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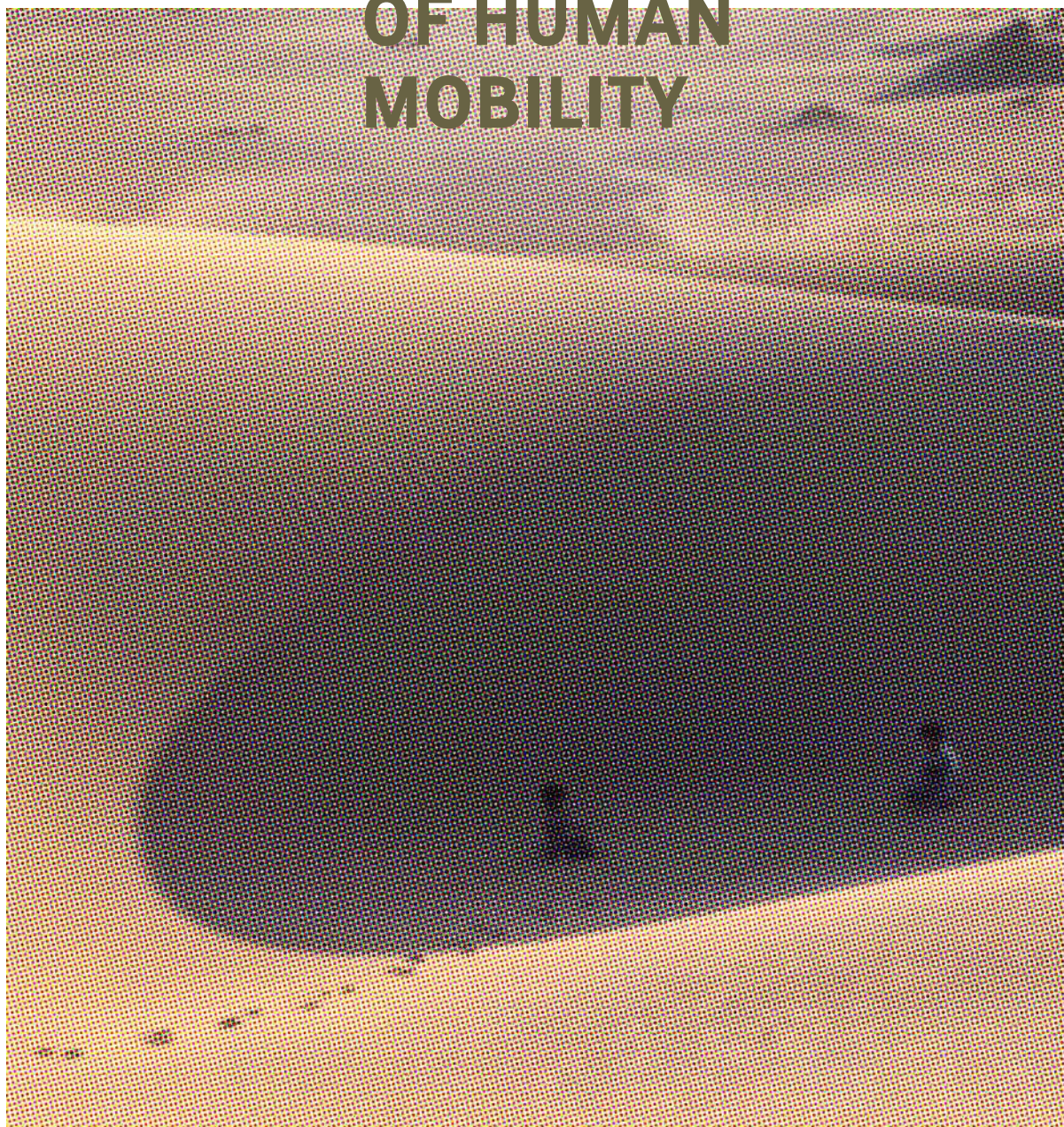
Aleksandra Łukaszewicz
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Szczecin
2022

SPACES OF TRANSFERS AND VISUAL MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN MOBILITY

**WYDAWNICTWO
AKADEMII SZTUKI
W SZCZECINIE**

Edited by

Aleksandra Łukaszewicz
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Table of Contents

Part III
Designing and Living in New Realities

Introduction

Reflexive Pluralism on the Mobility Turn

Flavia Stara

The articles collected in this volume constitute one of the results of a collaborative research project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme (MSCA-RISE) under the theme of "Technologies of Imaging in Communication, Art, and Social Sciences." This project included researchers from the following institutions: Academy of Art in Szczecin (Poland - coordinator), The Polish University Abroad in London (UK), Association for Education, Science, and Culture in Szczecin (Poland), Univerzita Jana Evangelisty Purkyně v Ústí nad Labem (Czech Republic), University of Macerata (Italy), University of the Witwatersrand (Republic of South Africa - until 01.02.2018), Pwani University College (Kenya - from 01.02.2018). The international research project TICASS focused on the investigation of technologies of imaging in communication, arts, and social science. The broad objective of the TICASS project was the perception of the public space – in different places and cultures – through visual language, visual learning, and visual literacy.

The present volume is the outcome of an international conference, within the TICASS project, held at the Polish University Abroad in London in 2019, on the theme "The Visual Management of Mobility."

The conference focused on how mobility is influenced by visual communication accessed via technology, how different recipient groups understand various kinds of visual communication in cities, and how people's behavior is influenced by visual communication in defined spaces of interaction.

The contributors to this volume investigated the ways in which people engage with their environment and with each other on the basis

of transformations in communication, mobility, and technological ways to access information. Social mobility, whether by foot, car, or public transport, is guided visually through signage, GPS, online maps, route planning, applications for public transport, and so on. Technology – including smartphones, tablets, and laptops – allows people to navigate to and within unfamiliar places. At the same time, these devices may discourage verbal communication with other people as the required information can be easily accessed without human interaction.

The book also focuses on geo-cultural ways of interpreting and using signs and forms of visual communication. The challenge for visual communication in the management of a global mobility is to empower people with interdisciplinary tools to appreciate manifold languages as well as to improve social awareness about technological interactions.

The volume is divided into three parts: Part I Ethics of Visual Management in Cities**,** Part II Semiology in Spaces of Transfer**,** Part III Designing and Living in New Realities.

