

# [Space and Place: Sommer Semester 2007 ]

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[introduction]

Theory of space and place

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[introduction]

## Key thinkers

Philosophers: Lefebvre, Deleuze, Virilio

Human Geographers: Massey, Thrift, Yi Fu Tuan, Harvey

Architects/Urban Planners: Lynch, Hall, Gehl, Whyte

Social scientists: Castells, Goffmann

Media/HCI: McCollough, Dourish, Weiser, Meyrowitz,

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[introduction]

## Some basic assumptions about space

Space is a neutral container that is filled by human activity

It is outside of human experience and a backdrop to human behaviour

Space is physical or geometrical (Euclidean) and can be measured

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## [Lefebvre]

Instead of an absolute concept of space to a spatiality which intertwines cultural practices, representations and imaginations

Place is an act of naming as well as distinctive activities and imaginings associated with particular social spaces

Historical notions of space are analysed on three axes:

Spatial practice -, Perceived space everyday social life and commonsensical perception

Representations of space - Conceived space , professional concepts of cartographers, urban planners, developers

Representational spaces - Lived space, transcending space of imagination

Concept of 'moments'

As a way to counterbalance this he proposed we need to seize and act on all 'moments of revelation, emotional clarity and self-presence as the basis for becoming more self fulfilled'

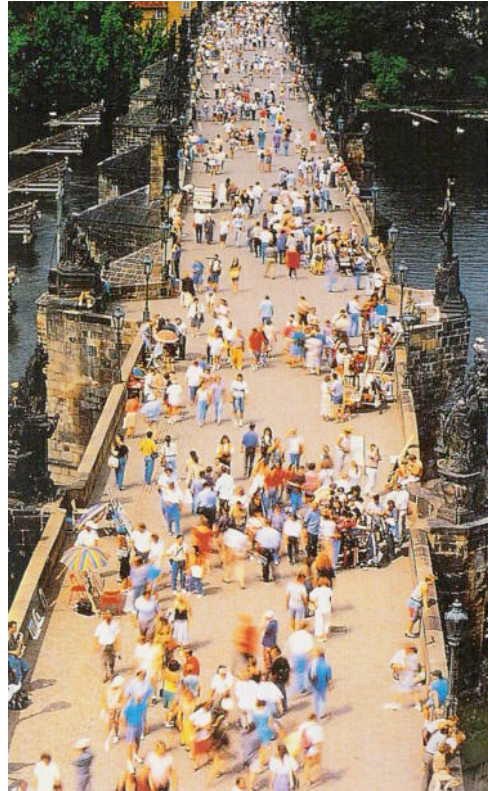
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[Lefebvre]



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[Massey]

Place as the locus of complex intersection and interrelations

Space as possibility

Space as always in process, as never a close system

Space is open- a space of loose ends and missing links

Delight in space

Places are made up of multiple, intersecting social, political and economic relations.

Open and flexible boundaries of place and many interlinkages

Experienced differently by different people and fluid rather than fixed territories

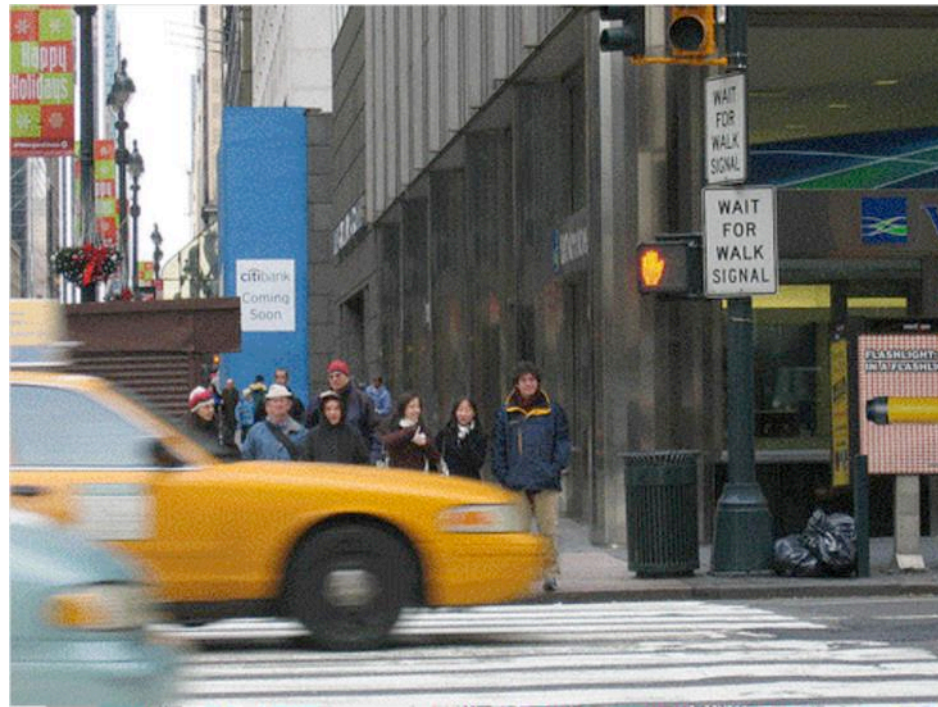
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[Massey]



