



**FAKULTA  
SOCIÁLNÍCH VĚD**  
Univerzita Karlova

Course:  
Lecture:

**Critical Urban Sociology**  
Urban Communities and Spatial Location

# Urban Communities and Spatial Location

**Mgr. Václav Orcígr**  
**ISS FSV UK**

**JSB421 Critical Urban Sociology**



## Discussion

What is a community? How is it created? What are the specifics of an „urban community“? What are the differences between rural and urban communities?































- Community, neighborhood – important concepts to understand urban daily life
- Lifestyle differences externalized in a specific environment: the enclave, the street corner, the mall, the golf course...
- -> spatial manifestations of various forms of urban life embedded within specific types of community
- Interaction shaped through the signs and symbols of sociospatial context
- Choice of residential location is not always voluntary (wealth, race, gender...) -> differences in individual lifestyles, neighborhood living, local space -> reproduced in everyday life through acts of consumption



## Émile Durkheim

- Transition from mechanical -> organic solidarity (1933 (1893) – *The Division of Labor in Society*)
  - > strong social bonds -> flexible social bonds of modernity
  - > enabled the evolution of capitalism
- Observations in the 19th century Europe
  - > modernity tore apart a communal life based on family and kinship + uniform cultures
  - > division of labor replaced kinship ties -> society was held together through a network of social institutions -> jobs, schools, families, religion, government

X anomie

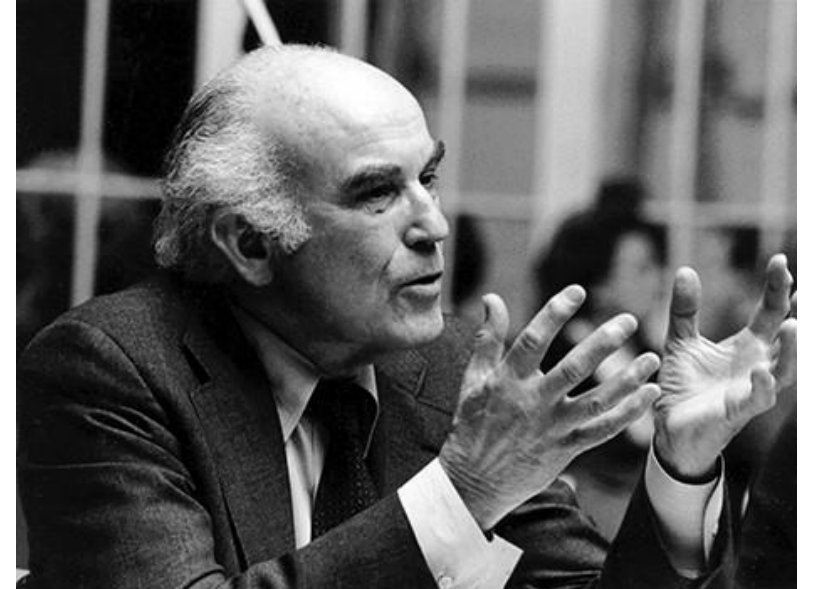






## Robert Nisbet

- *The Sociological Tradition* (1966)
  - > five important themes that have guided the study of community from 19th century origins: *authority, alienation, the sacred, status, community*
  - > Weber – social relations a) *communal* (total involvement of the individual in the group)
    - b) *associative* (rational and less sustained individual involvement)
  - > Nisbet -> erosion of social institutions that supported community (incl. family and church) lead people to seek community through increasingly powerful government





---

## The Sociospatial Approach to Community

- > includes the importance of social space for group identity + the role of power in limiting opportunities throughout the life course
- > Lefebvre -> urbanization creates a world of differences -> leads to polarization between those who manipulate the spatial form (*the technocrats*) and those who possess the content (*differential groups*)
- > variety of sociocultural distinctions used to emphasize relations of **inequality** (of domination and subordination) + framing through political, economic and cultural processes
  - x „classical“ urban analysis of urban differences => subcultures, minority groups, natural, ecological processes
- > groups affirm their distinctions against the process of homogenization
  - > Lefebvre´s multi-factorial analysis of „differential groups“ -> need to establish own space for them to exist as a meaningful social category
    - > evidence of meaningful social action established group identity + defending the group space was akin to reproducing their identity over time
- > role of the *right to the city?*





