



## **Explain the importance of studying human geography in modern times**

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### **Abstract**

I argue that contemporary human geography has suffered from a significant narrowing of the time periods that inform its empirical and conceptual studies. This is despite the fact that contemporary human geography has undergone a welcome explosion in terms of the breadth of its thematic scope. I start by providing evidence that the temporal focus of the subdiscipline has shifted over the course of the previous 50 years, with a special emphasis placed on the temporal narrowing that has occurred over the course of the past 20 years. After stating this, the next thing I want to do is provide some probable explanations for why the times that are researched in this subfield have become shorter. After that, I demonstrate why it is beneficial to broaden our chronological frame of reference to include discussions of prior eras. In conclusion, I will argue that the project of expanding the timeframes that we use to organise our geographical study has the potential to allow us to tell alternative tales about the geographical past and present. This is the argument that I will give.

**Keywords:** human geography, physical geography, chorology, postpositivism

### **Introduction**

#### **Human Geography**

Human geography is the study of the interrelationship between the physical environment and the sociocultural environment formed by human beings via reciprocal contact with each other. Humans construct both the physical and the sociocultural environments. You human beings are dependent on nature for the resources that allow them to survive. For communities like this, their natural surroundings take on the role of Mother Nature. Anthropogeography, often known as human geography, is a subfield of geography that investigates the geographical links between human groups, cultures, and economies, as well as the ways in which these factors interact with the surrounding environment. Methods of qualitative and quantitative research are used in order to conduct an investigation into the spatial interdependencies of social interactions and the natural environment. “The field of study known as human geography

examines, on a regional scale, the geographical distribution of human facts on the surface of the globe as well as the functional links that exist between different human groups and the environments in which they live. Human geography, which is the most prominent subfield of geography, is concerned with the investigation of human populations, societies, economies, and cultures, as well as the investigation of how these factors interact with the surrounding physical environment.

### **Definition of Human Geography**

Definitions of human geography expressed by some of the Geographers of human geography are given below

According to E.C.Semple, Human Geography is a study of the changing relationships, between the unresting man and the unstable earth.

According to French Geographer Vidal de la Blache Human Geography offers a new conception of the inter-relationship between earth and man..... a more synthetic knowledge of physical laws governing our earth and of the relations between the living beings which inhabit

### **Nature of Human Geography**

The following is a list of characteristics that may be found in human geography:

With the passage of time, the people gradually get a better understanding of their surroundings and the natural forces at play. As human society and culture advance, we are able to create technology that is both more advanced and more efficient. They go from a condition characterised by need to one characterised by freedom. They generate opportunities by using the resources that are gleaned from their surrounding surroundings. Human actions produce a cultural landscape. Ports on the coasts, oceanic routes on the surface of the ocean, and satellites in space are just some of the places where human activities have left their mark. Health resorts on highlands, vast urban sprawls, fields, orchards, and pastures in plains and rolling hills, and ports on the coasts are some other examples. This viewpoint was referred to as possibilism by the previous academics. Nature presents chances, which are then taken advantage of by human people, which results in nature gradually becoming more humanised and beginning to exhibit the marks of human endeavour.

There are also some important points about the nature of human geography which are given below:

1. The study of human geography focuses on the complex interrelationships that exist between man's natural environment and the sociocultural environment he has created.



2. The land, the water, the soil, the temperature, the plants, and the wildlife are all components of the physical environment.
3. Elements of cultural environment include transit and communication, settlements, agriculture

### **Scope of Human Geography**

The fields of the physical sciences, the biological sciences, and the social sciences each have their own distinct philosophies, methodologies, and scopes. For instance, economics is primarily concerned with the production, movement, and consumption of goods and services; geology is concerned with the composition and interior of the earth's crust; demography pertains to the characteristics of the human population; and zoology and botany, respectively, examine the animal and plant kingdoms. These are just some examples of the many different scientific disciplines. In a similar vein, geography investigates a wide variety of observable and unobservable natural and man-made occurrences. The study of human societies in connection to their environments or habitats is the primary focus of human geography. This area of research is also known as socioenvironmental geography. Human geography, which is concerned with the geographical dispersion of societies, encompasses a very broad area, or its scope is quite extensive. It encompasses the study of human races; the expansion, distribution, and density of people in the different areas of the globe; their demographic characteristics and migratory patterns; and the variations, both physical and cultural, that exist between human groups and economic activity. In addition to this, it discusses the connection that exists between man and the natural world around him, as well as the manner in which his actions are dispersed. Human geography also takes into consideration the patchwork of culture, language, religion, customs, and traditions; kinds and patterns of rural settlements; the location, size, development, and functions of urban settlements; and the categorization of towns according to their purposes. The study of the ways in which the physical environment affects the geographical distribution of economic activities, industries, commerce, and means of transportation and communication is another major issue in human geography.

