

Module One: Thinking Geographically

Geography: study of earth as created by natural forces and modified by human action

Human geography: The study of spatial organization of human activity and of people's relationships with their environments.

- About recognizing and understanding the interdependence among places and regions, without losing sight of the uniqueness of each specific place

Key Themes of Geography:

- modernity and globalization
- place, culture, and livelihoods are intimately connected
- human action in society (either resisting or conforming to cultural/economic norms)

Methods of human geography:

- Observation
- Fieldwork
- Lab experiments
- Archival searches
- Remote sensing

Space and Scale:

Space- something that holds things, has identified edges, space is open ended, space can be thought of in 3 different dimensions

- Absolute: defined mathematically or with spatially referenced coordinates (e.g. a classroom)
- Relative: Socioeconomic space or of experimental or cultural space. (e.g. census tracts). Can be used to make decisions about the allocation of services, retail outlets, or other public funds.
- Cognitive: People's values, feelings, beliefs, and perceptions about locations, districts, and regions. (behavioral space).

Scale: partitioning of space within which certain processes play out (nested hierarchies; a way to partition space in a hierarchical/interrelated way)

Divided into 4 realms:

- 1) The global world - world climate change
- 2) World regions- treaties trade agreements; collections of countries which often share cultural, political, or economic purpose
- 3) National states - federal policy, economies; individual countries
- 4) Human settlements - work, play, family. Community, home, and body

Place and Landscape:

Place: places are central to the processes of the scale of human settlements

- Structure daily routines of people's economic and social activity.

- Provides opportunities and constraints for social wellbeing
- Provides a context in which everyday knowledge and experience are gathered.
- Provides a setting for socialization.
- Provides people with social norms

Landscape: compilation of visible features of space (ordinary and symbolic)

- Ordinary Landscape: everyday, lived in landscapes
- Symbolic landscapes: representation of values

Distance and Networks:

Distance has 3 dimensions

- absolute** - Units of measurement in terms of kilometers, miles, etc.
- relative** - Measured by time, effort or cost.
- cognitive** - The distance that people perceive as existing in a given situation.

Friction of distance: a reflection of the time and cost of overcoming distance.

Topological space: nature and degree of connection between places, mediated by connection; can be thought of as relative space (where is one thing in connection to another)

Networks: shows relationships between individuals

Region and Territory:

Region: a classification of space based on characteristics

- Formal-** homogenous; regions which are defined by a government or other structures such as cities, towns, states, and countries
- Functional** - diverse and work towards a common goal; regions which are made up by a central place and surrounding areas affected by it such as a city/metropolitan area and surrounding suburbs.

Territory: space claimed by or dependent on a sovereign power

- Territories can become formal or functional regions
- Geographic space of the state or nation
- Territorialization:** the process of claiming space which can lead to geopolitical conflict

Spatial interaction- movement of human activity

Laws of Geography:

- Everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related than distant things
- What happens in one place is related to what happens in another place

Body: a space within which culture, politics, and economics can be observed and studied

Place: a space with meaning which structure daily routines of economic and social life and provide opportunities and constraints for long-term social well being.

Geographic Information Systems: one of the most important methods of geographic analysis, particularly in the military and commercial worlds. GIS allows for the merging of data and production of highly detailed maps at both large/small scales.

Geodemographic Research: uses census + commercial data to provide info about people's socio-economic & demographic attributes.

Nominal Location: a specific location that you remember being at when you heard about an event that took place at a different location which can be named e.g. Washington D.C. when 9/11 occurred

Absolute Location: a location which is fixed by points of latitude and longitude

Site: refers to the location of a place relative to other places & human activities

Situation: refers to the location of a place relative to other places and human activities.

Complementary: a demand in one place which matches the supply in another; can be the result of several factors

Economies of scale: places, regions, and countries can derive economic advantages from the efficiencies created through specialization. Economies of scale are cost advantages to manufacturers in high-volume production; the average cost of production falls with increasing output.

Functional Regions: regions that, while they may exhibit some variability in certain attributes share an overall coherence in structure and economic, political and social organization.

