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Politics of Space: From the Experience to the Struggle Over Urban Space

Abstract:

The main goal of the article is to show the possibility and necessity of thinking of urban space in the political perspective. In order to do that, I present set of tools elaborated by David Harvey in his text “Space as a Key Word”. They can be used to analyze different types of space – particularly urban space – in an orderly way. I then use those tools to examine one type of urban space, which is the “scattered city”. This example and its critique allow me to link scattered cities with a certain type of politics. In the next step I show a selected range of political problems, questions, and convictions connected with urban space.

Keywords:

urban space, scattered city, politics of space, neoliberalism, public space

I. Introduction

The main goal of this article is to raise the issue of the politics of urban space. This purpose is correlated with an opinion of David Harvey. In his work *Rebel Cities*, he states:

... the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold. The right to the city is, therefore, far more

than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.¹

In order to justify the necessity of a politics of urban space, I will present – in the first part of the article – a set of tools that would allow us to think in a structured way about arrangements of cities and also about creating our space of life. Those tools are taken from Harvey's 2004 paper "Space as a Key Word." In the second part, I will then use those tools to analyze and diagnose the problems of "scattered cities", which I correlate with a neoliberal model of public space. For that purpose, I will use, among others, concepts from Harvey's *Rebel Cities* and reflections from Charles Montgomery's *Happy City*. As already mentioned, the set of tools I will present is taken from Harvey's work "Space as a Key Word."

Although I will be drawing from Harvey's work, my own project is significantly different from his. Harvey seeks to build conceptual tools that we can use to understand the processes that create, develop, and transform our cities. Certain organizations of urban space are some of the main ways in which those processes reveal themselves. In particular, he shows modern and contemporary cities in their immanent, even dialectical connection with capitalist economy. So we could say that, in general, Harvey elaborates upon concepts that allow him to illustrate a genealogy of contemporary cities, in order to show the main factors responsible for shaping urban space. He also strives to answer the question of what kind of consequences cities bring to the lives of their inhabitants. In addition, Harvey also thinks about cities in a political perspective. He wants to start and win the fight for citizens to be able to create their own common space, instead of or in addition to public and private spaces.² Harvey's work gives us the opportunity to look at the problems of history, genealogy, and the economy through the organization of urban space. In presenting these problems, Harvey opens up a range of political questions connected with urban space. My goal, however, is more modest than Harvey's. I want to use the tools which we can find in his text "Space as a Key Word," to ask some questions pertaining to the field of political philosophy and to justify that asking those questions is crucial for our lives. My goal is not in opposition to Harvey's perspective in *Rebel Cities*; rather, it is a step back. In particular, I want to use Harvey's tools to show a way to analyze cities and to diagnose some of the problems connected with contemporary visions of their planning. Based on this, I am going to present possibilities for politics. Politics is connected with organizing people's lives, which is strictly connected with the process of decision making. Urban space, as I will argue, needs to be structured by political decisions, not by different processes which are perceived as independent from politics, such as the economy.

II. Order of Space

In his paper "Space as a Key Word", David Harvey stresses two sets of ways to understand "space". Each set contains three concepts or theories of space: (1) The first set of ways to understand "space" is taken from a scien-

1) David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2012), 4.

2) Most of Harvey's analysis on the matter is to be found in the work *Rebel Cities* from 2012, quoted above. A short text presented during a conference in 2004, "Space as a Key Word," is interesting, however, because it allows us to look at the city as a sort of machinery which organizes space and our lives in it. For more, see: David Harvey, "Space as a Key Word" (Paper presented at the Marx and Philosophy Conference, Institute of Education, London, May 29, 2004).

tific and epistemological perspective; (2) The second set of ways is taken from the work of Henri Lefebvre – *The Production of Space*.

The scientific and epistemological views of space can provide us, as Harvey claims, with such theories of space as: *space as absolute*, *relative time-space* and, finally, *relational time-space*. As he explains, “If we regard space as absolute it becomes a ‘thing in itself’ with an existence independent of matter. It then possesses a structure which we can use to pigeon-hole or individuate phenomena.”³ In other words, space as “absolute” leads to a vision of space which contains different objects. These objects are objective and independent from human perception. For example, Newton’s convictions about space are representative for this perspective.

The second theory of space stresses, according to Harvey, that “the view of relative space proposes that it is understood as a relationship between objects which exists only because objects exist and relate to each other.”⁴ This theory comes from, *inter alia*, Albert Einstein’s general theory of relativity. From this point of view we can build different geometries, and our measurements depend on reference, which could be chosen rather arbitrarily. Because of the mobility which constitutes this concept, and is immanent to this way of thinking about space, one of the features of this model is time. Thus, this second way of viewing space is a spatio-temporal theory, rather than just a spatial theory.

