

Imperatives for Geography in Area Studies

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해외지역 연구에서 지리학의 소임

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요약 : 이 글에서는 해외지역연구에 있어 세계화와 관련한 여건 변화, 지리학계의 동향, 그리고 21세기의 새로운 지역연구에 지리학의 역할이 어떠하여야 할 것인가를 살피고자 한다.

해외지역연구는 2차대전 이후 미국을 중심으로 발달하였다. 냉전기에 세계적 우위를 유지하고 국익을 보호하기 위하여 외국 현지어 구사 능력을 포함한 해외 정보 수요가 늘어 지역연구의 발달을 보게 된 것이다. 이러한 배경 때문에 지역연구는 개성기술적(ideographic) 성격을 띠게 되었다. 요즘에는, 지역연구가 주로 초국적기업, 국제경영대학원 등을 중심으로 이루어 지고 있다. 새 지역연구는 해외시장정보 수집 등 경제적 동기로 이루어지고 있어, 경제적으로 편향되는 취약점이 있다.

세계화는 요즘 학계의 화두(話頭)로, 세계 경제와 사회에 일고 있는 이 변화를 바로 이해하는 것은 향후 지역연구의 방향을 정립하는데 매우 중요하다. 세계화는 세계 어디서나 똑같이 일어나는 동질적인 현상이 아니라, 매우 다양하고 여러 의미가 담긴 현상이다. 마치 동전에 양면이 있듯이, 세계화는 수렴과 분화를 동시에 일으키고 있는 것이다. 따라서, 국경을 개방하고 장애를 없애 하나의 동질적인 세계시장환경을 지향하는 신자유경제 논리에 바탕한 지역연구는 설득력이 약하다.

지리학이 지역연구에 기여하기 위해서는 다음과 같은 노력이 계속되어야 한다. 첫째, 해외지역을 이해하려면 공간(space)과 장소(place) 연구가 필수적이라는 점을 인식하고, 둘째, 인간과 환경의 상호작용 관점에서 지리적 차이를 파악하려는 노력이 필요하다. 셋째, 지리학은 이론정립 노력을 계속해야 하며, 넷째, 그 이론들은 해외지역의 현장답사와 정보수집을 통하여 검증되어야 한다. 지리학은 일찍부터 도시, 농촌 등 미시적 수준의 연구를 수행해왔기 때문에 경험적 연구에 강하다. 다섯째, 정부와 기업 등 조직에 대한 지리학적 연구가 이루어져야 할 것이다. 경제활동 분포에 대한 조직의 역할, 소유권에 대한 정부의 규제, 생산 조직의 환경 영향 등의 연구가 그 예이다. 여섯째, 지리학의 발달을 위하여 국가, 국제적 학술 기구를 활용하는 전략이 필요하다. 국제지리학회(IGU)에서 개발한 지리교육과정, 미국 National Research Council에서 세계지리에 밝지 못한 국민을 대상으로 펴낸 지리서 등이 그 사례이다.

지역연구는 사회과학 이론과 문화연구가 서로 점목되도록 새롭게 방향이 설정되어야 하며, 지리학의 인간-환경 연구 전통이 여기에 기여할 수 있을 것이다. 그러나 지리학의 역할이 효율적이기 위해서는 지리학 자체의 담론을 다시 확립해야 한다. 지리학계에서 지난 20여년간 추구해왔듯이 일반적 법칙을 지향(nomothetic)하는 접근법을 활용해야 하며, 여타 사회과학 및 환경과학과도 긴밀한 관련을 유지할 필요가 있는 것이다.

1. Introduction

In the last decades of the twentieth century, geography has had its place in the sun. All of the social sciences and many of the humanities have incorporated geographic thinking and metaphor into their rhetoric. Images from geography have

infiltrated the spectrum of writing from the scientific to the popular. Globalisation is the vogue word. Virtually everything is being metaphorically mapped against other things. Scholars from across the social sciences frequently have space and place at the centre of their analyses. Palat, a sociologist, begins his seminal paper on area studies with the

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provocative quote from Fredrickse - 'There are many maps of one place, and many histories of one time'(Palat 1996:269). Such powerful spatial metaphors demonstrate how discourse, power, and knowledge come together in language.

