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## **THE MAIN APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF THE CITY PHENOMENON AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM**

The article considers issues relevant to contemporary social philosophy regarding theoretical approaches to the study of the urban space phenomenon. The authors show how the social phenomenology of the city is studied within the socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-ecological and urbanistic approaches. An analysis of the works of representatives of these approaches has made it possible to distinguish several dimensions of the city as a social phenomenon and the trend issues of relevant scientific research. Thus, within the framework of the spatial dimension, the city should be studied as the interaction of physical and social space, giving various configurations of the cultural and spiritual standard of living; the political and administrative dimension focuses the researcher on the study of the activity and interaction of formal organizations and administrative structures in terms of meeting a wide range of human needs. The economic dimension of the city allows considering it as a place of concentration of constantly operating markets, leading to an increase in consumption and the development of a consumer culture of social communities and groups; communication dimension shows it as a synergistic system of intersecting flows of information, under the influence and on the basis of which, complex interaction of social individuals, social institutions and groups is conducted with the aim of producing, using and distributing material and spiritual benefits. From the socio-cultural perspective, the city appears as a symbolic level of the existence of collective ideas, values, social, cultural codes; the so-called "urban myth" is of particular importance here.

**Key word:** *city phenomenon; city as a social system; theoretical experience in the study of urban space; conceptual approaches to the study of the city.*

### **Introduction**

The emergence of the city became the most important event in the subsequent social history of mankind, which predetermined all its further development. It is with the emergence of the city that we can talk about the beginning of civilization, the emergence of a special type of worldview, characterized by a new picture of the world and the emergence of new social and economic relations. The city, in contrast to the village, which, as noted by J. Ortega y Gasset, is a natural form of community life, is an artificially constructed social space, the viability of which is supported by a system of rules of social community corresponding only to it (*Ortega y Gasset, 2008*).

Usually they are expressed in formal or informal laws, rituals and customs, which turn into traditions over time. Indeed, this is why the study of the essence of urban culture, which is one of the manifestations of social life and the way of thinking of a person, requires a thorough and comprehensive investigation of those artifacts and laws of social interaction that have determined their individuality and originality in a specific historical dimension. The study of these phenomena significantly complicates the powerful development of cities, and at the same time actualizes the research related to

the study of the historically established social and cultural identity of the city and the values corresponding to its population, thereby facilitating the identification of the population in conditions of destruction of value imperatives.

### **Research methods**

The city phenomenon is a complex multifaceted phenomenon, in order to study the essence and content of the concept of which an integrated approach is needed from the standpoint of historical, legal, economic, sociological, geographical and other sciences. The multifacetedness of the city, which has made it the subject of research in many sciences, entails a heterogeneity of approaches to the definition of the concept. This leads to the problem of the multiplicity of discourses in the definition of the "city" concept. Today, we can state that among the main approaches to the definition of the studied concept, a number of theoretical definitions have formed within several paradigms for a comprehensive consideration of the concept of "city" as a social system. *The philosophical understanding of these definitions and the problems of the city in general requires an appeal to the rich theoretical experience of studying the urban*

space by foreign and domestic scientists, which is the purpose of this article.

### Results and Discussion

The city is a specific settlement of people, which is strictly separated from the whole variety of natural space and the natural harmony of village life, primarily due to the peculiarity of its structuring. The city has a special social infrastructure, all cultural forms are present, centers interacting with science and technology are created, social intercultural interaction takes place.

The study of cities has a long tradition. Even Aristotle, in his famous work "Politics" (Aristotle, 2000), offers a plan for an ideal city-state – the Greek polis. The image of an ideal city, inspired by the teachings of Plato (2000) and Aristotle about the state, was brought to life by the Italian artist, a representative of the Renaissance, Piero della Francesca. The ideal City of the Sun was created in the 17th century in the philosophical work of T. Campanella (1954).

The origin of the scientific tradition in the study of the city as a social phenomenon was laid in the works of such famous scientists as Z. Bauman, E. Burgess, M. Weber, L. Wirth, G. Simmel, W. Sombart, F. Tönnies, L. Mumford, R. Park and others.

