

## New models of urban sociology

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### Abstract

Urbanization is not just a modern phenomenon, but a rapid and historical transformation of the human social roots on a global scale, where largely rural culture is rapidly replaced by the urban prevalent culture. Rural culture is characterized by common blood ties and intimate relationships, while the urban culture is characterized by distant blood connections, unfamiliar relationship sand competitive behavior. This article will consider urbanization (according to Castells) as a creator of the major social, economic and environmental changes that provide sustainability opportunities by using efficient resources. The appearance and architectural features of the cities and suburbs express wars and conflicts between different groups of society. In other words, the urban environment represents symbolic and spatial manifestations of wider social forces. While according to Harvey in modern urbanization space is usually restructured. This process is determined by the place where the large companies decide to set up factories, industrial production centers, investor activities as well as buying / selling houses and land.

**Keywords:** urbanization, urban culture, city, urban environment and space.

### Introduction

In sociological studies, the urbanization is generally defined as increasing of the concentration of the people in limited geographical areas, called cities. Urbanization did not only change the distribution of the population within a certain society but also many models of the social life (Dervishi, Z., Dautaj, A., 2004: 31).

During the urbanization process the population in cities is increased compared to rural areas. Urbanization began during the period of industrial revolution, when the workers moved from industrial areas to cities to break away from agriculture jobs as well.

During most of their history, the people moved constantly and had no permanent settlements. But they began to create the first permanent settlements as the first urban revolution (Dervishi, Z. Dautaj, A., 2004: 31).

Since the mid of 18th century, the use of steam power and the increasingly advanced technical and technological equipment in the industry, transport, etc., brought radical changes in the lives of cities, which were characterized as the *second urban revolution* (Dervishi, Z. Dautaj, A., 2004:35).

Urbanization is very important for a variety of disciplines, including geography, sociology, economics, urban planning and public health. This phenomenon has been closely linked to modernization and industrialization.

In Europe, urbanization began about 1800 years before the New Era on the Mediterranean island of Crete. Urbanization spread to scale in Greece where more

than 100 city-states were built, of which Athens was the largest and most prominent (Dervishi, Z. Dautaj, A., 2004: 32).

The study of urbanization in Europe is a relatively anticipated issue, as it is the oldest part of the world with fully urbanized societies.

In the Albanian lands, the first cities with the most prominent urban features were Buthroti (today's Butrint) and Dyrrahu (today's Durrës), which were founded in the 7th century before the New Era and Apollonia that was founded a century later. Over time, Dyrrahu and Apollonia became big cities. At the height of their bloom, they had a population of 40-50 thousand inhabitants. Within the high walled walls built with sculpted stones, there were magnificent buildings, amphitheatres, temples, luxurious flats of aristocracy etc. (Dervishi, Z. Dautaj, A., 2004: 32).

Urban analysis has several goals that are expressed as follows:

- To observe and analyze the relations between the citizens and the rural areas, taking into account the existence of clear boundaries between the rural and urban areas and the conception of the city as a self-sufficient and self-contained entity;
- Understand the city as part of an extensive economic system in mediating, shaping and restructuring the economic processes;
- Analyzing the urban economic base;
- The city's view as an economic entity;
- Analysis of the relationship through economic systems and urban development.

### **New models of urban sociology according to Manuel Castells**

Early urban sociologists, particularly those associated with the Chicago School, aimed to experiment with forms of social interaction in cities. Taking the concept of socialization from Simmel, they observed the informal social relationships that existed in different parts of the city, affecting the daily lives of certain social groups and the processes of social organization of disorder, which seemed to be typical of the modern urban experience. They have inherited an interest in urban culture. But this legacy has been difficult to use by later sociologists. Empirical studies assumed that the urban cultures could hardly be distinguished from the rural ones.

Around 1970s, new theories for urbanization began to develop. Unlike previous theories, the urbanization process is closely related to political and economic changes. Manuel Castells considered the study of the urban culture as ideological and unable to be theoretically defined. He argued that advanced countries were heavily prospered states, where the national government supported a range of social programs for all workers such as unemployment insurance and subsidized housing, which safeguarded the quality of the people's life (Castells, M. 1996: 88).

According to Castells, to understand cities we need to see the processes through which spatial forms are created and transformed. The appearance and architectural features of the cities and suburbs express wars and conflicts between different groups of society. In other words, the urban environment represents the symbolic and spatial manifestations of wider social forces (Castells, M. 1983: 103). In contrast to the Chicago school sociologists, Castells sees the city not only as an urban area, but also as an integral part of the collective consumption processes, which in turn

are the indispensable environments of industrial capitalism. Houses, schools, urban services and leisure facilities are the way people consume the products of the modern industry.

