

Human Geography

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Human geography is a major subdiscipline within the wider subject field of geography. Traditionally, geography is considered the study of the Earth's environments and peoples, and the interactions between them. 'Geography' comes from ancient Greek origins (Eratosthenes was the first to use it), literally translating as 'to write or describe the world'. In classical and Enlightenment geography, humans and the 'natural' world were usually described in conjunction, often in a regional fashion, as Europeans encountered unfamiliar places in exploration and empire. Since the late nineteenth century, this conjoint understanding of geography – as describing the natural and human world, region by region – has gradually been augmented by more precise subdisciplinary pursuits and identities. The most basic of these describes geography as consisting two fundamental halves: physical and human geography. Physical geography generally means the science of the Earth's surface, while human geography usually refers to the study of its peoples, and geographical interpretations of economies, cultural identities, political territories, and societies. Physical geographers classify and analyze landforms and ecosystems, explain hydrological, geomorphological, and coastal processes, and examine problems such as erosion, pollution, and climatic variability. Human geographers analyze population trends, theorize social and cultural change, interpret geopolitical conflict, and seek to explain the geography of human economic activities around the world. How exactly this division of labor came to be is a most pivotal story of contemporary geography. It is a story about twentieth-century scientific fragmentation, and about different theories on the status of humans vis-à-vis nonhuman nature. It is also a more slippery and difficult story about how academic knowledges are produced, mutate, and travel (and how this happens in particular places), how knowledges find popularity, fade away, or are challenged in time and across space. The central division of labor in geography – produced by these means over more than a hundred years – has established and defined the space within which most human geographical practice now occurs. This article is an introductory overview of contemporary human geography and the stories underlying it.

An outsider could be forgiven for thinking that human geography was the study of the existence and distribution of humans on Earth – of *Homo sapiens* as a distinct species.

Literally, human geography could be interpreted as the study of the geography of humans: when, where, and how humans evolved, developed strategies for survival, and dispersed to other parts of the world. Some within geography would indeed consider such themes important to geography. They invite analysis of how humans inhabited and related to physical environments, how humans used (and abused) resources, adapted to different climates, and developed distinct regional cultures. When prominent geographer Halfred Mackinder presented his ideas on the scope and purpose of geography to the Royal Geographical Society in 1887, this idea of geography as "trac[ing] the interaction of man [sic] in society and so much of his environment as varies locally" proved immensely popular and would shape future interpretations. However, for most human geographers in the current era such questions have fallen from favor because of ethical and intellectual concerns (see discussion below), while more contemporaneous themes have grown popular, firmly on the human side of geography. The science of human evolution and geographical dispersal has instead become the purview of other disciplines such as archeology, paleontology, and anthropology.

Most contemporary academic geographers hold some nominal allegiance to either of geography's 'halves' (human or physical), although for important intellectual and philosophical reasons (discussed below) some do resist this division and instead prefer to regard geography as a disciplinary whole, or insist on troubling the conceptual distinction between 'the human' and 'nonhuman' parts of the world. Some commentators have criticized a perceived widening of the gulf between geography's two halves. Others see human geography as merely a convenient badge for its diverse contents, while still adhering to the principle of a wider, umbrella discipline of geography (including physical geography). Regardless, contemporary human geography has taken on a particular character. Human geographers tend to explore social, economic, cultural, political, and demographic dimensions of human existence, and situate analysis in geographical space (conceptualized across and between scales from the body to the city, nation, and globe). While diversity defines contemporary human geography, there are common questions of geographical scale, causality,

agency and structure, interrelationships and networks, place and movements. Human geographers are concerned with observed distributions and analytical explanation. They invariably focus on the spatial and, whether implicit or explicit, have a great deal to say about the moral and political dimensions of human activity.

This article is structured in anticipation of the more pertinent questions an outsider might ask of a human geographer: ‘what is human geography?’; ‘when did human geography emerge as a discipline and how has it changed over time?’; ‘what is the character of contemporary human geographical practice?’; and ‘how is it practiced in different places?’. At the outset it is worth clarifying the approach taken here. Reflecting current thinking, a single, linear story about canonical development of ideas in human geography is sought to be avoided. Such stories only reinforce the dominant narrative at the expense of less powerful ones, and are invariably Eurocentric. This article also tries, where possible, to show that geographical knowledges are produced by a range of actors in different ways and for different audiences.

However, the manner in which such knowledges are produced, and what those knowledges mean, is contingent on the degree of formal academic practice, on the political, institutional, and cultural circumstances whence they came, and on the perspective of the onlooker or interpreter. Certain actors and institutions benefited (sometimes enormously) from the production of particular kinds of human geographical knowledges, while others suffered. In this article, the author hopes to give some sense of the ‘effect’ of human geographical knowledges for people, institutions, and places.

In short, this article tries to situate human geography in the times and places in which it has been produced. The author is cognizant that this is one academic’s perspective. This article seeks not to define core agendas, but to provide explanation and context. It necessarily cannot do adequate justice to all subthemes, topics, and perspectives. Part of the problem is that most of the disciplinary histories written in English have come from Britain and America. This has subsequently given the impression of an Anglo-American axis of academics ‘creating’ the history of the discipline – a history to which others from elsewhere occasionally contribute, but not to shape in any fundamental way. Alas, probably more than a whiff of such a bias seeps into this story too. There are attempts below to decenter the sense of an Anglo-American dominance, but finding and fully surveying the mass of non-Anglo-American explanations of human geography is beyond my capacity. As Sidaway (1997: 74) argued, “no single author could ever do justice to all traditions of geography, everywhere in the world.” Human geography exists as a formal academic discipline

in tens, if not over a hundred, different countries and languages, with diverse meanings and contexts. Only a fraction of those stories have been properly documented. Instead, the reader is recommended to treat this article as an entry point, and to explore the subdiscipline’s various trails from it. The author hopes it will become apparent as the reader progresses that the development and diffusion of human geography has been dynamic and context dependent – and amidst significant advances, has often been far from straightforward.

What Is ‘Human Geography’?

Defining human geography is especially difficult because of complicating factors like the relationship between human geography and geography (the former to many considered a mere subdiscipline of the latter); the rather late professionalization of the discipline; variations in human geography written in different languages; and the difficulty (indeed, sheer dubiousness) of being able to identify definitive research questions, sequential paradigms, or key thinkers. It is tempting to define a common ground for human geography’s intellectual core (as Hartshorne attempted), and wish to enforce this. Such a common ground might provide human geography with a sense of unity. But the reality of how human geography is practiced simply cannot sustain this. As David Livingstone so powerfully put it in *The Geographical Tradition* (1992: 28), “The idea that there is some eternal metaphysical core to geography independent of historical circumstances will simply have to go.”

