

# A GENERATION OF NEW GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN 1960s' ENGLAND: FROM MADINGLEY CONFERENCE TO CHARNEY MANOR CONFERENCE

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*Abstract* In the late 1950s, a “New Geography” emerged among geography academics that marked not only a change in how geography was studied at universities, but also had a major impact on how geography was taught in schools. In England, geography education was fundamentally changed to adopt the New Geography approach. Its origins are widely recognized as having been the first Madingley Conference, held in 1963. This paper aims to reveal how that conference led to the changes that occurred in the 1960s, with a particular focus on schoolteachers.

The conference papers were published as *Frontiers in Geographical Teaching: The Madingley Lectures for 1963*, in 1965. Some young teachers were keen to build on the innovative ideas in these lectures, and in 1966 they formed a voluntary research group focused on practical applications. This group was remarkably active; some of its results were published as a series of New Geography educational books. These activities led to another type of seminar, the Charney Manor Conference, in 1970, and the outcomes of this conference were published as *New Directions in Geography Teaching: Papers from the 1970 Charney Manor Conference*, in 1973. This book is quite different from *Frontiers in Geographical Teaching*. This means that while they were adopting the New Geography paradigm, schoolteachers transformed its educational content through various activities, and this content ultimately became the New Geography Education.

**Key words:** geographical education, school education, education theory, England

## 1. Introduction: New Geography and geography education

In the late 1950s, a “New Geography” emerged among geography academics in North America, and dramatically changed the Anglo-Saxon geography of the 1960s. It was called quantitative geography, and was described as a conceptual revolution of geography. This revolution marked not only a change in how geography was studied at universities, but also had a major impact on how geography was taught in the schools of various countries.

In the United States, a large-scale secondary level geography curriculum development project called the High School Geography Project (HSGP) was started in 1962, on the initiative of the Association of American Geographers (AAG). The purpose of this project was to develop a curriculum and learning materials that integrated the concepts and methods of New Geography into high school geography curricula. Therefore, many academic geographers, including G. White and W. Garrison, participated in the project directly, and developed teaching materials. Six

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volumes of material were collected and published in 1965/1966 as “Geography in an Urban Age.” However, the influence of these materials on geography education reform in the United States was small; the project’s purpose was not achieved (Helburn 1983).

This project received a great deal of attention in Japan. As a result, some innovative teaching ideas and strategies have been introduced into some of the geography lessons in Japanese schools. However, looking at the thread of geographical content over time, the tradition of assigning great importance to regional geography content has never changed in Japan, and it has continued until today (Shimura 2009; Ida *et al.* eds. 2015). This means that in Japan, unlike the geography education offered at universities, New Geography was essentially not adopted in schools.

However, the exhaustive regional geography learning content taught in Japan is not currently evident in England (Shimura 2010). Geography education in England has fundamentally changed from the traditional regional geography approach to that of the New Geography, hereafter referred to as New Geography Education. When looking back at the history of geography education in England, the New Geography has been diffused since the 1960s, and its origin has been widely attributed to the 1963 Madingley Conference led by P. Haggett and R. Chorley (Walford 1989, Brown and Smith 2000, Rawling 2001). Sugiura (2001) argues that the objective of that conference was the decisive deployment of the New Geography, from the perspective of the history of academic geography.

Rather than being academic, even in the history of geography education, the Madingley Conference at Cambridge is recognized as being the origin of the New Geography Education in England. Why, and what is recognized as such? This paper aims to reveal how the process of the conference led to the changes that occurred in the 1960s, with a focus on participants’ subsequent activities.

## **2. Madingley Conference from 1963 and *Frontiers in Geographical Teaching* (1965)**

### **Prehistory to the Madingley Conference and an Overview of the Conference**

In the summer of 1962, Haggett and Chorley, who would later organize the Madingley Conference, were staying in the United States. They visited a ghost town near the California and Nevada border, and “it was there, against the backdrop of empty facades so reminiscent of much geographical teaching in British schools, that the theme of the Madingley Conference was born....As our plans evolved, it became increasingly clear that new life had to be breathed into British geography teaching at all levels” (Chorley 1995: 366-367). From this paper, we can see that there had been a problem with the British geography curricula, which they believed lacked intellectual challenge. They knew about the HSGP project, and envisioned a similar project in the UK. Their key strategy for effecting the project’s realization was to focus on a core of intellectually dissatisfied teachers in the sixth-form, which is equivalent to the late high school stage in Japan, because changes in sixth-form teaching would rapidly diffuse up into the universities, and down to the teaching of younger students.

