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HUMANISM IN GEOGRAPHY

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Humanism in Geography: Methodology and Themes in Humanistic Geography

Humanistic geography developed due to a deep dissatisfaction with the mechanistic models of spatial science that had developed during the quantitative revolution.The cultural and historical geographers attacked the positivism from the early 1970s. In fact, it was a rejection of the geometric determinism in which men and women were made to respond automatically to the dictates of universal spatial structures and abstract spatial laws. The followers of spatial science (positivists) treated people as dots on a map, data on a graph, and number in an equation.

It was at the same time a claim for a human geography with the human being at its very centre, a people's geography, about the real people and for the people' to develop human being for all.One of the first geographers to attract a wide audience with his advocacy of a humanistic approach was Kirk (1951). But, it was Tuan (1976) who argued for humanistic geography. The term 'humanistic geography' was used for the first time by Yi- Fu-Tuan in 1976. The focus of humanistic geography is on people and their condition. For Tuan, humanistic geography was a perspective that disclosed the complexity and ambiguity of relations between people and place (man and environment).

- Humanistic geography gives central and active role to human awareness and human agency, human consciousness and human creativity. It is an attempt at understanding meaning, value and the human significance of life events. In the humanistic strand, the intent has been to understand and recognize the dignity and humanity of the individual.
- Humanists explain and interpret man and space relationship mainly with historical approach. Humanism does not treat humans as machines. It is a subjective approach which aims at verstehn, at an understanding of man in his environment. Humanism is a conviction that men and women can best improve the circumstances of their lives by thinking and acting for themselves, and especially by exercising their capacity fo reason (Ralph, 1981).
- As stated above, humanism in geography developed as a criticism against positivism and quantitative revolution in geography. The basic objection of humanists against quantitative revolution is that its tools

and assumptions do not adequately explain human world and human issues, especially those relating to social institutions, attitudes, morals, customs, traditions and aesthetics.

- Humanistic geographers propose that reasoning in humanistic geography should conserve contact with the world of everyday experience and recognize, if not celebrate, the human potential for creativity. The followers of this approach consider geography as "the study of the earth as the home of man".
- Humanistic geography is thus not an earth science in its ultimate aim. It belongs to the humanities and the social sciences to the extent that they all share the hope of providing an accurate picture of the human world. In humanities the scholars gain insight into the human world by focusing what man does supremely well in the arts and logical thought. In fact, in humanities, knowledge of human world is acquired by examining social institutions. These institutions can be viewed both as example of human inventiveness and as forces limiting the free activity of individuals.
- Humanistic geography achieves an understanding of the human world by studying people's relation with nature, their geographical behaviour as well as their feelings and ideas in regard to space and place.
- Humanists reject the reduction of space and place to geometrical concepts of surface and point as perceived and preached by the positivists through the methodology of quantitative techniques. Place (landscape, region) is a key concept in humanistic geography. Much humanistic writing is devoted to illustrating and clarifying space. From a humanistic perspective, the meaning of a place (landscape, region) is inseparable from the consciousness of those (men) who inhabit it. The scope of place as a concept varies according to the extension of the thoughts, feelings and experiences that make the consciousness of inhabitants.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Although humanism in geography is traced back to Vidal de Lablache's writings, its real beginning is attributed to the Kantian philosophy. Kant asserted:

History differs from geography only in consideration of time and space. The former (history) is a report of phenomena that follow one another and has reference to time. The latter (geography) is report of phenomena beside each other in space. History is a narrative, geography a description.

Geography and history fill up the entire circumference of our perception: geography that of space, history that of time.

The humanistic approach in geography became popular by French geographers, especially Febvre and Vidal de la Blache. The school of possibilism advocated the view that the physical environment provides

the opportunity for a range of possible human responses and that people have considerable discretion to choose between them. The possibilists emphasized that "nature is never more than an adviser" and that the milieu interne revealed the human being as "at once both active and passive". Vidal de la Blache's writings, however, bear many of the hallmarks of functionalism and pragmatism, and Vidal himself regarded human geography as a natural science. Sauer wrote of the phenomenology of landscape in 1925. In 1936, Wooldridge claimed that historical geography must seek to view the countryside through the eyes of the farmer. In 1947, John Wright introduced the term geosophy as part of his contention that geographical knowledge is part of the mental stock of all humans.

In 1939, Hartshorne pleaded the cause of humanistic geography in his book, The Nature of Geography. He accepted that geography's basic task was essentially Kantanian:

Geography and history are alike in that they are integrating sciences concerned with studying the world. There is, therefore, a universal mutual relation between them, even though their bases of j integration are in a sense opposite-geography in terms of earth space, history in terms of periods of time (Hartshorne, 1939).

Subsequently, it was Kirk (1951) and Tuan (1976) who laid a strong foundation of humanism in geography.

The revival of humanism in geography in the 1970s owed much to a deep dissatisfaction with the more mechanistic models developed during the 'quantitative revolution'. For this reasons, its early steps were made alongside 'behavioural geography'; but the two soon parted company and humanistic geography came to recognize the essential subjectivity of both the investigator and the investigated.

Over the past decade humanistic geography has moved far from its previous position. It has advanced from its early attack on positivism to make an assault on structuralism (man is bound in socio-economic and political structures). Moreover, it has developed a more incisive and logical methodology for empirical investigation.

The anarchism of Kropotkin and Reclus and their writings were also the typical examples of humanism. The approaches of Fleure and Herbertson were also humanistic.