Indeed, human geography has not had a linear trajectory of intellectual advances accompanied by more or less parallel diffusions as the subject was established and pursued around the world. Human geography has been energized and replenished in a more decentered manner by multiple authors asking very different questions within the same subdisciplinary space. Some, like Alexander Von Humboldt, are seen as forbearers, but others, such as Friedrich Ratzel and Ellsworth Huntington are remembered more for how subsequent geographers disowned their ideas. Somewhat an exception to this is Paul Vidal de la Blache, who took up the chair of geography at the Sorbonne in 1898 and whose students became professors of geography at most of France’s (then) 16 other universities. In this instance one could argue that a single leading figure established the terrain and direction of a national geographical tradition – at least for several subsequent generations.

Of course there have been highly influential theorists and practitioners in every era, but human geography has been a remarkably open field, particularly since the 1960s, when especially diverse ideas and political practices found traction, and when links were made to

Table 1 Contents of *Progress in Human Geography*, 1978–2007; numbers of articles by subdisciplinary theme^a

	1978– 1982	1983– 1987	1988– 1992	1993– 1997	1998– 2002	2003– 2007 ^b	Total
Economic geography	10	14	16	16	26	22	104
Social geography	9	10	10	15	18	22	84
Cultural geography	6	8	9	18	18	25	84
Spatial science	19	12	17	6	11	16	81
Political geography	4	11	13	8	15	19	70
Philosophy and the practice of human geography	5	2	16	16	15	15	69
Urban geography	15	13	6	4	10	9	57
Regional geography	16	18	9	2	5	6	56
Historical geography	7	11	11	6	6	13	54
Population geography	12	8	10	8	4	5	47
Environmentalism	12	10	7	3	5	0	37
Rural geography	10	5	1	4	6	7	33
Development geography	6	4	9	3	4	3	29
Human/environment relations	7	4	3	2	6	6	28
Agriculture and food	4	7	4	2	3	8	28
Statistical techniques	6	6	3	2	5	4	26
Industrial geography	6	4	4	4	4	2	24
Behavioral geography	10	3	5	2	2	0	22
Health geography	3	2	7	3	4	3	22
Feminist geography	1	0	2	6	6	1	16
Moral and ethical geographies	0	0	1	2	5	7	15
Methodology in geography	0	0	0	1	6	8	15
Transport geography	8	1	1	0	1	1	12
Indigenous and postcolonial geographies	1	2	0	0	2	2	7
Tourism geographies	0	0	1	2	1	0	4
Cultural economy	0	0	1	0	0	3	4
Humanism	0	2	1	0	0	0	3

^a Commonly accepted monikers were used for themes (e.g., economic, urban). More were added when articles did not seem to be adequately covered otherwise (e.g., health geographies). A subtree of themes was also used. For example, Marxist geographies were included in economic geography. Some theoretical perspectives that human geographers would consider a distinct theme were included, even though strictly they are a particular perspective that could apply more broadly across subjects (e.g., feminist geography). Others were not considered distinct themes because their theories, though important, are not normally associated with separate subdisciplinary identities (e.g., post-structuralism, actor-network theory). In these cases articles were classified according to the theme of the case study or other subdisciplinary identity (e.g., post-structuralist geopolitics within political geography; actor-network interpretation of cities in urban geography). Major themes such as geographical scale, GIS, and globalization were also subsumed within categories to aid in reducing the number of categories (in those instances, articles on scale were classified as 'philosophy and practice of geography'; GIS as spatial science, and globalization as economic or cultural (or other), depending on subject matter and theoretical perspective). Where articles clearly covered two listed themes, they were counted twice. Therefore totals do not exactly equate the total numbers of articles actually published in *PHG* from 1978–2007. Articles on the history of geography were counted in historical geography unless their abstract overtly mentioned philosophy and geographical practice (in which case the article would be included in both categories). Articles on sexuality and gender identities were counted in cultural geography, unless feminist theories were discussed in the text (in which case they were counted in both cultural and feminist geographies). Articles on statistical methods were counted separately from those providing progress reports on methodologies in geography. Some may quibble at the chosen categories (any act of classification involves at least some arbitrariness), but the author proceeded in using these estimations regardless, for they illustrate at least reasonably well an overall sense of English-language geographical publishing in the past three decades.

^b At the time of writing, only two issues for 2007 had been published, and were thus used in these statistics.

anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, economics, and philosophy. This perspective helps explain how contemporary human geography has emerged as a complex and differentiated grouping of scholars and students, institutions and analytical sites, technologies and methodologies, journals and conferences, arguments and audiences – evidenced by the very diversity of entries covered in this encyclopedia.

For what it is worth, and before discussing some rather more entangled stories about the discipline, it is worth

briefly surveying current human geography – at least in a surface scan of its various themes as they are represented in English-language academic publishing. **Table 1** summarizes the contents of one leading journal in the field, *Progress in Human Geography*, sorted by the themes of human geography written within its pages. *Progress* was chosen for this exercise not because it was deemed to be superior to other journals – it is not a representative sample because *Progress* has been Anglo-American dominated – but because above all other journals its aims

most suited this exercise: to ‘offer a genuinely comprehensive survey of geographical studies’, covering all human geography (rather than just parts of it), with regional reviews and commissioned progress reports on areas of research concentration. Unlike older journals (often published by national geography associations) it is exclusively centered on human geography (with its sister publication, *Progress in Physical Geography*, covering the other ‘half’ of the discipline). Every article between 1978 and 2007 has been counted in **Table 1**. What it reveals is that contemporary human geography is indeed diverse. Some subdisciplines have had a constant presence (e.g., urban, economic), some have seen declining number of articles published since the 1990s (e.g., regional geography), while others came to prominence (cultural). Some have ebbed and flowed (e.g., rural) and others have remained constant even though according to some commentators and historians of the discipline their fall from theoretical favor had been presumed complete (e.g., spatial science, statistical techniques). Meanwhile, a more self-reflexive element is evident especially since the mid-1990s, focused on the philosophy and practice of human geography, ethics, methods, and links to nature.

When Did Human Geography Emerge as a Discipline?

Geography’s ‘early modern period’ is thought to have begun with the Renaissance in the 1600s and ended with the formalization of geography as a school and university discipline in the late nineteenth century. In this period, “geography was ‘precisely defined’ as a scale of inquiry, that of the earth as a whole” (Withers, 2006: 712), which distinguished it from cosmography at the larger scale of the universe, and topography and chorography which dealt with regional and national scales. Geographers dealt with locations upon the Earth and described the phenomena to be found in those locations. Human geography was a constituent part of this, rather than a discrete endeavor. Geography was “a coherent body of knowledge about a clearly-defined object, namely the situation of places on the earth and the content of those places in natural and human terms” (Mayhew, 1998: 391).

