

Thinking Geographically:

Space, Theory and Contemporary Human Geography

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1.1 Summary

This text will be a genuine introductory text aimed at first- and second-year undergraduate geography students studying Concepts, Methods and Theories modules. By offering an accessible introduction to the theories, terms and ideas that underpin the nature and practice of contemporary human geography, this book will encourage students to engage with different ways of thinking about the world. The book is thus divided into two key sections designed to show students that different ideas and theories about spatial relations result in the production of very different geographical knowledges. The first of these sections will provide a succinct introduction to the different theoretical traditions that have shaped Anglo-American human geography, with a focus on the ideas that currently appear most influential in shaping geographical scholarship. The second section aims to illustrate how these ideas have shaped geographical understanding of four key concepts - money, the body, governance and globalization - to show that an understanding of key theories and ideas is essential if one wants to 'think geographically'. Covering social, cultural, political and economic geography, these chapters will demonstrate how ideas developed both within and outside the discipline combine in the study of different geographical worlds.

1.2 Rationale

We are aware through our own teaching that encouraging students to ‘think geographically’ can be a difficult and often thankless task, made all the more difficult by the lack of an accessible text that spells out clearly to students the value of theory and why they should engage with it. This book will thus address a significant gap in the market by acting as an essential aid for undergraduate students struggling to make sense of higher-level ‘introductions’ to the theory and philosophy of human geography, offering succinct and clearly-written (though not ‘dumbed-down’) definitions of key ideas and concepts. By providing readers with carefully-considered contextual material on the changing lineaments of human geography, the text will show that the way geographers think has always been open to change and contestation, but that certain ways of thinking have become associated with particular types of geography (and particular geographers). Through the use of pedagogical features (such as definition boxes for key thinkers), the text will introduce students to many current thinkers whose ideas are by no means straightforward, but whose influence looms large over contemporary human geography.

The text will therefore present an overview of the histories of human geography as a way of showing that geographical thought has changed markedly over time. Its prime objective is not, however, to act as a ‘history of geography’ volume. Nor is it designed to act as an expansive overview of philosophical traditions in human geography. Rather, its objective is to introduce some key ideas and key thinkers as a way of introducing students to the multiple worlds of human geography and enthusing them about the importance of ‘thinking geographically’.

1.3 Level

‘Thinking Geographically’ will be written as a genuinely introductory text, pitched in language and style at first- and second-year undergraduate students. We are aware that many students struggle with theory and philosophical ideas, and this is not aided by many texts that claim to be accessible to undergraduate students actually being fairly difficult and advanced reads. All four of us have a commitment to undergraduate teaching and learning and to providing teaching texts that communicate

to students of varied backgrounds and abilities. Phil and Rob have both previously written undergraduate textbooks (see Section 1.8)

1.4 Writing

We imagine that some proposal reviewers might anticipate that the multiple authorship of this book might lead to an unwieldy and uneven text. We believe that the strength of the text will be our combined knowledge of different theoretical debates in social, economic and political geography. The four of us will thus contribute to and proof-read all chapters, and careful editing will ensure that the text will have the same tone and consistency throughout. We have all worked with each other before in various guises - as writing partners, conference/session convenors, shared teaching - and thus know that we can work as a team.

1.5 Timetable

Delivery of manuscript by February 2001 for September 2001 publication.

1.6 Market

We believe that there is a large potential market for a text which explores the utility of theory rather than simply presenting a history of geographic thought. *Thinking Geographically* will thus be an essential purchase for students taking Concepts, Methods and Theories modules (which are often mandatory at first or second-year level). The book will also act as a companion text of use to students throughout their academic study, particularly for students of social, political and economic geography. Because we will use examples from around the world, and discuss thinkers who have had a global impact, it is anticipated that the book will appeal to courses in all Anglophone countries. This text will occupy a particular, unoccupied niche, but competing texts for Concepts, Methods and Theories modules include: *Approaching Human Geography* (Cloke, Philo and Sadler, 1991); *Modern Geographic Thought* (Peet, 1997); *Human Geography Today* (Massey, Allen and Sarre, 1999) - all of which are widely regarded as advanced-level undergraduate texts.

