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The Theoretical Background of Understanding Urban Identity in the Anthropological Perspective

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Abstract

In the article, the theoretical background of the interpretation of urban identity is given using examples from anthropological studies. Urban identity is interpreted in terms of corporeality, memory and history of the city, and community. It is interpreted as a conflict of own and alien, anonymous and public, unique and secondary parts inside the cultural space of identity. The anthropology of the city offers a range of perspectives in the interpretation of identity, particularly in the context of corporeality. Another important thing is the cultural connection with history and memory. The defining feature of identity is the way of creating its own (hi)story of the city. Urban identity also appears to be the preservation of the symbolic capital of the city, including certain values, customs, rules, legends etc. Moreover, it gives rise to a permanent exploration of sustained ways of its transmission to the next generations. The findings of different anthropological studies illustrate the complex character of the phenomenon and introduce possible theoretical frames for further understanding.

Key Words

urban identity, cultural landscape, everyday life, anthropology, urban anthropology, philosophical anthropology, philosophy.

Introduction

The question of urban identity is raised in various types of research: from political philosophy to gender studies. Every type of these studies attempts to build its own methodological way of the interpretation of the given phenomenon. The growth of cities in the Modern era actualizes the importance of understanding the human identity in a complicated multicultural urban area. On the one hand, this creates an unprecedented

interest in the phenomenon in the humanities and especially anthropology; on the other hand, it produces many interpretations, whereby the concept seems to be losing its meaning. Moreover, the anthropological precondition of the problem of urban identity perception should not only absorb various measurements of reflection (very often conflicting with each other), but also be a self-sufficient cultural branch that claims to have integrity and versatility in its conceptual field. Such perspective avoids an excessive unnecessary appeal to social, political or cultural types of mind, but makes your own reflection in the phenomenological sense, where only particular practices and tactics of urban identity are constituted. In this sense, it is important to outline the map of main citizen practices that separate them from others, thereby clarifying the problem of identity. It is clear that this ambitious goal cannot be fully achieved in the following exploration, but it is possible at least to point out the main problems and issues regarding the phenomenon of urban identity in anthropological studies.

Urban Identity as a Term

Defining and classifying the notion of urban identity, which allows various ways of interpretation, is a major problem in anthropological studies. The predominant tradition of using the term was established by classical urban anthropologists in the early 1970s, where "urban anthropology was already being defined as a distinctive field within cultural anthropology, and the publication of textbooks, readers, and reviews increased significantly."[1] There is no way to call to question Layla Ali-Zubaidi's words, that the Chicago school (at least the latest period) redefined the main vocabulary and methodology of urban studies, combining poststructuralism and other new philosophical trends: "The most prominent work (not only within urban anthropology) was Erving Goffman's microstudy of human interaction, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). He

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1   Layla Al-Zubaidi, *Urban Anthropology – An Overview,* accessed March 26, 2014, http://www.indiana.edu/~wanthro/URBAN.htm.

defined human interaction in terms of a dramaturgical metaphor through an analysis of human behaviour as a series of performed parts. The value of this research for urban anthropology lies in its emphasis upon the element of subtle play in human interaction. Urbanites are notably required to continually present fragmentary aspects of themselves to others, strangers, or people who know them only as inhabitants of discrete occupational or ethnic categories."[2] Perhaps, such keen interest was caused by intensified migration processes from Latin America to the main cities of North America. The question of identity was faced not only by real people representing diverse cultural regions, but also by theorists. Richard Basham, the author of a classical introduction to urban anthropology, infers that this situation is comparable to a rebirth of interdisciplinary studies,[3] whose relations functioning in an urban setting substantially differ from the way they function in a rural setting.[4]

Nowadays, this term is mostly used in order to ascertain the main urban facts (economic, political, social etc.) that constitute and reconstitute human identity. In other words, the cultural landscape is still important for urban identity these days, but the latter is not a stable ontological phenomenon, for it is similar to a rhizome-like world-view without a centre and a clear logic of being. This perspective refers to David Harvey's urban theory[5] with a combination of modern geography, anthropology, and social philosophy.