That human geography might be something separate from or a distinct part of geography is a recent conceit. Most professional ‘human geographers’ work in university geography departments that cover the whole discipline, and most would probably pledge some allegiance to a conception of geography as an entirety that needs both human and physical parts. This nominal unity explains why in many forums – from journal publishing to conferences – the discipline of geography as a whole has been sustained. On the other hand, there is much evidence that human and physical geography are now

effectively separate. Both have specialist journals (with subdisciplinary aims); definitive publications that suggest whole-of-discipline integrity (like this one); and conferences. Joint teaching programs across human and physical geography are more common than genuinely collaborative research projects.

Tracing when and how human geography became recognized as distinct is no easy task. One can trace the term itself, its use, and the manner in which ‘human’ came to preface ‘geography’. According to Livingstone (1992: 198), the term owes its existence to German evolutionary geographer, Friedrich Ratzel, who in *Anthropogeographie* “sought to lay out the conceptual foundations of a new discipline – human geography.” In Britain, The Royal Geographical Society was established in 1831, and started *The Geographical Journal* in 1893, but it was not until 1909 that the first article appeared with ‘human geography’ in its title – a review essay by H. J. Fleure, of Elisée Réclus’ six-volume *L’Homme et La Terre*. In French geography the term first appeared in the title of Paul Vidal de la Blache’s *Principes de géographie humaine*. The discipline-defining journal *Progress in Human Geography* was itself only established in 1977.

Standard geography textbooks used in the English-speaking world at the turn of the twentieth century did not use the term at all. In 1893, Hughes divided *A Class Book of Modern Geography* into ‘mathematical or astronomical geography’, ‘physical geography’, and ‘political and commercial geography’. The latter category most neatly fits today’s human geography – although Hughes’ further description of it, as that part of geography “that treats of the political divisions of the earth, and the condition and industrial pursuits of mankind [sic]” is hardly comprehensive. Similarly, Lionel Lyde, in his 1895 textbook *Man on the Earth: A Course in Geography*, dealt separately with ‘population’, ‘commercial’, ‘political’, and ‘historical’ geography – without using the term ‘human geography’.

In contrast, the formal use of ‘physical geography’ can be traced back to examples such as Mary Somerville’s *Physical Geography*, Guyot’s *The Earth and Man: Lectures on Comparative Physical Geography*, and Emmanuel Kant’s *Lectures in Physical Geography* (1756–96) – although none of these fits perfectly with contemporary meanings either: for Somerville humans were considered part of physical geography; for Guyot (who was heavily influenced by the theological geography of German Carl Ritter), “the whole universe is a thought of God”; and in the case of Kant, not only were humans included, but physical geography was considered the foundation “for ‘other geographies’ including political, commercial, moral (in the sense of mores), and theological geography” (Hartshorne, 1939: 36).

In English, ‘human geography’ only really started to be used in articles and textbooks in the 1920s and 1930s,

usually when describing environmental determinist anthropogeography (after Ratzel), or when used as a container term for related debates about nature/human influence and causality. The term did not generally apply to political, historical, or commercial (economic) geography. Human geography as an umbrella term for the half of the discipline that dealt with human affairs was not commonly used until well into the 1950s and 1960s.

'The Human' in 'Human Geography'

At this point – and in lieu of a neat story of disciplinary beginnings – it helps to consider how the separation of geography into its 'human' and 'physical' parts reflected a particularly European intellectual heritage – with Biblical origins but gaining pace in the Enlightenment – of separating out concepts of 'the human' and 'nonhuman nature'. While 'human geography' has its particular etymology (spanning a century at best), the intellectual conditions from which separate agendas for 'human' and 'physical' geography could manifest were already apparent – and had been building consistently because of the influence of key thinkers both inside and outside geography – well before the twentieth century.

As Anderson argued, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries European intellectuals struggled to come to terms with what it meant to be 'human' in contrast to that part of the world deemed 'nonhuman'. Geographers were important public intellectuals developing theories on this problem. Geographers variously argued that humans were distinct and unique from nonhuman nature; conversely, that humans were an innate part of nature, subject to its universal laws; that humans could be classified into different types (e.g., into 'races') and their 'humanity' ranked (as 'less-human' savages, or 'children' in a stage of civilizing development); and that nonhuman nature (including the distribution of soil, landform, climate, and geological types) influenced the geography and manner of human social development.

Before Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, teleological theories dominated. These argued for some kind of grand design at work (usually at the hand of God), or emphasized that nature and humans changed in stages or movements toward preordained destinies. 'Stadial' theories, typically influenced by Locke's famous theory of ascent from a 'state of nature', saw humans as "shar[ing] a potential to lift themselves above other life forms which – so it was assumed – *merely lived*" (Anderson, 2005: 273). For premodern geographers, "imagined humanity sat on the scale of human variation... savagery was something that could be and, on the continent of America, had been surpassed. Only the circumstances of people's mode of living, adapted to specific environments of soil and climate, held them back" (Anderson, 2005: 273). Europeans

saw themselves as having successfully arisen from nature, as civilized and rational. Encounters of explorers and geographers on colonial voyages seemed to confirm that other humans were 'savage', 'closer to nature', or in need of civilizing through missionary Christianization.

Darwin's theories of natural selection and evolution would shape the intellectual climate of all the sciences, including geography. So-called 'social Darwinists' sought to directly apply his laws of evolution and 'survival of the fittest' to human populations, attempting to more thoroughly theorize the relationship between humans and the environment, rather than just catalog and describe places. It is worth noting that many so-called 'social Darwinist' theories were more accurately neo-Lamarckian, because they drew inspiration from Jean Baptiste Lamarck's earlier evolutionary theories. These emphasized more speedy, direct evolutionary adaptations by successive generations, and accounted for distinctions in a population "attributable to environment and will in mutual cooperation rather than to the vagaries of some capricious variation" (Livingstone, 1992: 187–189). Whatever the source of inspiration, social Darwinists commonly sought to explain human traits and behaviors as a result of environmental variation. In an illustrative example, in his 1923 address to the AAG, William Morris Davis – a major American proponent – showered warm praise on studies of the Seri Indians, which revealed "the many ways in which physiographic factors have influenced the human inhabitants of the region... by reason of the dry climate, the open surface, the small food supply and the scanty population, the Seri have become exceptionally fleet and enduring as runners; they can capture deer by pursuing them on foot and exhausting them; one of the tribe overtook a running horse." Such ideas were not entirely new – both Hippocrates and Aristotle had philosophized on the links between climate, habitability, and characteristics of people, and before Darwin, Montesquieu's ideas of how climate governed cultural traits and the 'degeneration' of humans were highly influential. But in this era, such ideas found a renewed vigor, frequently resulting in presumptuous and judgmental typecasting of racial types. Many geographers bought into it, particularly in English-speaking geography: notably James Bryce, Ellsworth Huntington, and Griffith Taylor. Fantastical leaps of (il)logic were common. As late as 1931 Austin Miller argued in *Climatology* that "The enervating monotonous climates of much of the tropical zone, together with the abundant and easily obtained food-supply, produce a lazy and indolent people, indisposed to labour for hire and therefore in the past subjected to coercion culminating in slavery." Huntington and Taylor both made maps of climatic and racial distributions and sought to schematize races of peoples further along spectrums of civilization and mental development: tropical climates, for instance, produced

