

An Investigation of the Relation of Space to Society
A discussion on A. Giddens, H. Lefebvre and Space Syntax

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To my parents

Abstract

Keywords:

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space syntax
theory,
structuration
theory, Lefebvre*

This thesis is dealing with the relation of society and space as a main characteristic for elucidating the design process. More particular is based on the problem which appears both in spatial and social theories of relating entities which 'are in different scales'. This is the relation of space, which is a local notion, to society, which is a global idea or the relation of society to the everyday life, which is also local and spatial.

This thesis attempts to investigate the relation of society to space through this core problem by examining three theories which seem to deal with this issue. These are the Space Syntax Theory of Hillier and Hanson, the Structuration theory of Giddens and the theory of the Production of Space of Lefebvre. The first has an architectural and urban point of view of the matter, the second a sociological and the third a politico-economic.

The discussion of the three theories shows that all three grasp an interrelation between society and space although each theory sees this interrelation in a different way. For the Structuration theory space has an important role in the structuration of society, for Space Syntax a constructive role of the generic forms of society and for Lefebvre an instrumental character.

A big part of the research in this paper on Lefebvre is based on previous research done by the writer for the MSc Theory Course paper on the comparison between Lefebvre and Space Syntax. That paper was mostly dealing with the triad of the conceived, perceived and lived space while this one investigates other aspects of his theory.

A. Introduction

A.1 Research Question

Anyone who tries to study the built environment will soon figure out that there are two kinds of creation of space; the one is the vernacular and the other the conceived or designed space. In the first case the creation seems to be a practice of individuals or groups of individuals (societies) within a context which has never been discursive or even comprehensible, while in the second case it seems that this context is, or it should be, within the architect's or urbanist's head.

The diverse attempts of the last century, which had often as a result many unsuccessful examples of architecture and urbanism, lead someone to pose the question of the relation between space and those who create space on one hand, and, on the other hand, those who use space and can tell if it is successful, not in an aesthetic sense but mostly in its function, or not. In the case of the vernacular the individuals were both creating and using space. In the case of the contemporary architecture the architect's creates space (and uses it of course) and the individuals use it and criticize it. The

question is what are the criteria of the individuals in order to criticize if a space is successful or not? Are the individuals conscious of the use of such criteria or not? Were these criteria discursive or comprehensible by those creating space? Are these personal criteria or are they based on a more common sense of how architecture should be? The case of the vernacular architecture shows that there were some common, widely accepted, criteria guiding the creation of space which had as a result successful examples of architecture. The question is who imposes the criteria and why the architects seem not to be aware of them? Could it be said that such criteria are having a social character since they are widely accepted and so that it is society who imposes them? Could this lead to the assumption that there may be a relation of society to space? If there is, what kind of relation is this? Is it a relation of imposing criteria on the creation of space or something more than that?

The creation of space in an unconscious way, in the vernacular, and the conscious design of space by architects raises the question of the relation of society to space. This question seems rather puzzling because someone may wonder if by this is meant the relation of space to the individuals who compose society or the relation of space to the entity itself called society. The relation of space to individuals is usually easier to be grasped because we can see, we can perceive, individuals and space all around us in our everyday life and so we can understand that they may relate in some way. In the second case, the problem is that society is an abstract and macro entity while space is usually a notion we think of locally and so it is difficult to grasp how they may be related. The same problem appears in social theory as well, in order to explain how the everyday life, the social which seems spatial and local is related to the global and abstract society. So it seems likely that the problem of the society-space relation depends on finding a way to handle the way the small scale, everyday life which is spatial is related to the large scale, abstract entity called society.

The aim of this thesis is to use this core problem as a way of exploring the relation of space to society. An approach to such a question can be both from social theories and from spatial theories. However, the theories that will be analytically presented

here are three and each one investigates this relation from a different point of view. Hillier and Hanson's Space Syntax Theory has an architectural and urban point of view and is mostly described in the book "The Social Logic of Space" written in 1984, Giddens' Structuration Theory basically described in his book "The Constitution of Society", written in 1984 as well, has a sociological point of view and Lefebvre's theory of space, described in his book "The Production of Space", written in 1974 and translated in English in 1991, a politico-economic point of view.

All three theories are dealing explicitly with space and see an involvement of space both in the level of the everyday life and of society. They see an interdependence of space to all the levels of social life. The difference between them lies in the way they see this involvement and interdependence. The final discussion will examine how each one of the theories grasps the relation of space to society and where the differences between them lay.

The structure of this paper will be as follows. In the next section of the introduction writers from different fields will be presented and the reasons they are considered to be inappropriate for the argument of this thesis will be discussed.

In Chapter B each one of the main theories, is presented and the main concepts of each one are described. It is important to mention that the theories are not described here in their entity, as they cover each one a very broad field, but only the concepts that are related to the paper's question are described. In the sequence an examination and discussion of all theories follows.

In the last chapter C the conclusions of the research are presented in two sections, in the first one the research questions are revised in the light of the investigation in order to see if there is a reply, and then in the second further thoughts and questions that have been raised during the investigation of the problem are presented.

A.2 Literature Review

The investigation of the problem will start by looking at a range of writers and arguing that they are inappropriate for the project of understanding the society-space relation because they do not deal with the core issue in ways which acknowledge their interrelations as the core problem.

Max Weber

The first to be presented is a sociologist, Max Weber (1978) who was the exponent of 'social action'. In this term all human behavior is included when and in so far as the individual attaches a subjective meaning to it and it takes account of the behavior of others. He advocated that what makes social science possible was the fact that human beings act rationally for at least a large part of time. Weber did not see the interrelation between individuals and society, focusing only on individuals. Although his theory is very important for the understanding of human action, and actually Giddens' 'action' is based on Weber, it hasn't managed to grasp both the levels of the social life and of society.

Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons is also a sociologist who (1959;1964;1968) tried to establish a theory of society which he grasped as a system. He was also referring to social action but he integrated it in the context of norms and values which are imposed by the social system. He saw the action of individuals to be institutionalized into a system of status roles. This system was consisted of and being the outcome of three sub-systems: the personality system, the cultural system and the physical environment to which a society must adjust. The concept of the roles, especially described as the framework created by the social system in which the development of the personality takes place, had also many partisans in the field of anthropology, as well, like Ralph Linton (1968) and Ralf Dahrendorf (1973). In any way, all these theories, contrary to Weber, they were seeing society as the important entity and were giving less attention to individuals.