1.7 Chapter Structure

1. Introducing Geographic Thought

This chapter will introduce the aims of the book and the substantive content. It will start by examining why academics are interested in studying and theorising the world around them. This will be followed by an exploration of the production of knowledge, focusing on the ways in which knowledge construction is itself theorised. The way theory has informed the production of knowledge will be illustrated by examining how human geography as a field of study draws on a number of (often competing) theoretical frameworks for making sense of the world. This illustration will also help to define what is meant by theory (as distinct from practice). Working with these definitions of theory and practice we will then begin to explore the distinction between geographic theory and other theories of how the world works, drawing out the importance of space as a fundamental component of geographical theory. In the final two sections, we will detail strategies for understanding, critically evaluating, and operationalising theoretical concepts, demonstrating the practical and meaningful ways in which geographers have used theory.

Content: Understanding and explaining the world; Production of knowledge; Defining human geography; Why think geographically?; Critically evaluating theory; Operationalising theory (c. 6,000 words).

SECTION ONE: Thinking Human Geographies

These chapters aim to introduce readers to the idea that geography is both synthetic and derivative in its borrowing of ideas from other sciences, social sciences and humanities. Here, the emphasis will be on the way that geographers have looked towards other disciplines and thinkers to help them think through the geographies that they explore. Taking a broadly historic perspective, chapter two will accordingly seek to explore how different theories of space have been developed at different times, and to show these theories have been informed by wider academic ideas and fashions. In chapter three, the focus will be on the contested terrain of contemporary human geography. Throughout, we introduce students to key theorists. We acknowledge that our choice of thinkers is selective, and there are many other individuals that have influenced geographic thought and practice. For the purposes of space and

illustration, however, we will restrict our choice to those whose ideas are addressed in the text and whose influence on (or within) geography is acknowledged to have been significant in expanding its theoretical horizons.

2. A Brief History of Geographic Thought

This chapter serves to provide students with an introduction to the contested production of geographic knowledge in the twentieth century. Identifying and clarifying key traditions in the discipline - regional, 'empirical-analytical', 'historical-hermeneutic', 'critical' science and so on - this chapter aims to show that different geographers have imagined space in different ways, and, as a result of this, adopted different approaches to understanding the relationship between space and economic, social and political processes. The ideas of some of those geographers who have been most important in shaping the trajectory of the discipline will be explained here, with separate sections describing the unfolding relationships between geographers and those working in other disciplinary traditions. Here, succinct explanations of the basis of regional, behavioural, humanistic, Marxist, feminist and realist human geographies will serve to illustrate the competing nature and status of different theories of space, simultaneously explaining how geographers have been influenced by wider academic debates.

Content: The making of a discipline; Thinking and mapping space; Geography as a spatial science; Critical perspectives on space; The poetics of space; Hidden traditions in geography (c. 10,000 words).

Key thinkers: Halford Mackinder's political geographies, the regional geographies of Vidal de la Blache, Ellen Semple and environmental determinism, The poetic geographies of Yi-Fu Tuan, Reg Golledge's analytical behaviouralism, Torsten Hagerstrand's time geographies, Peter Haggett and the search for synthesis, David Harvey and Marxist geographies, Andrew Sayer and realist thought, Linda McDowell and feminist geography

3. Human Geography Today

This chapter introduces students to some of the most recent and emerging concepts that will inform the geographies of the twenty-first century. The chapter does this by identifying three characteristics of contemporary geography: firstly, a focus on representation, secondly, a focus on the 'other' and, thirdly, an emphasis on complexity. Here, the importance of the 'cultural turn' and the importation of European philosophical frameworks are explained, with a focus of the key thinkers and ideas who are impacting on the discipline as it unfolds today. The focus on thinkers working in other disciplines is considered (and explained) in relation to debates on post-disciplinary studies.

Content: The cultural turn; A post-disciplinary landscape?; Geographies of representation; Discourse and deconstruction; Post-modern geographies; Feminism and queer theory; Subaltern geographies; Complexity and chaos; Post-structural geographies; Actor networks and worlds of things (c. 20,000 words)

Key thinkers: Stuart Hall and Cultural Studies, Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, Fred Jameson and the Postmodern, Jean Baudrillard and Simulation, Schizoanalysis and Gilles Deleuze, ANT and Bruno Latour, Knowledge/power and Michel Foucault, bell hooks and new wave feminism.