‘inertias’ that eroded the will to work and degraded morals. In craniology the skull sizes of humans from the different races were measured, and a more fully ‘innatist’ – and thoroughly racist – view of the geography of humanity was proffered, based on the “preposterous contrivance that the world’s people could actually be differentiated and calibrated on a scale of distance’ from nature” (Anderson, 2005: 276), with white, temperate Europe at its center, and the other continents further from it (and thus closer to the tropics, and to nature).

Darwin’s ideas of evolutionary survival would be appropriated and applied to theories about nations and territorial expansion, in turn informing statecraft and practical foreign policy. In Mackinder’s 1904 famous geopolitical treatise, ‘The geographical pivot of history’, one zone in Eastern Europe – the Heartland – was seen to occupy a location key to ultimate global territorial control. The national or racial group that emerged from the struggle for survival to control that space thence controlled Europe, the wider landmasses connected to it, and effectively then the whole world. In *Politische Geographie*, Ratzel would argue that as populations grow, states, like biological organisms, must expand their territorial interests to create *lebensraum*, or ‘living space’, in which to endure. He provided a convenient rationale for European colonial expansion (then well underway in Africa) as a quest for living space and, literally, an outcome of the struggle of peoples to survive. Moreover, the ideal aim of states was to progress toward *grossraum* (large space) as a reflection of higher levels of civility. Here was, according to Livingstone (1992: 201), “a naturalistic theodicy that justified the imperial order in the language of scientific geography.”

In hindsight it is easy to argue, as Johnston (1987: 36) did, that “the environmental influences adduced were gross... it is hard to believe that they could have been written and taken seriously.” Certainly there were critics and reactions. The arguments of ‘possibilist’ authors such as Vidal de la Blache gave agency to individual humans to select from a range of uses of the environment. In another of the more well-known reactions to environmental determinism, Carl Sauer, at the University of California, Berkeley, sought to reinstate humans as active agents in the production of landscapes. In his *Morphology of Landscape*, it was humans “who possessed the uniquely controlling capacity to modify landscapes for better and worse” (Anderson, 2005: 269), as ‘world-altering beings’ impacting on pre-human, natural places. The subsequent ‘Berkeley tradition’ of cultural geography, led by Sauer and his disciples, became more interested in the diffusion of culture traits (rather than evolutionist generalizations of their origins), the identification of culture regions (in both material and nonmaterial terms), and the role of culture in conditioning human perceptions of nature and the environment. Sauer was influenced by the German

Otto Schlüter, who distinguished natural landscape (*naturlandschaft*) from cultural landscape (*kulturlandschaft*); a distinction underpinning the conceptual separation of human and nonhuman nature, and by extension the formal interests of human and physical geography.

In some parts, debates about environmental determinism lingered on into the mid-twentieth century. Griffith Taylor scoffed at suggestions that the Australian landmass could support white populations in the hundreds of millions because of unsuitable climate, lack of rainfall, and productive soil capacity. Against the grain of the then white-only immigration policy, he promoted Chinese immigration – because according to him they were of the brachycephalic race and thus ‘more suited’ to the prevailing environment. So much was the Australian government horrified by Taylor’s ideas that he was denied promotion, his texts were banned by education authorities and university senates (because of his pessimistic use of words like ‘arid’ and ‘desert’ rather than any racist assumptions), and he eventually left in 1928 to take up the chair in geography at the University of Chicago.

By and large, geographers had by the 1940s felt a loss of face from their detour into debates about human–environment relations. Such efforts had been largely discredited, or in the case of Taylor, were so against imperial and nationalist sentiments as to fall from institutional favor. That which had defined ‘human geography’ in the first decades of the century – questions of the causal relationship between humans and nonhuman nature – faded into obscurity. Human geography would ‘let go’ of nature from its theoretical purview, leaving behind an era that harbored inherent racism, excused colonial violence, lacked theoretical muscle, and simply suffered the inaccuracy of overgeneralization.

And so, human geography in the second half of the twentieth century became further defined against non-human nature, which physical geographers would come to examine using an increasingly scientific positivist paradigm (quickly developing in parallel). Further separation of human and physical geography was perhaps inevitable. Advancement of the discipline was thought to come from segmentation into fractions that could be manageably examined and theorized to more sustainable and defensible ends.

Although enabling subsequent generations to evade the dangers of environmental determinism, post-war human geography did not overturn the human/nonhuman dualism on which environmental determinism so firmly rested. It merely shifted focus, to concern itself with just one side of that dualism. Indeed, in retrospect it has only become ‘common sense’ to talk about human geography as different to ‘physical geography’ because geographers have come to accept that division. This relatively recent separation has been both useful and

unhelpful. On the one hand it established intellectual grounds within geography where engagements with nonhuman nature were merely optional – in turn enabling human geographers to lead theoretical debate in the wider social sciences (without needing to somehow ‘bridge’ back to the physical side). On the other hand, many would argue that a wedge was driven between great strands of knowledge, artificially dividing the human and nonhuman parts of our world. For some, this divide created practical, institutional, and political risks. With common purpose, human and physical geographers would be otherwise more strategically positioned to contribute to debates about sustainability, inequality, and our ecological future. For others the divide was analytically poor, because it left assumptions about the distinctions between humans and nonhuman nature intact and untested: “Geography, like history, becomes the story of exclusively human activity and invention played out over, and through, an inert bedrock of matter and objects made up of everything else” (Whatmore, 1999: 4).