Part I Ethics of Visual Management in Cities contains chapters by Polish and Italian scholars considering ethical insights on visual communication. The first essay inquires what kind of technology should be developed in order to be sustainable and eco-friendly, furthermore it questions the human use of technology and the moral value of the technology itself (Aleksandra Łukaszewicz, *Ethics and Visual Management in Post-Polis*); the second chapter offers a study of visual communication in public urban space by exploring how any visual message (sign, object, image) features modality of "language" to reach agreement within the open public sphere (Maria Czerepaniak-Walczak, *Claims of Validity in Visual Communication in Public Urban Space*); the third chapter discusses how to recalibrate digital and visual communication by enhancing more human interactions, in the challenge to use the very addiction to technologies as a space-time for knowledge, education, and for critical reflection on cultural/natural expressions and claims intertwining in the contemporary social fabrics (Flavia Stara, *Speed and Hyper-technology. Re-approaching Slowness in Knowledge.*)

Part II Semiology in Spaces of Transfer proposes the study of various international settings in which human transfer takes place, along with the analysis of both specific and customary contexts of communication within the scope of the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Poland, and Kenya. In the opening chapter the author focuses on how to read the grammar of airports, referring it to social and anthropological values (Justyna Gorzkowicz, *Grammar of Airports: Toward an Anthropology of Non-Places in a Public Space)*; the next essay deals with a specific form of visual communication in public transport: artworks made amongst and for passengers both in public transport and the nearby surroundings (Adéla Machová, *Actual Visual Art Creation in Public Spaces*); another essay stresses the lack of visual information regarding the use of the scooter in urban areas, along with the need to implement solutions suitable both for

road and pedestrian participants. (Aleksander Cywiński, *Scooter Sign.*) The other two chapters analyze social content of messages conveyed through visual communication in Kenyan contexts. One article investigates religious messages communicated in public urban spaces by arguing how religious images and messages are infused in almost all aspects of the people's way of life (Stephen Muoki Joshua**,** *Religious Images and Messages on Public Spaces of Kenya: an analysis of some 100 pictures taken at North Coast Towns of Kenya in 2018*); in the section's last contribution is discussed the opportunity to open a research platform to study the art of the wordings of traditional health services advertisements exhibited on billboards in major cities and along major roads or town streets (Tsawe-Munga wa Chidongo, *An Analysis of Advertisements of African Healers in Coastal Kenya Town Streets and Along Major Roads.*)

   Part III Designing and Living in New Realities contains proposal perspectives on visual communication in reference to contexts of social interaction in Italy, the United Kingdom, and Poland. The first chapter considers the importance to initiate dialogue between relational interdependencies, languages, and forms of communication in order to creatively dwell in public places, and to design times and spaces for a better mutual understanding (Rosita Deluigi, *Interdigital Humans: visual codes, mobility, and relational fragility*); the second chapter aims at proving that, thanks to animation techniques (animated graphs in general), visual information is processed in a different way by a human brain, thus helping to detect important features of data sets (Radosław Nagay, *Visualization of multidimensional data using animation*); the author of the third essay claims that Augmented Reality (as a kind of 'Parallel reality') can be regarded as a kind of representation of a precession of simulacra and indicates the universal possibilities offered by involvement of new technologies in everyday life (Jarosław Solecki, *Living Among Simulacrum. Augmented Reality as a Commonplace*). The section closes by focusing on the investigation of traveling and tourism as forms of visual consumption, in reference to the reflections offered on the matter by John Urry in his work "The tourist gaze" (Lidia Marek, *"The Tourist Gaze" as Visual Experience [theoretical and empirical reflections on the concept of tourism perceived as John Urry's visual consumption].*)

Part

I

Ethics of Visual Management in Cities

Ethics and Visual Management in Post-Polis

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Abstract

The developed world is becoming more and more technologized, and it is hard, if not impossible, to imagine this trend ever reversing. The issue in discussion is then about what kind of technology we should develop: sustainable and eco-friendly or abusive and destructive. Of course, this question is about the use of technology and its moral qualification and not about the moral value of the technology itself. Everyday use of technology by most people is neither very sustainable nor very abusive. It is rather facilitating functioning in everyday activities, and its moral qualification is not that obvious as in the other radical cases.

Technology in the everyday lives of the majority of the population in the developed world is ubiquitous, and very explicit in the case of the management of mobility. The mobility of both individuals and groups is managed by visual communication and online technology. All types of online applications that help people get around and travel are responding to new practices (and influencing them reciprocally). They allow the precisely planning of a trip, transfer, or travel details, and we follow the guidelines on our smartphone, not focusing on our surroundings or the people around us.

This kind of urban mobility is not that easy in historical cities (although it is not impossible) as their strong visual and symbolical impact attract our interest, while it is natural in such cities as New York, which may be called, after Ewa Rewers, "post-polis" – a post-modern city in which it is impossible to be a flâneur. Walter Benjamin's flâneur comes from arcades to a city which is a net for transfer but not a social and material net of relations.

Points of transfer are non-places, as defined by Marc Augé, and among them we may find airports, stations, and others. In such non-places, more and more common in contemporary world, personalized and universalized visual communication are required, both requiring ethical considerations.

<p style="text-align:center">✳✳✳</p>

"Technology is responsible for neither our salvation nor our destruction. Always ambivalent, technologies project our emotions, intentions, and projects into the material world. The instruments we have built do provide us with power, but since we are collectively responsible, the decision on how to use them is in our hands"

Pierre Levy, *Cyberculture* (2001: XV).

The developed world is becoming more and more technologized, and it is hard, if not impossible, to imagine this trend ever reversing. This poses an important moral question – in which direction do we want to develop and use technology? The modernist assumption that progress is a positive value in itself is no longer automatically taken up, and it no longer forms the overall frame for building the world view. On the contrary, many post-Second World War theorists and philosophers criticized modernist ideas, values, and concepts, deconstructing them, as Jacques Derrida showed, making visible their dispersed genealogies in the Foucauldian spirit, what led to postmodernism.

The undermining of the legitimacy of progress for its own sake was followed by theoretical proposals like posthumanism, postcolonialism, and visual culture studies. Some of these schools are critical and suspicious of the conscious and unconscious aims of those who develop progress and advocate it, understanding them in terms of the pursuit of power and property; other schools praise them for promoting development for the sake of the emergence of transhumans, that is, better, technologically enhanced humans. Between the poles of rejecting technologies and being delighted with them and the possibilities they give are the intermediary positions, which are aware that, as Pierre Levy stresses, technology is not neutral but depends on the use we make of it (Levy 2001: 3-12)[1]. This position focuses on our moral choices (not on the moral qualifications of technology because there are none). A contemporary artefactual technological environment is one that prolongs the communicative networks of social and cultural life.

