

GEOGRAPHY IN SPAIN
(1970-1990)

PART ONE

**The Organization of Academic and Professional
Geography. The Geographical Institutions.**

1. GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION

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1. GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION

1.1. GEOGRAPHY TEACHING IN SPANISH UNIVERSITIES

A. LÓPEZ-ONTIVEROS

An examination of this subject entails a certain risk at a time when we are in the middle of reorganizing the system of awarding degrees; it is the most important reorganization since the nineteenth century, as it will mean not a partial adjustment, but a change of model.

However, except for occasional references, our study does not go back beyond the Civil War. The background to the present situation is to be found in developments since then; and clearly it is the present situation that concerns us mainly here.

CURRICULA AND RECENT EXPANSION IN SPANISH UNIVERSITIES.

As is the case in other European states, the roots of the Spanish university system are to be found in the Middle Ages. The University of Salamanca was founded in 1218, and Valladolid in 1346. During this era, and during the Renaissance, *Siglo de Oro* and the Enlightenment, Spanish universities developed as public institutions; they were thus created, accredited, encouraged and organized by Royal authority. This characteristic has lasted until the present day.

More recently, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, three legal landmarks of great importance have shaped the course of the universities. These were the *Ley Moyano* (the Public Instruction Act) of 1857, the Spanish University Development Act of 1943, and the General Education Act of 1970 (14/1970). Although naturally universities had their individual features, one can point out certain characteristics which applied to all Spanish universities over this long period:

a) there was stability and little expansion in terms of numbers of universities. Most were either medieval or modern in origin - the Central University in Madrid, Barcelona, Granada, La Laguna, Oviedo, Salamanca, Santiago, Seville, Valencia, Valladolid and Zaragoza - with the exception of Murcia, founded in 1915. This also meant that there was little growth in student numbers. They were

all public universities, except for two private Jesuit universities, Deusto, founded in 1886, and Comillas in 1935.

b) there was a high degree of centralization, a vertical bureaucratic structure, and a total absence of autonomy. Universities depended economically and academically on the Ministry of Education.

c) as a result, curricula were absolutely uniform, both in terms of the length of courses and in the subjects taught. Degrees or national diplomas were validated, not by the university that awarded them but by the State Government. The Government turned them into either automatic passports to jobs in the Civil Service or a kind of public authorization to practise traditional professions such as medicine, law or engineering, among others. (International Council for Educational Development, 1987). With this system, obviously, the subject of geography gave no official title.

Ortega y Gasset's well-known work *Misión de la Universidad* (the University's mission) was published in 1939. Significantly, the origin of the book was a lecture entitled *Sobre reforma universitaria* (On University Reform); in the book he criticizes this bureaucratic and «professionalized» system (Ortega y Gasset, 1955). More recently, the International Council for Educational Development summarized and criticized what it calls the «Napoleonic model» in the following way:

In the old system, the power of decision over all university matters, both academic and organizational or managerial, was monopolized by the Central Government. Decisions were taken by the Ministry of Education and Science in Madrid. The only exception of any importance was a kind of subtle autocratic power exercised by a handful of professors who governed the university faculties as if they were dukedoms. In principle all the universities were equal. All the teaching centres followed the same curriculum, prepared down to the last detail by the Ministry. All the universities awarded the same «national degrees» approved and validated by the Government. These degrees were passports to positions of authority in the Civil Service, in the traditional professions, in the educational system and in politics. The teachers were Civil Servants, selected, appointed and paid by the Ministry; there was a uniform salary structure. The Ministry drew up the budget for each university and kept watch over the internal expenditure, in accordance with a common formula. At best, research projects were awarded only small quantities, as universities were considered to be teaching institutions in which research was of little or no importance. University Rectors were seldom more than representative figureheads with practically no say in decisions about academic or managerial aspects of the institutions that they presided. The real Rector was the Minister. (International Council 1987, 43)

From 1970 onwards Spanish universities underwent considerable changes, the most important being the following:

1. The number of students shot up: from 166,797 in 1960-61, to 329,149 in 1970-71, to over a million in 1988-89. The increase was not gradual, as in other European countries, but very sudden. This was due to the demographic and economic situation of Spain, and also to changes in social stratification (access of women, and of mature students to the university). (International Council, 1987).

2. By 1989, the number of universities had increased from the dozen historic universities to 39. There were now 998 centres, 281 faculties, 27 university colleges, 74 UNED associated centres, 52 senior technical colleges, and 144 university schools. It is not possible to make a breakdown of the situation of Spanish universities; nonetheless, we should mention some of their key features. On the one hand, universities and centres are widely dispersed, in keeping with the practically federal structure of the Spanish state. Although university services are available throughout the whole of the territory, the result of this is that the university network may also be fragmented to an absurd and inefficient degree. On the other hand, there is a concentration of resources in Madrid and Barcelona and the few other universities founded before the Civil War.

3. As a result, and due to the advances of science and the fragmentation of disciplines, new faculties were created and existing faculties were divided. In particular, the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts was divided into Philosophy and Education Sciences, Philology and Geography and History. As we will see, this division had a marked effect on the development of our discipline, geography.

In spite of the intentions of the General Education Act of 1970, the rampant growth of Spanish universities soon became chaotic. The *Ley de Reforma Universitaria* (University Reform Act, or L.R.U.), passed in 1983, was designed to remedy this. The key of the system that it imposed was university autonomy, recognized in Article 27 of the Constitution, described in depth in Articles 1 and 3 of the L.R.U., and upheld by two Constitutional Tribunal rulings. This university autonomy, more a fundamental right than an «institutional guarantee», has two sides: it means freedom of teaching, research and study for university students, and it also means that institutions have the power of self-regulation (Leguina Villa, 1989). The structure and content of university degree courses and curricula are undergoing thorough modification. We are now fully involved in a process which will multiply the number of degree courses, make curricula more modular and flexible, and, we believe, more in line with those currently in operation in Europe.

GEOGRAPHY IN SPANISH UNIVERSITIES FROM 1940 UNTIL THE 1973 CURRICULUM.

After this general outline of the evolution, structure and special problems of Spanish universities, we will now move on to examine recent developments in the specific case of geography. We will concentrate on three periods: the post-Civil War period, from 1940 onwards; the period after the 1973 Curriculum; and the recent period, in which the discipline has expanded fully. We will finish with a study of the creation of and proposals for curricula to come, and their current situation.

After the Civil War, according to Capel's study (Capel, 1976), geography was not only retained as a subject in secondary schools and centres of higher education (in business schools and teacher training colleges) but also in university faculties (there was a Professorship of Geography in Philosophy and Arts Faculties and a Professorship of Physical Geography in Science Faculties). In the area of research, the Juan Sebastián Elcano Institute was set up in 1940, with its delegate sections. In this year the Centre for Applied Geography, dependent on

the CSIC in Zaragoza, and the Institute for Studies of the Pyrenees were also set up. As Franco's régime considered geography as a «vehicle for nationalist ideologies» and an instrument for propagating the «unity of the fatherland», «geography was soon assigned an important role» (Capel); certainly geography was considered more important than other social sciences (Capel, 1976). In my opinion, however, the privileged status of geography after the Civil War should not be exaggerated; many declarations of the time were merely rhetorical in nature and geography still did not award a national degree, which is what really established the courses taught at universities. Continuing the nineteenth century tradition, geography «epistemologically had not only failed to cut its umbilical cord with history, but territory was still considered the 'theatre' of events, and geography as the «daughter» of history» (López Ontiveros, 1986, 4).