- ⇒ The study of community involves examining patterns of social solidarity and difference in the MCMR
- ⇒ Fragmentation + integration included within the same process
- ⇒ The sociospatial approach involves studying how social groups (racial, ethnic, subcultural, gender...bowling teams) form and change, as they interact with social space
- ⇒ How spatial location interacts with other markers of identity and community + the variation in quality of daily life within the MCMR



FAKULTA  
SOCIÁLNÍCH VĚD  
Univerzita Karlova

Course:  
Lecture:

**Critical Urban Sociology**  
Urban Communities and Spatial Location

---

# The sociological search for community





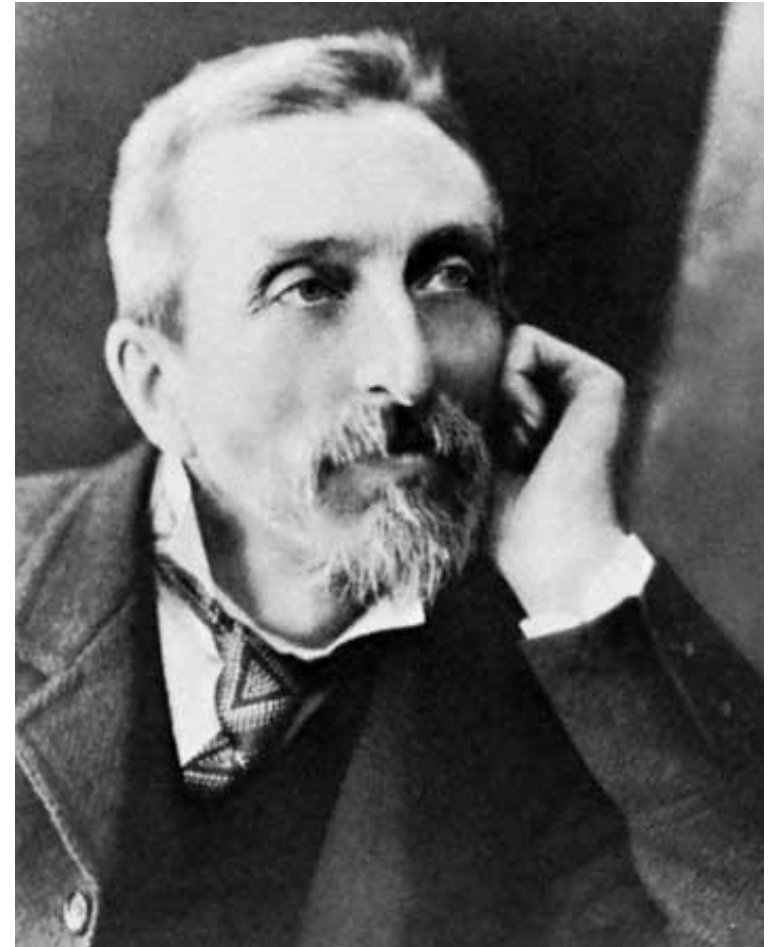
- long-standing tradition, origins in the 19th century -> studies associated with the settlement house and social reform movement
  - > concerns about the housing and living conditions for the working classes in the new industrial cities
  - > Ch. Booth -> life of London poor -> *Life and Labour of the People* (1891)
    - > other London social groups -> *Labour and Life of the People* (1891)
    - > included a detailed map of seven social groups (lowest class -> middle class -> wealthy)



FAKULTA  
SOCIÁLNÍCH VĚD  
Univerzita Karlova

Course:  
Lecture:

**Critical Urban Sociology**  
Urban Communities and Spatial Location





- Toynbee Hall -> founded in the slums of East London by Samuel Barnett
  - > students from Oxford and Cambridge served as residential volunteers -> learn about poverty + develop practical solutions
- > inspired Jane Addams to establish the Hull House in Chicago
  - > facilities eventually included kindergarten classes + night classes for adults, public kitchen, art + drama classes
  - > social reformers and educators associated with the Hull house (led by Florence Kelly) conducted a series of studies about poverty and living conditions among immigrant groups in Chicago
    - > *The Slums of the Great Cities*
    - > *Hull House Maps and Papers*

