



## Challenges and opportunities for human geography: A review

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### **Abstract**

When we look back at the evolution of human geography over a longer period of time, we can see that there was a general trend toward combining concepts that originated inside the subject with those that were brought in from other areas. It is significantly impacted by a variety of impulses stemming from the dynamically changing environment around it. presents a concise overview of the difficulties facing human geography and places them in the perspective of paradigmatic development as well as changes in economic, social, cultural, environmental, political, and technological systems. It gives a concise overview of the arguments that human geographers have been having about what their field may or should research in the not too distant future and how this could be accomplished. writers from Visegrad share their thoughts and opinions. There are now four nations focusing their emphasis on the future direction of human geography. The next few decades are not expected to be characterised by the dominance of a single paradigm in the field of human geography; nonetheless, a conversation on how to create a common ground for the integration of paradigms in the field of geography is likely to continue. The primary sources of inspiration for human geographic research are likely to include shifting hierarchical structures, significant modernization processes, as well as local, regional, and global changes that influence the space-time behavioural patterns of humans. This can be expected to be one of the most important aspects of the field.

**Keywords:** human geography, challenges, future directions, geographical thought, integration of paradigms, Visegrad Four countries,

### **Introduction**

The modern world is fraught with a great deal of difficulty. The rising complexity, fluidity, and connection are defining characteristics of this phenomenon. There is a blurring of traditional demarcations. Many contradictory trends have been brought to our attention recently. The quickening pace of technological advancement is likely to result in the appearance of the evolutionary successor of man as it exists now. The field of human geography, as a scientific subject with the goal of contributing to a better knowledge of how the world is currently evolving, will need to take these facts into consideration.



When evaluating the most important factors that will influence the development of human geography in the next decades, it is possible to use a mix of internalist and externalist methods. The first strategy places an emphasis on the inward workings of scientific research and places primary importance on the investigation of paradigms, ideas, concepts, methodological methods, and standards for verifying the findings of scientific research. “As a result, it provides a response to the challenges that reflect on the internal requirements of the growth of the scientific field. The second approach places a greater emphasis on the effect of external elements (natural, environmental, social, economic, cultural, and political), and as a result, views science as an element of social life. In this view, the requirement of being able to establish societal relevance in the context of its heuristic, application, educational, and moral aspects is the condition of preserving the life of scientific discipline.

Beginning with the conceptual framework that has been given, we will now explore the issues that human geography is now experiencing on two levels. First, we will address the reflection level of internal challenges, and then we will discuss the reflection level of exterior challenges. This classification has a dichotomous flavour, but at this point we want to underline that, in reality, there is interference from the stimuli that originate both inside and outside. be dedicated to certain thoughts expressed by writers from the Visegrad Group. There are now four nations focusing their emphasis on the many paths of human geography study.

### **Challenges affected by the internal development of human geography**

Maintaining the discipline's autonomy, identity, and integrity will be the most difficult task in the future, and it is not only human geography that faces this obstacle; geography in general faces it. Since the discipline of geography was first established in academic institutions, this issue has been a source of contention. Geography is one of the sciences with open and permeable boundaries in relation to other scientific disciplines, and its position is at the intersection of the defined categories within various science classification systems. In addition, geography is one of the sciences that has a position at the centre of the planet. Synthesizing attempts to converge or connect the fields of science, social science, and the humanities is geography's primary objective. Geography seeks to understand the nature of the identity and individuality of places at various taxonomic (scale) levels of a local-global continuum in order to achieve its goals of elucidating the mechanisms and effects of interdependent natural, technical, and social processes that structure space-time and better comprehending the nature of the identity and individuality of places.



Due of the ambiguous integration and disintegration tendencies that exist within geography, this goal provides an exceptionally difficult challenge. The inclination toward integration is connected to the attempt made by geography to legitimately carry out its function as a discipline that synthesises information. It is shown through the hunt for an integration platform, dimming ideas, or themes. The propensity toward disintegration reflects both the ontological and epistemic setting of the situation. The hybrid character of the geography study object, which consists of material and intangible geospheres of inorganic, organic, and anthropogenic origin, is a representation of the ontological context. This context is made up of material and intangible geospheres. Because of this, geographic study is becoming more specialised, which has led to the development of a number of partially distinct subdisciplines. The epistemological context is represented by a variety of exploratory viewpoints that aim to comprehend the complex and hybrid reality. This has resulted in the multi-paradigmatic character of geography being formed as a result of the development of geography. Each paradigm makes it feasible to examine and analyse just a restricted range of phenomena, or a limited set of features of reality, at the price of others that it ignores. This is because each paradigm is based on a different assumption about how the world works.