Erving Goffman

The next two social theorists had tried to introduce space in their theories. First, Goffman's theory is presented where the presence of space was explicit (1990;1961). Goffman recognizes the importance of space in the everyday life but mostly as the background of the social action which, however, plays an important role in the

communication of the meaning. Particularly, space, for him, is the 'setting' where the 'people are performing 'roles' in their everyday life. He sees space as a characteristic of the everyday life only and there is no reference to its relation to society. His work has been the base for the understanding of the face to face interaction and has also been an important reference in the Giddens' Structuration theory.

Emile Durkheim

Another social theorist who refers, although implicitly, to the relation of society to space is Durkheim. Durkheim (1978;1964;1951) tried to set a field of 'social morphology' which would study social life in relation to the constitution of the 'substratum' which directly or indirectly affects all social phenomena. This 'substratum' is the material forms of societies and particular the manner in which the individuals are disposed upon the earth and the nature and configuration of objects of all sorts which affect collective relations. In the Division of Labour, he differentiates the two kinds of solidarity, mechanical and organic, and relates them to different forms of arrangement of people in space. Mechanical solidarity, based on common characteristics, has no spatial reference or need and for this reason it did not provoke the creation of big aggregations. On the other hand, organic solidarity, arisen from the division of labour, presupposes proximity and spatial relations and lead to the creation of dense aggregations. In this theory exist a first idea of the relation between society and space. The concept, latent in Durkheim's theory, that different ways of spatial organization are the means which support different kinds of solidarity or the outcome of these solidarities, has been a basic idea of the Space Syntax theory.

Durkheim has mainly dealt with society as a whole, the solidarities are considered as entities above the individuals and the individual has not important place in his discussion. Although, in his book 'Suicide' he is dealing with this totally individual action but even that in a way in which he attempts to show that the 'nature' of this act is dominantly social.

Edward Soja

A theorist, from the geography field, who has referred to the reassertion of space in social theory was Soja (2003;2002). Soja differentiates the physical space, what he calls space per se, and the socially-based 'spatiality' which is the created space of social

organization and production. He believes that physical space has been a "*misleading epistemological foundation upon which to analyse the concrete and subjective meaning of human spatiality*" (Soja,2003:79). His approach, based on Marxist thought, is more politico-economic and has its main reference on Lefebvre's theory. The question of the 'status of space' which remains contentious (Mitchell,2002) is a persistent one in the spatial theories and apparent in Soja's concept. Soja's explanation of the society-space relation is inappropriate for this paper since he deals with 'spatiality' and not physical space.

B. Three Theories of Society and Space

B.1 Presentation of the theories

In all these theories the notion of space and its relation to society is the common and main point to be examined. However, some sociological notions will be investigated. The purpose is not to give a definition or a critique of sociological concepts but to present them to the degree they facilitate the understanding of the relation of space to society. So, for example, the definitions of system, structure and everyday life are actually presented through and because of their involvement in the relation of society to space.

B.1.a. Structuration theory

Giddens had two main objectives to achieve with the structuration theory. First, to acknowledge the importance of individual action which means to give an account of the competent and knowledgeable human agent. Second, to formulate such an account without failing to grasp the structural components of the social institutions (Giddens,1981:15). In both these ideas, of the importance of individual action and of the

structural components of social institutions, space and time are considered as very important elements.

Individual action

An important element of the structuration theory is the actions 'brought off' by individual actors, which according to Giddens constitute the set of reproduced practices of social life. These practices format the routinised character of social life and constitute forms of interaction, involving the communication of meaning, and structures, which pertain to collectivities or social communities (Giddens,1976:102-113). These constituting structures are not grasped as such by the individuals who experience only the recursive character of daily activities. All these social practices, or activities, are situated in time-space and organized in a skilled and knowledgeable fashion by human agents (Giddens,1981:19).

Structure-System

So for Giddens, structure derives from these recursive social practices, it is an element inherent in the free action of individuals. In this sense structures are more 'internal' to individuals, as they exist as memory traces and as instantiated in social practices. In this sense, structures are virtual because they exist in time-space only as moments recursively involved in the production and reproduction of social systems (Giddens,1981:26). In other words, a system is a structured totality and a structure does not exist in time-space except in the moment of the constitution of a system, so structure and system are appearing and existing the same time but are not the same thing (Giddens,1979:59-73). The definition that Giddens gives for system is "*reproduced relations between actors or collectivities, organized as regular social practices*" (Giddens,1984). Systems have structural properties, they are composed of patterns of relationships between actors or collectivities reproduced across time and space, but they are not structures in themselves because structures are characterized by the absence of a subject (Giddens,1979:59-73). According to Giddens:

"To say that structure is a 'virtual order' of transformative relations means that social systems, as reproduced social practices, do not have 'structures' but rather exhibit 'structural properties' and that structure exists,

as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human agents” (Giddens,1984:17).

Structuration

The moment of constitution of a social system which has as result a structure is what Giddens calls 'structuration'. Structuration is the way that structure and systems are produced and reproduced through the application of structural properties. According to Giddens to study the structuration of a social system is to study the ways in which that system, via the application of generative rules and resources, and in the context of unintended outcomes, is produced and reproduced in interaction (Giddens,1979:66).

Duality of structure

The basic idea of the structuration theory is the duality of structure, that is structure both as rules and as resources or as the means and the outcome of the actions of human agents. Structure is the rules and resources that make social relations possible but at the same time it is the outcome of these social relations. This is better understood in the parallel with language where the structural properties of language are the means and the rules which speakers apply to understand each other but at the same time they are the outcome since the speakers reproduce these rules by making use of them (Giddens,1979:59-73). So structure is constituted by individual action, by the recursive character of this action, and at the same time it is applied by individual actors in the creation of social relations.

Social-system integration

A basic concept of Giddens, for the understanding of the importance of space in his theory, is the social and system integration. Giddens rejects the terms micro and macro, which are usually used in sociology, and substitute them with social and system integration. The main difference between micro- and macrosociology was the distinction between small groups and the concern with the activities of the 'free agent', and larger collectivities or communities and the analysis of the structural constraints which set limits to free activity. For Giddens there is furthermore another difference which is between face-to-face interaction and interaction with others who are physically absent which is

achieved by the 'stretching' of social systems in space-time (Giddens,1979:201-210). Social integration is "*the reciprocity of practices between actors in circumstances of co-presence, understood as continuities in and disjunctions of encounters*" while system integration is "*the reciprocity between actors or collectivities across extended time-space, outside conditions of co-presence*"(Giddens,1984:376). So actually, Giddens differentiates interactions in two categories, those which take place with the actors being co-present and can be called 'social' (according to social integration) and those which are taking place with the actors not being co-present but by the mediation of the system which is stretched across time-space and these can be called 'system interactions' (according to system integration). These two notions, social and system integration, show the interrelation and interdependence of the individual action and the system in Giddens' theory. The creation of the system is based on individual action, as it was previously explained, and the system is 'used' by the individuals in order to achieve 'system integration', this is to interact with individuals which are not co-present.