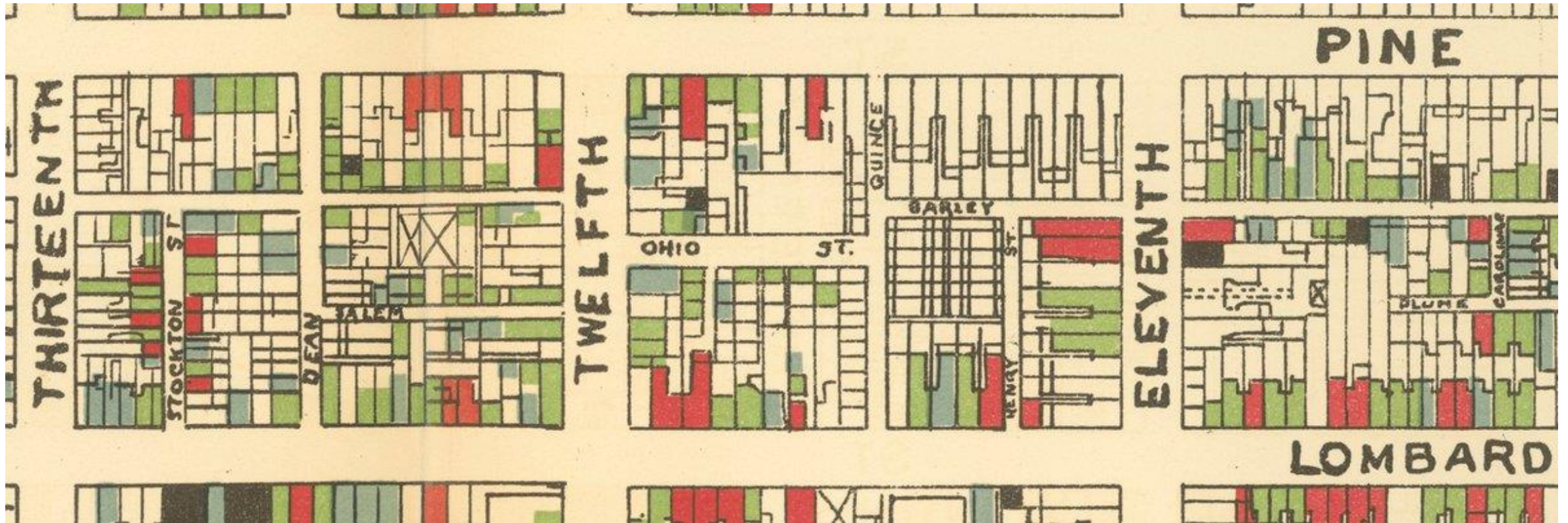






- **W. E. B. Du Bois – *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899)**
- Most important early US social survey
- University of Pennsylvania -> to study „the social conditions of the Colored People of the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia“
- Door-to-door interviews with more than 2500 black residents, field visits
- Conclusion -> conditions stemmed from a lack of education and the need to strengthen the black family
  - > housing as the most serious problem, brought about by widespread discrimination, high rents, racial prejudice
  - > first systematic study of an urban black community





