

SUBJECT: GEOGRAPHY

SEMESTER: UG 6th (H)

PAPER: GEOG-601(EVOLUTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT)

TOPICS: SCHOOLS OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT: FRENCH, AMERICAN, GERMAN

FRENCH SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT

The major contribution of French geographers is discussed as below:

Vidal De La Blache (1848-1918)

Vidal de La Blache was a French geographer. He is considered to be the founder of modern French geography and also the founder of the French School of Geopolitics. He conceived the idea of *genre de vie*, which is the belief that the lifestyle of a particular region reflects the economic, social, ideological and psychological identities imprinted on the landscape. Vidal de la Blache founded the French school of geography. The *Annales de Géographie* became an influential academic journal that promoted the concept of human geography as the study of man and his relationship to his environment. Vidal de la Blache's pupil Albert Demangeon was deeply influenced by his emphasis on the importance of historical influences in the study of geography, and went on to become France's leading French academic in the field of human geography.

Vidal de la Blache produced a large number of publications; including 17 books, 107 articles, and 240 reports and reviews. The *Tableau de la Géographie de la France* was a summary of Vidal's methods, a manifesto whose production required a dozen years of work. It surveyed the entire country, taking note of everything he had observed in his innumerable notebooks. He took an interest in human and political aspects, geology (an infant discipline at the time, little connected with geography), transportation, and history. He was the first to tie together all those domains in a somewhat quantitative approach, using numbers sparingly, essentially narrative, even descriptive—not far removed, in some ways from a guidebook or a manual for landscape painting.

Influenced by German thought, especially by Friedrich Ratzel whom he had met in Germany, Vidal has been linked to the term "possibilism", which he never used but which summed up conveniently his opposition to the determinism of the sort that was defended by some nineteenth century geographers. The concept of possibilism has been used by historians to evoke the epistemological fuzziness that, according to them, characterized the approach of Vidal's school. Described as "idiographic", this approach was seen as blocking the evolution of the discipline in a "nomothetic" direction that would be the result of experimentation, making it possible to unlock laws or make scientific demonstrations.

"Vidalian" geography is based on varied forms of cartography, on monographs, and on several notable concepts, including "landscapes", "settings", "regions", "life ways", and "density". Some adherents to modern geography as the science of the social dimension of space have criticized Vidal's geography as the natural science of life ways. According to this view, Vidal's ideas made nature the external force that drove societies. They served to validate the equation of nation, territory, and sovereignty, and the fundamental idea of the French Third Republic that patriotism was the supreme value. The reasoning that made nature the driving force for societies was only tenable in regard to rural and seemingly static

societies. Vidal avoided looking at industrialization, colonialism, and urbanization. He called those concepts "historical winds", like gusts on the surface of a pond.

Jean Brunhes(1869-1930)

Jean Brunhes was a French geographer (born 25 October 1869, Toulouse, France-died 25 August 1930, Boulogne-Billancourt). His most famous book is *La géographie humaine* (Human Geography). *Ruskin and Bible* is popular book by Jean Brunhes. Brunhes was named professor of general geography at the University of Fribourg in 1896, and in 1908 he was appointed to give a course in human geography at the University of Lausanne. He continued to work in human geography, a science that did not then exist in France.

In his *Anthropogéographie* the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel attempted to explain man in terms of nature and to make history and culture dependent on geography. In contrast, Brunhes saw in nature "not a tyrannical fatalism, but an infinite wealth of possibilities among which man has the power to choose". He also believed that there is no social determinism whose laws can be ascertained. In his great work, *Géographie humaine* (1910), Brunhes presented the first attempt to coordinate the geographical phenomena resulting from the activities of man. It was illustrated with numerous photographs. In 1912 the Collège de France created a chair of human geography for him.

Demageon(1872-1940)

Albert Demangeon (13 June 1872 – 25 July 1940) was a Professor of social geography at the Sorbonne in Paris for many years. He was an educator, a prolific author, and in the 1930s was the leading French academic in the field of human geography. He was a pioneer in the use of surveys to collect information on social questions. Demangeon was a prolific author. His pre-war work focused on physical regional geography, but later he also wrote on larger topics including several volumes of the *Géographie Universelle* published under the direction of Paul Vidal de La Blache and Lucien Gallois. At the Sorbonne he turned from physical to human geography. He avoided theoretical work, and did not write a book about the general subject of human geography; although his writings on the subject were published after his death in *Problems of Human Geography* (1942). This collection of his main articles covered a broad spectrum of human geography topics.