SECTION TWO: Doing Human Geographies

These chapters (c. 8,000 words each, including 'Key thinker' boxes), aim to show how different theoretical materials have been brought to bear on the study of four concepts at the heart of economic, social and political geography. Each is intended to show how the material introduced in the first half of the book has been used by geographers to help them think about particular geographies. While the focus is primarily on geographical scholarship, the chapters endeavour to show how concepts derived from other disciplines have been invoked and developed by geographers, using appropriate case studies and examples to clarify the distinctive contribution of particular ideas.

4. Geographies of Money

This chapter aims to explore thinking around the geographies of money and finance. It begins by analysing traditional geographical interpretations of money, but suggests that such accounts have proved somewhat limited in their ability to make sense of worlds of money and financial exchange. In order to exemplify this idea, the chapter contrasts these accounts with other interpretative frameworks. In doing so, it draws on the reader's own perceptions and understandings of money to exemplify how different ideas of exchange, value and commodity might generate new insights on money and its commodity forms. Here, the reader's perceptions will be generated through use of a range of reflective questions about the his/her perceptions, use, abuse, and management of their own financial experiences and experiences of money in contemporary society. These questions are designed to draw out the social, economic, political and cultural bases of 'economic' geographies, showing that money has multiple forms and multiple geographies depending on how one conceptualises it. The chapter then turns to consider these geographies in more detail by considering geographer's work on banking, financial exclusion, credit unions, and LETS.

Content: A brief history of money – geography matters – from pre-modern to virtual; 'Traditional' conceptualisations of money – 'economic' money; (Re-)interpreting money - bringing in the social and political; International finance, Financial Exclusion and new economic geographies; credit unions and LETS

Key Thinkers: Marx, Weber and Simmel and the dominant model of money, Douglas, Polanyi, and Zelizer and the social meaning of money, Dodd and the monetary network, Thrift and the network of internationalised credit money, Leyshon and Thrift and financial infrastructure withdrawal/exclusion

5. Geographies of the Body

This chapter examines geographer's long-standing interest in the body, noting that it has been imagined and conceptualised in different ways by those working within different geographical traditions. Questioning the definition and importance of the

body, the chapter explores how the body has been theorised by geographers as a social and cultural site of inscription, an object of desire, a means of mobility, a biological object and so on. The chapter begins by thinking about how behavioural and phenomenological accounts of the body superseded positivist accounts which provided a disembodied human geography. The relevance of such ideas are shown in studies of disability, which emphasise that everyday geographies are embodied through a geography of encounter and bodily experience. This presages other, more 'social' accounts of the body, which are introduced via geographical investigations of incarceration, institutionalisation and the disciplining of bodily management. Notions that the body can also act as a space of cultural projection (being commodified via the fashion and beauty industries) are explored through consideration of the 'cultural' geographies of clothing, health, fitness and sexuality. Finally, ideas that the body can be a site of resistance will be examined by looking at the work of those geographers who have studied performance and identity (e.g. through research on disabled politics or queer identities). Throughout this chapter, the contribution of theoretical frameworks derived from biology, psychology, sociology and cultural studies will be considered, showing that geographers both borrow from (and contribute to) interdisciplinary debates.

Content: What is the body?; Movement, rest and encounter; Managing and disciplining the body; Cultural capital and body projection; Sexed and sexy bodies; Coping strategies and cultural politics of the body

Key Thinkers: Martin Heidegger's phenomenology, Norbert Elias and the history of manners, Performativity and Judith Butler, Pierre Bourdieu and cultural capital, Erving Goffman and body drama, Gill Valentine's corporeal geographies, Psychoanalysis and David Sibley, Rosemary Garland Thomson and imperfect bodies.

6. Governance

In the first half of this chapter will examine the move in recent decades away from traditional analyses of hierarchical (central-regional-local) government influence on the control of space and activities to a focus on more flexible and facilitative forms of

regulation which require government representatives to work directly with business markets and other non-government agents. It will also explore the link between these changes and the associated shift in orientation of state policies from welfare protection to the promotion of economic development and competitiveness. As such, we will track changes from government diktat to collaboration and partnership and the thinking that has influenced these changes. We will then examine the association between these trends and the emergence of new theories which extend the analysis of power in politics beyond issues of party politics and class control to approaches that stress the multivalent qualities and many sources of power. A discussion about alternative hegemonic and pluralist views of the state will frame a more detailed examination of competing theories about the role of elites, power brokers, institutions, promotional coalitions and partnership regimes as well as resistance movements and practices. The issue of whether there is a convergence or divergence in approaches to state regulation at an international level will provide a further backdrop to the discussion.