The last concept of the space is the theory of *relational space*. As Harvey explains, “There is another sense in which space can be viewed as relative and I choose to call this relational space – space regarded in the manner of Leibniz, as being contained in objects in the sense that an object can be said to exist only insofar as it contains and represents within itself relationships to other objects.”⁵ From this perspective, space and time are the results of processes. Different processes do not take place *in* space, but rather they *create* spatiality. The same holds true for time. Processes are not *in* time, but *create* temporality. In this view, just like in the previous theory, time is taken in conjunction with space. On this ground, one cannot understand a single object without considering its relations to other objects. As a result, measurements are extremely complex, difficult, and may not lead to a single answer. And, as Harvey concludes, “In a way, relational conceptions of space-time bring us to the point where mathematics, poetry, and music converge.”⁶ Theories of such thinkers as Baruch Spinoza or Gilles Deleuze come from this vision of reality.

I will add that the concept of relational space, despite some inconveniences arising from a challenge of finding or elaborating upon a satisfactory system of description and measurement of results, is particularly useful in the field of politics, because in politics or social sciences, common actions create states of things, both the quality of and quantity of certain political and social phenomena.

The second set of concepts to understand space arises from reflection upon the experience of space. Harvey uses here the thought of Henri Lefebvre, although he is interpreting it in a particular way. Mostly, he simplifies and slightly transforms the tripartite division elaborated by Lefebvre in his masterpiece *The Production of Space*. The main interest of Lefebvre is spatiality as something which constitutes our everyday life, and which is based on physical and social relations. He questions, and in the end rejects, the mental approach, which means scientific or philosophical conceptions and theories concerning space. As he put it,

3) David Harvey, “Space as A Key Word,” 2, accessed July 2, 2018 <http://frontdeskapparatus.com/files/harvey2004.pdf>. Also published in *Spaces of Neoliberalization: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005).

4) Harvey, “Space as A Key Word,” 2.

5) Ibid.

6) Ibid., 4.

The quasi-logical presupposition of an identity between mental space (the space of the philosophers and epistemologists) and real space creates an abyss between the mental sphere on one side and the physical and social spheres on the other. From time to time some intrepid funambulist will set off to cross the void, giving a great show and sending a delightful shudder through the onlookers. By and large, however, so-called philosophical thinking recoils at the mere suggestion of any such *salto mortale*. If they still see the abyss at all, the professional philosophers avert their gaze. No matter how relevant, the problem of knowledge and the “theory of knowledge” have been abandoned in favor of a reductionistic return to an absolute – or supposedly absolute – knowledge, namely the knowledge of the history of philosophy and the history of science. Such a knowledge can only be conceived of as separate from both ideology and non-knowledge (i.e. from lived experience). Although any separation of that kind is in fact impossible, to evoke one poses no threat to – and indeed tends to reinforce – a banal “consensus”. After all, who is going to take issue with the True? By contrast, we all know, or think we know, where discussions of truth, illusion, lies, and appearance-versus-reality are liable to lead.⁷

Lefebvre criticizes the mental approach mainly because it deprives our reflection on spatiality of two important issues. The first is that this kind of approach is an abstract one which deprives us of tools thanks to which we could understand our everyday life and experiences that we have. The second is that it overlooks the ideological or political meaning of spatiality. Of course, Lefebvre is interested mainly in urban space, because this is the space in which most people live. He elaborates upon a tripartite division, which, in his opinion, has the potential to both grasp our everyday experiences in urban space and show the ideological meaning of it.⁸ Harvey slightly transforms Lefebvre’s division. He changes the English translation of terms and modifies one of the components of Lefebvre’s theory, namely “spatial practice” to “material space.”

As a result, he proposes a tripartite division: material space, the representation of space, and spaces of representation. *Material* space refers to “the space of experience and of perception open to physical touch and sensation.”⁹ Our bodies experience contact with other physical objects and material space reports this aspect of our life. The *representation* of space explores “space as conceived and represented,”¹⁰ which focuses on the cognitive aspect of spatial experience. This leads to theories, concepts, ideas, and metaphors about our experience, such as social life or art, which, of course, all take place in a certain space. Finally, *spaces of representation* refer to “the lived space of sensations, the imagination, emotions, and meanings incorporated into our everyday lives and practices.”¹¹ In other words, spaces of representation explore our ways of experiencing and perceiving our experience of space. Here we find personal and individual perspectives.

In his next step, Harvey combines these two sets of concepts, (1) scientific and epistemic views of space, and (2) reflections on our experiences of space. He writes, “I propose ... a speculative leap in which we place the threefold division of absolute, relative and relational space-time up against the tripartite division of experienced, conceptualized and lived space identified by Lefebvre. The result is a three-by-three matrix within which points of intersection suggest different modalities of understanding the meanings of space (and time).”¹²

7) Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 6–7.

8) Ibid., 33. The tripartite division of Lefebvre is as follows: spatial practice, representation of space, representational spaces.

9) Harvey, “Space as a Key Word,” 8.

10) Ibid.

11) Ibid.

12) Ibid., 9–10.