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2   Al-Zubaidi, *Urban Anthropology*.

3   Richard Basham primarily involves rural-urban migration, kinship in the city, problems that arise from urbanism and social stratification.

4   Richard Basham, *Urban Anthropology: The Cross-Cultural Study of Complex Societies* (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1978), 93.

5   Some of the most important of his works are: *The Urban Experience* (1989), *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (2001), *Social Justice and the City: Revised Edition* (2009). Harvey's urban theory was built on the idea "right of the city" that Henri Lefebvre proposed in his book *Critique of Everyday Life* (1968). Trying to rethink classical Marxist and anthropological ideas, Marcelo Lopes de Souza continues this strategy of interpreting a city in the perspective of postmodern human geography.

Urban Identity as a Dynamic Reality

The transition from sedentary and cyclic time in traditional society to nonlinear time in industrial life has completely altered human existence. It is also important to mark that the evolution from traditional flexible societies (rather communities) to postmodern cities was not so obvious. Moreover, there was no economical or cultural jump from undeveloped rural spaces to more technologically progressive cities. Many cities still kept some traditional schemes but in a new cultural form. Data show time again that the more the world becomes global, the more people feel local. People identify themselves primarily with their locality.[6] But how does this happen?

Not only is man separated from the usual rhythm of nature, but a symbolic border between *our* and *their* space has also emerged. This simple and archaic definition has launched the canonical cultural and anthropological ritual of saving one's *own area of existence*. Furthermore, people in the first ancient cities used to save not only everyday areas but also the senses of their co-existence. The other thing is that urban culture became a tyrant that has suppressed man, unifying and reducing his space of freedom. According to Georg Simmel, "The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life."[7] The Other plays a crucial role and its significance may be expressed by residents of the same city and "external" unfamiliar figures. Georg Simmel explicitly and in detail wrote about the foreigner as a stranger. In particular, he highlighted the concern of citizens for their own identity and the projection of these concerns embodied in Other, where its own territory plays a dominant value: "The most elementary stage of social organization which is to be found historically, as well as in

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6   Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), xxiii.
7   Georg Simmel, *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 11.

the present, is this: a relatively small circle almost entirely closed against neighbouring foreign or otherwise antagonistic groups but which has however within itself such a narrow cohesion that the individual member has only a very slight area for the development of his own qualities and for free activity for which he himself is responsible."[8]

This archaic principle of protecting "one's own place" is available in splintered sectors of the city, where neighbourhoods and districts are united into one cumulative image of urban identity. In this case, it is appropriate to address ourselves to the representations of identity and its meanings in the texts of culture, especially in literature and art. A text is an integral realm belonging to human senses that were buried in urban identity. The goal of philosophy is to give rise to the transition of those senses from the text to the area of intellectual reflection. Another difficulty is that a researcher has to keep a balance between speculative philosophical thinking and clear empirical reality that is filled with facts and details of city life. Considering this, such cultural configurations of urban identity as lifestyle, language and slang, traditions and food are also important. These components are often much more helpful in anthropological understanding than the context of representations, where an image destroys the connection with a concrete sense.

Jane Jacobs argues that in most cases an identity is made not by government authorities, but by the citizens' body practices, proximate facts of reality where various declarations and manifests do not actually work: "A city sidewalk by itself is nothing. It is an abstraction. It means something only in conjunction with the buildings and other uses that border it, or border other sidewalks very near it... Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs."[9] The author correctly indicates the lack of interpretation of the "the sidewalk by itself," because without human practices a city becomes only a senseless monument. It is important to stress the concept "practices" (also the main

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8   Simmel, *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, 15.