In the 1944 Plan, during the five-year course in the Philosophy and Arts degree there were only three geographical subjects: «General Geography», «Geography of Spain and of the Hispanic Peoples» and «Descriptive Geography of the World». Until 1955, when the University of Zaragoza instituted specializations in an experimental curriculum, there were no specialized courses in geography in Spanish universities; the first such plans in the University of Barcelona were in 1968.

In the meantime geographical research continued in the work of the institutes mentioned above and in the journals *Estudios Geográficos* of 1940, which replaced the *Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid*, *Pirineos*, 1944, *Geographica*, 1954, *Cuadernos de Geografía*, 1964, *Revista de Geografía*, 1967, *Papeles de la Universidad de Murcia*, 1968, *Cuadernos de Geografía*, Granada (later *Cuadernos Geográficos*) 1971 (Capel, 1976).

On the eve of the large-scale restructuring of the Curriculum of 1973, geography in Spain was one of the more modest disciplines at the level both of teaching and research: «its level has not yet reached that of other national schools of greater tradition». Although the influences of German, English, American and Portuguese geography are clear, the predominant ideas came from the French school «both from the point of view of the overall conception of the discipline and as far as working methods and techniques were concerned». This resulted in the «wide acceptance of the conception of geography as a science of synthesis and the importance given to local and regional studies», in spite of the great influence of history, the use of methods of an empirical and deductive nature, and the poverty of theoretical reflection. Geography was essentially academic and teaching-oriented, professional geographers being few and far between in private businesses, the administration and planning (Capel, 1976).

On the whole, Capel is very critical of this situation. With the benefit of hindsight, my appraisal is less harsh. The departmental structure of the times and the problem of the teaching staff, which Capel examines at length, should not occupy us, since they were by no means exclusive to geography; on the contrary, they were the manifestation of the chaotic situation, both academically and politically, of Spanish universities. In among the general atmosphere of apathy there was a clear desire for excellence and critical reflection on the part of the young geographers, and a group of teachers created Spanish geography as it is today by their hard work. Among them we should mention the names of Terán, Casas Torres and Solé Sabaris in the first generation, and their pupils López Gómez, García Fernández, Floristán, Vilá, Cabo, Bosque, Rosselló and Quirós.

SPANISH GEOGRAPHY IN THE 80's.

As a consequence of the spectacular growth of Spanish universities and the undertakings of the 1970 General Education Act, university geography in Spain was affected deeply by two structural modifications. Firstly, faculties of Geography and History were created, in which geography became a section, together with the sections of Art, History or the History of America; secondly, from 1973 onwards in most universities a curriculum was implemented based on a *Diplomatura* (Part One) course of three years, common to all sections, a *Licenciatura* (Part Two) course of two years with specific geographical subjects, and Doctorate studies.

This new situation, along with the growth of Spanish universities in general had two key effects: the growth of geography, and, for the first time in Spain the recognition, albeit not total, of a degree in the subject; it is this degree that confers distinction and efficacy in the world of Spanish studies. We can verify a great deal of this by reading an article by Bosque (BOSQUE, 1981) in which he deals with these themes with data that refer to 1980. He estimates that in Spain in 1979-80 there were some 1,500 students in the Geography specialization; 400 finished the *Licenciatura* (Part Two) course, and 12,000 were studying the *Diplomatura* (Part One) course. There were 268 university teachers of Geography.

The new curricula were quite varied but included in the *Diplomatura* «General Geography» (in some cases divided into «Physical Geography» and «Human Geography») «Geography of Spain» and «Descriptive Geography» as compulsory subjects; in a few cases there were also optional subjects. At the level of specialization, as we said, all the subjects are of a geographical nature, and although some are compulsory and others are optional, they can be classified in four groups in terms of their content: informative, conceptual - theoretical or epistemological - didactic and instrumental, or techniques for research or teaching. According to Bosque it appears that in terms of subjects the curricula implemented in a fairly subjective way could be classified as follows: a) in Castile and Leon, the plans were strictly traditional, and informative and compulsory subjects predominated; b) in Catalonia there was great receptiveness to new currents, with a large number of optional courses and conceptual, didactic and instrumental disciplines; c) intermediate, though tending towards the first; d) intermediate, though tending towards the Catalan model.

As for research, the number of geographical journals in circulation grew: in 1980 there were eleven. In the content and articles of these journals there was an almost total predominance of studies of a local or regional nature until 1971; from 1971 to 1980 the situation changed radically: «studies of a local or regional nature were relegated to a position of secondary importance, and studies of General Geography and, to an extent, of Epistemology and Method took their place». In general terms, this evolution is also perceptible in doctoral theses and in the bibliography used by researchers. Bosque states in relation to this and in relation to the structure of the curricula that one can deduce «in a broad sense, the influence of the French school ... on Spanish geographical research. In contrast, the importance of Anglo-Saxon and Germanic lines of research is as yet very limited».

This author's conclusions are of great interest to us a guide to this period:

«In a short period of time, scientific Geography in Spain has reached significant levels of development..... (both) in terms of the number of teachers, and in the number of students and graduates.... none of the sciences that could be considered to be immediate rivals - Sociology, Ethnology, Anthropology - have reached the same levels. Nonetheless, if we look at its content, its objectives and its concerns, we see that Spanish Geography does not seem to have reached a level comparable with that of the same science in France, the Anglo-Saxon countries, Italy or Germany. Its attachment to certain guidelines which some consider very traditional may be a basic reason for this. The privileged attention given to teacher training, and the neglect - sometimes more apparent than real - of other professional activities not related to teaching, are also essential factors. The result of this is the general sensation of dissatisfaction and crisis that now exists among the Spanish geographical community» (Bosque, 1981, p.199)

In my opinion, the growth of the discipline in those years depended totally on two external factors: the spectacular growth of Spanish universities, which naturally affected Geography, and the recognition of a specialization of Geography inside the Geography and History Section; as it was now partially assigned an official degree, it received a seal of recognition, without which it could make no headway in Spanish society. Nonetheless, the reasons for this growth require a more thorough analysis.

ANALYSIS OF THE RECENT EXPANSION OF SPANISH GEOGRAPHY.

By 1986 there had been little change. However, a special of the Bulletin of the Association of Spanish Geographers, published on the occasion of the Regional Conference of the I.G.U. held in Spain, contributed greatly to the data on Spanish Geography. This publication contained information about the Departments that existed, their preferred lines of research and their structure, geographical journals, subjects in all the curricula and a synthesis - by Departments as well - of all this information. It is a great source, a more or less faithful description of the state of Spanish Geography in 1986, and to a certain extent of its state today. Although we cannot examine it in every detail, we can give a general account of what it says. (A.G.E., 1986).

