

## INTRODUCTION: SOME BASIC QUESTIONS

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The American Behavioral Scientist decided three years ago to publish for two or three years a series of issues each covering developments in a certain subject in the behavioral sciences. One of the first issues was devoted to developments in human geography and I am sure you would like to read it after this discussion (American Behavioral Scientist vol. 22. September, 1978)

The interesting point in this collection of papers is that they are designed to meet the desires of somebody who is academic but doesn't know much about human geography, as it is very interesting to review what has been done in human geography in the last twenty or thirty years in perspective of general developments in the sciences. Wilbur Zelinsky who edited that issue states in his interesting introduction, "Geography has been coming of age intellectually" and I think that this could be a very good starting point for our discussion today. Zelinsky gave a few interpretations to this statement, but I would like to emphasize, especially

after listening to the various people talking this morning, that I believe that the discussion we had today could not take place ten or twenty years ago, neither in terms of the topics covered nor in terms of the general trends which were described today. I refer specifically to the fact that current geography is a social science, while ten or twenty years ago we were still equipped with a tradition originated in the Humanities. I think that today, after having digested the scientific revolution and the quantitative revolution the topics which we are dealing with such as humanism, radicalism or applied geography are shared actually by many other social sciences and therefore I am not so sure if I agree with the statement that geography is not fully integrated in the social sciences. (Meir, in this issue).

Moreover, I think that recently we start to bridge between the quantitative - positivistic approach which had dominated the field in the sixties with humanistic approaches which flourished in the seventies. Meir and Reichman in one of their statements asserted that humanism and positivism contradict each other but while developing their ideas they come up with the conclusion that they are actually complementing each other. This trend may be discovered while glancing through European journals, not the

German but the British, Dutch or Swedish (e.g. Environment and Planning journal, which is not too popular in America unfortunately).

If we look at the papers presented there we can see a whole spectrum of geographical papers which cover both quantitative analysis and humanistic approaches from various sides. A good example is the time-space approach. America is almost not dealt with but in European journals is much understudy.

I believe that there is no way to differentiate between past, present and future, so I think it will be quite artificial to say that we should talk now only about what is going to happen in the future. After all our prediction possibility is based on what is happening in the present and what happened in the past so I don't want to lead anybody to speak on the future in terms of futurism. I wish you to refer to the things that have been said in the mornings' session. I prepared a list of questions to which you might refer to. The first one deals with the relevance of geography to pressing social and planning needs of current society, both in general, and specifically in the USA, Israel and Europe.

A second question will be referring to the quantitative trend, whether it should continue in geographical research or not.

The third question will be complementary or contradictory to the second. What is the role of phenomenology approaches in human geography?

A fourth question could be the status of radical geography and the fifth one could be whether there are any chances for continuing the development of geographical theory.

The last question could be on regional geography, whether it is going to have another era of flourishing or is it going to remain as it has been in the last ten years. I believe that all these questions are highly inter-dependent and it will be very difficult to differentiate among them but we shall try to do so.