9   Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House Inc., 1997), 37.

concept of Henry Lefebvre), that is described in Jacobs' vision as "active participants in the drama of civilization versus barbarism in cities."[10] The philosophical and anthropological emphasis in this thesis infers that people are *active subjects* of their lives and identities. Of course, this concept is very similar to Lefebvre's term "right to the city," which means literally the same: to have the right or possibility of creating your own urban world. The essential remark from Marcelo Lopes de Souza is needed here: "Nevertheless, the "right to the city" for Lefebvre was not reducible to the right to better housing, lower rents etc. in the framework of the capitalist city (which was in fact in his eyes a "non-city," the opposite of a true human and enjoyable city), but the right to a very different life in the context of a very different, just society."[11] In other words, the right in the city is the right to be *the Other*, to be open for any challenges and questions.[12] Thus, urban identity cannot be described and analysed as a blocked reality. It is always a dynamic, unpredictable and often irrational strategy of human behaviour in different forms of urban life.

What's more important in Jane Jacobs' major book *Death and Life of Great American Cities* is a dual anthropological strategy of interpreting urban identity. The first strategy concerns the design of comfortable space where the figure of the Stranger is liquidated by citizens. This particular activity not only unites people owing to a common purpose, but also constitutes each active subject of a microdistrict as well as the subject of a macroarea. The second strategy of Jane Jacobs lies in attempts to separate one's own world from the worlds of the others, defining in such a way your own identity space through appropriate signals, landscapes and scenery, points of observation. Interestingly, the surveillance extends not only to Stranger, but also to Own. Indeed, we have a mirror effect when through surveillance a citizen unconsciously beholds in his own reflection.

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10   Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 37–38.
11   Marcelo Lopes de Souza, "Which Right to Which City?" *Interface* 2 (2010), 318.
12   Then we see how this idea is in opposition to George Simmel's term *alienation* as a defense from the pressure of the city.

Urban Identity and Everyday Life

The issue of defining the criterion of urban identity demonstrates a primary importance in anthropological studies. What are the external and internal criteria for identifying a citizen?[13] Is it possible to confidently talk about the complete image of identity? These directly philosophical questions are connected with the anthropological problem of urban identity. Alfred Schutz uses the concept of typing as a way of referring to a class that operates within the realm of everyday life. It is important to distinguish two levels of questions: "How do others see me?" and "How do I see myself?" These questions illustrate the outer level of the definition that tends to be objective and the inner level of self-identification, appearing to be more subjective and prejudiced. In the introduction to the Schutz's *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, Helmut Wagner emphasizes the main goal of analysis is to find the identity that is rooted in everyday rituals and experience: "The strength of the phenomenological approach lies in its point of departure: the experience of the world of everyday life. In making this world the basic subject matter of sociology, Schutz did not deny the existence of other realms of human experience; he merely asserted its inescapable ascendancy over them."[14]

These two levels of the problem (perception of the part and autoreflection) essentially differ from each other because the former is more inclined to design an integrated and sustainable image of identity, while the Other is closed enough to understand the phenomenon that is associated with the identification that is not similar to identity. Alex Scott, commenting on Paul Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another*, states the following: "To be identical to someone in some quality or characteristic is to have the same

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13   In this article, we do not separate the meaning of "citizen" and "urban dweller/urban," because the strategy of preservation and transmission of urban codes matters in both cases. At the same time, we understand that the meaning of "citizen" is more general and has rather socio-political than cultural sense.

14   Alfred Schutz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1999), 40.

quality or characteristic as that person. To be identical to something in some quality or characteristic is to have the same quality or characteristic as that thing. Identity may be viewed as either a state of being the same as someone or something, or as a state of being oneself or one thing, and not another."[15] However, the cultural and ontological basis of a citizen's existence absorbs both identification (how to be with others) and identity (how to be myself).

We can aggravate the problem and ask the next question: is the citizen similar to urban identity? In fact, many people live in a city but do not identify themselves with its world, values and history. For getting accepted in the representational and empirical discourse of identity, living in the urban area is not enough. Paul Ricoeur indicates them as "narrative" and "personal" identities: "The equivocity of the term "identical" will be at the centre of our reflections on personal identity and narrative identity and related to a primary trait of the self, namely its temporality."[16] All these intentions depend on everyday life, but each – in a special way. The narrative identity exists mostly outside of the urban activity, because it is writing the text of city life and it must distance itself from the spectre of human everyday stories. At the same time, the personal identity is often found inside the discourse of banality, for it is a unique unsurpassed experience of life.