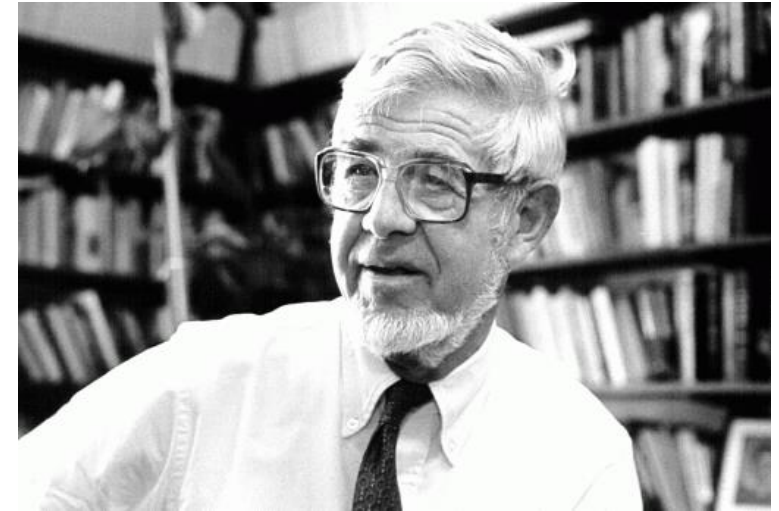




- 1920s – 1930s -> Does urban settlement space produce different behavior than the rural way of life?
  - > idealized image of small-town life as a community (primary relations) x secondary (anonymous) relations of urban life based on business or state bureaucratic considerations
  - > Wirth: „Urbanism as a Way of Life“ -> loss of community + demographic factors (size + density) produce a distinctive form of urban behavior
    - > negative effects on the individual and on everyday life -> anomie, disengagement from community life
  - > S. Fava – *Suburbanism as a Way of Life* (1980)
    - > difference of everyday life in the suburbs (premise of size, density, heterogeneity as determinants of everyday life in the city)



- > H. Gans – „Urbanism and Suburbanism as Ways of Life“ (1968)
- > key factor = socioeconomic characteristics of the population living in particular suburbs or city neighborhoods
  - > social interactions may be primary, quasy-primary, or secondary, determined by demographic characteristics (age, gender) + stage in life-cycle (marriage, children etc.)
  - > suggested examining particular subgroups in the city:
    - a) *cosmopolites* (value urban residence for the amenities – museums, restaurants, music...)
    - b) *single persons and childless couples* (value urban residence for the nightlife)
    - c) *ethnic villagers* (living in older ethnic neighborhoods)
    - d) the *deprived* (ghetto poor with few opportunities to move)
    - e) the *trapped & downwardly mobile* (often elderly who lack the resources to move despite changes taking place around them)



- ⇒ Specific lifestyle not determined by urban x rural
- ⇒ X ignores the role of capitalism & the role of architecture



- **The Community Study**
- 1920s – 1930s, US & UK
- Application of more scientific methods (avoiding the language of the social reformer)
- Impacts of social change on everyday life in the industrial, capitalist city
- Overview of community study tradition -> Bell and Newby – *Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community* (1972):
  - > 2 sociological purposes of the community study
    - a) results may be generalized to other communities / larger society
    - b) allow the exploration of the effects of the social setting on human behavior (= treating the community as independent variable)



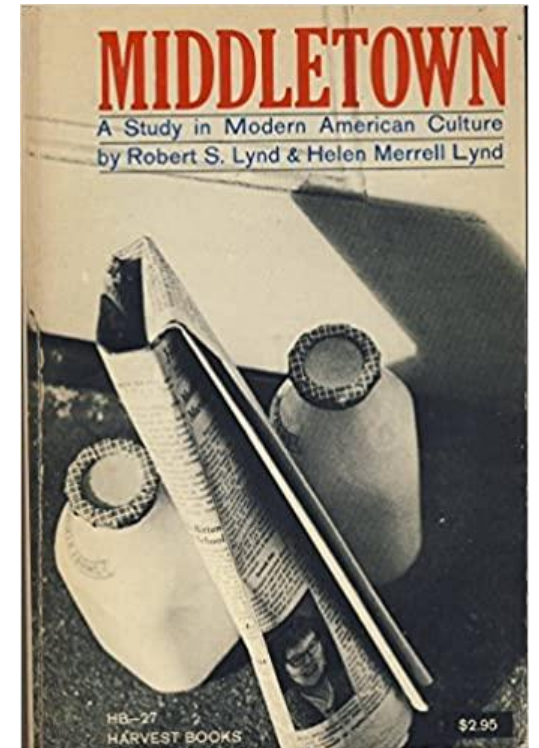


-> Three stages of community study „research process“:

- 1) Entering the community and establishing a presence in the ongoing system of community life that will allow the researcher to access the data
- 2) Collecting data through a variety of methods and over an extended period of time
- 3) Exiting the community, analyzing the information collected + publishing the results  
-> may be difficult (losing ties with the community, anonymity, confidentiality)



- *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (1929)
- *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts* (1937)
  - > Helen + Robert Lynd
  - > „typical“ American small city
  - > variety of techniques (existing documents, statistical analysis, field research, personal observation, interviews)
  - > to discover the impact of cultural change on social norms and the quality of community life
  - > showed a division between the working class and business class + cleavage in the community; segregation, spatial location of various social classes
  - > later study -> impacts of the Great Depression
    - > discovered some social changes, which tended to return to old patterns as the economy returned to normal





