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THE POSTMODERN CITY: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**Radionova L.***c. philos., as prof.*<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9691-1199>**Mykhailova I.***c. polit.s., as. prof.*<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0530-1235>

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Abstract. *The article considers the postmodern city as a fragmented space with many different and often conflicting meanings and functions. It is shown that urban space affects the ways of interaction between people and each other and the identity of its inhabitants. The role of the global city in the postmodern era is revealed. New forms of social and economic polarisation of cities are considered. When analyzing the city, integrative approaches are used: the inclusion of various disciplines from geography to cultural studies to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the city. The cultural mechanism of the city space production is revealed through the triad «perception – comprehension – living» – not just as a way of observing and interpreting space, but as a way of living in it. Another important characteristic is the binary construction of space, which builds the conceptual space of life in urban society. It includes real and imaginary space. The first manifests itself in the features of the physical, material, objective world, while the second contains the mental, subjective characteristics of people associated with this space.*

Key words: *city, postmodern, «right to the city», global city, city body, city space, urban inequality.*

Introduction.

Modernity replaces traditional society, and postmodernity in turn replaces the age of modernity. We find ourselves confronted with the need for intensive and productive reflection on the radically changing role of the city. We are also faced with the imperative to modify the language of disciplinary knowledge and formulate a «new rationality», to update the categorical apparatus of urbanology. In the conditions of theoretical confusion and uncertainty, it is the philosophical concept of the city that is needed, which means that attempts to holistically assess the ongoing urban transformations are needed.

New socio-philosophical concepts in the study of the city demonstrate the inevitable transition from modernism to postmodernism. Modernism was dominated by theories explaining the degree of determination of various factors on the development of the city. These are, first of all, the classical sociologists of the city G. Simmel, M. Weber, R. Park, E. Burgess. Today, in the postmodern era, the universality of concepts and their ideological attitude are denied, and the need for synthetic approaches that consider various forms of urban research is revealed. First of all, these are such authors as D. Harvey, S. Sassen, G. Weiss, A. Lefebvre and E. Soji. In Ukraine, there are also researchers who are engaged in the study of the city under postmodern conditions. The works of A. Boychenko deal with changes in the urban environment and cultural transformations under postmodern conditions. Sociologist and urbanist I. Derevyanko analyses social and cultural changes in



Ukrainian cities in the context of global postmodern processes. V. Mironenko, a culturologist and urbanist, deals with the issues of cultural identity and transformation of urban spaces in the postmodern context.

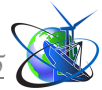
The aim of the article is to outline the methodology of the study of the city under postmodern conditions, based on the works of Western urban theorists.

The research methodology includes ideas and concepts of postmodernism, which emphasise the fragmentation, deconstruction and multiplicity of meanings of the city. These are the theories of Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jamieson. Also the globalisation theory of Saskia Sassen and Manuel Castells. The theory of D. Harvey, A. Lefebvre and E. Soji, which focuses on the critical analysis of social structures and power, and liberation from oppression and inequality.

Findings of the study. Many philosophers and urbanists have considered the city in the postmodern context. One of the most influential contemporary neo-Marxist theorists, David Harvey, in his book *The Condition of Postmodernity*, analyses how the economic and social changes associated with postmodernity affect urban spaces and the architecture of cities. In the programme book «Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution» [1], D. Harvey explores the very relevant for modernity theme of «urban rebellions». In his opinion, the nature of these phenomena, regardless of the city, always lies in the dissatisfaction of people with living conditions and the surrounding space, neglect of individual communities. Harvey believes that the city is a place of class struggle and the final target of the confrontation, which the rebellious classes want to get their hands on.