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1 Pierre Levy, in *Cyberculture*, shows that technology as such is neutral, though at the same time fundamental for the achievement of human status since the mythical Prometheus (the fire given by him to people is a sign of technology as such – it can bake bread, warm up or burn a house, give power to engines and explode in bombs).

Society, culture, and technology are distinguishable as separate phenomena only theoretically, because in practice we always encounter "a multitude of human agents who variously invent, produce, use, and interpret *technologies*" (Levy 2001: 5).

The communication made possible by online technology today differs from the traditional communication present in traditional societies, which was mostly face-to-face[2], and is predominantly interface-to-interface. This mediation modulates what, how, and to whom we communicate and, structures our social networks to entail work, entertainment, and movements around the space of various subjects. The society that emerges from these kinds of connections and relationships is a "media society" in which acts of communication are realized through various, but especially computer and network, media (Goban-Klas 2005). In this kind of society, interpersonal relations are mediated; agents move within the ionosphere, in which the telecommunication infrastructure is the basis of network and information circles; most activities are supported by media-information technologies; most employees work with or in the information sector; and most of the GDP comes from the sector of information, telecommunication and media services. For such a society, information and knowledge are the main commodities of value.

Communicating subjects are also highly mediated – in online communication an individual can communicate with other individual online directly, for example with the use of video chat or texting, or indirectly, as when reading or watching the news online. Today people communicate through the use of chatbots, algorithms, and applications, as well as through everyday high-tech objects. Communication through objects is termed the Internet of Things within the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) arena[3]. Here I would like to focus on how communication using online platforms and applications influences the modes of an individual's activity and movements in that space, their visual presence in the urban spaces, and the ethical dimension that should be considered in this case.

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2   On the development of the modes of communication, see, for example, the work of the Polish sociologist Tomasz Goban-Klas, who differentiates six eras of revolutions in communication: 1) signs and signals, 2) language, 3) text, 4) print, 5) telecommunication, 6) computer and telecomupter (Internet) (Goban-Klas 2005); developing classic Marshall Mc Luhan's works, differentiating between three eras: 1) oral, 2) writen, 3) electronic; (McLuhan 1962).

3   For a definition, and the potential and societal role of the Internet of Things, see, for example: L. Atzori, A. Iera, G. Morabito (2017). "Understanding the Internet of Things: Definition, potentials, and societal role of a fast evolving paradigm". *Ad Hoc Networks 65*, December 2017. DOI: 10.1016/j.adhoc.2016.12.004

Telecommunication technologies in post-polis

> "[F]rom the desktop computer to the laptop, the tablet to the smartphone, the connected fitness device or smartwatch to the radio frequency identification device (RFID) trackable card, the networked car to the online fridge, the Wi-Fi access points in the street, we are surrounded, connected, always online, and making use of the connective devices as part of all our many everyday interactions, engagements, desires, and routine"
>
> Rob Cover, *Digital Identities* (Cover 2016: IX).

In the 20th century, a telecommunication bomb (one of three observed by Albert Einstein with global repercussions: demographic, nuclear, telecommunication) exploded, causing a chaotic growth in communication activities and transforming forms of connection. Today it has allowed the creation of non-hierarchical contacts between individuals in a net that contains, besides people, software (for example, applications for social media or public transport), hardware, objects (like computers, telephones, or cars), and places (starting from Internet cafés in the 1990s and 2000s to reach potentially any place located on online maps).

The everyday use of technology by most people is neither very sustainable nor very abusive. Rather, it facilitates functioning in everyday activities, and its moral qualification is not that obvious as in other radical cases. This can be referred to the Internet environment used to retrieve information, social platforms via which people interact, and the interconnectedness with the physical world with the use of Internet (as with, for example, an "Internet-connected washing machine (...) [or] the fitness wearable technological device that tracks our calorie depletion, our rates of exercise, and bodily health information"[4]). Telecommunication technologies are very important because they create the social and cultural space in which we function and in which we define ourselves, finding ourselves "as embodied beings in the relation to the technologies we use" (Cover 2016: 76). An analysis of global telecommunication technology brings us to the concept of sociotechnical systems/ regimes and to the analysis of capitalistic and consumeristic strategies.

Telecommunication in the everyday lives of the majority of the population in the developed world is ubiquitous, and it is very explicit in the case of the management of mobility. The mobility of individuals and groups is managed by visual communication and online technology. All types

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4 These three phases of development of the network or digital media environments are described by Rob Cover as subsequently: Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 (Cover 2016: 74-78(76))

of online applications that help people get around and travel are responding to new practices (and influencing them reciprocally). They allow the precise planning of a trip, transfer, or travel details, and we follow guidelines on our smartphone, not focusing on our surroundings or the people around us. This kind of urban mobility is not that easy (although not impossible) in historical cities as their strong visual and symbolical impact attract our interest, while it is natural in such cities as New York, which may be called, after Ewa Rewers: "post-polis" – a post-modern city in which it is impossible to be a flâneur (Rewers 2005).

Walter Benjamin's flâneur has come from arcades (Benjamin 1999) to a city which is a net for transfer but not a social and material net of relations. A post-polis is decentralized, mediated electronically, and managed with applications. It is not the space for strolling, looking around and meeting people; rather, it is a network of lines leading to places where we meet and spend time. When moving around a post-polis, we do not inhabit the space but rather teleport through transfer spots in which we change a means of transport. These transfer spots can be called non-places, as defined by Marc Augé, that is, anthropological spaces of transience in which people may remain anonymous; places not offering the possibility to meet (airports, stations, telephone boxes, and others) (Augé 1995). Augé included in non-places malls, telephone boxes, and hotel rooms, but this is not always the case anymore. For example, malls serve as meeting venues for adolescents, who are digital natives, and telephone boxes have nearly disappeared.

Personalized and universalized visual communication in post-polis

In non-places, universalized visual communication is required because various groups pass through them, and visual communication that is personalized creates a sense of comfort and attention. Universalized communication is the communication that reaches out to the broadest possible group of recipients and mostly communicates public issues and rules, while personalized communication reaches out to each person individually and has a mostly commercial use. The communication act initiated by a person may be standard and common but is never universal.

