentary elections in the respective states the students make a map of the "Electoral Geography" and compare it to the map of the ethnical minorities. They comment on the coincidence of areas and (in much less extent) the differences.
- Making the conclusion that in a number of countries the tendencies to separatism amplify, which prevents the formation and consolidation of awareness of the regional community. Particular examples of the displays of separatism in the region are also given.

The second level of research is connected with the analysis of the Islam–Christianity relation, i.e. of the religious confrontation on the Balkans. Here should be clarified the following circumstances:

- That the Balkans are predominantly Christian region. But one part of them is a territory well covered by the Islam religion. On the basis of interdisciplinary relations with History, this circumstance is analyzed and the ethno-confessional areas are outlined. The ethnonational and religious integrating functions of the two religions are characterized. The conclusion is made that the ethno-integrative functions of Islam are mainly directed to the Turkish and the Albanian nations, and these of Christianity – to a great part of the population of Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia and Greece. Discussed is the pressure on the Islamized groups of the population of non-turkish ethnical

origin for their Turkization and differentiation as a Muslim minority or nation as in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A map of the religious spreading of the population in this country is made up.

- That in contrast to Christianity which connects the Balkans with Europe, in Islam can be found an aspiration for uneuropeanization of the Balkans, for erosion of their historical, cultural and other types of European identity. In this context the question about the future development of Turkey is discussed: as a modern secular state, a participant in the European process, or as a state, built on the base of the Pan-Turkism and the Islamic fundamentalism. Evidences “for” and “against” the two opposite theses are given.
- That on the Balkans in future will exist bi religious situation – Christian Balkans (the bigger part of the region) and Muslim Balkans.

On the basis of research of historical, ethnographical, geographical and regional studies materials, the conclusion should be made that: leading should be not the ethnical and even less the religious differences, but the common interest of the Balkan states and peoples in peace, cooperation and stability in the region.

The final part of the research is connected with putting the stress on those priorities, which in the fastest way will help for the accomplishment of the process of mutual regional development:

1. Mutual interweaving of the vitally important national interests with the non-less important regional interest.
2. The better exploitation of the geopolitical potential of the Balkans – as a geographical position, as a crossing of strategic interests of world and regional powers, as a place of contact of different cultures, religions, civilizations, as a communication center between Europe, Asia and Africa.
3. Realization of the opportunities for regional economic cooperation – through the functioning of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, the development of integral Balkan transport and other infrastructure - roads, oil and gas pipelines, communication connections, free zones for regional trade and so on. On the basis of the preliminary explored economic-geographical and other specialized literature students make short reports, predict the future economic development of the region and the probable changes of the territorial structure of economy.
4. Solving of the problem of environmental protection – through the building of the foundations of common Balkan ecological policy.
5. Regional cooperation in the military sphere and characterization of the war geography of the region.
6. Preservation and development of the Balkan culture. Reaching the conviction that the contemporary Balkan cultural cooperation would stimulate the preservation and development of the cultural identity of Balkan peoples, would provide protection against the contemporary cultural “colonialism”, would cooperate for the creation of European and Balkan information space.

The model of territorial specificity we search in the answers of the questions (Fig. 18): *What are the reasons for the level of development? Why do people live this way? Who lives in the Balkans? And the directions could be:*

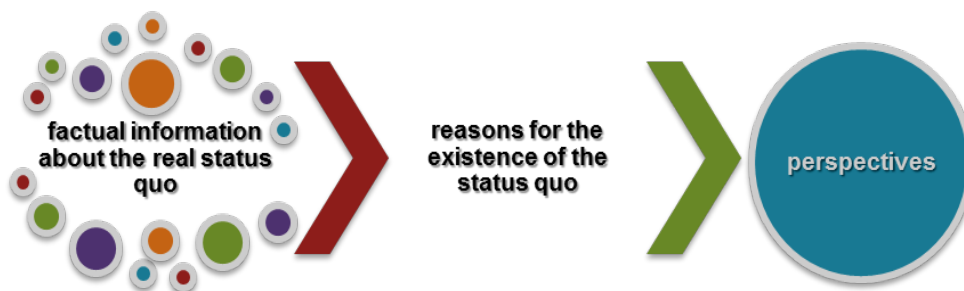


Fig. 18 – The model of territorial specificity.

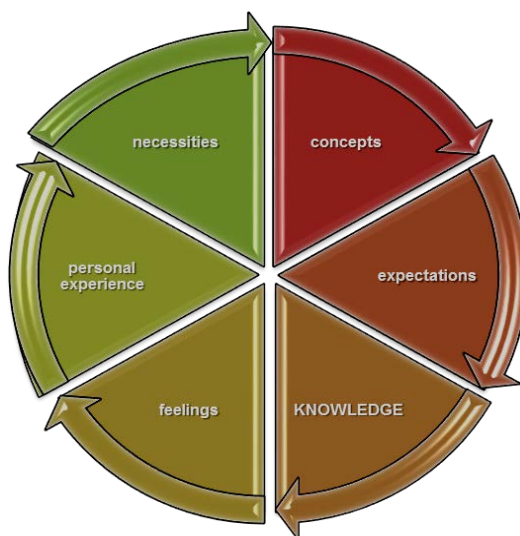


Fig. 19 – Perception of the territory.

The research finishes with the making of fundamental conclusions and formulation of particular suggestions for optimization of the Balkan regional cooperation. As a result of the development and application of the project method in Geography of the Balkan States we can draw some general conclusions:

- Through application of the system of activities for realization of the project activity is facilitated the creation of educational environment, which can motivate for self-dependent search, processing and

analyzing of geographical information, for activation of personal interest in the acquiring of new actual knowledge.

- The application of the method of projects in a system contributes to the formation of different types of competency in students: communicative (for widening of contacts), social (for teamwork and performing of different roles) and objective – for development of cognitive capabilities related to the concrete geographical educational contents.
- The method of projects presents opportunity for individualization and humanization of the educational process in Geography, for meeting of specific necessities and interests of students, for development of their creative skills.
- The application of the project method requires continuous preliminary preparation, which demands its reasonable application.

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