The methodology of humanists is characterized with:

- A self-conscious drive to connect with that special body of knowledge, reflection and substance about human experience and human expression, about what it means to be a human being on this earth, namely, the humanities.
- Its methods are essentially those of literary criticism, aesthetics and art history. It is essentially based on hermeneutics (the theory of interpretation and clarification of meanings).

- Its interest is the recovery of place and the iconography (the description and interpretation of landscape to disclose their symbolic meanings), of landscape.
- In other words, the interpretation of the landscape as a carrier and repository of symbolic meaning, widening the traditional definitions of iconography—the study,description, cataloguing and collective representation of portraiture as revealing of the prevailing aesthetic of an age—to include the landscape specifically.
- It lays emphasis on participant observation, interviewing, focus groups discussion, filmed approaches and logical inferences, rather than statistical and quantitative techniques for establishing correlation between people and place (environment).
- It is a philosophy which seeks to disclose the world as it shows before scientific inquiry, as that which is pre-given and presupposed by the sciences.
- Humanists argue that 'objectification' is never the simple exercise which conventional forms of science assume them to be.

Themes in Humanistic Geography :

Scientific approaches like positivism, empiricism, and quantification tend to minimize the role of human awareness and knowledge. Humanistic geography, by contrast, especially tries to understand how geographical activities and phenomena reveal the quality of human awareness. Humanistic geography does not consider human being as an 'economic man.

The propounder of humanistic geography (Tuan) explored **five themes** of general interest to geographers, namely: (i) geographical knowledge (personal geographies), (ii) territory and place, (iii) crowding and privacy, (iv) livelihood and economics, and (v) religion.

Geographical Knowledge (Personal Geographies):

Man is the superior form of life and has special capacity for thought and reflection. The primary task of humanistic geographers, therefore, is the study of articulated ideas (geographical knowledge). In general, broadly conceived knowledge of geography is necessary to biological survival. All animals must have it, and even the migratory birds have a mental map.

The people (who are not trained in geography) have a broad range of ideas regarding space, location, place and resources. All human groups possess such ideas, though their degree of articulation varies widely from group to group. For example, some primitive people like the Polynesians of the Pacific Islands are able cartographers, where as materially more advanced people, lack the concept of map and map-making.

Territory and Place: Territory and place is also an important animal instinct. Some species of animals, like honeybee, tiger, lion, etc., defend their living space against intruders. They behave as they regard certain areas as their own; they appear to have a sense of territory. Human attitudes and attachment to territory and to place bear a clear resemblance to those of other animals. All animals, including human beings, occupy and use space.

A song-bird, perched high on a tree, is able to survey the entire area that it takes to be its own. Contrary to this mammal living close to the ground cannot survey a whole area. Their whole territory is not bounded space but a network of paths and places. Similarly, the food hunters and gatherers generally do not envisage the boundary of their territory. Territory for them is therefore not circumscribed area, but essentially a network of paths and places. By comparison the shifting cultivators and settled cultivators tend to have a strong sense of property and of the bounded space (territory).

Much more than animals, man develops emotional attachment to place as he satisfies his biological needs (drinks, eat and rest). Moreover, in comparison to animals he has a strong memory. He remembers the past and thinks of the future. It is because of these feelings that he attaches so much importance to events like birth and death.

Consequently, man becomes sentimental and attaches more importance to his birthplace. How mere space becomes an intensely human place is a task of human geographers to explore and explain according to the preachers of humanistic geography.

Crowding and privacy:

Crowding of a place leads to physical and psychological stress. It has been observed that the behaviour of animals at a crowded place becomes abnormal. Same is the case with man. Culture, social institutions and infrastructures, however, help in reducing these stresses. For example, people in crowded Hong Kong are no more prone to crime than people living in relatively spacious American, European and Australian cities. Contrary to this, in the Kalahari Desert, the Bushmen are crowded by choice, and biological indicators of stress are absent despite the high density at places where water is available.

Similarly, privacy and solitude also affect the thinking process and decision-making of a person regarding space. In solitude a person creates his own world. All people need privacy; the degree and kind may vary. Crowded conditions make it difficult to escape the human gaze, and thereby a developed sense of self. In solitude a person creates his own world; safe from another's gaze he seems to sustain the existence of all that he sees.

Livelihood and Economics:

Man sustains himself by doing some economic and social activities. All human activities appear to be economic and functional in the sense that they support the social system outside of which people cannot live. Whether it is worship of the sacred cow or ritual human sacrifice, they may be shown to have important economic consequences, and hence they are not beyond the economic rationale.

While working for his livelihood, man differentiates between life-sustaining and life-destroying activities. Production of armaments, for example, is an economic activity that provides a livelihood for many workers, but its contribution to the survival of the species is in doubt. All people and professional planners plan their economic activities according to their knowledge and technology. To what extent do planners make use of economic theory and facts in reaching the decision? How good are the results? Such questions need to be asked by the humanistic geographers.

Religion:

Religion is present at varying degree in all cultures. It appears to be a universal trait. In religion human beings are clearly distinguished from other animals.

Religion (Latin religare) means to bind again, i.e., to bind oneself strongly to a set of beliefs, faith, or ethic. More broadly speaking, the religious person is one who seeks coherence and meaning in his world, and a religious culture is one that has a clearly structured world-view. Since everybody tries to understand cosmos in his own way, everybody is religious. In other words, if religion is broadly defined as the impulse for coherence and meaning, then all human beings are religious. In fact, at individual level, Albert Einstein also was a religious person. The strength of the impulse varies enormously from culture to culture and from person to person. A humanistic approach to religion would require that we should be aware of the differences in the human desire for coherence, and not how these are manifest in the organization of space and time in attitude to nature or physical environment.

