

ŠTÚDIE

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GEOGRAPHY AND THE CHANGING WORLD

Emil Mazúr, Ján Drdoš, Ján Urbánek: La géographie et le monde changeant. Geogr. čas., 32, 2—3, 1980; 20 réf.

Dans leur étude les auteurs discutent avec importance de la question du rajeunissement de la géographie régionale qui a été instaurée par les organisateurs du XXIVe Congrès international de l'UGI. Ils partent de la base que l'objet central de la géographie depuis son origine était le milieu géographique qui, même aujourd'hui, est la condition de son existence en tant que science. Ils esquissent brièvement le développement des opinions de la géographie sur son objet, l'avance graduelle de la spécialisation de la géographie, l'approfondissement de l'approche analytique, le retardement de l'étude de la synthèse et l'instruction à partir de l'objet fondamental de la géographie.

Ils confrontent le développement de la géographie avec le développement des sciences en général, même avec les changements qui se déroulent sur la Terre surtout sous l'influence de la révolution scientifique et technique. Ils cherchent les causes du retardement de la géographie du point de vue du niveau de sa base théorique et des possibilités de son utilisation pratique. Les auteurs montrent sur la haute actualité des approches de l'intégration, sur le caractère indispensable des synthèses régionales certes, sur la base exacte nouvelle pour résoudre le rapport l'homme-environnement. On accentue la nécessité d'arriver à la définition explicite de la conception de l'objet de l'étude de la géographie et la création de la base théorique et méthodologique nouvelle de la géographie.

The organizers of the XXIV. International Congress IGU in Tokyo have established the question of rejuvenation of the regional geography as one of the central themes, which will be discussed within the frame of an individual section. Mainly Prof. H. Ishida, convenor of this section, has exerted a considerable personal effort for a certain preparatory discussion of the problem of regional geography and this in a relatively wide international scale. His preliminary sounding of stand points, preparation of concise extracts from them and outlining suggestions of sub-themes in the form of an elaboration *To Rejuvenate Regional Geography* and its sending to geographers of many countries in the pre-Congress period are giving promising preconditions for a high level of discussion in Section 10 of the XXIV. IGU Congress.

It is true, the problem of regional geography in Czechoslovakia is not in the traditional conception, but rather as a geographic synthesis, one of the gravity lines of geography. Mainly in Slovakia at the Geographical Institute of the Academy of Sciences the research effort has been concentrated in this sense during the last 12—15 years. In this issue of the *Geographic Journal*, devoted to the XXIV. IGU Congress, mainly the three first studies, closely interrelated, are aimed at the discussion related to the problem of geographical syntheses.

GEOGRAPHY AND THE OBJECT OF ITS RESEARCH

We think the most suitable precondition for a purposeful, positive discussion is to start from the basis, on which the stand points of the discussing partners are conforming or at least very close to each other. For such a basis we consider the conformity, or the nearness of stand point on the subject of geography [meanwhile we are fully aware of the apparent paradox of our assertion on the conformity of stand points on the object of geography, because it is just in the variety of its conception and interpretation there are most controversial stand points between the geographers]. What was and is the object of geography? The former IGU president C. Troll in the miscellany *Zum Gegenstand und zur Methode der Geographie* [1967] states in a free version the Strabo's answer to this question: *Geography familiarizes us with the inhabitants of the Earth and Sea, with the vegetation, with the particularities of various parts of the world and makes him, who knows it, a man familiarized with the great problems of life.* This stand point on the object of geography, two thousands years old, points in substance to the same objective reality which, even we, the present geographers, consider for the research object of geography, as is justified by C. Troll (p. 389—390). It stretches like a thread through the ancient and middleage geographical writings, through B. Varenius, through the writings of exploratory travels and we find it strongly anchored even in the foundations of modern geography of the 19th century, whether it is German, French or Russian school. It is not lacking either in W. M. Davis. Similarly even in the writings of the present century the earth's surface remains and man on it even if under various names in various languages and in various authors, as for instance geographic environment, geosphere, geographic sphere, landscape sphere, landscape, géo-ecosphere, man-earth ecosystem, etc., the fundamental object of geographic research. From the long-date and rich history of geography and finally even from its name it results uniformly that the earth surface as man's *home* was and remains even today the research object of geography, the condition of its existence as a science.