We can illustrate the matrix as follows:

	Material space	Representation of space	Spaces of representation
Absolute space			
Relative time-space			
Relational time-space			

Construction of the matrix means that in spite of Lefebvre's argumentation that epistemological and scientific theories have no use for understanding actual human life in urban space, Harvey finds them important in order to build proper and wide tools to analyze spatiality. It does not mean, however, that Lefebvre's achievements from *The Production of Space* are somehow lost or diminished. On the contrary, the matrix preserves them, but also allows us to exhaust their potential by adding other perspectives.¹³

I will use urban space as an example to show how the matrix could be used. But first, a short introduction to the matrix is needed. I will discuss the matrix by explaining epistemological and scientific theories. For this purpose, the tripartite division will be used.

III. The Spatial Matrix

(1) Let us first look at space as an absolute unit; this is the absolute space perspective. Corresponding to this view of space is a view of a city as a static set of things, namely a material space. From this perspective, we are interested in certain material components of such a city, such as buildings, roads, stations, parks and so forth. Each of them is located in certain configurations. This perspective enables us to create visualizations of this "set of things," for instance, by drawing different maps of the city.

We can add to this the second aspect of experiencing urban space: representation of space. We can represent the material aspect of a city with a map. Then we can analyze certain parts of it by the way space is organized, and then create more specific maps of these parts and districts. As a result, we can distinguish between parts and districts of a city on the basis of different ways in which they are organized. But representation of space means also different metaphors connected with different types of space. For instance, open and closed spaces. Examples of closed spaces are a tunnel or an elevator. Examples of open spaces are a park or an avenue. Language provides us with other more specific metaphors connected with open and closed spaces, such as freedom, trap and so forth, and contains other metaphors about different types of organization of space.

The third aspect of experiencing the space, namely spaces of representation, is based on the way human beings react to different types of organization of space. In particular, we can ask how people react to closed or open spaces. Next, we can gather data about the way which certain spaces or places influence people in general and ask questions about the character of different areas of a city because of the influence they have. The possibilities for research on this theme are quite wide.

(2) We can also look at a city from the perspective of relative time-space theory; we can – and this is a material aspect of this theory – explore a city as a space of mobility. In this case we are interested in the city as a space where mobility occurs and, therefore, which creates the possibility of communication, transportation and so forth. Mobility means movement of different entities such as physical objects, information, data, money and so forth.

13) In the matrix, we can put Lefebvre's reflections in relational time-space theory, because they explore reality constructed entirely by relations between different objects and actors, which are, of course, results of the dialectical process of those relations.

The obvious remark is that human beings, like other species, need to be mobile to survive. City-life means a style of life based on mobility. "Mobility" is a rather broad term. For example, mobility means the possibility of physical movement. From this perspective, we can look at a city in terms of its infrastructure for transportation. We can ask whether the city is based upon public or private transport, how it is planned and organized, whether it allows or encourages walking on foot, traveling on bicycle, using public transit, or private transportation. We can check if we can see differences in the transportation systems between parts or districts of the city, what kind of consequences these differences bring and so forth.

We can also relate mobility to processes of communication, flow of information, money, water, electricity and so forth. In fact, in each case where we are able to point out an entity and observe it move, we can analyze it from the perspective of relative time-space theory. This adoption of relative time-space theory significantly expands the scope of phenomena that we can explore. It is especially useful for reflection on a city and how our lives are conditioned. In particular, thanks to this approach we can not only examine different aspects of mobility such as we can find in the economy or in social-mass media, but also try to find links between them.

The representation of space would mean, for instance, investigating thematic maps of transportation systems and the logistics they require. On this level, we should also explore metaphors about movement. This issue is particularly interesting because it gives us a glimpse of common fantasies. Here we can also find different theories explaining the phenomenon of mobility in urban space.

In the work *Rebel Cities* we find the concept that contemporary cities are not contracted, but rather expansive, due to the fact that they provide us with the proper infrastructure to move from place to place in a smooth and effective way. It is rather that the development of infrastructure for mobility creates cities and the bourgeois way of life. Harvey explains this process using Marx's critique of capitalism:

Urbanization has always been, therefore, a class phenomenon of some sort, since surpluses have been extracted from somewhere and from somebody, while control over the use of the surplus typically lies in the hands of a few (such as a religious oligarchy, or a warrior poet with imperial ambitions). This general situation persists under capitalism, of course, but in this case there is a rather different dynamic at work. Capitalism rests, as Marx tells us, upon the perpetual search for surplus value (profit). But to produce surplus value capitalists have to produce a surplus product. This means that capitalism is perpetually producing the surplus product that urbanization requires. The reverse relation also holds. Capitalism needs urbanization to absorb the surplus products it perpetually produces. In this way an inner connection emerges between the development of capitalism and urbanization. Hardly surprisingly, therefore, the logistical curves of growth of capitalist output over time are broadly paralleled by the logistical curves of urbanization of the world's population.¹⁴

This process leads to development of a certain way of life which is connected with consumerism and the contemporary labor system. However, mobility is crucial because it produces surplus product, and creation of new ways of mobility can absorb surplus product. This theory is, I think, particularly interesting, because it allows us to explain the phenomenon of a need for constant flourishing mobility in terms of quality and quantity. This need makes cities and our lives in them extremely dynamic. So there is a development of existing forms of movement – we move faster and try to eliminate obstacles for mobility – but we also create new ways of mobility which are based on a technological development (mobile phones, the internet, and so forth).

14) Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 5.

Spaces of representation, in the context of the relativity theory, contain individual reactions on solutions connected with the mobility applied in the city. Traveling through urban space seems to be a constitutive part of it. Most of us live in a hurry, so experiencing the anxiety of being late is just part of our lives. We can predict that obstacles in the transportation system would increase the level of stress felt by inhabitants. We can also explore the problem of reactions of people on other types of mobility. Again, the possibilities for research depend more on the ingenuity of a researcher than on any limitations of the research subject.

(3) Relational time-space theory allows us to look at entities created by relations.¹⁵ As with the previous cases, we will start with the material aspect of experiencing space. Relational time-space theory gives us the possibility to explore such phenomena as, for instance, the concentration of smog, or pollutants more generally. The air that we breathe in the city is not a resource that we just consume. Industrialization has an impact on the quality of the air. The number of private cars we have, or whether we are allowed to use them in the city, has a direct influence on the concentration of smog. Of course, it is only one of many features important to the matter. Nonetheless, the quality of air in the city is something real, something which can be measured and yet is a result of a combination of many factors.

Another example of a phenomena useful to be seen from the perspective of relational theory is traffic jams. Generally, they are seen by us as a result of some kind of event, for instance, an accident or road works. But if the number of cars in a city reaches a certain level, traffic jams become just a part of using roads in the city during some time of the day. Again, we can observe experience and measure the phenomenon of the traffic jam, even though it appears only in specific hours and in particular areas, and is a result of combining other elements, in this case cars.

Relational time-space theory allows us to include social relation in the analysis of urban space. Different types and patterns of social relations and social situations will be a part of this research. Let us note that we can find social relation also on the internet, so we can add social media to the matrix.

Representations of space as an aspect of relational time-space theory can be bound with different concepts and theories. As we could see by examples given earlier, the range of possible directions is quite wide. We could have some parts of urban logistics, economy, social sciences, especially connected with urban sciences and so forth. This perspective opens up the possibility of including political reflection both on a field of bureaucracy and models of the public sphere, since politics in a way organizes social relation and it is responsible for legal order. I will explore this thread in the next part of the article.

Spaces of representation would also spread to a variety of experiences, as a range of possible areas where we can look for relational time-spaces, from different reactions to diverse cyberspace, to the wide range of reactions to social relation that appear in cities and their parts. For certain, political emotions can be included in the explored field. Below, I show some possibilities that can be found and examined in this aspect of spaces of representation (as an example).

15) The difference between relative and relational time-space theories is as follows. According to relative theory we find in the world different entities. Their features are a resultant of a movement. Things are relative to movement. The relational time-space theory claims that entities are created by relations. Relations between things creates those things. In other words, relations are primal; entities are consequential.

Contents of the matrix in the form of a table could be filled, for instance, as follows:

	Material space	Representation of space	Spaces of representation
Absolute space	Bridges, roads, buildings, estates, parks, etc.	Maps of the city, administrative maps, metaphors of space (closed or open), nodal points of the city, etc.	Feelings of being safe or being in danger as a result of being at a city-party or being in an elevator, a feeling of power as a result of possession, fear of those who are on the other side of the wall (of your house), etc.
Relative time-space	Circulation of electricity, water, air, people, information, money; intensity of obstacles during the process of circulation of certain goods, etc.	Thematic maps, metro scheme, metaphors of movement, mobility, speed or distance, etc.	Anxiety of being too late or of entering a new place, anger because of a traffic jam, contentment for being on time, etc.
Relational time-space	Electromagnetic field, social relations, potential income, sounds and smells of the city, concentrations of pollutants, etc.	Surrealism, existentialism, cyberspace, post structuralism, theory of chaos, quantum mechanics, etc.	Fantasies, memories, frustrations, mental states, etc.

We can use the tools of the matrix to conduct research on cities, or on certain areas of cities. The advantage of this tool is, as I tried to show, that it allows us to include different aspects of cities as our living space. In particular, we can ask not only about pragmatic aspects of arrangements of a city or certain districts of a city, but also about their effects on the humans experiencing the space. This opens the door, for example, to questions of the aesthetic values of space or consequences of space felt on an individual level. These new possibilities for inquiry lead to a politics of space as a reflection on normative aspects of our collective life.

IV. Space of Order

The tools provided by Harvey's elaboration, can be used to analyze the so-called "scattered city." This example is particularly useful to illustrate the necessity of analyzing political perspectives concerning urban space.

