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CITY AS PART OF THE LANDSCAPE – STRUCTURE, MEANING, PHENOMENON

MIASTO JAKO CZĘŚĆ KRAJOBRAZU – STRUKTURA, ZNACZENIE, FENOMEN

Abstract

Landscape is the space that surrounds us and is associated with a number of formal and functional conditions. With regard to the city, we can adopt a division into structure, meaning and phenomenon, which is related to the categories of genius loci. The aim of the study is to indicate the author's interpretation of selected levels of urban space research. The results present proposals for a system of terms facilitating the diagnosis of the city as a landscape.

Keywords: city, landscape, space

Streszczenie

Krajobraz jest otaczającą nas przestrzenią związaną z szeregiem uwarunkowań formalnych i funkcjonalnych. W odniesieniu do miasta możemy przyjąć podział na strukturę, znaczenie oraz fenomen, który wiąże się z kategoriami *genius loci*. Celem opracowania jest wskazanie autorskiej interpretacji wybranych poziomów badania przestrzeni miejskiej. Wyniki przedstawiają propozycję układu pojęć ułatwiającego diagnostykę miasta jako krajobrazu.

Słowa kluczowe: miasto, krajobraz, przestrzeń

1. INTRODUCTION

The city, with its many layers, is an image of a man of all times. It is a kind of lens where you can see all the mistakes and successes both in the context of entire societies and individuals. The city, apart from total interdisciplinarity, is also a kind of multidimensional scenography. It is a large-scale organism with enormous possibilities and hopes. This variability of perception due to specific users also shows a different picture of problems and expectations. Desires for a neighborhood group are one thing, another for a specific resident, and another for the city as a whole. What we can call a city landscape is therefore very ambiguous and depends on the plane from which this phenomenon is considered. There are thousands of possibilities, just like the types of problems related to the city can be multiplied almost indefinitely. In the presented study, three factors will be the most important: structure, meaning and the phenomenon of the city as a landscape.

The three planes to which the presented study refers have a specific symbolic dimension. The structure, that is, everything we perceive, is also a kind of pattern, an identification that we give to the cityscape. The structure is responsible for recognizing, getting used to certain forms through which we define space. The meaning is to go a step further. Just as structure is the equivalent of "I see", meaning is the equivalent of "I know". Meaning does not exist in the concept of a city without structure, nor does structure without meaning. Things not only exist, they exist for a reason, the same applies to trees, buildings, or all other elements that make up what the city forms in all its fixed and mobile aspects and time dimensions. Meaning is also interpretation and emotion in relation to the community and the individual. This is the answer to the "why" question. Specific places and spaces are associated with specific identifying values. This system of values is essential in the interpretation of the space we are dealing with and its diagnosis. It relates directly to the perception and remembering of the city, it is related to the knowledge, tradition and culture of the places it contains. The phenomenon combines structure and meaning, its feeling creates the uniqueness of space.

The aim of the study is also to draw attention to the role of the researcher, his knowledge and intuition in personal cognition of the structure, system of meanings, or the phenomenon of the city as a landscape, and to indicate specific tools for space recognition in the widest possible humanistic area, containing the possible fullness of the observed structural systems, but also those based on values, social needs and identity. At the same time, both the role of in-depth analysis and the ability to multidimensionally interpret space are important, so that the design guidelines created on its basis could result in the best concept and implementation of projects in the area subjected to research.

The study indicates the possibility of interpreting and shaping the landscape in a more complementary scope, taking into account the spectrum of its tangible and intangible values.

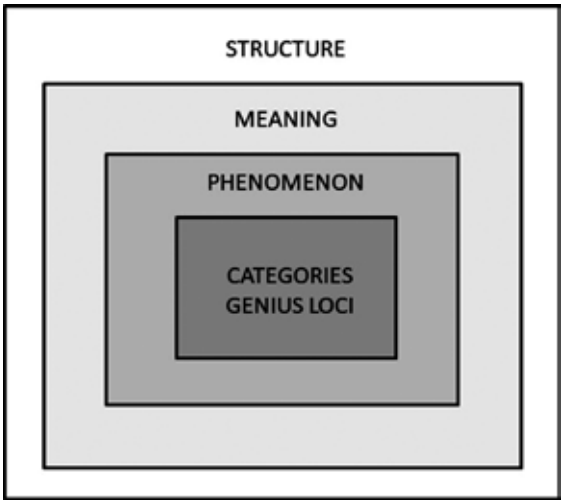
2. METHODS

The city as a landscape is treated here as a construct showing the ideas of recognizing, experiencing and identifying with the phenomenon of space. It is the idea of searching and understanding the world in an in-depth way that will allow you to see all the material and intangible elements. The conducted research concerns many fields and scientific areas. They are based on issues in the field of architecture, landscape architecture, philosophy, art, urban planning, iconography, sociology, psychology, and humanistic geography. The research material is based on own observations, but also on remembered and learned works of fine art or literature experienced directly and indirectly[1].

