

Current Scientific and Educational Problems of Social Geography in Bulgaria

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Abstract: *The article examine more important problems stand against Social Geography for resolving in Bulgaria. There are reported as scientific problems and their educational aspects. These ones marked are only a part of wide field of Social Geography. It stressed on their social importance.*

Keywords: *geography, problems, development, investigation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary Social Geography in Bulgaria as other social sciences asking for their research objects in spatial defined objects and subjects with their set of specific parameters. Social Geography describes and examines these parameters with specific tools. It gives own valid suppositions and prognoses for their development in geographical spatial. In the transition period this important science for the society lost its subject and low its actuality. Parallel with this the quota of Geography in whole educational system decrease as and for Social Geography. The subject of this article is mainly these contemporary problems against the development of this science in Bulgaria.

The Geography like science is defined in different directions. Scientific grounded reasons for this are hidden in the systematic approach or Systematic Geography (Hartshorne, 1939, Rusev 2008). In relation of this is defined and social branch geographical sciences – Cultural, Social, Politic Geography, Geodemography, Ethno- Confucian Geography etc. In fact these are branches of Social Geography valid for Bulgarian geographical science.

In this way we think Social Geography has to fallow the painful problems of Bulgarian society. It has to be more “public” than it was. The socializing of the Geography is researched by different authors (Dermenjiev, 2004) but according them Geography of society is precedent step in forming Social Geography. New think this is opposite. Social Geography and this wider “canvas ‘on which are “embroider” the contemporary problems of Bulgarian society in a spatial scale. After this and an analysis of the society problems follow marking of the social ones. In fact the Social Geography with its social subject for research is function of Geography of the society. This hierarchy of structure is important for in way for proper targeting and research of the subject.

Foregoing give us to mark firstly the public problems which could be subject for research of Social Geography. The state of society is weak and it needs revision. Main problem is the stark misbalance in economic and social indicators of binary structure “center- periphery“. Social Geography has to have aim to explain this misbalance, to do from spatial

difference of resources and services and to give reasonable explanation.

Examples for differences in the model “center-periphery” could be given in wide specter .We will give only in differences in salaries in several towns. From the data of NSI (www.nsi.bg) at the end of 2013 the average monthly salary in Sofia is 1089 BGN, in Varna 771 BGN, in Burgas – 690 BGN, in Blagoevgrad – 555 BGN, in Shumen 631 BGN.

II. Territorial- spatial analysis in dynamic order is given by Public Geography

The society is also divided in other way: the living in towns and in village’s .This involves us indirectly in Social Geography. The physical age and the social status of population in town and villages are different. This is like in misbalance “center- periphery “ but with the difference in its areal structure her we have mosaic spatial structure integrated deeply in Bulgarian living and manners. The depopulation of areas and their economical activity we consider as one of the main problems in spatial development in Bulgaria. Social Geography have to observe, analyze and prognoses these processes. Even this trend is valid not only for villages also and for small towns. We consider the problem of depopulation in border areas as problem of the national security.

In a research Penerliev (2015) in his analysis of border territories between Bulgaria and Romania alongside Danube River estimate some important trends:

- Predominating of village population
- Small quota of towns (only three towns)
- Low birth - rate and low average habitant density
- Low number educational centers and lack of secondary schools

The depopulation is process which has to be examined by Social Geography.

One of the important problems against Social Geography is examination and forecasting of the educational processes in the country. The high quota of educated people is in direct relation with sequence micro economic indicators as GDP, Labor productivity, Human resources development index etc. As it known the education is the motor of the progress. But how to reach this aim when 12,9 % of students left school in 2014 (according data NSI). The relative quota for science developing is only 0.65 % from GDP.

Here we examine the education or its leak as element of the national security. Brzezinski said: “... it is passive for America the ignorance which has its citizens have to the world around. Awkward true is Americans have worrying limited knowledge in Geography and very seldom they are interested in the news and events around the world.”

In this article the famous politician gives data from a research of National Geographic in 2002 according 75 % of the adults couldn’t find Iran and 88 % couldn’t locate

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Afghanistan on the map. These territories where USA have geopolitical interests. According the author this is direct threat for the national security. *“The cumulative effect of such wide spread ignorance makes the audience weak for fears which demagoguery implant them mainly when it is caused by terrorist attacks . This increases the probability of self demolition foreign affair initiative. “*

In this article the authors stress on this problem in details. In the context of the national security Social geography have to be involved in contemporary geo political processes in the country. An essential problem for recent governments during the Bulgarian political transition is the delimitation of Bulgarian aquatory. Penerliev considers it is clear geographical task – the estimation and analysis of the Danube river border and its Black se aquatory border with Romania. Social Geography together with Natural Geography in political processes could give “benchmarks “of such delimitation together with the experts of maritime legislation. In fact the definition of borders is a pure task.