Geography is a discipline taught in all Spanish universities, and in most of them (there are five exceptions) it is a section in its own right inside the specialization of Geography and History. It is also studied in two Research Institutes, the «Juan Sebastián Elcano» and the Institute of Applied Geography, under the umbrella of the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (Higher Council for Scientific Research, C.S.I.C.), the most important research organization in the country.

In each university Geography, inside the Faculties of Philosophy and Arts or the Faculty of Geography and History, is organized in Departments. There are 38 departments in all; in the larger universities, given their size, there are several departments.

Hundreds of doctoral theses have been presented since 1970, and thousands of students have graduated. 23 geographical journals are published in Spain; this total suggests dispersion but shows the vitality of geography that we mentioned

before. It bears witness to the lines of research of the Departments and all the specializations that exist in the subject.

Furthermore, the practice of geography has expanded outside the academic world and penetrated organizations - both national, and those that correspond to the autonomous regions - of territorial planning and administration in which the profession is exercised.

It is clear that the growth of Spanish geography is closely linked to, and contemporary with, three things: the growth of the discipline on a world-wide scale, the economic growth of Spain, and the opening of Spanish universities to large numbers. In this way we could claim that to a great extent it has been due to external factors. Perhaps, as the starting point was very low, this growth has been relatively greater than in other countries and greater than that of other disciplines with which it has lived in close contact in Spain. We should mention other factors of importance in the Spanish geographical boom: the need for spatial understanding and analysis of a territory like Spain which has undergone brutal changes as a result of the growth of the economy and of tourism, among other things: the process of organization of the autonomous regions in Spain, which has uprooted the political and administrative structures of 1833; the didactic force of geography, compared with other more bookish, less attractive disciplines; the epistemological concern of the geographer, less evident and convulsive in more traditional, stable subjects.

However, although no one can deny this growth, it is also true that few Spanish geographers contest the fact that this process suffers from many limitations and disproportions, because the growth has been irregular and incoherent. In the centrifugal process, although necessary and enriching, there is a risk of provincialisms and autonomism at any price. In general, Spanish geography has lived without external contacts, without integration in the international geographical institutions (especially, the I.G.U.). Due to lack of coordination and isolation, there may have been - and there may still be today - a waste of scientific resources both in terms of infrastructure and intellectual production. The growth of Geography within the university has not been accompanied by growth at other educational levels (in primary and secondary schools). For this reason there are hardly any teaching jobs available; like other areas, these jobs are in danger due to the general economic crisis.

Like so many other areas of life in Spain, Geography has grown enormously over recent decades. This is undeniably an achievement, even though there are occasional traces - inevitably, perhaps - of a certain «disorder and incoherence» (López Ontiveros, 1986).

The curricula also reflect this disorder and incoherence in the growth of Geography in Spain. There were neither unified criteria nor even coordination in their creation, and they present very little conceptual and terminological accuracy in their subjects. This is clear from the number of subjects - 86 - which is excessive if we bear in mind that the specialization is a two-year course. These disciplines can be brought together under the following headings:

1. «General Geography» and introductory areas of Geography.
2. «Physical Geography» and «Human Geography» which are widely accepted.

3. «Geography of Spain», either «General» or «Regional», taught almost everywhere, and «Geography of the Region».

4. «Descriptive Geography», only accepted as such by half the universities, symbolically present under other partial denominations; titles such as Geography of the EC or of South America are conspicuous by their absence. This is at variance with the so often mentioned regionalist tradition in Spanish Geography, and as we will see, it is also at variance with the later implementation of «Regional Geographical Analysis».

5. Under «Physical Geography» «Geomorphology» and «Climatology» are taught almost everywhere. «Biogeography» and Hydrography» are much rarer.

6. Under «Human Geography», «Population Geography», «Agrarian» (the term «rural» is not consolidated yet) «Urban» and «Economic» are widely taught. Not so common is «Industrial Geography» and «Tertiary Geography» is almost non-existent.

7. Instrumental and conceptual subjects can be divided into «Techniques» and those that deal with «Concept, Method, Theory, History and Epistemology of Geography», which frequently appear with different titles and contents, and «Regional Geographical Analysis and «Regional planning», which we only find sporadically.

Our conclusions on the 1973 curricula are slightly different from other opinions described above:

a) the plans are based on introductory disciplines («General Geography» «Physical Geography» and «Human Geography») «Geography of Spain» and the most consolidated parts of «Human» and «Physical Geography».

b) they are based to a lesser extent on «Descriptive Geography», on the region in question and on a wide range of instrumental and conceptual subjects.

c) there is very little representation of «Regional Geographical Analysis» in its theoretical form, or «Applied Geography» or «Regional planning».

GENESIS AND PROPOSALS FOR THE NEW CURRICULA FOR THE NEW GEOGRAPHY DEGREE.

Both the subject of geography in particular and the Spanish university system in general have undergone vertiginous and uneven growth. Nineteenth century characteristics persist in their regulations, structure and curricula, and the reforms during the seventies were only partial. Consequently the panorama of both the university system and geography as a subject seems totally chaotic. An attempt to impose order in keeping with the principles of the new democratic regime established in the 1978 Constitution was made *ex novo*. The provisions of the 1983 University Reform Act are especially interesting for Geography, as far as its areas of knowledge and curricula are concerned.

Areas of knowledge in Geography.

With the object of creating Departments and setting up Commissions for selecting civil service teaching staff «areas of knowledge are understood as fields of

cognizance characterized by the homogeneity of their object of knowledge, a common historical tradition and the existence of communities of researchers at home and abroad». The areas of knowledge in Geography are established as «Regional Geographical Analysis», «Physical Geography» and «Human Geography»¹.

In principle, the simplification and rationality of this solution seem praiseworthy, since university teachers of Geography had been giving courses with titles that had no homogeneity or logic whatever². Nonetheless, the solution adopted is controversial for several reasons. For some people, the only area of knowledge admissible was «Geography» as its premature division contradicts the historical tradition of Geography in Spain as a unit, the tradition that it has always presented; also, it has no precise specializations and is very vulnerable to competition from similar disciplines which may be more vigorous and coherent. This indeed is true in the case of the concession of the research resources to teaching staff in Physical Geography, dominated by geologists. Nevertheless, it seems absurd to set up a degree called «Geography» as if there were only one area of knowledge, or as if in «Chemistry» there were only one type of chemistry, or in «Law» only one type of law.

Although there have been no major objections as far as the areas of «Physical Geography» and «Human Geography» are concerned, there have been problems with «Regional Geographical Analysis». This area aims to revive a traditional part of Spanish geography and lays claim to subject matter that other sciences such as Economics also demand. However it is indeed difficult to mark its boundaries clearly; «Physical Geography» and «Human Geography» can carry out regional analysis and frequently do so. The reverse is also true.

In conclusion we may say that the growth of Geography in Spain was so fast that its cultivators lacked a common and specific historical tradition which would have helped them to claim clearly defined areas of knowledge.

The Group XIV proposal for the Geography curriculum.