The cause of rebellion is the modern processes of capital accumulation. The ideal has always been a city belonging to the people, a city comfortable for living, working and creating. However, the modern city cannot belong to the citizens; the possession of space is concentrated in the hands of a small group of oligarchs with large capital and private property. The townspeople are alienated and alienated from the benefits of the city, they cannot influence the processes of space planning and development taking place in it. The image of cities is being commercialised, building what can bring money. With the arrival of investment, cultural features and historical monuments are overlapped with new buildings, losing the opportunity to fully function in space. There is a «disneyfication». Therefore, D. Harvey supports the «right to the city» – a demand that expresses the resistance of city dwellers to capital, a demand directly related to the quality of life of people. This is the right to preserve the cultural uniqueness of the city, its cultural space, and, accordingly, the right to a unique identity. After all, the values of its citizens and their behaviour depend on what the city will be like. The question of values, the influence of postmodernism on culture and architecture, on urban spaces is also considered by Fredric Jamieson, an American theorist in his work «Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism».

Jean Baudrillard analyses how postmodern cities become spaces of simulations and signs, losing touch with reality. French philosopher and sociologist known for his theories of simulacra and hyperreality. His views echo the theory of urbanist Rem Koolhaas, who in his work «S, M, L, XL», emphasises the fragmentation and chaotic

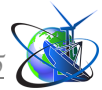


nature of modern cities [2].

S. Sassen has a different aspect of urban development in the postmodern context. She is sure that the city ceases to be connected with the state, it is adapted from its territory due to the development of information society, which, incidentally, was first noted by Manuel Castells, considering the impact of information technology and globalisation on cities and urban life in postmodern conditions. In global cities, the space of places is replaced by the space of flows, and consumption centres become the most important. Centres of production, on the contrary, cease to develop and attract interest. Global cities are phenomena of the modern world, so it is better for many cities to exist autonomously, without borders and without states.

Saskia Sassen's analysis focuses on how globalisation and new economic realities affect the structure and function of cities. Sassen argues that certain cities (New York, London, Tokyo) are becoming key nodes in the global economy. These «global cities» play a central role in governance, finance, and information flows, linking different parts of the world [3]. These cities concentrate significant resources, including human capital and technology, making them centres of innovation and economic activity. Sassen stresses that globalisation leads to increased economic and social inequalities in cities. High-skilled workers in the financial and technological sectors coexist with low-wage workers in the service sector, leading to the division of the city into elite and marginalised zones. Global cities are becoming centres of transnational networks and migration. They attract migrants from around the world, creating multicultural communities. Transnational corporations and global financial flows influence the development of urban infrastructure, real estate and local economies. This can lead to changes in traditional urban landscapes.

Gail Weiss, Professor of Philosophy at George Washington University, developed the concept of «Urban Flesh Theory» in her book «The City as Body». In this work, she explores how urban spaces and architecture affect the bodily experiences of the people who inhabit these spaces. She analyses how the physical structures of the city (streets, buildings, parks) interact with people's bodily perceptions and movements. G. Weiss considers the city from the perspective of feminist philosophy and phenomenology. In her opinion, the two approaches are interconnected and always co-present, asserting the primacy of life experience and trying to reveal its hidden prerequisites. The city, in her view, is a great example of the richest «factory of meanings». The city produces a multitude of meanings that humans are able to identify in its architectural flesh. For example, American cities in their bodies demonstrate the binary relationship of «liberal and oppositional», they generate and themselves refute the ideas of racism, non-traditional sexual orientation, political indifference, etc. [4]. Thus, for Weiss, urban experience is corporeal, that is, people experience the city through their bodies. She argues that the urban environment is part of the formation of people's bodily and social identities. Weiss draws attention to the importance of inclusive urban design so that all people, regardless of physical ability, can participate fully in urban life. She considers how architectural barriers and lack of accessibility can exclude certain groups of people, discussing the ethical dimensions of urban planning and design, calling for cities that consider the needs of all bodies and promote their well-being.



Feminist philosophy is a very valuable tool in analysing urban flesh, it offers a comprehensive description of this phenomenon, forcing us to reflect on the phenomena of contemporary social and political issues. There is an undoubted affinity to social constructivism, which is most clearly represented in the following concepts: the concept of the production of space by French and American philosophers A. Lefebvre and E. Soji.

The most significant work of A. Lefebvre is his 1974 work «The Production of Space» [5]. Here the scientist emphasised that space is not so much a physical phenomenon as a cultural one, which did not appear suddenly and then received stable unchanging features and characteristics, but is created again and again by people, subject to numerous changes in the process of its economic and cultural functioning. A. Lefebvre considers the city as a peculiar organisation of this space.