Sectionalism: an extreme devotion to regional interests and customs (ethnic groups often aim for autonomy from a national state and the development of their own political power).

Irredentism: the assertion by the government of a country that a minority living outside of its formal borders belongs to it historically/culturally.

The Dead Zone of the Mississippi Delta:

- represents a combination of anthropogenic and ecological processes.
- Overfertilization of corn → toxic runoff in the Mississippi Delta → overproduction of marine organisms → organisms use the oxygen in the water when they die/decompose → dead zone is created where marine life can no longer live

Module Two: A Short History of the World

Geographic knowledge: knowing where stuff is and how places are connected

- Goes beyond basic navigation

Knowledge: the product of what we know to be true & what we believe to be true

Hearth areas: a geographic area where new practices have developed and from which they have subsequently spread. Hearth areas show evidence for the possibility of civilizations that used writing or other forms of permanent documentation to record knowledge. This is where geographic knowledge was 1st recorded.

- Natural food supplies
- Diverse terrain
- Soil is rich and easy to till
- No need for large scale irrigation

Ex-

- Middle east (fertile crescent, modern day iraq)*
- South asia
- Southeast asia
- Americas

**show the possibility of civilizations that used writing or other forms of permanent documentation to record knowledge → what we know is very partial

Hunter and gatherers: humans who lived in societies where almost all food was obtained by foraging.

Imperialism: the extension of power of a nation through direct or indirect control of the economic and political life of other territories.

- Often facilitated by intermarriage between dynasties or religious missions

Colonialism: the establishment and maintenance of political and legal domination of a state over a separate and alien society.

- Often involves the creation of army bases, outposts, or churches for missions

Mini system: the primary economy that emerged through agriculture and is characterized by a reciprocal social economy in which barter is the primary medium of exchange.

World empires- emerged through imperialism and colonization

World system- emerged as national states slowly replaced empires

World Systems Theory: divides countries of the world into three groups (core, periphery, semi periphery) based on political power, social standing & economic/technological development.

Modernity: Forward looking philosophy emphasizing science, rationality, and religion. Against traditionalism and spawned from the Enlightenment of the 14th century.

- ❑ Characterized by new forms of social, economic, and political life but also new forms of inequality
- ❑ Gave us the political economic system we have today =the world system
- ❑ the height of modernity was thought to be in the mid-20th century (we are now in a postmodern era).

Empires:

Roman Empire (218 BC- 117 AD)

- ❑ Early developers and recorders of geographic knowledge

Islamic empire (622-750 AD)

- ❑ Noted for developing the astrolabe (telescope)
- ❑ Spanned from North Africa into Central Asia

Holy Roman Empire (962-1806 AD)

- ❑ Dominated Europe and western Asia during crusades

Ottoman Empire

- ❑ Replaced Islamic and Roman empires in some territories
- ❑ Imploded during WW1; paved the way for the modern Middle East to emerge

British Empire (1497- WW2)

- ❑ Important to shaping contemporary geopolitics
- ❑ Strong land armies and navy strength to dominate
- ❑ -pioneered methods of measuring longitude

Empires were facilitated by imperialism and trade:

- ❑ Imperialism's primary purpose was the development and transformation of economies
- ❑ the continents of Eurasia and Africa were well connected for trade and cultural exchange via Silk Road routes.

Enlightenment: rise of national states and the rights and freedoms associated with new political forms (aka modern era=modernity)

World system- the world is changing, political, economic, social and cultural and there are systems of power exchange and control.

3 regions: the theory organizes the regions around shared economic states

- 1) Core
 - a) Regions that dominate trade, control technology, and have high productivity within diversified economies.
 - b) Wealthiest regions

c) North America, Europe, Japan

2) Periphery

a) Regions with underdeveloped or narrowly specialized economies with low levels of productivity

b) Have some power over other countries but are typically former colonies

c) Rest of the world e.g. banana republics

d) Have a narrow economic base

3) Semiperiphery

a) Composed of regions that are able to exploit peripheral regions, but are exploited themselves and dominated by other regions

b) Ex- BRICS - brazil, russia, india, china, and south africa

Hegemony: dominance socially, economically, and politically in the world system exercised through a combination of economic, military, financial and cultural means.