The University Reform Act lays down that «the Government ... will establish which degrees are official and valid throughout the country and will also establish the general guidelines of the curricula to be followed in order to obtain and convalidate the degree». (Art. 28).»The universities will elaborate and pass their curricula, in which they will indicate the subjects, both compulsory and optional, which are to be studied in order to obtain the degree». (Art. 29). We should point out, however, that the first phase - Article 28 - is practically complete, and that the second - Article 29 - has hardly begun. As a result, curricula for Geography can only be analyzed in part.

For the elaboration of these plans, the Ministry for Education and Science created «Groups of experts»; geographers were in Group XIV, which also included Philosophy, History, History of Art, Musicology, Documentation and Archives and Religious Sciences. The group proposed the creation of nine Degree courses and two *Diplomaturas*; among the Degree courses there appeared a «Degree in Geography» and a «Degree in History, Geography and History of Art». At the same time, the core subjects proposed for the degree of Geography were:

Primer Ciclo (Part One): «Physical Geography», «Human Geography», «Techniques in Geography», «Geography of Spain», Regional Geographical Analysis», «Geomorphology», and «Urban Geography».

Segundo Ciclo (Part Two): «Climatology», «Rural Geography», «Theory and methods in Geography» «Geography in the EEC».

In the degree «History, Geography and History of Art» there were only three core subjects from Geography: «Physical Geography», «Human Geography», «Geography of Spain». There were a larger number, perhaps excessively so, of History subjects.

As one of the experts in Group XIV, I know all the details behind the proposals; here are some observations with reference to the degree in Geography:

1. The most important point was the creation, for the first time, of a degree in Geography, recognizing the genuine, independent nature of the discipline and its personality within the scientific world. As a result, Geography will develop scientifically and be transmitted through teaching without the support of other sciences. This support was of debatable value, even if the historical reasons behind it were easily explained.

2. The fundamental aims of the degree in «History, Geography and History of Art» were, from our point of view, to ensure that Geography was present in *bachillerato* (Secondary School) teaching, since the degree would train teachers for this area, and to enable geographers to continue teaching Geography in small universities and University Colleges in cases in which the size of the staff did not allow them to teach a specific degree in the discipline. This degree was not accepted by the Ministry for Education and Science; at the moment it seems that it will be substituted by an even more general one, «Humanities» in which there is only one core subject from Geography: «Human Geography».

3. The core subjects for the degree in Geography were proposed as such because they were generally considered to be consolidated, epistemologically basic, and accepted by all the geographers (we may recall what was said about the 1973 curricula). There are innovatory subjects and others which are contemporary in nature, and less defined; it was felt that the universities could include them in the range of compulsory and optional subjects.

In this way, the proposal aims at a certain balance between introductory subjects which belong in the *Diplomatura*, and other «content» subjects which are considered fundamental, and one instrumental subject to guarantee a certain «technical» character in the *Diplomatura*. There is another which allows theoretical and epistemological reflection at the end of the *Licenciatura*. It also aims at a scrupulous balance between subjects assigned to the three areas of knowledge; although their implementation was recent, they had created a series of interests in Spanish Geography which could not be ignored (López Ontiveros, 1987).

The alternative proposals by the universities.

The proposal of Group XIV was then analyzed by the universities, who made 29 alternative proposals and observations, which are worth examining here (Consejo de Universidades, 1988).

Degree. It was accepted unanimously that the *Licenciatura* should be called «Geography». Many felt that there should be a *Primer Ciclo* with a first degree, which would be called, significantly, «Diploma in Geography (Territorial Analysis)» This is the first sign of an approach which stresses the applied character of the curriculum. Nevertheless, the Ministry for Education and Science dismissed this *Diplomatura* unilaterally.

Core subjects and structure of the Degree. The desire for a structure of three years for *Diplomatura* and two years for *Licenciatura* was also practically unanimous; it was suggested that core subjects should be reduced to 30% of the course content, whereas in the previous proposal they had been made up 40%.

Core disciplines: The following were generally accepted:

«Physical Geography», «Human Geography», «Theory and Methods», and «Techniques in Geography» (as such, or under other names). The following did not reach general acceptance as core subjects: «Regional Geographical Analysis», «Geography of Spain», «Geography of the EEC», and different parts of Physical Geography and Human Geography («Geomorphology», «Climatology», «Urban Geography», «Rural Geography», and «Population Geography», which did not appear in the Group XIV proposal).

«Regional planning» has made considerable headway, as have other branches of Applied Geography, in line with the current trends in favour of this applied subjects. This conception is clear too in the proposal of the Association of Spanish Geographers, after the study carried out by a Commission, whose conclusions are as follows: *Primer Ciclo* : «Regional Geographical Analysis», «Physical Geography», «Human Geography» and «Techniques in Geography»; *Segundo Ciclo* : «Applied Physical Geography», «Applied Human Geography» «Regional planning», and «Theory of Geography».

In practice, therefore, Spanish geographers want the degree in Geography to have three main bases: a) Introductory subjects in the *Diplomatura* «Regional Geographical Analysis», «Physical Geography», «Human Geography»; b) «Techniques in Geography» and Theory and Methods in Geography»; c) «Regional planning», and «Applied Physical and Human Geography». On the other hand they reject - and this is the great divergence from the Group XIV proposal - different parts of Geography specialized in terms of content, and «Descriptive Geography» and «Geography of Spain» for the core subjects.

The degree in Geography according to its general guidelines.

After diverse alternatives the Royal Decree 1447/1990, of 26 October, established «the University degree of *Licenciado* in Geography, official and valid throughout the country and will also establish the general guidelines of the curricula to be followed in order to obtain and convalidate the degree». We should bear in mind particularly the objectives of the teaching, how the subjects are organized, and the list of core subjects.

As for the objectives, we should note the emphasis that is put on the applied and practical nature of the teaching, which «should provide sufficient scientific training in basic and applied aspects of Geography, analysis and «Regional planning».

As for the organization of the subjects, there are two parts, or cycles, *Primer Ciclo* (Part One) and *Segundo Ciclo* (Part Two), with an overall length of four or five years, each *Ciclo* being at least two years; the teaching load is at least 300 credits, 120 for each *Ciclo*. Besides these two cycles there is the Doctorate cycle, specifically for graduates, which comprises courses and seminars in the Doctorate programme (dealing with methodology and training in research techniques, basic subject matter of the discipline and areas related to the programme). The Doctorate will last at least two years, and the presentation and approval of a Doctoral Thesis consisting of an original research project¹.

Finally, the core subjects laid down for the *Licenciatura* in Geography for the *Primer Ciclo* are «Geography of Spain», «Geography of Europe», «Physical Geography», «Human Geography» and «Techniques in Geography». For the *Segundo Ciclo* they are «Applied Physical Geography», «Applied Human Geography» «Regional planning» and «Theories and Methods of Geography». As can be seen, these core subjects only vary in one aspect from the proposal of the A.G.E. - in my opinion, it is an improvement - «Regional Geographical Analysis» is replaced by «Geography of Spain» and «Geography of Europe». This is a partial concession to the initial proposal of Group XIV. I say «partial» because other «content» disciplines have disappeared from the list of core subjects, and the other applied guidelines of Geography have prevailed; this development will probably direct the study of the discipline along new and unexpected paths. In any case, we will have to wait until the end of 1993 before we see how Geography in Spanish universities develops; this is the deadline for the universities to finish their curricula for the discipline with all its basic and optional subjects.