This assertion of ours on the conformity of stand points concerning the object of geography appear paradoxal and even untrue mainly with regard to the above mentioned various names for this object. Does the variety of names really mean also the variety of the research object of geography? We think the indicated paradox is only apparent, and the difference to controversy of names between geographers does not lie in the question of object as such, but it lies in the position of conception of this object and in the methodologic approach and of its interpretation resulting from it. In our study we will try to contribute just to the solution of this controversial problem. We start from

the aspects which, as it appears, were not adequately taken into consideration so far. It is the contact of geography with the science in general, with its laws and dynamics of development (theoretical-methodological aspect) and context with the society (practical aspect).

Geography as one of the oldest sciences in general has achieved its first summits from the earth knowledge stand point and had a considerable social weight already in the 16th —19 th century.

It is true its scientific-verification tools corresponded to its era (to the level of its science, philosophy, and to social-practical needs). Obviously, these tools led to the results of a descriptive nature, not systematic, strongly marked by subjective approaches. Geography of this era is not yet appearing as a science with individual theoretical-methodological basis.

The constitution of geography as a modern science with its own scientific conception is the matter only of the 19th century, when it achieves its summit even from the social application view point.

To grasp the conception of that era's geography we can, in accordance with W. K. Davies (1966), emphasize the fact that A. V. Humboldt and C. Ritter died in the year when C. Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. The conception of their work lay obviously on the predominant science philosophy of the pre-Darwin era and proceeded under the sign of interpretation of the fundamental unity of nature. This unity in its variety stood on the teleological understanding. Their approach to the study object inductive in substance was also tributary to its era (compare Davies 1966).

In the second half of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century under the Darwin's evolutionary thesis a new philosophical current penetrated from biology even to other sciences and was markedly manifest also in geography but alas in the deterministic conception. Deduction and generalization come into foreground.

The influence of possibilism, in geography arising against the deterministic conception, brought forth, as W. K. D. Davies points out, beside positives mainly from the methodological view point many negatives. Considerations of a single object and personalization of space (region) did not permit the application of a logic analysis and experiment (compare also W. Bunge, 1966). The scientific conception of the fundamental content of geography, the synthesis of the geographical sphere, were getting into a situation without issue through the help of the theoretical-methodological tools which geography had at its disposition.

Formulation of the basic principles of geography in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century stands namely in a close relationship with the state of factological facts. These were relatively good from the cartographical view point, though not complete and adequately detailed, the observations were, let us say, even if global, but very non uniform, and occasional. Description and interpretation were qualitative in substance, strongly subjective, various statistical data onesided, etc. In a word, the level of the analytical knowledge has barely permitted a theoretical-methodological generalization of another line than was formulated.

Our very general evaluation of geography and of its scientific approaches does not pretend in any case the condemnation of the past. On the contrary, we want to point out that geography had its conception long ago which cor-

responded to its era and was developing in the context with the development of science and philosophy in general.

It is necessary to touch on this place another aspect too and it is the position of geography in the social practice. This attained the summit in the 19th century and decreased only slowly at the beginning of the 20th century. A strong industrial development of this era, the need of raw materials and markets, the efforts to dominate the little used areas of the world, military reasons, and not in the last place the desire to know new countries, etc., required similar informations from geography which it was in state to provide. The level of geography correspond to practical demands of its era and its place in the hierarchy of sciences was still very important.

An intense development of natural, technical and social sciences which has influenced positively the development of geography in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century is accelerating further on in this century, and with it take place also social changes and new demands for science. The reflection of this process in geography is above all in the differentiation trend inside geography. An always closer specialization takes place up to the gradual independence of its individual disciplines.

The trend of the internal differentiation of geography culminated in the middle of this century. An extraordinary deepening of knowledge on the individual landscape elements, experimentation, erection of ixperimental stations, mathematization, etc., took place, in a word the exact sciences but in the indicated differentiated or closely specialized objective. What we called geography, was frequently composed of an incoherent mosaic of partial disciplines, beginning from geomorphology and ending by individual disciplines of economic geography. The synthetizing conception of the geographical study receded strongly to the background in this period.