The philosophical departures of Humanistic tradition includes:

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach that studies human consciousness and experience. Geographers began to adopt aspects of phenomenology in the 1960s and 1970s, partly to challenge the abstraction and generalization of prevailing spatial scientific approaches and partly to provide a more invigorated sense of human agency within geographical theory. Phenomenological approaches emphasize the significance of human subjectivity, the complexity of geographical knowledge production, and, in some quarters, the search for shared categories through which the world may be apprehended. In recent years

phenomenological approaches have been critiqued for an overemphasis on human subjectivity, while some have questioned the extent to which phenomenological philosophy challenges the positivism of spatial science.

Existentialism is a philosophy that emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. It is the view that humans define their own meaning in life, and try to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. It focuses on the question of human existence, and the feeling that there is no purpose or explanation at the core of existence. It holds that, as there is no God or any other transcendent force, the only way to counter this nothingness (and hence to find meaning in life) is by embracing existence.

Idealism is the metaphysical and epistemological doctrine that ideas or thoughts make up fundamental reality. Essentially, it is any philosophy which argues that the only thing actually knowable is consciousness (or the contents of consciousness), whereas we never can be sure that matter or anything in the outside world really exists. Thus, the only real things are mental entities, not physical things (which exist only in the sense that they are perceived).

Idealism is a form of Monism (as opposed to Dualism or Pluralism), and stands in direct contrast to other Monist beliefs such as Physicalism and Materialism (which hold that the only thing that can be truly proven to exist is physical matter). It is also contrasted with Realism (which holds that things have an absolute existence prior to, and independent of, our knowledge or perceptions).

Idealism is a label which covers a number of philosophical positions with quite different tendencies and implications, including Subjective Idealism, Objective Idealism, Transcendental Idealism and Absolute Idealism, as well as several more minor variants or related concepts (see the section on Other Types of Idealism below). Other labels which are essentially equivalent to Idealism include Mentalist and Immaterialism.

Types of Idealism:

Epistemological Idealism asserts that minds are aware of, or perceive, only their own ideas (representations or mental images), and not external objects, and therefore we cannot directly know things in themselves, or things as they really are. All we can ever have knowledge about is the world of phenomenal human experience, and there is no reason to suspect that reality actually mirrors our perceptions and thoughts. This is very similar to the doctrine of Phenomenalism.

Actual Idealism is a form of Idealism developed by the Italian philosopher Giovanni Gentile (1875 - 1944) that contrasted the Transcendental Idealism of Kant and the Absolute Idealism of Hegel. His system saw thought as all-embracing, and claimed that no-one could actually leave their sphere of thinking, or

exceed their own thought. His ideas were key to helping the Fascist party consolidate power in Italy, and gave Fascism much of its philosophical base.

Practical Idealism is a political philosophy which holds it to be an ethical imperative to implement ideals of virtue or good (it is therefore unrelated to Idealism in its other senses). Its earliest recorded use was by Mahatma Gandhi ,although it is now often used in foreign policy and international relations, where it purports to be a pragmatic compromise between political realism (which stresses the promotion of a state's narrow and amoral self-interest), and political idealism (which aims to use the state's influence and power to promote higher liberal ideals like peace, justice and co-operation between nations).

This approach has, however, been criticized on more than one grounds as below.

In humanistic geography, as discussed above, central importance is given to the actor's (man's) definition and behaviour for examining the social world. The researcher needs to discover the actor's definition of the situation, namely, his or her perception and interpretation of reality and how these relate to behaviour. In other words, the researcher must be able to see the world as the actor sees it.

- A general criticism of humanistic geography is that the investigator can never know for sure whether one has actually succeeded in providing true explanation. Undoubtedly, one can never know with certainty that a humanistic explanation is true; the same objection may be raised to positivists, quantitative and theoretical approaches. The theoretical physicist can never be certain of his theories. In fact, the history of natural science is largely a history of abandoned theories. Yet progress has been made, because with the failure of old theories, new more powerful ones have emerged.
- The second criticism of humanistic geography is that on methodological grounds it separates physical geography from human geography. In physical geography, the scientific techniques can be applied for theory and models building and hypotheses testing as it mainly deals with non-living objects. Contrary to this, in human geography, such quantitative techniques may not give the authentic and reliable results as the behaviour of man varies in space and time. The dichotomy of physical geography and human geography is thus harmful for the growth and development of the discipline. This dualism has eroded the geographical core of the subject—the unity of the subject.
- In humanistic geography which is largely based on participant observation, it is difficult to develop theory, abstraction, generalization and spatial geometry. Thus, it has no sound and valid methodological base as it involves more subjective than objective research.
- There is insignificant emphasis on applied research. For example, it does not give emphasis on applied research or policy related to the location of industry, locational analysis of land use and crop intensity.

The indifference towards applied research may destroy the base of the subject. The potential dangers are greater because other disciplines have been more effective at academic imperialism than geography. For example, applied research on the economics of location (economic geography) is in danger of being consumed within economics; research on climatic variability might be swallowed by atmospheric physics; research on slope and soil might be absorbed by engineering soil mechanics, and so on.

- Humanistic geography does not offer a viable alternative to, nor a pre-supposition less basis for, scientific geography. Rather, the humanist approach is best understood as a form of criticism (Entrikin, 1976).
- Humanist approach is 'methodologically obscure'. The goals of understanding man's meaningful experience seem to lead to a situation in which any method is acceptable. It is not a practical philosophy as it involves thinking rather than practical activity. Its methodology is eclectic and sources of interpretation are numerous and therefore it becomes difficult to ascertain the reality.

