

INTRODUCTION TO SUB-THEME A: MAN AND HIS TRANSPORT BEHAVIOUR

by

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When the Steering Committee of the WCTR had communicated our theme to my co-chairman (Prof. Ben-Akiva) and myself, we first of all considered which important aspects belong to this sub-theme. From these considerations, the following structure emerged:

- We are primarily dealing with individuals in action. These individuals are living in their own specific situation, which is characterised by the family environment, the given transport development and the relevant subjective attitudes and values. If we want to understand the individual in action, we must know this complex context of his or her actions.
- A decisive aspect is how the actor himself perceives the environment around him and what subjective rationality is at the base of his actions. Special consideration ought to be given to the fact that the objectively existing transport infrastructure is, at best, fairly well known only to the transport planner himself. Individuals in action, however, have only a more or less incomplete and distorted idea of this factual situation. Consequently the conclusion that an objectively existing supply is directly relevant to action must be revised; the subjective perception of objective structures is an important field for research.
- Transport planning is dependent on transport planning models. They help to translate the real world into a set of instruments which can be handled by the planner and which, to the decision-maker, make the consequences of his decisions clear. This is largely beyond dispute; nonetheless, more recently models appear, so to speak, to assume an independent life of their own and to gain a predominant importance. More recent developments in the discussion on models have been devoted to these problems and have been trying mainly to bring out the limitations of thinking within mathematical statistical contexts.
- This is important particularly because there are signs indicating the emergence of unexpected behaviour changes, - quite in contrast to what has been forecast in many "quantitative" models". For some considerable time now, for example, non-motorised traffic in the Federal Republic of Germany has been attracting growing interest and has shown corresponding increases, whereas motorised private traffic has rather been stagnating. At present this development is the object of highly controversial and often emotional discussion; for this reason, an objective debate is especially indicated.

- o Transport research and planning are especially dependent on the current ascertainment of actual conditions, and thus on valid empirical data. Despite the major effort made in this field and despite the large quantities of data surveyed, the survey instruments used are often highly imperfect. More recent findings established by the relevant basic research finally provide an opportunity of substantiating more firmly the foundation of the planning models, which are mostly highly complex.
- o Finally, relevant technical conferences traditionally concentrate on the problems of industrialised countries. The specific problems of developing countries are frequently neglected. On the contrary: one can often observe that research or planning approaches which were developed in industrialised countries are transferred comparatively uncritically to developing countries. For this reason, appropriate time has been reserved for the discussion of specific problems in developing countries.

The organisational structure of all sessions on sub-theme A is shown in a summary fashion in the following survey table.

SUB-THEME TRANSPORT BEHAVIOUR