We can differentiate the communication acts in which persons are involved into those

1) which are initiated by persons with a) other persons or b) online platforms, applications, and things, and

2) which are initiated by the objects themselves a) with persons due to detection online of the certain conditions activating them, and b) with other platforms, applications, and objects (as in the case of internal communication

between different social media, exchanging contacts and sharing advice).

In case of people initiating communication, either talking directly to others or to online platforms, applications, and things these are people who... look for information in order to moderate their activity – when and how arrive for dinner with a friend in a restaurant; how to commute to school or work; in which shop downtown they may find a thing they want to buy; where they can find the closest city bicycle to rent, and so on. This information may seem to be free, but it does cost as the people searching for it are tracked. On the basis of the constantly bigger set of data such actions generate, a person's activities can be anticipated, that is, the places they go, the modes of transport they use, and the things that they choose to buy. This allows communication on individual preferences to be directed individually to that person via the personal settings in their device.

This is the line of development of digital signage screens, which are now personalized so that the message screened is directed to one customer. This can be achieved using sensors recognizing age, gender, and even the emotions of the person in front of the screen, and by communication about a person's preferences between a smartphone and that screen. Digital signage screens can also have sensors for the weather, smells, air, and others – the limit here is our imagination, not the technology itself. The development of this very effective system of communication can strongly transform how goods are sold (Duszczyk 2019). LCD or LED touch screens already not only allow easy management of all and each screen without interruption for five years but also interact with viewers and potential customers, influencing decisions on purchases (even one of every two clients – according to Kantar TNS and Samsung research, 65% of clients who bought a meal advertised on digital signage screen confirm that the ad influenced their decision).

The technology used in digital signage screens' reading of viewer's preferences, allowing the customization of the message screened, can presumably support the creation of a friendly iconosphere in which persons do not encounter many undesired or unpleasant images. These images communicate ideas associated with advertised products and commodities. Contemporary media advertisements do not present just a product and its objective qualities but also the idea of how one would like to be. This encompasses the possession of the good, which starts to be desired due to its connection with a coveted idea, for example, of being young, beautiful, and elegant. This is what creates a consumerist identity as a commodity in the time of late capitalism[5]. Personalized messages do not just sell goods; they are the effects of tracking people and

5 For more, see, for example: Jhally, Sut (1987). *Codes of Advertising: Fetishism and the Political Economy of Meaning in the Consumer Society.* New York: Saint Martin's; and Leiss, William, Kline, Stephen, and Jhally, Sut (1986). *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products, and Images of Well-Being. New York: Metheuen.*

their technological recognition, which in turn influence their choices and purchases. Therefore, the use of this technology should be considered from an ethical viewpoint, focusing on the moral side of the content, referring the meaning to the social and cultural context in which it is presented.

In case of cummunication initiated by objects, companies, institutions via online platforms, it is more often directed to a broader public. This communication also uses sometimes responsive digital signage screen, because the point is not on the technology itself, but on the way of using it. This is the case of a Swedish advertisement by agency Akestam Holst for pharmacy Apothek Hjärtat's shampoo in the new Apolosophy line of hair products from 2014. The commercial is based on the effect trains have on women's long hair when they whoosh into a metro station. In the advertisement, the wind blows the woman's hair on the screen every time a train arrives at the station in real time, which is achieved due to ultrasonic sensors connected to a Raspberry Pi minicomputer and local network socket accurately sensing the comings and goings of trains[6]. The image is highly realistic and dynamic. The use of technology responsive to the surrounding current conditions creates, in those people waiting for the metro, a feeling of amusement, freshness, realism, and entertainment. The video showing the reactions to the advertisement increased the interest in the technology used in the add.[7]
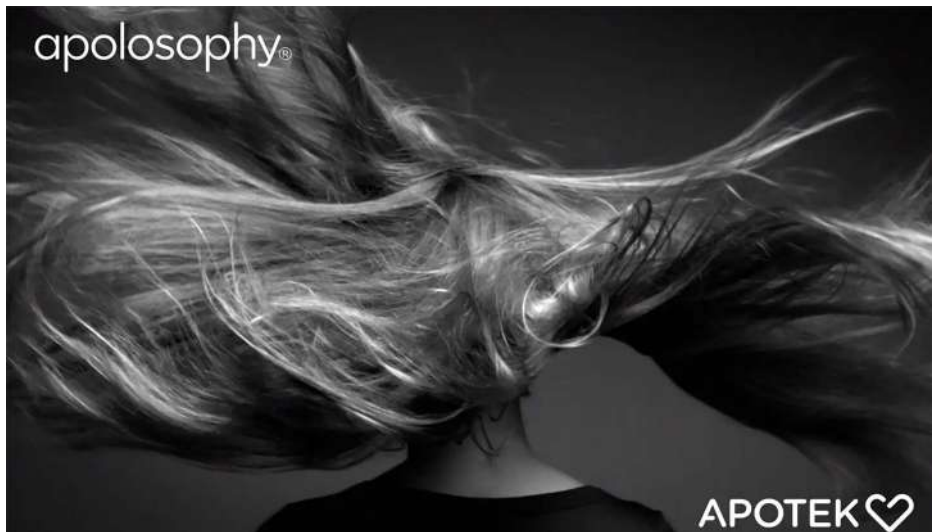
Il. 1. Screenshot from the advertisement for Apothek Hjärtat's shampoo in the new Apolosophy line of hair products by agency Akestam Holst, 2014

6   https://vimeo.com/126108155

7   https://vimeo.com/226439376

The Apothek shampoo advertisement is aimed at inhabitants of a media society who are commuting in a post-polis. Therefore, though innovative, the image fortifies the consumerist approach of a media society and follows the advice to not show unpleasant images but, on the contrary, feed people with amusing, beautiful images aimed at selling goods. An interesting use of the same technology, though in a critical manner, to raise awareness of important social problems can be found in the 2014 social campaign of the Swedish Childhood Cancer Foundation. The campaign also contained digital signage screenings of a girl with her hair blown up by the wind every time a metro train arrived at the Odenplan station in Stockholm, but in the end, the hair, which was a wig, is blown off the girl's head and there appears a message: "Every day a child is diagnosed with cancer"[8] and a simple message to text a donation of 50 kronor. A video featuring the reactions of those who saw the campaign shows a combination of honest emotions at the request for charity[9].