Demangeon was interested in the interactions of man and nature, and also in history, although he felt that geography must remain a distinct subject. He wrote in 1906, "To explain the geographical phenomena of which man has been the witness or contriver, it is necessary to study their evolution in the past with the aid of documents." Later he defined three principles for the study of human geography:

1. It should avoid determinism. Causes are always complex and involve human initiative and choice.
2. It should be based upon a territorial unit. To understand and describe regional units is one of the main objectives of geographical study.
3. It must consider not only the present day. The idea of age and of evolution is indispensable. Without it, the reason for what exists often escapes us.

He cooperated with historians, and co-authored *The Rhine, Problems of History and Economy* (1935) with Lucien Febvre. He studied current issues such as colonialism, globalization, the Great Depression and German ambitions. His *Le déclin de l'Europe* (1920) was published in the US in 1921 under the title *America and the Race for World Domination*. It argued that Europe was deeply in debt and exhausted by the war, with reduced agricultural and industrial output, and low birth rates. Demangeon wrote several studies of cities, but was more interested in the country, and also in economics. Throughout his career Demangeon was

interested in spatial variations of farmsteads. He presented a famous study of rural houses to the 1st International Congress of Folklore in 1937. His two-volume work *France Économique et Humaine*, published posthumously in 1944 and 1948, surveyed the rural life and economy, road, railway and canal routes and their traffic, coastal and inland towns, industry and Paris. Throughout the work there is a historical flavour with references to evolution of land use, development of routes, evolution of industry, changes to urban area.

Demangeon used a precise vocabulary and linked observed facts in order to formulate new questions. He made use of questionnaires to investigate patterns as early as 1909. In the 1930s he used questionnaires in large surveys for a 1939 study of foreigners in French agriculture. The surveys, sponsored by the Rockefeller Institute, gathered information on rural habitat, the organization of farms and the use of foreign farm labour.

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT

Ellen Churchill Semple

Ellen Churchill Semple (January 8, 1863 – May 8, 1932) was an American geographer and the first female president of the Association of American Geographers. She contributed significantly to the early development of the discipline of geography in the United States, particularly studies of human geography. She is most closely associated with work in anthropogeography and environmentalism, and the debate about "environmental determinism". Semple was a pioneer in American geography, helping to broaden the discipline's focus beyond physical features of the earth and bringing attention to human aspects of geography. Her innovative approach and theories influenced the development of human geography as a significant subfield and influenced the social sciences across disciplines, including history and anthropology.

Her first book, *American History and its Geographic Conditions* (1903) and her second, *Influences of Geographic Environment* (1911), were widely-used textbooks for students of geography and history in the United States at the start of the 20th century. Semple was a key figure in the theory of environmental determinism, along with Ellsworth Huntington and Griffith Taylor. Influenced by the works of Charles Darwin and inspired by her mentor Friedrich Ratzel, Semple theorized that human activity was primarily determined by the physical environment. In her work *Influences of Geographic Environment on the Basis of Ratzel's System of Anthro-Geography* (1911), she describes people and their associated landscapes, dividing the world into key environmental types. Semple identifies four key ways that the physical environment: 1) direct physical effects (climate, altitude); 2) psychical effects (culture, art, religion); 3) economic and social development (resources and livelihoods); 4) movement of people (natural barriers and routes, such as mountains and rivers). Semple's work also reflects discussions and conflicts within geography and social theory about determinism and race. Indeed, in some works she challenges popular ideas of her time about race determining social and cultural differences, suggesting that environment was a more important factor in cultural development. Semple's theories of environmental determinism have been criticized as overly simplistic and often replicating the same themes of racial determination through "nature". Semple believed that mankind originated in the tropics but gained full maturity in the temperate regions of the world. "where man has remained in the tropics, with few exceptions, he has suffered arrested development. His nursery has kept him a child."