In geography an always stronger asymmetry of development of the synthetical-theoretical and analytical line was manifest in a strong lagging of the former. Meanwhile the fundements of the synthetical regional approaches in geography formulated already at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century were not almost developing further, the study of the individual elements of the geosphere and the level of their analysis aquired an unprecedented extent on the quantitative and qualitative side, mainly during the last 3—4 decades.

The reflection of lagging of the synthetical-theoretical line of geography is obviously the discordance of the theory of general and regional geography with the partial analytical facts. This state, beside the further deepening of specialized researches, led to atomization of geography to a whole series of branches, linked only by traditional-formal elements. Connected with it, obviously, was mainly the stagnation of regional geography as a synthetizing science on the landscape and its theory. The specialized geographical researches began to pass over the limits of geography and vice-versa, several disciplines of natural and social sciences were entering the field of regional geography, and finally there began to occur new ones, aimed at the regional problem (e. g. regional science).

This fact has affected markedly also the position of geography in the social practice. By deepening the specialized research geography has gained on the one side some new positions in the practical life of the society (applied geo-

morphology soil erosion, pedogeography, settlement geography, geography of inhabitants, industry and further economico-geographical disciplines). On the other hand geography has almost *emptied the field* as a synthetizing theory on landscape in the social practice. Regional studies and text-books built in substance on the principles formulated decades ago cannot concord to the present analytical knowledge nor suit the practice. Although the term *geographic* has become very frequently used in current practice, it is grasped a term formal in substance, without a real content in the full sense of the word. The decrease of the significance of geography, mainly regional, in the social practice is reflected also in its evaluation. Geography becomes more and more an academic and scholarly object without a socio-practical hinterland.

The development of geography briefly indicated did not take place isolately, but it was in close context with the general development of sciences and needs of the social practice.

Since the origine of science in the 19th century we can follow in general a continuous growth of the phenomenological, substantial research in its significance, gradually an always bigger and bigger specialization of sciences, accompanied by an intense development of exact analytical methods. On the opposite side synthetizing, integral disciplines strongly lagged behind theoretically even in the social-practical significance. The indicated developing trend of the scientific research suited fully to the industrialized society and it reflected also in the hierarchical organization of sciences from the social-practical importance stand point. Closely specialized technical disciplines came into the foreground, then physics, chemistry, mathematics, from the geoscientific and biological sciences mainly the monothematic branches, equally as some social-scientific branches with a closer objective. Deep below them stood the synthetizing disciplines, either from the theoretical-methodological level or practical importance stand point.

However, in what the consequences of a specialized trend of geography from the other sciences is the fact that *for trees the forest cannot be seen*. As a result of a onesided orientation to individual specialized aspects of its object, i. e. of the geographic sphere, as a substance of the existence of geography, as a crystallization core of its research, has been lost in its entirety so to say from the consideration. What is still worse, in many geographers this trend led to a deep scepticism, whether it is possible at all and necessary to arrive at a regional geographic synthesis.

Where does the cause of this gloomy state lie? We think that it lies in unsolving the apparent paradox mentioned above, i. e. in confusing the research object as such and its grasping in the conceptional level.

In fact, geography till the 19th century viewed its object, similarly as many other sciences, very freely, significatively and did not get further than to its ostensible and empiric definition. The constitution of geography in the 19th century as a modern science with its own scientific conception meant, it is true, a progress in the definition of its object to a syncretic level, even to a certain form of an intuitive conception, but it did not get to the exact conception definition. It viewed its object as something *more* than the sum of elements. True, there lacked an exact formulation for this *more*. The lack of an explicit defining of its object then reflected unavoidably not only in using

various names for it, but unfortunately also in a varied, frequently controversial grasping of the object content.

Further on we will try to answer the serious doubt of many geographers, whether it is necessary and possible to arrive at the geographical synthesis. We will do so again in the context with the present society and its science.

THE CHANGING WORLD AND GEOGRAPHY

We analyze at least in general the present world and this mainly from the aspect of structural changes which are taking place in it and which are often comprised under the conceptions as a scientific-technical revolution, population explosion, etc. The conception of population explosion is frequently narrowed to a relatively accelerated growth of population on the Earth, in proportion to the lagging food production. Very serious, however, are also the further facts. The geographical distribution of population on the one hand becomes more and more unequal, on the other hand, however, the settlement of the earth's surface takes a continuous structure. The unprecedented development of scientific-technical facts gives man the means for a literal girdling of the globe by various devices of communication means, for a continuously accelerating exchange of informations and displacement of people and products. This necessarily leads to a relative decrease of the space, to the cramming of interaction elements of the social system. Man fills more and more the landscape with various types of technical constructions, intervenes more and more directly and indirectly in the environment in which he lives.