Surely, everyday rituals have also constructed our relation to the world, specifically to the city world. However, we would raise the question if it will always affect the basic philosophical issues of the relation between man and the world, the personal and the collective. In this way, Alfred Schutz is trying to recall Husserl's comprehension of belief: "In our everyday life, or, as Husserl says, "from the natural standpoint," we accept as unquestionable the world of facts which surrounds us as existent out there. To be sure, we might throw doubt upon any *datum* of that world out there, we might even distrust as many of our experiences of

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15   Alex Scott, *Paul Ricoeur's Oneself as Another,* accessed June 19, 2013. http://www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/ricoeur.html.

16   Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 2.

this world as we wish; the naive belief in the existence of *some* outer worlds, this "general thesis of the natural standpoint" will imperturbably subsist."[17] If to transfer the concept into the city everyday life, we would be able to see that the process of constructing urban identity is similar to the *mapping of existential area.* Therefore, there is no surprise that the main theorists of urban theory have directed their attention to the issue of space and place as well.

The Project of Urbanity and Human Activity

The process of constructing urban identities is rooted in space, so it is not surprising that most studies are concentrated on urban topography/topology. Kevin Lynch noted that "like a piece of architecture, the city is a construction in space, but one of vast scale, a thing perceived only in the course of long spans of time."[18] This project of construction is a historical niche, while urban identity is fully rooted in the historical experience of the city as well. Lynch continues his reasoning stating: "Moving elements in a city, and a particular the people and their activities, are as important as the stationary parts. We are not simply observers of this spectacle, but are ourselves a part of it, on the stage with other participants. Most often, our perception of the city is not sustained, but rather partial, fragmentary, mixed with other concerns."[19] The same thing Jane Jacobs said, with the exception of the leftist theory. In this case, the theory of Guy Debord concerning *the Society of the Spectacle*[20] can be recalled. Moreover, this idea would assimilate more accurately with reflections of Michel de Certeau.

Whereas the main theorist of the New York School rather sceptically noted that in the perception of the city and oneself in this space, where identity is always fragmented, divided and elusive, Michel de Certeau sees clear cultural logic in everyday urban practices. The French philosopher offers to look specifically at the city, predictably choosing New York

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17 Schutz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, 58.
18 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, London: The MIT Press, 1960), 1.
19 Lynch, *The Image of the City*, 2.
20 See Debord Guy, *The Society of Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 2004).

with this intention. He suggests reading the urban text from the highest point of the metropolis: "To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city's grasp… When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators."[21] It is clear that the World Trade Center doesn't exist anymore, but the observer can find any other highest point for observing. Lynch's idea of fragmentation is not something that was cancelled by de Certeau, but dialectically grasped by the view from the highest point, because there is maintained the chaos of city life (for those who are inside the crowd) and order (invisible text that becomes visible only from a distance) in city life. Interestingly, in the *horizon* of urban life the meaning of the "magical city world" could not be grasped; it is eroded in spots, human flows and the infinite change of events. Instead, *the vertical* is a climb to the maximum point of defining a vital map of the city, not a cold abstraction.

Michel de Certeau indicated many important ways for the anthropological investigation of urban identity. The researcher pointed to the unconscious writing of the text of urban identity, so despite our projections and plans, some territories and areas of our life are still open. Culture also presents many resources for creating our identity, but largely it also happens unconsciously. Urban identity starts before our birth and it looks like a preliminary sketch of our life. Nevertheless, what makes Michel de Certeau's theory so original is that he proposed to add one more useful cultural way of understanding urban identity – tactics. For Walter Benjamin the most appreciable way of writing is an unplanned trip through arcades, but for de Certeau making rational strategy is more helpful for discovering urban place. Consequently, tactics represent a rational map of perception and creation of the city that strongly determines the specificity of urban identity, "but what distinguishes them at the same time concerns the types of operations and the role of spaces;

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21   Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 92.

strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces, when those operations take place, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces."[22] The citizen knows on what street it is better to pay and where it is better to buy cheaper foods; he knows secret places and clubs, unexpected landscapes and mysterious buildings. That is all called tactics, which perfectly fits in with urban identity.