3. LANDSCAPE

The landscape contains the city, and the city is part of the landscape. In the construction of the city as landscape, the latter is primarily synonymous with context, both in terms of

[1] K. Rybak-Niedziółka, *Miasto jako krajobraz = City as landscape*, Komitet Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania Kraju Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa 2018.



Ill. 1. Study of the city landscape. Source: K. Rybak-Niedziółka, author's material.

form, meaning and phenomenon. At the same time, attention should be paid to the diversity of approaches to attempts to define the landscape, which is emphasized by Bożena Degórska:

> Landscape, which is on the one hand an object of relativized perception and sensations, and on the other hand an expression of the state of objectivized reality, mutual relations between man, animate nature, physical environment and built-up structures, is the subject of research of various disciplines, which is why there are many approaches and definitions (…)[2].

Wojciech Bonnenberg, on the other hand, defines "the urban landscape as the physiognomy of the spatial structure of the city, which is a synthesis of natural, technical and cultural elements"[3]. We can divide all these trends into several groups from the point of view of various fields of knowledge:

- Philosophical approach – considering various schools and trends explaining the idea of the city.
- Natural and strict approach – referring to such fields of science as mathematics, physics, geography, etc.
- Social approach – where the starting point is the relationship between space and man in terms of an individual and as a community, and which can be additionally divided into:
  - anthropological approach – where the city is interpreted as a product of culture; these include studies in the field of humanistic geography (Yi-Fu-Tuan) and cultural anthropology (Otto Friedrich Bollnow);
  - environmental psychology approach to the study of human behavior in space (Edward Hall);

[2] B. Degórska, *Urbanizacja przestrzenna terenów wiejskich na obszarze metropolitalnym Warszawy. Kontekst ekologiczno-krajobrazowy*, Instytut Geografii i Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania im. Stanisława Leszczyckiego. Polska Akademia Nauk, Warszawa 2017.

[3] W. Bonenberg, *Przemysł w mieście. Ekologiczna metoda modernizacji zakładów przemysłowych zlokalizowanych na obszarach intensywnie zurbanizowanych*, Dział Wydawnictw Politechniki Śląskiej, Gliwice 1985.

  - the approach of cognitive psychology – including character theory, James Gibson's ecological theory, Kevin Lynch's theory;
  - sociological approach.
- View from the point of view of art – as a city in art or architecture, urban planning or landscape architecture, here you can refer to the history, theory or design of the city's landscape[4].

The issue is defined in a slightly simpler way by the dictionary of terms related to landscape architecture and garden art created by Aleksander Bohm and Agata Zachariasz. Translating the concept of *landscape* interpreting it as the entire environment of the region, neighborhood, topography, ecosystem, as an image or scenery of our surroundings[5]. Bohm defined the landscape as mutually complementary evolutions of the form of the city and the garden[6]. In turn, Bolesław Szmidt, in his considerations, drew attention to the inseparability of architecture and urban planning from the landscape[7].

Christian Norberg-Schulz, followed by Jeremi Królikowski, perceive the landscape in terms of different levels of awareness of inhabitation – private, public and living in nature[8]. Florian Znaniecki, on the other hand, defined the landscape (and space) in terms of values that are an expression of its phenomenon in the humanistic context, from the point of view of perception and a system of meanings important to man[9].

Since in the definition of a city as a landscape man is the starting point, then the landscape is everything that surrounds it. The landscape in the view of the city cited here is the context of spatial, social, natural, civilizational, economic and political values through which the city expresses itself. The concepts of city and landscape define each other here.

4. CITY

Zbigniew Zuziak[10] presents the city as a spatial and social structure expressed by the development of civilization, emphasizing that its key elements are the multi-layer nature, social, cultural, technical, economic, political, legal and managerial matter – complicated modes of institutional and spatial integration – "openness" of the structure, which may cause difficulties with the use of systemic approaches – tensions between durability and changeability of form. A well-developed city can be a kind of economic catalyst for the whole country. A good example are highly touristic cities with valuable historical and contemporary urban tissue, which, due to their attractiveness, drive economic mechanisms. They become a kind