Based on the concepts of the city as a social system presented in the scientific discourse, several main approaches can be distinguished that allow a comprehensive analysis of the social phenomenon of the city. Among them, the socio-economic approach, the socio-cultural approach, the socio-ecological approach, and the urbanistic approach are of the greatest scientific interest.

The economic paradigm in the reasoning of the essence of the city as a result of the historical development process, which is based on the social system as a place of concentration of production and social division of labor, was substantiated by Emile Durkheim. The socio-economic approach in his research is to present the city as a special type of social solidarity. The city, according to E. Durkheim, organizes the social order in a special way (Durkheim, 1991). A new type of solidarity, organic, based on the mediation of social ties and specializing in the performance of labor functions, emerges in the city.

The division of labor leads to cooperation; corporations, unions, organizations arise. The role of cities as coordinating centers is growing in the process of territorial specialization of economic activities and further specialization of types of labor. The most important consequence of this process is the change in the mechanisms of interaction – the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity. With the growth of cities, a territorial, social and spiritual unification of society takes place, socio-cultural life and regulatory requirements in society change.

The main contribution of E. Durkheim and his followers is that by substantiating the socio-economic approach to the study of the city, they conducted a deep analysis of the industrial stage of the city formation and development. At the same time, an underestimation of the cultural and historical factors of the city formation and development, the exaggeration of the role of economic conditions in the city development, the lack of attention to the mental sphere of urban life and the real behavior of citizens should be considered a significant drawback of this approach.

Socio-cultural determinism, which concentrated its attention on the cultural and historical conditions of the

emergence of cities, determined the presence of a socio-cultural approach in the study of the city phenomenon. This approach focuses on the development of the city from the standpoint of socio-cultural heterogeneity, which consists of representatives of different social strata and cultural orientations. This specificity of the city creates conditions for the formation and detachment of specific urban communities, which differ in their symbolic and organizational culture.

The prominent scientist Georg Simmel can rightfully be considered one of the founders of this approach, in fact, a pioneer in the scientific study of cities who dedicated specialized works to the studied phenomenon. He was the first who started writing about the peculiar atmosphere of big cities, their heightened energy, about the imprint that cities leave on the psyche of its inhabitants, in the format of scientific discourse (Simmel, 2002).

The essential basis of G. Simmel's views is the idea of considering the city as a specific center of cultural, artistic and spiritual activity of mankind. The psychological basis of the city, on which its individuality is formed, is, according to the scientist, an increase in nervous stimuli and their effect on a person. A large city creates specific psychological conditions with a rapid pace of change, a variety of economic, professional and social life. That is why in big cities the intellectual nature of spiritual life prevails, in contrast to small towns and villages, where more manifestations of the soul and relationships based on feelings are required.

An extreme variant of the development of individuality – insensitive indifference becomes, according to G. Simmel, an important manifestation of the development of large cities, together with punctuality and accuracy, intellectualization and rationalization of the individual. Internal relations of residents of large cities are formally characterized by solitude and isolation. And in the depths of this external isolation, there is not only indifference, but even disgust, alienation and remoteness, which, upon close contact, turn into hatred and struggle. This inevitably leads to the other side of the city – the city of mental disorders, suicides, homeless people. This is a city where primary social ties and relationships are destroyed, and only alienation and loneliness remain.

However, this other side of the city, together with the above-mentioned characteristics, creates an indivisible whole of the city's life – something that at first seems to be a destroyer of any sociality, but, according to G. Simmel, is an elementary factor of development. Closure, alienation and disgust are only external forms of the deep spiritual essence of the city, which provides the individual with personal freedom, the possibility of manifestation and expression of his or her own individuality and creativity.

Max Weber paid much attention to the city phenomenon in his works. He identifies a city with a settlement in which there is an economic center, a place of trade or a market, i.e. the place of intersection of subjects of economic activity (Weber, 2001: 335).

M. Weber applies his methodology of ideal types to the study of the city, the essence of which is to develop certain generalized characteristics of social phenomena, the so-called ideal type as a tool for cognizing social reality, with which a real social phenomenon or process is subsequently correlated. In his work "The City" M. Weber combines the use of ideal types with the comparative-

historical method, trying to find common features in various individual, specific processes.