In a nutshell, the field of human geography investigates how a region's inhabitants are influenced by their surrounding physical environment in terms of their economic activities, society, culture, and religion. In the field of human geography, another issue that is gaining ground in relevance is man's influence on the natural world. In typical geographical regions such as the equatorial, hot deserts, and tundra, the adaptation of man to his physical



environment is of great relevance to human geography. This is because it helps in understanding the symbiotic relationship that exists between social groups and the natural environment in which they live. The study of human geography examines both the world in its current state and the globe in a variety of potential future states. It places a strong focus on people, including where they are located, what they are like, how they interact through space and time, and what sorts of landscapes of human use they create atop the natural landscapes that they inhabit. It includes all of the interests and themes in geography, such as mapping, that are not immediately concerned with the actual environment. The subject matter of human geography serves as a unifying factor for all of the other social sciences. This is because human geography offers the social sciences with a geographical, temporal, and systems perspective that they would not have access to otherwise. At the same time, the studies that are associated with human geography's subfields, such as behavioural, political, economic, or social geography, draw on the findings of other social science disciplines. The goals of a liberal education are served wonderfully well by the study of human geography. It enables us to get a better understanding of the world we live in as well as an appreciation for the conditions that are experienced by people in countries and communities different than our own. It elucidates the differences in communities and cultures, as well as the human landscapes that humans have produced in various parts of the world. Its models and explanations of spatial interaction let us to have a better understanding of the economic, social, and political systems that we all live and work within as individuals and as a group. The studies of spatial systems that it provides make us more aware of the reality of our own society as well as the possibilities that it has in a world that is becoming more unsettled and competitive. Therefore, the study of human geography has the potential to help us become more educated citizens, more capable of comprehending the significant challenges that are now being faced by both our communities and our nations, and more equipped to contribute to the resolution of these problems.

### **People and the environment: the physical and the human**

Changes to the terrain have been studied for a very long time by historical geographers. Their work is currently used to guide analyses of worldwide environmental changes and to illustrate the previous human-induced changes that have occurred to the environment. In other lines of investigation, modern environmental shifts and their repercussions, not only for the future of the environment but also for the prospects of human lives, are investigated. These types of research lie at the confluence of human and physical geography; nonetheless, the amount of



work that requires cooperation between human and physical geographers is rather low. Incorporating human-induced changes into models of environmental processes and systems is required for the later step. Concerns of human geographers span broadly and may be broken down as follows: pragmatically applied work on environmental policy and management; political ecology; studies of culture-nature interrelationships; and so on.

### **Types of Human Geography**

Studies in human geography can be broken down into a variety of sub-disciplines that concentrate on various facets of human activity and organisation. Some examples of these sub-disciplines include cultural geography, economic geography, health geography, historical geography, political geography, population geography, rural geography, and social geography. These several subfields of human geography are broken down into discussion below.

**Economic Geography:** The field of research known as economic geography examines the production and distribution of a wide variety of goods and services across several specialised marketplaces. This division also investigates the many ways in which wealth is distributed around the world in various locations.

**Medical Geography:** The study of illness patterns and how they spread is the primary focus of the subfield of geography known as medical geography. This covers epidemics and pandemics, in addition to the factors that led to their spread across a particular region of the world.

**Religious Geography:** A subject of human geography, religious geography is concerned with the proliferation and dispersion of religious organisations, in addition to their culture and the constructed environment in which they operate.

**Political Geography:** Political geography is a subfield of human geography that analyzes and investigates human politics. This includes things like country borders, development policies, and voting patterns and behaviours within each jurisdiction.

**Historical Geography:** Historical geography is a subdiscipline of human geography that studies previous spatial patterns and processes. Behavioural geography is a subdiscipline of geography that studies how humans comprehend maps and physical space.

**Physical Geography:** Physical geography is a key subfield of geography that examines the planet from a physical perspective and is one of the most important fields in the field. This subfield of geography is sometimes referred to as physiography in certain circles. The study of physical geography may be broken down into five distinct subfields.



Although the natural environment is the primary focus of physical geographers, a significant number of the field also investigates the ways in which people have influenced natural systems. Physical geographers investigate a wide range of topics, including the weather, climate, and atmosphere, as well as landforms, seasons, and streams. Some examples of fields that fall under the umbrella of physical geography are geomorphology, glaciology, pedology, hydrology, climatology, biogeography, and oceanography. Geomorphology is the study of landforms as well as the processes that shape those landforms. Geomorphologists study the factors such as wind, ice, rivers, erosion, earthquakes, volcanoes, living organisms, and other natural processes that shape and modify the surface of the Earth.