The origin of the concept of the scattered city reaches back to the early twentieth century. In particular, we find this idea of a city in Dana Bartlett's 1907 book *The Better City*.¹⁶ This type of urbanization became popular and widespread in the second half of this century. This vision is based on an assumption that each individual should have a proper living-space, namely a house with a garden. From this perspective, living in a small flat in the center of the city, with limited access to green space, does not meet human needs. Instead, a need for green space can be better met in a suburban area. The development of the auto-industry made scattered cities possible, especially since this vision of the city served the interests of car manufacturers. In fact, the

16) Joel Kotkin, *The City: A Global History* (New York: Modern Library, 2005), chapter 14.

scattered city seemed to be the perfect ground for economic development. Individuals – consumers – seemed to have what they wanted, and so did auto manufacturers. However, the most significant income went to the construction industry and loan service providers. As a result of these highly profitable businesses, scattered cities appeared, suburbs grew, and cities expanded. In other words, even though the idea of the scattered city comes from a dreamer who wanted to improve the quality of people's lives, it would not have become so popular and widespread if it did not go hand in hand with economic interests.

As a result of the organization of urban space in scattered cities, a whole system of roads and highways became crucial for the city, because transportation of people from home to work and back depends on this system. Since distances between suburbs and the city were increasing, cars started to be the only solution. Sidewalks became unnecessary. Public spaces were also reduced (except roads and highways, of course), because this rhythm of life makes it almost impossible to use them in a regular manner. Activities such as shopping were centralized in shopping malls. As a result, local life, which used to center around small shops and services, almost disappeared.¹⁷ Scattered cities created a certain style of life, which I will describe in more detail in the following section.

It is also worth mentioning that the process of transforming cities into scattered ones was not as smooth as it would seem to be, because it proceeded together with gentrification and the polarization of society. The poorer inhabitants were ousted from those parts of the city which became more attractive for investments. As a result, certain districts and areas of the suburbs started to diversify, namely poverty was aggregated in ghetto-like places. As Harvey comments:

The suburbanization of the United States was not merely a matter of new infrastructures. As in Second Empire Paris, it entailed a radical transformation in lifestyles and produced a whole new way of life in which new products – from suburban tract housing to refrigerators and air conditioners, as well as two cars in the driveway and an enormous increase in the consumption of oil – all played their part in the absorption of the surplus. Suburbanization (alongside militarization) thus played a critical role in helping to absorb the surplus in the post-war years. But it did so at the cost of hollowing out the central cities and leaving them bereft of a sustainable economic basis, thus producing the so-called “urban crisis” of the 1960s, defined by revolts of impacted minorities (chiefly African-American) in the inner cities, who were denied access to the new prosperity.

Not only were the central cities in revolt. Traditionalists increasingly rallied around Jane Jacobs and sought to counter the brutal modernism of Moses's large-scale projects with a different kind of urban aesthetic that focused on local neighborhood development, and on the historical preservation, and ultimately gentrification, of older areas. But by then the suburbs had been built, and the radical transformation in lifestyle that this betokened had all manner of social consequences, leading feminists, for example, to proclaim the suburb and its lifestyle as the locus of all their primary discontents. As had happened to Haussmann, a crisis began to unfold such that Moses fell from grace, and his solutions came to be seen as inappropriate and unacceptable towards the end of the 1960s. And if the Haussmannization of Paris had a role in explaining the dynamics of the Paris Commune, so the soulless qualities of suburban living played a critical role in the dramatic movements of 1968 in the United States, as discontented white middle-class students went into a phase of revolt, seeking alliances with other marginalized groups and rallying against US impe-

17) Charles Montgomery, *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), chapter 3.

rialism to create a movement to build another kind of world, including a different kind of urban experience (though, again, anarchistic and libertarian currents were pitted against demands for hierarchical and centralized alternatives).¹⁸

Despite problems and tensions, scattered cities become one of the most widespread kinds of cities, especially in the USA. If we look at them from the perspective of the twenty first century, we can search for long-term effects that they bring, as demonstrated in the spatial matrix. To fill gaps in the matrix, I am going to use reflections from a book of Charles Montgomery's, *Happy City*.

	Material space	Representation of space	Spaces of representation
Absolute space	Highways, system of similar houses, lack of pavements, lack of public space, system of private properties, etc.	Maps, metaphors connected with living in the single house (dreams and desires), etc.	Hope, satisfaction, loneliness, etc.
Relative time-space	Rhythm of the city: traveling to work and back, duration of those travels, accidents, gasoline prices, bankruptcy, migrations, etc.	Schemes of a system of urban communication (only roads), metaphors connected with driving (freedom), etc.	Frustration, anger, loneliness, despair, etc.
Relational time-space	System of relation between private and individual entities, lack of a common good, lack of common practices, social relations limited to relations in the family and in the working place, overloaded roads, etc.	Spatial development code, models of public sphere, values, etc.	Visions, hope, rebellion, despair, political opinions, vulnerability to populism, etc.

This matrix can be used for an analysis of the relation between organization or urban spaces and political philosophy. In order to more clearly articulate my point, I am going to use the scattered city as an illustration of a certain political stance, namely neoliberalism. In order to do this, I will discuss the matrix in a different order than in the previous part of this article. Let me start from the tripartite division taken from Lefebvre and then interpret each of these divisions by the epistemological and scientific theories of space.