Space

From the definition of social and system integration it can be concluded the importance of space in Giddens' theory. Space is an important element for social integration and organization, since the integration in this case is based on the 'face to face' relations, this means actors co-present in space. System integration, on the other hand, refers to relations that are not face to face but which presuppose these relations for the system to be created (Giddens,1981:29). Space is also important for the routinised character of daily life and of the structure of the system, previously described. Space and time are important elements for the situation of practices and are responsible for the 'daily paths' and 'life paths' of the actors. In the level of the everyday life, or social integration, space is an element according to which the 'paths' or the routines of actors are formed and in the level of the system, or system integration, these 'paths' have to be overcome in order to bring actors closer. As Giddens says "*space is not an empty dimension along which social groupings become structured, but has to be considered in terms of its involvement in the constitution of systems of interaction*"(Giddens,1984:368). He relates space to system integration with the concept of 'time-space distanciation' and to social integration with the concept of 'locale' and 'region'.

For the system integration to be achieved Giddens introduces the concept of time-space distanciation (Giddens,1981:4). This is the practice that social systems are using in order to 'stretch' in time-space. The time-space distanciation is a reply to the problem of order in social theory which tries to explicate how the limitations of individual 'presence' are transcended (Giddens,1984:35). He refers, for example, to smaller societies, as hunter-gatherers societies or settled agricultural communities where the time-space distanciation was the result of the grounding of legitimation on tradition and on the importance of kinship in the structuration of social relations (Giddens,1981:5). In another case, in class divided societies, and in all societies characterized by extensive time-space distanciation, what made possible the time-space stretching was the centralization of resources –especially administrative resources- which is established by the development of cities (Giddens,1984:143). Although Giddens is trying to explain how the stretching is happening in different societies his explanation is not adequate as, for example, he doesn't explain how tradition or kinship or the centralization of resources are solving the problem of the limitations of individual presence.

Locale, Region

In the case of social integration where the role of space is more explicit, he uses the notion of 'locale' and 'region'. A 'locale' is the setting of any interaction, not just the environment, the space where interaction takes place, but all the features of this space that individuals drawn upon in the sustaining of the communication. A locale is the means that helps the communication of meaning (Giddens,1979:201-210). All collectivities have defined locales of operation, this is physical settings associated with the 'typical interactions' composing those collectivities as social systems. Locales are normally regionalized on a time-space basis, the regions are aspects of the settings which are implicated in systems of interaction, by being differentiated for different types of individuals or different activities (Giddens,1981:40). So social integration is based on the interactions in circumstances of co-presence which take place in 'locales' and 'regions'.

Institutions

An important element of the connection of social and system integration are the institutionalized practices (Giddens,1984:xxxi). These are practices that have managed to outlast in time and have a spatial 'breadth', meaning they are widespread across a range

of interactions. The structures that organize these practices are considered as deeply layered (Giddens,1979:65). Each society has different conditions of social and system integration, which means different connections between the proximate and remote in time and space, and so its own form of institutional articulation (Giddens,1984:144.). The connections of social and system integration

"...can be traced by examining the modes of regionalization which channel, and are channelled by, the time-space paths that the members of a community or society follow in their day-to-day activities. Such paths are strongly influenced by, and also reproduce, basic institutional parameters of the social systems in which they are implicated"(Giddens,1984:142).

Power

The concept of structure as resources is also related to power. Power within social systems can be analyzed as relations of autonomy and dependence between actors who draw upon and reproduce structural properties of domination (Giddens,1981,29) or the domination of parties which take advantage of the resources (Giddens,1979:69). The structural properties of domination include the dominion of human beings over the material world (allocative resources) and over the social world (authoritative resources) (Giddens,1981:91-97) The importance of resources is related to the centrality of power in social systems. All social interaction involves the use of power, as a necessary implication of the logical connection between human action and transformative capacity (Giddens,1981:29).

Summarizing Giddens' theory, space is important for the interaction of actors because it contributes in the communication of meaning. It is also important for the structuration of systems by the way it implicates in the routinised character of social life by imposing limitations and 'creating paths' on human action (Giddens,1984:112). Another way in which the space is involved in human action is in the sense that human action provokes the stretching of social relations across space in order to overcome the limitations of individual presence. The resources to traverse specific time-space paths are of the highest consequence, not only for the structuration of organizations but also for the individual actor as it has been shown from the examples of the hunter-gatherer and class-

divided societies and also because of their implication of the time-space paths in the institutional articulation.

B.1.b. Lefebvre's theory

As seen up to now, Giddens, has as starting point in his theory society and structure and introduces space as important element for the study of these two. Lefebvre, on the contrary, starts directly from space and particularly by what he calls social space, which is the space of people who deal with material things, and attempts to build all his argument on the attributes of this space and on his main hypothesis that social space is a social product and every society produces its own space (Lefebvre,1991). So he actually examines societies through the spaces that they produce. Lefebvre's concept is deeply influenced by the Marxist thought.

The spatial triad

Lefebvre's theory is based on what he calls the spatial triad. This triad is the space as physical, mental and social and identifies them with the three moments which are the perceived, which refers to spatial practice, the conceived, which is related to representations of space and the lived, which is what he calls representational spaces. The spatial practice of a society is this society's space which it produces slowly, the physical space, the perceived space. Representation of space is the conceptualized space, which is conceived by scientists, architects, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers. This is the dominant space in any society. Finally the representational space is the space as lived and experienced through its associated images and symbols. This space overlays physical space making symbolic use of its objects.

