

Urban Social Geography - Summarised Notes

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January 14, 2022

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Urban Geographical Traditions

Globalised urbanisation: urbanisation is a global phenomenon. It is also unequal across the world (eg. Asia dominates economic growth and urbanisation). The ‘urban age’ frame can be criticised: measurements depend on diverging national definitions, and it is a chaotic abstraction that does not neatly overlay cities in a spatial sense.

Brenner and Schmid, 2014
Urban vs.
Rural

The urban: a distinctive way of life, which can take place in the city but also outside (sub-urbs, rural, slums). It epitomises a particular society (capitalist, industrial, fordist, modern, classist, etc.). It projects symbolic power, notably by means of its built environment.

The city: the material built environment. Has a complex division of labour, with increasing efficiency and surplus, but also inequalities. It projects symbolic power, and has physical and administrative boundaries. The ‘non-city’ is hard to define, because it’s hard to know where the city ends: the ‘rural’, the peripheries, can have elements of the city.

Skyscrapers
(Dubai, NYC);
CCTV tower
(Beijing)

Urbanisation: the process of becoming urban. It is a demographic process, whereby cities gain more and varied residents, with increasing density. It entails a globalisation of urban economic, political and cultural influence. It considers how space is organised through processes of uneven development.

Geography: the social and physical processes within the context of space. There are multiple concepts of space: **territory**, the boundaries and sovereignty of a space; **scale**, the sensitivity of processes; **network**, hubs and leaks beyond the territory, towards micro-networks; and **place**, the attachment of meaning and sentiment to a space.

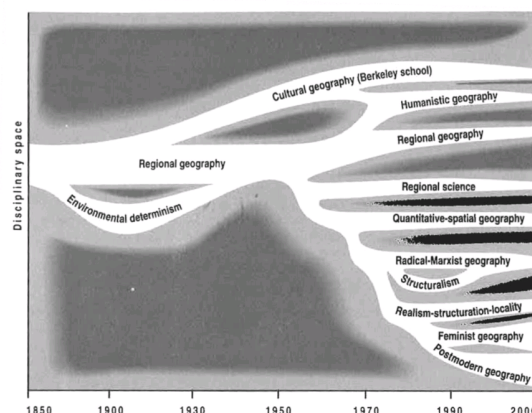
Brussels capital

Critical geography: epistemological rules of thumb include: acknowledging that there is no universal theory of anything; knowing every theory has birthmarks, ie. is situated in time and space, and reflecting on the birthmarks is necessary to be critical; asking whether theories can be used across contexts; engaging in pluralism to allow inter-theoretical conversation and comparison.

Jonas et al.,
Sayer, Brenner
and Schmid
provincialisation

Materialist approaches to geography: concerned with the distribution and social-justice, and agenda-setting.

Humanist approaches to geography: about the experienced city, issues of representation and discourse, uses qualitative methods, gives a voice.



Theories of World-City Formation

Polarisation in World/Global Cities

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Cultures of Urban Research

Urban Cultures

Transport and Cities: a Historical Hegemony

Critical Perspective on Urban Transport