Max Weber was one of the first to conceptualize a sociological approach to the study of the city phenomenon, where the subject of study is the impersonal social relations of large groups of people within the outlined spatial continuum in order to achieve and realize their specific socio-economic interests.

A special view within this approach belongs to Werner Sombart. According to W. Sombart, the formation of a modern city is based on the effect of consumerism, when the dominant factor is the economic behavioral activity of city residents (Sombart, 2008: 40-41). However, it should be recognized that the scientist absolutized the attributive characteristics of representatives of urban culture, such as consumerism, which significantly reduced the scientific potential of studying the city phenomenon. Ferdinand Tönnies devoted his works to the dynamics of the emergence and development of specific urban communities. The scientist focused on social relations between people, highlighting a special type of characteristics of social interaction as urban (Tönnies, 2002: 59-61). A city for him is a type of social and spatial settlement of people.

The researcher introduces the concept of community (Gemeinschaft) and society (Gesellschaft) into scientific circulation as special forms of social relations. While relations of the Gemeinschaft type characterize a traditional, pre-industrial society, in which social life is based on personal interaction between people and is supported by an awareness of their belonging to a family, place of residence, specific cultural values, then relations of the Gesellschaft type are based on rational calculation, they are official and impersonal, in they are based on benefit and selfish interest.

Considering the historical changes in social relations, F. Tönnies typologizes social communities, placing them according to the degree of decrease in organic ties, from those based on the unity of blood, a common place of residence, to communities that are formed on the basis of a spiritual community. Accordingly, the researcher identifies three types of communities – kinship, neighborhood and friendship.

Thus, according to F. Tönnies, the city becomes the center of the formation of a special type of social relations and connections based on spiritual unity, and the formation of a variety of artistic activities becomes a specific feature of the city's existence.

The point of view of researcher Lewis Mumford seems to be specific in the context of this approach. His view is that the city is a social-group association based on a variety of interactions between different groups, associations, and civic centers. Based on this, the scientist concretized the discourse of the city as a space for the emergence and functioning of civil society (Horban, 2011). The use of the metaphor "theater" to supplement the definition of the city is interesting in the scientist's works. The city is considered as a stage for social drama (Mumford, 2004: 29). To define the modern city, L. Mumford introduces the concept of "metropolis". Moreover, for him it has a rather negative context, since the increased size of the city in the metropolis conditions impedes the functioning of such key characteristics of the city as communication and exchange.

The sociocultural approach today is represented by complex studies, which can be grouped in two main directions: neo-Weberianism, which focused its main attention

on the political and managerial aspects of considering urban issues, and the cultural direction, where the dominant search is the study of the spiritual principles and foundations of the origin and functioning of urban life.

One of the well-known modern representatives of this approach is Zygmunt Bauman, who developed the socio-cultural context of clarifying the city phenomenon through the connection of the city with social changes. In his opinion, social changes are related, first of all, to changes in the quality of urban life and forms of urban existence (Bauman, 2008). Z. Bauman defines the city as a social space in which the socio-cultural products of the society of liquid modernity are concentrated, and individuals are guided by the symbolic figure of the "stranger", which deepens the uncertainty of the life aspirations of the city residents.

The cultural codes of the city's social space are explored by Ya. E. Vodarsky (2006). In his opinion, the terminology is initially very important – which settlement is considered a city, from what stage of their development a village and a fortress become cities in the scientific understanding. The next problem that he raises is the reasons for the founding of cities in this particular place and at a given time, i.e. spatio-temporal conditions of the city origin. The third problem is the study of the development of cities as settlements, the emergence of new districts, streets in them, that is, topography and building, in other words, how the city phenomenon changes under the influence of the material conditions of the existence of the urban environment. The fourth is city management, its specific features, depending on a complex of historical, geographical, socio-economic and other factors. An important point here is the analysis of the vertical and horizontal social ties that arise in the city under the influence of the increasingly complex social infrastructure. The fifth problem is the development of trades, industry, intercity transport, post, i.e. the formation of intercity infrastructure. The sixth problem is education and enlightenment, the emergence and history of schools and special educational institutions, i.e. to what extent the educational level of residents influenced the development of the city. The seventh problem is the communicative features of the city, its ability to act as a place of access and exchange of information. The eighth problem is the development of trade as an important direction in the formation of an urban way of life. The ninth problem is the spiritual and social life of various social groups (Vodarsky, 2006: 3-4).