However, since there are so many different paradigms, it becomes difficult to compare the exploratory perspectives that are used in geography. Because the humanistic methodological model is infused with values, it is impossible to apply the principle of neutrality and objectivity of the researcher, who is supported by proponents of nomothetic geography tending to neo positivism, analytic philosophy, and philosophy of science. The reason for this is due to the fact that the humanistic methodological model is infiltrated with values. They advocate for the methodological unification of geography, with the naturalistic methodological model serving as the foundation. On the other hand, geographers who are influenced by anti-positivist ideologies argue that the unreasonable expectations for the neutrality and impartiality of the researcher should be rejected and that naturalistic research technique has basic limits. Therefore, geography, particularly human geography, is represented by parallel paradigmatic communities that often engage in conflict with one another. The members of this scientific community all adhere to the same conceptual or taxonomic framework (lexical taxonomy), which serves to both maintain the community's cohesion and distinguish it from other groups of a similar type. In this particular setting, the meta-geographic discourse of the late 1980s introduced a plurality of 'geographies' rather than the solitary 'geography,' with the argument



that it takes multiple geographies to adequately capture the complexity of the world that is being studied. This technique has a number of dangers due to the fact that it considerably bolsters the disintegration tendencies that are present within the field, which, in the most severe circumstances, may result in the field's complete disappearance.

The current multiparadigmatic aspect of human geography is reflected by a number of paradigms, each of which has a unique tradition that extends back for varying amounts of time. The paradigm of spatial science has been undergoing significant development since the 1950s. Its beginning may be seen within the context of contemporary positivist geographical theory. In the 1970s, this paradigm was the target of overwhelming criticism, which came from two different directions: humanistic and structuralist (critical) geography. Both of these schools of thought were critical of the paradigm. In spite of this, it has managed to preserve its status as a paradigmatic group, even as there has been a resurgence of interest in spatial science during the last several decades. This worry is connected to the increased use of GIS technology, the gradual elimination of the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative approaches, and the need to make use of statistical methodologies in critical geography as well. The phenomenon known as big data, which was tied to a revolution in social media and mobile information and communication technologies, was responsible for the introduction of new impulses. One term for this process is datafication, which refers to the act of amassing knowledge on everything that is going on in the globe at any given moment. These data provide a significant window of opportunity for use in geographical investigation. On the other hand, they constitute a significant obstacle in terms of the processing methods that may be used on them and the ethical considerations involved in study.

Because this effort requires their interconnection (combination), which is the result of the idea of paradigmatic complementarity, the question of the compatibility of the various paradigmatic perspectives is raised by the complexity and comprehensiveness of reality that is examined by geography and the pursuit of its fullest knowledge. Therefore, the problem for (human) geography is to locate a decreasing epistemology in which a number of scientific optics may be combined fruitfully. Dealing with the issue of how different paradigms might be compared to one another is the primary challenge. On the one side, there is the incommensurability of paradigms (preferring logical coherence - consistency), and on the other, there is eclecticism (maximising empirical coverage). Paradigmatic complementarity is a stance that seeks to find a middle ground between these two extremes. The identity of



particular paradigms is the only thing that is put at risk by paradigmatic complementarity; nonetheless, the research that is produced as a consequence of eclecticism loses its internal coherence as a result.

