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Architects and Designers Meet Sociologists to Design Urban Space. Reflection on the (im)possible crossing of disciplinary borders.

Space as an academic concept occupies a place in various disciplines and professions. In each case it tends to be named, studied, understood and created in the appropriate conceptual apparatus, using the relevant methodology for the acquisition and analysis of data. On the other hand, an ever greater role in the process of designing space is accorded to the users themselves, who have certain specific preferences and their own models of shaping the space. Awareness of these different perspectives requires interdisciplinary cooperation. The paper refers to experience gained during interdisciplinary spatial design workshops, at which students of architecture, interior architecture, sociology and philosophy jointly prepared designs for urban space. The design process is analysed as communication between the representatives of disciplines using different resources of reflexivity about space. This workshop experience is not treated as ordinary, empirical research. It is rather an impulse and a starting point for further research on the cognitive aspects of cooperation gathering together experts rooted in different institutional contexts and fields of knowledge. The article discusses the possibility of cross-disciplinary cooperation between architects, designers, sociologists, philosophers, artists and other space constructors and users. Our assumption – based on the conceptions of reflexivity by Pierre Bourdieu, Scott Lash and Anthony Giddens – is that this cooperation is practised as an *interdisciplinary* relationship, incapable of overcoming disciplinary borders.
Key words: space, architecture, art, design, cooperation, interdisciplinary borders

Introduction

The article examines the issues of reflexivity on social space as knowledge used by interdisciplinary teams in the process of designing a public space and discusses the possibility of cross-disciplinary cooperation. This kind of cooperation is within the mainstream of the pop-up city idea and

practice, and is becoming an important element of local (urban) policy in Poland.[1] Our assumption – based on the conceptions of reflexivity by Pierre Bourdieu, Scott Lash and Anthony Giddens – is that this cooperation is practised as an *inter–disciplinary* relationship, incapable of overcoming disciplinary borders. The paper makes a reference to the experiences gained during two rounds of the 'New Space' Interuniversity Trade Workshops, at which students of architecture, interior architecture, sociology and philosophy jointly prepared designs for urban space. Group dynamics observed within the teams that formed in the frame of the workshop, the ways of cooperation discussed, and the communication within these groups led us to similar conclusions from one year to the next. It is important to emphasise that we treat this experience not as ordinary empirical research. It is rather an impulse and a starting point for further research on the cognitive aspects of the cooperation, gathering together experts rooted in different institutional contexts and fields of knowledge.

It is obvious for the social and human sciences that only to a limited extent is the form of a space dictated by the influence of a professional designer and their knowledge and values. One can see how in modern architectural and urban-planning theories, importance is increasingly attached to the way in which the space is perceived, used and shaped by people, and the nature of the relations between the space and social practices. These questions are significant not just for the development of sociology per se, but also for individuals who are professionally influential in regard to the quality of local life: city officials, urban planners, architects and politicians. In practice, they display different levels of reflexivity in terms of the theoretical context of their own actions. There is no doubt, though, that the need for a 'participatory planning process' and the application of sociological knowledge – including from the fields of urban sociology and the sociology of space – is slowly becoming the declarative standard of architectural and urban-planning practices. Our experience of working with architects and urban planners would suggest that it is much easier for them to approach sociologists with a proposal of collaboration than to accept the consequences of such a venture. The direct consequence of this is acceptance of the fact that theories of space in sociology are manifold and diverse, as are its methodologies and the specifics of social research. We would argue that difficulties in accepting these consequences result from different types of reflexivi-

[1] On the political (legal) level the new standards in urban planning are designed in the Act on Revitalisation (2015) in which interdisciplinary cooperation is necessary to prepare and realise the revitalisation projects.

ty: that of the architect/visionary/creator on the one hand, and that of the sociologist/spokesperson for society on the other.