V. The Spatial Matrix and the Politics of Space

(1) We can see from the material point of view – throughout all three theories of space – that a certain life-style is linked to scattered cities. The contents of material space include characteristics of suburban life: the daily rhythms of its citizens, the situations they encounter, social relations, legal systems, and constraints. This way of life is based on the assumption that private property and private life are crucial. In this vision, those needs can be fulfilled when a person can have a family and own private property, which allows him or her to live separately from those who are not members of the family. That kind of property is a house with

18) Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 9–10.

a garden, which makes it possible to spend time with family, without having to encounter non-members of the family. Yet, to be able to afford this level of privacy, individuals have to have a proper job. Because of the conditions of the contemporary labor market, workplaces are usually located in the city, not in the suburbs. Therefore, many inhabitants of scattered cities are focused on working and family time. Other activities – spending time with friends – are limited by external circumstances, such as the long distances between suburbs and the city center, and the limited time that each person has, after coping with work and spending time with their families.

In the matrix, absolute space is represented by the system of suburbs, similar houses, roads, and highways. The relative time-space theory means the rhythm of life, namely traveling from home to work and back. Also, the economical determinations of this life are important (oil prices, credit costs and so forth). The relational time-space theory is connected with social relations, which, in this case, are limited to relations within the family and between co-workers.

(2) Likewise, we can use the representation of space to analyze political ideology within a city. The representation of space reveals three interesting features. First, we can focus on collective dreams. Metaphors of different aspects of space, emotional connotations, and even values that people share, may be interpreted in a variety of ways. From a liberal point of view, they expose human preferences.¹⁹ Liberals, such as John Rawls, assume that individuals have the ability to independently establish their life preferences. This ability leads to diverse visions of life, because people differ from each other. However, liberals also claim that there are certain factors which make people relatively similar. For instance, according to John Rawls, people are rational egoists with an ability to distinguish right from wrong in a moral sense.²⁰ Because of that, people have a need for freedom, which means the need for having certain rights, including the right to privacy and private property, which allows them to execute their own interests. This liberal perspective does not exclude the existence of a society as a space for interactions and a sphere where certain social needs can be fulfilled. On the contrary, many liberals assume that society is a sphere of common cultures and practices.²¹ From this point of view, the lack of public space in scattered cities is problematic. However, if we consider the neoliberal perspective, we will see a different interpretation of basic needs.

Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek were two important neoliberals, but it was Margaret Thatcher who expressed the neoliberal assumption about relations between individuals and society in a simple and distinct way. In an interview in 1987, she said: “They are casting their problems at society. And, you know, there’s no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look after themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then, also, to look after our neighbors.”²² The conviction here is that the only reality in the state are individuals and their families. There is no society, which means that any need that people can have that relies on non-members of the family is illusory. So public space, except spaces of necessary interaction (such as roads) are not needed for people. Of course, this view has many consequences for public policy, especially for tax policy, but here we are interested mainly in how this affects the organization of urban space.

19) Liberalism includes a rather wide spectrum of opinions, so I will use the thought of John Rawls – one of the most influential liberal thinkers of the twentieth century – as my primary example.

20) John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Revised Edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1999), chapter 1.

21) John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Columbia Classics in Philosophy, Expanded Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), part 1.

22) “Margaret Thatcher: a life in quotes,” *The Guardian*, April 8, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/apr/08/margaret-thatcher-quotes>.

As we can see, the neoliberal point of view fits the type of urbanization that scattered cities represent. What is especially interesting here is that it seems to be assumed that this type of urbanization follows certain convictions about society and human functions and needs. Here, then, the representation of space precedes and justifies the material space. In this case, spaces of representation should confirm neoliberal assumptions. People's reaction to scattered city's type of urbanization should be consistent in a certain way. They should experience satisfaction rather than frustration. As we can see, however, later research carried out on inhabitants of scattered cities showed that there was a gap between expectations on living in the suburbs and experiencing living there.

What we can see here – what Harvey and Montgomery provide us with – is that politics and urban organization are not separate. The creation of scattered cities itself rests on political assumptions, such as views on human nature and activity held by the neoliberal point of view.

Conversely, a Marxist perspective would provide a different interpretation of the relations between spatial representation and material space. Representatives of the Frankfurt School such as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, or Herbert Marcuse in *One-Dimensional Man* elaborate upon the problem of creating certain attitudes and needs in a society by, for instance, mass-media. Horkheimer and Adorno called this process “the culture industry.” From their perspective, common dreams, metaphors, emotional connotations, and even some values are in fact products of mechanisms connected with capitalistic economy. They claim:

In our age the objective social tendency is incarnate in the hidden subjective purposes of company directors, the foremost among whom are in the most powerful sectors of industry—steel, petroleum, electricity, and chemicals. Culture monopolies are weak and dependent in comparison. They cannot afford to neglect their appeasement of the real holders of power if their sphere of activity in mass society (a sphere producing a specific type of commodity which anyhow is still too closely bound up with easygoing liberalism and Jewish intellectuals) is not to undergo a series of purges. The dependence of the most powerful broadcasting company on the electrical industry, or of the motion picture industry on the banks, is characteristic of the whole sphere, whose individual branches are themselves economically interwoven. All are in such close contact that the extreme concentration of mental forces allows demarcation lines between different firms and technical branches to be ignored. The ruthless unity in the culture industry is evidence of what will happen in politics. Marked differentiations such as those of A and B films, or of stories in magazines in different price ranges, depend not so much on subject matter as on classifying, organizing, and labeling consumers. Something is provided for all so that none may escape; the distinctions are emphasized and extended. The public is catered for with a hierarchical range of mass-produced products of varying quality, thus advancing the rule of complete quantification. Everybody must behave (as if spontaneously) in accordance with his previously determined and indexed level, and choose the category of mass product turned out for his type. Consumers appear as statistics on research organization charts, and are divided by income groups into red, green, and blue areas; the technique is that used for any type of propaganda.²³

23) Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1993), 2.

Their analysis concludes that strong economic factors may influence the desires and aspirations of members of society. But to understand the connection with the way urban space is arranged, we must go to what Marx refers to as the “analysis of subsumption.” Marx elaborated upon this category in an unpublished part of his monumental opus *Capital*, called “Results of the Direct Production Process.”²⁴ It stresses that the development of capitalistic economy is connected with the subordination of society to capital. The mechanism of economy transforms the lives of people – individually and collectively – so that they in a way serve the accumulation of capital. Harvey uses this idea to justify the claims that the development of cities in the nineteenth century was strictly connected with the development of capitalism, and that it actually created modern ways of life with its consumerism. The creation of a lifestyle, however, is strictly connected with the transformation of cities as places where this style of life can appear and develop. From this point of view, the transformation of cities into scattered cities is just a part of this process.

The relation between the representation of space and the material space – which follows Marxist analysis – is a dialectical one. There are no ready solutions that would allow us to create cities that fit the economy. Also, there is a set of metaphors and values which would be invariable and connected to the capitalistic economy. On the contrary, the system is always transforming and in flux. Cities in the nineteenth century created a lot of public spaces where the bourgeois way of life could appear and develop, with a multiplicity of small shops, cafes, and services. Scattered cities are, as we can see, based on a completely different idea. In this context, the politics is always connected with the processes of economic development.

The second and third features of the representation of space are connected with relational time-space theory. In particular, these features are about spatial development code and models of a public sphere. Both of them are strictly connected with politics, but not often discussed within the public sphere. Spatial development code is prepared by experts commissioned by public administration, and so do not go through democratic procedures. This process is a part of the legal and bureaucratic system that modern organizations use. Because spatial development code is responsible for organizing space, but does so un-democratically, such code is highly problematic. There is a gap in democratic procedures, or as Habermas calls it, a “democratic deficit.”²⁵ In the case of scattered cities, the problem is slightly different. People may perceive themselves as a part of one society with a relatively common identity, but they would not be able to influence the process of transforming the city, even if they organized themselves to change it.²⁶ Helplessness of that sort does not go hand in hand with democracy. Of course, it probably would not be a problem if scattered cities fulfilled the expectations and the needs of their inhabitants, but that is not the case.

Models of public space generally focus on the level of the state or the society as a whole. Thus, how to use them for a city is not exactly obvious. Of course, for neoliberals this is not a problem at all, since, according to them, “there is no society.” But if we skip this perspective, we can recognize a serious problem. This problem is connected with creating a model in which we could coordinate democratic procedures, an already-established legal order, and the wide range of interests among different actors in a society. Legal order is crucial at the city level, because, as we can see, one of the main problems is spatial development code, which is adopted on the

24) Karl Marx, *Results of the Direct Production Process*, trans. Ben Fowkes (1864), accessed July 5, 2018, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/economic/index.htm>.

25) This term was used by Habermas in 1995 to emphasize the situation in the European Union, which is controlled by European bureaucracy, while it should be discussed by European peoples. For Habermas, this deficit was a problem; Habermas’ goal was to form Europeans as a people of one European identity; Jürgen Habermas, “The Crisis of European Union in the Light of a Constitutionalization of International Law,” *The European Journal of International Law* 23, no. 2 (2012): 335–348, <http://www.ejil.org/pdfs/23/2/2277.pdf>.

26) Montgomery, *Happy City*, chapter 10.

state level, not on the local level, so inhabitants of the city may have sharply limited influence on city they live in. Another problem is that most models of the public sphere do not have a clear idea of how restraining the economic interests of major corporations are, such as represented by the construction industry.

Both spatial development code and models of public space have a normative and political character. They have the possibility of transforming the conditions of human life according to certain ideas. Hence it is important to discover urban spaces as a space for politics.