Much of the colourful spatial imagery derives from French scholars who take geography seriously, notably Braudel(1980), Lefebvre(1991) and especially Foucault(1980; 1982) who reified space and material and social stratigraphy, although mostly at finer resolution. The continental origins of this thinking reminds us that knowledge is itself geographic. And the boundaries of disciplines vary through space and time, like national boundaries. What is regional Economics in France may be Geography in New Zealand or the Netherlands. What is area studies in the United States at one time is regional Geography in the United Kingdom at another. But I would also argue, as Molloy(1997) does, that disciplinary knowledge itself makes special and distinctive contributions to interdisciplinary knowledge. Without it the interdisciplinary project is likely to be much less influential or enlightening, if only because it will not be able to confront of their own terms some of the other powerful disciplines such as Economics.

Although it has the flavour of determinism, I wish to argue that geography shapes what the discipline Geography is and what Geography does. Livingstone(1992) makes similar arguments for the influence of history on the geography that is practised at any particular time. New Zealand, my own country, is the beginning point for the discussion. Its location, physical and social geography, colonial history and intellectual connections, bi-cultural and multi-cultural society, and recent economic restructuring have resulted in a distinctive niche for geography in New Zealand. Geography, as a discipline, has always been much more important in New Zealand than in countries such as the United States, whereas area studies has

had much less impact. After discussing the changing real and intellectual context for area studies I turn to the recent history of Geography, especially the emphasis on theory within human Geography, and pose the question of the role of Geography as a discipline in the enhancement of local and international understanding through an area studies for the 21st century.

2. The early New Zealand experience

New Zealand has a distinctive experience from which to contribute to the debate on area studies. Marshall's *The Geography of New Zealand*(the first book of this title published in New Zealand) begins with the provocative statement that 'the fortunate inhabitants of these islands should be geographers by instinct'(Marshall 1905:1). Marshall was a geologist and his assertion was based on the diversity of terrain and physical environments that excited natural scientists who visited the country. But he, or rather someone else, could equally well have been referring to the way in which the country's geographical situation establishes an instinctive geographical context for any attempt by New Zealanders to understand themselves through literature or social science, or the way overtly geographic processes such as migration and international trade and investment have inscribed themselves on such identities. A first step towards an understanding of New Zealand should be taken with maps in hand, including one plotting the history of Geography as a discipline in New Zealand.

Geography was an important component in New Zealand's colonial school curricula of the nineteenth century. The colonial nature of the project is strongly apparent in the curricula of the Native Schools where Geography retained its position(Barrington and Beaglehole 1974; Simon *et al.* 1997). The photographic images of the time



Figure 1. Open air geography class circa 1910. From the Northwood Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

capture the ironies of a global but Empire geography being taught to the indigenous inhabitants (Figure 1). This use of geographic teaching in New Zealand was an extension of what (Livingstone, 1992:166) has called 'The Imperial Impulse'. As late as the 1950s the main textbooks used in the senior geography classes in New Zealand were of British origin by authors such as Dudley Stamp. Not surprisingly, they continued to reflect the British colonial view of the world.

New Zealand is not without its indigenous geography. Almost totally neglected until recently is the finely-honed geographic knowledge and attitudes of Maori that has been demonstrated by archaeologists and social anthropologists (see Firth 1929, Schwimmer 1966). But it was not this knowledge which influenced the geography curricula of secondary schools as geography emerged as a strong subject after the second world war. I have argued elsewhere that the academic

geography in New Zealand is a distinctive blend of local interest and initiative with the British and American academic traditions (Moran 1984). The local interest is first seen in the work of geomorphologists and geologists in the nineteenth century.

The formal emergence of academic geography in New Zealand came with the establishment of Departments of Geography from the late 1930s. Scholars from these departments (initially mainly of United Kingdom origin) were influential in the emergence of a new geography in the secondary schools. It was based on the emerging paradigms of the time and especially the strong emphasis on regional geography - the interpretation of the patterns of human activities within natural environments. These perspectives were strongly influenced by Hartshorne's ideas as perpetrated by K.B. Cumberland who held the first chair in Geography at the University of Auckland from

1949. A generation of secondary school students were brought up on this meso-level regional approach using textbooks such as *New Zealand: A Regional View* (Cumberland and Fox 1958) and similar interpretative descriptions of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. Alternative and distinctive views of Geography were perpetrated, most strongly from the Department of Geography at Victoria University of Wellington where Keith Buchanan (the notable Chinese scholar) and Harvey Franklin influenced a generation of students by bringing wider intellectual experience from the social sciences and humanities into the geographical spotlight. They had a direct impact on students who disseminated their ideas in teaching and elsewhere, although their immediate influence on the curricula of area studies through secondary school syllabuses was less.