Experience and the Process of Adaptation

Besides absorbing identity as a set of tactics and practices, the city also includes the intention of creating the experience of the city. Specifically, this intention represents itself not only in citizens' life that is planned and moves towards some goal, but also in the foundations of urban culture. It happens because of culture, despite its dynamic nature, must always have a stable complex of values and meanings. Moreover, the urban experience and the experience of the city world represent an extremely significant starting point for self-knowledge. Moris Merleau-Ponty commented on the complex nature of experience: "The whole system of experience – world, own body, and empirical self – are subordinated to a universal thinker charged with sustaining the relationships between the three terms... Now, if one's own body and the empirical self are no more than element of the system of experience, objects among other objects in the eyes of the true *I*, how can we see with our eyes what we in fact grasp through as inspiration of the mind; how is it that the world does not present itself to us as perfectly explicit; why is it displayed only gradually and never 'in its entirety'? In short, how does it come about that we perceive?"[23] Perhaps, the main precondition of perception in the urban world might be human *openness* or believing in the *potential semantic appropriateness* of the city. There is no other way of getting the experience without your *own* intention to have it.

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22   De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 29–30.

23   Moris Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 208.

The characteristic feature of gaining experience is also the fact of the impossibility to get knowledge without adjustment to cultural space and time. Ernest Cassirer clearly states that "to describe and analyze the specific character which space and time assume in human experience is one of the most appealing and important tasks of an anthropological philosophy.[24] It would be a naive and unfounded assumption to consider the appearance of space and time as necessarily one and the same for all organic beings… Yet it is not easy to account for this difference if we merely apply our usual psychological methods. We must follow as indirect way: we must analyze the forms of human culture in order to discover the true character of space and time in our human world."[25] However, do any traditions exist in the city, where many people blur the regulatory principle of human experience? In what manner is tradition expressed in big cities?

The form of tradition in the city is a cultural institution that maintains the human experience in codes and symbols. The transmission of human experience through cultural institutions has both synchronic and diachronic manners. In the first case, it is about the simultaneity of transmission, the knowledge between people and their communities as well. As for the diachronic way, it includes two special principles: consistency and historicity. Consequently, the transfer of individual experience closely relates to the future (as emphasized by Paul Ricoeur in his book *Time and Narrative*) and therefore provides the duration of perception and learning cultural skills in the urban environment. In this way cultural institutions become certain transitions of individual adaptation in the city and therefore they completely absorb in their environment all functions of culture: beginning from regulative and ending with compensatory function.

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24   This concept is fairly controversial as well as philosophical anthropology that has established historical and theoretical tradition exists only in Germany. Despite this fact, we can find many opportune ways of interpreting the city and urban identity (especially in the context of human corporeality) in philosophical anthropology – from Max Scheler to Michael Jackson, author of *Existential Anthropology: Events, Exigencies and Effects* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005).

25   Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 2006), 48.

This means that despite *the openness of human existence* in the city (the main concept in Arnold Gehlen's philosophical anthropology), the *subject is determined* by the city in some (un)known way, registered in its cultural and historical coordinates and obviously depends on them all his life. That is exactly the problem of philosophical anthropology, which has the intention of understanding the meaning of this predetermination, but this openness strongly depends on Another. Max Scheler created the very clear idea, that "our life is completely dependent on the changing opinion of another person."[26] For that reason the behaviour and thinking of individuals perfectly represent the logical-semantic content of urban culture. Max Scheler purely notes a negative character of this influence, eliminating any possibility of a "positive program," such as adaptation and self-realization through the creative resources of society. One of the first who spoke about the inclusion of individuals in the structural field of social identity was Kurt Lewin, who felt the need to be involved in group or local identity in order to preserve "inner calm."