[4] E. Niezabitowska, *Ewolucja konceptu przestrzeni w teorii architektury*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Śląskiej, Gliwice 2008, pp. 12–13.
[5] A. Böhm, A. Zachariasz, *Architektura krajobrazu i sztuka ogrodowa. Ilustrowany słownik angielsko-polski*, Krajowy Ośrodek Badań i Dokumentacji Zabytków, Warszawa 2005, p. 37.
[6] A. Böhm, *Architektura krajobrazu, jej początki i rozwój*, Politechnika Krakowska, Kraków 1994, pp. 7–8.
[7] B. Szmidt, Ład przestrzeni, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1981, pp. 271–272.
[8] C. Norberg-Schulz, *Bycie, przestrzeń i architektura*, Murator, Warszawa 2000; J. Królikowski, *Interpretacje krajobrazów*, Wydawnictwo Szkoły Głównej Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego, Warszawa 2006.
[9] F. Znaniecki, *Socjologiczne podstawy ekologii ludzkiej*, "Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny, Socjologiczny" 1938, no. 1, pp. 89–119.
[10] Z. Zuziak, *O tożsamości urbanistyki*, Politechnika Krakowska, Kraków 2008, pp. 27–28.

of symbols on a global scale (Manuel Castellis, Kazimierz Dziewoński)[11]. This assumption is controversial. Ash Amin and Nigel Thrif believe[12] that most modern cities do not have a socially generated center. Rather, they are a kind of different spaces merged together. This way of thinking is characteristic of the 21st century technological and social revolution. Contemporary city researchers (Manuel Castells, Andres Duany, David Harvey, Wojciech Kosiński, Jeremi Królikowski, Piotr Lorens, Saskia Sassen, Edward Soja, Richard Sennet) draw attention to the heterogeneity of the modern city as a product of overlapping and coexisting social, economic, cultural and spatial differences. In this view, the contemporary city is a kind of melting pot in which all behaviors and types of space mix. The role of the city center is changing. Its importance is declining. It is rather a symbolic space, a tourist attraction, a relic of the past than an area living in the rhythm of other spaces. Interestingly, it often simply does not interest the inhabitants of the city. In the anthropological approach, there is a division into "cities of power" controlling religious, social and identity symbols, and "cities of exchange" focusing on the adoption and dissemination of cultural, technological or social patterns in the definition proposed by Ulf Hannerz[13]. Friedmann, in turn, speaks of cities as "effective spaces" that arise when an ordinary area is transformed into a more organized one in every respect[14].

5. STRUCTURE, MEANING, PHENOMENON

Recognition of the structure is the starting point, a set of basic information on the basis of which we build the rest of the image and awareness of a given place. The structure shows us things and their functions and how they fit in the composition of a given space. It indicates the type of colors and the proportions of the building. This is the simplest and most elementary part of knowledge about the space under study. This recognition will concern all kinds of buildings and plants, infrastructural elements, but also temporary objects, such as various mobile elements or easily portable or easily dismantled elements. Basic diagnosis is the key to further research. What we see is something, has a certain size, dimensions and height. In relation to the city landscape, this element determines its form. The fact that something is of a certain height and size affects one of the basic elements of the structure, which are proportions. Recognition of them is possible only when the specific sizes of all elements participating in the analyzed place are known. This type of information should apply to all permanent objects, mobile and temporary, natural and architectural, located in a given space. It is good if, apart from the term "what", there is also information related to the function in the study area. The next step is meaning. This is a step further, not only to indicate specific elements, but also to interpret them. In terms of the city landscape, it always has a contextual dimension. What the explored place is always appears in the juxtaposition of the background and awareness of the surrounding space.

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[11] K. Dziewoński, *Studium rozwoju pojęć, metod i ich zastosowań* [in:] *Baza ekonomiczna i struktura funkcjonowania miast*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1971.

[12] A. Amin, N. Thrift, *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2002, pp. 1–10.

[13] U. Hannerz, *Odkrywanie miasta. Antropologia obszarów miejskich*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2006, p. 99.

[14] J. Friedmann, *Cities in Social Transformation*, "Comparative Studies in Society and History" 1961, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 92.



Ill. 2. The structure of the city on the example of the urban fabric in Zamość. Source: K. Rybak-Niedziółka, author's material.

The search for meanings is a slightly more thorough reading of the structure at this stage. In the spatial sense, it shows its compositional hierarchy, coherence and harmony or shortcomings in these areas. This layer can take into account social aspects as part of the perception of space and its identification. Meaning is also much more capacious than structure. Just as the latter, due to its strictly defined materiality is rather a closed set, the meaning allows for a greater number of possible approaches. Perceptual space[15] in this approach is an expression of the relationship between place and background, the environment. The context is treated as not only the surrounding area, but also the area of intention and understanding of the existing space. The layer of meaning is connected beyond material elements, with fragments of space that are completely intangible, bordering on symbolism. The meanings can be divided and interpreted in different ways. The contents of this notion may refer to purely spatial and perceptual issues, but they may also drift in the existential and symbolic direction. If they are additionally enriched with social or even anthropological issues, the knowledge gained may be even broader. It should be noted that the meaning here is interpreted on two levels – internal and external. The former refers to the identity and energy of the place, the latter to its hierarchy and role in the city landscape.