Ellsworth Huntington (1876-1947)

Ellsworth Huntington (September 16, 1876 – October 17, 1947) ,a professor of geography at Yale University during the early 20th century, known for his studies on the controversial science of environmental determinism/climatic determinism, economic growth and economic geography. He served as President of the Ecological Society of America in 1917, the Association of American Geographers in 1923 and President of the Board of Directors of the Society for Biodemography and Social Biology from 1934 to 1938. He taught at Euphrates College, Turkey (1897–1901); accompanied the Pumpelly (1903) and Barrett (1905–1906) expeditions to central Asia; and wrote of his Asian experiences in *Explorations in Turkestan* (1905) and *The Pulse of Asia* (1907). He taught geography at Yale (1907–1915) and from 1917 was a research associate there, devoting his time chiefly to climatic and anthropogeographic studies. He was the 1916 recipient of the Elisha Kent Kane Gold Medal from the Geographical Society of Philadelphia. In 1909, Huntington led the Yale Expedition to Palestine. It was his mission to determine "step by step the process by which geologic structure, topographic form, and the present and past nature of the climate have shaped man's progress, moulded his history; and thus played an incalculable part in the development of a system of thought which could scarcely have arisen under any other physical circumstances." He was on the original standing committee of the Foundation for the Study of Cycles from 1941. His work chiefly concerned the relation of climate to land forms, geological and historical changes, human activities, and the distribution of civilizations. These researches produced several works, including *Civilization and Climate* (1915; rev. ed. 1924), *The Human Habitat* (1927), and *Mainsprings of Civilization* (1945).

William Morris Davis (1850-1934)

William Morris Davis (February 12, 1850 – February 5, 1934) was an American geographer, geologist, geomorphologist, and meteorologist, often called the "father of American geography". Davis worked for Nathaniel Shaler as a field assistant, and was later hired to teach at Harvard. Though his legacy lives on in geomorphology, he also advanced theories of scientific racism in his writings about physical geography. Davis was a tenacious, as well as keen observer of nature, a master of logical deduction, and a brilliant synthesizer of disparate observations and ideas. From his own field observations and studies made by the original nineteenth-century surveyors of the western United States, he devised his most influential scientific contribution: the "geographical cycle". His theory first defined in his 1889 article, *The Rivers and Valleys of Pennsylvania*, which was a model of how rivers erode uplifted land to base level, was inspired by the work of Erasmus and Charles Darwin and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, and it had a strong evolutionary flavor. His cycle of erosion suggests that (larger) rivers have three main stages of development, generally divided into youthful, mature and old-age stages. Each stage has distinct landforms and other properties associated with them, which can occur along the length of a river's upper, middle, and lower course. Though the cycle of erosion was a crucial early contribution to the development of geomorphology, many of Davis' theories regarding landscape evolution, sometimes termed 'Davisian geomorphology', were heavily criticized by later geomorphologists.

Isiah Bowman

Isaiah Bowman, (December 26, 1878 – January 6, 1950) was an American geographer and President of the Johns Hopkins University, 1935-1948 .Some of his more notable works include: *Forest Physiography* (1911), *Well-Drilling Methods* (1911), *South America* (1915), *The Andes of Southern Peru* (1916), *The New World-Problems in Political*

Geography (1921), Many reprints. Desert Trails of Atacama (1924), The Pioneer Fringe (1931), Main Editor of Limits of Land Settlement (1937)

Bowman was a known anti-Semite, extremely suspect of Jews and reluctant to hire them at the university. According to Neil Smith's "American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization" (University of California Press, 2004), Bowman fired one of the most promising young historians on the Johns Hopkins faculty in 1939, saying "there are already too many Jews at Hopkins."

Furthermore, while President of Johns Hopkins he was asked to look into the status of Geography at Harvard University, as a senior figure in the discipline. At the time Harvard had a Geology and Geography Department and was about to offer tenure to a second geographer, which was resisted by some geologists. Bowman's refusal to praise Harvard's geographers and their program, revealed through archival research by Neil Smith, was instrumental in Harvard's decision to close the program that year and almost end the teaching of geography at Harvard. Given Harvard's status, this had major repercussions across the country for the discipline. Archival research of private letters reveals Bowman intensely disliked the only tenured geography professor at Harvard, Derwent S. Whittlesey, for his scholarship and homosexuality

Mark Jefferson

He was one of the outstanding scholars of Davis. He in America was the founder of real man oriented geography. The concept of 'Central places' and the 'Law of Primate City' were coined by him. He stated that geographical concern was with man about 'where they are', 'what they are like' and 'why they are there' So in a sense he studied about ecological phenomenon.

