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Book Review

The Sociology of Space: Materiality, Social Structures, and Action

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Low, M., Goodwin, D. (2016). *The Sociology of Space: Materiality, Social Structures, and Action*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Although the book was written by Martina Löw and Donald Goodwin translated the English version of this book in 2016. In the meantime, the author of this book efforts to integrate the abandoned sociology of space by employing practical or empirical research. This book has vibrant methodological aspects. Hence, to investigate the concept of space, the author has used mixed-method approaches that include both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Beyond the naturally existing world, the book has tried to incorporate the symbolic aspect of space that makes people redouble interpersonal communications. The book has six chapters:

The first chapter details the reason why the discipline of Sociology should have to be concerned with space. As a result, several sociologists believe that human history has been shaped by the critical desiderata aspects of time and space. Even though the concept of space is ontological in its nature but socially

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constructed, historical context could best explain it by acknowledging the difference between the conclusive experiences of the current conditions, which is time. Also, this section encloses that recently the concept of space is becoming in a dire state because of the rapid intensification of modern technologies and globalization. As a result, we could replace it with posterity through the crucial dignitary aspect of time. (Löw & Goodwin, 2016)

Chapter two then entails the constitution of the space that can be understood through the continuous daily social process encounter. In supporting the findings, the author of the book has used a systematic theoretical arsenal to inspect the significant differences between sociological approaches in the eye of absolutist and relativist traditions. This chapter sought to examine the three variations of absolutist territorial, Kantian, and local space concepts. Despite their importance, these dimensions do not inform the sociological concept of space at the same time. In contrast to ontological physical–philosophical or absolutist assumptions, the author of this book, like other sociologists, is inclined to the epistemological assumption that space only existed through subsequent human experiences and the way they present themselves in the descriptive enterprise (phenomenology). This chapter deduces the ideological differences between sociologists and natural scientists in looking at and defining the nebulous term of space.

Chapter three contends the changes in the traditional view of space because of the rapid intensification of technology and globalization that lightened the interpersonal relationships with people without being affected by physical distances. In terms of empirical and scientific sociological studies, this chapter makes an effort to be aware of the ontological aspects of space. Furthermore, among the various types of spaces, this book reveals the synthesis material conception of space as the only concept that can be studied using structural sociological analysis. Through the assumption of Euclidean thoughts, the author augmented that we could generate the concept of space through the ability of individuals to define and perceive the world in which they find themselves. We socially constructed the conception of space at the level of imagination and internalized perceptions. This chapter, as a whole, infers the concept of space through a variety of theoretical and empirical examples. Also, an interesting thing is that the chapter sought to seek relevancy of space by augmenting both sociological levels of analysis, which are Macro-Micro (PP, 55-91).

Chapter four and five then turn to look at the indispensability of space with social action and augments how the concept of space is situated and arranged

through time. Unlike the absolutists, the author of the book asserts in this chapter that space does not exist in a vacuum, but rather as a dynamic relational arrangement of material bodies that is highly interrelated with time. Through taking the idea of erudite scholars such as Elias and Luhmann, the author seeks to develop a theoretical approach to space that is constructed and built through antecedent consequences of actions. With this in mind, space must be created using two analytically distinct processes: synthesis and spacing. In this process, the concepts of imagination, perception, and memory are pivotal. The final two chapters, which are chapters six and seven, are concerned with the author's elegant ability in interpreting the theoretical interpretation of empirical findings regarding the relational concept of space. The chapters look at the complexity and organized daily encounters and activities of society that depend on the material dispositions that generate space. Besides, like Hegelianism and Marx's proposition, the author of this book presumes space as an arena of social conflicts. These two chapters pose the society that emerges through the historical struggle between distinct classes who struggle to gain property ownership and power. Apart from these social conflicts, the efficient means of utilizing space have become means of production for society.

Hopefully, this book will be very interesting for students and academicians. The major strength of this book is that the author seeks to examine the notion of space and time through appending with the two social and philosophical realms. These are ontology and epistemology. With the essence of ontology, the author strives to revolve the abandoned sociology of space through swaying the dignitary contribution of the natural sciences such as Newton's law. On the phenomenological side of the book, the author sees and explains the constitution of space through socially constructed and historical contexts in order to recognize the difference between conclusive experiences of current conditions, which is time.