In light of this, the combining of paradigmatic viewpoints must not be eclectic. It demands a consistent reflection of the metatheoretical assumptions underlying the theories and ideas with which we are working and which we want to integrate. Finding a common ground or metatheoretic framework that will enable the diverse paradigms to be incorporated into a single entity is the obstacle that has to be overcome in this scenario. There are a few different ways that this philosophical foundation might be established for this common basis. Most often seen in discourse are positivist, scientific-realistic, and instrumentalist (pragmatic) frameworks. The positivist framework is an essentialist one, and it is founded on a coherence theory of truth (wherein the veracity of anything is determined by its logical consistency). It has a very narrow view of causality in accordance with the deductive-nomological model (the subordination of the event under universal law), and it does not consider non-causal research to be within the purview of the scientific method. Due to these factors, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to integrate this approach with the constructivist frameworks. Constructivism is represented by the other two theoretical frameworks. The scientific-realistic framework is predicated on a theory of truth known as the correspondence theory, which defines truth as being consistent with objective reality. The instrumentalist framework relies on a pragmatic and consensual theory of truth as its underlying philosophical foundation (they define truthfulness by being useful for solving a given problem or by the consensus of the leading representatives of the scientific community). Because it allows for more flexibility, it recommends using ideas rather than theories or paradigms as the foundation for the synthesis rather than just because concepts are easier to understand. These two models keep a safe distance from extreme scepticism and relativism, which, in the lack of a solid basis, conclude that truth and falsity cannot be differentiated from one another and that different assertions cannot be compared to one another. It is probable that the debate on how to develop a common ground for the integration of paradigms in geography will continue, and at that point it will be clear if scientific realism or instrumentalism will win out, or whether other options will come into play.

### **Challenges affected by the external environment**

The external environment presents a variety of challenges that may be broken down into a number of distinct categories, including the environmental, economic, social, cultural, political,



and technical categories. The effect that human actions have on the ecosystem of the world as a whole is a significant and significant problem. Since the very beginning, when geography was first being developed, this issue has always been at the centre of the discipline. Scientists have conceptualised a new geological era that they have dubbed the Anthropocene in response to the unprecedented level of activity and the worldwide effect that this activity has had. The contemporary conversation, which is centred on comprehending and explaining changes occurring on a global scale, lays a considerably bigger emphasis on the topic of change in general, in particular revolutionary social change. In addition to this, there is a need for critical thought on the many kinds of reforms that are being advocated for. views human geography to be one of the most significant social sciences, one that ought to contribute to a much-required shift in the discourse on the topic of changes in the global environment. She believes that the field of human geography is on the cusp of entering a new age, one in which geographers will be pushed to take the lead in the establishment of a new science on global change – a science that investigates the human components of change in a more in-depth manner. Research on global change is about to enter a formative phase, and it is essential that the human geographic community frame its interests in preparation for the future.

### **Some reflections on the direction of human geography among geographical communities of the Visegrad countries**

The German geographical school is the source of many of the common roots shared by the V4 nations' geographical traditions. During the interwar era, it was also impacted by the French geographical idea that was inspired by the Vidalian regional geography. During this time, it was also influenced by the Russian regional geography. Following World War II, communities of geographers were also subjected to the influences of the Soviet geographical school, which had a very limiting effect on human geography as a result of its ideological indoctrination and restricted connections with Western geography. On the other hand, human geographers may tackle the applicable themes in this scenario first and foremost in the realm of strategic, regional, and territorial planning. This would be one possible outcome. The success of their collaboration within the framework of the COMECON nations was also a factor. There was also a reflection of some Anglo-Saxon geographical currents that did not threaten the viability of the philosophy. An example of this would be the systematic approach and growth of geography as a spatial science, in particular the use of quantitative methodologies and modelling. Following the breakthrough that took place in the 1980s, new opportunities



presented themselves to geographers in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. These new opportunities consisted of broader contacts with the world geography as well as in relation to newly emerging themes, epistemological fields, and methodological approaches to research. Because of the United Kingdom and the United States' historical predominance over the rest of the globe, Anglo-American geography was the dominant source of inspiration (Bajerski, 2010). In these nations, throughout the course of the last several decades, conversations within geographical communities have taken on a comparably wide range of topics in terms of their focus. Let's bring some of these to everyone's notice.

In the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the new millennium, human geography in the four national geographical communities focused primarily on the study of the process and effects of the social, political, and economic transformation. This focus continued into the first decade of the new millennium. Beginning of the new millennium became a strong incentive for an effort to inventory the results of geographical research, reflection on the status of geography in individual countries in the context of its world development, and an effort to scheme the possibilities of its further development. Efforts to inventory the results of geographical research, reflection on the status of geography in individual countries in the context of its world development.