Content: Theories of the state; new modes of governance; regime theory; regulation theory; Identity politics and power; New Social Movements and resistance;

Key Thinkers: Gramsci on early views of the state and power; Ray Pahl on subsequent views; Robin Hambleton on the new governance; Bob Stoker on coalitions and regime studies; Francis Fukuyama on regulation theory; Manuel Castells on mass movements; Michel de Certeau on resistance.

7. Globalization

This chapter examines globalisation as a contemporary 'buzz word'. The chapter begins by examining definitions of globalisation and how it has become used as a catch-all term, short hand for a menu of social, economic, political and cultural changes. It will be illustrated how the term is used by some commentators in a positive 'new Renaissance' manner to suggest the promise of a glorious future of increased material and cultural riches, and is used by its critics in an negative way to suggest a new 'dark ages' based on intensified exploitation of people and places

across the globe. For the latter, globalisation involves the creation of a global economy – a worldwide version of a national economy like that of the United States – which threatens to homogenise all other aspects of life. It will be explained that for both camps there is an agreed assumption that an old order is passing and being replaced by a new order based on a quickening and deepening of connections between places and people across the world. In this view, the ‘annihilation of space and time’ by innovations in communications and information technology is producing a fundamental transformation in society akin to that of the industrial revolution of a previous era. Care will be taken to examine the language employed to account for the discontinuities involved in the transition from the previous to the pending or new order and how they relate to key concepts: industrial/post-industrial (economy); fordism/postfordism (labour markets); keynesian/postkeynesian (welfare organisation); colonialism/postcolonialism (political); modernism/postmodernism (culture), etc. The chapter will also look at those thinkers who question the validity and use of the term globalisation itself. In particular it will explore the assumption that the contemporary changes constitute a revolutionary transformation along the lines of the industrial revolution. Theories developed by both conservative and radical commentators will be examined. Using this discussion we will explore key debates concerning the changing nature of space-time, the role of nation-states, and the relationship between the local and global.

Content: Defining globalisation; postmodern turn; stretching space and time; new world order; supplanting the nation state and re-emphasising the local; mediation of local-global relations; complexity theory.

Key Thinkers: Marshall McLuhan on cultural homogeneity, Saskia Sassen on global cities; John Friedman on origins of globalisation; Noam Chomsky on structuralist perspectives; Peter Taylor on political dimensions of globalisation; Paul Knox on links between economic and cultural turn; Kevin Robins and global media.

8. Conclusion

In this final chapter we will reiterate our central thesis concerning the importance of ‘thinking geographically’ revisiting the ideas presented in earlier chapters. The chapter will encourage students to engage with theory and to adopt a critical stance in

relation to the material they are taught, in the reading they undertake, and in conducting any individual or group projects. Given that the text is concerned with engagement with theory, rather than providing a detailed history of geographic thought, we will not be using the conclusion to attempt to predict the future of the discipline, other than to say that theory will continue to play *the* central role in its shaping.

Total length: 80,000 - including approximately 50 text-based boxes summarising particular ideas associated with key thinkers (c. 250-300 words each).

To include line diagrams, tables and charts as appropriate, but no plates.

1.8 About the Authors

Brendan Bartley is a Lecturer in Urban Geography at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, with academic and professional qualifications in urban/regional planning and urban transportation. He is director of the Land Use and Transportation Unit (LUTU) and which specialises in the preparation of socio-economic, planning and transportation studies. He is actively involved in a number of collaborative European research networks in the connected areas of urban lifeworlds, urban governance, urban regeneration and social exclusion. He is engaged in a range of projects in local research projects covering such diverse areas as local policing, life histories of drug users, and horse protest movements in Ireland. The largest of these projects is an ethnography of everyday life in two socially excluded communities. At an international level he is currently involved in two E.U. targeted social and economic research projects on urban planning and social exclusion: (1) *Urban Redevelopment and Social Polarisation in the City*; (2) *Social Exclusion in European Neighbourhoods: Processes, Experiences and Responses*. Other current research interests include governance and the neighbourhood in regeneration; urban regeneration and public participation; the role of urban regimes in city promotion and re-imaging; and the 'settlement' policies for displaced travelling communities in Ireland. His recent publications include chapters in a number of edited books, a number of government

reports, and articles in refereed journals. He is editor of *Insite*, the Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute (Ireland).