Most of the criticisms of humanistic geography are, however, ill-founded. Is it not a fact that all history is the history of human thought? The geographical reality of a place or region may be appreciably understood through participant observation and social interaction, by giving central and active role to human awareness, and human agency.

THE CONCEPT OF SPACE AND PLACE

The concepts of place and space have varied throughout the recent history of geography, specifically with phenomenology and humanistic geography. Entrikin (1991*) has illustrated quite well the idea grounded in the humanistic discipline by dividing place into objective and subjective. The subjective dimension embraces individualistic meanings attached to place basically in the representational level whereas the objective denotes to the 'naturalistic qualities of place'.

However, this approach has been criticized for various reasons. Firstly, authors following the non-representational approach have been debating the understanding of subjective character only on the mental level, leaving aside sensual and physical performances in place . Secondly, in his basic assumption when assuming that the observer and the observed are somehow detached. The phenomenological approach, according to him, rather seeks ways to understand how the two polar opposites can be brought together rather than to comprehend that place is a unity containing within itself different aspects. However, in our opinion this binary approach in humanistic discipline is mainly used to lead attention to meanings which had been neglected prior to this approach. Still, the way meanings are brought to the analysis needs further attention.

Lefebvre (1991) challenged the binary notion by introducing the third term. Lefebvre, argue that space is understood as physical and social landscape which is imbued with meaning in everyday place-bound social practices and emerges through processes that operate over varying spatial and temporal scales. Three different scales are distinguished. Firstly, perceived space, which includes both the emotional and behavioral bubbles which invisibly surround people's bodies as well as complex spatial organization of practices that shape action spaces in households, buildings, neighborhoods, villages, cities, regions, nations, the world economy and global geopolitics. Secondly, conceived space refers to our knowledge of spaces which is primarily produced by discourses of power and ideology constructed by professionals such as planners, engineers, researchers etc. Eventually, third space is the space where all the spaces are and where the subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete etc. meet. This encompasses at the same time the space of users in everyday life, the mental space, the space influenced by wider social, economic and political processes etc.

The postmodern approach has even more emphasized the inseparable character of place. Despite their focus being on socio-spatial relations in their TPNS (territory, place, network, scale) model, the model presents how place has also been approached in different times. Although the presence of place in the framework may be misguiding, in this context it actually denotes more the specific location. There are different approaches used simultaneously when investigating place – place should be viewed as specific location, as a wider territory, as consisting of networks and finally extending over different scales.

Place for us is socially constructed and operating, including interaction between people and groups, institutionalized land uses, political and economic decisions, and the language of representation. This definition already stresses that place should be looked at interdisciplinary, however, authors claim that there are some shortages in the current research. Firstly, the literature of place making mainly deals with wider scales and especially authors investigating global influences on places rarely engage with the topics of place meaning nor identity . Global processes are viewed only as having material influences on places and not having to do anything with ever changing place meanings.

Auburn and Barnes (2006) have suggested dividing the meaning-making process into four categories: personal, local, national and supranational. To clarify the following the article authors have used this categorization, although we suggest that these categories are more constructed than natural. All these different scales finally mix through individual consciousness. The meanings which a person attaches to places are similarly influenced by personal experiences and global politics.

Finally, the connection between the place meanings and identity also needs to be reviewed. Place identity, when using the simplest clarification, characterizes people as meaning characterizes places. People's identities are created through defining themselves in relation to places . As meaning-making, also this process takes place in a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, memories, ideas, feelings, values, goals and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment

Supranational place making, place meanings

Recently a lot of literature focuses on globalization and the global scale of places. Globalization, may well have eliminated space but not place, which means that no longer locational advantage is important but instead place based characters, in determining the relative attractiveness of place for capital. He even goes as far as stating that actually global economy creates more inequalities and differences between places, by preferring some and neglecting other places. Also, that globalization develops porosity of place – communication with other places, that is vital for the survival of regions and communities.

Globalization influences the meanings of states. For instance, the so-called Third World states have become the depository, container or low-cost production sites in Western paradigm, some places have acquired the meaning of demand nodes etc. Globalization changes the meanings of places on the individual level as well, for example, people's evaluation of global businesses depends on how they (state, region) see the globalization, whether as destructive force to regionality, or as force which gives prosperity to everyone etc.

One example of supranational place making is also the discourse of researchers and planners . Probably the most obvious example is high-modernism ideas about city planning which influenced the destiny of various cities. Not only did the discourse intend to change the physical form of cities but also the practices that were performed by individuals by introducing zoning policies . Today those discourses continue to influence the meanings attached to places in various scales also through the regimes of so called ideal landscapes. Researchers are starting to more and more intervene in planning policies and there exist a wide literature on place making which is used by community making throughout the world .

Supranational place making also comprises the meanings that unite different groups based on age, gender, religion . For example home has been throughout the history associated with women. These meanings can differ between various regions as well, catholic church has totally different meanings in Warsaw or in Israel but also in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.

Finally, the contribution of Relph (1976*) should also be reviewed as he has introduced the term mass-identity which according to him refers to the meanings created by opinion-makers and provided

ready made through media. Mass identities are not only based on symbols and significances, but also on stereotypes.

National place making

Friedmann has very thoroughly discussed how place making appears in the level of state. State creates the images of places by constraining everyday life by deciding what activities are allowed at certain times of the day or night, who may or may not be seen on the street, what forms of public behavior are permitted and which are not, what kind of traffic may circulate, what sort of structures may be built and for what purposes. State is empowered to regulate everyday life in the public spaces of the city but, not only, the state also regulates our private life by punishing us for playing loud music at night etc. State's presence is at the same time visible and invisible through various institutions like the police, social workers, surveillance cameras, systems of licensing and permits, standards for constructions etc.