In the summer of 1963, Haggett, Chorley, and their colleagues held a week-long accommodation seminar. The venue, an off-campus facility at the University of Cambridge in the west suburb of Cambridge, was Madingley Hall, and subsequently this conference came to be called the Madingley Conference. Twenty-eight people participated in the seminar, entitled “Modern Geography: A survey of development and research,” which was held again the following year. The seminar contents for the 1963 and 1964 conferences were published as “*Frontiers in*

*Geographical Teaching: The Madingley lectures for 1963*” (Chorley and Haggett eds. 1965) (hereafter *Frontiers*), and the contents of the third seminar, in 1965, for which the title had been changed to “Geography in a changing intellectual environment: Models in Geography” was published as “*Models in Geography: The second Madingley lectures*” (Chorley and Haggett eds. 1967) (Table 1).

**Table 1** Brief history of relationships between geography education and academic geography in 1960s

Year	Geography in schools	Geography in academic field
1962	Start of High School Geography Project in USA	Haggett and Chorley stay in California, USA
1963	1st Madingley Conference at Cambridge; title Modern Geography	
1964	2nd Madingley Conference; title Modern Geography	
1965	Chorley & Haggett eds. <i>Frontiers in Geographical Teaching</i>	
	3rd Madingley Conference; title Models in Geography	
1966	4th Madingley Conference; title Theory in Geography: New Teaching Problems	
	London Schools Geographical Group is formed	(Madingley Conference continued until 1978)
1967	Committee on the role of Models and Quantitative Techniques is established in GA	
		Chorley & Haggett eds. <i>Models in Geography</i>
1969	GA journal special issue; title The role of Models and Quantitative Techniques in Geographical Teaching	
	Everson and FitzGerald. <i>Settlement Patterns: Concepts in Geography 1</i>	
1970	1st Charney Manor Conference	
	(1973:Walford ed. <i>New Direction in Geography Teaching</i> )	

### Contents and attributes of *Frontiers in Geographical Teaching*

*Frontiers* was composed of eighteen chapters in three parts: Part I, Concepts, Part II, Techniques, Part III, Teaching. In Part I, Concepts, Chapter 1 described the philosophy of New Geography as an alternative to the traditional regional geography paradigm, and later chapters discussed the most advanced academic ideas for each field of systematic geography. Part II explained various techniques such as quantitative methods used in New Geography. The third part related to geography education. After looking at the contents of each chapter, it became apparent that dealing with the school teaching level was addressed only in Chapter 16, which described three topics—syllabuses, the relationship between the geography taught at schools and universities, and audio/visual aids—without any overall unifying concept.

From these contents, one concludes that *Frontiers* was intended to introduce the thoughts, contents, and academic methods of New Geography. It can also be said that it was not intended to address the educational perspective of teaching geography in schools. However, evaluations of the seminar and the book by targeted teachers were extremely high. What is now called the New Geography Education, which incorporates New Geography into the educational school context, was born here.

### 3. Beginning of the Exploration of New Geography Education by Participants

#### The start of underground activities

Young teachers, who had been troubled by traditional regional geography teaching practices, were keen to create innovative content, based on the Conference and *Frontiers*. One of these enthusiasts, Walford (1989), has described those days as follows:

I always think it a stroke of Nemesis that this book was first put into my hands...I did my best to understand the book and joined the pilgrimage to Madingley a few months later.... The impact of those conferences (and books) on those who attended is hard to fully explain; they opened up a new intellectual life for young geography teachers of the time. (310)

Participants caught up in this passion voluntarily began promoting practical research, and subsequently formed an organization. Everson and FitzGerald, who attended early Madingley conferences, formed the London Schools Geographical Group (LSGG) in 1966. This group was remarkably active, and members exchanged materials such as worksheets that documented improvements achieved through new teaching practices. Eventually, these materials were published as a New Geography educational book series titled *Concepts in geography* for the sixth-form and first year university students. *Settlement Patterns*, the first volume, was written by Everson and FitzGerald (1969). This book has a short preface dated September 1968, contributed by Haggett at the University of Bristol. He said,

It is now five years since the University of Cambridge Extra-Mural Board launched the Madingley Seminars in Geography in which university teachers and researchers tried to set out current changes in the field for practicing teachers. It is particularly encouraging to see two of the original members of that course taking up the challenge thrown out then in such a vigorous and exciting way. (vii)

In the Introduction that follows, Everson and FitzGerald wrote that, “we have been greatly indebted to the ideas given at the courses held at Madingley Hall...Much of our work has been influenced by the approach used in the American ‘High Schools Geography Project’...” (x). These comments are suggestive of the significant influence of the Madingley Conference on them. This series clearly means that young teachers were aiming for a new geography education that was different from that taught in the past, one that was revolutionary.

