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THE INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF A CITY

Kostromitskaya A. V.

Taurida National V. I. Vernadskiy University, Simferopol, Ukraine
E-mail: anna0663473837@gmail.com

The article is devoted to the Interdisciplinary Approach to the study of the phenomenon of a city in the modern scientific discourse. The author has paid her attention to multiplicity of approaches to the study of a city and has focused on Geographical, Sociological, Psychological, Geographical and Sociological, Synergetic approaches as a most topical.

Key words: a city space, interdisciplinary approach, cultural landscape, Urban Studies

INTRODUCTION

Research work on the phenomenon of a city takes a considerable place in contemporary Humanities. A city as a research field is able to unite the work of scientists from different disciplines and to use a methodology appropriate to these disciplines.

The approach to the study of a city based on Cultural Science (or Culturological Approach) is one of the most modern and current nowadays. It has an extensive theoretical and practical potential in the further research of this phenomenon. It is possible to reveal the peculiarities of functioning and development of a city space by using opportunities of this approach and by applying to the interdisciplinary approach to the study of the phenomenon of a city.

The purpose of the article is to reveal a number of peculiarities of the scientific concepts which reveals the essence of the phenomenon of a city and describes various aspects of a city space. The author uses the interdisciplinary approach to achieve this purpose.

The main objectives of the article are: to reveal such concept as a "city"; to identify some of the spaces of a city; to evolve their structure and the main components of it.

Multiplicity of approaches to the study of the phenomenon of a city imparts not only to the importance of this topic but also to the complexity of the object that is located in the research field of a number of disciplines. In the article we refer to the terminology database that reveals the content of the concept and facilitates comprehension of a city. We also analyze the latest developments in this scientific context.

In the dictionaries a "city" is interpreted as a central large town and as a type of social organization, as a social organism, and as a "administrative, commercial, industrial and cultural center" [9, p. 140], "economic and geographical, architectural, engineering and construction, as well as cultural complex" [4], the development of which "is structured by availability of transport and communications technology" [1, p. 129]. From other types of settlements it differs in size, presence or absence of activities which are typical for a city (culture, science, governance, trade, industry, education).

THE GEOGRAPHICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF A CITY

The etymology of the word “city” goes back to the concept of “an enclosure”, a fortified settlement, often “naturally protected”, “elevated, which has a water barrier” [16, p. 6], and other physical barriers.

A city stands as a “proven tool organization of the territory” [5, p. 124]. This definition is the basis for the formation of the Geographical Approach in which a city is considered as a separate territorial “organization with its structure, functions, and population”, as a “center of the province, region, state, land, etc”, or as a “center of “suburban” territory” [12, p. 18]. Any city, understood in this way, has a clear structure: certain geographical coordinates, boundaries, patterns of distribution of components of the geographical environment, etc.

Geographers define a combination of factors that have influenced the geography of the emergence of new cities and replace the old location (in particular, in Eastern Europe). Some of these factors have been mutually supplemental to each other, and some affect a city today. The construction of cities on the borders for defense, the changeable political and military situation, the construction of new cities on the outskirts for facilities management, the railway transport, the industry and a number of others factors transform space, specifically a city space.

The investigation of a city in the context of geography gives us an idea of a physical city space which is foundation for the formation of a city spaces of another kind. A lot of modern scholars (Jane Jacobs, Viatcheslav L. Glazychev) indicate some difficulties in the determination of the specific criteria of a city as a integrated formation despite of long-term experience of its studying. Size, population, and other quantitative indicators used in geography are essential features in the identification of a city. But according to these quantitative indicators only the process of determination of a city would be extremely difficult. Incipient difficulties would lead to inaccuracies and to a loss of precision, and in that case a large city would be designate as “standard city, just a large” and as “the same thing as the suburbs, only denser” [6, p. 4].

In this case, it seems that Sociological Approach to the study of a city would be more productive when a city space is understood as a community of people developing in the process of their activity.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF A CITY

Sociologists explore a city as a “focus of public life, artificially organized habitat which combines a system of conditions of life-support created natural and social” [13, p. 4]; as a “hub... of people and intelligence” [11, p. 226]; as a “one of the most complicated man's creation, the highest expression of its historical and cultural conquests with all its advantages and contradictions” [15, p. 5]; as a “indissolubility of “process” and “place” of human activities” [10, p. 6].