Only in the last decade or so have geographers sought to properly question the very category of ‘the human’ on which ‘human geography’ rests. This has seen inward flows of influence from gender and science and technology studies, and new theories in which human and nonhuman entities are all seen as active agents in wider technosocial assemblages. The point is to emphasize that

The ‘humanness’ of human beings is not pre-given in any absolute contrast with animals... The species specificity of people is not disputed... there is no shrill naturalism at work here which wants to remind us, after Darwin, that essentially ‘we are all animals’... Instead, post-humanism’s point of departure... is to refuse the humanist account of living things which *begins* by assuming a radical or pure break between humanity and animality. (Anderson, 2005: 271)

In this way – at least for some – the very distinction that the identity of human geography rests upon has been brought into fundamental question.

Modern Geography, Human Geographies

Between 1950 and 2000, human geography became more diverse, and spread across university systems and languages. It also more wholly engaged with theoretical and epistemological turns across the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. There are different ways to portray this development and diversification. One explanation is that growth and further specialization merely continued to unfurl as ever more themes, subjects, and places were incorporated into geographical analysis. Further parts were simply added as subdisciplinary specialisms developed and became normalized. This rings true for

certain places and subdisciplines: urban geography, rural geography, and population geography became fully coalesced specialisms as critical masses of researchers and teachers were reached, as university subjects were proposed and approved, and as academic journals gained publishers and readerships.

This doesn’t however reflect the way other sub-disciplinary areas emerged from political impetuses, or in reaction to the perceived intellectual poverty of existing orthodoxies. This was certainly how the so-called ‘quantitative revolution’ transformed academic geography in the 1960s. According to Allen Scott, it was

a period of great intellectual and professional struggle in geography between traditionalists and reformers, with the latter seeking to push geography out of its perceived idiographic torpor and – on the basis of quantitative methodologies and formal modelling – into a more forthright engagement with theoretical ideas. (2004: 481)

While pre-war geographers speculated about environmental determinism, or retreated to regionalism and areal differentiation, other competing academic disciplines had proceeded ahead with conceptual and statistical advances. This triggered reactions in a new generation of geographers with a shared desire to develop a thorough, mathematically justifiable geographical science that could be taken seriously by other disciplines. Geographers created the field of spatial science in the 1960s – with new journals and readerships – attempting to develop general theories of space and human activity using inferential statistical techniques and abstract modeling. The emphasis was on techniques of locational analysis – often inspired by other disciplines such as physics, mathematics, economics, and sociology – but also on developing more defensible theories. Common themes included the geography of land rent in cities; geographical diffusion over time; networks (particularly transport); and the locational decision-making behavior and distribution of economic activities.

In turn, radical geography would emerge from the 1970s when geographers would become dissatisfied with quantitative geography, which was perceived as socially irrelevant and apolitical. Quantitative geographers appeared to have much to say about how human economic and social activities were structured across hypothetical, abstract space, but were silent on the worrying problems of poverty, war, and racism afflicting the world at that time. Indeed, radical geographers became concerned that (whether willingly or not) the discipline may in fact contribute these problems rather than provide explanations or solutions. As Harvey explained,

the radical and Marxist thrust in geography in the late 1960s concentrated on a critique of ideology and practice within the positivism that then reigned supreme. It

sought to penetrate the positivist shield and uncover the hidden assumptions and class biases that lurked therein. It increasingly viewed positivism as a manifestation of bourgeois managerial consciousness given over at worst to manipulation and control of people as objects and at best capable of expressing a paternalistic benevolence. It attacked the role of geographers in imperial endeavors, in urban and regional planning procedures designed to facilitate social control and capital accumulation. It called into question the racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and plain political prejudice communicated in many geographical texts. (Harvey, 1984: 5)

Various liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s would exert a political influence on the development of new strands of human geography concerned with injustice: the women's movement would inform a new critique of the embedded masculinist and patriarchal power axes in geography (and in society more generally); the civil rights and union movements would inspire young radical social geographers concerned with issues of race, class, exclusion, and inequality in the city; international movements for the recognition of the treatment and rights of indigenous peoples would lay the foundation for new postcolonial geographical critiques of empire and European cartography; and poverty, capitalism, and uneven development were examined in more critical light. Economic geography in particular would be transformed, with new interests in the role of transnational corporations, the politics of trade and foreign direct investment, and international and gendered divisions of labor. New journals emerged (notably *Antipode*, in 1969, and *Gender, Place and Culture*, in 1994) and study groups emerged from within geographical associations to provide more focused arenas for radical discourse. These reactionary voices would have a substantial legacy for contemporary human geography. In addition to the shifting of its topics and themes, they opened up the discipline to political exigency, and to broad critical shifts energizing the social sciences and humanities. In time, postmodern and post-structuralist theoretical perspectives (as well as those from more specific fields such as queer theory, governmentality, science and technology studies, and psychoanalysis) would become incorporated into human geographical praxis and be debated for their merits in advancing meaningful, theoretically robust and relevant research. Engagements with philosophy would take human geography even further into metaphysical and ontological ruminations on the nature of place and space.

Intellectual and political 'turns' were thus vital in replenishing the discipline. However, linguistic and national differences complicated this: even between English and American geography the uptake of new specialisms and influences varied. Lingering legacies of older

practitioners were present in one country but not another, as were channels of influence on government and the wider social sciences. The enthusiasm for paradigmatic revolutions from the 1960s onwards also belied historical continuities with earlier approaches. Quantifiers, for instance, did reject description and regional parochialism in a revolutionary manner, but they also reconnected geography with a much earlier legacy of Renaissance mathematical geography. Quantitative geography also secured a more formal role for theory in human geography, which subsequent phases of the discipline would rely upon – even if their theoretical and political influences were different. Certain types of human geography developed consistently without necessarily falling from favor, as in the case of social geography. Similarly, although cultural geography bloomed in the 1980s after the 'postmodern turn' (to the chagrin of some commentators), certain continuities would exist with much earlier traditions (e.g., its focus on landscape). Political geography too would be written for over a hundred years – even though it would have its own internal radical and post-structuralist 'turns'. In addition, new areas with their own journals would emerge not from paradigm shifts but in relation to real world cultural and economic changes (e.g., tourism geography), from observations of research gaps (e.g., children's geography), or from the continued needs of the state for certain kinds of geographical knowledge. It is because of this mix of continuities, overturnings and absorptions that it is now possible – perhaps even more appropriate – to talk about human geographies, rather than a single disciplinary corpus. Pluralizing the term human geography is both a linguistic convenience (one which more accurately depicts current practice) and an intellectual imperative for the discipline aimed at celebrating difference.

How Are Human Geographical Knowledges Produced?