The socio-ecological approach in the study of the city phenomenon is represented by the Chicago School of Urban Sociology.

The starting point for the development of research of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology in the field of the city was the socio-ecological concept developed by Robert Park, which is based on the idea of society as an organism. Society, according to the researcher, is primarily a biological phenomenon, which, in addition to the social (cultural) level, also contains a biotic level that underlies social development and ultimately determines the organization of society.

Competition is the driving force of the social evolution process, which determines the development of a social organism from the biotic level to the cultural level. It is competition that gives an organic character to society. It forms its structure and regulates the sequence of disturbances and balance updates in the development of the social organism.

The social organism, according to R. Park, consists primarily of individuals who are able to change their position in social and physical space, to migrate. Migration acts as the collective behavior of individuals of a biotic nature, forming an ecological structure at the macro level. A hierarchy is formed above the biotic level, represented by a special economic, political, social and cultural order emerging in the city.

Ernest Burgess's zonal theory is a special kind of socio-ecological approach to the study of the city phenomenon. He viewed the urban community as a complex mosaic of different social groups, each of which claimed a certain territory. This is how the theory of structuring urban space appeared. The socio-spatial organization of the city, according to the author of the theory, is a system of concentric circles, like circles arising around the urban core – the central area of the city. Each urban area differs in the type of development, economic functions, as well as the social and professional composition of the population.

The center of the city is the central business district, surrounded by a transition zone – an inner city built up with factory buildings and housing for the working class, followed by a zone of upper class residences, and, finally, a suburban area inhabited by people who come to work in the city. Workers have no choice of place of residence, since their settlement is determined by the cost of housing and transportation costs.

However, as noted by E. Burgess, urban growth leads to the expansion of the manufacturing industry and an increase in the population. Accordingly, the processes of invasion take place in the structure of the city, when some social groups invade territories that were occupied by another social class. The result is the emergence of new areas for residence, as well as a change in the existing social and spatial distribution of the city.

With a certain degree of convention, it can be argued that R. Park and E. Burgess were at the origin of urban sociology. As prominent representatives of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology, they focused on the definition of the “city” concept, considering it as a kind of social laboratory (Park, 2002). The socio-ecological approach developed within the framework of this school made it possible to draw an analogy between social processes in a city and socio-biological processes in nature (Burgess, 2002).

Within the framework of this school, the research of Louis Wirth is of particular interest. He was the first to introduce the concept of “urbanism” as a special way of life, characteristic of the urban environment and constituting a key characteristic of the phenomenon of the city as a social institution (Wirth, 2005). The researcher notes that in the urban environment the significance of primary ties between residents (for example, relatives) is lost with the emergence of socially impersonal ties, thus secondary social contacts are reproduced.

L. Wirth identifies three main characteristics of the city: size, density and diversity, manifestations of which can be seen in the city.

So, a consequence of the significant size of the city is its transformation into many social groups, in which friendly, family ties are weakened, relations become formalized. Such social institutions as the media, police, bureaucracy and the like take on the exercise of public control. The consequence of an increase in the density of residence is an increase in the number of influences on a

person, a large number of contacts with strangers. As a positive result, there is an increase in the level of tolerance for the Other. The negative consequence is an increase in antisocial manifestations of behavior – conflicts, misunderstandings and social tension. The heterogeneity of the population influences on the growth of vertical social mobility. Prescribed statuses specific to a traditional society are replaced by received ones, and the complications and variety of social relations are regulated by new city institutions.

Thus, an emphasis on the evolution and development of an urban community as a territorial-local ecosystem of interrelations between functionally differentiated elements should be attributed to the advantages of the socio-ecological approach in the study of the city phenomenon. The disadvantages include the absolutization of the biotic order as a key factor in choosing a place of residence, which often does not work in conditions of settlement and residence of national minorities, where sociocultural factors dominate.

