

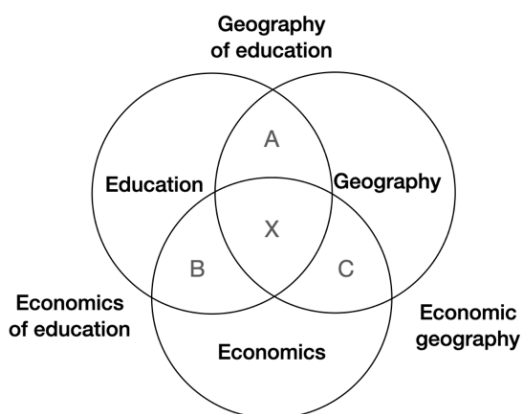
# BOOK REVIEW

**Geography of Education: Scale, Space and Location in the Study of Education.** By Colin Brock (2018), 240 pp. ISBN: 9781350063907, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Of the many inspirations from Colin Brock's original book, I would like to discuss three synergic frameworks that paved the way to the creative and exciting world that fuses both Geography and Education. All three frameworks are in the form of Venn diagrams below, accenting Brock's love for, and ingenious use of such diagrams.

Brock is the first scholar to articulate the nature, purpose and content of Geography of Education. He stated his book's prime aim to "further the understanding of the work of each about the other" between Geography and Education. He argued that the two disciplines have much in common and much to offer in harness. Given both are composite disciplines, he regarded the come into being of both having a 'geography' in itself-- through an interactive process in time-space of learning from, and teaching to, across a wide range of subjects in Arts and Sciences, meanwhile also contributing to other disciplines and fields. Based on his definitions of both Geography and Education, the Geography of Education espoused in this book can be defined as the following: the spatial and locational analysis of human and physical phenomena from the edge of space to the earth's surface and below about the production and dissemination of knowledge and of learning and teaching, and the factors that enable them to operate.

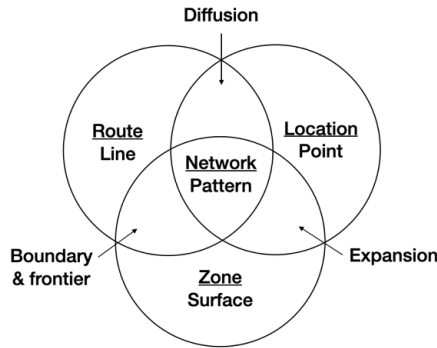
**Figure 1. Overlaps among Education, Geography, and Economics**



He embraced the purpose of Geography of Education as applying all sub-disciplines of Geography to the study of education. Hence, he left a clue to expand the content of Geography of Education as locating the overlap among Geography, Education, and a third discipline that Geography and Education may both have a sub-discipline of. For example, by putting Economics, Geography, and Education into a Venn diagram (Figure 1), then the issues of Geography of Education may be 'uncovered' from area X which all three disciplines share. Moreover, if replacing Economics in Figure 1 with other disciplines, such as Politics, History, Management, Cultural Studies, among others, the more the issues of Geography of Education can be mapped out.

A second contribution is Brock’s creative application of Walford’s (1973) dynamic model of Human Geography as a signature method of the Geography of Education. The model consists the four basic concepts of geography (Figure 2): point as location; line as route; surface as zone; and pattern as network which combines any of the two or all three concepts (Brock 2018 p.56). Moreover, Brock proposed to apply Walford’s two freestanding circles representing manufacturing processes and social problems respectively, with economic relationships to educational provision and sociocultural educational issues (Brock 2018, p.55).

**Figure 2. Brock’s Application of Walford’s Model of Dynamic Themes in Geography**



With this model, he argued for the centrality of the individual and the local milieu as the “ultimate base level” that “human and environmental survival and sustainability will likely depend” ((Brock 2018, p.60, p.173). He regarded the local scale as the locale, a particular place as a unique point, the base unit which consists of, and is embedded in, other spatial concepts such as line, surface, and network. He argued that education was too singular, complex, and context-based to be dealt with a simplistic, universal welfare policy (Brock 2018, p.172-173). Therefore, he placed the individual school and the individual person relating to the school (often the learner or the teacher), as the fundamental concern of Geography of Education. He argued that the understanding of that individual could be made through the understanding the locale as a cultural milieu.

A third contribution is Brock’s emphasis on the importance of scale. Scale in geography refers to an actual or imagined framing of the space. He regarded the national scale as the normal regulated space produced through national educational policy, however, the national total or average view in education statistics is often misled by the complexity of education provision. Therefore, he argued that the local-global dynamics in education should be understood with reference to, instead of absence from, national and regional scales that connect and contrast the local and the global. Figure 3 is made to illustrate his view of connected scales from local to global.

**Figure 3. An Interpretation of Brock’s Model of Analytical Scales for Education**



Hence, Brock identified the school as a space occupying a locality and operating in a networked social space, which may extend from a local to a global scale, through connecting points, lines and zones. He provided both a concentric and nested view to illustrate the local-global dynamics in which a school operated (Brock 2018, p 60-61). Both views portray the school in interaction with multiple scales as a space-spanning agency, where relationships are changing relative to the school and to each other, in both a space of flow and a process through time.

Brock also argued that education should uphold the duty of a humanitarian response to achieve three types of sustainability: sustainable survival, sustainable stability, and sustainable development. More importantly, he argued that it was the 'local resonance' as the way to achieve all types of sustainability. He quoted Schumacher that the "production of local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life". He then asserted that the 'local' in education in the school curriculum and the mutually supportive objectives of all its components. He defined school curriculum as consisting of both liberal and technical education with relevance and responsiveness to local needs. Here again, he regarded the local as the entry point to the local-global dynamics.

Brock concluded with deep concerns for the survival and sustainability of people and the environment. In particular, he argued for the imperative for Geography of Education to not only understand but also advocate for the right to education of the marginalised, the excluded and the remote, the dislocated and the disparate under the seemingly uniform national welfare policies. He aligned a special goal for Geography of Education with the role of education as a humanitarian response, and he clarified the unique impact of the spatial and locational factor in forming the sociocultural identity of the individual, especially the disadvantaged.

Brock's book on the geography of education provides a much-needed systemic way to understand education through spatial, locational and ecological analysis. Please let me share a quotation he selected to conclude his book:

*"Is there a conceptual framework that can accommodate all these changes, that would help us understand the transformations and inter-connections, inform our thoughts and decisions through a particular comprehensive perspective? This book answers these questions with one affirmation: geography. (de Blij, 2012 as cited in Brock 2018, p.188)*

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