Disciplinary 'reflexive communities'

Reflexivity – considered one of the key features of postmodernity (Giddens 2001) – is manifested in the increasing self-knowledge of individuals and the community, in the social awareness of the consequences of one's own actions – towards others but also towards the environment. Owing to this particular competence of social actors, an increasing role in spatial design is played by the users of the space, who have their own specific preferences and models for creating it. With the aid of the category of reflexivity we can gain a broader and deeper insight into the experiences gleaned from the workshops as a reflection of the processes taking place in modern society. In this society, as Scott Lash writes in reference to Pierre Bourdieu's conception, 'fields' are reflexive communities producing "the shared meanings and practices, the affective involvement with the 'tools' and product, the internalist generation of standards, telos, and ends, the felt obligations, the guidance by *Sitten*, the characteristic habitus of the field" (Lash 1994: 161). Anthony Giddens adds to the list of characteristics of modernity, reinforcing the picture of the aforementioned 'reflexive communities', the internal referentiality of social systems, manifested in the tendency to improve methods of influence and distinguish actions that are comparatively isolated and thus more susceptible to control. Internal referentiality is also linked to another attribute of late modernity, which Giddens calls the 'sequestration of experience' and is associated with a growing influence of expert abstract systems in all areas of daily life (Giddens 1991: 83ff.).

Referring to our experiences – jointly leading the interdisciplinary spatial design workshops, we can conclude that it was not just the fact that the various disciplines employed their own meanings and practices that dictated the shape of the process of joint spatial design by their representatives. This would mean that after the meanings were decided on it would be possible to form a 'common field'. Instead, a factor that exerted a stronger influence on the design process was the participants' readiness to use the process while being reflexive on the various paradigms, perceiving the ontology and epistemology of social life and space in different ways and as a result differing in their definitions of the objectives and norms of aesthetics in architecture. This is also the reason why for the purposes of our study we propose using the concept of reflexivity in two ways. First, as reflexivity applying in a given 'field', as understood by Bourdieu (e.g. 2009: 50-51). The relevant fields

here will be 'sociological', 'philosophical/aesthetic' and 'architectural'. This is a kind of meta-layer referring to the way in which from a sociological perspective we analyse the process of spatial design as social practices within the fields of disciplinary communities. We refer to Bourdieu's concepts as we analyse the usual practices of the students of all subjects – while in this sense social *practices* are the main material of analysis enabling us to discover the *models of practising* (reflexively – as in the concept of the habitus, organising the *practices* themselves). In the second layer, we complement the description of these fields in reference to the various types of reflexivity mentioned by Lash (1994): cognitive, aesthetic and hermeneutic. According to him, cognitive reflexivity, based on Enlightenment rationalism, corresponds to the positions of Ulrich Beck and Giddens, who refer to the current phase as late modernity. They consider reflexivity to be an immanent characteristic of a contemporary society which results from the development of expert knowledge; on the one hand, it contributes to the increased social risk, while on the other it means that risk becomes familiar through the development of knowledge (reflexivity). This is a type of reflexivity that is part of the so-called paradigms of social subjectivity, in which the individual – the rational agent – invoking reserves of socially established knowledge and participating in the creation of the discourse on social reality (e.g. local identity, aesthetics of architecture), undertakes actions that reconstruct the social structures, reflexively influencing them. Weighing up the risk (as understood in Beck's theory), the individual constructs their own identity, creating a kind of narrative about oneself. Therefore, at every level of social life, from the individual to the macrostructure, the process of structuration is dialectical in character: the structure of the social world determines the subject, but is also reflexively created by it. This type of reflexivity is dominant among representatives of the social sciences, as alongside the impermanent character of knowledge, distinctive in particular of all scientific disciplines based on empirical factors, they constantly revise social practices in the light of knowledge of these practices.

We can therefore intuitively assume that the cognitive type of reflexivity sets apart and at the same time distances sociology students from those of disciplines that are not geared towards application. Justification for this hypothesis, based on loose observations, is given by Giddens, who notes that, "the discourse of sociology and the concepts, theories, and findings of the other social sciences continually 'circulate in and out' of what it is that they are about. In so doing they reflexively restructure their subject matter, which itself has learned to think sociologically. Modernity is itself deeply and intrinsically sociological" (Giddens 1991: 43). Reflexivity therefore also

means the 'circulation' of social knowledge, although Giddens adds that "much that is problematic in the position of the professional sociologist, as the purveyor of expert knowledge about social life, derives from the fact that she or he is at most one step ahead of enlightened lay practitioners of the discipline" (ibidem: 43).