«In history and in society there is nothing that has not been acquired and produced. Nature itself, as it appears to the senses in social life, is modified, i. e. produced. People produce legal, political, religious, artistic, philosophical and ideological forms. Consequently, production in the broad sense includes numerous creations and various forms, even if these forms do not bear the stigma of a producer or a production process» [5]. As social beings, people shape their lives, the world around them and their particular relationship to that world, that is, the space around them.

Taking into account the provisions and ideas of Marxism, but slightly rethinking and refining them, Lefebvre comes to the opinion that any production of space contains a certain set of spatial practices, combining types of capital distribution, human resources, as well as ways of organising personal and social life in the space of any place or settlement. Spatial practices conditioned by various factors of social development can change or change the factors themselves.

In addition to the production of space, the scientist draws attention to the concept of «representation of space», how and in what forms it can represent itself. According to A. Lefebvre, the representation of space is embodied through the figurative language of signs and symbols. Such codification of the space surrounding society is developed and implemented by professionals who know this language (cultural code) – architects, planners, sculptors, artists, scientists. Then these codes begin to be read by everyone else, and representation begins to be embodied through the perception of these created signs and symbols by everyday people, whose everyday life is inherently connected with this constructed space. Lefebvre even defined the landscape of the city street as a «social text» that contains detailed information about the society interacting with this space.

The resulting trilogy (production – representation – space) is further developed by A. Lefebvre. The researcher writes that all three components are strongly interdependent and interrelated, and often pass into each other. «Space is the result of a sequence or complex of operations, it is irreducible to a simple object. Being the result of actions performed in the past, it itself allows actions to take place by inducing or prohibiting them. Among these actions, some are connected with production, others with consumption, i.e. with the use of the results of production. Social space encapsulates the diversity of knowledge» [5].



Thus, the representation of the constructed space becomes for ordinary residents a kind of production of this space. It makes no sense to speak about the existence of space without perceiving it as something represented. It is only in the process of its perception and acceptance that space acquires the status of its existence, becomes labelled and filled. This process unfolds as follows: first, the individual becomes a recipient, perceiving the space presented to him through the senses. He observes it, listens to it, smells it, makes a tactile connection, begins to feel its presence. Then he begins to comprehend his feelings, to try to understand the meaning of the signs and symbols he has seen. Conducting a kind of reflection on what he has perceived, he builds certain inferences in his head. Space is filled with a certain meaning, becomes a certain kind of concept for a person. Further, he begins to live the space directly, to feel himself an integral part of it, and the space a part of himself. However, this process cannot be seen as a sequential development of a linear type. The process of space production is rather closed and forms a cyclic structure, as it does not mean that living space is a natural outcome. After all, depending on numerous conditions, the perception of space and its feeling can change. An individual or a society as a whole can look at the same place differently at different moments of their life, understand and perceive the signs and codes encoded in it ambiguously. Therefore, the production of space: perception – comprehension – living is a rather dynamic and changeable process.

Citing the example of famous Italian cities – Venice and the region in the centre of Italy – Tuscany, where he conducted field research together with his students, A. Lefebvre notes that they fully reflected in their structure all the most important changes that took place in the economy and culture. Thus, when the feudal system was replaced by early merchant capitalism, medieval Tuscany turned into Renaissance cities, significantly changing the appearance of its space. The layout of the city streets changed, new types of buildings appeared, their external and internal appearance changed considerably, new neighbourhoods appeared, some, on the contrary, disappeared forever from the map of Tuscan cities. Together, all these signs gave rise to a new spatial code of the city, which could be read both by the inhabitants of Tuscan towns and by citizens travelling from other regions.

A. Lefebvre's follower and his colleague – American researcher E. Soja – also postulated the idea of the «production of space» of the city in his scientific works. The most significant and outstanding work of the scientist was the monograph «Postmodern Geographies: Reconstructing Space in Critical Social Theory», published in the late 1980s. In it, he repeatedly states the importance of spatial thinking in the humanities and social sciences and calls for a reexamination of the work of A. Lefebvre, whom many have begun to criticise. Even when describing his time, he operates with the concepts of space, saying that the modern era is the era of simultaneity, the era of close and distant neighbourhood, dispersion and dispersal of our lives [5].