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1.2. THE NEW CURRICULA AND TEACHING IN SPANISH UNIVERSITIES.

A. HERNANDO

POLITICAL CONTEXT

The democratic period that started in 1975, and the increasing links with liberal Europe are two key factors in the development of Spanish universities today, which present a clear break with the institution and regulations inherited from the past. Since 1982, with the Socialist Party's ascent to power and the passing of the University Reform Act the following year, we have seen a set of regulations and decrees that have tried to shape a new form of university education. This Act is the foundation of a new university system, aiming above all to satisfy the present and future demands of a society and an economy whose links with Western Europe grow stronger every day. It gives a great amount of autonomy to the institution and tries to make its structures flexible enough to adapt to a changing world. There is a notable increase in the number of disciplines that can award degrees; one of these is Geography. The regulations created by this Act affect teaching staff, students and also teaching and learning norms.

One of the most innovative new policies is the concession to the different universities of the right to design their own study plans in an autonomous fashion. In the past, all the universities followed plans laid down by the Administration. We are all aware that the new situation is exceptional and unprecedented.

The political pragmatism behind the new regulations explains the limitations of Humanistic studies. These studies have a long tradition in Mediterranean Europe and it is within this context that Geography has developed until the present. Now attention is given to applied studies and the offer of training and study has diversified; classes devoted to practical activities, and fresh subjects with a clear applied bent, such as Regional Planning have been incorporated.

The geographical community has welcomed all these changes. Its vitality is evident from the provision for courses and activities which aim to improve its image and to raise the level of recognition among the general public, thanks to the incorporation of teaching which until now have been barely associated with Geography. There are, though, certain clouds on the horizon: for example, the low numbers of students in this speciality, due to the lack of knowledge of its possibilities. This is the result of the limited and partially distorted image promoted in secondary education.

THE CURRICULA.

The creation of the degree of Geography («Boletín Oficial del Estado» November 20th, 1990) brought with it a partial design of the teaching involved in the subject. The number of credits - a new name for evaluating learning experiences

or teaching units - required to obtain the degree is 300. They can be attained over a minimum period of four years. To make it easier to convalidate degrees and studies from the different universities, or subjects in the case of students who change university, the Administration proposed a proportion of common credits of 30% for all study plans. The rest depend on the Statutes of each university; the universities are responsible for imposing a larger proportion of compulsory subjects and for allowing students to choose courses in the Geography specialization or in others. For example, the University of Barcelona has made 50% compulsory and 20% optional (to be chosen from any specialization). The remaining 30% must be chosen from the Geography courses offered on an optional basis every year to students, which are theoretical, regional, instrumental or applied subjects.

The subjects laid down by the Administration correspond proportionally to Physical Geography, Human Geography and Regional Geography (Geography of Spain and Geography of Europe). There are others, such as Theory and Methods of Geography, Techniques in Geography and Regional Planning. This set of subjects makes up the core syllabus that universities must offer in order to confer degrees in Geography. To this offer of 108 credits established by the Ministry we should add other subjects of both compulsory and optional nature, which are decided at the level of each individual university. The traditions of research and teaching in each department, the number of members in each department, the specializations of departments and teachers explain the existence of a very varied syllabus within the Spanish context. Subjects of diverse natures - theoretical, thematic, regional, methodological and instrumental (such as Cartography) - and of an applied nature, linked especially to Regional Planning, are the characteristics of modern Geography education; to these we should add other subjects that students choose from outside the Geography curriculum.

Future geographers are required to follow approximately 75 credits annually, 150 in each two-year cycle of their instruction and training. In terms of hours of class, this supposes some 750 hours per year. Roughly half of these classes must be practical in nature. Regulations lay down a minimum of 30% for practical classes; as we mentioned before, for Geography and other Humanities subjects, this is a great novelty. The maximum allowed for theoretical classes is fifteen hours per week; if we multiply this figure by the number of weeks in an academic year (30) we find the theory/practice ratio.

Until now in Spain, there have been no external examinations at the end of the course to standardize criteria and present an academic profile of each university. The legislation does not make provision for them either. Each centre, and not the State of the Ministry of Education - as was the case before - issues the degree in question. The teaching staff of each university determines the nature and depth of knowledge and experience necessary to earn the degree in Geography. We should remember that, due to the pragmatism behind all this legislation, the second study cycle is considered as preparation for professional practice.

Because of the lack of research into teaching and learning in university Geography it is difficult to have a generalized idea of the area or to speak of a dominant university model. However, the programmes for the subjects, their bibliography, and personal contacts are proof enough of a tendency towards an educational model based on the transmission of knowledge, and familiarization

with concepts and ideas of the areas corresponding to the subjects mentioned; study is based on a limited number of authors, and knowledge based on the dogmatism and monopoly of the bibliography available. In recent years, the list of works has grown notably, with translations of English and North American material. Previously authors and works from the French school dominated. In the teaching given, there is little tradition of encouraging applied aspects of the discipline, or of familiarizing future professional geographers with problems and training them to solve them; nor is there much tradition of manipulating instruments used in obtaining, analyzing and presenting data, or of setting students tasks which will make up their professional future. Although study trips are common, field work is not yet compulsory for all Geography students. The tutorial guidance and independent work of students and other teaching and learning procedures are still little in evidence as fundamental ingredients of the study of Geography.

While regional studies used to dominate the educational philosophy of the recent past, the growing thematic specialization of teaching staff has meant that theories from Natural and Social Sciences, with marked empiricist influences within a neopositivist framework, have become widely accepted and followed. Conceptual and methodological tendencies, and others more recent - the modern and post-modern (although their influence is still slight) - are present alongside erudite traditions of an idiographical or historicist nature. If we look at the existing bibliography we will see that research studies are usually carried out on a regional scale, within the area of an Autonomous Community, or on a national scale; there are few international studies. Broadly the same is true of applied studies and projects; although they are larger in size, they do not have the necessary social impact to arouse the interest of the Administration or private spheres of activity.

An attempt is clearly made to offset these limitations in the new study plan. We should stress particularly the fact that «Geography of Europe», a subject with little research tradition, will become a compulsory, core subject. At present it is not to be found in the curricula. We hope that this move will prove to be a stimulus, and that it will enrich the Spanish geographical tradition, which until now has not been present in political debates and decisions on the European scale. The same can be said of the subject Regional Planning.

Despite the synthetic nature of many of the subjects taught, there are as yet few publications in Spanish within the scope of students. A substantial part of the bibliography is made up by foreign works. Although considerable efforts are being made by certain Spanish teachers and publishers, very few works by Spanish writers have been published. Paradoxically, there is a large number of geographical journals, published by the different Spanish universities.