Human geography is "an irredeemably situated, positioned system of knowledge" (Gregory, 1994: 76). How knowledge has been produced, distributed, and consumed matters a great deal in how we interpret its impact and meaning. As already mentioned, human geography existed well before it became a formal academic enterprise. In addition to at universities, human geographical knowledges have been produced in a multitude of contexts. "All societies," wrote David Harvey (1984: 2) "possess a distinctive 'geographical lore', a working knowledge of their territory, of the spatial configuration of use values relevant to them." Human geographical knowledges are found on university campuses beyond geography departments (for example, researchers working from history departments on colonial mapping), and

where knowledges are produced about people and place in nonacademic, populist ways. Cultural expressions like art, film, music, or literature all in one way or another ‘write or describe the world’ (as do postcards, television nature documentaries, and tourist brochures) and in that way form legitimate and rich sources of geographical knowledge. In cultural and political geography in particular, popular culture has become an important source of material for analysis of geographical imagery and meaning.

Conceptualizing human geographical knowledges as the manner in which peoples and places have been imagined, written, or spoken about enables one to reveal a plural, diffuse, and ingrained vintage for the discipline. In a very basic way, human geography has been practiced throughout human existence on Earth – or at least as long as humans have made cartographic representations of space and their habitation within them. In Africa rock art depicts topographical features and animals, and people and dwellings are arranged in relation to them; in Australia, aboriginal rock art is part of a living and dynamic history of human geographical representation spanning thousands of years. In Native American art across the southwest, and in varied traditional cultures elsewhere, oral traditions were recorded and transmitted via cartographic techniques, where knowledge of topographical and cultural sites and routes of travel were necessary. Such knowledge was, and still is, at its most fundamental, a human geographical representation of a defined social space.

Before the development of universities, scholarly societies, or printing presses, geographers were employed by royal courts to discover parts of the world and report back on them. Exploration and discovery funded pre-modern geography. Geographical knowledges dispersed via the commercial trade in maps and globes. This was not a set of activities purely confined to what we now call Europe, indeed it preexisted the age of European exploration. Trade enabled exchanges between ‘the West’ and various parts of the Ottoman Empire, the Indian Ocean, and Asia that had already been mapped. Additionally, as Sidaway argued, indigenous human geographical knowledges provided the basis for European geographical knowledges, when Europeans, during the Renaissance and later centuries, expanded empires and influence across the globe. Europeans gained advice, traveled over already-worn paths and routes, exchanged maps and charts, and built a geographical tradition that hybridized – rather than ignored or replaced – already existing indigenous knowledges.

Prior to the 1400s, written geographical records were hardly scientific – they were often “travel accounts of the weird and wonderful” designed to “titillate readers” (Livingstone, 1992: 34). Writing only became more idealistic and methodical from the late 1400s onwards,

after the Renaissance had begun. But the format and popularity of ‘travel’ geographies persisted. Most people writing geography in the 1700s and 1800s were not ‘geographers’ in the sense that we understand it, instead being historians, botanists, or ‘Grub Street journalists’ – the name given to hack writers associated with cheap publications, stemming from the London street of the same name (Mayhew, 1998: 402). These were compilers and collators of others’ works, not field scientists, and they published populist books rich with fanciful description that went into numerous successive editions: “Truths were not demonstrated as would be demanded by scientific method; they were simply copied and repeated” (Mayhew, 1998: 405). In a similar manner, for over 400 years a genre of book publishing called ‘special geography’ sought to describe every country of the world. Written for the US and Britain and most popular from the 1780s to the 1820s, they were prose works rather than encyclopedia, containing secondhand information gleaned from reports of exploration. Their intention was for “pleasure and utility” (Withers, 2006: 713); their readers engaging in “voluntary self-enlightenment” (Sitwell, 1993: 9). Not coincidentally, they were most popular at exactly the time that reports of the travels of Cook, Flinders, La Pérouse, and other explorers reached Europe. Consumers not only read books. In Britain, the Royal Geographical Society’s lectures were heavily patronized by ‘the dining club set’, frequently people of military affiliation, for whom geography “centred on regional description and reportage, and the advancement of Britain’s colonial exploits overseas” (Livingstone, 1992: 175).

Nowadays academic geographers distance themselves greatly from early precedents, although it would be naïve in the extreme to suggest that the output of current research efforts is somehow more independent or more intellectually ‘pure’ (in the sense of ideas written for their own sake, irrespective of expectations, pressures, or perceptions of their various audiences). Alongside other kinds of knowledge production, academic human geography is complicit in the continued expansion and power of corporate-dominated publishing, events, and intellectual property industries. Geographical research output is increasingly reimagined as ‘content’ for corporate entities that have bought and amalgamated publishers, and oligopolized academic print outlets. Indeed, only recently are implications of the nesting of geographical pursuits in the corporate knowledge economy becoming more fully apparent. A recent example was the debate surrounding connections between Elsevier, the publisher of this encyclopedia, and a subsidiary company who among other activities were the organizers of defense industry fairs where military-related arms contracts and deals were brokered. Geographers raised a range of direct and related concerns about how academic publishing is

enmeshed with capitalist social relations; how close academia might be to global trade in the machines of warfare and torture (not just through Elsevier, but through the substantial shares that universities such as Cambridge and Oxford own in arms-exporting corporations) and about the tactics academics could use in protest. After pressure from researchers Elsevier would eventually sever links through subsidiaries to the defense industry in order to improve its image of independence. Such dialogs have refreshingly opened up debate about research and the embeddedness of academic pursuits within and beyond geography in the apparatuses of capitalism and state control.

Who Has Benefited and Suffered from the Production of Human Geographical Knowledges?

Recent debates about academic publishing and links to corporations and the military echo earlier critiques of the connections between geography and the imperial interests of the state. They share a focus on who has benefited and suffered from the production of geographical knowledges. Geography was “the science of imperialism *par excellence*” (Livingstone, 1992: 170). From the 1500s up until World War II, geographers mapped places and environments that would become part of European colonial empires, they identified resources that would be plundered, they described cultural practices that were to be ‘civilized’, races to be ‘saved’. But colonial geography was also a means through which European nationalism was cemented, because through it conceptions of European nationhood were forged: expeditions and subsequent geographical writings described other places, environments, and cultures in the eye of the beholder, and reinforced what it meant by contrast to be European, to be Western, to be British, or German. Cultural representations also had material effects. Colonial geographical maps and writings would support actual imperial expansions that made and remade those territories.