**Environmental Geography:** Environmental geography is defined as the study of the spatial features of interactions between people and their immediate environment, as well as the repercussions of these interactions. This subfield of geography contributes to an improved understanding of the many types of human activity that may be found in a certain region as well as the impacts that these activities have on the area in question. Environmental geography is essential because it contributes to a better knowledge of the physical aspects of the land and how those features interact with the actions of humans. Researchers are able to determine which human behaviours cause particular kinds of land to form, as well as how to discourage or promote certain behaviours that have a detrimental influence on the ecosystem, with the use of this information. Environmental geography also contributes to the simplicity of daily living by investigating the factors that contribute to the onset and spread of illnesses, such as environmental activities.

### **Nature of Human Geography**

Human geography is the study of the interrelationships that exist between places, people, and the environments in which they live, as well as the ways in which these interactions change across space and time within and between different areas. The study of the interrelationships that people have formed between the physical environment and the sociocultural environment that they have built via reciprocal interaction is called environmental sociology. A concern for a variety of human activities or ways of life may be inferred from the key categories that make up human geography. There are several sub-types of human geography, some of which include urban geography, cultural geography, social geography, and demographic geography.

### **The geography of contemporary geography**





Since it was first established as a field of academic study in the 19th century, the study of geography has seen significant development; yet, some fundamental metaphors have remained the consistent foundations of its various endeavours. The first view is of the world as a patchwork of different patterns and shapes, a convoluted map consisting of a vast number of little places, each of which has unique qualities that are the result of the interplay between natural circumstances and the actions of humans. Mapping that mosaic in all of its diversity and depth and communicating to a broad audience the observable areal heterogeneity of the Earth's surface has been the focus of a significant amount of geographical research throughout the years. The world can also be thought of as a machine, consisting of a large number of intricately interconnected systems in which everything acts as both a cause and an effect. The ability to recognise and represent these systems is the foundation for comprehending the relationship between cause and effect in environmental and human systems.

A third way to think about the universe is as an organism, in which the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts, but which also includes a diverse collection of secondary species and local areas that share comparable qualities. These organic components, regions in which the simultaneous presence of a variety of events generates something that is more than simply the sum of its parts, have been recognised by researchers as being the source of the French concept of *genres de vie* that are unique to each country. In connection with this is the metaphor of the world as a manuscript, in which the landscape itself is one of the texts that must be analysed in order to comprehend the goals and cultures of its designers. Last but not least, there is the metaphor of the world being an arena, with locations functioning as the settings within which events take place; places serve as the contexts for learning and behaviour. This metaphor is connected to the preceding two.

These metaphors are not mutually exclusive; rather, it is standard practise to combine elements of one or more of them. They are the environments, sometimes known as worldviews, in which academic inquiry is conducted. Their relative significance varies over time and region, and geography encompasses a vast array of interconnected academic practises that are intended to represent local realities and the ways in which geographers (both individually and collectively) react to their respective environments. There may be some similarities, such as issues that reflect the basic ideas of environment, space, and location, for example, as well as a concentrate on certain metaphors, but there may also be regional differences, such as emphases and absences. In pre-Soviet Russia, for example, physical geographers placed a greater emphasis



on climatic variations and their influences on soils than they did on landforms, as was typical in other parts of the world. During the time of the Soviet Union, human geography was largely nonexistent, and only a few economic concerns that were relevant to national planning were investigated.

A significant amount of the worldwide diversity in spatial practises may be located within the framework of the different linguistic worlds. Each of the great national schools has had an impact on the way geography is taught at a number of other institutions, including some of those institutions' imperial ambitions. In different parts of the Iberian world, German and French influences have been particularly strong. For example, in Latin America, German geographers had an early influence on the development of Argentina, while a Catalan geographer had a considerable influence in Venezuela, and a Spaniard was the first person to start developing Panama. After World War II, physical and human geography in Japan became almost completely distinct from one another, with American influence coming to predominate over the latter. Japanese geography had previously been shaped by German influences, which had in part been refracted through American interpretations, particularly at Berkeley. There has been an increasing concern on a global scale over the predominate position that English plays in the discourse of the field of geography, and consequently geographers in Anglophone nations.

Despite the fact that there are many similarities due to the significant amount of interaction that has taken place across the Atlantic over the course of the last half century, there are significant differences even within the individual language realms of the United Kingdom and the United States. These differences are a reflection of important local contexts. One of the primary reasons for such disparities is the influence that location plays in each of their educational systems.

In the second half of the 20th century, the geographical illiteracy of many Americans served as a shining example of the deficiency of geographic education provided in schools across the United States. Several different organisations have taken it upon themselves to work toward improving this issue. During the 1960s and 1970s, the National Scientific Foundation provided funding for many initiatives that aimed to improve the quality of science education. One of these programmes was the High School Geography Project, which was run by the American Association of Geographers. In the final decade of the 20th century, the National Geographic Society, which is best known on a global scale for publishing National Geographic Magazine,





launched a television channel to carry educational materials about human interactions with the natural world as well as committing significant resources to the promotion of geography in the nation's schools. This was done in conjunction with the launch of the Society's magazine, which is known around the world.