Il. 2. Screenshot from the social campaign of the Swedish Childhood Cancer Foundation at the Odenplan station in Stockholm, 2014

8   https://sofii.org/case-study/a-hair-raising-message-from-the-swedish-childhood-cancer-foundation
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=064ipuBiWDg

9   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=064ipuBiWDg

Ethical approach to visual communication

It is clear how important the social and ethical approach to visual communication in the media society in post-polis is. Commuting passengers amused by the beauty of the girl with her hair being blown up by the wind caused by the arriving train are shocked when confronted with the underlying truth that the girl has cancer and uses the wig. Shock is the right approach to bring up new subjects and issues for consideration, but not the best method for the promotion of a sale because it is too disquieting. Of course, there are exceptions as illustrated by the famous advertisements by Oliviero Toscani for the United Colours of Benetton, which started the trend of shockvertising, that is, the use of a shock for promotion. However, as Toscani was showing actual world problems in place of Benetton's clothes, and this shock strategy is critical to social problems, it was still engaged in the selling of clothes (Kubacka 2012). This path is still controversial, with accusations of commodifying social and individual problems from one side,and of the disquieting (or even immoral) influence of these images from the other.

When construing visual messages in contemporary media environments, designers should keep in mind the various ethical issues concerning the content to be transmitted, and the individual and social influences of the message, which is beyond understanding but leads to certain actions on an individual level, such as taking the metro, buying a shampoo, making a donation to a foundation combating cancer; and on a cultural and social level, such as sustaining the consumerist approach of a media society in post-polis and tracking potential customers or facilitating the access of various public spaces to groups of recipients with various limitations (disabilities) with media technologies. Graphic design is not only about visual appearance; it communicates by its content and impacts the formation of important ideas on society and culture, influencing the (ever dynamic) structure of media culture and society.

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- A 'hair-raising' message from the Swedish Childhood Cancer Foundation: https://sofii.org/case-study/a-hair-raising-message-from-the-swedish-childhood-cancer-foundation

- A hair-raising message: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=064ipuBiWDg

List of illustrations

- Il. 1. Screenshot from the advertisement for Apothek Hjartat's shampoo in the new Apolosophy line of hair products by agency Akestam Holst, 2014.

- Il. 2 Screenshot from the video presenting the social campaign of the Swedish Childhood Cancer Foundation at the Odenplan station in Stockholm, 2014.

Keywords

Claims of Validity in Visual Communication in Public Urban Space

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Abstract

This article is an attempt to apply Jŭrgen Habermas' theory of communication as a tool in the study of visual communication in public urban space. The purpose is to present a visual message (sign, object, image) as a modality of "language" in reaching agreement in the use of the open public sphere.

The specificity of the modern urban public space is the modality of communication sources and tools, which on the one hand can hinder understanding, and on the other hand can be an inspiration to submit and respect claims regarding validity as the basis for uninterrupted communication activities.

The examples used are selected visual messages, signs from open urban spaces that perform inclusive functions, and signs that communicate exclusion, closing space for some people and/or groups. These examples are derived from research by the international team implementing the TICASS project (MSCA-RISE Horizon 2020).

Introduction

The city is a living, dynamic organism in constant contact with the direct and indirect natural and social environment, reacting and causing reactions in social relations as well as in the natural and climatic environment and in the world of flora and fauna. The ability to change the natural environment in an accurate and sustainable way can be considered the greatest achievement of our imagination as a species. The city is the place of life of "natives" – endogenous inhabitants – humans, animals, and plants. It is also visited by others who are invited because of their usefulness in the structure of the city or because of the empathy and compassion of their suffering in other places. It is also visited by tourists, as the city is a social, natural, and technical attraction, a centre of politics, culture, and education. The verbal, iconic, kinetic, and proxemic messages occurring in urban space are addressed to these people and groups, and they are to be considered as creating specific sociolects. Reading them, i.e. seeing and understanding, is the basis for safe and fair participation in a common open space.

Communication is a necessary symbolic mediation of all social relations. It is a form of symbolic production that creates and maintains social relationships. It is fundamental to all social systems and societies and serves the rational purpose of organizing social relations (Fuchs 2016: 189). One of the manifestations of participation in an open urban public space is a communication activity which, according to Jűrgen Habermas, is "a certain type of interaction that is coordinated by speech acts but does not coincide with them" (Habermas 1999: 190).

In this context, communication activities that fulfil claims regarding validity, i.e. claims of truth, clarity, truthfulness, and normative equity, are of particular importance. This indicates the usefulness of the Habermasian theory of communication in describing, interpreting, and explaining individual and collective social behaviour in the urban public sphere, which is the place of reaching agreement, that is, knowingly and responsibly respecting the rules of intercourse with the assumption that the concept of language goes beyond speech acts to include a wide spectrum of behaviours and reactions expressing consent/disagreement. This addition is important due to the fact that images, gestures, melodies, and other ways of communication are discourse modalities as well as words (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006: 17). This understanding of communication activities also includes visual communication in the form of verbal and iconic, and static and dynamic texts that favour reaching agreements that are the basis of order in the urban public space.

This article presents the partial results of research conducted within the TICASS (Technologies of Imaging in Communication, Art, and Social Sciences) project. The subject of the analysis is determining the principles of accessibility in selected examples of visual messages in an open urban space for individuals and groups. This serves to justify why visual communication in the city is important from the point of view of social justice

and respect for human rights. The conducted analyses and interpretations of visual communication in the city are focused on the availability (readability and comprehensibility) of both communication codes and their location in space. An attractive theoretical perspective for this is the Habermasian theory of communication (Habermas 1999, Habermas 2002) activity combined with the author's concept of structural transformations of the public sphere (Habermas 2007).

The specificity of communication in public urban space

The history of the city as a place of human life is the subject of myths and stories. The creation of cities is actually a manifestation of an important change in the life of a person who feels "natural" and safe in this unnatural environment created by people. The city offers protection against threats by creating new patterns of interpersonal relations and developing new skills. At the same time, as Tomáš Sedláček writes, "the city was (especially in old Jewish texts) a symbol of evil, degeneration and decadence – inhuman things" (Sedláček 2012: 46). Beginning with Quaramel, the oldest city in the world (XI–X millennium BC), discovered by Polish archaeologists in the north of today's Syria, cities gave shelter to an increasing number of people. They also became places of exchange of goods and information as well as new types of social relations regulated, among others, by regulations and announcements of power "serving the public" (Habermas 2007: 88).