The participation of Social Geography in political processes is a part of its main task. Geographical analysis in help of geo - policy and geo - strategy is important reason in taking important political decisions. Here we give an example which proves the role of Geography in political life in the beginning of XX century.

The founder of Bulgarian Geography science Prof. Anastas Ishirkov published “Short notices on Dobrudza and Moravkso “issued in 1917 Sofia. This is short edition only 21 pages but especially written for the delegates of peace conference. Its role is guide book and strategy document where the territory and spatial are combined in the time. This shows the place of Prof. Ishirkov in then days elite, also and the need of geographical knowledge and science in resolving political and geo-political tasks and problems (Penerliev, 2013).

The only science taught in schools as discipline forming a complex picture of the world in its unity and variety is Geography. It is science and discipline which relate directly the knowledge for the Nature and the environment formed by the other Natural sciences (Physics, Geology, Chemistry and Biology) and the relations of the man to Nature (Ecology), and with the society knowledge (History, Philosophy, Sociology, Culturology) as and with the knowledge for the economical activity (economics).

Geography is one of the sciences which form in the student’s concrete knowledge about the world in its reality and entirety supporting and building a scientific attitude to the Nature, to public events and situations, to the processes and phenomena in local, regional and global scale.

The discipline “Geography and Economics“ integrates knowledge and skills from other sciences. Synthesizing knowledge the Geography provides an informational basis for practical – applied field of the student’s activities. At the same time explains logically and entirely the dynamic processes and phenomena in the complicit interaction between The Nature and the society. Helps students in risk assessments and gives them actions and measures which appear due global climate changes and in Nature. Students study the separation of Earth surface on regions and the influence of geographical factor for its formation and development.; they are familiar whit the meaning of natural and social resources for development of the economics.; they examine the territorial systems formed in

result of the interaction between the society and the Nature; they study the geographical basis of the problems and the contemporary conflicts in the world –in local, regional and global range. This discipline gives the students the geographical prerequisites for Euro integration and the establishment of Bulgaria as part of European economical, political and cultural space.

The aims of the education are a problem of contemporary Common Didactics an Geography Didactics.. They are examined in different aspects – essence, function, properties,, relations , taxonomy etc. The main problems of targeting the education in particular and Geography are related to its formulation using it as tool for taking ad measuring the results , with formulation of binomial “aim - educational content”; “aim”- final result”; Aim- Resources” etc. The outgoing theoretical postulates related to the model are: “The aims are: ... main characteristics. attribute of the education , “ideal model for the final result “...; “ first procedure of management the education process , mechanism , “a propulsion “in education process ,... standard and norm for assessment results”. The aims are reached by activities and on the basis of motives.

There are narrow relations between geographical education connected in forming geographical culture and the culture of children rights. Accomplishment of their interaction is built on the basis a complex of approaches - intercultural, systematic, functional, experimental etc.

One of the requirements of contemporary education is aimed to its continuity in formation of attitude for teaching and realizing a transition during all its periods. In the recent years the most important problems against the education in Geography are as follow:

Main problem is insufficient school time for study in Geography. In our schools is implemented the wrong practice for some disciplines including “Geography and Economics“ the week workload to be only 1.5 school hours in average per a school year. In practice in one of the both school terms where we have 1 school hour Geography we haven’t real educational process. The implemented not argumentum administrative limitation of the workload in “Geography and Economics“ discipline determine the big disparity between the lessons and these ones for practice. As effect of this the students can’t attitude permanent and systematic knowledge as and to build competent skills for team work.

Unjustified reduction of the content in “Geography and Economics” disciplines is another problem. It is due different reasons. One of them is the reduced workload school hours. It follow reducing of the content which is given in School plan, the State Educational Requirements and teaching programs was realized with not correctly combining lesson themes.

Other problem is the delays of educating in “Geography and Economics” after the contemporary needs of the world, Europe, Bulgarian society and Bulgarian education. In the most of European countries the workload in geography disciplines are 2 – 2.5 times more than these ones in Bulgaria. Uncompleted knowledge of the young people leads to low level of their culture and behavior.

In respect to build whole educational system with improved quality directed to acquiring of key competency and improvement of student’s achievements have to make sequence of changes in normative regulations, basis etc.

Here are some possible activities for improvement of the situation as follows (Ruseva, Vladeva, 2014) :

- Periodically actualization of school content;
- Modernization of the educational process implementing methodical models developed on the basis of ITT;
- Improvement technology of education with alternative forms and methods for work;
- Actualization the requirements to school books;
- Reforming the professional education and its real relation to the business;
- Actualization school programs in professional education;
- Involving the parents to the life and problems in school.

