

STUDENTS, CURRICULUM AND GEOGRAPHY: DEVELOPMENT, USE AND POSSIBILITIES OF SCIENTIFIC AND EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Daniel David Martínez Romera

ABSTRACT

The present paper, after a brief evolutionar walktrough about curriculum and geography bonds, tackles two question derived from it: the progressive divergence between society and geographical education, specially among the students, analyzing its causes and consequences; and, later, boards and new way to rebalance that issue trough the scientific speech of geography, emphasizing the relevance of the principles of method in its more elemental form. All that, in the end, with the aim of offering, from the specific discipline, efficient elements to improve the academic and personal training of the students in so far as nowadays and tomorrow citizens.

In the first part of the work, we aim our thoughts on the epistemological, curricular and social aspects of the contemporary Geography. Making clear their integration is far from be easy due to the amount of external and internal influences present, and not always with the educational sake in mind. Across the XIX and XX centuries, political willfulness, intellectual disagreements, economical goals, among others viewpoints have made very hard the development of education by and large, and the geographical particularly as its epistemological origins diverge from those in natural, social and humanistic counterparts: it's the only one who still tries to apprehend the world as whole as ultimate goal. Sadly, after the passing of Humboldt and Ritter, the specialization in Geography changed its status from an intermediate tool to an aspiration on its own.

So, the education in geographical contents and methods was over and over relegated to three main uses: national identity, entertainment and military applications. With that reality in motion, the mainstream society losses a tool, not only as scientific knowledge but also as ethical and philosophical one, as far as Geography is in a privileged position

to show the hidden relationships that flow in and over the world. Instead of this, the mythological simplifications in terms of black-boxing processes rise up: the highest mountain, deepest hollow, the biggest country... moved away from any context or deeper explanations, maybe with the exception of the military viewpoint.

Moreover, in the society of information that we all are living, time is a measurement of success, so the faster the answer is gotten the better, despite the fact that knowing a name is not the same that knowing its meaning and context. And this is a constant source of sadness in education, at all levels; it seems that the days of quiet, long thinking, for answers are in the past in favor of a more dynamic approach for faster and short ones.

At the face of that, we put on the table a way to get back some key references in order to strengthen the epistemological virtues of Geography, the basic principles of method. Although is far to be easy achieving an agreement about them, in terms of numbers and meaning, we propose to rescue a minimal structure of four, all of them based in ideas and writings of the big names in the classical Geography:

1. Principle of General Geography, which states the connection, influence and interdependence of all phenomena in the world, as it is a unity.
2. Principle of Localization, remembers us that understanding or analyzing a phenomena implies, necessarily, distinguish and contextualize it in a trans-scalar way of thinking.
3. Principle of Collate, which helps us to introduce the ideas of singularity and uniqueness in an analytical context that overcomes the classical debate between nomothetic and ideographic conceptions of the geographical space.
4. Principle of Indetermination, "everything human is contingent" praised the famous adagio by Vidal de la Blanche. And states a key point: even after the best of our efforts the conclusions can be trusted only to a certain point, after which new facts, new ideas, new methods and new conclusions can force, or at least advice, and necessary change on our certainties.

With this principles in mind, filling the gap between knowledge of quality and time is possible, as them are a scientific-oriented fast-paced thinking that, if needed can be developed in more classical and slow-paced procedures like deeper source analysis, abstraction models or practical experiences for validation purposes.

At this point, we must recognize that this framework is barely implemented from a practical point of view: in the past decades a small but constant group of researchers offered related ways from a theoretical perspective; so our main effort should be oriented to the next steps, the classroom and the necessary adjustments to make possible a better use of the geographical knowledge for the sake of our society.