From the 1950s, and increasingly from the 1960s, a higher proportion of Geography departments were staffed by New Zealanders who had received higher degrees in Geography from universities in the United Kingdom or, more commonly, from those in Canada and the United States. From then on New Zealand Geography experienced a similar sequence of paradigms as the rest of the world, although often with different emphases than elsewhere. I do not have time to explore these recent developments here although I return to the strong recent engagement with theory later in the paper.

3. The context for area studies

As we geographers contemplate our involvement in area studies for the 21st century we must recognize the changed real and intellectual environment in which we are working. Two inter-related sets of ideas are useful as a context. First, the changes that are taking place in the world economy and society. These are often encapsulated in the

single word globalization, a process that is proving much more nuanced and diverse than it is sometimes painted. The interpretations of globalblization differ according to the discipline which is analysing it. My second theme, the practice of area studies, is one prism from which to view globalization. Different disciplinary perspectives and the contestation of intellectual territory are in sharp relief in the long term and recent history of area studies. I conclude this section with some examples of the way global processes are influencing the relationships between your country and mine.

In one sense globalization is a reality. People are traveling much more than ever before; whilst the phenomenon of the transnational corporation has been developing for several decades. GATT, the WTO and the EU and other groups of nations and individual nations are making it easier for goods and people to move globally. These initiatives and altered spatial practices are inextricable from a second reality of globalization, its incorporation into political discourse. The primary intellectual arguments supporting globalization come from Economics, and one branch of economics in particular. Neo-liberal theory suggests that barriers to competition and free movement of goods and services should be reduced or eliminated, and that this will generate greater wealth for all (Hayek 1960; Friedman 1982). Since 1984 governments of different political persuasions in my own country have embraced these ideas as comprehensively as in any other and used them as the basis of their policy. The financial instability of many countries of Asia in late 1997 reminds us of the fragility of the global capitalist economy and the need for intervention and regulation by international agencies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to sustain it.

In reality the process of globalblization is much less homogeneous, as sociologists, political scientists and geographers have been

demonstrating. McMichael(1996) urges us to remember that the globalization we refer to is not a new concept, but the latest re-construction of a global socio-economy. Philip Cerny elegantly captures the paradoxes of this latest round of globalization in a recent paper.

The central paradox of globalization is that rather than creating the big economy in one big polity it also divides, fragments and polarizes. Convergence and divergence are two sides of the same coin. Globalization is not even a single discourse but a contested concept giving rise to several distinct and intertwined discourses, while national and regional differences belie the homogeneous vision as well(Cerny, 1997: 273).

He emphasises that the transnational companies that are articulating the globalisation, and are its most obvious symbols, have adopted global strategies precisely because they seek to exploit difference. He adds that economic and cultural globalization are matched by counter forces and indeed unleash others. And he is unconvinced that globalization is ultimately an homogenising force.

Even more problematic are the subnational, transnational, and supranational ethnic cleavages, tribalism and other revived or invented identities and traditions - from local groups to the European Union - which abound in the wake of the uneven erosion of national identities, national economies and national state policy capacity characteristic of the 'global era'. Globalization can just as well be seen as the barbinger not simply of a 'new world order' but a new world disorder, even a 'new medievalism' of overlapping and competing authorities, multiple loyalties and identities, prismatic notions of space and belief and so on(Cerny 1997: 256).

A direct expression of globalisation is evident in the relationships between our two countries. New Zealand's current legal status was established in 1840 by a treaty between indigenous Maori and the British Crown. Over the last two decades, new legislation, the Treaty of Waitangi Act(1975) and its later amendments has allowed the grievances of Maori over the illegal confiscation and taking of

their land to be addressed as a claims process. Large settlements have been made in the form of capital, land and interests in economic enterprises including rights to commercial resources such as forests and fish. One settlement has included a controlling interest in a major fishing company - Sealord - for Maori. A recent development has been an offer to return New Zealand's highest mountain, Mt Cook(now to be known as Aoraki), to the South Island tribe Ngai Tahu as part of a major settlement. Maori have become implicated directly in the globalization process by using their new capital to make their own arrangements with trading partners in a variety of countries. Strong direct relationships have also been established with First Nations people in Canada, the United States and elsewhere. Maori scholarship, invigorated by the research for the Treaty claims, is becoming an essential literature in the understanding of indigenous people internationally. Such tribal and personal relationships transcend national boundaries.