E. Soja studies the peculiarities of the production of space, giving numerous examples from the history of the development of settlements and cities. For example, the researcher calls the time of capitalism an uneven disharmonious epoch for cities and countries, or «unevenly deployed spatiality», creating a discordance between



economically developed and backward regions [6].

This is a somewhat painful state of space, its development is like spasms and convulsions, because for its normal development, according to E. Soja, it is necessary to take into account the economically and culturally backward regions, because they also involve the economic components they need – labour force and markets.

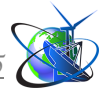
Following A. Lefebvre, E. Soja shows how the geographical shape of cities changes in connection with the distribution of economic resources, how the uneven development of capital affects the quality of formation of spatial codes and their content. For this purpose, he takes the types of cities formed throughout history: early capitalist city, market-industrial city and corporate-monopolistic city. In them he finds and analyses in detail specific patterns of capital distribution, wealth and poverty, residential and productive sectors, concluding that they are strongly interdependent.

He concludes that it is quite obvious – the plan of the city and its visual appearance are directly related to the class, ethnic, religious and other composition of its inhabitants, to its so-called «spatialisation» (literally «overspreading» – the form of space in which social existence is objectified). At the same time, all classes, ethnic groups and religious communities are also affected by the urban environment, occupying a specific place in it. That is, they influence the construction of space, and it influences them.

A group's perception of whether a space is favourable or unfavourable determines its appearance and its value. «More and more costs are spent on the formation of «good» and «safe» space in the conditions of the city, space is becoming expensive» [6]. Therefore, it is obvious that the space of the city becomes another cause of social stratification.

In addition to the peculiarities of space production, important in the cultural geography of A. Lefebvre and E. Soja is the issue of «the binary construction of space, including real and imaginary space». «Imaginary» space contains mental, conceptual, subjective characteristics; real space contains the characteristics of the physical, material, objective world. E. Soja notes that spaces cannot be considered only real or only imaginary, they are always «real-and-imaginary» and even more. «People live and work simultaneously in a concrete space and in an abstract construction of society. It would therefore be wrong to deny postmodernism as an approach that exists by our choice. It represents a set of conditions that affect virtually every aspect of modern human life. Therefore, postmodernism brings changes not only in time and space, but also in our perception of the world» [6]. He also sees the existence, together with the real and the imaginary, of a third space, which not only synthesises the qualities and characteristics of the first and the second, but is the space of the Other, interconnected and interdependent with «the real and the imaginary». What Ray Oldenburg would call the third place of the city.

The approach of A. Lefebvre and E. Soja is very important for understanding the city in the postmodern context. Especially when it comes to the study of the space of a particular city or other locality and its specific symbolic meanings. Here, the application of the «double illusion» will be quite effective, because taking into account both real and imaginary spaces, the conceptual space of social life is



constructed.

Thus, we can note the similarity of the main provisions of the interpretations of urban space in the works of A. Lefebvre and E. Soja, who assume that space is reproduced by people and its construction is subject to change.

Conclusions:

The appeal to foreign concepts and theories of the city allowed us to identify the fundamental research disciplinary directions working with urban issues: philosophical, geographical, sociological, cultural-anthropological, political science, art history. Their consideration allowed us to conclude that in the course of their development, these scientific approaches gradually overcame the initial one-sidedness in research (where geography studied territory and landscape, sociology - urban communities, and cultural anthropology – human values), moving to the study of diverse urban phenomena and phenomena existing at the intersection of disciplines. Today, they are characterised by a gravitation towards synthetics, expansion of methodological possibilities, reliance on current philosophical views, etc.

The integrativeness of urban studies turns to the socio-philosophical approach, in which the appeal to a variety of concepts and methods makes it possible to comprehend urban space and its unique components. Today, the problem of studying the city can be solved within the framework of current socio-philosophical theories of postmodernism, generating spatial thinking.

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