What we called above a relative decrease of the space and acceleration of the development of the social system, by an intensified penetration of man and his creations into the geosphere, into the landscape, means in practice an extreme urbanization process, with a further development of industrialization, technicization of agriculture, forest economy, it is manifest by crowding the inner urban transport, of the daily and weekly commuting to work, by a regular and seasonal overfilling of the communications by a current of means of transport which, however, means also the pollution of the atmosphere in always wider areas, increase of noise, contamination of waters, but on the other hand also an increased demand for new water resources, etc. The change of the life style and existential considerations put into movement always greater and greater masses of people for the search of oasis of silence and rest, i. e. requirement for new recreational areas are increasing, new requirements for growing, for raw materials, etc. Opposite to it stands the limited Earth and its resources. Dynamization of the above indicated processes of the social sphere has been manifest mainly during the recent years by the growth of crisis situations beginning with the ecological, on to the raw material, energetic, hydrologic, etc. A very significant aspect is also the tendency of a relative decrease of the geographical space as a result of extremely growing speeds of transport means (space as a function of speed movement). Only a phenomenological or singular scientific approach to the solution of tasks is no longer sufficient. A multiform, integrating approach of sciences and an interdisciplinary cooperation become indispensable.

The scientific-technical revolution in the field of science is manifest by

changes whose bearing so far is not fully grasped and valued. The changes on the one hand reflect on the theoretical-methodological platform, and partly also on the problem one (the occurrence of new science disciplines) and they will necessarily appear also in the hierarchical organization of the socio-practical significance of sciences. Many synthetizing disciplines, considered recently as obsolete, unpractical, non exact, educational, academic, etc., are vehemently changing even in keeping the traditional object of study. From the classical disciplines we can indicate, for instance, economy, sociology, psychology, demography, ecology, etc. The objects of their study remain the same in the setting as in the past, but with far more crammed, more variable and more dynamic content. A revolutionary change, however, undergoes also their theoretical-methodological platform, due to the enormous development of the exact sciences, mainly mathematics, physics, chemistry and also of great quantities of analytical material, aquired by specialized branches of natural, technical and social sciences, growth of technical means for experiment, observation and evaluation of data, etc. The absorption of these facts and their synthesis, integral theoretical-methodological interpretation open to the classical and newly occurring synthetic disciplines new horizons for a general systems approach to the study of their object from the theoretical side and practical stand point.

It appears always more obviously that what was considered as known, as without perspective from the stand point of further research is often a terra incognita in the sense of new integrating approaches.

Conformably with the internal need of science arises also the social-practical requirement of an integration approach to the solution of problems, emerging from the above mentioned changes. The scientific-technical means which the specialized science gave and is giving in man's hands, require the creation of an adequate regulating apparel, if they are not to turn against man himself.

What is the position of present geography with regard to the above indicated changes of the world and to the trend of sciences? In replying this question it is barely possible to avoid the statement that geography lags considerably behind the generally very rapid development of sciences. Let us mention again here the vagueness in the conception of its object, i. e. the geographic sphere, or landscape, resulting from the unadequate conception definition, the lack of adequate theoretical-methodological basis to know and interpret this object. It is why geography has not an adequate application and position in the social practice.

Has geography the space and chance to contribute to the knowledge of the very complicated system Earth-man with regard to the content and progress of other science presently at all? The positive answer to this question is implicitly comprised in the preceding paragraphs. Explicitly it is given by the existence of the geographic sphere, or landscape as an objective reality. The individual elements of this hybrid physico-biologico-social system are studied by the specialized geoscience, biologic, technical and humanities disciplines, as well as by the specialized branches of geography. We know very little on the landscape from the entire systems stand point. Is this problem possibly solved by ecology, or regional science, or by another discipline? Each of these synthesis approaches is marked by a concentration to a certain aspect of the landscape sphere and it is why it cannot represent the geographic synthesis. If

geography is not solve the landscape problem, the society will be obliged to create a scientific apparatus even under another name to solve these actually existential problems.