In the recent years after its update kept the high requirements to the volume and the level of knowledge. The striving to high grade and high expectations must be preserved but have in mind the school plan is over loaded with direction to the well performed students and not stressed on the practices and preparation of the students for a new changeable world.

The reasons for the problems in education even this is not pointed directly are State Educational Requirements (SER) to discipline “Geography and Economics“. Their achieve by the students suppose learn by heart of a defined content without developing student’s thinking. It is require from them teaching of a big volume matters without practice hours. This big volume supposes predominated method for teaching – lecture and predominated control method – written test. I lead to impossibility of the teachers to work for development in students the team work, self-defense position, skills in reaching consensus, tolerance to different ideas, positive thinking and presentation skills.

The excessive common character of the language formulations regarding standards and themes as and the presence of undetermined verbs make difficult text books for authors, teachers and students.

The contemporary normative basis is an attempt to achieve of harmonization, coordination, subordination between the main educational characteristics with aim achievement of standards and themes an attempt for overcoming amorphous core performance of goals. Its functioning showed the presence of problems proved the need of its improvement.

The all documentation for discipline “Geography and Economics“ have to be actualized on the basis of: developing of unified conception for developing geographical education; on contemporary condition and achievements of Geography; on the expectations of society to Geography education in agreement with the traditions and innovations. In this way can be reached unified approach in development normative documents.

Sequence factors influence essentially on the quality of the education in “Geography and Economics “Some of them influence positively and form several serious problems.

The broken balance between the types schooling. In our schools we have three levels of teaching – mandatory schooling (MS), mandatory eligible schooling (MES), and free eligible schooling (FES). It is implemented study for week norm – 1.5 hours and year’s norm – 54 or 51 hours. This led to serious cut of the content. For minimum resolving the problem is necessary reducing the MES hours to sane

minimum for each educational grade. With this will have additional time for full teach of the basis.

Another problem is for the balance between the fundamental and practical knowledge. It is very often talked about reducing of the over load of the students. In fact it is about lowering the level of the acquired knowledge. The practical activities in Geography could be done real. The main have to be not practical mechanically made activities but solid theoretical knowledge through use of logical and practical operations of comparison, analysis , summaries, and forming own position.

Essential problem is breakage of the inter disciplines relations which makes difficult the acquiring of new knowledge. Geography as synthetic science and wide active relations with the other sciences use knowledge from other disciplines as Mathematics, History, Informatics, Physics, Chemistry, Statistics, and Economics etc. Some of them are not studied in school so Geography has to fill gaps. With the others which are studied disciplines in school have to be relations and depending in structure and sequence in its studying. We have some examples for mismatch of the content and time of studying.

Vladeva says (2006): The realize of critical thinking in educational process is problem against Geography discipline. The essence of critical thinking is related to effective and long term acquiring of knowledge which practicable in different situations. Through it is enforce the deep thinking and realizing of the problems. The critical thinking realize in “...presence of ideas which exceed the visible; discovering new dimensions in a theme; searching and resolving problems; defining ideas necessary for written motivation or discussion” (Steele, and others, 2005).

The main problems of normative basis could be defined: mismatch the structures of school programs in the discipline; leak of synchrony between the elements of the school content; leak of continuity in normative documents etc.

The teaching staff has different problems the pointed one is the age trend and leak of young teachers.

The return of interest to teacher’s profession is one the goals against the Educational reform as it requires improving the work conditions and teacher’s wedge and popularization of pedagogy specialties in the Universities.

The main factor for bad performance of Bulgarian students according researches is the social inequality – students come from an environment which supports the education and give the necessary resources achieves results. In this meaning improving of the family environment and the conditions for education in the small towns could lead to sensitive improvements of students. Another opportunity is wider intervention of the Educational system in student’s life (as fulltime schools and boarding schools) but the counter arguments are the free will of the parents to grow –up their children.

The examination of good practices in the countries with the best results in quality researches – market liberalization of educational services, diversification and freedom in making school programs and better conditions for the teaching staff.

Parts of the problems in the basis are common for the educational system: leak of free Internet access in classrooms; leak of multimedia projectors for visualization. The specific problems of discipline “Geography and Economics” are related to leak of thematic maps and atlases; need of diagram pictures etc.

But the main problem is the humbled role and place of the teachers in Bulgarian school. The main aim is increasing their authority against the students and the society. For this reason it has overcome the wrong statement the student is the main person in school.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion we consider pointing that marked here important problems in scientific and school geographical field are our point of view. Obviously they can't to limit all aspects of problem field in Public geography. They are only marks for a future discussion.

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