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[Goffmann]

definition of the situation in a given interaction

Described how people negotiate and validate identities in face- to-face encounters and how people establish 'frames' within which to evaluate the meaning of encounters, especially person-to-person encounters.

People behave differently in different 'Social situations'; depending on where one is and who one is with.

Situations are usually defined in relation to physical settings.

Social behaviour is shaped by and in social situations.

Situations are usually defined in terms of behaviours in physical locations.

A behavioural region can be described as 'any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception'

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[Goffmann]



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[Lynch]

Lynch established the concept of environmental image or cognitive maps of urban space

for a city to be more fully experienced the imageability or intelligible elements of the city need to be understood.

Landmarks, nodes, districts, edges and paths

An imageable place is one that that can be comprehended over time as a pattern of high continuity with many distinctive parts clearly connected

This process of image construction is also referred to as cognitive mapping, and is a process composed of a series of psychological transformations by which an individual acquires, codes, recalls and decodes information about relative locations and attributes in a spatial environment (Downs and Stea 1973, 9).

Outcome is an enviromental image

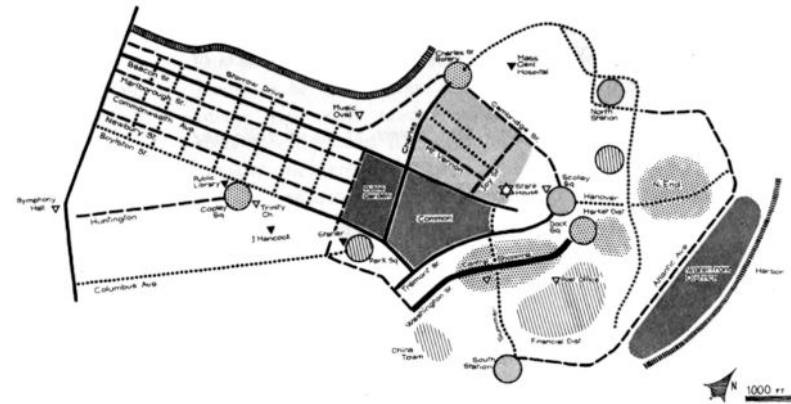
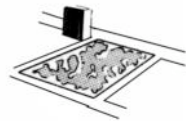
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[Lynch]



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[Whyte]

Whyte "believed in the perseverance and sanctity of public spaces.

For him small urban places are 'priceless,' and the city street is 'the river of life...where we come together, the pathway to the center. It is the primary place.'"

the street corner remains the best meeting place in the world

The importance of observation

..people tend to sit where there are places to sit. But what is just as important as a good place to sit is what you see from. The prime places are those with full views of the main show, the street.

Successful spaces are not cut off from the street; they are not elevated high above it, nor are they sunk down beneath it. Sunken plazas are usually empty.

The elements of a good city space, then, are basics, and it is interesting to note how many of them are natural--people to watch, sun to bask in, trees to sit under, water to splash in and listen to. In nature, green spaces

Similarities to Alexander, Gehl

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[Whyte]



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## [Castells]

Our societies are constructed around flows: flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interactions, flows of images, sounds and symbols.