Hegemony is a function of technology, innovation and control.

New World Order(1989-1991): President George H.W. Bush's characterization of the emerging post-Cold War international system, emphasizing democratization, economic globalization, and multilateral cooperation. US becomes the world's only superpower.

Globalization: Increasing inter-connectivity through common processes of economic, environmental, political, political and cultural change/processes which result in shared culture, economics, or politics

Neoliberalism: philosophy focused on reducing the role of government in economic activities; privatization of formerly publicly owned entities; enables corporations to move their capital, factories, or profits across the globe in search of better financial situations.

Transnational corporations: Firms with activities that cross national state boundaries, some of which have headquarters in the US but manufacturing elsewhere

Supranational organizations: a collection of representatives of individual states working collectively toward political or economic objectives.

Some argue that it increases state power while others argue that it increases sovereignty

Examples include the European Union (own constitution and currency), NATO, United Nations, Commonwealth of Independent States (coalition of former soviet republics), & ASEAN (association of southeast asian nations)

The UN was established after World War II and is headquartered in New York City.

Import Substitution: when a country begins to make replicates of goods which were previously available only by trading/import.

The law of diminishing returns: refers to the tendency for productivity to decline after a certain point with the continued addition of capital and/or labor to a given resource base.

Shifting Cultivation: forests or grasslands are burned and plots were cultivated for a few years and then abandoned for new ones. This practice still persists in many sub-Saharan African and South American forests.

The Enlightenment: a period of the mid-14th century frequently termed the Modern Era in which societies transitioned from feudal/imperial economics and governance to state systems, leading to the rise of capitalism globally (modernity).

- ❑ the rise of national states and the rights/freedoms associated with new political forms has its Western roots in the Enlightenment
- ❑ the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 gave certain principalities the right to practice the religion of their choosing

Perspectives on Globalization:

- ❑ transformationalists argue that globalization is a new and different form of imperialism and that it presents new challenges to old problems.
- ❑ skeptics (Jihad) have been equated to tribalism, or protection of cultural values associated with religious fundamentalism, traditional allegiances and opposition to Western materialism. Skeptics imagine that globalization is bad for most people in the world and that it's nothing new or different from imperialism.
- ❑ Hyperglobalists (McWorld) have been equated to excessive enthusiasm for globalism based on pop culture & materialism. Hyperglobalists believe that greater interconnection will help solve problems and increase overall prosperity.

Module Three: Geopolitics

Political geography: concerns itself with the way space is organized into political units called states and also how they change over time with pressures from conflict, culture, power, and capital.

Power over space:

- Power is the ability to have influence or to impose one's will on others
- Can be held by individuals or by collectives
- Coercive power:** the use or threat of conflict, force or violence to influence people
- Symbolic power:** uses a legitimized, normalized view of how the world works to convince people/groups to do something (e.g. everyone agrees traffic lights are needed for safety)

Sovereignty: ability to have power or self governance over territory; territories that are sovereign are referred to as states

- Recognized by other sovereign states and a monopoly on coercive force.

Nationalism: identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations.

Borders: can be physical or not, always displayed in different ways, often compared by their permeability, can be symbolic

- Can be natural or artificial (rivers/mountains vs wall)
- Define limits of territory
- Making places
- Creating and reinforcing special differentiation
- Regulation people and resources and whatever crosses
- Change over time and usually in response to political economic change or massive global conflict

Decolonization: Re-acquisition by colonized peoples of control over their own territory. Often generates new conflicts as previously oppositional groups of competing interests must work together to govern.

Conflict: an ongoing state of hostility between two or more groups of people

- Conflict has a close relationship with decolonization
- Higher levels of poverty, higher level of conflict

Refugees: forced migrations within or out of a country due to military conflicts or persecution. 80% of refugees are women and children. 15 million cross-border refugees. 22 million displaced within their own country. Concentrated in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. Refugees are vulnerable because they are stateless and thus can claim no rights within a country. No state guarantees/protects their rights. E.g. forced internal migration during the trail of tears.