Different plans create spaces endowed with meaning by stating what their purpose is and how they should be used. It also brings out the conflict between the state and the individual, although the state has somehow regulated the use of its spaces the actual activity of individuals does not always stay in these borders and places often have alternative uses. State planning policies can also act in more hidden ways.

The state policy also influences national and other scales of place making. For instance if the state has been following neo-liberal policies the communities are been assumed to take care of the local facilities . This kind of policy also creates more segregation which influences the spatial character of the cities. As a result different districts obtain various meanings.

Local place making

Regional identity is created in distinctive manner, regions try to distinguish themselves by natural, cultural elements and inhabitants. In some way global economy is reinforcing distinction because it now more than ever values distinctive characters of place instead of position. These distinctions are also used in discourses of science, politics, cultural activism. However such narratives are not only used for economic etc. purposes but it also lets people create the sense of self by acknowledging who and what they are and sometimes adopting ready-made identities.

These ready-made identities are often created through historical association. Usually common history has not been directly experienced and is thus carried on by stories and creating narratives themselves (These narratives can also act in the state level). Narratives are reinforced through traditional activities. The more actively an individual is involved in traditional activities the stronger is the bond between the individual

and places. Another bounding character that influences people's identity is common culture. Culture involves common socialization process which takes place through sharing similar experiences, signs and symbols. Community making has complicated the relationship with place meanings. On one hand those sharing similar experiences and having common purposes unite under citizen movements, on the other hand this activity transforms previous meanings. Neighborhood organizations use various narratives such as previously discussed historical and cultural but also physical natural and experimental. Place frames are constantly in transition and are remade by creating common ground for collective action and shaping people's ideas about places. New meanings are being created by bringing out common experiences, interests and values. Often however what is more stressed upon are the characters that distinguish people from others.

Individual place making

A lot of attention has been given to the meanings people attach to places in individual level and how it contributes to their identity. One of the reasons, in fact, why people give meanings to places is the need to discover and evolve their identity. Through some place people can experience reflection, introspection, self-understanding etc. Individual's identity may form in contribution to many places and their meanings .

Sometimes places act as important markers in people's lives. Places can acquire meaning through significant experiences (trauma, loss) and through the experiences of change and transition (moving).

Places can become meaningful to people because of the relations they have had with other people for instance people living there – friends, acquaintances, relatives (Gustafson, 2001*). Relationships with other people are a part of collective self defining as also individual place making through special relationships with only one or few persons. The connection, however, is two folded – places can become meaningful through social relationships but special places help to create meaningful relationships as well.

Places have a great role in reminding us of our past. The connection to history that places form extends as already mentioned over all the categories of place making. On the individual level they act for us as connections with special times or occasions in our life. Places can also act contrary and reflect continuity in our lives . But in other circumstances places are valued for some decisions and changes that are connected to these and for interrupting continuity.

Places are also used for awaking certain feelings like comfort, security, belonging, being anchored, self-expression, and freedom to be oneself.

BEHAVIOURALISM IN GEOGRAPHY

Behavioral Geography

Defining terms is an unusually important activity in the case of behavioral geography, since it has two historically contingent meanings. The first views it **sensu lato** as a movement with **multidisciplinary** leanings that enjoyed its greatest influence between the years 1965 and 1980. Broadly overlapping with what others variously referred to as ***'environmental perception', 'behavioral and perceptual geography' or 'image geography', behavioral geography emphasized the role of cognitive processes in shaping decision making and behavior, for which reason its underlying approach was known as 'cognitive behavioralism'***.

In essence, its proponents argued that people's spatial behavior depended on how they understood (perceived, cognized) the world around them, but researchers varied markedly in how they conceived and tackled their subject matter. Some embraced 'cognitive science', examining regularities in human spatial cognition and behavior and using their findings as a basis from which to generate theories about how people make decisions and act in geographic space. Others looked to 'humanistic' approaches. Critical of what they saw as the reductionist tendencies stemming from scientific inquiry in general and mainstream psychology in particular, they more often sought to understand human imagination and experience holistically than wishing to make overt connections with behavior.

The second and more contemporary meaning of behavioral geography defines it **sensu stricto** as a subdiscipline of **human geography.** To some extent, this definition arose by default. Tensions between behavioral geography's 'cognitive science' and 'humanistic' streams eventually led to these two schools of thought parting company by the early 1980s. Henceforth, the term 'behavioral geography' described the work of those previously associated with the 'cognitive science' wing and was largely confined to North America, where it maintained an accepted but increasingly marginal presence in geographical research and in the undergraduate teaching curriculum.

At first glance the existence of these two overlapping definitions would seem of little real consequence, but the failure to differentiate between them lies at the heart of the prevailing historiographic misrepresentations of behavioral geography. By the 1990s at least, the prevailing view was, first, that behavioral geography was primarily a limited extension of spatial science and, second, that the limitations of its underlying positivist

philosophy led to it being challenged and replaced by alternative approaches. By failing to recognize its true scope as a broad movement that provided a home for nonpositivist as well as positivist approaches during the 1960s and 1970s, it becomes difficult to recognize behavioral geography's contribution as a forum that once nurtured what was later termed 'humanistic geography' and, indeed, indirectly helped to lay the foundations of the 'new cultural geography'.