From the sociological approach to space planning

The sheer number and diversity of theoretical paradigms, based on a variety of ontologies of space using different research methodologies and stressing various aspects, is reflected in the list of 52 researchers of space and place whose conceptions are discussed in the book *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (Hubbard, Kitchin, Valentine 2004). The way in which space is understood in sociology, social geography, anthropology and psychology today results from the development of diverse and often competing theoretical notions, especially the perspectives of humanistic and macroeconomic sociology. Adopting a specific ontology of space has cognitive and methodological consequences. Sociologists (or anthropologists, psychologists, etc.) following a constructivist paradigm will not say anything true about a space if unable to reconstruct its social meanings. Sociologists therefore ask how people perceive and mark a space, as well as asking why they perceive it in different ways. They look for answers in individual and collective experiences, cultural models rooted in the past and modified and maintained in various ways today. In this way, they 'discover' the various characteristics as well as the value of the space, permitting them to call it primary or secondary, one's own or someone else's, but also private, public, sociopetal and sociofugal space. Researchers analysing space from a macroeconomic perspective assume that it reflects fundamental macrostructural contradictions, and that power relations established beyond the space are materialised in it. They then ask who has the real power in a space, what entities determine its shape, and in what way the space favours maintenance and recreation of its macrostructural features. The number of perspectives provides a cognitive potential to better understand people in a space, but also to better understand the space in which people live and from which they emigrate.

Sociology not only offers a particular way of understanding specific conceptual categories, but also identifies various sources of knowledge which are complementary and allow us to examine and interpret space holistically. Owing to the diversity of methods – interviews, observations, analyses of documents, visual analyses, measurement of paths, mental and behavioural mapping, etc. – we are able to perceive the multitude and variability of spac-

es, the accumulation of structures and meanings in time, and their relational character. Through sociological theories developed on the basis of empirical theories, we can better understand people's actions, decisions and attitudes. The work of an architect, who is seeking to establish how best to implement accepted premises, may involve using both the results of sociological research with applied functions and fundamental studies aiming to provide better theoretical tools for understanding person–space relations. Similarly, sociologists themselves, in adopting given theoretical premises and the social ideology that underlies them, can – like artists or architects – be social engineers, visionaries, and designers of human actions and spaces. However, this role is a less obvious one than that of the researcher. Having said that, in the developing field of public sociology, there is a stress on the need for the sociologist to form a relationship with the community and to conduct research not for the sake of knowledge per se, but to make use of it (Burawoy 2005). The prominence of this point of view means an increase in the ethical responsibility of research. The similarly applied function of social research in spatial planning or design is relatively new, at least in Poland. It is hard to forge the relationship between sociology and architecture – fields joined by a common denominator of people – in practice, i.e. in spatial design. Of course, we can cite examples of specific architectural and urban-planning projects that result from balanced collaboration between sociologists and architects. These, though, are still much less common in Poland than elsewhere. There are several factors behind this gradual increase of the participatory element in the design process. Firstly, there is evidence of increasing social subjectivity: consumers' awareness that they have the right to expect their opinions, or even ideas, to be taken into consideration in the project. Secondly, the architects themselves – particularly those designing in the public space – have growing faith that the potential users of the space possess knowledge, competence and imagination that not only can enrich the project but upon which depends the success or failure of how the space is developed. There is no doubt that a major role has been played by publications pointing directly to the consequences of 'social' or 'participatory' thinking about space in the process of its design (the best-known examples of those popularising this process are Jan Gehl and Peter Hall, or in Poland Krzysztof Nawratek). Thirdly and finally, a belief increasingly popular among sociologists is that many social phenomena and processes cannot be described, comprehended and explained without consideration of the spatial context, understood not only as a social construct, but also as a kind of ecosystem, an area with a particular form and matter. For all these reasons, social researchers (sociologists as well as anthropologists and psychologists) are increasing-

ly attempting to work together with urban planners, architects and spatial designers.