The four states of space

Based on this triad and considering that every society gives more importance on one of these elements each time, Lefebvre has differentiated space in four categories identifying each one with historical periods (based on the modes of production). His starting point is '*absolute*' space which was the politico-religious space, made up of sacred or cursed locations: temples, palaces, commemorative or funerary monuments, places

privileged or distinguished in one way or another. In this space there was the predominance of an "idea", of something mental. With the medieval town a new space emerged, the *'abstract' space*, the space of accumulation (of money and commodities), the space of exchange, of communications and networks. This space tended to govern the rhythms that now escaped from the control of nature, it was institutional as instituted by a state and it was political as product of violence and war. He believes that although abstract space seems homogeneous, it is not; it encompasses contradictions between economic growth and social development, between the social and the political, power and knowledge, quality and quantity (the space of consumption to the consumption of space), need and desire, productive and unproductive spaces. The abstract space, because of these contradictions, carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space, the *'differential' space*. This is the space of 'the right to difference', in contrast to the usual idea that

"...what is different is, what is excluded: the edges of the city, shanty towns, the spaces of forbidden games, of guerilla war, of war. Sooner or later, however, the existing center and the forces of homogenization must seek to absorb all such differences, and they will succeed if these retain a defensive posture and no counterattack is mounted from their side."
(Lefebvre,1991:373)

Yet in this space, the differential, dominant is the architecture of pleasure and joy not of commerce, power or productive labour.

*Dominated-
Appropriated space*

For Lefebvre space tends to be an instrument as *"it is becoming the principal stake of goal-directed actions and struggles"* (Lefebvre,1991:410). Space is more than the stage or setting of action, an effect of a past, a history or a society; it is the medium, with a role as an instrument and as goal. Particularly abstract space, is the space of strategies, it is a master's project a *'dominated' space*, transformed and mediated by technology and practice. Dominance coincides with practical power and with what he calls abstract and conceived space. Dominated space is usually closed, sterilized, emptied out. The full meaning of dominated space can be grasped only when it is contrasted with the opposite and inseparable concept of *'appropriation'*. Appropriation, for Lefebvre, is related to the

cutting off of space from the capitalist power, or generally from what has turned space to be abstract, in order to be lived. In order

"...to abolish the capitalist state, space must be reappropriated on the planetary scale; historical time will be indeed rediscovered, but "in and through [reappropriated] space." And this is because everything (all the "concrete abstractions") that revolutionaries seek to abolish -- ideology, the state, the commodity, money, value, and class struggle -- do not and cannot exist independently of space" (Lefebvre,1991)

According to Lefebvre, there are a lot of appropriated spaces but it is not always easy to decide in what respect, how, by whom and for whom they have been appropriated. In order to appropriate space, Lefebvre believes that a "revolution of space" is necessary which will be achieved by the establishment of a theory of space (Lefebvre,1991:422).

*Space-Evryday Life-
System*

The instrumental character of space is also apparent in the fact that it implies and embodies an ideology –that of the primacy of abstract unity (Lefebvre,1991:355). This is the fragmented and at the same time homogenizing character of the conceived space and the contradictions that it encompasses, what was previously referred as differential space. As Lefebvre says, the problem with abstract or conceived space is that it is fragmented although it seems homogeneous or better with homogenizing character. It has only an apparent coherence since actually it conceals contradictions which are clearly revealed by the analysis of this space. The space belongs to everyday life and it must return there escaping the domination of the system, which use it as an instrument. For Lefebvre the everyday life and the system, the micro and the macro, are not interrelated, as in the structuration theory, but are two different things with the macro exercising power on the micro. He, also, like Giddens, sees the micro as a level which implies and supposes neighbourhood or contingent relations in a social space but the macro, contrary to Giddens, controls the micro, it penetrates it and imposes regulations upon it, which are themselves at differing levels of depth and effectiveness: norms of conduct and behaviour patterns, models and roles, etc. He sees a relation of abuse and constraint between the two. He sees the macro making every effort to contain, to absorb and reabsorb the micro (but by means of the actions of privileged individuals, its leaders) (Lefebvre,2002:141). So

both the macro and the micro are claiming space. The system wants space for exchange and the everyday life wants it for use. Everyday life, for Lefebvre, cannot be understood without the contradiction between use and exchange. A property of abstract space is that it is considered as a medium of exchange which tends to absorb use. The shift from domination to appropriation should be done by the primacy of use over exchange. So the implication of space, is recognised in both level of the everyday life, micro level, and in the macro level as well,

"...space's hegemony does not operate solely on the 'micro' level, effecting the arrangement of surfaces in a supermarket, for instance, or in a 'neighbourhood' of housing units; nor does it apply only on the 'macro' level, as though it were responsible merely for the ordering of 'flows' within nations or continents. On the contrary, its effects may be observed on all planes and in all the interconnections between them"(Lefebvre,1991:412).

Everyday life

Although Lefebvre sees this polarization between the micro and macro, or the everyday life and the system which he sees as two different things, he doesn't reduce everyday life to the sum of the individuals that compose it. On the contrary, he believes that, the idea of everyday life is only meaningful within a totality, but this totality must be perceived dialectically. Everyday life is a neglected fragment or a level of social practice of a totality (society, social structure, culture) (Lefebvre,2002:31). For Lefebvre, the everyday is linked first with astructural elements, second with elements 'structured' by determined and fragmented activities and functions associated with society as a whole and third with elements which are organized by apparatus existing on the macro scale in society as a whole (Lefebvre,2002:164). From this concept it derives that everyday life, society and the 'apparatus on the macro scale' are three different things in his theory. It has been already referred that the capitalist state can be an example of this apparatus on the macro scale.

Social practice

The 'structured' elements of everyday life are what he calls 'praxis' or social practice which reveals itself as a totality. For Lefebvre, like for Giddens, everyday life consists of this repetitive praxis, this is stereotyped and repeated actions which keep the human world going, and help to produce it over and over again. However, he accentuates

that repetitive and creative praxis should not be separated, and the everyday should be defined as the place where repetition and creativity meet and confront each other (Lefebvre,2002:239). Yet, this totality never appears to be other than fragmentary, contradictory, and composed of levels, and of partial totalities. This is analogous to the existence of contradictions in space referred above. Society is reached from within via these fragments which presuppose a whole and which necessitate the concept of a whole of which they are the evidence and the elements but not the entirety (Lefebvre,2002:237). So actually he sees society as a totality and as fragmented at the same time but doesn't explain how these two opposites can co-exist as attributes of the same entity.