It is not possible to study for the degree in Geography in all Spanish universities. This is due to the low numbers of teaching staff in many of the university departments and also to the explicit desire of the autonomous Administration to regulate the location and the number of universities that offer the degree. Apart from the limitations in human resources, all universities suffer from a lack of teaching resources, with under-equipped lecture halls and classrooms, libraries with few international books and reviews, general unavailability of cartography and aerial photography of diverse nature, and computer hardware and software.

Only the predicted fall in student numbers may make up for the lack of material resources, at least in the universities with large student numbers, such as Madrid and Barcelona.

We do not have at our disposal data on the subject of the quality of teaching, as there has been no research aimed at presenting a profile of modern graduates with their virtues and shortcomings. Recently, most universities have carried out various surveys in order to obtain diagnostic data. The aim of these projects is to improve certain aspects of teaching activity. We imagine that competitiveness and the increasing integration of Spain in Europe will call for an evaluation and appraisal of the efficiency of the teaching, the future occupation of our graduates, reasons for students giving up the courses, and other aspects, in a bid to raise the quality of our teaching.

Apart from the *Licenciatura* studies (the First Degree), many departments offer or participate in Post-graduate studies, leading to the presentation of doctorates. Two academic years, with classes of a very varied nature, depending on the teachers who give them, and the presentation of a written research project, are the requirements for students who wish to round off their academic careers. Other post-graduate studies, more related to the necessities of society, are as yet few in number, although there is some participation in post-graduate studies taught in other Faculties, in areas such as urban development, the Environment, Regional Planning or other studies.

A FUTURE OF PROMISE.

Although we should be careful of over-confidence, we can look to the immediate future with optimism. The reform of the universities has offered us the opportunity to train experts in geography - something without precedent in our history and something that has been achieved after numerous previous attempts. The autonomous character of the subject, now freed from its humanistic straitjacket, allows to plan its future development based on the needs of society, with themes and approaches of a markedly applied orientation. The vitality that Geography has shown over the last few years with the proposals for new subjects, the appearance of departments, the interest in developing other areas of research, has borne fruit with the creation of the degree of *Licenciado* in Geography.

At the same time, this invitation to train professionals is a great challenge for the geographical community. Like all novel situations, it poses certain problems. The sensitivity that we show to the labour market, the proposals for training that allow our students to compete with other professionals, and the public image that we project will attract new students who are well informed of what we have to offer. Indeed, student numbers will depend on this offer. The consolidation of Geography as a specialization within the university set-up will cause an increasing recognition of its contribution not only to knowledge and understanding of the society and world around us, but also to its improvement.

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APPENDIX

THE GEOGRAPHY CURRICULUM PASSED

BY THE UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA

- List of subjects offered in the Geography degree course.
- Compulsory subjects should be taken by all students. They make up 50% of the total of credits required (150 out of 300).
- Optional subjects listed here may vary every two or three years. Most of them are worth six credits (about 60 hours of teaching). It is hoped to fit supply to demand. Optional subjects from the *Primer Ciclo* (Part One) may also be taken during the *Segundo Ciclo* (Part Two).
- In terms of teaching staff, some 800 credits are available.
- There will be two groups for compulsory subjects and one for optional subjects.
- This plan will come into force in October 1992.

COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

Part One

Physical Geography (24)

- Climatology (6)
- Geomorphology (6)
- Soil Geography (3)
- Hydrogeography (3)
- Biogeography (6)

Human Geography (24)

- Human Geography (12)
- Population Geography (6)
- Economic Geography (6)

Introduction to Regional Geographical Analysis (12)

- Introduction to Regional Geographical Analysis (6)
- Geography of Catalonia (6)

Geography of Spain (12)

Geography of Europe (12)

Techniques in Geography (18)

- General Cartography (6)
- Thematic Cartography (6)
- Quantitative Analysis Techniques (I) (6)

Part Two

Applied Physical Geography (12)

- Analytical climatology (6)
- Dynamic geomorphology (3)
- Protected natural spaces (3)

Applied Human Geography (12)

- Urban Geography (9)
- Rural Geography (3)

Regional Planning (12)

Theory and Methods of Geography (12)

- Theory and Methods of Geography (6)
- Theory and Methods of Physical Geography (3)
- Theory and Methods of Human Geography (3)

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS.

Part One

Climates of the Earth.	Photo-interpretation and satellite images
Synoptic climatology	Physical/mathematical bases in geography
Climatic geomorphology	Quantitative Analysis Techniques (II) (6)
Mediterranean erosion	Applied Computing Techniques in geography (I)
Landscape geography	Applied Computing Techniques in geography (II)
	Qualitative Analysis Techniques
	Laboratory Analysis Techniques
Social geography	
Cultural geography	
Political geography	
Historical geography	

Part Two

River geomorphology	The uses of water in Catalonia
Erosion processes	Transport infrastructure in Catalonia
Geomorphology of cold regions	Catalan agriculture
Geoecology of Mediterranean mountains	Regional planning in Catalonia
Littoral geoecology	Evolution of Catalan industry
Hydroedaphological processes	Expansion of tourism in Catalonia
	Geography of the Autonomous Communities of Spain
Dynamics of the climate	Territorial Divisions in Spain
Microclimatology	Socio-economic contrasts between Spanish regions
Analysis of Meteosat images	
Climate and atmospheric contamination	Regional World Geography
Climatology of the Western Mediterranean	Geography of Africa
	Geography of Latin America
Biogeography (II)	Geography of World Agriculture
Biogeography of the Iberian peninsula	South Asia
Biogeography of the Mediterranean	
Geography of migrations and human resources	Sources and methods in Historical Geography
Demography	Historical Geography of forests
	Geographical Information Systems
Territorial conflicts and social movements	Cartography project
	Toponymy
Agrarian geography	
Rural spaces	Research project in geography
	Geography field work
Internal space in the city	Laboratory techniques and analysis (II)
City and territory	
Industrial geography	Regional management
Geography of the Service Sector	Regional Disparities
	Analysis and evaluation of environmental impacts
	Urban and regional planning
Political geography: case study	
Cultural geography: case study	History of geography
	History of cartography
	History of geomorphology
	Educational geography
	Educational resources in geography teaching
	Teaching practice in geography

1.3. THE GEOGRAPHY IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

J. CRESPO-REDONDO
E. FERNÁNDEZ DE DIEGO

In the more than half a century that has passed since the end of the Spanish Civil War, seven school programs have transpired, each with its own way of organizing primary and secondary education. These have followed the political, economic, and social evolution of the country. Geography was never excluded in these programs, but the importance assigned to our subject, its scientific basis, and the educational goals aspired, have differed greatly from one program to the next. In general, throughout this period, geography has played a small and diminishing role. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the treatment of our discipline in both the educational system that prevails and the one that will come gradually into effect as of the scholastic year 1991-92. The former derives from the *Ley General de Educación* (General Law of Education) of 1970, and the latter was established in the *Ley Orgánica de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo* (Organic Law for the General Organization of the Education System) enacted in 1990.