The interest of Korea in New Zealand and New Zealand in Korea have been stimulated by economic associations. Trade between the two countries has grown rapidly with Korea now being New Zealand's fourth or fifth largest trading partner with a volume of trade approaching that of the United Kingdom. Korean investment in New Zealand is now substantial, notably in forests and in forest processing and increasingly in other industries and in urban real estate. From a very small base in the late 1980s over 15,000 Koreans are now living in New Zealand. Tourism has grown rapidly. In some years in the 1990s over 135,000 people from Korea have visited New Zealand - more than 10 percent of New Zealand tourists. These associations have meant many more Koreans coming in contact with New Zealanders. The Connection also has a strategic and institutional foundation. As Tremewan(1996) points out, "we are both partners in the Asia-Pacific region with

shared interests in the region's security and prosperity. We are both founding members of APEC, joint participants in the ASEAN Regional Forum for discussion of regional security, both are dialogue partners of ASEAN and now both are members, or soon to be, of OECD".

4. Area Studies, Geography and New Zealand

Palat(1996) sees the rise of area studies as a post second world war phenomenon very much tied to the dominance and needs of the United states. He relates the interest in, and funding of, area studies to the power of the United States during the Cold War and the need for it to have detailed knowledge, including expert language knowledge, of a variety of regions where it had strategic interests. It is not surprising that area studies, as it developed in the United States, was dominated by studies of an idiographic nature(the study of particular cases). The interests in detailed knowledge of regions and the type of knowledge which it sought, when combined with the disciplinary hierarchy in the United States, resulted in many of the participants in area studies coming from the languages, sociology and political studies.

The origins and nature of area studies in the United States has received much attention in the 1990s as the content of programmes and their funding have been under intense debate(Heilbrunn 1996; Palat 1996; Wallerstein 1996). In the academic literature, the area studies that developed in the United states has more recently revived a strong cultural studies component. The countries being studied, it is argued, are best approached through their literature and culture but approached in a way that is more akin to the social sciences(Wallerstein 1996). The paradox is evident. Although the original motive may have been strategic, many of the individuals who were

involved in area studies were sympathetic to the cultures and countries that they were studying and teaching. It is unlikely that these courses themselves changed the American view of the world and its regions, but as the area studies programmes have recently come under scrutiny, the nature of the knowledge embodied in them has been questioned.

There is little doubt that the imperatives now driving area studies are different from the period of the Cold War. Economic interests, in the real and theoretical senses, have become more powerful, even though from the beginning they were central issues, although strategically expressed. The reasons for doing area studies are now different. Informal area studies is part of the daily experience of the transnational corporations. Knowledge of place, although usually from a particular perspective, is more and more necessary for doing business. Formal area studies for corporations is carried out by internal research teams, international business consultants or schools of international business. Not surprisingly, the powerful, perhaps unparalleled, dominance of neo-liberal economics, which has colonised the discourse of globalization and defines many of the research questions of corporate area studies, is reflected in the knowledge produced by it. But one could argue that for corporations to be really successful the knowledge that they need is a deep and rich one of the places where they are investing.

These contradictions expose the vulnerability of area studies. Heilbrunn(1996: 52) argues that '...the old antagonism ... was heightened by the new prominence of rational choice theory, which seeks to replace ethnographic study with an economics-based explanation of human behavior.' Wallerstein(1996: 2) conceptualises this conflict in the idiographic-nomothetic distinction, which he argues forms the basis of the separation of History from what he calls the 'hard' social sciences in the late 19th and early 20th century. Intriguingly, this

same distinction was the foundation of intense debates within Geography in the 1950s and 1960s when theory and quantitative testing of ideas were becoming dominant at the expense of the areal differentiation advocated in Hartshorne's (1939; 1959) two books. To geographers, who, as Livingstone (1994) has admirably documented, have always responded to the needs of the time, this inter-disciplinary upheaval all sounds a little old hat.