Historical Perspective:

In geography, behaviouralism has a long history. Consciously or unconsciously, the behavioural approach has been adopted since the time of Immanuel Kant. In the last decades of the 19th century, Reclus, the French geographer, emphasized the point that in man- environment relationship man is not a passive agent. The landscape school in American geography focused on man as a morphological agent. Similarly, advocates of human geography—as a type of human ecology—owed much to the possibilist philosophical position (French School) that stressed the significance of choice in human behaviour.

Sauer, the leading American historical geographer, also recognized fully the important role played by man in shaping his socio-cultural environment by transforming and utilizing his physical surroundings. In 1947, Wright put emphasis on behavioural approach for the interpretation of man-nature interaction. He proposed that a profitable direction for geography would be to study geographical knowledge in all its forms, whether contained in formal geographical inquiries or in the vast range of informal sources, such as travel books, magazines, newspapers, fiction, poetry and painting. The works of Sauer, White and many others demonstrate that people act according to habits and experience not as rational persons.

Wolpert (1964) concluded in his doctoral thesis that farmers face an uncertain environment—both physical and economic—when making land use decisions, which in aggregate produce a land use map. Wolpert decided that the farmers were satisficers and not economic men. They behave on the available information and their image about the environment and the resource. Subsequently, Kirk (1952-1963) supplied one of the first behavioural models. In his model, he asserted that in space and time the same information would have different meanings for people of different socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds living in a similar geographical environment. Each individual of a society reacts differently to a piece of information about the resource, space and environment. This point may be explained by citing an example.

The followers of behavioural geography do not recognize man as a rational person or an 'economic man' who always tries to optimize his profits. Man always does not take into consideration the profit aspect

while performing an economic function. Most of his decisions are based on behavioural environment (mental map) rather than on the 'objective or real environment'.

The objectives of behavioural approach are

- To develop models for humanity which were alternative to the spatial location theories developed through quantitative revolution;
- To define the cognitive (subjective) environment this determines the decision-making process of man;
- To unfold the spatial dimensions of psychological and social theories of human decision-making and behaviour;
- To explain the spatial dimensions of psychological, social and other theories of human decision-making and behaviour;
- To change in emphasis from aggregate populations to the disaggregate scale of individuals and small groups;
- To search for methods other than the mathematical and statistical that could uncover the latent structure in data and decision-making;
- To emphasize on procession rather than structural explanations of human activity and physical environment;
- To generate primary data about human behaviour and not to rely heavily on the published data; and
- To adopt an interdisciplinary approach for theory-building and problem-solving.

The fundamental arguments of the behavioural geography to achieve these objectives are that:

- People have environmental images;
- Those images can be identified accurately by researchers; and
- There is a strong relationship between environmental image and actual behaviour or the decision-making process of man.

The behavioural approach in geography was introduced in the 1960s. Its origin can be traced to the frustration that was widely felt with normative and mechanistic models developed with the help of quantitative techniques.

These normative and mechanistic models are mainly based on such unreal behavioural postulates as 'rational economic man' and isotropic earth surface. In normative models, there are always several assumptions, and generally the centre of attention is a set of omniscient (having infinite knowledge) fully rational actors (men) operating freely in a competitive manner on isotropic plane (homogeneous land surface).

Many normative models are thus grossly unrealistic as they ignore the complexities of real world situations and instead concentrate on idealized behavioural postulate such as rational economic man. People behave rationally, but within constraints—the cultures in which they have been socialized to make decisions.

Behavioural geography banks heavily on 'behaviouralism'. Behaviouralism is an important approach adopted mainly by psychologists and philosophers to analyze the man-environment relationship. The behaviouristic approach is largely inductive, aiming to build general statements out of observations of ongoing processes. The essence of behavioural approach in geography lies in the fact that the way in which people behave is mediated by their understanding of the environment in which they live or by the environment itself with which they are confronted.

In behavioural geography, an explanation for man-environment problem is founded upon the premise that environmental cognition and behaviour are intimately related. In other words, behavioural approach has taken the view that a deeper understanding of man-environment interaction can be achieved by looking at the various psychological processes through which man comes to know environment in which he lives, and by examining the way in which these processes influence the nature of resultant behaviour.

The basic philosophy of behaviouralism

- The behavioural geographer recognizes that man shapes as well as responds to his environment and that man and environment are dynamically interrelated. Man is viewed as a motivated social being, whose decisions and actions are mediated by his cognition of the spatial environment.
- The behavioural geographers argued that environmental cognition (perception) upon which people act may well differ markedly from the true nature of the real environment of the real world.
- **Space (environment) thus can be said to have a dual character:**
- As an objective environment—the world of actuality—which may be gauged by some direct means (senses); and
- As a behavioural environment—the world of the mind— which can be studied only by indirect means.

No matter how partial or selective the behavioural environment may be, it is this milieu which is the basis of decision-making and action of man. By behavioural environment it is meant: reality as is perceived by individuals. In other words, people make choices and the choices are made on the basis of knowledge.

- behavioural geographers give more weight to an individual rather than to groups, or organizations or society. In other words, the focus of study is the individual, not the group or community. They assert that research must recognize the fact that the individual shapes and responds to his physical and social

environment. In fact, it is necessary to recognize that the actions of each and every person have an impact upon the environment, however, slight or inadvertent that impact may be. Man is a goal-directed animal who influences the environment and in turn is influenced by it. In brief, an individual rather than a group of people or social group is more important in man-nature relationship.