The urbanistic approach to the study of the city phenomenon is represented by modern sociological concepts of the city.

The concepts of explaining the processes of the modern city are based on the analysis of the problems of the functioning of capital in Western cities, the processes of urban collective consumption as the basis for the reproduction of the capitalist system. The increase in the dependence of the city on the interests of the ruling elites is analyzed.

Henri Lefebvre is one of the representatives of this approach. H. Lefebvre's important contribution to the development of the sociological theory of the city was his concept of social space. The researcher notes that social activity is formed not only through the direct interaction of individuals, but also through the intersection of urban spaces. Our perception of the city does not consist of individual elements – houses, streets, monuments, – we perceive the city space as a whole. Despite the typical building, different cities have a unique urban landscape. In this regard, the scientist introduces into scientific circulation the idea that space is a component of social organization.

In addition, H. Lefebvre points to the use of space by the state for the purpose of exercising public control. The state regulates the process of building police departments and fire departments in certain places of the city in order to respond quickly in case of emergencies (the task is to localize emergency situations, prevent it from spreading). State and municipal authorities control the distribution and amount of urban land. Through the collection of taxes and the allocation of resources, the state regulates the development of certain territorial units. At the same time, H. Lefebvre substantiates the regularity of the appearance of a conflict between the abstract and social space of the city. Here, by abstract space, he means the space that investors and businessmen operate, using the criteria of profitability, size, prestige of the place. Social space is the world of individuals, their habitat. But planning by the state or entrepreneurs to change the abstract space often comes into conflict with the social space of city residents. At the same time, civil society can play a special role in the elimination of conflict situations related to this type of social confrontation as a special type of organization of horizontal social ties, which can act as a link between abstract and social urban space (Horban, 2011).

One of the newest concepts in the urbanistic approach to the analysis of the city phenomenon is the synthetic theory of socio-spatial perspective, developed by American scientists Joe Feagin and Mark Gottdiene.

The main features of this approach are:

1) consideration of real estate development as the most important feature of changes in large cities. While other approaches focus on the industrial, commercial, consumerist approach to real estate research, the socio-spatial perspective focuses on the formative component of this factor in the growth of metropolises;

2) supporters of the socio-spatial theory consider the intervention of authorities and politicians as an important factor of change in cities. If other approaches reduce the participation of the authorities to a simple accompaniment of the processes of urban changes, then this view tries to reveal the interests of the state in the development of urban real estate;

3) the study of the cultural orientations of residents of large cities becomes a decisive factor in understanding urban life from the standpoint of a socio-spatial perspective;

4) the understanding of urban processes should be conducted taking into account the globalization process. Today cities are closely linked by the system of international division of labor, the activities of transnational corporations. Based on global economic changes, representatives of socio-spatial theory try to determine how local factors and their specifics affect international relations.

In the context of the studied approach to the city phenomenon, in our opinion, an important view is the view presented in the monograph of Russian scientist M. Karpovets "City as a World of Human Existence" (Karpovets, 2014). The researcher proposes to consider the city as a social system in the context of its anthropological features. In this consideration of the social system of the city, the author identifies several types of "urban anthropology", in particular, the proper social, as well as cultural, historical and urban anthropology in the context of their epistemological similarities and differences.

Social anthropology analyzes human existence in a city in the context of social structures, institutions or texts, and defines the boundaries of the representation of human existence in a metropolis. Using various methodological tools, the model of social anthropology seeks to build an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the city, based on the nature of the functioning of public relations (Karpovets, 2014: 11-22).

In contrast, cultural anthropology takes into account the inherent features of human life in local urban cultures, neglecting their general characteristics. The initial presumption of this model is that each city has unique features that cannot be reduced to a coherent concept.

In the model of cultural anthropology, each city is a world with its own specific structure of being and requires not a detached view, but direct involvement to its foundations (Karpovets, 2014: 23-30).