This United States experience is quite different from countries like my own where area studies of an interdisciplinary nature has emerged more recently. It is tempting to argue that in small countries, or those not central to the major global alliances, there was no strategic need for a specific focus on area studies. Thus, the traditional disciplines were sufficient to maintain knowledge of the world. Any reading of the syllabi taught in secondary and tertiary institutions in New Zealand illustrates this point. As with any other nation, they show strong emphases on certain parts of the world and periods of history that reflect the geography and history of the nation. Indeed, the United States too had its own geography, history and economy to deal with before becoming a dominant power and turning its attention to the strategic production of knowledge. The New Zealand experience reflected the centrality of Geography rather than strategy, and placed geography at the heart of area studies.

5. The geographer's contribution to area studies

Close engagement with social science theory and philosophy has undoubtedly characterised geography in the last 30 years. The works of Foucault (1982) and Lefebvre (1991) in particular have established a central place for space in social theory that has opened serious debate in

geographic literature (see Gregory 1994); whilst at the same time geographers such as Harvey (1969, 1989, 1996), Soja (1989) and Castells (1991) have been powerful contributors to the wider debates. Alongside the emphasis on global processes, geographers have been exploring at the level of place, locality and individual activity precisely the contradictory forces of convergence and divergence that Cerny (1997) refers to. However, in so-doing, I feel that the discipline has become characterised by an uneasy sense that something has been lost. This sense of unease and the unresolved tensions between the recent flowering of theory and the discipline's traditional imperatives underlie my comments on the potential contribution we might expect geography to make to area studies in the next century. In a provocative introduction to *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, Harvey (1996:2) expresses a more profound disquiet, quite at odds with much recent theory, when he suggests that "... the task of critical analysis is not, surely to prove the impossibility of foundational beliefs (or truths), but to find a more plausible and adequate basis for the foundational beliefs that make interpretation and political action meaningful, creative, and possible". I suggest that to maximise its contribution geography must continue to provide the following:

- Explicit consideration of space and place as essential components of understanding
- An explicit recognition of people-environment interaction, which encompasses a focus on cultural processes in the understanding of geographic difference
- A continued close engagement with theory
- Empirical testing of theoretical ideas through direct observation and collection of information
- An explicit consideration of the role of the organisation and control of production on the geographic distribution of wealth



Figure 2. The world from New Zealand. Based on great circle azimuths and distances from Wellington to all parts of the world.

- A strategic approach to the disciplinary imperative in education

Place and space

Regardless of paradigm, the distinctive contribution of Geography to area studies is clearest when place and space are in the forefront of the questions being asked. Their centrality is clear even when it is place names themselves (the bane of the lives of all academic geographers) that are being probed. Palat (1996) and in earlier papers severely criticises the categorisations within which area studies is conducted. He sees these categories as an imposition from the western centres of power. Such a point of view resonates with many New Zealand geographers. Even the treatment of the nation on world maps is disconcerting. In almost all atlases the Southern Hemisphere is truncated at about 60

degrees South making us appear much more distant from the equator and the old and emerging centres of power. Maps of the world are seldom centred on the Pacific as my earlier photograph showed. When they are realigned a totally new perspective emerges (Figure 2). If we widen the discussion, in the way that Palat intended, to our regional categorisation amongst the other Pacific islands, the situation becomes more revealing. Geographers of the 1960s placed New Zealand in the 'Southwest Pacific' with other Pacific islands but, not surprisingly, did not include Southeast Asia. The names that assume real authority in the Pacific are the linguistic and ethnographically imposed Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Austronesia.

The recent debates, of course, centre around the extent to which New Zealand can be considered as

part of Asia. But the Pacific Rim doughnut needs investigation at all sorts of levels. I found it enlightening a recent conference to be greeted by a Chilean colleague whom I had not met previously as 'Ah! My Pacific neighbour'. I am sure Korean geographers can quote similar examples from their own experience. At a quite different resolution, my colleague Hong-Key Yoon has demonstrated the distinctiveness of the place names of New Zealand in regionally retaining a very high proportion of Maori names. Indeed, as I understand it, the Korean classical tradition in geography, as practiced by such scholars as Kim Chong-ho, has involved a close attention to the details of place through field observation and mapping (Yoon 1995), a point that also relates to the need I identify for empiricism informing theory.