### **The expansion of organizational support by the Geographical Association**

In the early days, the Geographical Association (GA)—the national teaching organization for geography in the UK—viewed the new movement critically, and did not respond to it. Realizing that a gulf was developing between its members prompted the decision to form a new committee, to keep the New Geography Education “revolutionaries” in the GA (Balchin 1993:53). In late 1967, the LSGG metamorphosed into the Committee on the role of Models and Quantitative Techniques in Geographical Teaching, within the GA. The committee included many subsequent “revolutionaries,” like FitzGerald, Everson, and Walford.

The committee’s most significant output was the 1969 publication of a special issue in *Geography*, a GA journal, discussing the role of models and quantitative techniques in geographical teaching. Chorley was a guest editor of this issue, and the first chairman of the committee, Gregory, claimed that “...in this issue of models and quantitative techniques, geography has reached its own particular Rubicon. To refuse to cross it could cut us off from contemporary scientific thought for many decades to come” (Gregory 1969:10). Geography education was at a major turning point, in the context of the scientific movement of education.

The GA also advanced other efforts in those years. One was to initiate the *Teaching Geography Occasional Papers* in 1967, edited by N. Graves, a young professor of geography

education at the Institute of Education, in London. Pamphlets were produced in response to a call from teachers for more practical aids. These pamphlets addressed many issues dealing with quantitative techniques and models, and were written by committee members. Other GA responses included a plan for a practical seminar (Balchin 1993: 56). In 1969, the committee organized a seminar jointly with the Department of Education and Science at the Maria Grey College, where Walford was working. Finally, he and other enthusiasts attempted to hold a new conference.

#### **4. The 1970 Charney Manor Conference and *New Directions in Geography Teaching* (1973)**

##### **The 1970 Charney Manor Conference**

Their activities led to a conference that involved mainly schoolteachers and school educators. In 1970, Walford organized an opportunity for innovative teachers to meet each other, and exchange lesson experiences and ideas, at a training facility called Charney Manor, in Oxford's west suburbs. For this reason, the gathering has been called the Charney Manor Conference. The outcomes of this conference were published in *New Directions in Geography Teaching: Papers from the 1970 Charney Manor Conference* (hereafter *New Directions*), edited by Walford (1973). The twenty-six participants included fourteen people from schools, eight people from colleges, and four from the Universities of Bristol, Bath, Sussex, and H.M.I., Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education. Most of the participants were geography schoolteachers, or staff at the teachers' training college. At the same time, one of the "revolutionaries," Everson, had become a school inspector in the H.M.I., which had a large influence on the geography education of all of England.

##### **Overview and a previous Japanese study of *New Directions***

This book contained contributions from seventeen of the conference participants. The book's content was divided into two parts. The first half, titled "Teaching Units," documented the contributors' teaching materials and methods. All the authors of this part of the book were teachers at schools or colleges. In addition, active members of a GA Committee wrote many chapters of the book.

In Japan, Ando (1986), a high school teacher, was quick to recognize the value of this book, and advanced an analysis of its contents to his colleagues. This was a research frontier in Japan. This practitioners' study did not include the second part of the book that contained its theoretical content, however, and consequently this paper focuses on the second part.

##### **Structure and content of the second part**

The theoretical contents of this book, "New developments and their consequences," consist of eight chapters, and can be divided into three sections, as described below.

###### *(1) Explanations of ideas and theories required in teaching practice: Chapters one through five*

The first chapter, which provides a commentary on the latest academic ideas behind the teaching/learning content of New Geography Education, was written by Ambrose at Sussex University. In conclusion, he abstracted key concepts, and five possible implications for the future direction of school curricula. The directions were movements, from a factually-based to a concept-based mode of study, from regional to systematic work, from compartmentalized to interdisciplinary work, from qualitative to quantitative statements, and from a lesser to a greater emphasis on values. Subsequent chapters include explanations of the theory behind the new

teaching contents, the theory of learning methods, and the theory of learning evaluation. The former two theories were not so much of a novelty at the time of publication. On the other hand, "Chapter 5: Assessment and examinations," written by Hones at the University of Bath, included theoretical content with references to the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* by American education scholar B. Bloom, which had not been seen in previous geography education studies.

