

GUIDE TO ANALYSING ARTICLES

Adapted from Explorations in Social Geography by HJ and PE Kariel

The following questions are designed to help in the analysis of research articles. Not all questions will apply to all articles. The more descriptive, theoretical or philosophical the article, the less useful this guide will be.

A DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

- 1 What is the general topic?
- 2 In what ways is the study geographic?
- 3 What are the specific aspects of the topic on which attention is focussed?
- 4 To what extent does the study refer to existing knowledge, observations, laws or theories?
- 5 What hypotheses are stated? Are they explicit or implicit ?
- 6 What spatial and temporal delimitations are made?
- 7 Are key concepts defined adequately?

B METHODS

- 1 How were the data collected: what sources were used; what is done to establish the validity of the data and the reliability of the data collection method?
- 2 What type of data analysis is used: descriptive; comparative; classificatory; statistical; mathematical?
- 3 Is the type of data analysis appropriate and properly conducted?

C FINDINGS

- 1 What were the findings?
- 2 How were they presented: verbally only; maps; tables; diagrams... ?
- 3 Were the hypotheses confirmed?

D CONCLUSIONS

- 1 What explanation and discussion of the findings is given?
- 2 How do the findings relate to theory?
- 3 In what ways are the generalisations better than previous ones: more precise; a higher probability of being valid; more generally applicable, spatially or temporally?
- 4 How are residuals — observations not fitting the general pattern — analysed?
- 5 Are the conclusions based on and consistent with the findings?
- 6 Is the possible significance of the findings pointed out?
- 7 What suggestions for further research are made?

E EVALUATION

- 1 How would you evaluate the consistency and completeness of the study?
- 2 What value do the findings and/or conclusions have for other studies?
- 3 How might the study have been more effectively carried out?