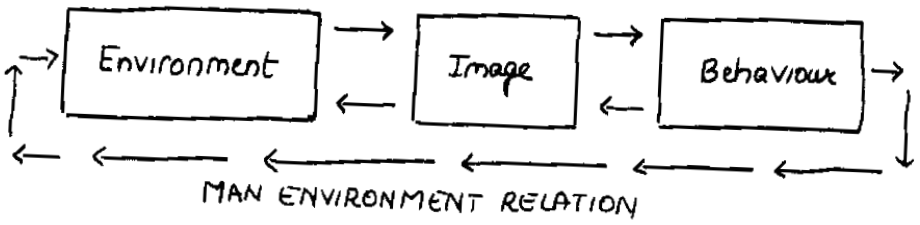
- Behavioural approach in geography postulated a mutually interacting relationship between man and his environment, whereby man shaped the environment and was subsequently shaped by it .
- important feature of behavioural geography is its multidisciplinary outlook. A behavioural geographer takes the help of ideas, paradigms, and theories produced by psychologists, philosophers, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, ethnologists and planners. However, the lack of theories of its own is coming in the way of rapid development of behavioural geography

Behaviouralism deals in behaviour environment. The subjective evaluation of phenomenal environment, which surrounds a human subject, revealing his awareness of it and his intentionality towards the object which constitute it is behaviour environment.

The concept of behavioural environment was developed by Gestalt School of Psychology, which holds that the objects which we view in the world have a different meaning when viewed as a whole rather than as individual parts. The perception being ordering and simplifying man-environment relationship. In fact, it was the failure of models build with quantitative techniques, that led to the development of behaviouralism.

The first model of behaviouralism was presented by Kirk in 1951, but the actual beginning was in 1960s. Among the prominent contributors, Boulding, Gould, Pratt Sonnenfield and Porteaus are identified. The sequential development of behaviouralism includes –

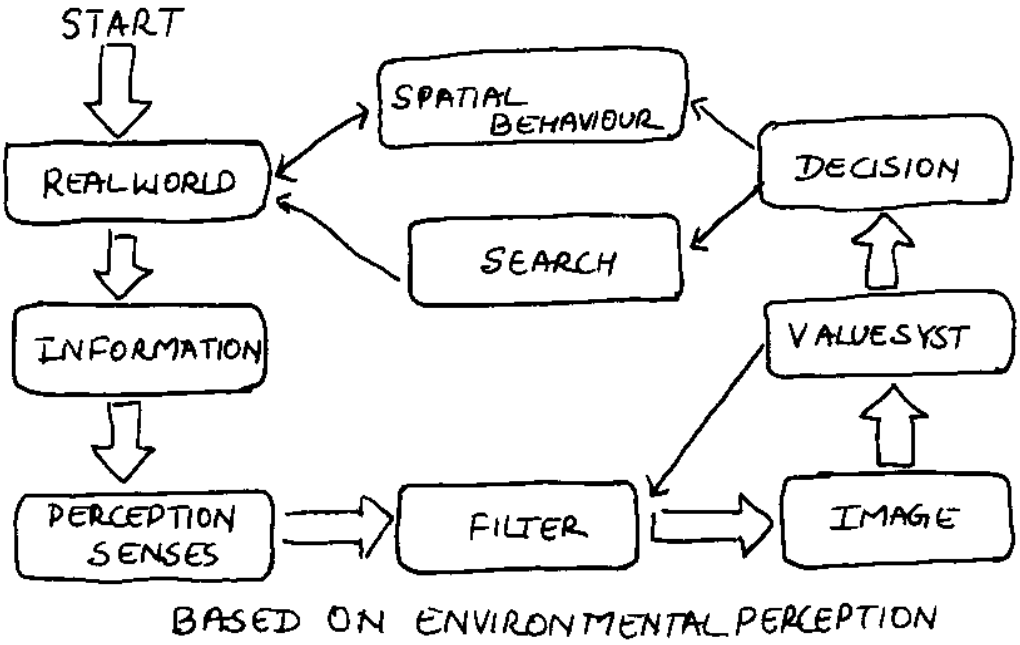
Phase I (1950-60) – The development was made by Krik, Gilbert, White and their respective disciples. They attempted to analyses the mental reactionsto hazards. This was mostly the sociological and psychological approach. Kirk elaborated the difference between actual and behaviour environment. Haggerstrand contribution to 'migration' and 'diffusion of innovation'.



The behavioural paradigm has been shown in Figure

In this paradigm, man has been depicted as a thinking individual whose transactions with the environment are mediated by mental processes and cognitive representation of external environment. In geographical circles, this concept is derived primarily from the work of Boulding (1956) who suggested that over time individuals' developmental impressions of the world (images) are formed through their everyday contacts with the environment and that these images act as the basis of their behaviour.

The conceptual framework provided by Downs has been illustrated in Figure This framework proposes that information from environment (real world) is filtered as a result of personality, culture, beliefs, and cognitive variables to form image in the mind of man who utilizes the environment.



On the basis of the image formed in the mind of the utilizer about the environment he takes a decision and uses the resources to fulfil his basic and higher needs. Downs' framework also suggests that there exist an 'objective' and a 'behavioural' environment.

Phase II (1960-65) – Marked the development of man-environment relation, which was based on mutual inter relationship and also the source of inspiration of decision makers, objectives and their aspirations. These were developed predominantly by Lowventhal, Kates , Pred and White.

Phase III (1965-70) – diversified developments including the analysis of consumer behaviour (based on Central Place Theory). The micro analysis of mobility trends in urban areas, the locational analysis of

industries on the basis of human behaviour etc. In fact all the development during the early tenure of this phase was decision making and environmental perception. However eventually different fields as – Voting trend (Cox), locational activities and their analysis (Gould). Brookfield's analysis of New Guinea tribal group and Pratt's analysis of information as determining factor of behaviour sets the examples of cultural, historical fields with behaviour applications.