Max Weber [2], the German historian and sociologist, was one of those who first turned to the study of the phenomenon of a city. The emergence of ideas of a future science Urban Sociology and Urban Studies on the whole is connected with the release of his book “The City” (1921, the first Russian-language edition – 1923). In abovementioned

work the thinker emphasizes several types of cities, such as the city of consumers, the city of manufacturers, the industrial city, the market place, the city of agricultural type, the market town, the city nobility, the city as a military fortification and others. However, to determine a city in a space of which one of the indications is prevalent is virtually impossible because cities are mixed types of settlements that can be classified exclusively to the “prevailing economic component” and a range of other components.

Despite of such a variety of classifications of cities, the scientist notes that the size can not be decisive in determining a city. Max Weber offers basic features of a city among which are:

- the closed settlement, “inhabited locality”, and not one or several separately located dwellings;
- the territory (political and administrative part);
- the variety of occupation of the urban population;
- the presence of the center, it is necessary to meet a political and economic needs;
- the market or presence of a regular exchange of goods;
- the principle of taxation;
- the absence of the personal acquaintance between neighbors;
- the fortress and the place of the garrison residence.

The latter feature has been not actual even in the period of the writing of the book, but has been the most important criterion in determining of the “burg”, that is a fortified fortress, “where the lord and his family lived with their subordinate servants, or with warriors, who formed lord’s retinue, and with their families and servants” [2, p. 346]. Burg, according to Max Weber, is the predecessor of a Western European city.

French sociologist and philosopher David E. Durkheim [7], the founder of the French school of sociology, also reasoned about society and the territory on which they live. He has expressed his regret for the fact that there was no science that dealt with the description and explanation of the reasons for the resettlement of communities of people in a particular territory, that there was no science that investigated the “anatomy” of a big city. However, accumulated experience on the subject has already allowed to create such a science. David E. Durkheim has proposed to call it a “social morphology”, that is a science promoting comprehension of the features of the internal structure of a city as a integrated formation formed on the basis of physical territory and its inhabiting society.

The representatives of the Chicago School of Sociology (or the Ecological School known for the urban sociology) have raised such a crucial questions as segregation, migration, and assimilation, race relations, ethnic ghettos in the city, struggle for social status, mass media and others. The major researchers (Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, L. Wirth, N. Anderson, Edward F. Frazier, Everett C. Hughes and others) were focused on human behavior as determined by social structures and physical environmental factors, rather than genetic and personal characteristics. These studies contributed to comprehension of the city as a social organism.

The French historian Fernand Braudel explores a city in the context of the study of material culture. He considers that a city is embodiment of civilization, the product of social development and it is feasible to classify cities according to the political, economic, social and other characteristics. Fernand Braudel has emphasized capitals as a special type of urban settlements which are intensively transformed and transforms person.

In our opinion, the social space that is part of the total space of a city established in the course of vital activity of urban society, especially clearly manifests itself in the capital cities, and in large cities with the metropolitan functions on the whole.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF A CITY

The question of “being with others” is also worthy of special attention. The answer to this question can be found by referring to the Psychological Approach to the study of a city. It is actualized because of inevitability of a daily interaction of citizens with each other and results in “detachment and restraint” [14, p. 122] in everyday relationships between people. Resident of big cities becomes tolerant, then he shows “callous indifference” (according to the German philosopher Georg Simmel [8]) which is gradually replaced by estrangement.

Psychological space of a city is caused by the concrete historical time as well as other types of city spaces. This is one of the foundations of the formation process of urban mentality and urban identity.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF A CITY

Continuing the sociological tradition of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim also referring to the works of an American urban planner Kevin A. Lynch (his research interests include the problems of urban landscape and a symbolic city space), Viatcheslav L. Glazychev [3], a Russian architect and art historian, an expert in urban design, planning, and development, has distinguished “under-cities” («недогорода»), “before-cities” («предгорода»), “not-cities” that includes “over-cities” and metropolis («негорода»: «сверхгорода», метрополии), and such a special type of settlement as “Sloboda” («слободы»). He determines “perceived” attributes of a modern city which seem to us sufficiently comprehensive, among them are: 1 the availability of not-built space for public use; 2. the united urban community which has a free time to visit the “center of attraction” (a definition of Glazychev), namely public spaces; 3. the main street as “the axis of urban life” (a definition of Glazychev), a dynamic system full of affecting spectacles.