The last factor is the phenomenon, i.e. the essence of the analyzed space. This is a summary of all previous studies. It shows the phenomenon of the discussed area and what is associated with it. It is a synthesis, the components of which contain conclusions from all previous activities.

[15] C. Norberg-Schulz, *op. cit*.



Ill. 3. Praça do Comércio – a commercial square in Lisbon, as an example of importance in the cityscape. Source: K. Rybak-Niedziółka, K. Langie, author's material.



Ill. 4. Square and the Basilica of St. Peter's Square in the Vatican – a social phenomenon related to genius loci expressed by a strong symbolic and historical sacrum. Source: photo from private resources.

Defining the phenomenon of a given place also requires a key, tools with which we will define this layer. With the proposed method, one of such studies will be the analysis of the genius loci category. Their interpretation in relation to structural and semantic studies will allow us to catch the identity of the place. Thanks to the analyses, we gradually discover the identity of the place. Its genius loci allows us to capture the essence of the researched area and understand it, to catch what makes up the aforementioned existential space. The described area is revealed layer by layer. We know what it is like, what its limitations and possibilities are, you can determine its potential. Here, one should also take into account the fact that we may be dealing with a lost area or one that has not reached its full potential. This is also included in the final conclusions in the discovery of the form of the phenomenon. It may turn out that a given space needs to be written anew, transposed in such a way that, on the one hand, it fits the surrounding context, and on the other hand, it has its identity clear in terms of structure and meaning. It is important here to find the right directions, the path that should be followed in further actions.

6. SUMMARY

The search for all elements relating to its landscape allows to catch the specificity of the analyzed area. The essence of a place is defined by tangible and intangible values, where not only morphology is taken into account, but also the evolution of culture and emotions. Identity, the meaning of which is special, reflects the vision of the city as a landscape, but also shows that it is a constantly changing process taking place at the level of constant reinterpretation of space in a social context. In order for this continuity to run coherently and harmoniously, appropriate tools are needed to understand the principles of shaping the system in relation not only to the moment when the study is carried out, but also in relation to the entire cause-and-effect series that is responsible for the current state. At the same time, understanding takes place when by discovering the structure through a system of meanings and catching its phenomenon, based on the interpretation of the pattern and the category of genius loci, it is possible to determine the form, social needs and identity of a given place in relation to the widest possible context. In this way you can get to know the city as a landscape. The set of analytical tools that can be used in these studies is very wide and open in accordance with the principle that since there are no identical spaces, one should be flexible in the approach to research methods, especially those relating to basic structural and semantic research. The choice of methods for more open landscapes will be different, and different for architecturally or naturally compact systems. When studying a phenomenon, but also patterns and forms, it is extremely useful to analyze and interpret the category of genius loci. In turn, the results and conclusions from their study, with the previously defined phenomenon of the place, help to define social needs and the identity of the landscape. All these elements seamlessly complement each other. The proposed method serves as a tool for identifying space and seeking its identity at every desired level. It includes the study of material and intangible elements interpreted on various problematic layers. The open layout means that there is no need to use rigid frames, you can define individual directions of activities yourself in connection with the needs of a given area, you can follow them and modify them during work. It is so useful that it allows you to think and

draw conclusions from the expanding knowledge about the studied space. In addition, it gives the possibility of corrections of the analyzes used during the entire cognitive process. The presented method is a contradiction of rigid procedures, it focuses on multi-faceted observation and knowledge, which gives the possibility of complementarity of the presented research. This is valuable as it allows you to get a little closer to the specific "truth" of a given place. It highlights what it is like and what it needs or doesn't need. The presented method makes it possible to diagnose its condition on many levels: physical, semantic or social, in a way more adapted to a specific space. The freedom to insert "building blocks" of selected methods into the adopted framework gives greater cognitive possibilities, but at the same time requires great insight and caution from the examiner. The proposed arrangement will not accept anything. The selection of individual methods within the proposed framework is crucial and requires well-thought-out decisions. It can change during the research process itself, but it can never be accidental. The selection of methods must be justified by the specific situation of the study area in the selected aspect. The order and consistency of choices translate directly into results.

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