System

Furthermore, except from his concept of structure and everyday life, his concept about system also creates confusion. He sees the everyday made up of partial systems, juxtaposed without any rational links, and each with its own implications and consequences: temporality, rhythms, periodicity, recurrences and repetitions, specific works and symbolizations, these systems are distinct and disconnected. He believes that there is a tendency to make the word 'system' and the word 'structure' synonymous, particularly when certain characteristics of structure are emphasized, such as coherence, inner logic, and the whole in which elements are distributed and maintained according to an immanent logic (Lefebvre,2002:175). Lefebvre recognizes that the term system was not very clear because it was used to mean at the same time the real, conceptual constructs and pure abstractions, which in every case, had the characteristic of balance and inner cohesion. But there is a need to know where this characteristic originates: from logic, from the real, or from both and this would explain the ambiguity of the idea of structure, which is understood sometimes as a construct (a model) and at other times as given (an essence) or as a mixture of these two polarities. It could be said at this point that Lefebvre actually identifies the problem to which Giddens has suggested an answer. In the structuration theory it is clear that system and structure originate from the real and they are understood as given.

Summing up Lefebvre's theory, it could be said that he differentiates space into the perceived and the lived which he considers to be the space of everyday life and the

conceived which is the space of the system. This is the space he calls 'abstract', in the same sense as Marx refers to abstract labour, and he believes that this space is dominated by the system which has turned it to be an exchangeable commodity. However, it must be appropriated by individuals in order to be 'used' in their everyday life. So he sees the involvement of space both in the everyday life and in the system but contrary to Giddens, for Lefebvre these two are different entities. For Lefebvre, space is an instrument that can be used accordingly to exercise power, either from the system or from individuals, and the underpinning of social relations, since relations cannot have real existence save in and through space (Lefebvre,1991:404). An analysis of this underpinning should imply to explain a genesis and constitute a critique of the institutions that have transformed the space under consideration.

B.1.c. Space Syntax theory

Space Syntax has as starting point space, like Lefebvre, but the difference lies in that Lefebvre refers to social space, which is the space of people who deal with material things, while Space Syntax deals with the physical, architectural and urban space. So, although the space to which Lefebvre refers can also include the architectural and urban space, his definition of space is more general and therefore more abstract. Space Syntax's theory begins first by detecting the social logic of space and then continues with an attempt to explain the relation of society to space which also gives a possible definition of society through space.

Configuration

The social logic of space is identified in the fact that there is social information which is embedded in space. This information is embedded particular in the *configuration* of space. Configuration is an important notion of Space Syntax and means relations that take into account of other relations (Hillier,2003). The importance of configurations for Space Syntax, shows that what are important in space are the relations between the elements than the attributes of the elements themselves. The elements, the parts, affect the whole and the whole emerges from the parts in their distinctive configurational

position, and the whole is highly sensitive to the part. Configuration also solves the problem of relations which seem to be abstract while configurations seem more hard-edged things (Hillier & Netto,2001:13.6).

*Local-global
relation*

This phenomenon of the part-whole relation is observed in settlements or buildings complexes which are, according to Space Syntax, emergent patterns deriving from generative rules. Emergent pattern means, global pattern emerging from a local rule. The reproduction of a rule which creates a system leads Space Syntax to the idea of the domination of the *law of the global pattern deriving by local rules* (Hillier & Hanson,1984). Space follows this law but although it is created bottom-up, it has both a bottom-up and top-down functionality (Hillier & Netto,2001:13.7), which means that the global affects the local and is affected by it or as it was referred above there is this interrelation between the part and the whole. This duality in the function of these systems is crucial for their attributes. The same concept was seen in Giddens' theory with the idea of the creation of structure and system (the whole or global) by the routinised situated practices of the individuals (the parts or local). This relation between the parts and the whole, or the local and global, and the relations of the parts themselves is that accounts for the configurational properties of space and the way in which society and culture are embedded in space. The process of embedding social information in space is not a discursive one and Space Syntax invented techniques of analysis of space, which describe its configurational aspects and the way they are related to human presence.

Co-presence

Space Syntax sees space influencing individuals as well, by creating circumstances of co-presence and patterns of movement. *Co-presence and encounter* are basic concepts of space syntax theory. In urban settlements this is explained with the theory of natural movement and verified by the correlation of configurational analysis with patterns of real movement (Hillier et al,1993). The natural movement theory shows that the movement in urban space is due to the configuration of the space rather than to attractors. Something similar happens in buildings where the configuration organizes certain kinds of social relations by defining the position of different categories of individuals in buildings, like inhabitants and visitors, which have an effect on the co-

presence and encounters that take place in buildings (Hillier & Hanson,1984:143). The idea of the relation of space with different categories of individuals is also mentioned in Giddens' concept of defining regions in a locale. These regions are differentiated for different types of individuals or different activities, although he doesn't explain how this regionalization arises and how it affects the social integration.

For Space Syntax, a way in which space influences social relations and is affected by them is through the patterns of co-presence that space establishes or that are inscribed in space. Nevertheless, co-presence and interaction are the 'hardware' of society while the rules, beliefs, values and practices which guide interactions are the 'software' and the software is what seems to be the important thing (Hillier & Netto,2001). So there is an interaction of space and the 'hardware' of society, through the patterns of co-presence that configuration generates and an interaction with the 'software' through the inverted genotype.

*Inverted
Genotype*

The *inverted genotype* is the social information that is embedded in space. Space Syntax calls it 'inverted' because the information is not in individuals' heads but in the built environment. The inverted genotype is the structured information on which the system runs and it exists as a transpatial or informational structure within an environment of human spatio-temporal reality and activity (Hillier & Hanson,1984:44). The description center, is the center where the genetic information of each organism is. The information determining the way the individuals create space is not only in their heads but in the built environment as well. This spatial information is retrieved by individuals affecting the way they interact with others and it can be responsible not only for the reproduction but for the production as well of social relations,

"...the inverted genotype of the discrete system can permit that mixture of structural stability and evolutionary morphogenesis, while being generally stable, can undergo revolutionary rather than evolutionary changes and establish radical discontinuities in its history. It is a system without genetic memory. It can also be changed by deliberate and conscious action. Reflective action could operate on the system's description of itself in much the same way as an external perturbation or catastrophe"(Hillier & Hanson,1984:44).

*Description
Retrieval*

Individuals retrieve the social information from space because of a mechanism of the brain that is called '*description retrieval*'. This is the ability of our minds to input abstract information into the world we create and also retrieve abstract information from it (Hillier,2003). Descriptions refer to social software, to properties of the entity in which social models are embedded, they are the locus of the social software. Description retrieval involves the participation of the human cognitive subject and at the spatial systems it occurs at two levels, at the level of the generative rules by which consistent local behaviours lead to emergent global patterns and at the level of the emergent global pattern itself (Hillier,2003).