The physical form of the city is a product of market forces and government power, but the nature of the created environment is not just the result of the activity of wealthy and powerful people. Castells emphasizes the importance of combating of the disadvantaged groups to change their living conditions. Urban problems spur a host of social movements related to the improving housing conditions, protests against air pollution, protection of parks and conservation of greenery, as well as the struggle against the development of constructions that change the nature of an area (Giddens, A. 1997: 538).

Since 1980 there has been a revival of cultural studies for cities. The number of studies examining the urban living experience in all its branches has increased. For Castells, the unique aspect of the urban sociology as a particular field of research were determined by issues arising from the administration of employee subsidies by local government, such as housing, transportation, health education and welfare services. This created the conditions for a particular kind of conflict. Thus, the urban conflicts were new forms of conflict created by the modern forms of the social capitalist organization. These social movements are very significant for the study of urban sociology (Savage, M., Warde, A., Ward K., 2003: 25).

He also addressed the role of social movement in transformation of the city. In his studies, he introduces us to the concept of the "collective consumption" such as the public transport that is a public good that can be used by all residents of the city.

Castells pays also special attention to space issues. The sociological treatment of the space organization, as a material element of human existence, does not lead to a specific theoretical field, but to the discovery of the relationships maintained by the space with the remainder of the technical-social complex.

Castells emphasized that we should use the term spatial structure or "urban system" to describe the particular way in which the basic elements of the social structure are spatially structured (Pickvance, C. G. 1976: 46).

### **David Harvey on the Urban Sociology: The Importance of Urban Planning**

Harvey emphasizes that urbanization is an aspect of the created environment caused by the spread of industrial capitalism. In the traditional societies the city had distinct differences from the village. In the modern world, the industry wanders the separation between the city and the village. Agriculture is mechanized and directed simply on the principles of price and profit. Just as the industry work, this process weakens the differences of the social life between people in the city and village (Giddens, A. 1997: 537).

According to him, urbanization involves the concentration of overvaluation in many versions of the city. Through the urbanism, the capitalism produces space, materials, physical infrastructure for the production, circulation, exchange and consumption and the image of itself (Harvey, D., 1898: 25). According to Harvey in modern urbanization, space is usually restructured. This process is determined by the place

where the large companies decide to set up factories, industrial production centers, investor activities as well as buying / selling houses and land.

David Harvey defines a specific category called "lease of the monopoly class" as the property income owned by the cities. He was of the opinion that the ability to make money is dependent on a combination of factors that include a variety of financial institutions and government subsidies.

#### The benefits from Harvey's model:

- Conceptualize the meaning of the investment in construction in relation to other economic processes by establishing links between the urban and the economic restructuring;
- Critique of the evolutionist model: According to Harvey investment in the urban forms constitutes a temporary solution to the crisis in capitalism. This then turns into a problem by requiring the addressing of the capital elsewhere. Cities grow and fall cyclically;
- The model explains the variety of the urban phenomena;
- The model takes into account the historical peculiarity, recognizes the role and impacts of the human actions;
- David Harvey studies the role played by the capital turnover in the development of the urban spaces. Capital flows are related to the investments in city areas. According to him, investments should be carried out not only in the center but also in the suburbs.
- The strengths point of his theory:
- The role of the social actors in the urban life;
- The clash of interests brings changes in the life of the city;
- The role of the collective consumption;
- Criticism of the theory:
- Urban space is seen as independent;
- The main problem was the city management;
- The city's space should be seen as a dependent and independent space, as a physical and social space;

We live in an era when the human rights ideals are influenced both politically and ethically. A lot of political energy is used to promote, protect and articulate their importance in building a better world. For the most part, the circulating concepts are individualistic and private-based and they don't do anything to challenge the liberal and neoliberal hegemonic logics or neoliberal modalities of law and state action. We live in a world where the private property rights and the profit percentage affect all other rights notions. But there are times when the human rights ideal stake a collective turn, for example the rights of workers, women, homosexuals and other minorities (Harvey, D., 2012: 4).

### **Conclusions**

The appearance and architectural features of the cities and suburbs express wars and conflicts between different groups of society. Urban problems spur a host of social movements related to the improving housing conditions, protests against air

pollution, protection of parks and conservation of greenery, as well as the struggle against the development of constructions that change the nature of an area. David Harvey defines a specific category called "lease of the monopoly class" as the property income owned by the cities. We live in a world where the private property rights and the profit percentage affect all other rights notions

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