TIME, SPACE, AND SOCIETY:
GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVES

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Time, Space, and Society: Geographical Societal Perspectives

by

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FOR MY DEAR PARENTS.

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PREFACE

Time and space are two of the most basic dimensions of human life. They envelop all human beings from birth to death. As such, they provide the context for human existence. At the same time, however, time and space also serve as major influencing factors in mankind's actions. Hence, a vast literature has developed on time and space as separate dimensions, and recently on time-space as joint dimensions. Interestingly enough, the social connotations of time and space have mostly been studied with the individual human being in mind. The more societal significance of time and space, whether separately or jointly, have been relatively neglected. It is the purpose of this volume to help fill this lacuna through discussions on some of the many junctions of time, space, and society at large.

The discussion will naturally involve concepts and findings from more than just one discipline -- notably, geography, sociology, social history and political science. It is, thus, obvious that the topic may be highlighted from several perspectives. Given my own education and work, the approach will lean more to the geographical perspective. Geography has a special merit as an integrating framework for the study of time, space, and society. It is a discipline that has space at the center of its *raison d'être* and, as such, has always striven for integration, holism and comprehensiveness. Geography, therefore, has absorbed concepts and theories from other social sciences in symbiotic and sometimes eclectic fashion. The unique importance of the geographical viewpoint has not always been appreciated. As the denoted historian Fernand Braudel put it: "Spatial models are the charts upon which social reality is projected, and through which it may become at least partially clear; they are truly models for all the different movements of time (and especially for the *longue durée*), and for all the categories of social life. But, amazingly, social science chooses to ignore them."¹

The theoretical framework for the study of the changing concepts and uses of time and space originated in sociology rather than in geography. The newly developing theory of structuration permits the study of the ongoing dialectics between society at large, on the one hand, and time and space, on the other. It also enables comparative analyses of time and space. The theory of structuration, which will be briefly described in the next chapter, is based, among other elements, on geographical notions of time and space. It has already been applied to the geographical study of both individuals and society at large.²

The chapters of this book will be presented in the following order. First, the idea of societal time and societal space will be elaborated, mainly through comparisons to the time and space of individuals. Next, societal time will be compared to societal space at the theoretical level. The possibility of a homology between the two will be explored, and common terminology proposed. Third, societal time and space will be compared at the urban level, with a focus on the changes in cities in capitalist systems since the industrial revolution. The analysis then turns to the two most basic social groups, men and women. Evidence for different conceptions, perceptions, and uses of time and space will

be presented within the framework of modern society, and the possible implications for urban life will be explored. Finally, the focus moves to a national arena, the transitions in spatiality and temporality within Israeli society. The choice of Israel is not only linked to my own nationality, for Israel is also an excellent setting for a national analysis of time and space because of the many social and geographical changes that this society has experienced in the twentieth century.

My interest in the systematic study of time-space rose in the mid-1970s, when I became interested in the linkages among the spatial expressions of growth in the urban fringe, the time it takes for them to develop, and the growth processes that operate in both time and space. This interest developed during my Ph.D. studies at Boston University. Later, at the University of Miami, when I became exposed to Hagerstrand's time-geography, I tried to see whether his conceptual framework could be applied to the urban and regional levels as well.³ Using a model developed by Krakover, we also tested this approach in part on some data for Philadelphia.⁴ I first examined the idea of a time-space comparison at the societal level in 1982-83, during a sabbatical leave, from the University of Haifa, at the University of Maryland, College Park. It was then that I discovered Giddens' structuration theory, which led to my work on time-space homology and on time versus space at the urban level.⁵

After presenting an analysis of time versus space at an annual meeting of the Israeli Sociological Association, I was confronted with criticism that the analysis applied mainly to men and not to women. This brought me to a study of time-space differences between the sexes and their possible implications. Simultaneously, I became involved in a study of transitions in spatial patterns and social processes within twentieth century Israeli society. One of the questions that begged consideration had to do with the changes in temporality and spatiality that occurred in this society -- and led to the writing of the fifth chapter in this book.

Excited as one can be about an evolving research topic, it always involves help from others, and this study is no exception. Research and writing took place at the University of Haifa and at the University of Maryland. I wish to thank my students in Israel and in the U.S. whose comments were most beneficial in many ways.

I owe special thanks to Kenneth E. Corey, Chairman of the Department of Geography at the University of Maryland, College Park, for providing the necessary facilities and atmosphere for me, while serving as Visiting Lecturer there, several times between 1982 and 1987. I received also generous support in this regard from the Research Authority and the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Haifa. David Gross, Department of History, University of Colorado, provided some very useful insights on the full manuscript, while separate chapters were read by Robert D. Mitchell, Nurit Kliot, and Orna Blumen. I used many of their suggestions, but responsibility rests, obviously, with me.

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NOTES TO PREFACE

1. Braudel, 1980, p. 52.
2. E.g. Moos and Dear, 1986; Dear and Moos, 1986.
3. Kellerman, 1981.
4. Kellerman and Krakover, 1986.
5. Kellerman, 1987b.