

LECTURE 2

*Why Place Matters &
Other Foundational Concepts*

Lecture Outline

- Why study human geography?
- Key Concepts
 - Place
 - The components of place: location, locale, sense of place
 - Scale
 - Distance
 - Spatial Interaction

Why study human geography?

- In this course, we emphasize two key themes in human geography:
 - To understand the ways in which space influences the organization of society
AND
 - To understand the role of *scales* in constructing interconnections between people and places

Key concepts: "Space" & "Place"

Space

- Absolute space (mathematical space)
- Relative space
 - Socio-economic space
 - Experiential or cultural space
 - Cognitive space
- How space is produced
 - Human activities produce space
 - Society constantly produces space by assigning economic or cultural or social value to space

Importance of Place

- Economic, social, cultural & political relations build the characteristics of a place through time
- Influence of place: social/psychological
- Influence of place: physical well-being and opportunities
- Influence of place: emotional and cultural symbols
- Influence of place: resistance & conflict

Place as a social process

- John Agnew's definition:
"Place refers to discrete if 'elastic' areas in which settings for the constitution of social relations are located and with which people can identify."

• Source: Agnew, John. 1987. *Place and Politics*. Boston: Allen Unwin

The Making of Places

- Place making is always incomplete → dynamic
- Place making is always a two-way process
 - Interdependence between processes & places

Key concepts: "Scale"

Scale

- Cartographic scale
- Methodological scale
- Geographical scale

Cartographic scale

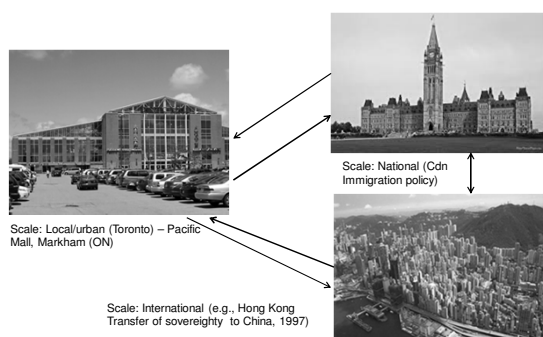
Methodological scale

- Diffusion of the HIV virus

Geographical scale



Inter-relationships between scales



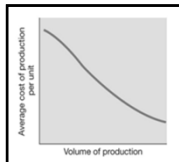
Other key concepts

Distance: absolute & relative & more ...

- Absolute
- Relative
 - Can change (e.g., new technological innovations in transportation)
- Social
- Friction of distance

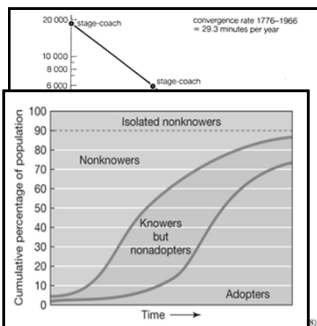
Spatial interaction

- "Spatial interaction" – refers to all kinds of movements & flows involving human activity
- Inter-dependence between places sustained by flows or movements
- Fundamental qualities of spatial interaction:
 - Complementarity
 - Economies of scale



Spatial interaction

- Transferability
 - Time-space convergence
- Intervening Opportunities
- Spatial Diffusion



(Johnston et al. 2000: 836)