The death of distance...

Flows are not just one element of social organization: they are the expression of the processes dominating our economic, political, and symbolic life. ...

a new spatial form characteristic of social practices that dominate and shape the network society: the space of flows.

The space of flows is the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows.

flows are purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors.

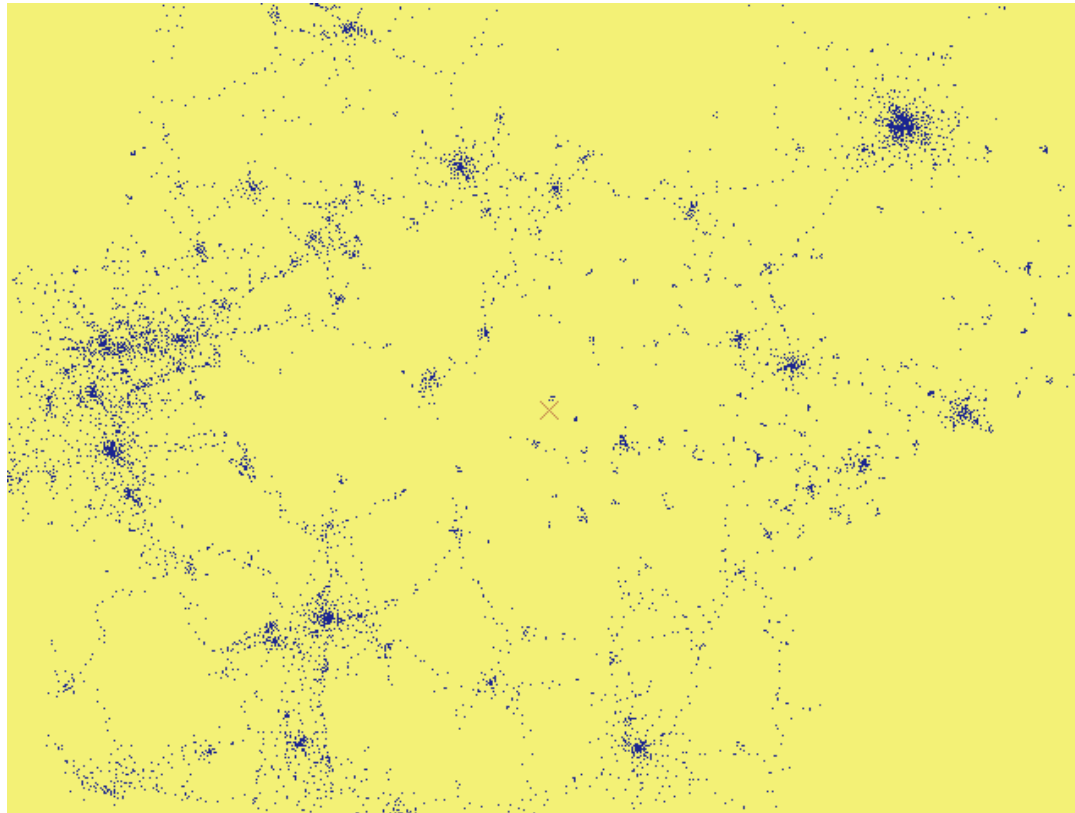
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[Castells]



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[McCollough]

Flow needs fixity, like a river needs riverbanks. Intentionally fixed settings, also known as architecture, provide a necessary context for Flow.

"digital ground" : as digital systems become embedded into the contexts of our lives, forms a background, present but unobtrusive.

Context- a setting, like the physical built environment, in which other behaviors and relationships exist.

The usability of well-made traditional places (i.e. workplaces, home, a corner of the library) now appears as a rich basis for design of context-aware technology.

Context generally means not an a priori setting, but the engagement of it, as well as the bias that setting gives to interactions that occur within it. In other words, it is not some preexisting space to be filled with objects and events, but an emergent perception of those aspects of surroundings which give meaning to what one is doing

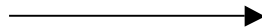
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[McCollough]



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[conclusion]

Many different theories:

Social space

Physical space

Digital space

Intertwining of all

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