Investigating a various types of cities Viatcheslav L. Glazychev pays his attention to the fact that the size of a city depends not only on the number of population and land area, but also on the “quality of the urban environment” [3], including the urban population and its participation in the life of a city.

The signs of a city marked by Viatcheslav L. Glazychev do not allow to determine the type of a particular city as well as to emphasize a city itself within its boundaries, to identify it from the mass of various settlements. The cause of this is contradiction between quantitative and qualitative indicators. So, in a large city with a population of over a million people, public activity may be low, and the degree of an influence on a city authorities on an urban landscape (in the diversity of its forms) may be significant. It is also significant, however, that the accuracy of a city signs detecting is necessary for understanding the processes occurring in a city space, and for its correct formation or transformation.

THE SYNERGETIC APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF A CITY

The application of the Synergetic Approach to the study of urban issues is also topical in contemporary Cultural and Urban Studies. Such a variant of approach to the study of a city suggests consideration of a city as an attractor that gives an incentive to attraction of informational, economic, and any other type of capital as well as human resources. This approach is interdisciplinary and conducive to deep studying of a various city spaces: physical space as a space of human habitation, social space as a space of interaction with others, economic space, symbolic space, and others. The various components of urban areas could be also considered as a numerous attractors determining the present and future development of the urban texture.

CONCLUSION

During the work on this article the analysis of the approaches to the study of the phenomenon of a city has been carried out. It has been found that urban studies take a considerable place not only in Cultural Studies but also in other humanities.

It is important to notice that in the course of the analysis of the scientific literature on the general problems of a city we have identified a lot of theoretical conceptions devoted to a city space. We consider that the problem of a city space is of interest for further research.

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Статтю присвячено міждисциплінарному підходу до вивчення феномена міста у сучасному науковому дискурсі. Автор звертає увагу на наявність великої кількості підходів до вивчення міста і фокусується на географічному, соціологічному, психологічному, соціо-географічному та синергетичному підходах як найбільш актуальних у сучасній культурології.

Ключові слова: простір міста, міждисциплінарний підхід, культурний ландшафт, урбаністика.

МЕЖДИСЦИПЛИНАРНЫЙ ПОДХОД К ИЗУЧЕНИЮ ГОРОДА

Костромицкая А. В.

*Таврический национальный университет имени В. И. Вернадского, Симферополь, Украина
E-mail: anna0663473837@gmail.com*

Статья посвящена междисциплинарному подходу к изучению феномена города в современном научном дискурсе. Множественность подходов к изучению феномена города говорит не только об актуальности этой темы, но и о сложности объекта, который находится в исследовательском поле многих дисциплин. Автор обращает внимание на наличие множества подходов к изучению города и фокусируется на географическом, социологическом, психологическом, социо-географическом и синергетическом подходах как наиболее актуальных в современной культурологии.

Так, в рамках географического подхода город рассматривается как самостоятельная территориальная организация с определенными функциями, структурой населением, либо как центр области, штата, земли, губернии, а также как центр субурбии, или пригородной территории. Любой город, понимаемый таким образом, имеет четкую структуру: определенные географические координаты, границы, закономерности размещения компонентов географической среды и т.п.

Социологический подход к изучению города кажется нам не менее продуктивным. Городское пространство понимается как общность людей, развивающаяся в процессе их жизнедеятельности. Обращает на себя внимание и вопрос «бытие с другими», ответ на который помогает найти психологический подход к исследованию городу. Он актуализируется по причине неизбежности ежедневного взаимодействия горожан друг с другом. Психологическое пространство города, которое интересует приверженцев психологического подхода к изучению города, обусловлено конкретно-историческим временем, как и другие виды пространств. Оно является одной из основ формирования городской ментальности и идентичности резидентов.

Не менее актуально применение синергетического подхода, предполагающего рассмотрение города как аттрактора, способствующего привлечению информационного, экономического и других видов капитала, а также человеческих ресурсов.

Ключевые слова: пространство города, междисциплинарный подход, урбанистика.