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## *Heritage lived space: an alternative look of cultural heritage from the geographical science*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The space lived sets one of the subjective dimensions of the geographical space, a social construction that each individual builds based on relations between individuals, in a specific space and through the personal lived experience (temporal and spatial). This individual and personal construction is even more complex when we think about it in relation to those historical and cultural components which are part of the identity threads built in a certain space. This makes us wonder: What position does the cultural heritage occupy in spaces lived? How are these goods incorporated to the personal biography of individuals? Can we talk about “common/shared lived spaces” referring to these forms of space and cultural expressions?

In this context, in order to generate a conceptual contribution, this paper wants to establish the basis to define a cultural heritage’s category of analysis in the scope of the geographical science from the notions of lived space. It is worth investigating here if it is possible to think or rethink new analytical categories which will in turn allow us to address the study of the historical-cultural components from the geography, more precisely from the humanistic geographical paradigm. In this sense, it is proposed to set the bases to define the first descriptors of we have called: *heritage lived space*. It is not the intention here to innovate on the creation of a new concept but to define a category of analysis which will allow a differential approach of the cultural heritage, having as support those adjectives developed in the lived space.

Other works of the author of this article have already been published and they also show parts of the applied investigations mentioning the concept of heritage lived space. Nevertheless, the objective now is to present the framework that sustains at a theoretical-conceptual level the analytical category suggested or proposed. Likewise, the aim is not to deepen into the analysis of the concept of lived space as part of the geographical science (it has been done previously) but to understand the context of reference which allow us to lay the foundations to establish the new contributions through the description of the variables that structure it and also through the methodological exemplification in a specific case.

First of all, the concept of lived space is inquired, signaling the main contributions in this sphere. Then, the different perspectives of the cultural heritage definition are posed, laying a stance on it from an integral notion of the concept. Last, the first guidelines for the definition of the category of heritage lived space are established, trying to make a contribution to the treatment of the heritage from the geographical discipline.

### II. THE SPACE LIVED AS A PERSONAL SPACE

We can say that the notion of space lived is positioned in the field of spatial subjectivity inside the geography of everyday life. The proposal of this concept arises from the conceptual advances developed during the seventies in the French-speaking geography by Armand Frémont

and Jacques Chevalier (LINDÓN, 2006, 2007). Following this, Frémont emphasizes (in a publication made in 1974) the value, the experiences, representations and emotions built upon the places and regions, focusing not any more on the materiality of space but on the subjective variables built by the society (BENEDETTI, 2017). As regards Chevalier, he also expresses the relevance of the consideration of social representations when he deals with space lived but changing the question How do men live in space? Into How do men see space? (CHEVALIER, 1974). In this sense, and according to the words of the author, this spatial dimension is conceived as a space of representation and of values attributed to the environment. The difference between an everyday space where social practices are developed and an everyday space emotionally apprehended, makes us come up with two concepts: the space of life and the space lived (DI MEO 1991, quoted on LINDÓN, 2007).

Lefebvre (1974 [2013]) with a differential approach distinguishes three moments of social space: a perceived space, a conceived space and a lived space. The perceived space is the space of social practices in the physical and material sense; the conceived space are the representations of the space through the scientific and professional knowledge and the lived space takes into account the world of symbolism, the experience, the imagination; it is the space of representations. The interesting thing raised by Lefebvre as regards these dimensions, is not the independent analysis of each one but the dialectical relation between them. These moments of social space are going to lay the bases of what Soja (1996, 1997, 2008) will later call *thirdspace*.

In this personal biography, the lived time is articulated, but also the physical space lived along the individual's existence and the symbolism built around particular places. This makes us wonder then, how do we approach the study of this spatial dimension that each one of us builds throughout our existence? What elements or components structure it? What happens to the shapes and expressions that make up the history and culture of a community? We will here try to answer these questions or at least set the foundations to generate new questions that will in turn deepen the issue.

### III. CULTURAL HERITAGE: AN ALTERNATIVE LOOK FROM THE INDIVIDUAL'S PERSPECTIVE

If we had to start by establishing a basic concept about what we understand for cultural heritage from

a dominant perspective and a greater acceptance, we could say that it comprises a set of material and immaterial components, which correspond to the past of the community constituting a legacy of an immense historical and cultural value. So, it must be preserved as a filament of the identity represented. It is important to say that this concept has been widely disseminated and accepted in the academic and management sphere and has been reproduced in different disciplines that study heritage as a topic. This perspective of analysis, respected for the development and application it has had in time, has suffered a series of criticisms and questions in different ways (TRONCOSO y ALMIRÓN, 2005; SMITH, 2011; TRONCOSO, 2008, 2012; PINASSI, 2017, 2018) for the static character attributed to heritage, for the direct link to identity or for the lack of relation between individuals and other artists. So, all of these have been the subject of different investigations that serve as a basis to contribute to the development of the analytical category that is intended to present.

These controversial points give an account of alternative looks to the consolidated version of heritage. One of them understand heritage as a social construction (PRATS, 1997, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2014; SMITH, 2011; BERTONCELLO, 2008, 2010, 2017; PINASSI, 2018). Unlike the traditional look, here heritage would not be made of the tangible and intangible goods product of culture, but it would be made of the social, cultural and political mechanisms that define the different heritages.

After articulating these two perspectives mentioned before, we come up with a third perspective which links the official version of the heritage (which focuses, following the etymology of the concept, on the objects and manifestations of a culture) and a more critical perspective which focuses on the selection processes of these historical components where individuals become the real creators of heritage. And here we can say we come up with a more integral view of heritage, making it not an object in itself but a link between inhabitants, residents of a city and the city itself. Here we refer to the common citizens, and not the social agents with political or economical power which the critical version speaks about. From this way of understanding the word heritage, we can say that the social value given by people to the historical resources of a city or place generates and promotes the connotation of the term.