In Jeffersonian America, geography proved central to nation building, buttressing attempts to foster patriotism and a sense of independence in a newly colonizing nation. Jefferson himself was a vocal advocate for geography, funding the inland explorations of Lewis and Clarke, and even penning his own geographical (and rather boosterish) text on his home state, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. France’s geography was reorganized after the Revolution, not just to change administrative boundaries and the like, but to create “locales wherein a revolutionary political culture was made, challenged and remade after 1789” (Heffernan, 2005: 277). One key exponent, Edme Mentelle, wrote explicitly Republican

geographies “to mould new citizens” (Withers, 2006: 716). Elsewhere in Europe, geographical characterization of national populations increasingly showed the imprint of contemporary political concerns. In Greece, “Meletios, Archbishop of Athens, sketched a geography of European civility in his *Geography, Old and New*, praising the French for their culture, the Swiss for their struggles for political freedom and the English for being the ‘most civil and tame’” (Withers, 2006: 716), while in Nikiphoros’ *Elements of Geography* “Holland is singled out for its religious tolerance, the Swiss and the Swedes for their liberty, the English for their seriousness of character and scientific disposition.” These human geographical writings were not born of scientific impulse; instead they intended to diplomatically “reassociate Greece, an ancient centre of classical learning, with modern centres of learning in western Europe” (Withers, 2006: 716).

Other interests have been furthered by human geographical praxis – some subtly contributing to the maintenance of systems of oppression; others contributing more destructively to outright tyranny. Religious maps of the medieval era were deliberately moralizing, and often depicted a world with Jerusalem or Rome as the rightful centers of religious power. The first Greek map of the world, dated at around 500 BC, was ‘a diplomatic device’, displayed in Miletus in an attempt to persuade Greek states to take up arms against Persia. It showed a world dominated by a vast Europe, towering over diminutive Asia and Africa. Writing about the transition from feudal to capitalist society in Europe, David Harvey described geographical knowledge production as pivotal. Geographers contributed exploration, cartographic survey, regional inventory, geopolitical taxonomy, and resource compilation – all central to imperial manipulation, management, and exploitation. Indeed, mapping in the contemporary world of geographic information systems (GISs) has not ceased to be a technology used in the governing and control of populations.

Motivations for geographers have included the idealistic, the selfish (fame and fortune), and the evangelical. Geographical societies had close links to missionaries and produced knowledges of the savage ‘Other’ that supported intentions to convert them. Such knowledges enabled immense and often destructive cultural change, although this was often complex in moments of colonial contact. Ratzel, like Mackinder, produced geopolitical knowledges that were meant to be read by foreign policymakers and shape state military actions. Although it is strictly incorrect to claim that Ratzel provided intellectual justification for Nazism, as is often thought the case (his philosophy promoted racial mixing as survival strategy – more accurately it was Karl Haushofer’s work that was most used by the Nazis), Ratzel nonetheless justified German colonial activities, just as Mackinder supported Britain’s fragmenting of

post-war Eastern Europe in order to create a buffer between Germany and Russia, thus averting their control of the Heartland, and protecting Britain's dominance.

In recent decades, geographers concerned with these pasts, and with ethics and justice, have thought more deeply about self-reflexivity and positionality in research, and about how dubious agendas or questionable goals can be smuggled into academic enterprises. Many have re-defined themes and research questions, and the manner in which research is carried out. In contrast to geography's deeply imperial past, research can now be a catalyst for addressing difficult moral and ethical questions, or a vehicle for empowerment and liberation. Research can give voice to marginalized groups, can relate to activist causes, encourage participation of subjects in research design and management, or be imagined 'for', rather than 'on', the poor or marginalized. Even geographical information systems (critiqued by some as throwbacks to positivism or as technologies of state control) have been increasingly explored as a tool for critical and participatory research.

Where Have Human Geographical Knowledges Been Produced?

Human geography has its own differentiated geography. It has addressed different intents, and has taken place in diverse institutional contexts that all shape its character, orientation, and reception. In some academic disciplines a strong sense prevails of truly international debates and paradigms. This is not necessarily the case in human geography. Ironically, even though human geography has global aspirations and an international presence, a sense of global uniformity or consensus is remarkably absent. Perhaps it is a marker of the respect geographers pay to the crucial roles of place, context, and geographical specificity that the very notion of global consensus is unpopular.

Even by the late 1700s the idea of a coherent and universal explanation of world geography had been challenged. Jedidiah Morse was so incensed by the Anglocentrism of British geography books that he inverted the usual practice of describing Europe first in his *The American Geography*, and dedicated 90% of its 536 pages to the New World. Similarly, William Guthrie, a Scottish writer, sought to expose how English assumptions had pervaded eighteenth-century geography, and rewrote it using concepts from the Scottish Enlightenment instead.

Most recently, and perhaps most fundamentally, any sense of a canonical, universal story of human geography has been unsettled by critical geographers both within and beyond the English-language sphere. Concern has been raised about the Anglo-American and English-

language dominance of the academic publishing industry (see **Table 2**), and the assumption of universality in much Anglo-American geography. American and British writers, it is argued, often assume global relevance for their work, yet are silent on their own particularity and inward gaze, reluctant to engage in comparative research in a truly international sense. Referees and editors of English-language journals published from Britain or the United States have demanded that papers from 'the periphery' justify their interest to northern audiences or else face rejection. Such attitudes valorize Anglo-American geographies as 'unlimited', and depict other geographies as 'limited'. For Minca (2000: 287), "there is a widespread conviction both among many Italian geographers as well as among many of my European colleagues that these journals' implicit claims of being 'international' ... are patently absurd if not downright pretentious." It is perhaps no coincidence that this has occurred in an era when English increasingly became a global lingua franca of business, science and the internet.

But just as Livingstone (1992: 142) cautioned against interpreting American geography in the 1800s as "a mere epiphenomenon, a pale shadow, of its European counterpart," so too it is similarly naïve – nay offensive – to presume that the dynamic centers of geographical development since the 1960s have been England or the United States. Most English-language geographers would not even be aware there are over 270 geography journals in Spanish and Portuguese, published from Spain and throughout Latin America. Meanwhile, in Japan quantitative geographers adopted and debated Western ideas quickly, and critical geographers were as early as the 1920s incorporating German Marxist ideas into their work on poverty (some 50 years before Marxism rose to prominence in English-language geography). If Anglo-American myopia is true, it runs counter to a history of international exchanges in past phases of geography. Italian geographical scholarship was not just an "implicitly peripheral national variation" but instead spoke "to a *fundamental political moment* in the genesis of European geography" (Minca, 2007: 181). During the quantitative revolution of the 1960s origins and inspiration came from geographers in Germany, Sweden, and Finland. In the case of the concept of cultural landscape, it was trafficked from German (*Landschaft*, in Humboldt) into French (*pays*, in Vidal de la Blache), and into English (Sauer). British and American geography has never only just been British or American. The "suggestion of a self-generating (western) geographical tradition smacks of a fetishisation of the west... western geographical knowledge did not develop in some kind of vacuum, away from prior non-western geographies. It *depended* upon them" (Sidaway, 1997: 74–75).