Robin D Salisbury

He had keen interest in physical geography. He established and organised the department of Geography of Chicago University. He established and organised the department of Geography of Chicago University. Besides Griffith Taylor he was also one of the Pioneers of Modern Geography.

GERMAN SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT

Alexander Von Humboldt (1769-1859)

Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Alexander von Humboldt (14 September 1769 – 6 May 1859) was a Prussian polymath, geographer, naturalist, explorer, and proponent of Romantic philosophy and science. Humboldt's quantitative work on botanical geography laid the foundation for the field of biogeography. Humboldt's advocacy of long-term systematic geophysical measurement laid the foundation for modern geomagnetic and meteorological monitoring. Humboldt was one of the first people to propose that the lands bordering the Atlantic Ocean were once joined (South America and Africa in particular). Humboldt resurrected the use of the word *cosmos* from the ancient Greek and assigned it to his multivolume treatise, *Kosmos*, in which he sought to unify diverse branches of scientific knowledge and culture. This important work also motivated a holistic perception of the universe as one interacting entity. He was the first person to describe the phenomenon and cause of human-induced climate change, in 1800 and again in 1831, based on observations generated during his travels.

Humboldt's researches into the vegetation of the mines of Freiberg led to the publication in Latin (1793) which was a compendium of his botanical researches. That publication brought him to the attention of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who had met Humboldt at the family home when Alexander was a boy, but Goethe was now interested in meeting the young scientist to discuss metamorphism of plants. An introduction was arranged by Humboldt's brother, who lived in the university town of Jena, not far from Goethe. Goethe had developed his own extensive theories on comparative anatomy. Working before Darwin, he believed that animals had an internal force, an urform, that gave them a basic shape and then they were further adapted to their environment by an external force. Humboldt urged him to publish his theories. Together, the two discussed and expanded these ideas. Goethe and Humboldt soon became close friends.

Humboldt was able to spend more time on writing up his research. He had used his own body for experimentation on muscular irritability, recently discovered by Luigi Galvani and published his results, at Berlin, 1797 entitled Experiments on Stimulated Muscle and Nerve Fibres, enriched in the French translation with notes by Blumenbach.

Carl Ritter (1779-1859)

Carl Ritter (August 7, 1779 – September 28, 1859) was a German geographer. Along with Alexander von Humboldt, he is considered one of the founders of modern geography. From 1825 until his death, he occupied the first chair in geography at the University of Berlin. Ritter intended to write an all-encompassing geography spanning the entire globe. His work consists of three parts:

1. The solid form or the continents
2. The fluid form or the elements
3. The bodies of the three realms of nature

Part one was to undertake the continents of the globe beginning with the "Old World" and work to the "New World". The dynamic of old and new proposed here does not correspond to contemporary notions, rather refers to the evolution of human activity on the planet as Ritter understood it. Consequently, as noted by Hanno Beck, "The most extreme parts of the world, in Ritter's opinion, in the North, the South and the East are in practical terms as much a part of the New World as America". Part two was to deal with the fluid forms; by this was meant water, air, and fire. These elements correspond approximately to the studies of Meteorology, Climatology. This part, too, was to be examined within the framework of the whole system. The final part of the proposed work was to be dedicated to the interrelationships of organic life with geography and history. Part and parcel of Ritter's approach to geography was to identify the relationship between the variables at stake. He was particularly interested in the development of these relationships over time and how their constituent components (animals and the earth) contributed to this evolution. Borrowing the concept of "organic unity" used by Alexander von Humboldt, Ritter went further saying geography is simply not possible without it.

The methodology employed by Ritter was an inductive one, consisting of compiling large sums of information and material, and creating theories from those texts. This style of research was much criticized by his contemporaries. A consequence of his inductive research methods, Ritter was increasingly interested in observing the planet as an organism composed of geographical individuals. Ritter elucidates the development of a geographical individual and strives to establish a natural geographical system.