Up to this point the social logic of space was described, this is the way that social information is inscribed in space and the way that space affects social relations through the creation of circumstances of co-presence. In order to see the relation of space to society through Space Syntax, a clarification should be made, this is a differentiation that Hillier makes of a 'theory of the social' and a 'theory of society'¹ (Hillier,2003). The differentiation is primarily based on the fact that all our ideas about the 'social' –social life, social experiences, social behaviour, social practices- are spatio-temporal while our ideas about society without any spatial content. It is easier to grasp the relation of space to the social, since our everyday lives are dealing with it, than the relation of space to society which seems an abstract entity.

In order to show that society is related to space or that it has a spatial necessity, Space Syntax first shows that society is not an immaterial entity because if it is then it cannot matter how it is deployed in space (Hillier & Neto,2001:13.5). Space syntax, sees society, in the same way as space, as a system which consists of elements related to one another. What is important for this system is first the way the elements are related to each other, what was referred above as configuration, and then the substance of the system which derives because of these relations. The crucial point is that from the

¹ This differentiation has not been done to separate these two theories but in order to accentuate the different ways in which systems, like society, work.

moment the system is created, the attributes both of the system and the elements are mutating, because the attributes of the system are reflecting back and affecting the attributes of the elements. So the whole system functions in two ways or levels, which were described above as local and global or the part whole relation.

*Discrete
Systems*

Society, for space syntax is a discrete system of individuals with intrinsic structure. In order to understand better the relation of society to space the definition of a discrete system should be presented as this appears in the 'Social Logic of Space' (Hillier & Hanson,1984:34). Discrete system is a system composed by autonomous, freely mobile, spatially discrete entities called individuals, and the relations between them seem mostly abstract so that the system cannot be grasped as an entity, as a thing. The problem of relations is that they do not seem to be real as opposed to the things they relate. So relations are not grasped by our senses but by our minds (Hillier& Netto,2001:13.5). This means that society cannot be regarded as a spatially continuous system because the relations that connect individuals do not exist in the real world, in space-time. Society seems to be a system without connections, without influence, without material embodiment. Yet, what Space Syntax has done with the concept of configuration is to make relations seem more real things and show that what makes such an aggregation being conceived as a system is exactly the construction of relations among the individuals of the system which are manifested in space-time reality. Or better say, the manifestation of the rules that govern the relations between individuals in space-time reality.

*The primacy of the
phenotype*

The space-time manifestation of rules in discrete systems or arrangements, establishes a very important law in the Space Syntax theory which is called the *principle of the primacy of the phenotype* (Hillier & Hanson,1984:205). This is the primacy not of the rule or the structure in abstract but their concretization in space-time reality. So a rule or a structure does not necessary precede the spatio-temporal event but it exists only because of its spatio-temporal production and reproduction. The manifestation of the rule is what makes discrete systems as society to seem as real things. A parallel can be attempted with the idea found in Giddens' structuration concept, as well, which explains the creation of

the system by the routinised character of the individual actions which are embedded in space-time.

*Space-society
relation*

At this point, the relation of society to space as seen by Space Syntax can be presented. The law of the primacy of the phenotype explained the way that a rule is manifested in space-time. Then by the description retrieval mechanism individuals can retrieve abstract information by concrete realities. The information that they retrieve is the social 'software' which is inscribed in space according to the theory of the *inverted genotype*. All these concepts show how the individuals are interacting with space and the social attributes of space. Space Syntax attempts to show furthermore the constructive role of space in creating the generic forms of society (Hillier & Netto,2001:13.3). This could be the 'theory of society' as complementary to the 'theory of the social'.

Space Syntax in order to describe the time-space reality of society represent it as a graph of the individuals considering that all are related to each other through the activities that they practice. Some of these activities have as objective to expand the graph, to generate relations, and so are called generative of the graph and others have as objective the conservation of the existing relations and are called conservative of the graph. Space Syntax enters time in this concept by identifying everyday activities with generative activities and activities that have longer periodicity with conservative activities. Space Syntax gets this concept further by the introduction of the idea of long and short models (Hillier & Netto,2001,13.16). These models are determining the number of rules that are required to make an event happen. The length of the model is the ratio of rules over events, which means for example that a ritual is a long model description, because more rules are applied for a ritual to happen, and a party a short one, because there are few rules. So, it is concluded that generative, everyday activities or events with short periodicity tend to be short models and the conservative activities or with long periodicity tend to be long models.

This connection of time to social software leads Space Syntax to the connection of the social software to space. The connection is done through time and movement and the dependence of encounters on movement. So encounters, which depend on movement, depend also on time. The dependence of encounter on movement is different between local and global space. In local space the encounters happen through the agency of space itself without any special effort by the individuals and usually short models are drawn upon to generate encounter and long models to restrict encounter. In global space the greater the distance that has to be overcome by movement, the longer the model that is used. So long models are used to overcome distance and control proximity for the reproduction of the system and short models are used to generate and sustain the system. By this concept Space Syntax explains how space gets into the social software. It is important here to stress that this relation for Space Syntax is explained not in a specific way of corresponding social activities to spatial patterns but in a generic way through the mediation of encounters and movement. As it is referred,

"...the relation of social activities to space is generic rather than specific. It is not this or that pattern of activity that gives rise to the durable spatial patterns that we find in cities, but the demands that different kinds of activity make on co-presence, which articulate the spatial laws to make one kind of space rather than another."(Hillier & Netto,2001:13.2).

It could be concluded that Space Syntax's approach has two different objectives which though cannot be seen separately. The first is to explain the social character of space and the second the spatial character of society. In both case co-presence and encounter are main notions. Space Syntax first relates space to the individuals and to the everyday life, to the social, through the inscription of social information on configuration of space and the influence of configuration on co-presence. Then, the relation of space to society is examined through the spatial and social conditions which are necessary for co-presence and encounter to happen in order to generate and conserve society.

B.2. Discussion, Critical comparison of the three theories

The discussion will start with a comparison of the three theories within the context of the concepts of the questions posed in the introduction. After the comparison the relation of space to society in the three theories will be examined.

Are all theories talking about the same space?