The messages disseminated in urban environments are reaching a growing number of recipients – residents of cities and co-creators of urban public space. In 2016, 1.7 billion people – 23 percent of the world's population – lived in a city with at least a million inhabitants, and the cities are growing. According to a UN report published on May 16, 2018, by the Department of Economy and Social Affairs:

> "Today, 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, and this proportion is expected to increase to 68% by 2050. Forecasts show that urbanization, a gradual change in the population's place of residence from rural to urban areas, combined with a global increase in world population, can increase urban population by another 2.5 billion by 2050."

Global urban similarity is characteristic of modern urban areas. On the one hand, this facilitates and, on the other hand, makes it difficult to comply with the principles of sustainable development, which is an inseparable element of communication that meets validity claims.

In urban public space, there are not only intentionally placed communication signs: verbal, iconic (accessible to sight), and available to the senses of hearing, smell, and touch – products of culture, but also elements

of nature: plants, animal and bird tracks, and the sounds and smells produced by the city's fauna and flora. The perception and understanding of these signs are the basis for our adequate reading and following the message they transmit. In addition, due to technical progress, the spectrum of communication media and tools is expanding. On streets, on public buildings, and on and in public transport, there are static and dynamic images, words, and numbers presented using digital media. People equipped with smartphones use messages presented in the form of digital codes, GPS information, and so on. The credibility of this information, its comprehensibility, clarity, truthfulness, and sincerity are the basis of our trust in them, regardless of whether they are imperatives that fulfil imperative claims clearly stating purpose and sanctions or whether they are subjects of choice. It is important to study urban public space because, as in the lens, universal problems and social dilemmas are concentrated in the city, including multidimensional inequalities in access to goods and places.

Living in modern cities requires understanding the meaning of signs and images created by both people and nature. Both types of messages (created and natural) force people to follow them, or at least not disregard them. Social communication, both vocal and visual, understandable to residents, is dynamic, constantly enriched by new characters and codes. This, in turn, requires participants in the public sphere to be able to "read" messages and respond to them adequately. Intelligent critical reading is the basis for rational responsible action, conscious response, and reflection on what, how, and why things can and should be done. This, what should be done, can be also a disagreement, causing interaction oriented towards changing oppressive, false, unclear messages. Judith Butler (2014) writes

"If we are to understand ourselves as not only participating in the public sphere but involved in the very establishment of what is public, then education is necessary. We must be both open and critical of various idioms of public life, regardless of whether they are verbal or written, visual or acoustic, architectural or tactile and performative. "

(Butler 2014:25.)

The specificity of the urban public sphere, including communication between its participants, is an attractive object of research (Breska 2017: 145-155.). The concept of communicative activity assumes that language is a means of agreement, and its participants, when referring to the world, raise pleas regarding validity that can be accepted or challenged (Habermas 1999: 186). This is the perspective of Habermas, who presents the belief that language and linguistic communication are authentic forms of social relations that should be considered as manifestations of the normative good and used responsibly for the potential good of society (Fuchs 2016: 187). However, the use of language in social communication takes many

forms. Signs and images, both real and symbolic, must be valid in order to be credible and to lead to mutual agreement. Reaching agreement and mutual recognition in communication practice covers a wide spectrum of forms of expression of argumentation in a way that is not coercive and opens doors for consensus, which is the basic condition of every social order (Habermas 1999: 33).

Communication, in a wide spectrum of its forms, including largely visual communication, is a key factor in the living conditions of city dwellers and a key benefit of urbanization. Clear, understandable, reliable, and normatively motivated information promotes social inclusion, provides everyone with access to infrastructure and social services by focusing on the needs of vulnerable groups in terms of safety, education, healthcare, and a clean environment.

Visual communication in the city in view of validity claims

Public urban space, with its open access for users, both residents and guests, is full of visual messages. Visual communication is an open work and is subject to constant changes as the urban fabric, local economy, and lifestyles change (Stańczyk, Wasik 2017: 36). Its elements, both natural and cultural, being a product of humans, are everchanging and determining new functions and social potentials of urban space, including the public sphere. They change the availability of urban public spaces and intensify or suppress social inclusion.

In the classic, modernist edition, Jűrgen Habermas' theory is based on a model explaining ideal, uninterrupted communication in order to form "public opinion". In contemporary times it is worth considering the role of specifically visual communication signs in shaping public opinion, focusing on the conditions and procedures of social inclusion and exclusion in access to places in a public urban space. Asking questions about the extent to which visual communication is or can be a factor in communicational rationality and the extent to which it is a factor in the control over participants in urban spaces can give a degree of universal orientation in the moral and practical matters of social life in a city.

The messages and information in the urban space in the form of signs and images (both static and dynamic) received by users are placed in locations with a specific purpose. Respect for the images by people who follow their instructions is an expression of agreement based on the understanding, normative clarity, honesty, and truthfulness of the messages. This applies to all communication activities, not just the privileged word (spoken and written). Polish sociologists M. Frąckowiak and Ł. Rogowski (2011: 42–56) write that

"[t]he visual visibility of communication creates a social situation, regulates the life of the group, enables the transmission of ideology and myths, that is – to put it simply – participating in the visual layer of culture teaches us how to look, and organizes cognitive processes, what creates visual literacy but also leaves the possibility of questioning the order of the world social, and deconstructing meanings and negotiating them. "

The argument for approaching elements of visual language as an immanent part of social communication can be found in Habermas' theory because visual communications perform the same functions as the speech acts he distinguished, namely:

- description, information, explanation, i.e. representing the state of affairs in the external world system,
- expressing expectations and hopes, i.e. representing the subjectivity of the actors of interaction, and
- promises and warnings, which is to say, norms that regulate social order.

Knowledge of the meaning of orders, prohibitions, instructions, and information, as well as understanding the social criteria for inclusion, exclusion, and occlusion, are the basis for the operation of the whole. The choice of response depends on a critical assessment of the situation, namely, the assessment of communication from the point of view of equality, social justice, and the limits of freedom.

The correct reading of the communication signs and their responsible observance are conditions of personal and shared safety. Understanding their significance is the basis for respecting for human rights and social justice in terms of access to the public sphere. Visual messages (images and words) containing both orders and prohibitions addressed to users of urban space should be treated as a manifestation of respect for the human right to information.