THE «LEY GENERAL DE EDUCACION» and GEOGRAPHY

The authoritarian educational system that was imposed by the winning forces of the Civil War was closely tied to the totalitarian political regime and to its autarchic economy. However, this system came into crisis around 1960. Thereafter, Spain significantly developed economically; it became an industrialized nation thanks to the technocratic policies that were adopted. Spanish society also changed noticeably; extensive rural areas in the interior of the country were abandoned, the cities grew, the traditional rural family disappeared, the industrial proletariat increased, and the middle classes expanded. With technocratic and modernizing policies, the newly emerging Spain needed an educational system that would be less elitist and less geared towards the minority. The process of industrialization and the growth of the service sector necessitated a better trained labor force: workers with higher degrees, more high school graduates, and graduates with professional training. Thus, there was a need to expand education at all levels and to modernize the education system as a whole, both in terms of curriculum and methodology (Arroyo, 1990; Crespo Redondo, 1983).

The *Ley General de Educación* (General Law of Education) of 1970 attempted to answer all of these needs. It entailed not only a new curriculum, but also the complete revision of the school system. The previous primary education became the *Enseñanza General Básica*, EGB, and was extended to age fourteen; it was mandatory and free of cost for all Spaniards. The new high school, «unified and polyvalent», known as BUP, was consequently reduced to three years. The *Curso Preuniversitario* or COU (Pre-University Year) was required

for admission to university. At the high school level, there was also a Professional Training Program which ran parallel to BUP and COU; it was divided into two grades. In each one of these stages and levels, the role of geography differed greatly.

GEOGRAPHY IN THE «EDUCACION GENERAL BASICA» (ELEMENTARY SCHOOL)

In the new EGB, geography was eliminated as an independent subject. It fell into the domain of social sciences where it was combined with history and civics.

The *Ley General de Educación* (General Law of Education) decided that in the *Ciclo Inicial* (lower school), students, age seven and eight, would begin to come into contact with their immediate physical and social environment; in the following three years, they would begin studying their local surroundings, communities, regions, and Spain, with a global perspective which would include a familiarization of the most basic geographic characteristics of each of these areas. However, it is in the *Ciclo Medio* (middle school), with students age twelve, thirteen, and fourteen, that geography would acquire a greater role. In the first two years of this stage, sixth and seventh grades, specific geography units would already be fully integrated into the curriculum although these remained under the course heading of Social Sciences. In this way, the sixth grade curriculum included notions of general geography, both physical and human, and some units on the geography of Spain, along with a historical backdrop on Spanish and European society, and civic issues. The seventh grade curriculum consisted of the study of the continents, with a regional focus, coupled with history and civics.

In reality, in this phase Social Sciences never really integrated History, Geography, and other Social Sciences, in a coherent way. Rather, the curriculum juxtaposed thematic units from each one of these disciplines. As Martínez Varcárcel has pointed out, Geography had the secondary role of presenting a backdrop against which social and historical events transpired (Souto, 1990).

GEOGRAPHY IN THE «ENSEÑANZAS MEDIAS» (HIGH SCHOOL)

In the new high school system, comprised of BUP and Professional Training Programs, Geography played a small role. In the latter, the curriculum did not even include geography. In the *Bachillerato* or BUP (high school), the presence of geography was limited to one subject. It was called «Human Geography and the Economy in the Current World» in the first year, and «Geography and History of Spain and Hispanic Nations» in the second year. This course entailed studying general characteristics, both physical and human, of the geography of Spain, combined with history of the same and of Iberoamerica. In COU, there was also a subject called Economic Geography, but it was eliminated early on.

The course «Human Geography and the Economy of the Current World» consisted of two different parts. The first entailed an analysis of the population and its major economic activities. Instead of following the old methodology of Economic Geography, based on extensive cataloguing that located economic activity and was accompanied by much statistical data, an attempt was made

towards a more human and cultural focus; as a novelty, the course included the study of the geographic areas that corresponded to each economic activity. The second part of the course consisted in having the students apply the knowledge acquired from the first section by studying certain imagined states as economic spaces. In our opinion, this approach has been unjustly criticized of following the tenets of traditional Regional Geography (Hernando, 1981; Souto, 1990). There is nothing in this curriculum that recalls Vidal's concept of regional space as a unique and singular entity; furthermore, in this program, students neither study regions nor landscape. Instead, they study the geographic characteristics of a few countries which «as models», represent «various types of economic systems and degrees of development» (González and Martín Moreno, 1989). Evidently, this is an approach which is not related to that of Regional Geography.

As stated above, in the third year, students take a multitudinous course entitled «Geography and History of Spain and Hispanic Nations». In actuality, the course only manages to present the geography and history of Spain. The curriculum begins with the physical traits of Spain and continues with a historical overview from pre-historic times to the present. It includes some geography units of a socio-economic nature on contemporary Spain. The decision to combine geography and history was not based on any ideological concept intended to explain Spain with geo-historical criteria, nor on any conscious and explicit Determinist calculation, and much less on any didactic pretensions to interdisciplinary education. In reality, the ministerial authorities decided that there was not enough room for both subjects separately in the curriculum, and so, they opted for combining them (González and Martín Moreno, 1989). Nevertheless, it is true that in the distribution of subjects, geography was given an auxiliary role with respect to history; it was meant simply to describe the physical environment and in this way, set the stage for historical material.

THE CRISIS OF THE «LEY GENERAL DE EDUCACION» (GENERAL LAW OF EDUCATION). GEOGRAPHY IN THE L.O.G.S.E.

The state of geography in the new curriculum established by the *Ley General de Educación* (General Law of Education) was immediately criticized. Some teachers complained of the absence of Physical Geography, the mix of Spanish geography and history, the inappropriateness of the material for the age group of the students, the insufficient time allotted in the school schedule. Parting from a different viewpoint, others denounced the encyclopedic and overly academic nature that, in their opinion, geography had been assigned in both EGB and BUP. This group wanted to integrate geography into a section of social sciences that would also encompass some areas of sociology and economy. In part, the curriculum they proposed would be determined by the interests of the students themselves. Their program would respond to the idea of a practical education that would serve one's life in the future. The role of geography in education was being debated in such a way that its place was determined not according to its scientific foundation, but rather on the basis of its educational capacity. Thus, a strong inclination for the elimination of the so-called academic geography and the introduction of a scholastic geography in its place arose among groups of high school and above all middle school teachers. The new kind of geography would be inscribed into the subjects of social

sciences. It would be especially oriented to the study of one's environment (Crespo Redondo y Rodríguez Santillana, 1989). This tendency first developed in the catalan institution Rosa Sensat, and later spread to other movements of pedagogic reforms that disseminated it throughout the country in the early 1980s.

On the other hand, at the time of Franco's death, it was already becoming clear that it was necessary to substitute the technocratic education system of 1970. A program that would respond to the new socio-economic situation and especially to the new constitutional values was urgently needed. The government of U.C.D. began to plan an education reform which they never finished. In 1983, the first socialist government initiated an experimental reform that affected geography in a sensible way (González Muñoz, 1989).