The preoccupation of Geography with theory and environment

While other social sciences have recently begun to focus on space and place, geographers have been directing little of their energy into area studies (other than at the local scale). Two reasons are apparent. First, as I suggested, many geographers have been concentrating the theoretical debates of social science. Their work is now fully imbedded in the mainstream literature of social science. Second, geographers have had the environment on their agenda. Both physical and human geographers have had almost too many opportunities to teach and to research all manner of environmental issues and concerns. This environmental imperative for geographers and other natural scientists has similarities with the interest of all social sciences in space and place. All of the natural and physical sciences, and many of the social, have seen a place for themselves in investigating the environmental concerns of the late twentieth century. One of the central and long-standing interests of geographers - the environment - now has many other protagonists,

although for many of these disciplines it remains subsidiary. Their core business is often elsewhere.

Much of the recent environmental emphasis in Geography is disappointing for its limited perspective. Like many of the other disciplines claiming the environment as territory, the overwhelming emphasis in geographic research that is labelled as environmental has been on human impact on the natural environment rather than in attempting to understand the environment as milieu for human activity. Although understandable from the threats that many scientists claim are posed to planet earth, this emphasis seems like a reversion to the environmental interest of the 1950s and 1960s when the rallying point was the volume edited by Thomas and with a title fitting to the time - *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*. The current emphasis could be paraphrased as *Peoples' Role in Changing the Atmosphere and its Impact on the Earth*. The resolution of such work is often very coarse, a characteristic that it shares with the literature on globalization. At finer resolution, whether it be regional or local, people-environment interaction (and especially the influence of natural environments on people) is culturally mediated. Indeed, the separation of people from nature or environment is not always helpful. As Harvey (1996:435) so forcibly argues '...the distinction between *environment* as commonly understood and the built, social, and political-economic environment is artificial and that the urban and everything that goes into it is as much part of the solution as it is a contributing factor to ecological difficulties.'

Geography needs to reintegrate the environmental turn into the traditional strengths of the discipline. In New Zealand, there are signs that this may be occurring, in part through tying environmental debates to a traditional geographical definition of that most elusive, yet dominating, term 'sustainability'. For example, in a current study of

the Northland region funded in order to investigate 'sustainability' (the central concept of New Zealand's environmental legislation) the investigatory framework is the boundaries of a single river catchment. We have used geographical frames of reference and themes such as land use, water, studies of communities in situ, the mechanics of place, and ethnic identity to explore the catchment and its resources (Blunden *et al.* 1996; Kaipo 1997; Scott *et al.* 1997). And we have attempted to marry the traditional methodologies of geography including the new GIS technologies with ethnographic techniques and perspectives. Thus, this example also illustrates the need for a re-insertion of cultural processes into studies of geographic difference. Certainly, it is no longer possible to study almost any theme in New Zealand without recognising the bi-cultural and multi-cultural elements that pertain to it.

Empirical testing of theory

Molloy (1997) argues that all social sciences need to engage in empiricism if only to provide evidence to question the unsubstantiated assertions of economics. Geographers roundly rejected the dominance of a singularly economic and theory-dominated approach to understanding after the intense attempts of the 1950s and 1960s to model spatial social and economic processes quantitatively. While the exclusivity of the approach was rejected, the need for convincing information of the sort provided by that period is necessary if the empirically unsubstantiated claims of the rational choice models of economics are to be debated effectively.

In all parts of the discipline geographers have been struggling to relate the local to the regional to the national to the global. To understand the influence of the global on place many human geographers have returned to detailed studies of small areas in cities and rural areas, often through qualitative analysis. They have been successful in

exposing and clarifying some of the complexities of globalization discussed by Cerny (1997). Whether these micro-studies can be replicated effectively at the meso-scale, and a similar level of understanding emerge, is far from clear.

The geography of organisations

One of the unresolved debates of the recent decades is concerned with establishing a deeper understanding of the relationships between environmental degradation (and people-environment interactions in general) and the uneven distribution of wealth. The major debates of the 1992 Rio conference centred on this issue as something of a standoff developed between the nations and groups of the North and South. It is clear that the same sorts of issues are emerging within nations and among different sets of nations as more international pressure is being placed on everyone to be more environmentally responsible, particularly the firms and farms involved in production. The North-South division and its attendant development issues remained intense during the debates at the Kyoto conference of late 1997 over greenhouse gas emissions. The vitriolic exchanges ended in a modest reduction in emissions by the European Union, Japan, and the United States.