In light of these contrasting stories of myopia and cross-cultural diffusion, it is fruitful to recast our image

Table 2 Nationalities of authors in *Progress in Human Geography*, 1978–2007; nation of institutional affiliation of each author on all articles

	1978–1982	1983–1987	1988–1992	1993–1997	1998–2002	2003–2007 ^a	Total	% of Total
UK	100	79	70	64	98	121	532	53.2
USA	28	29	53	38	47	65	260	26
Canada	13	10	8	14	10	15	70	7
Australia	5	6	2	6	2	6	27	2.7
Aotearoa								
New Zealand	2	1	5	5	7	4	24	2.4
Singapore	0	0	0	2	8	1	11	1.1
Ireland	0	1	1	0	3	4	9	0.9
Germany	0	0	0	1	0	8	9	0.9
Netherlands	0	3	3	1	1	0	8	0.8
France	3	0	1	0	1	2	7	0.7
Israel	0	3	2	0	1	1	7	0.7
Sweden	0	0	0	4	0	2	6	0.6
Finland	0	0	0	0	4	2	6	0.6
Japan	1	0	0	2	0	1	4	0.4
China	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	0.3
South Africa	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.2
Poland	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.2
India	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Austria	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Nigeria	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Portugal	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Brazil	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Italy	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Argentina	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Swaziland	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Hungary	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Palestine	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.1
Spain	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.1
Denmark	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.1
Taiwan	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.1

^aAt the time of writing, only two issues for 2007 had been published, and were thus used in these statistics.

of the geography of human geographical knowledge production and dissemination not as some simple linear diffusion model – of centers and diffusions into margins – but as a more complex and hybrid set of flows. Geographers are sometimes connected with one another (and at other times not) across different countries and languages. Human geographical knowledge production and distribution occurs through ‘scenes’, made up of researchers and readers, much as one might imagine music scenes, artistic scenes, or political communities being organized within and across cities and nations. Fall (2007: 195) argued that the content of geography in languages differs less than the manner in which their texts circulate, shaped by “institutional structure, the nature of the academy and styles of debate.”

Human geography must therefore be understood in place and the institutional context within which it is produced. Geography departments can be very large, such as at Universitas Gadjadara in Indonesia, but house only some of the subdisciplinary areas expected in Britain. Indeed, Gadjadara has probably the largest academic geography unit in the world, constituting an

entire faculty of the university, separated further into departments of physical geography and environment, human geography, cartography and remote sensing, and regional development. Little known outside Southeast Asia, Gadjadara’s teaching and research is focused on what is necessary and required by government, and by local communities with most pressing humanitarian needs (hence foci on agricultural development and rural poverty). In that institution, too, subscription to Western geographical journals is virtually impossible because of funding and departmental space limitations. Their understandable preference to teach and research in Bahasa Indonesia rather than English (which only some staff speak) mediates adoption of outside vernaculars. Even in the Global North, conditions of academic labor vary enormously, as do pressures to produce certain kinds of research and to conform to research impact assessment exercises; all these translate into variegated geographies of human geographical research across universities and cities.

More accurately, the geography of human geography has become hybrid. Editorial boards of most geography

journals are now “genuinely committed to trying to deal with the politics of publishing” (Laurie, 2004: 142), although for many this is still a ‘work in progress’. Strategies to internationalize and democratize human geography have made some headway, and debates have intensified about the pluralism of geography, the hegemony of English as a *lingua franca* in international publishing, and methods that could be explored to break this down or to use English for cross-cultural dialog. Language barriers are never absolute. Some English-language journals such as *Social and Cultural Geography* and *Tourism Geographies* translate all abstracts into at least two other languages, and many geographers (particularly from the non-English-speaking world) publish and work in more than one. Some journals publish in two or more languages (such as the *Canadian Geographer*, the Finnish *Nordia Geographical Publications*, the *Rivista Geografica Italiana*, and *Geographische Zeitschrift*). Others (such as *Geografiska Annaler* and *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*) are from countries and regions that have national languages other than English, but nonetheless publish in English and have become “much more inclusive of alternative traditions” (Rodríguez-Pose, 2004: 2). Changing political economic circumstances as well as growing diasporic academic networks have broadened and diversified Chinese human geographical output, even while China is woefully neglected in Anglo-American publishing. In the case of *Arab World Geographer*, it has become a journal for a genuinely international mix of scholars from a range of political and epistemological perspectives. It has proved an important arena for debate and dissent over recent global conflicts, having commissioned symposia following the 2000 al-Aqsa *intifada*, the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center towers in Manhattan, and the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. Although efforts to speak across linguistic, cultural, and epistemological traditions always entail much hard work for those involved, journals that attempt it are more likely to publish genuinely international viewpoints. Greater reflexivity over research production is thus gradually altering the geography of human geographical activity.

Contemporary Human Geographies

Whereas this article began with an uncomplicated description of what is commonly understood to be human geography, it concludes here by arguing that the maintenance of the subdiscipline as discrete and internally coherent is far from straightforward. When most people talk about human geography, they refer to a type of academic pursuit undertaken in the modern era, and particularly from the latter half of the twentieth century onwards, which encompasses a diversity of ways of examining the presence and actions of humans in

geographical space. But because of this, human geography is necessarily an interdisciplinary pursuit, one that evades precise definition and intellectual closure. How human geographies are done also varies from place to place and in different linguistic traditions, although traffic of ideas and methods across and between these has also been apparent. Contemporary human geographies are hybrid formations in which multiple paradigmatic viewpoints, drawn from multiple historical and spatial contexts, coexist and jostle within the same institutional and subdisciplinary spaces.

See *also*: Colonialism I; Colonialism II; Cultural Geography; Darwinism (and social Darwinism); Environmental determinism/environmental geography; Feminist Geography; Geopolitics; Historical geographies of ethnicity and resistance; History of Cartography; History of Geography; Human Geography and Physical Geography; Human-nonhuman; Indigenous Geographies; Marxism/Marxist geography I; Marxism/Marxist geography II; Post-modernism/post-modernist geographies; Post-structuralism/post-structuralist geographies; Publishing: Books and Texts; Quantitative Revolution (Geography of); Radical geography; Taylor, Griffith; Women, gender and geography (the ‘pre-history’ of feminist geography).

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