The structure of specialisations found within geography departments is a good indicator of the significant contrasts that exist between the two nations. In the United States, for instance, there has been a growing awareness that students can be attracted to undergraduate geography courses that provide training in marketable skills. This realisation has come about as a result of an increase in the number of people who have been conducting research on the topic. A growing number of departments see geographic information systems (GIS) as an essential set of abilities, which has led to an increase in the number of faculty appointments for GIS professionals. In the United Kingdom, such pressures are lower, and cultural geography is given a higher priority; in fact, it predominates human geography in some departments, with spatial analysis occupying only a minor place in the curriculum. This is in contrast to the situation in the United States, where spatial analysis is given a more prominent role. In addition, geography degree programmes in Britain are constructed on far more extensive foundations of geographical exposure; as a result, there is less need to cover a wide variety of interdisciplinary specialisms in the curriculum. In addition, given the significance that is placed on the quality of specified research in the process of financing institutions there, the prevalent practise at the moment is to exclusively construct specialised research teams in certain fields.

As a result of the many times that these national peculiarities are replicated, there is a geography that can be attributed to geography as an academic study. There are also variances from one country to the next. To provide just one example, few departments—even the biggest in the United Kingdom—cover the whole spectrum of contemporary subdisciplines within the scope of their teaching programmes, and that's without even taking into account the research specialisations they offer. The majority specialise, which reflects the interests of senior staff at certain points in the organization's history as well as choices made by the institution about the distribution of resources. Therefore, the study of geography as an academic field itself reflects its own core tenets and principles. There are certain universal aspects that are common to the majority of geography courses, but there are also specific aspects that are reflective of regional peculiarities and personal choice-making. Location is important in geography, as it is in so many other aspects of life.



The academic field of geography that was being developed at the tail end of the 19th century is in many respects unrecognisable as the practised form of the subject that exists now. Despite this, the fundamental ideas that lie underneath the discipline, such as environments, spaces, and places, continue to form its centre. Through the ways in which people interact with the natural and social environments around them, geography continues to shed light on significant facets of the human experience. The academic field was established in order to investigate questions about what is where and why. That is exactly what it continues to accomplish.

### **Conclusion**

I argue that contemporary human geography has suffered from a significant narrowing of the time periods that inform its empirical and conceptual studies. I demonstrate why it is beneficial to broaden our chronological frame of reference to include discussions of prior eras. The project of expanding the timeframes that we use to organise our geographical study has the potential to allow us to tell alternative tales about the geographical past and present. The study of human geography focuses on the complex interrelationships that exist between man's natural environment and the sociocultural environment he has created. As human society and culture advance, we are able to create technology that is both more advanced and more efficient. This results in nature becoming more humanised and beginning to exhibit the marks of human endeavour. The study of human societies in connection to their environments or habitats is the primary focus of human geography. Human geography also takes into consideration the patchwork of culture, language, religion, customs, and traditions. The study of the ways in which the physical environment affects the geographical distribution of economic activities is another major issue. The study of human geography offers the social sciences with a geographical, temporal, and systems perspective that they would not have access to otherwise. It enables us to get a better understanding of the world we live in as well as an appreciation for people in countries and communities different than our own. Studies in human geography can be broken down into a variety of sub-disciplines that concentrate on various facets of human activity and organisation. These include cultural geography, economic geography, health geography, historical geography, political geography, population geography, rural geography, and social geography. Some examples of fields that fall under the umbrella of physical geography are geomorphology, glaciology, pedology, hydrology, climatology, biogeography, and oceanography. A concern for a variety of human activities or ways of life may be inferred from the key categories that make up human geography. The world can be thought of in three



different ways by geographers. Mapping that mosaic in all of its diversity and depth has been the focus of much geographical research. In pre-Soviet Russia, for example, physical geographers placed a greater emphasis on climatic variations and their influences on soils than they did on landforms. There has been an increasing concern on a global scale over the predominate position that English plays in the discourse of the field of geography. The structure of specialisations found within geography departments is a good indicator of the significant contrasts that exist between the two nations". In the United States, there has been a growing awareness that students can be attracted to undergraduate geography courses that provide training in marketable skills. Geography degree programmes in Britain are constructed on far more extensive foundations of geographical exposure. The academic field of geography was established in order to investigate questions about what is where and why. The fundamental ideas that lie underneath the discipline, such as environments, spaces, and places, continue to form its centre. Through the ways in which people interact with the natural and social environments, geography continues to shed light on significant facets of the human experience.

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