Urban Identity as an Open Project

Despite the severity of the transmission of knowledge rituals, a person has an interpretative orientation to the perception of knowledge. At the same time, the dynamic nature of culture cannot be understood without the presence of certain constants or structures (both temporal/topographical and epistemological) that orient the individual existence to clear behavioural strategies. What is more, the assumption about the presence of a common semantic field of experience of previous generations is a precondition for involving a common mode of being in culture. It is the impulse for the formation of urban identity. But from the perspective of anthropological philosophy it is also important that urban identity as a project depends on subjective intentions and efforts, and also on factors that are independent of us: tradition, cultural codes and patterns. Culture expert Barry Curtis proposes an accurate thesis that "place is the product

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26   Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1973), 42.

of a relationship – part subjective projection. Part internalization of an external realty."²⁷Actually, it is possible to interpret urban identity as a place connecting various types of cultures, realities and human practices as well. Moreover, philosophical anthropology actualizes general configurations of meanings (and therefore configurations of urban contexts), what is also called *discourse*. So, even this trivial fact is cogent proof of the dialectical nature of urban identity, which really becomes an open project of constructing yourself within city limits.

It is necessary to add that a condition of interpreting urban experience includes the existential dimension of human freedom. While interpreting and trying to understand the experience (even interpretation in the city does not always mean a profound understanding of culture), people construct their own *image of the world*, not acting in a mechanical or strictly regulated manner. The principle of interpreting experience points to the special status of the individual in the system of collective existence. As Martin Heidegger mentioned, the human being is determined by the relationships we create with our fellow humans.²⁸

It means that subject *deserves* to be in the city as an active citizen. In other words, an individual can pretend to receive the status of urban identity. Still, "status" is not the right word because people do not follow some illusive urban projects. In fact, it is more than some unreal construction. People do believe in images of themselves, though the majority of ways of constructing urban identity have a playful nature.

Critics, representing the Chicago School, have emphasized the diversity of experience and general descriptions of "urbanism as a way of life" (probably the first attempt to clarify the semantics of urban identity), which was postulated by Louis Wirth.²⁹ The criticism was based on the fact that there are different urbanisms, which cannot be reduced to a

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27 Barry Curtis, "That Place Where: Some Thoughts on Memory and the City," in *The Unknown City*, ed. Iain Borden et al. (Cambridge, London: The MIT Press, 2002), 55.

28 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 156.

29 See Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *The American Journal of Sociology* 44 (1938): 1–24.

common structure. Indeed, what if the relationships between humans always have a common formation of social skills? Does the urban lifestyle really associate with specific spatial and temporal forms? Are they always so significant for the individual? If we accept the fact of the conscious processing of the urban experience and add the important fact of uniqueness (also including non-Western cities, that were included in anthropological discourse by Jennifer Robinson), it will contradict some basic concepts of anthropological philosophy (such as openness to the world, self-sufficiency of human values, the unity of body and spirit etc.). It means that the generalization of urban reality cannot exist, because it is impossible to merge all various levels of human existence in the city. The scepticism is based on the preconception that urban identity is blurred and fragmented in numerous urban practices (or, if you wish, in urban tactics). As for anthropological philosophy, this is the only way to say something about these practices using its own vocabulary. Interestingly enough, no reflection is going on in this similar way and there is nothing special in that methodological procedure. So, the main goal of anthropological philosophy stays on the line of accepting both conceptual and empirical levels of theorizing without losing the main ideas of these activities.

Thus, this analysis demonstrates in which way certain theoretical levels of understanding urban identity can be transformed considering anthropological studies. From a conceptual point of view, our findings show that urban identity is a dynamic reality that permanently combines the urban senses and practices. In this case, everyday life and urban experience play the key role in analysis, which is also actualized from the phenomenological point of view. At the same time, there is a conflict with structural reflection, because the anthropological paradigm absorbs and saves all various identities without any generalization. And anthropology suggests that urban identity becomes an open identity for all individuals. Thereby, the main problem of analysing urban identity is to maintain balance between numerous cultural facts and an abstract system of concepts.

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