

SOCIOLOGY OF SPACE

A sub-discipline of sociology that explores the multi-level relations between space and human communities.

Sociology of space is interested in the influence of social norms on the shape of space and space on social norms, relations of power and social control taking place in a given space, the patterns of behaviour, orders and prohibitions shaped by it.

Among the anthropogenic factors influencing the shape of space, both biological factors (e.g. gender and age) and social factors (e.g. class, property, religion) are indicated. The former may result, for instance, in the construction of separate rooms for women and men, bans on staying in certain spaces; the latter may result in gated communities or decisions regarding the construction of buildings for religious purposes (e.g. refusal to consent to the construction of a mosque in Christian countries). On the other hand, space affects social relationships by weakening or strengthening social ties, encouraging or discouraging interaction (e.g. socialised and de-socialised space [Hall]), creating relationships of balance or dependency (subordination), formal or informal, integrating or disintegrating.

The issues discussed by sociology of space are, for example, the differences in social relations between urban and rural areas (urbanisation and counterurbanisation, problems resulting from excessive population density, local and global communities, [Giddens]), public and private space ("consumption" of space depends on whether we recognise it as private or public, the degree of recognition depends on our cultural competence), space and social values, space and family, space and socialisation (elites live in centres, contribute to the development of space, masses live on the outskirts and inhibit the development of space [Sjoberg]), type of ties created in enclosed spaces (monasteries, prisons), social control, social roles (home versus workplace), sanctions and penalties as consequences of behaviour and attitudes in specific spaces, the influence of the material environment on the ways of communication (proxemics), prevention of crime through the shaping of space, creation of memorial sites (Wallis). Sociology of space treats space as a social space, produced in a collective process and characterised by reference to collective actions and social values. Space can be characterised by the notion of territory (territorial behaviour), border, distance. Analyses of sociology of space are used, among others, in intercultural research (Hofstede).

Sociological analyses of space appeared already in the first representatives of sociology: In the case of Emile Durkheim (e.g. the division of space into *sacrum* and *profanum* and the types of social attitudes and behaviours associated with this division), Maurice Halbwachs (the concept of collective memory), Max Weber (the concept of the city) or in the Chicago School. The latter became famous, inter alia, for its holistic, social concept of the city treated in ecological terms (social tissue) and for research into the relations between a given space and the activities of its users. These, in turn, result from migration, adaptation processes (both in accordance with the axionormative system and deviant – e.g. spatial differentiation of thefts, burglaries, murders and other forms of violence), socio-spatial segregation processes, research into the mechanism of ethnic ghettos, "our/alien" issues in urban space or the theory of communication processes

taking place, among others, by means of architecture (Burgess, Park and McKenzie). The terms of key importance to the Chicago school's city ecology studies include "natural space" (referring to behaviours taking place in the space recognised as "natural", own – among others Mead's findings), "cultural space" (inhabited by a community with similar cultural characteristics). In Europe, attempts at theoretical approaches to space began in the early 19th century, when the first problems related to the development of industry, resulting in urbanisation, i.e. the migration of population from rural to urban areas and urban sprawl (e.g. the social concept of Owen or Fourier) occurred. Particularly noteworthy is the work of Henri Lefebvre, the author of the idea of social creation of space. Polish space sociologists include Bohdan Jałowiecki, Stanisław Rychliński, Stanisław Ossowski, Florian Znaniecki and Aleksander Wallis.

[M. G.]

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