Visual communication in the process of social inclusion in the urban public sphere

Visual messages in public space serve, in their graphic and aesthetic form, to articulate values and are important means of implementing an ideology. They have the power to include and exclude people and groups from activities and places in a city. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2018: 2) claims that sustainable urbanization demands

" ensur[ing] that the benefits of urbanization are fully shared and inclusive, urban development management policies (…) provide access to infrastructure and social services for all, focusing on the needs of poor city dwellers and other vulnerable groups in housing, education, health care, decent work and a safe environment."

The main requirement is to ensure access to as many goods as possible for all users of an open public urban space. One way to achieve this is visual communication.

Acts and processes of social inclusion or exclusion, with information as their factor, take various forms. They can appear as:

a) information codes: understandable and interpretable to all or only a few, in the form of images and words as well as natural or abstract signs;

b) the content of the information: orders or bans addressed to everyone (inclusion) or to specific groups (exclusion);

c) information carriers ensuring accessibility: for persons with full functionalities or with various types of disabilities, with or without technical or digital tools, etc.

The key purpose of the deep reading of visual objects, both material and symbolic, graphical and linguistic, obtained through the field research carried out within the TICASS project is to understand the ideology and socio-cultural contexts in which these visual objects are located.

The interpreted images were taken and discussed by international and interdisciplinary teams in cities in Kenya (Kilifi, Mombasa, Malindi, and Mtwapa). There one can see signs of social stratification in access to activities and places in urban space expressed through visual communication. These signs were recorded in the form of photos taken by researchers. Given examples of communication acts are trivial – their counterparts could easily be found in any city. That is why they are used in this text.

Analysing the collected images from the perspective of the intelligibility of the information code, I noticed that on the Kenyan coast there are mostly verbal signs, but written in the local language (*kswahili*, the second official language in Kenya, common to the East Africa), which can serve as examples of the exclusion of people from other countries; and images and visual signs in the form of material objects, both symbolic and abstract, which can serve as examples of inclusion.

However, written messages in the urban public sphere are only one indicator of exclusion. The same function is played by abstract images that can only be read by well-prepared readers, members of socio-cultural elites, or a group of specialists. This function can be performed by monuments with local heroes or local traditions and myths if there are no boards

with information about them. The symbolism of local monuments is understandable only to residents (and not necessarily to everyone).

The symbolic message of the content presented by means of messages in the form of symbols and monuments, including little-known historical figures, is not clear and understandable for everyone. Some of them (both symbols and monuments) raise doubts and even contradictions. Consequently, it is also difficult to see their normative validity. Instead of respecting claims of validity, one can rather speak of imperious claims that perpetuate social stratification and cause emotional and moral tensions, which contribute to the social exclusion of individuals and groups.

Visual messages in the form of signs and symbols can also be exclusive due to, for example, location making them difficult to see and use. A perfect example is an information board at the *matatu* (common public transport in Kenya) stop (Il. 1).

Il. 1. Anna Watoła, Mombasa: *Matatu stop*
Category: Stations. Type: Boda boda/matatu station
2/5–8 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019: 528)

A visual message can be a price list for travelling to specific locations. The board is placed on a high voltage pole at a height of about 3 m above the ground. It is in a visible place but the message on it is not clearly visible to all people because the information is too high. Therefore, this can be treated as an exclusion factor, and also because it is not a fulfilment of honesty claims. The "readers" of the messages posted on the price list (I will add contractual – usually this price is set by the ticket seller sitting at the entrance door of the *matatu*) are treated unfairly.

Visual messages directed to all "readers", to all recipients of universal culture, regardless of how much they education they have or science and technology they know, meet validity claims such as claims for truth, normative equity, sincerity, and comprehensibility not only in themselves but also in the contexts in which the messages are found. Because they are addressed to, and understandable and interpretable by everyone, their function can be considered inclusive.

Some visual information in an open urban space performs an integrating function not only thanks to its comprehensibility but also thanks to the content and its accessibility to everyone regardless of individual skills and competences. The visual message posted on the wall of the school in Malindi conforms all of these criteria (Il. 2).

Il. 2. Ales Loziak, Malindi: *Shalom Academy primary school*
Category: Public spaces (facilities). Type: logos and signs – identification of buildings
2/2-4 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 339)

Everyone has the opportunity to see and understand this image of school and education as well as the gender equality promoted at school (boy and girl holding hands) as a factor of social integration. This message contains clear, understandable, and normatively motivated information about the recognition of justice and the right to education.

Social inclusiveness is illustrated by signs and symbols indicating access to public space for people and groups with specific needs. This applies not only to people with disabilities, the signs for which are marked by an international symbol, but also, for example, to places of physical activity in parks. Their readability, intelligibility, clarity of message, and normativity are the basis of order in the public sphere.

Admittedly, these selected examples of visual communication in urban public spaces do not exhaust the spectrum of interpretive potential using validity claims. They illustrate the exclusive and inclusive function of images and symbols. They also indicate that if images and symbols do not meet validity claims, they can be treated as a medium and factor of social exclusion, as well as an expression of a lack of respect for human rights, especially the right to have honest and true information.

Final conclusions

The presented use of the Habermasian concept of claims of validity and the public sphere is an attempt to indicate their potential to describe, analyse, and interpret communication in urban public space. Visual signs in the city play a key role as social infrastructure factors. They help people orient themselves in urban public spaces and behave in accordance with the rules and understand common messages. In many cases, both the content and forms of visual communication are known, and therefore understood and accepted. All are legible to everyone and accepted as visual information respecting freedom and justice in the urban public sphere due to their forms and colours.

Visual communication, or signs, in public urban spaces is part of a cultural guide that teaches (at least a little) the culture of cities, especially to visitors and newcomers. It also helps residents learn about their own history, local traditions, and myths and gather information about buildings, heritage sites, important events, and people. It is an important element of communication. Through signs, people learn not only where public facilities are located, what the city offers, and where and how to use the right of access goods but also the ethical principles – what is allowed and what is forbidden, which behaviour is appropriate and which is bad, and where you can feel safe and where there is danger. This makes claims of validity in communication activities an important category of analysing agreement by using visual messages in the spectrum of their modality.

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List of illustrations

- Il. 1. Anna Watoła, Mombasa: *Matatu stop*. Category: Stations. Type: Boda boda/matatu station. 2/5-8 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 528).

- Il. 2 Ales Loziak, Malindi: *"Shalom Academy" primary school*. Category: Public spaces (facilities). Type: logos and signs – identification of buildings. 2/2-4 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 339).