Building interdisciplinary bridges

The differences between the representatives of various academic disciplines in their approach to space can be seen at the stage of categorisation of reality and acceptance of certain premises as to its socio-spatial ontology – which has a variety of consequences. On the one hand, for example, it can lead to the individual fields becoming further professionalised and specialised, meaning development of knowledge, diverse perspective and conceptions unavailable in the process of the popular view and understanding of social reality. On the other hand, though, by exhibiting and 'nurturing' their own distinctiveness, if this acts as a safeguard for their particularistic interests, as a result the sense of independence, exceptionality or stability of the previous position may be limited. By acting hermetically, the representatives of a given community can become closed off from interdisciplinary knowledge and dialogue. This may lead to aversion to different ways of perceiving and understanding the social world, seeing beyond one's own point of view, methods of action and implementation of solutions. Becoming isolated and resisting stepping outside the limits of one's own discipline can lead to a sense of a chronic shortage of information about the subject of analysis. A particular role is played by those disciplines located at points where different areas meet – social sciences and humanities, technical sciences/engineering and arts – which are at the same time of a strictly applied character, being followed in the spatial design process. Examples of such disciplines are architecture and interior architecture.

The need to combine the perspectives of various fields was expressed several years ago by academic staff at the Faculty of Interior Architecture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków as well as the Faculty of Architecture at the Cracow University of Technology, who organised 'New Space' interdisciplinary spatial design workshops. In the first three editions, future architects and interior architects worked together as a team. In 2012 the first workshop to include students from the Institute of Sociology of the Jagiellonian University took place, and they were joined in 2013 by students from the Jagiellonian's Institute of Philosophy. The groups, comprising representatives of each subject, had the task of preparing a design on a theme with a general definition and stipulations. In the fourth edition – the first to feature sociologists – the topic was 'Cultural Bridges' (referring to the Vistula River and its banks in the Kraków area), and in the fifth – with philosophy stu-

dents – it was 'Trans-Formation of Local Identity'. This time, the projects were to be on three empty Kraków buildings: those of the former Cracovia and Forum hotels and the NOT building, the so-called 'Skeletor'. The main premise of this interdisciplinary programme is to "broaden the educational opportunities of students by pursuing academic interests in collaboration with related subjects at various universities, and at the same time initiating integration of the professional community combined with forming the skill of collaboration in sector groups" (Gibała-Kapecka, Kapecki 2013: 6). The motif for this joint work by representatives of various disciplines was the belief – expressed at many of the preparatory meetings for workshop leaders and students – that space cannot be discussed, understood and designed with blinkers on, heeding only the point of view of one's own field. 'Space' cannot be slotted into disciplinary compartments, as it is at once a product, a context and a pretext for human actions and valorisation, allowing a person to simply 'be', in a purely physical sense as well as an emotional, political, economic or other one. The workshops therefore confronted the theoretical competences of the students of three of Krakow's universities with their ability to work together and share knowledge, while also asking how an engineer, artist, sociologist and aesthetician-philosopher can work together to expand their imagination and working methods, making them more creative and efficient.

Let us, however, begin with a short description of the empirical reality, and only afterwards come back to the category of reflexivity and the consequences that result from diversity – which can in various conditions constitute a strength or weakness of interdisciplinary teams. Each of the groups formed for the workshops comprised representatives of every subject, and each was responsible for its final results: a graphic spatial design with descriptive elements. The group's structure was to develop during the work, as a result of the disciplinary competences and skills as well as the characteristics of its members. However, in practice it turned out that a major factor in the formation of this structure comprised the expectations of the workshop initiators, expressed during the introduction and during the workshop. The sociologists (students and group leaders) were invited to take part in the project as 'specialists who will look after the social aspect of the projects' – they were therefore called upon to provide theoretical and empirical knowledge about the expectations and opinions of the local community. Philosophy students (and their group leaders) were defined as 'specialists in aesthetics'. Incidentally, the students themselves were discreetly surprised to be given this role, at first making quiet protests that they were 'just philosophers/philosophy students', but with time internalising the role and demonstrating