## - Neighborhood

- ⇒ Any sociospatial environment where primary relations (esp. intimacy) among residents dominate
  - > if such connection absent (large city housing blocks, suburban apartment complex) – hardly a „neighborhood“
  - x CSOs, civic society
- ⇒ Importance of the local space in social relations
  - neighboring activities occur across metropolitan regions; strongly related to the lifecycle (single/married, children, young/old...)
  - mostly by people raising families
  - urban areas with higher density of private businesses or public amenities („third places“) may facilitate social interaction among community residents rather than suburban housing developments (Oldenburg 1999)











## Types of Neighborhoods and Community Interactions

- Rachele and Donald Warren – *The Organizer's Handbook* (1977)
  - > *identity* (the sense of connectedness to place, feeling of sharing)
  - > *interaction* (interactive ties to neighbors, mutual visits)
  - > *linkages* (ties between the local area and larger community)
  
- ⇒ 5 types of urban neighborhood (ideal types):
  - 1) The *parochial neighborhood*
    - > strong subcultural orientation, stable community with strong identity, weak ties to the surrounding area and to the city as a whole, may not possess political influence
  - 2) The *integral neighborhood*
    - > high sense of belonging; interactivity; ties to the larger community, high degree of involvement in community associations, strong ties to city agencies, active influence in affairs of the city as a whole





### 3) The *diffuse neighborhood*

-> low levels of neighboring, considerable interaction and social networking among residents and others outside of the neighborhood, may have influence in the larger city (social status of residents)

### 4) The *anomic neighborhood*

-> many poor areas, low voter turnout, weak community organizations, little interaction or connectedness among residents, may be high levels of social disorganization and crime

### 5) The *stepping-stone neighborhood*

-> highly mobile residents, place as part of a process to acquire resources to move elsewhere, some neighboring, weak common identity and linkages to the larger community



Anomic neighborhood – East Hastings, Vancouver



+ **Gerald Suttles – *The Social Order of the Slum* (1968)**

- Study of the Near West Side in Chicago (Hull House)
- 6) *The defended neighborhood*
  - > neighborhoods may isolate themselves as a consequence of an external threat
  - > heightened sense of community identity and increased social interaction as the community mobilizes to build linkages to local government to increase community influence
  - > mainly racial circumstances
  - > today? Struggles against external development & neighborhood interventions?





- Squats, Social Centres, Houseprojects -> specific examples of urban communities
- Subculturally embedded, use of right to the city in the broadest sense





FAKULTA  
SOCIÁLNÍCH VĚD  
Univerzita Karlova

Course:  
Lecture:

**Critical Urban Sociology**  
Urban Communities and Spatial Location

---

# Class Differences and Spatial Location



- Society is stratified -> division into a number of different groups based on SES = socioeconomic status
- Classical modern division
  - > the lower class
  - > the working class
  - > the lower middle class
  - > the upper middle class
  - > the ruling class
- Wacquant – Urban Outcasts (2007) – *advanced marginality*
- Standing – The Precariat
- Gottdiener et al. -> class-based lifestyle differences in the metropolitan region





## The Wealthy

- Multiple homeownership, concrete spatially embedded activities (restaurants, clubs, resorts)
- Exclusive social spaces
- Gated communities
- T. Veblen: *conspicuous consumption* (1899)
- ...

## The Creative Class

- Significant discretionary income associated with their field of work
- Service-related jobs, information-processing economy, financial, legal institutions (i.e. jobs of a „global city“)
- „yuppies“ = young urban professionals
  - R. Florida -> new „creative class“ (2002)
    - > diverse, tolerant, creative communities
    - > „back to the city“ movement



## **The Suburban Middle Class**

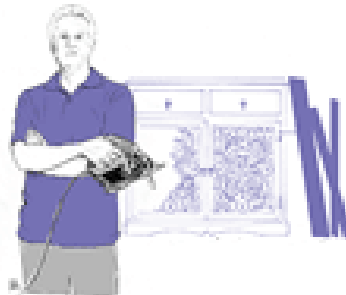
- Suburbs historically associated with the middle class
- Typical suburban home = scaled-down replica of the upper-class estate + symbols of status
- „disappearing middle class“ – social polarization

## **The Working Class, the Working Poor, the Jobless**

- Since 1960s – weakening of traditional social institutions within the working class, lack of collective power, suburbanization
- Spatial & racial segregation, subsidized housing, precarity
- ...