In the above given context therefore the situation in geography appears incredibly illogical if we have to appeal for the revival of regional geography, if it is to discuss, whether to solve the problem which is the condition of its existence as a science. Certainly we have not in mind regional geography in the form of description of countries, enumeration of rivers, their length and breadth, description of mountain ranges and towns, or voyages of *discoveries*, etc. What matters is the return to the regional landscape syntheses, true on a new level corresponding to the present state of science.

SEARCH FOR ISSUES

The scientific instruments of geography were not in a position so far to grasp adequately and to explain the object of their study in its complexity and dynamics. Should geography give it up for this? We think it is necessary to search for the issues, new ways. A whole series of geographers mature presently undoubtedly under the influence of an amazing development mainly of the so-called exact sciences and techniques and precision or quantification process in sciences in general related to it, to the search for issues even in geography. An important motive is also the development of ecology.

We are not going to speculate on studies which mechanically, epigonally are taking over the procedures of other sciences, and predominantly in individual specialized branches of geography whose substance lies in the analytical position with regard to the geographic sphere as a system. This similar so-called mathematization, or exactisation is so to say in a blind valley. It appears the quantification aspects and mechanical transfers of various procedures, experiments for models, etc., are little successful for the reason that graphical elements worked with, are taken over as a rule from the classification and systematics of traditional geography and are in most part unsuitable for similar „modern“ operations. Neglected as a rule was the process of formalization, classification and systematics in the in the exact conception level, etc. Similar approaches were proudly called also as the direction of *theoretical geography*, though, as a rule, it was not a theory, but usually but new methodic processes or at most certain partial theoretical conclusions on certain elements or aspects of the landscape sphere. Geographers with this objective looked sceptically at the possibility to form a widely founded theoretical-methodological basis of geography and consequently at the possibility to study landscape systems.

Our evaluation of the indicated objective of geography does not want to be its condemnation. Undoubtedly it brought up many new facts, but it is only one side of geographical approach, meaning an extreme progress of the analytical line, in neglecting the geographical synthesis. It is why it could not and cannot be an outlet. It is at the same interesting that largely founded theoretical impulses, formulated by neef E. (1967) remained the supporters of the above mentioned *theoretical geography* practically unnoticed.

The issue is to be searched for on a far larger basis, in the progress of the synthetical-theoretical line, in the transfer of philosophy of the contemporary

science, in its theoretical-methodological conception, in the transfer of mathematical logics and consideration, not in the mechanical transfer of formulas and technical processes from other sciences. In diffusing the facts from other sciences it is necessary to bear in mind continuously one's object — geosphere, and as an object rapidly developing, considerably differing from the object geography of the past. The object remains constant, but its content changes strongly. In the convergence of facts of individual branches of geography to fundamental problems of the geographical reality there is a perspective for overcoming the present state.

It cannot be said that in geography of the present century a similar direction would have completely disappeared. Unfortunately it lagged strongly behind. A critical evaluation by remarkable representatives of conception of a traditional geography Hettner A. and Hattshorn R. from new positions appears already in Schaefer F. (1953), then Bunge W. (1962), Berry B. J. (1964), Davies W.K.D. (1966), etc. It is necessary to mention also several works trying to find a new philosophy of geography, in part by traditional, in part by non traditional approach, as that of Anučin V. A. (1963), Bobek H. — Schmitthüsen J. (1957, 1967), Carol H. (1963) and mainly Neef E. (1967), etc.

This trend is developing strongly mainly during the recent years in the European geography, but gradually it gains ground also on the world scale. Let us mention here for instance the development of the modern theory on landscape, or geoecology mainly in the GDR, theory on landscape and the constructive geography in the U.S.S.R. unwinding from it, the direction of study of landscape syntheses in the ČSSR, the revival of a complex geography in France, Great Britain and elsewhere.

Our brief outline of the position of the present geography within the frame of sciences and its ability to help to solve highly actual problems of the society does not want to lead into a pessimistic conclusion. On the contrary.