commitment in preparing the descriptions of the projects' aesthetic conceptions. The architects were to be the 'creators' of the designs, which were expected to be prepared on the basis of the knowledge provided by the sociologists and philosophers. This function was legitimised firstly by their degree subject and the knowledge they had gained on the 'art of architecture'. As Steen Rasmussen (himself an architect) wrote, "Architecture is not produced simply by adding plans and sections to elevations. It is something else and something more. It is impossible to explain precisely what it is – its limits are by no means well-defined. On the whole, art should not be explained; it must be experienced. (…) The architect works with form and mass just as the sculptor does, and like the painter he works with colour. But alone of the three, his is a functional art. It solves practical problems. It creates tools or implements for human beings and utility plays a decisive role in judging it" (Rasmussen 2000: 9). Rasmussen's last sentence here stresses the primacy of ethical over aesthetic criteria. The role of architecture students as the project 'creators' also resulted from one other apparently prosaic but telling fact: they knew how to use computer software for designing and visualising designs for space.

The first edition of the workshop – in which the sociologists took part – was a remarkable, very creative experience, but one that made the difficulties of interdisciplinary communication emphatically clear. At least this was our impression based on analysis of our own class evaluations at the time: in terms of group dynamics and communicational structure, the necessary teamwork skills were lacking (including cooperative competences), and this was closely linked to a lack of knowledge of the specific nature and potential of the various disciplines, their language, methodology and tools. This made it much more difficult to work together, since, as Stephen Covey (2004: 277) put it, "unless we value the differences in our perceptions, unless we value each other and give credence to the possibility that we're both right, that life is not always a dichotomous either/or, that there are almost always third alternatives, we will never be able to transcend the limits of that conditioning". Design in general is – following Christopher Alexander (1964), a process of reaching knowledge, and the path that leads us to the solution is just as important as the solution itself.[2] It is therefore crucial to go beyond one's own opinions, experiences, values and perspective. The process of knowledge acquisition plays a key role, and for socially oriented designers becomes something equally important as the designing itself. The objective of design

[2] See: Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964.

conceived in this way is to apply solutions to their purpose – which is a continual process and an intellectual and practical challenge. The workshops, the idea behind which was to initiate new social orders (not only hypothetical ones within the designs constructed by the groups, but also actual ones implemented in the form of interdisciplinary consultations and discussions which sought to bridge the banks of the human imagination, sensitivity and competencies), required not just suitable conditions for meeting and working together, but overcoming a range of institutional and personal limitations, or even more – overcoming borders between disciplinary 'reflexive communities'.

Sociologists' research, which has applied functions, is often linked directly or indirectly to social change. This practical, 'engineering' aspect of sociology has been present in the discipline since the outset, when its founding aims were not just to better understand the social world, but also to 'organise' it better. As Giddens notes (1987: 21), "the social sciences have been reflexively involved in a most basic way with those very transformations of modernity which give them their main subject-matter". Artists, on the other hand, can be distinguished by the other type of reflexivity – let us look at it for a moment – rooted in the aesthetic modernism of Adorno, Baudelaire and Nietzsche, and represented by Bauman, Derrida and Lyotard. This form is distinctly antifundamentalist, denying the possibility that in our modern reality any coherent social ideology exists that designs that reality (such as rationalism or Marxism in the past). The source of reflexivity is the expressive 'I', which attains cognition through negation (e.g. of the existing structures of knowledge) and deconstruction. This is a reflexivity resulting from an ontology of reality that is focused on difference (and not, like cognitive reflexivity, on identity) and on an event (not a narrative) (Lash 1994).

When looking at the subject of different types of reflexivity on space, we refer to their foundations – depending on the academic discipline – in the various ontological paradigms cited earlier. These different types of reflexivity and communicational practices between the group members translated into 'design practices', meaning the ways in which the participants created their designs for the city spaces during intensive workshops lasting several days. The expectations of the main organisers and initiators of the enterprise – representatives of architecture and interior architecture – appeared on the face of it to be tangible, although in practice they proved to be based on definitions of 'expert knowledge' that were not agreed upon in the interdisciplinary group. The teaching models and methods used in the individual academic environments, the dynamic of the group work, and at the same