Often the degradational effects of the actions of major corporations are treated in an oversimplified way by attempting merely to find ways to enforce more responsible action. As has happened in the past, I believe that the debate will shift to more fundamental issues that revolve around the organisation of production and the nature of our cities (see Harvey 1996). In rural areas, for instance, the real issue that is emerging is the relationship between the property rights of land owners and the powers that local, regional and national governments have to limit or change these rights. This interplay is locally and regionally differentiated, as well as strongly influenced, by the

make-up of the local population, their culture, and their involvement in the political economy. It is not difficult to see debates intensifying over the organisation of industrial production in relation to its total environmental effects. Without a continuing research and teaching agenda on the geography of the material conditions of production, and the forms of production around which they are organised, geographers will not be able to make the interconnections necessary to maximise their contributions to these people-environment issues.

A strategic approach to disciplinary self-interest

Williams (in Pinkey 1989: 160) identifies the influence of the inclusion of work experience in the curriculum on the opportunities for Cultural Studies. On one level it limits the opportunity for other offerings by holding out powerful material incentives. On another level it introduces the '... routines of the foreseen formations of the new industrial capitalism'. Meanwhile, the opportunities to enhance the human and social knowledge of individuals will be reduced. Harvey (1996:433) makes a similar observation when he writes 'One of the strong objections to capitalism is that it has produced a relatively homogeneous capitalist person. This reductionism of all beings and all cultural differences to a common commodified base is the focus of strong anti-capitalist sentiments'.

Such arguments are relevant to Geography in the school curriculum for the twenty-first century. While the need for geographic education is increasingly being recognised, often as a result of the global and environmental interests already discussed, the curriculum as a whole is often dominated by subjects which are perceived as offering a more certain path to employment. The controversy and delays surrounding the introduction of a new high school curriculum in social studies in New Zealand during the 1990s

illustrates the manner in which the curriculum is becoming a more overt site for social contestation of knowledge. The intense debates over constructivism in science in many countries is an even better example. In such an environment of competition the geographic community must have its case for inclusion coherently developed and closely argued.

There are indications that within the national and international geographic communities progress is being made. In the last five years various of the national and international professional geographic organisations have assessed their current position in research and education. I commend the impressive work of the Commission on Education of the International Geographical Union and its Charter, to any group who are planning their curricula or wish to have an international perspective on geographic education. Such globalization of knowledge must also be informed by national and regional attempts to evaluate and publicise the discipline. Intense debates are in progress in, for instance, South Africa on the shape of the geographic curriculum beyond apartheid. From such distinctive local perspectives these discussions are questioning the geographic curricula that have been developed in other parts of the world, notably their emphasis on the didactic teaching of values and on limited case studies at the expense of more comprehensive understandings of place. Contemporaneously, the United States National Research Council's recent publication on Geography (National Research Council 1997) has been developed to capitalise on the re-emerging concern in the United States on the geographic illiteracy of the population. Given the earlier discussion of area studies, one cannot help recognise the distinctive international, temporal and chronological circumstances for the revitalisation of Geography in the elementary and secondary schools of many parts of the United States. I believe that one of the important roles of

the IGU is to establish a level of understanding that goes beyond anything that any individual country might achieve. Geographic education and contact between peoples is one of the ways of achieving a culturally sensitive globalization.

6. Conclusion

To be successful the area studies of the future will require strong contributions from both the social sciences and from cultural studies. Geography has an important role to play within area studies but to be effective it must recapture its own discourse. It must use the insights derived from the intense theorising and emphasis on the nomothetic of the last 20 years to produce a more nuanced and empirically-established understanding of place that makes its own distinctive contribution to area studies. At the same time, it must continue to engagefully with the other social and environmental disciplines, as it has done in the recent past.

Certainly the knowledge created must be culturally informed. It is quite insufficient to assume that any association between countries be based only on economic interests and the implied knowledge that derives from limited and prescriptive approaches to understanding. It may be that what we see emerging in area studies, as envisaged by Wallerstein, is a closer drawing together of the humanities and social science through a re-integration of cultural studies with social science theory. For geographers any such package must be informed by a people-environment emphasis and the recognition that place makes a difference.

HE AHA TE MEA NUI
O TE AO
HE TANGATA, HE TANGATA
HE TANGATA.

WHAT IS THE GREATEST
THING ON EARTH,
IT IS PEOPLE, IT IS PEOPLE,
IT IS PEOPLE.

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