*(2) Practical problems including examination syllabuses: Chapter six*

All the papers included in Chapter six are written by geography schoolteachers, and they are relatively short. Where various practical problems had been widely reported, examinations and syllabuses related to university entrance were considered to be the serious issues. Corresponding to these issues, Jones, a schoolteacher in Bristol who had participated in the 1967 Madingley Conference, introduced the idea that syllabus reform had started in the autumn of 1968, in the Bristol School of Education.

*(3) Consideration of objectives and curriculum in light of education theory: Chapters seven and eight*

The final section attempts to use a theoretical study of education to solve these practical problems. The first paper claimed that, in order to solve these problems, it was necessary to set geography learning aims/objectives using Bloom's theory, and it was necessary to grasp the objectives, knowledge, evaluation, and learning experiences structurally, using British education scholar J. Kerr's curriculum theory. In the following paper, the nature of geographical objectives is considered in applying the general education theory mentioned above. Here, the education principles discussed by education philosophers R. Peters, and P. Hirst, cognitive psychologist J. Bruner, and geographers such as W. Pattison, E. Ackerman, P. Haggett, are referenced. The results revealed three threads that relate to the nature of geography education objectives. They were: geography integration, an introduction to the scientific method, and helping students prepare for responsible citizenship.

The final chapter discussed how to implement New Geography into the traditional regional approach used in school geography lessons, in a comparatively painless way. Their suggestion was to use the concept-based systematic topics study, or the concept-based area study, using a curriculum development strategy and learning methodology, which is based on developmental psychology, cognitive psychology theory, and other educational theories.

### **Attributes of *New Directions***

One of the distinctive attributes of this book, as noted by Ando (1986), when analyzing the first part of the book, is that it is a very practical resource for classroom teaching. However, based on the contents of the second part, it should be pointed out that another attribute of the book is its value as a source of subject education theory. As mentioned above, objective theory, curriculum theory, and psychology theory, considered frontier education theories, were frequently mentioned, and it was suggested that future geography education would incorporate these theories. Consequently, since the theory of geography education came first, operationalizing geography education objectives should be based on the broad aims of the entire education. Next, in the case of developing a curriculum incorporating a frontier of the geography discipline, while based on those goals, a concept-based curriculum was the most appropriate choice. Therefore, a significant value of the book was its inclusion of both practical geographic content, and general theoretical subject education content. It can be said that this book suggested the future directions of New Geography in the field of education.

## 5. Discussion

As described above, the New Geography was introduced into schools' geography curricula, and New Geography Education had been proposed in England in the 1960s. When discussing the subject of education in schools, the theory and practice frameworks, or those of the academics, educators, and society, are often applied. Therefore, using these frameworks, this study compares *Frontiers* and *New Directions*, with the objective of wanting to think about what the differences mean.

In the theory and practice framework perspective, although it includes "teaching" in the title, the main content of *Frontiers* is commentary on academic New Geography matters, and discussions of practical aspects of school geography curricula are negligible. On the other hand, *New Directions* addresses both the practical teaching unit and the theories of geography education. Therefore, the overall balance taken is that of subject education books.

From the academic, educational, and social framework perspective, *Frontiers* is extremely academic. It addresses only the university or college preparatory education stage in education. The reason for this is that the ultimate purpose of the Madingley was to diffuse New Geography into the UK university academic world. Based on the subsequent history of the development of geography in the UK, this academic social purpose has been achieved. On the other hand, *New Directions*, according to the full understanding of the academic New Geography, argues how to accept New Geography from the perspectives of both practice and the theory. Therefore, this book is educational, rather than academic. Its originality lies in the theory discussions in the second half of the book, which referenced the most advanced education theories current at that time.

The remaining social threads are complex issues. However, they were beginning to be aware of the value of educational goals and citizenship education. With respect to examinations and syllabuses, the beginning of a new syllabus development at Bristol should be noted here.

Overall, *New Directions* is a well-balanced discussion of an educational framework, and its recommendations are appropriate, as viewed both from the actual teaching practice situation, and from the state-of-the-art education theories current at the time it was written. This means, when adopting the New Geography, teachers led an educational transformation like process that Young (2014) described as "curriculum recontextualization," through the application of various activities, and ultimately created content that has been identified as the New Geography Education.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

This paper reported on the process of the generation of the New Geography Education with regard to the Madingley and Charney Manor Conferences. Although the details are as described above, the process involved the transformation of academic scholarship through education practice and theory. This transformation is one of the main reasons that New Geography has been widely used in school education in England. However, this is a finding mainly obtained from academic and education threads. Social threads, educational realities, policies of the time, and especially the examination system, are thought to have led to the different choices and processes. Further study of these aspects of this research is my future challenge.

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(\*: in Japanese)