time the need to develop an individual style, combined to define the situation in which all the workshop participants found themselves. This was especially true of the interior architecture students, as in their education – and we make this observation solely on the basis of the workshops – there is a clear expectation that their work will be the result of an aesthetic transgression, a 'trace' of their uniqueness and creativity[3]. The Academy of Fine Arts teachers suggested that their students break with patterns, 'think differently' and 'do the opposite'. From our (sociological) perspective, when the student artists' reflexivity was directed in this way the result was that they focused on the form and marginalised questions of functionality. We often observed spatial projects in development that were lacking in comfort or safety from the point of view of the future user – as a result of the size and shape of the rooms, their texture (e.g. spikes sticking out from the walls), the lack of driveways, insufficient lighting in long underground tunnels or safety barriers on high platforms intended for usage – but were also innovative, displaying original solutions or following the latest design trends. The designers here played the role not just of specialists in 'design technique', but also upholders of aesthetics in the social space. Discussions with the students made it clear that they were confident that certain formal and aesthetic solutions would result in the 'right' use – that is, in keeping with their expectations – of the designed building/space. Some projects – for public spaces – seemed somehow to be based on the assumption that it is 'the user who should teach the designer, and not vice-versa'. Meanwhile, the sociology students were encouraged by their sociologist leaders to enter the role of 'spokespeople for society', which led them to observe the ideas of the architects with growing interest, but also sometimes concern, as they tried to 'realise' their designs. This 'realisation' was conceived as adapting to the (assumed) needs of the society that the design would potentially affect, and a noticeable motif in their thinking was social inclusion and integration. However, the sociology students' arguments in favour of 'inclusive' or 'participatory' projects – starting from the basic question of *who the space was for* – did not go beyond questioning the artistic solutions. For the sociologists, not only acceptance proved difficult, but so too did the suggesting of new spatial forms; they tended to err on the side of caution, affirming what they knew and viewed as tested.

To conclude, let us specify the broadly outlined differences that come from the different reserves of knowledge and types of reflexivity of the rep-

[3] The difference between a *designer* and an *artist* seems to be a basic question in the discussion on the social sense of design and the social roles of designers. See: Piłat-Borcuch 2015: 16-24.

resentatives of various scientific disciplines and professions. Sociologists tend to accumulate and interpret *narratives* about a place. Usually, people *talk*, *give their view*, *have their say* about a place, and very rarely – the exception is children – do they use tools allowing them to visualise their emotions or judgements associated with that place. When sociologists use an observation technique to learn about the patterns of use of a space, they also verbalise the unsaid: behaviours, gestures, and trajectories of movement immersed in time. Architects work with pictures, icons and graphics – these are their means of talking about space. It remains a challenge to translate words into pictures or sketches. And although it is increasingly common and popular for sociologists to use visual methods – such as mapping of space in diagrams, drawing or photography – this is usually just supplementary material obtained in questionnaire or narrative interviews. While we are discussing these limitations, let us add that designs for public space should consider the relations between the space's past and future. Testimonies and verbal sources are required for interpretation of this kind of relationship. The Cracovia and Forum hotels and NOT building, the subjects of this year's workshop, are examples of places with histories, which, when creating new designs, require that narratives are put into practice in the physical form of the space. A further stumbling block in cooperation between a sociologist and architect is the hypothetical consumer/user of the space. Even if an architect is interested in public opinion, they simply ask: "what do people expect from this place (in which the former Hotel Forum, Hotel Cracovia or 'Skeletor' etc. can be found)?" The sociologist will reply: "which people? The residents of Krakow, residents of the district where the building is, the building's immediate neighbours, tourists?" Of course, the decision concerning the consumers has consequences in the selection of the study sample, but in fact it signifies a great responsibility not just in methodological issues – de facto, it is a decision that results in specific groups and social categories being included or excluded from the process of spatial design. The literature on methodology of social research devotes much attention to the question of over– and underrepresentation of certain social categories in a sample based on gender, age, social status or other characteristics. For research with applied objectives, for example in spatial design, the researcher must be aware of the consequences of decisions made in sample selection. In this sample, the ways in which a space is used, its valorisation and the expectations for it will be examined, and through the design process this will have tangible, long-lasting social consequences.