# ROZDĚLENÍ SVOBODU







## 6 social classes in the Czech society 30 years after the revolution:

- Secured middle class (Zajištěná střední třída)
- Incoming comopolitan class (Nastupující kosmopolitní třída)
- Traditional working class (Tradiční pracující třída)
- Class of local ties (Třída místních vazeb)
- Endangered class (Ohrožená třída)
- Destituted class (Strádající třída)
  
- Class calculator: <https://www.irozhlas.cz/rozdeleni-svobodou>
  
- Comp. Keller 2011



## Women, gender, and space

- Gender considerations into a city?
  - Stockholm 2014: prioritization of snow-clearing on sidewalks + bicycle paths over roadways -> women more likely to travel by bike, public transit or on foot (Schmitt 2018)
  - US Conference of Mayors 2018: #metoo movement and role of community leadership
- Gendered meanings of space => how masculinity and femininity is embedded into social space
  - > reflects social relations and gender disbalances
    - > public sphere (state & economy), leisure time, private sphere (family & home), occupations (care work), sidewalks (feeling of safety)...
  - => urban public spaces = historically masculine



Vance – *This Scene of Man*  
(1977)  
Suttles – *The Man Made City*  
(1990)



## LGBTQ+ Communities and Urban Life

- Similarly to gender, the meanings of sexuality and space are intertwined with larger cultural beliefs and social institutions that influence the spatial fragmentation and reintegration of groups
- Specific spaces of public manifestations & gatherings (bars, clubs, parades...) x systemic discrimination embedded in legal system & space
- After WWII – forming of gay enclaves in cities (NY, SF, Chicago)
  - the „coming out“ period – gay neighborhoods flourished (x gender differences within the LGBTQ+ community)
- Movie tip: Milk (Harvey Milk -> first openly gay elected official in California)
- Patterns of social life in LGBTQ+ communities echo aspects of Lefebvrian theory: necessity to produce own spaces in order to secure own identity



## Literature

- Bell, C. and Newby, H. *Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community*. New York: Praeger. 1972.
- Booth, Charles. *Life and Labour of the People in London*. London: Williams & Norgate. 1891.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Philadelphia Negro*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1899.
- Durkheim, Émile. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press. 1933 (1893).
- Fava, S. „Women’s Place in the New Suburbia“ in *New Space for Women*, edited by G. Wekerle, R. Peterson, and D. Morley. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 125 – 149. 1980.
- Florida, R. *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books. 2002.
- Gans, Herbert. „Urbanism and Suburbanis as a Way of Life: A Reevaluation of Definitions“ in *People and Plans: Essays on Urban Problems and Solutions*, 34 – 52. New York: Basic Books. 1968.
- Keller, Jan. *Tři sociální světy*. Praha: SLON. 2011.
- Lynd, R. S. & Lynd, H. M. *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*. New York: Harcourt & Brace. 1929.
- Lynd, R. S. & Lynd, H. M. *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. 1937.





- Nisbet, Robert. *The Sociological Tradition*. New York: Basic Books. 1966.
- Oldenburg, R. *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community*. New York: Marlowe & Company. 1999.
- Schmitt, A. „Why Sweden Clears Snow-Covered Walkways Before Roads“ in *Streets-Blog USA*. Available at: <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2018/01/24/why-sweden-clears-walkways-before-roads/>.
- Suttles, G. *The Social Order of the Slum*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 1968.
- Suttles, G. *The Man Made City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 1990.
- Standing, G. *The Precariat*. London: Bloomsbury. 2011.
- Vance, J. *This Scene of Man: The Role and Structure of the City in the Geography of Western Civilization*. New York: Harpers College Press. 1977.
- Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York: Viking. 1899.
- Wacquant, L. *Urban Outcasts. A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. Cambridge: Polity. 2007.
- Warren, R. B., and Warren, D. I. *The Organizer's Handbook*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. 1977.