Duncan Fuller is Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle. He is a young socio-economic geographer whose research interests have focused around the emerging new economic geographies of social and financial exclusion and inclusion. In particular, his work has examined the potential for credit unions, as one form of alternative source of credit and finance, to play a key role in future geographies of financial inclusion. This has led to ongoing work considering the current policy and developmental trajectories of the British credit union movement. Other current research interests include an analysis of the role of organisations such as the Black Environmental Network in developing a more multi-cultured focus on the environment and environmental participation and politics. He is currently co-authoring an undergraduate text with colleagues at Northumbria (*Social Geography: An Introduction to Society and Space*, Arnold), and has published a commissioned report for Friends of the Earth (*Credit Unions and Sustainable Development*). He has published a number of articles in refereed academic journals (including special editions of *Area* and *Geoforum*) and has various articles in press or awaiting referees reports (*Antipode*, *Environment and Planning A*, *Space and Polity*). He has presented various papers and organised sessions at international conferences.

Dr Phil Hubbard is Lecturer in Human Geography at Loughborough University. He is an urban social geographer whose research has focused on urban change in the late modern era. Within this broad theme, his research has examined emerging forms of governance and new modes of social regulation, particularly the changing relations of state and civil society. This has been manifest in his ongoing work on geographies of place marketing and entrepreneurialism as well as in work on geographies of heterosexuality and prostitution. His recent publications include *The Entrepreneurial City* (edited with Tim Hall, Wiley, 1998) and *Sex and the city* (Ashgate, 1999). His forthcoming publications include an introductory text *People and Place: the extraordinary geographies of everyday life* (with Lewis Holloway, Prentice Hall, 2000). He has also published widely in refereed academic journals including *Urban Studies*, *Progress in Human Geography*, *Geography*, *Geoforum*, *Gender, Place and Culture*, *Cities* and *Area* (also editing the special issue on Research, Action and

'Critical' Geographies, with Rob Kitchin). He organised the recent conference, New Critical Geographies, again with Rob Kitchin, and has organised several sessions at international conferences.

Dr Rob Kitchin is a Lecturer in Human Geography at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He has a diverse set of research interests which centre on culture, space and power; disability; violence; human spatial behaviour; and cyberspace and society. He is the general editor of a new journal for Routledge (*Social and Cultural Geography*). He has recently published three books, *Cyberspace: The World in the Wires* (Wiley, 1998), and *Conducting Research in Human Geography* (with Nick Tate; Longman, 1999), *Cognitive Mapping: Past, Present and Future* (edited with Scott Freundsuh, Routledge, 2000) and has three more in press: *Disability and Geography* (Geographical Association); *The Cognitive Understanding of Space* (with Mark Blades, Johns Hopkins University Press); *Mapping Cyberspace* (with Martin Dodge, Routledge). He is currently writing an undergraduate text with Rob Wilton (*Critical Human Geographies*, Longman) and editing a collection with James Kneale (*Lost in Space: Geographies of Science Fiction*, Athlone Press). He has recently edited three special issues: *Journal of Environmental Psychology* (Applying Cognitive Mapping, with Paul Jackson); *Area* (Research, Action and 'Critical' Geographies, with Phil Hubbard), *Professional Geographer* (Cognitive Mapping, with Scott Freundsuh). Another special issue is in press: *Ethics, Place and Environment* (Disability, Geography and Ethics, with Rob Wilton). He has published several articles in geography, psychology and sociology journals and has two active research grants: Geographies of violence (with James Anderson and Ian Shuttleworth, funded by ESRC) and geographies of blindness (with Mark Blades, Reg Golledge and Dan Jacobson funded by National Science Foundation. He organised the recent conference, New Critical Geographies, with Phil Hubbard, and has organised several sessions at international conferences.