The way in which recommendations are made can also pose an obstacle to collaboration. Yet this does not concern conveying the results of research,

which are expressed in the form of general observations – the need for safe spaces, for example. Such general recommendations can be inferred from theory, and their added value is mostly the empirical confirmation of what is 'widely known'. Sociologists – let's stick with the above example – using all their diverse research methods, can make this statement more specific by discovering what a 'safe space', 'safety' or a 'sense of security' mean in a given community, time and place. But these are also socially constructed categories, variable not only in a longer time perspective and broader geographical one,[4] but also differing according to the groups sharing use of the same space and considered in terms of age, gender, ethnic origin, education and individual experiences, etc. Even the specific solutions suggested by respondents (e.g. more benches or green space or expectations of playgrounds) are not linked to design solutions in a strict sense – and this offers much room for debate in interdisciplinary groups: how can the results obtained and communicated be interpreted? How can these socially defined expectations be fulfilled? How can a desired function be secured for a place? In practice, there are many solutions, and the choice of which to use is important. This means that the participatory nature of an architectural design process in no respect closes it to a new form or removes imagination from the designing. For this is neither about installing necessary equipment nor the unreflexive realisation of users' ideas, which can lead to clichéd, conventional, tired and mundane solutions. An example might be a park bench – recommended by residents, but put in a random place (albeit perhaps the best from the designer's point of view), which thereby loses its function, becoming a superfluous piece of furniture in an abandoned space. As sociologists, our task is not only to identify 'what', but also to provide explanations and help to understand 'why (not) in this place'.

Summary

The experiences of the workshop participants emphatically demonstrated the diversity of points of view and social practices that emerge from pursuing various scientific disciplines – although not all were able to use this potential. What was expected to be the strength of the workshops often become a source of tension caused by scholastically acquired knowledge and expert recommendations for its implementation, which became seen as the

[4] As an example: an operational definition of a safe space would be entirely different for a person living in Poland in the 12th century, in the inter-war period and at the beginning of the 21st century, as well as for an inhabitant of the Krowodrze district in Krakow, Manhattan and a Pacific island.

only correct option. By favouring our own ways of understanding space in the process of its design we grow distant from what Hanna Buczyńska-Garewicz (2006: 10) points out in her introduction to the issues of phenomenology of space: "not only philosophers speak about space, they only find various ways of expressing the human experience of spatiality. The experience itself is universal and constant, because any sensation and cognition of the world is a spatial experience. Therefore, apart from philosophers, scientists and gardeners as well as poets talk about it – the first when creating theories of space, the second when planting trees and measuring the distance between them, and the third when invoking imaginary pictures and metaphors. But behind the diversity of expression their sources are always one". Incidentally, in a certain sense 'our' workshop was a forum for (future) representatives of some of the groups Buczyńska-Garewicz mentions: sociologists, engineers, artists and philosophers. As a result, it was inspirational not only from a cognitive point of view, but also as an exceptionally 'instructive event', as the dynamic and difficult collaboration process gave rise to clashes of differing (but not necessarily mutually exclusive) beliefs, visions and emotions. Following two editions of the workshop, we are convinced that for the participants (students) themselves, a single participation is insufficient to be able to effectively and synergistically combine various disciplinary perspectives. A few days of intensive work are not enough for students of several subjects to create a common code, because their disciplines function in different 'fields' of discourse. However, they have an excellent opportunity to embrace the challenge of negotiating meanings beyond the boundaries of their disciplines. Our post-workshop discussions with the sociology students revealed that they saw the workshop as a practical encounter with other types of reflexivity, rather than just a theoretical one.[5]

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[5] The starting point for 'bridging the interdisciplinary gaps' comprised the joint meetings, and as part of them the students?' joint execution of tasks. This was no guarantee of effective knowledge sharing, sometimes taking the form of exclusively declared or ostensible collaboration. For this reason, the organisers went one step further, planning 'pre-workshop' courses as a future extension. These will give the sociology and philosophy students an insight into the artist'/designers' perspective and provide the latter with pointers as to how sociologists and philosophers think about and study social reality. The joint 'pre-workshop' courses will aim to offer a forum for exchanging views and overcoming the distance that each type of reflexivity can engender.

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