Generally it could be said that all three theories are referring to physical space. However, it is only Space Syntax that shows this explicitly with its occupation with the architectural and urban space. The other two theories as they are not approaching the matter from a spatial point of view as Space Syntax but from a social, particularly Giddens from a sociological and Lefebvre from a politico-economical, are not very explicit to what kind of space they are referring. They are both referring to a material space but they do not mention anything about architectural or urban space. Giddens reference to the features of locale show that he is referring to a material space, although he doesn't deal with the attributes of this space nor with the mechanisms that this space is related to society. Lefebvre is referring to the space of people who deal with material things, which doesn't state anything particular about space, but his occupation with the perceived space and the conceived space of architects, urbanists and designers lead to the conclusion that he is dealing with physical space and in a degree even architectural but in a general way. Space Syntax not only refers to architectural and urban space but shows also particular attributes of this space, as configuration, related to society.

In order to examine the way each theory grasps the relation of space to society first it should be examined the way each one grasps society.

Is society for each theory the sum of the individuals or an entity?

For Structuration theory, society is a system that has structural properties which derive from the repetitive character of individual actions. The structure of the system is at the same time the rules and the resources drawn upon individuals actors. In Giddens' theory the interrelation of individuals and society is obvious and there is no question of the one being more important than the other. Lefebvre, on the contrary, sees the everyday life and the system as two entities which are opposed and in conflict. By the notion 'system' he means mostly the state or an entity based on the relations of the modes of production.

Society, as a term, is not very clear in his theory. It seems that there is only the everyday life, which is however grasped as an entity and not as the sum of individuals but not explained what kind of entity it is, and a politico-economic system which obtain the power. So it could be said that for Lefebvre there are two entities, the 'everyday life' and the 'politico-economic system' which exercise control and power on the 'everyday life'. Finally, the concept of the discrete system of Space Syntax shows clearly that society is conceived both in its entity and in its composition of discrete elements.

How does each theory grasp society?

It could be said that for Giddens society is a virtual entity. He sees the system as the relations, which are not real things, between actors and the structure of the system as virtual because it doesn't exist except in the time of its creation. So since both structure and system are virtual it could be said that society also is virtual. The only thing that is real are the situated in space-time practices of individuals and the individuals themselves of course. Space Syntax is opposite to this concept and by using the same notion of 'situated practices', borrowed from Giddens, and the way these practices can be related through the individuals that take part in them, since individuals can take part in one and then in another, it creates a graph where all individuals are related through the situated practices in which they interfere (Hillier & Netto,2001:13.10). The difference between Giddens and Space Syntax is that the first considers situated practices to be dispersed and the second to be connected. In this way Space Syntax explains its belief that society is a real, a space-time entity. For Lefebvre, there is not such question as there is no society. But the 'everyday life' and the system, he is refering to, are definitely real entities.

Is it society, the individuals or both who relate to space?

As it was discussed above all three theories grasp two levels of the social, that of the everyday life of individuals and that of a superordinate system. This system is society, except of the case of Lefebvre, and each theory sees a different relation between the two. However, all three theories see a relation of both these levels with space. Giddens uses the concepts of social and system integration to refer to the two levels and the differentiation between them is based in a spatial characteristic. Social integration is related to co-presence of individuals and system integration to absence of individuals but

to the presence of the system. Lefebvre also differentiates the space of exchange and use, of domination and appropriation, the conceived and the lived, the abstract and the differential all relating to the system and to individuals accordingly. From all three theories, in Lefebvre's there is not only a relation of both the individuals and the system to space but furthermore space seems to be divided between them. In Space Syntax theory the differentiation was very clear, as it is already referred, with the differentiation of the 'theory of the social' and the 'theory of society'.

How is the relation of space to individuals grasped by each theory?

In the case of the 'theory of the social', the interaction of individuals with space was explained with the inscription of social information, the inverted genotype, in the configuration of space and the retrieval of this information by individuals, via the description retrieval mechanism, which influence their movement and the encounters. Giddens explains the interaction with the individuals through the notions of 'locale' and 'region'. He sees the locales, particularly their features, contributing in the communication of meaning. So Giddens sees meaning in space but he doesn't explain how the meaning is embedded in the 'locale' and the mechanism through which it helps the communication of meaning. Space Syntax with the idea of the imposition of meaning, the inverted genotype, in the configuration and the description retrieval mechanism answers explicitly these questions. It was also referred above the similarity of the notion of 'region', in Structuration theory, with the differentiation of categories of individuals in buildings, in Space Syntax theory, although Structuration theory is not very explicit how the 'regionalisation' is happening, how the 'regions' are defined. For Giddens, space except of being the means, as it happens at the level of social integration, it appears as well as a constraint or a more decisive element in the structuration of social life through the paths that it creates. The 'life paths' and the 'daily paths' of actors are strongly influenced by space. Lefebvre, sees space as perceived and lived by individuals. He recognises a spatial practice of individuals and the imposition of meaning in space by them (what he calls representational spaces) which gives to space the attribute to be 'used' (in contrast to 'exchange').

How is the relation of space to society grasped by each theory?

On the other hand, someone could say that the relation of space to society is defined by Lefebvre in the phrase that *"...every society –and hence every mode of production with its subvariants (i.e. all those societies which exemplify the general concept)- produces a space, its own space"* (Lefebvre,1991:31). However, particular attention should be paid, and maybe further research should be done, by what he means with 'society'. Nevertheless, except of seeing space as a product, he also sees it as an instrument. In this attribute is identified the relation of space to the system. The politico-economic system uses space for exchange and as an instrument to exercise power and control and this is done by imposing in it its ideology and by abstracting by it the meaning (the social meaning). The observation by Lefebvre of the abstraction of meaning from space seems to be interesting and could be further investigated (Lefebvre,1991:337).

Space Syntax defines the role of space as constructive for creating the generic forms of society. This is shown through the use of short or long models to overcome space and generate or sustain relations in distance and to regulate the relations in circumstances of co-presence and proximity. In Structuration theory, at the level of the system integration space appears as an obstacle because of the limitations of human presence, because of the human body individuals cannot be everywhere at the same time. Although, Giddens' concept of stretching the system across space, seems to be similar with the idea of overcoming space, Giddens doesn't explain, as explicitly as Space Syntax, how this stretching will happen and it is not very clear what he means by this.

Do these three theories see an interaction of society to space?