At the time of his death, Ritter had produced an astonishing amount of geographical literature contained in his "Erdkunde" alone. It amounts to 21 volumes comprising 19 parts which can be roughly divided into 6 sections

1. Africa (I) 1822
2. East Asia (II-VI) 1818-1836
3. West Asia (VII-XI) 1837-1844
4. Arabia (XII-XIII) 1846-1847
5. Sinai Peninsula (XIV-XVII) 1847-1848
6. Asia Minor (XVIII-XIX) 1850-1852

Ritter's masterwork, *Geography in Relation to Nature and the History of Mankind*, written 1816–1859, developed at prodigious length the theme of the influence of the physical environment on human activity. It is an encyclopaedia of geographical lore. Ritter unfolded and established the treatment of geography as a study and a science. His treatment was endorsed and adopted by all geographers. Ritter's writings thus also had implications for political theory. His organic conception of the state could be abused to justify the pursuit of *Lebensraum*, even at the cost of another nation's existence, because conquest was seen as a biological necessity for a state's growth. His ideas were adopted and transformed into an expansionist ideology by the German geostrategist Friedrich Ratzel. It is to be doubted, however, whether Carl Ritter can be held responsible for this interpretation, which was developed under the influence of Darwinism, which was to become a leading and popular ideology in Germany only after Ritter's death.

Ratzel (1844-1904)

Friedrich Ratzel (August 30, 1844 – August 9, 1904) was a German geographer and ethnographer, notable for first using the term *Lebensraum* ("living space") in 1890. Influenced by thinkers including Darwin and zoologist Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, he published several papers. Among them is the essay *Lebensraum* (1901) concerning biogeography, creating a foundation for the uniquely German variant of geopolitics: *Geopolitik*. Ratzel's writings coincided with the growth of German industrialism after the Franco-Prussian war and the subsequent search for markets that brought it into competition with Britain. His writings served as welcome justification for imperial expansion. Influenced by the American geostrategist Alfred Thayer Mahan, Ratzel wrote of aspirations for German naval reach, agreeing that sea power was self-sustaining, as the profit from trade would pay for the merchant marine, unlike land power.

Ratzel produced the foundations of human geography in his two-volume *Anthropogeographie* in 1882 and 1891. This work was misinterpreted by many of his students, creating a number of environmental determinists. He published his work on political geography, *Politische Geographie*, in 1897. It was in this work that Ratzel introduced concepts that contributed to *Lebensraum* and Social Darwinism. His three volume work *The History of Mankind* was published in English in 1896 and contained over 1100 excellent engravings and remarkable chromolithography. The book for which Ratzel is acknowledged all over the world is *Anthropogeographie*. It was completed between 1872 and 1899. The main focus of this monumental work is on the effects of different physical features and locations on the style and life of the people.

Alfred Hettner (1859-1941)

Alfred Hettner (August 6, 1859 in Dresden – August 31, 1941 in Heidelberg) was a German geographer. He is known for his concept of chorology, the study of places and regions, a concept that influenced both Carl O. Sauer and Richard Hartshorne. Apart from Europe, his fieldwork concentrated mainly on Colombia, Chile and Russia. His

book Europe was published in 1907. According to him, geography is a chorological science or it is a study of regions. Hettner rejected the view that geography could be either general or regional. Geography like other fields of learning must deal in both the unique things (regional geography) and with universal (general geography), but the study of regions — especially in the form of his Länderkunde approach — is the main field of geography. Hettner supervised, among others, the PhDs of Oskar Schmieder, Friedrich Metz and Heinrich Schmitthenner.

For more than 40 years Hettner's principal medium for disseminating his ideas on the scope and methodology of geography was the influential Geographische Zeitung ("Geographical Journal"), first published in 1899. The first volume of his "Foundations of Regional Geography" dealt with Europe, but its companion volume, on other regions, did not appear until 1924. He also wrote "Comparative Regional Geography", 1933-35. One of the major works of geographic literature, the 11-volume "Handbook of Geographical Science" completed in 1940, was his conception.

Richtofen (1833-1905)

Richtofen was also another important member of the German school of thought. He wrote 'Geography of China' in the year 1882. According to him in order to study geography properly the physical geography is to be studied at first and then adjustment of man in that setting is to be examined. He said that the main objective of geography is to explore the relationship of man to the physical earth and to the biotic features. He established the General Comparative Geography with regional variations. He introduced the term 'Chorology'. He said that Erkunde must refer to the study of the earth where all spheres eg lithosphere, atmosphere, biosphere and hydrosphere are in contact with each other. According to him the main objective of Geography is to explore the relationship of man to the physical Earth and to the biotic features.