Phase IV (1970 till date) varied contributions in different new arenas of geographical studies

- Loventhal and Tuan's landscape study.
- Nickel and Pedel's recreational studies
- Linch's urban analysis based on folk perception
- Clark's resettlement studies
- Huff's consumer behaviour studies
- Tobler's geometric analysis of ideologies.

A similar but slightly more complex classification came from Porteous (1977) who recognized the existence of:

- The phenomenal environment (physical objects);
- The personal environment (perceived images of phenomenal of real environment); and
- Contextual environment (culture, religion, beliefs and expectations that influence behaviour).

Sonnenfeld (1972) went even further and proposed four levels at which the environment should be studied. The four-fold environment, advocated by Sonnenfeld, has been given as below:

- The geographical environment (the world);

  The operational environment (those parts of the world that impinge upon a man, whether or not he is aware of them);
- The perceptual (the parts of the world that man is aware of as a result of direct and indirect experience); and
- The behavioural (that part of the perceptual environment that elicits a behavioural response).

Appraisal

The behavioural approach in geography is a fruitful one and it helps in establishing a scientific relationship between man and his physical environment. The broad scope of behavioural geography is remarkable even by the standards of human geography. There are, however, overall, biases in content towards urban topics and towards developed countries. One of the main weaknesses of behavioural geography is that it

lacks in synthesis of empirical findings, poor communication, inadvertent duplication, and conflicting terminology.

In behavioural geography, the terminology and concepts remain loosely defined and poorly integrated, primarily owing to the lack of systematically-organized theoretical basis.

- Another shortcoming of behavioural geography lies in the fact that most of its data are generated in laboratory experiments on animals and the findings are applied direct to human behaviour. Koestler pointed to the danger of this strategy, in that behaviouralism "has replaced the anthropomorphic fallacy—ascribing to animals human faculties and sentiments—with the opposite fallacy; denying man faculties not found in lower animals; it has substituted for the erstwhile anthropomorphic view of rat, a ratomorphic view of man". In short, behaviouralist theories are elegant but unhelpful when it comes to understanding the real world man-environment interaction.
- Behavioural geography has too often put too much emphasis on ego-centred interpretations of the environment. Specifically, scholars are critical of two assumptions on which a great deal of behavioural research in geography is based. The first assumption is that there exist identifiable environmental images that can be accurately measured. It is not clear whether an environmental image can be extracted without distortion from the totality of mental imagery. Moreover, not enough effort has gone into checking and validating the methods by which images are elicited.
- The second critical assumption is that there exists a strong relationship between revealed images or references and actual or real world behaviour. The main objection to this assumption is that it is an unfounded assumption because extremely little research has been under taken to examine the congruence between image and behaviour.
- A more serious criticism of behavioural approach in geography is that it frequently views man as homo-psychologicus and tends to treat environmental behaviour as a non-dimensional phenomenon to the extent that the economic, social and political considerations that act concomitantly with environmental influences are frequently overlooked.
- Another significant deficiency in behavioural geography has been the gap between theory and practice. This has been most noticeable over the question of public policy. In fact, behavioural geographers remain observers rather than participants. There is a serious lack of knowledge of planning theories and methods amongst behavioural geographers, which is an impediment to more active involvement.
- It is a barrier that can be removed only by developing the requisite understanding of the planning processes; it cannot be camouflaged by noble sentiments and moral tone. For instance, it will be only

rarely that a small survey carried out upon a sample of students will supply the basis for far-reaching policy recommendations, yet the final paragraphs of many such works contain this seemingly obligatory element.

- In other words, generalization on the basis of small sample studies should not be made the basis of wider and important policy decision-making. It is, therefore, necessary to conduct research on problems that specifically deal with policy questions, that are well-versed in planning theory and methodology, and communicate the results intelligently to the interested parties.
- There are signs that such an approach is developing, but the gap is still wide. The future of behavioural geography would be bright only if it could improve its standing in the subject while maintaining its multidisciplinary links.

Despite several constraints and methodological limitations, behavioural geography is now widely accepted within the positivist orientation. It seeks to account for spatial patterns by establishing generalizations about people-environment interrelationship, which may then be used to stimulate change through environmental planning activities that modify the stimuli which affect the spatial behaviour of ourselves and others.

The research methods of behavioural geography vary substantially but the general orientation—inductive generalization leading to planning for environmental change—remains. Eventually, it is hoped, a 'powerful new theory' will emerge. Golledge argued that substantial advances in understanding spatial behaviour have already been made by studying 'individual preferences, opinions, attitudes, cognitions, cognitive maps, perception, and so on—what he terms processes variables.

Use of behaviouralism and its impact:

Though behaviouralistic studies have been of great influence in geographical studies, its significance lies predominantly on two specific grounds –

- **Human migration –** Knox, Walpet and Haggerstrand are the prominent contributors. It has been the behaviour oriented mobility. In past, lack of availability of precise information, multidirectional movement of people were seen from Europe to Anglo America, Australia. However, diffusion of information has made movement much specific in direction. It is applicable to both rural urban migration and international migration.
- **Locational analysis** – Worked on by Smith, Gould and Feter. The earlier concepts of location was individual specific impression of the world. Smith's approach of maximum revenue and minimal cost reveals much applicable practical scenario. Gould and Haggerstrand worked on agricultural location. specific in direction. It is applicable to both rural urban migration and international migration.