(3) Spaces of representation can be revealed in a very different way, as I pointed out in the previous part of this article. To discuss spaces of representation, I will use data collected by Charles Montgomery in his book *Happy City*. Based on research and interviews with city inhabitants, he shows the dark side of scattered cities. The idea of living in suburbs seems not to be entirely misguided, but its success transforms it into a nightmare. This type of urbanization, connected with the widespread development of this model of the city, and the vision and dreams of many people, resulted in the increase of suburbs to such a degree that everyday transport to the workplace became problematic. Traffic jams became routine between certain hours. Long distances plus traffic jams results in a situation in which the main activity during the day is to travel to work and then back home. There is no time left for family life or for other social interactions. Even though most American people enjoy driving, at the same time they experience frustration if they get stuck in a traffic jam. Finances create another problem. Gasoline is one of the most significant costs in a home budget, especially if all members of the family have to have their own cars. Any increase of gasoline prices can be a problem for a family budget. And since most houses are burdened with a mortgage, the situation is additionally stressful.

In other words, there is a serious discrepancy between the expectations of buyers of a home in a suburb and their experience living there. This discrepancy allows us to question the neoliberal point of view, with all its assumptions, and leads to political questions connected with decisions about organizational procedures and layouts of urban space.

VI. Conclusion

In order to perceive urban space as a space for politics, we must take up a multidimensional perspective. The conceptual tools provided by Harvey are useful for this purpose. The range of possibilities provided by Harvey's matrix is quite large, and allows us to research different aspects of space, especially urban space. The multidimensionality of Harvey's approach allows us, in particular, to focus on different types and areas of urban space. However, in order to agree that urban space must be understood from a political perspective, we must first agree to the following assumption and arguments.

First of all, we have to start to perceive a city as a place which is in a process of permanent transformation. The process of transformation never ceases. Secondly, we have to realize that different types of urbanization are not just results of objective and inevitable processes that take place in a society. There are concrete plans, interests, and struggles which have a crucial influence on the process of organizing urban space. In other words, there is strong a component of particularity or arbitrariness in the process of the transformation of urban space.

The first two considerations lead to the third: politics. If we have space for decisions, then it is crucial to ask about the process of making those decisions. Since we live in a democratic system, it is especially important to ask those questions, in particular because different types of urbanization have such a big influence on our life.

Fourthly, if we agree that it is important to think of urbanization from the perspective of the politics of space, we have to recognize all or most of the conditions imposed on the process of the transformation of urban space. Take, for example, the legal system. Legal systems are open to some changes, but we must be aware of their current structures. In addition, we must contend with visions of models of public space. We

have to think of certain political beliefs or values in order to make political decisions. Economy is also an important feature. Capitalistic economy is based on an assumption of permanent growth, which is one of the main features which forces the process of transformation of urban space. While these three features do not cover all the possibilities for consideration, they nonetheless show a glimpse of the complexity of the problem we are dealing with here.

While some of models of the public sphere accept, to a certain degree, the necessity of capitalistic economy and the current system, other models would question both of them. For instance, Montgomery focuses on showing that scattered cities contributed to a global crisis. The 2008 crisis began with the bankruptcy of suburban homeowners. That took place because of the increase of oil prices. As Montgomery demonstrates, a scattered city is the wrong tool for economic development. Rather, we could rethink this idea and create cities which would be profitable and better for inhabitants. In other words, he thinks that it is possible to create a stable system which would offset the interests of people with interests in the economy.²⁷

Harvey, however, takes a different position. From his perspective, we should question the assumption of permanent economic growth, which forces the transformation of urban space in a way that subordinates cities and inhabitants to global economic processes. The solution to this problem would be to rethink global economy. However, the legal system would also need to be transformed; it is blind to certain human activities, which are connected with common practices. As Harvey claims, the legal system was built on a liberal assumption based on individual rights. Therefore, it does not recognize common rights and especially not the common good. In order to change urban space, we would have to transform the legal system so that it would be sensitive to the common good and to common space. From this perspective, common good or common space is not the same as public good or public space. The latter are connected with and mediated by public administration, while common good and common space is created between inhabitants without any mediation. The idea is to create a legal gap or space in order to fulfill this proposition.²⁸

As we can see, problem of urban space opens up a range of political questions. These questions are crucial insofar as they force us to ask further questions about political visions and their relation to legal order and economy. The necessity of those political questions is the result of two phenomena. The first is connected with the crisis that affects cities and their inhabitants. If a certain model of urban space – in our case the scattered city – seems to be vulnerable to, and even maybe the source of, crisis, its bases should be rethought and changed. Other phenomenon illustrates the spaces of representation. If people would be satisfied and their needs would be fulfilled by living in this type of a city, we could say that the scattered city is a great project with some challenges that we just should deal with. But it seems that is not the case. The moment we differentiate between representation of space, which includes common dreams and visions of life, and spaces of representation, which show how people actually react and feel living in the suburbs or in the ghettos, things get much clearer. If we agree on, I think, the reasonable thesis that cities should serve the people and fulfill their needs, the necessity of politics of urban space should be our conclusion.

One final crucial question is about the criteria that we use for assessment of political visions. As a starting point, we could also use presented tools, tools which do not give us obvious conclusions and certain solutions, but rather allow us to ask important questions, create visions of preferable urban space, and check whether our solutions match our expectations. Most of that is part of politics as an activity which organizes a multiplicity of people.

27) Ibid., chapter 12.

28) Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, chapter 3.

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