

SPACE

A concept of physics and mathematics, as well as philosophy, sociology and cultural research, where it has a symbolic meaning. It refers to the three-dimensional extent in which physical phenomena occur.

The concept of space is one of the basic categories for landscape studies. Space is understood as an area extending indefinitely or as a part of it delimited by borders; an open, undisturbed area; the type of spatial relations between things or places; also the place occupied by an object or the distance between point A and B. In the sociological, anthropological and cultural context, space is not studied in itself, but in relation to humans. It is one of two vectors of our life, besides time, which we can influence through the process of creating space (social, architectural, etc.). Depending on the context, space can be what exists (in a philosophical sense), relate to the relationship between objects, events and people or function as a context (physical or discursive) for intellectual activity.

In philosophy, the issue of space was discussed already in antiquity, especially in connection with the idea of space (Plato, Aristotle). In the 17th century, the category of space (just like the category of time) became one of the main epistemological and metaphysical issues. In Leibniz's philosophy, space appeared as a record of the relationship between objects and places (understood as locations), which can be described in terms of distances and directions on which it depends in its existence. In Newton's mechanics space appeared as an absolute existing regardless of the existence of other elements of the universe. According to Kant, the category of space cannot be deduced from experience (it is neither a substance nor a relation), it does not exist objectively and independently of the subject engaged in cognition. On the contrary, it is an a priori category through which human experience is captured. In Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, humans are always spatially oriented, individual life is synonymous with "being situated", and orientation in space is part of the process of existence.

In sociology, the notion of space appears most often in studies of the city and social relations, where a clear distinction is made between social and physical space. Durkheim was the pioneer of the sociological understanding of space as a representation of social organisation, changing with the changes in society. Simmel, referring to Kant, emphasised the importance of the space of "socialisation", understood as the process of people's interaction. He was interested in the distant – near relationship, expressed in social relations, relations between people, but also between people and things. According to Simmel, modernity leads to overcoming the distance in the external world (telescope, microscope) and increasing it in the internal world. Contemporary people move away from their closest ones in order to establish relations with those who are distant.

In Poland, the forerunner of sociological understanding of space was Florian Znaniecki, who in his essay "Sociological Bases of Human Ecology" (1938) pointed to the humanistic meaning of space and linked it with the notion of "humanistic coefficient". According to him, people value space and determine the way they use it. Znaniecki replaced the concept of space with "spatial values", which means occupied or empty spaces, narrow or spacious interiors, as well as "exteriors" (seats,

surroundings, borders, targeted and immeasurable areas, roads, off-roads, etc.). Spatial values form part of some un-spatial system of values (e.g. religious, aesthetic, social, etc.) and, in relation to it, acquire content and meaning.

Aleksander Wallis, analysing the social space of the city, introduced the concept of "cultural area" to define the area identified with the social space, connected with the system of knowledge, imagination, values and rules of behaviour. Individual experiences and preferences of individual individuals and social groups contribute to shaping spatial customs and values. The city consists of two interlinked but autonomous systems: urban planning, i.e. the spatial structure of the city and the social one, which consists of a community of city users.

According to Lefebvre, space is socially constructed and is subject to the relationship of power on which everyday practices depend. Even what we understand by progress, morality and rational behaviour has its spatial justification, because the excluded, in this rhetoric, create space for stagnation (backwardness), immorality and madness (e.g. districts of poverty associated with high crime rates). What we understand to be public and private, global and local or chaotic and orderly is also tied to power.

In the humanities (including humanistic geography and anthropology) space is sometimes treated as a factor determining the conditions of life and human development, subject to social and cultural shaping. Humanistic geography and anthropology define space in relation to the notions of place, road and environment. Places are judged in subjective (or inter-subjective) categories, while space in objective categories (area on the map, volume, geometry, distance to travel).

According to Tuan, space as such is abstract, impersonal, and its understanding has a cultural character. Space is also unambiguously connected with humans, whose bodies are a measure to determine its importance, range, sides and directions: top-down, right-left side, front, back, centre. Physical space does not exist independently of the bodily position of the human being, who always finds expression through movement, in relations to other people and to the environment. Space is "there", while place is "here". The principles of spatial organisation result from two facts: the attitude and structure of the human body and relations (close or distant) between people – based on the experience of the body, humans organise space in such a way that it corresponds to their biological needs and social relations.

Starting with Tilley, there has been a significant change in the approach to space that has allowed us to move from space as an abstract surface to space as an environment, an environment in which the various structures of human experience are fixed. According to Ingold, space should be distinguished from the landscape. Space is a cartographic representation of the earth's surface based on a "look from nowhere", while the landscape is rooted in human life, embodied in the experience and practice of everyday life.

Through space, as Relph points out, we get to know reality. It distinguishes individual space, i.e. bodily space, connected with the unconsciousness, sensory experiences; perceptual space, i.e. more perceptible than verbalised, always relative and qualitative space, created in everyday experience, when we conceptualise distances, directions, choose the path and move; existential space, in which the process of socialisation of an individual takes place and group activities are undertaken (here social meanings are created, symbols, rituals, borders, experience of alienation

and exclusion appear); architectural space, built through the elements introduced into space, e.g. buildings and edifices that structure it; cognitive space, creating a basis for reflection, theoreticalisation, discussion and analysis.

Also in a symbolic sense, space takes on different dimensions: it can be seen as sacred (Eliade), imagined (Bachelard).

[M. G., B. F.]

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