In the previous question it was shown how space affects society. In this one the opposite will be examined, if society affects space. The question could also be if some social categories can be related to space. It can be said that all three theories see an interaction of society to space but again, Space Syntax is the one that more explicitly describes this interaction. Space Syntax sees society, or social information, social categories, to be inscribed in space as it has already been presented with the notion of the inverted genotype. Giddens is referred to space as a factor affecting the structuration of social systems, his notions of 'locale', 'region' and 'space-time distanciation' are spatial categories. But he also sees the 'locale' as a setting whose elements are taking part in the

communication of meaning. In this way he relates social categories, these which compose the meaning, to spatial, the 'locale'. Since Giddens sees meaning in space this means that there is something social inscribed in space but as it was referred above he is not explaining how meaning is inscribed there. The same observation operates in Lefebvre's concept. His 'perceived space' is a spatial category while the 'conceived' and 'lived' spaces are mostly mental and social categories which are however related to space. His belief that ideologies can be inscribed in space and that space is an instrument of power and control accentuates this relation of spatial and social categories but he, neither, explains how these attributes can be assigned to space.

Yet, it is important to emphasize that although they see the relation of spatial to social categories they don't explain how this relation works. Of course, if this was explained it would be probably be the answer to the same question of the relation of space to society.

As it was referred in the introduction, the core problem of both spatial and social theories is the dual character of space and of the social. The two levels of the social are these of the individuals and of society and of space the local and the global. All theories recognize two levels in space and in the social but each one see in a different way their interrelation. Both Giddens and Lefebvre correspond the local to the everyday life and the global to society. Giddens, through the notions of 'locale' and social integration examined the interaction of the local space with the individuals co-present in it without examining the effect that the global level of space may have to this co-presence. On the contrary he sees the effect of the global level of the social, society, on the local, everyday co-presence. In the same way, by relating the global to system integration, he reduced from anything global the importance that the local element may have to its constitution. On the opposite of what he advocated for the individual action and society, where he saw the interdependence and interrelation in both levels, he doesn't see this interdependence and interrelation in the local and global level of space. Lefebvre as well corresponds the global space to the system and the local to the everyday life. He sees the global space as the

space created by the system and the local space produced and used by the individuals. It can be said that they have an idea that there may be something global in space, with the reading of meaning in it, but this concept is not clearly explained as it has already been referred. Space Syntax's explanation of the inscription of social information in the configuration of space, actually 'brings' society down to the local level and with the creation of the global pattern by the local rule it sees the implication of the local in the global.

C. Conclusions

C.1 Are the research questions finally replied?

Under the light of the previous discussion of the three theories, the questions of the paper will be raised again. Before this is done, what is important to be emphasized is the recognition from all theories of both the local and global levels in space and the two levels of the social.

*The relation of Space to
Society*

The relation of society to space has been grasped in a different way by each theory. Hillier sees space being constructive for society. He sees space like Giddens sees structure being the means and the outcome of social action. For Hillier space has a constructive role in the sense that it is both the means and the outcome of interaction. Space both constructs society and it is at the same time its output. Besides this role, space is also an obstacle, in the global level, that has to be overcome for societies or individuals to come closer in order to interact.

On the other hand, for Giddens space has an influential role on the structuration of society and on the communication of meaning. It affects the routines of individuals and for this reason the structures and it has inherent meaning which influences social action.

On the global level, Giddens as well, sees space as an obstacle that has to be overcome for systems to be integrated.

Lefebvre sees space as an important element of the everyday life because of the meaning that it carries. Space is a product of society, but is also used as an instrument to exercise power and control. He doesn't see the exercise of power and control via the physical attributes of space but via its exploitation by the system. Instead of space being a possession for common use it has become an object of exchange. But in order to become exchangeable it should first become interchangeable, because exchange implies interchangeability *"the interchangeability of a good makes that good into a commodity"* (Lefebvre,1991:337) and this happened by the abstraction of it of any meaning.

Both Giddens and Lefebvre see the meaning in space, or better say on the physical parts composing space, and Lefebvre believes that the commodification of space is related to the abstraction of any meaning from it. The meaning can be in space, in the configuration, as Space Syntax has shown, or on the physical elements as happens with any artefact. It seems that the success or not of a building lies on the meaning assigned to it as this is what is 'used' in the everyday life. Not to minimize here the function which is of course the main objective, but usually the function cannot be mistaken or wrong. It is the relation of function with the meaning that can be.

Finally, what are the specialist's of space for?

Space Syntax, believes that the relation of form and function is the main task of the architects. As Hillier says that *"if we know what the building is to be like, as opposed to what it must do, then we do not seek the help of an architect"* (Hillier,1996:413). And the form can be in both senses previous mentioned, as configuration and as the form of an artefact, the meaning assigned to the building. It can be said, then, that architect's skill is to assign meaning on space in order to enable the communication of people. This is what was happening in the vernacular, where the individuals themselves assigned the meaning to space. The task of the architect is to assign the meaning on space, both on the configuration and on the physical parts. In this way the interaction of society and space is grasped, as society will be inscribed in space, through the architect's skill, and

space will be involved in social relations and communication through the meaning assigned to it.

It could be concluded that the need of the specialists of space is related with the shift from local to global. As societies growing bigger, the global is more difficult to be grasped by individuals. At this point it should be clarified that there may be societies which are more global in space but more local in social categories, as for example the Gypsies who may travel around but their society, their rules and traditions have a very local (between the group) character. Societies which are global both spatially and socially will need specialists to relate the local with the global and make their co-existence harmonious. In vernacular architecture although the groups were global as well as local they were based more on mechanical solidarity, so the meaning was common for everyone and grasped by anyone. In a society of organic solidarity or of many different solidarities, the meaning may differ and may not be grasped by anyone. Actually, the specialists should retrieve description from more complex and global entities.

Concluding, it can be said that the relation of space to society may have been grasped in a different way from each theory and that generally there are notions which are not yet very well clarified but what is important is that there are many insights in all theories that can be very useful for the understanding and obtaining knowledge of space and therefore for designing space.

C.2. Further Thoughts on the relation of Space to Society

It seems that the occupation with the attributes of the physical space, particularly the space which derives from a society either in an unconscious way, vernacular space, or in a conscious way, designed space, is the only, or the best, way to understand society. This is not only the space that is created by society but the space in which society is formatted, deployed, produced and reproduced. The knowledge of this space, the architectural and urban space, is the knowledge of society and the best way to serve its, definitely, spatial, and maybe social, needs.

Lefebvre's observations about space seem quite pessimistic, space as an instrument for power and control, space sterilized, space for exchange, space without meaning embedded in it, and all these attributes in designed or conceived space by architect's and urbanists. He is impelling the individuals to proceed in a revolution, to appropriate space. Maybe he is not wrong for that, space seems indeed not to belong or express them. The question is why not this revolution, this appropriation of space for people not to start from the architects. Why not to be the architects those who will give space to, or create space for the people, for society. Then Lefebvre's project "Change life! Change Space!" could take place.

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