When fresh generations of geographers enter the field, it is not uncommon for there to be new impulses. They want to position themselves as leaders in their field, therefore they attempt to show how they are different from those who came before them and strive to provide innovative research topics, approaches, methodologies, and procedures. One such example may be found in the geography of the Czech Republic. After the social change in 1989, the generation that came after it expressed itself through a publication that had as its primary goal the explanation of modern western geographical thought to the Czech (Czechoslovak) professional public. This was because the previous generation had lost contacts with the professional public during the years of isolation that occurred during the period of real socialism. Another objective was to provide some thought on the current tendency of expanding the scope of geography to include other social sciences (sometimes referred to as the social turn in geography or the post-positivist turn). The publication that emphasises the cultural turn in geography and a spatial turn in humanities while the category of space is conceptualised from a social-constructivist position is the discourse of the generation of Czech geographers that appeared at the turn of the first and second decades of the 21st century. This generation of Czech geographers is known



for their work on the cultural turn in geography. the debates that took place amongst members of the younger generation of Czech geographers and were published in the magazine *Informace GS* and centred on the variety of epistemological views. Based on neo-positivism and scientific realism, Kofro is a member of an older generation of Czech geographers who profess post-structuralism. Kofro criticised the theoretical and methodological impotence of fragmented geography and proposed the remedy using the multipolarity of separated epistemological approaches. Inter-generation issues in Polish generation were explored. Recently, there was an engaging conversation that took place amongst people of different generations working in the field of Polish geography. The topic of discussion was the state, views, and strategies for the development of human geography.

### **A continent with great challenges**

Africa, which is the second biggest and most populated continent in the world after Asia, is now experiencing some of the most severe development issues in the world. Recent history in Africa has been distinguished by political instability, brutality, and authoritarianism. Post-colonial struggle, ethnic conflicts, hunger, civil war, and environmental issues have combined to impede social and economic growth throughout the continent". The world's poorest countries have the lowest human development indicators, which include high rates of illiteracy and hunger, inadequate access to clean water and sanitation, and poor health indices.

### **Conclusion**

The modern world is fraught with a great deal of difficulty. The primary sources of inspiration for human geographic research are likely to include shifting hierarchical structures, significant modernization processes, as well as local, regional, and global changes that influence the space-time behavioural patterns of humans. This can be expected to be one of the most important aspects of the field. We will examine the issues that human geography is experiencing on two levels. First, we will address the reflection level of internal challenges, and then we will discuss the exterior level of external challenges. Geography is one of the sciences with open and permeable boundaries in relation to other scientific disciplines. Geography seeks to understand the nature of the identity and individuality of places at various taxonomic (scale) levels of a local-global continuum. The inclination toward integration is connected to the attempt made by geography to legitimately carry out its function as a discipline that synthesises information. Geography, particularly human geography, is represented by parallel paradigmatic





communities that often engage in conflict with one another. The current multiparadigmatic aspect of human geography is reflected by a number of paradigms, each of which has a unique tradition that extends back for varying amounts of time. Paradigmatic complementarity seeks to find a middle ground between the incommensurability (preferring logical coherence - consistency) and eclecticism (maximising empirical coverage). The identity of particular paradigms is the only thing that is put at risk by this approach. Finding a common ground or metatheoretic framework that will enable all these perspectives to be incorporated into a single entity is the primary challenge. The external environment presents a variety of challenges that may be broken down into a number of distinct categories, including the environmental, economic, social, cultural, political, and technical categories. The effect that human actions have on the ecosystem of the world as a whole is a significant and significant problem.

Geographers in the Visegrad countries are being pushed to take the lead in the establishment of a new science on global change – a science that investigates the human components of change in a more in-depth manner. The success of their collaboration within the framework of the COMECON nations was also a factor. In the last decade of the 20th century, human geography in the four national geographical communities focused primarily on the study of the process and effects of the social, political, and economic transformation. Beginning of the new millennium became a strong incentive for an effort to inventory the results of geographical research. The aim of this article was to provide some thought on the current tendency of expanding the scope of geography to include other social sciences. Kofro criticised the theoretical and methodological impotence of fragmented geography and proposed the remedy using the multipolarity of separated epistemological approaches.

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