This alternative look allows us to think about the link of this concept and the understanding of space lived, and more specifically about the analytical category suggested in this work: the heritage lived space.

#### IV. TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF THE CATEGORY OF ANALYSIS PROPOSED: HERITAGE LIVED SPACE

Space lived is that subjective space that each individual constructs based on his own experience throughout his life, his social relations, his practices in the material space, his personal story and his bonds (social, historical and spatial) in a particular place. This space, being personal, can be structured from common elements to other “spaces lived”, defining homogeneous components to other social constructions. The approach of which elements are those that configure this spatial dimension are what interests us the most here. The set of material goods and intangible manifestations associated to the culture and citizen identity (the cultural heritage lived in an integral sense) are the axis of the conceptual contribution that is represented here.

We have then, goods and expressions of the culture shared by individuals in a society with common cultural and historical precepts. That is to say, that the same manifestation of the intangible heritage or a material good can be a symbol and an emotional representation for different individuals. So, in this case, individuals share a common social history, which is reflected in the space lived by each one of them and is manifested through the appreciation and recognition of the cultural legacy structured throughout the community history.

Heritage lived space can be defined as that space lived which is built from the components of the cultural heritage of a society. A lived space can become a heritage space through its configuration on the basis of a common cultural and historical heritage, shared by the inhabitants of a specific place. The difference between a lived space and a heritage lived space comes from the internalization and apprehension of the components that structure this representation of reality and they determine a specialty settled in the recognition and valuation of historical assets. A lived space can be structured on the basis of shapes and expressions which are far from the heritage connotations but a heritage lived space can be structured on the basis of the set of elements that identify, differentiate and highlight the site inhabited by the individuals, from a historical and cultural point of view. These components are shared by the set of citizens when the territory is spatially configured by them living in that specific place. We can say then that the heritage lived space is a common subjective space shared by individuals in a society. This geographical category is structured from a comprehensive view

of the heritage, since it articulates the historical components together with the bond that unites them with individuals. Emotions and affections are here important (LINDON, 2017). Those emotions individuals build during their lives in the geographical space in question. These social constructions are not mental photos or static experiences, on the contrary, they determine internal realities, which are dynamic and are produced and reproduced constantly.

In order to have a better understanding, we present a summary of an applied investigation, derived from a doctoral thesis in geography (PINASSI, 2016) which had as goal to analyze the place occupied by the cultural and historical components in the lived space of Bahia Blanca citizens (Bs. As. Rep Argentina). As one of the hypothesis here it was established that the degree of recognition and appreciation of the historical and cultural legacy by citizens is related to the lack of a consolidated heritage living space. In order to verify this premise a methodical strategy with a qualitative-quantitative approach was established. It was made from different groups of the society according to age and geographic criteria, based on different municipal sectors in which the city is organized. The groups were four: Children (aged 6 to 11), adolescents (aged 12 to 18) adults (aged 19 to 59) and the elder (aged 59 onwards). For each of these groups different techniques were implemented in order to get the necessary data. All the premises raised were oriented to obtain information on the importance that the historical components acquire in the personal biography of the inhabitants, asking questions like What place do the forms of geographical space and cultural manifestations rooted in local history occupy in the lived space of individuals? Can we speak about a heritage lived space?

As a result of this research we state that the citizens’ degree of recognition and validation of the historical and cultural legacy of Bahia Blanca is related to the lack of a strong and rooted heritage lived space. In general terms the appreciation of these components is limited and is directly related to the age of the residents. It is emphasized that:

- the Recognition of cultural assets is restricted to specific monuments of the city, like the Municipal Theatre or The Townhall which are popular. Nevertheless, the knowledge of the is very poor, superficial and in many cases wrong. It is also distinguished no validation of other sectors as railways or intangible cultural expressions.

- The age segments represent a relationship of direct cause with the appreciation of cultural resources: The older the person the more knowledge and representation of the cultural resources he will have. This knowledge being poor, confuse and many times wrong.

This poor assessment translates into the configuration of a living space structured by personal experiences that have a greater link with the contemporary, giving more importance to recreational spaces than to local history. The weight of the historical filaments fades leaving no space for subjective spaces charged with collective identity that contribute to a greater apprehension of cultural components. This shallow value given to these goods, even by adults and elder generations, gives place to a heritage lived space not yet consolidated and of a dormant character. This is referenced from the weak link between subjects, objects and manifestations of the history and culture of a place.

#### V. SOME WORDS TO REFLECT

Throughout these lines an attempt has been made to contribute to the understanding of cultural heritage from the notion of lived space, giving as a result the analytical category, we have decided to call: heritage lived space.

Here we propose an alternative look, different to the official perspective of heritage which is widely accepted.

The approach from the perspective of the lived heritage space, allows us to investigate in the thinking and experience of the individuals around the historical components of a society. This alternative look allows us to understand the investigation and the asset management from a more human perspective, not only focusing on buildings, monuments and cultural expressions but also giving importance to individuals who are actually the ones who build and give sense to that heritage.

As regards methodological aspects, we have presented here a specific strategy to get to know the heritage space lived of a group of citizens of a particular city and see how much they know and appraise the historical and cultural assets of that city. Of course, this method is not the only way to inquire about the personal biography of each of the individuals, but it structures a possible way to study perceptions, representations and symbolism linked to cultural heritage. In this social world, internal to the subject, the analysis of all the variables that can structure the evaluation with respect to certain components is extremely complex.

In this social sphere the formulation of the most adequate methodological strategy to explore experiences around cultural heritage, will depend on the intelligence of the researcher. Obtaining reliable results about the specific topic will depend on that witty.