



Book review: *Géographies humaines. L'espace en partage*

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Jolivet, V., Martin, P., and Rioux, S. (Eds.): *Géographies humaines. L'espace en partage*, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, Montréal, 248 pp., ISBN 9782760646933, CAD 25.99, 2022.

Despite being founded upon a specific epistemological context, human geography, as a science of human societies, incorporates the identity of the territory from which it comes by assimilating the reality in which it operates. *Géographies humaines. L'espace en partage* is a relevant example of the recognition of a discrete school of human geography, the Quebec one, within the framework of French-language human geography but located on the North American continent. Canada, in general, and Quebec, in particular, have characteristics that differentiate them from both Europe and North America. For example, the preservation of the French language aligns with Europe, while the weight of the colonial past and the relationship with indigenous peoples are indicative of North America, a point that stands out particularly in this book.

The editors, Violaine Jolivet, Patricia Martin, and Sébastien Rioux, are all geographers at the Université de Montréal, one of the most well-known Quebec universities. They have not expressed their intention for readers to view this book as a manifesto for the founding of a Quebec school of human geography, but there is a “Quebec imprint” in the book’s content: firstly, through the prism of the origins of the authors of the chapters, with 11 of a total of 15 authors (with diverse degrees of expertise, from PhD students to professor emeritus) having an academic affiliation in Montreal; secondly, by the topics of the chapters – Indigenous peoples, relationships with the environment, or the end of the nation state – a burning issue, especially for federal states or those with regions that are distinct from an economic or ethno-

linguistic point of view; and thirdly, the examples and case studies from Quebec, illustrated with suggestive figures. Although the content of the chapters concerns global phenomena and is illustrated with examples from around the world, alongside these, there are those from Quebec, systematically integrated into the content of the book, which amplify the impression of the existence of a Quebec school of human geography.

The particularity of this book is that the editors have chosen to structure the content around the implications of globalization (mondialization in the book) in “a dialogue with the space” (p. 234); globalization is a “multipurpose term that designates a series of transformations of an economic, geopolitical, technological, cultural, or even environmental nature” (p. 13). The justification would be that “globalization is fundamentally a geographical phenomenon. To the extent that it disrupts our relationship with the world, globalization serves as an implicit framework for this collective work” (p. 13). The structure of the book follows a logical sequence, with globalization constituting the common thread of all chapters.

Overall, English-language (especially American) textbooks of human geography are more oriented towards the concrete aspects of society (Dorrell et al., 2019), while French-language textbooks of human geography allow a significant corpus to epistemological questions (Bailly et al., 2016). There are some notable exceptions, i.e., textbooks in English with a focus on the theory of human geography (Couper, 2015; Cresswell, 2024; Nayak and Jeffrey, 2025) and textbooks in French more oriented to the major themes of the contemporary society (Ciattoni and Veyret, 2018), to mention only the most recent books. However, the two models of publication are distinct, and the particularity of *Géographies humaines. L'espace en partage* is that it achieves a

transition between them: its publication in French marks its belonging to the French-speaking world, but its structure and content recall the North American origin.

Consequently, the introduction of the book is the only one that deals with the place of geography in the field of sciences, while the 12 main chapters address current multidisciplinary themes.

The text of the introduction begins with a sentence that demonstrates the importance of geography, recently affirmed as a science, viewed with caution by professionals in other sciences and still relatively overlooked in the academic world: "We are all geographers" (p. 7), "to the extent that [human beings] cognitively and symbolically appropriate space, where they acquire a memory, an imagination and a practice specific to their territory" (p. 8). The introduction provides a brief overview of the philosophical and conceptual evolution of geography, where the main ideas and concepts are discussed.

The titles of the main chapters are suggestive of their content and can stand by thematic groups. In the meantime, every chapter is linked with the preceding one, the construction of the book thus being a successive interrogation on the sustainability of humankind in the context of globalization. The first two chapters deal with the economic development: the colonization as a basis of the capitalism and (sometimes) violent decolonization in chapter 1, which examines the geo-history of the modern world, started with the "discovery" of a "New World" by Christopher Columbus and which is part of a series of processes that have had a lasting effect on the contemporary spatial organization of the world (p. 20). Globalization, which has its origins on the (de)colonization described in chapter 1, is the subject of chapter 2; the contemporary dynamics of globalization are characterized by a dizzying growth of global economic flows and the presence of multinational firms and international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which has led to the reconfiguration of the role of the state in a context of neoliberalism and disruption of crises (p. 41) and major changes for the work (p. 46).