Currently, the reform of the education system is normatively almost complete. The L.O.G.S.E., enacted in 1990, will come into effect gradually. Among other stages and levels, the law provides for Elementary Education between six and twelve years of age, Mandatory Secondary Education, between twelve and sixteen years, and High School as of the age of sixteen, lasting two years. In each stage, geography will play a different role. The Ministry of Education and the Autonomous Communities have still to specify all the legal provisions of the new law. Thus, it is still not possible to know to what extent nor what kind of geography will be included at each stage. However, we do know enough to appreciate the new role of geography in Mandatory Secondary Education.

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEW MANDATORY SECONDARY EDUCATION

Under this heading, we will investigate the degree to which our discipline is integrated into the domain of the social sciences in the new curriculum. In addition, we will note the geography topics selected for the curriculum, and analyze whether these are well chosen and formulated. Finally, we will evaluate the kind of geography education that can be attained with this new program (Crespo Redondo and Rodríguez Santillana, 1991).

1. Does the law dispose for geography to be taught as a separate discipline?

As was to be expected, considering the documents up for public discussion, the L.O.G.S.E. and the minimal requirements of the Decree established one area of study under the multi-referential denomination of Social Sciences, Geography, and History. Within this category, the preeminence of History and Geography is explicitly noted because of «its greater academic and cultural tradition...»; and in the secondary level (14-16 years old), its «division into units» is accepted, (article 20).

Thus the legal clause cited above assigns a single area of study for the Social Sciences, Geography, and History. Furthermore, it allows teachers to organize the course in different ways that may vary between the most pure division into subject units to a program that completely integrates the different disciplines.

2. How many and which are the geographic topics in this category of the curriculum?

The role assigned to geography within the area of Social Sciences is very different in each of the three main aspects of the curriculum. Its importance is somewhat small as far as general goals are concerned, but it is greater in terms of subject matter and also more relevant with regard to evaluation criteria.

Goals: The presence of geography within the general goals of the area of Social Sciences is small. In fact, there is only one goal, number four, among the eleven listed, that can be characterized as specifically relevant to geography.

Subject Matter: With respect to subject matter, the minimal requirements of the Decree assign significant importance to geography. Among its four thematic divisions, the entire first one, entitled Society and Territory, and part of the third, The Current World, are dedicated to various geography topics such as concepts and theoretical principles, methods for analyzing situations and the development of attitudes.

Among the first group of topics, the traditional geography concepts, which have always been incorporated to scholastic programs, predominate. Some of these are physical environment, population, economic activities, geographic spaces, the urban phenomenon, the global economic unevenness, development and underdevelopment. There is, however, a novelty that should be noted: the inclusion of issues pertaining to Political Geography, fashionable long ago in universities, and only now introduced to secondary education. The geography of Spain lacks its own unit, but according to the Decree, every and each aspect of general geography that is noted above, also has to be studied with respect to Spain. In addition, some typical topics of Environmental Education are incorporated into the curriculum. The inclusion of methods and procedures for analyzing cases, which is also a novelty, is highly significant. Among these, we should mention the use of information resources, graphic representation, cartography, and the initiation into field work.

Criteria for evaluations: The importance that the Decree concedes to geography in terms of the criteria it determines for education evaluation is also considerable: of the twenty nine criteria listed, nine are completely relevant to geography. Their breakdown faithfully follows the units in the section Society and Territory. In most cases what is to be evaluated is the ability to identify, characterize, and locate the principle concepts of geography in the world and in Spain. Other times, evaluations expect students to understand more complex matters, such as some spatial concepts or the environmental impact of human activity.

3. Are the geography units well chosen and correctly formulated?

The geography units in the curriculum are not always well chosen nor, in our opinion, are the topics correctly formulated from a scientific point of view. Basic concepts such as mediums, space, territory, and landscape are sometimes used correctly, but other times used arbitrarily or at least with certain inaccuracy and ambiguity.

Even the concept of geographic space, which is fundamental regardless of the geographic perspective one may take (traditional, quantitative, radical, or behavioral) is treated with obvious theoretical carelessness; in general, the idea of geographic space that seems to predominate is that it is an empty entity which acts as the local for certain social phenomena.

Another issue which should be analyzed is the degree of novelty in the subject matter selected. Perhaps some professors believe that the selection was made on the basis of overly traditional criteria. Indeed, the curriculum has not really adopted new trends in the discipline. Nevertheless, some new focuses at the secondary education level are not altogether absent. For example, the curriculum concedes a notable role to Political Geography and to geographic methods; there is a specific unit for each one of these topics. On the other hand, the more traditional trends in our discipline are not included, to the extent that there is not a single reference to the old descriptive geography.

The selection of geography units in the curriculum seems to have been made with prudence and a certain eclectic spirit—perhaps a bit timorous. It is indeed a sign of prudence that of the nine trends in the discipline, none was imposed above the others, thus, allowing teachers to develop their course according to their own opinions. The eclectic spirit is evident in the addition of some new subjects to the traditional topics, tied to a concept of geography as a science principally concerned with the analysis of the relationship between nature and society.

4. What kind of geography education can be achieved with this curriculum?

We believe that there is only one real geography education, one which is attained when the teaching of geography is not limited to its general educational aims. Ultimately, it is desirable to arouse the ambition to reach an understanding of all that is inherent to the discipline of geography, which can be summarized as the formation of a spatial consciousness in all citizens. The education of geography is to supply the student with conceptual tools and methods by which to analyze and act in space, and to recognize and explain its structures. In the end, it is about seeing the world from a geographic lense, understanding space and knowing how to live in it.

The issue which is of interest to us now is to what extent is this type of geography education, that we clearly advocate above, feasible in the new secondary school program. As we see it, thus far, the legal proceedings have neglected to take full advantage of the many educational virtues inherent in geography; furthermore, they have looked upon geography as an instrument exclusively at the service of reaching general educational goals. In conclusion, neither the L.O.G.S.E. nor the minimal requirements of the Decree explicitly establish a geography education per se; this is clear from the small role assigned to geography in the goals stated for the area of Social Sciences. Among those objectives, only the fourth fully relates to geography, stating that it can contribute to the development of the student and his or her ability to «identify and analyze at different levels the interactions that human society establishes with its surroundings, both in the use of space and of natural resources»; and it can also teach «to appreciate the economic, social, political, and environmental result of these interactions». There are two other goals which relate to geography although they are not exclusive to our discipline. The first is of an instrumental nature since it emphasizes as a goal the use of different types of information, among which cartography is mentioned. The second relates to acquiring positive attitudes such as the appreciation of the environment and one's surroundings. In none of the other goals, which total eleven, is geography assigned an explicit role.

In effect, the Decree deals with geography in a somewhat incoherent way. On the one hand, it assigns considerable importance to our subject with respect to topics

and criteria for evaluation, but on the other, it underestimates its contribution at the level of reaching educational goals. It seems that in general the educational goals are ascribed to the social sciences, and more specifically to sociology and political science, while in subject matter, leaving ethics aside, geography and history are emphasized more. It is unfortunate that the authors of the new school program did not take advantage of the educational possibilities of geography.

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