There are periods, in which to a certain science open new horizons unsuspected before. They are periods when the science must change its strategy, when it is viewing the object of its research from a new stand point. The science is newly formulating its fundamental problems. It anticipates new solutions. Such that allow to penetrate to the core of the problem. In a similar phase is also the present geography. It is its primary task to know these changes, to find an issue from the place where the old way is closed. If the present geography succeeds to know the causes of reverses of the traditional geography, then it can solve the old unsolvable problems in the new transformed position.

For the geography a similar unsolvable problem by traditional methods were the landscape, the regional syntheses. In the context with the whole development of sciences, a purposeful transformation of facts from them, are the given objective preconditions to solve this problem on a new exact level. We outline in a concrete position some aspects of new theoretical-methodological approaches in the two following studies.

To conclude we take the liberty to make one more remark which symbolizes our stand point to the objective of geography. The frequently cited caricature (from Curry C — 1967, see also Haggett P. — 1972) of kidnapping geography by quantifactus from the hands of qualifactus misses almost completely the mark. Should it not be kidnapped by syntheticus?

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GEOGRAFIA A MENIACI SA SVET

V predloženej štúdií, ako aj v nasledujúcich dvoch príspevkoch od tých istých autorov sa diskutujú 3 základné okruhy problémov: otázka ujasnenia predmetu geografie, aspekty formovania jej teoreticko-metodologickej bázy a uplatnenia v spoločenskej praxi. Sú stavané ako príspevok do diskusie na XXIV. kongres IGU v Tokiu k otázke rejuvenácie regionálnej geografie.

V prvom príspevku sa zameriavame na otázky geografickej syntézy vo všeobecnejšej polohe, ďalšie dva príspevky sa venujú hlbšie špeciálnym otázkam teórie geografie, resp. možnostiam jej aplikácie. Z obsahu prvej štúdie v tomto krátkom resumé vynímame aspoň niekoľko myšlienok.

Z dlhšej a bohatej histórie geografie a konečne i z jej názvu jednoznačne vyplýva, že zemský povrch ako *domov* človeka bol, a i dnes zostáva výskumným objektom geografie, podmienkou jej existencie ako vedy. Tento objekt geografie sa objavuje u rôznych autorov pod odlišnými názvami ako geografické prostredie, geosféra, geografická sféra, krajinná sféra, geosystém, krajina, geoeokosféra atď. Značí rôznosť názvov aj rôznosť výskumného objektu geografie? Domnievame sa, že rozpornosť názvov medzi geografmi nie je v otázke samého objektu, ale v chápaní tohto objektu.

Geografia vlastne až do 19. stor. chápala svoj objekt veľmi voľne a nedospela ďalej ako k jeho ostenzivnej až empirickej definícii. Konštituovanie geografie v 19. stor. ako modernej vedy značilo síce pokrok v definícii jej objektu do synkretickej úrovne, avšak nedospelo k exaktnej pojmovej definícii. Svoj objekt poníma ako niečo *viac* ako sumu prvkov. Pravda, pre toto *viac* chýbala exaktná formulácia. Chýbanie jednoznač-

ného definovania svojho objektu sa potom nevyhnutne odrazilo nielen v používaní rôznych názvov preň, ale „žiaľ, i v rôznorodom, často rozpornom chápaní obsahu predmetu. To a ďalšie dôvody viedlo postupne k hlbšej a hlbšej špecializácii geografie a na druhej strane až takmer k opusteniu štúdia krajiny ako kryštalizačného jadra, ako substancie výskumného poľa geografie.

V ďalšom texte autori analyzujú zmeny, ktoré nastávajú v krajine v podmienkach VTR i progresívne zmeny v štruktúre a koncepcii vied, ako aj ich vplyv na súčasnú geografiu. Zdôrazňujú naliehavosť potrieb riešiť narastajúce disproporcie vo vzťahu človek—prostredie a zároveň nezastupiteľnosť geografie pri riešení týchto problémov. Aby geografia mohla plniť úlohy, ktoré pred ňou stoja, je nevyhnutné ujasniť si predmet svojho výskumu v pojmovej úrovni a vybudovať teoreticko-metodologickú bázu na úrovni súčasných vied. Autori v závere článku prinášajú viaceré námety k otázkam novej teoretickej základne geografie, najmä krajinných syntéz a naznačujú i viaceré aplikačné aspekty geografie, akými sú potenciál krajiny, geografické diagnózy a prognózy a pod.