Urbanization is a rapid and global phenomenon that cannot be ignored by human geography, and in this book, Chapter 3 focuses on the urban world. The chapter offers an overview of the terminology in this field, in a logical sequence, from the problems of defining the urban to the formation and functions of the metropolis, metropolitan regions (Quebec), and megalopolis. The link with the theme of globalization is realized through the phenomenon of metropolization, a corollary of globalization based on the shift to a service economy and a new form of division of labor (p. 57), which also led to competitiveness among cities and the segregation among inhabitants (p. 66).

Chapter 4 deals with transport geography. Transport is a fundamental infrastructure of globalization, and it is of extreme relevance in an era of great mobility. The sustainability of the transport modes is questioned, for both human and

freight transport, including at international and urban levels. Montreal's Metropolitan Express Network is studied (p. 83) as an imbroglio of the attempt to reconcile economic, social, and ecological issues.

The next two chapters focus on borders and their forms and functions nowadays. Chapter 5 studies borders as political and social constructs, which still exist despite globalization and were very visible through the COVID-19 pandemic (p. 92). The case study of colonial frontiers and their impact on Indigenous peoples, such as the Akwesasne community from Canada and the United States, is very relevant (pp. 95–99), as it is the externalization of borders to control migration (pp. 99–104). "Migration: a planet in motion" is the title of chapter 6, which starts with the information that one in five Canadians is a migrant (p. 108); this informs about the magnitude of the migration nowadays and the formation of important diasporas such as the Lebanese one (p. 111). The theories and the dynamics of contemporary migration are presented, with an interesting analysis of Canada in the global migration network (pp. 117–119).

Chapter 7 deals with political geography, since it questions "the end of the State" (p. 125) in the context of the tension between the desire to create a global political space, revealed by the activities of the international organizations, including the World Bank and the IMF, that transcend the particular interests of individual states and the latter's control over international relations (p. 129).

Something new follows in the case of French-language human geography textbooks: a chapter (8) dedicated to Indigenous peoples or Autochthones and decolonial dynamics. These themes are studied in English-language human geography textbooks (Cresswell, 2024; Nayak and Jeffrey, 2025) but not in French-language ones. It starts with the acknowledgement that many Canadians express towards the Indigenous peoples and continues with the definitions of this category of peoples by the United Nations. The impact of colonization on Indigenous territories and identities and the relationship between Indigenous people and urban processes are also presented, urban areas thus being considered ancestral cosmopolitan spaces (p. 157). The authors also discuss the attempts of Indigenous people to intervene in the mapping of their territory to reflect its occupation before colonization, such as the claim of the name of Aotearoa/New Zealand's highest mountain, which today bears the name Aoraki / Mount Cook.

Chapter 9 refers to the same area of marginalized people. In this chapter, issues related to race and gender are discussed. The stories that the chapter begins with (about killings committed by police or assassins in the United States and Latin America) help to highlight the close relationships between space, social identities, and power (p. 161).

The last three chapters deal with human–nature relationships. Chapter 10 deals with natural resources and environmental issues, with examples such as an analysis of hydro-electricity in Quebec. The risk, as it reflects the social rela-

tionships, but also the relationships that societies have with their environment in the context of global changes are the subject of Chapter 11. The book ends with another challenging theme for contemporary society, feeding the planet (chapter 12), including the revitalization of the countryside (p. 229), in the conditions of the paradox of the existence of malnutrition, which still exists despite a food context characterized by abundance (p. 216).

The content of the book is presented in an accessible language and offers concrete examples from all over the world and from Quebec (relevant for other similar situations around the world), along with the theoretical foundations of the field approached in every chapter. Thus, the book is interesting and useful both for scholars and for any reader curious to understand the implications of globalization and its relationship with space. This book is also of particular interest for Romania and for any country that is confronted with globalization but is/was not prepared to deal with it, since globalization produces roughness everywhere, areas of friction, and constantly renewed inequities (p. 235).

The publication of this book in French is more than welcome, in a context largely defined by the Anglo-Saxon hegemony. The content in French and the themes discussed contribute to the diversity within the field of human geography, granting more freedom to students and instructors in adopting textbooks and subjects in human geography, by questioning and confronting their geographical roots and epistemological consequences. Consequently, *Géographies humaines. L'espace en partage*, as an overview of the contemporary world through globalization, developed at the crossroads of French-speaking and English-speaking traditions, and which presented the discipline through the prism of a common vision, that of critical approaches (p. 233), is a foundational output of the Quebec school of human geography.

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