In terms of historical anthropology, the city focuses on changing the priority accents for historical knowledge. In the first place, here comes the study of a person (and not any general mechanisms of social regulation or cultural formation) in the aspect of his or her daily existence and frequent marginal practices in culture. Historical anthropology shows the city as a condenser of an unlimited number of ordinary practices which one should take into

account and try to fit into the general progress of culture (Karpovets, 2014: 31-35).

A special place, according to the researcher, is occupied by the model of urban anthropology, the ground of which is the city as a direct object of reflection. The task of urban anthropologists is to systematize the experience of urban culture and try to compose an image of the subject of a metropolis, taking into account a variety of spatial, bodily, economic, everyday and textual strategies of human existence, not forgetting about the ambivalent and dynamic nature of urban reality (Karpovets, 2014: 36-44).

### Conclusions

Based on the stated theoretical material, the authors of the article propose to identify four main approaches that combine the main set of conceptual positions in the study of the phenomenon of the city as a social system: socio-economic, sociocultural, socio-ecological and urbanistic approaches.

At the same time, we offer several dimensions of the city as a social phenomenon, namely:

1) Spatial dimension. In this context, the city has quantitative and territorial indicators. It is a socio-territorial entity, which is characterized by a certain socio-demographic composition, the established size of the territory and the number of people employed in the social division of labor. In this case, the city is a complex formation that includes a system of various types of spaces, the main of which are physical space, as a configuration of the material components of urban life, and social, as a space for the existence of the cultural and spiritual standard of living.

2) Political-administrative dimension. In this context, the city is a special state-administrative association of citizens, the relationship between which is mediated by formal organizations and administrative structures in order to meet a wide range of human needs.

3) Economic dimension. In this sense, a city is a place of concentration of constantly operating markets, which results in an increase in consumption and the development of a consumer culture of social communities and groups locally living in a certain territory.

4) Communication dimension. In this regard, the city represents a synergistic system of intersecting flows of information, under the influence and on the basis of which, a complex interaction of social individuals, as well as social institutions and groups is conducted for the purpose of production, use and distribution of material and spiritual benefits.

5) Socio-cultural dimension. In this perspective, the city appears as a symbolic level of the existence of collective ideas, values, social, cultural codes, which is formed as a result of cohabitation and social activity of social communities, groups and individuals united by a certain territory. Of particular importance here is the so-called "urban myth" – a phenomenon in the life of the city, characterized by the presence of intriguing stories related to individual places, events or people of the city, appealing to the existential dimensions of the essential being of a person through the formation of a new reality, revealed through special images, understandable for and peculiar to the inhabitants of a particular city.

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## ОСНОВНІ ПІДХОДИ ДО ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ФЕНОМЕНУ МІСТА ЯК СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ СИСТЕМИ

У статті розглядаються актуальні для сучасної соціальної філософії питання, що стосуються теоретичних підходів до дослідження феномену міського простору. Автори показують, яким чином соціальна феноменологія міста вивчається в межах соціально-економічного, соціокультурного, соціально-екологічного та урбаністичного підходів. Аналіз робіт представників названих підходів дозволив виділити кілька вимірів міста як соціального феномена і трендову проблематику відповідних наукових досліджень. Так, в рамках посторового виміру місто має вивчатися як взаємодія фізичного та соціального простору, що дає різні конфігурації культурно-духовного рівня життя людей; політико-адміністративний вимір націлює дослідника на вивчення діяльності і взаємодії формальних організацій і адміністративних структур в частині задоволення широкого кола людських потреб. Економічний вимір міста дозволяє розглядати його як місце концентрації постійно діючих ринків, що призводять до зростання споживання і розвитку споживчої культури соціальних спільнот і груп; комунікаційний – як синергетичну систему пересічних потоків інформації, під впливом і на основі яких здійснюється комплексна взаємодія соціальних індивідів, соціальних інститутів і груп з метою виробництва, використання та розподілу матеріальних і духовних благ. У соціокультурному ракурсі місто постає як символічний рівень існування колективних уявлень, цінностей, соціальних, культурних кодів і особливе значення тут має так званий «міський міф».

**Ключові слова:** феномен міста; місто як соціальна система; теоретичний досвід дослідження міського простору; концептуальні підходи до вивчення міста..

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