Keywords

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Speed and Hyper-technology /Re-approaching Slowness in Knowledge

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Abstract

The growth of technologies introduced into contemporary societies an acceleration in lifestyles: on a technical level (media, transport, communication, production), a socio-relational level (institutions, family, work), and emotional and physical levels (visual interactions, fitness). This accelerated time produces more easier-to-establish relationships, but these are also more fragile and ephemeral since they are entrusted to languages that offer fast reciprocations in which the dialogue is impoverished and trivialized. If mobility – physical and metaphorical – is the figure of contemporaneity, then it must also be the path to follow in the search for a countertendency that approaches understanding at a slower pace. The challenge is to use the very addiction to technologies as space-time for knowledge education and critical reflection on the different cultural expressions and claims that are intertwined in the contemporary social fabric in order to recalibrate digital and visual communication and focus on more human interactions.

The speed of complexity

"[..] Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas – only I don't exactly know what they are!
However, somebody killed something: that's clear, at any rate –
`But oh!' thought Alice, suddenly jumping up, `if I don't make haste I shall have to go
back through the Looking-glass, before I've seen what the rest of the house is like!
Let's have a look at the garden first!' She was out of the room in a moment,
and ran down stairs – or, at least, it wasn't exactly running,
but a new invention of hers for getting down stairs quickly and easily
as Alice said to herself. She just kept the tips of her fingers on the hand-rail,
and floated gently down without even touching the stairs with her feet;
then she floated on through the hall, and would have gone straight out at the door in the same way,
if she hadn't caught hold of the door-post. She was getting a little giddy with so much floating in the air,
and was rather glad to find herself walking again in the natural way."[1]

Lewis Carroll
Through the Looking Glass

We live in a fast world in which time contracts: we are continuously connected to the network for every need, hyper-stimulated by images, in a visual and cognitive frenzy that induces super activity in the brain. We are always on the move, always in action to get satisfaction; nevertheless, we are drifting away from each other. Technology and globalization emphasize one of the main fronts of complexity in contemporary societies: the increasing paradoxical solitude of individuals clogged and saturated by network connections and digital skillfulness. Complexity implies the phenomenon of individuals who, urged by an excess of stimuli, navigate through symbols and codes but do not reconnect with human emotions or with natural rhythms.

The notion of complexity, which evolved in the mid-eighties as a new cultural paradigm, is a transversal model within knowledge, an innovative epistemological frontier, under the impulse both of a revision of the logic of science (more problematic, sophisticated, and interactive) and of a transformation of society (complicated by techniques, re-articulated in groups and classes, variegated in objectives, and then plural, flexible, open, and interconnected.) Alongside the epistemic paradigms of complexity processed over the past decades, research work elaborated models such as the system, the network, and the nodes, but also the catastrophes, the rhizome, and the labyrinth (Benkirane 2007). They are mostly mathematical

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1 Lewis Carrol, *Through the Looking Glass*, Macmillan, London 1871, p. 24.

models though equipped with strong analogical value and, therefore, applicable to various fields of knowledge to understand sophisticated systems, to formally define them as well as manage them cognitively. These paradigms are now used in all domains of experience, representing a space-time of reference in which future is both oriented towards hope and enveloped in risks and fears. Technology increasingly provides contrasting outcomes: it produces both ecological fraud and the expectations for its overcoming, the post-human and the reconstruction of subjectivity even within the most advanced devices, and an administered world which also gives space to forms of resistance. Complexity spreads and personalizes to give strength and voice to multiple identities and claims. Complexity has a plurality of faces, now asymmetric, now concentric, which intertwine with epistemological, cognitive, social, and economic matters (Bertuglia 2005).

The paradigm of complexity, further clarified in reference to both its biological status and the anthropological-cultural one, is at present recognized as the basic structure of life and the mark of every social deed. Therefore, it is affirmed as the paradigm of human evolution of the being, understood in both the biological and cultural sense. The paradigm of complexity has acquired an ontological value in the homination of nature and of the species *homo sapiens* (Morin 1993).

Moreover, complexity is linked to digital literacy, which is separating, fragmenting, and specializing traditional knowledge. Hence the search in various domains of knowledge for concatenation, trans-disciplinarity, intersections: an ongoing quest for newer sustainable interactions.

The expansion of technologies has led to the acceleration of lifestyles: on a technical level (media, transport, communication, production), a socio-relational level (institutions, family, work), and emotional and physical levels (visual interactions, fitness). This accelerated time produces more easier-to-establish human relationships, but these are also more fragile and ephemeral since they are entrusted to languages that offer fast reciprocations in which dialogue is impoverished and trivialized (Sennett 2012). Humankind is experiencing forms of existence that no longer need the relationship with the context of belonging. There are no limits to technology fulfilling the demand to transform the world: even the idea of beauty has been formed through the fusion of biology and technology and transformed into a good, subdued by the rules of the market and the canons of professional replicability. In the determination of the new concept of beauty, indeed, seduction or attraction gives way to a remotely controlled technological functionalism; a techno-humanism that tries to make the achieved perfection coincide with undisputed superiority over the fickle uncertainty of nature, no longer able to hinder artificial systems. The landscape increasingly assumes the role of the frame of a human activity destined to take place only in the virtual world, in which nature no longer provides any teaching and of which it is no longer even an interlocutor. Very often the landscape that surrounds us is perceived as an imperfect territory, subjected to continuous mutations

at which the human being, increasingly eager for certainties, looks with disenchantment. Every border between real and virtual appears blurred and only fashions make tangible and intangible assets usable or useless. Around people there is often an empty habitat, well ordered, ordered in its emptiness, while the meaningful actions for existence take place in the virtual universe of information technology.

Since work, information, knowledge, and education, as well as all interpersonal relationships, occur increasingly in digital settings, it is worth asking which is the screen and which is the frame, and where does life happen: inside or outside the latest extraordinary product of technology? If the technological reality represents a perfect world and outside there is an imperfect world, it is inevitable that human beings are more inclined to select the combination of pixels that can be customized to their own "hedonic" idea of well-being based on pleasure, comfort, and stability. The desire for stability and certainty – as an atavistic feeling inherited from the subjection to adverse atmospheric elements – is losing connection with nature, and even emotional functions are bent to prioritize only specific representations of what can be recognized as reassuring. The advanced nature of the manifold changes imposed by technological innovations has to cope with psycho-emotional human functions and the time required to adapt to transitions and digest innovations. This condition is determined by the brain, the creator and architect of every form of reality, which, actually, is a slow machine processing knowledge. In order to keep up with the speed imposed by cutting-edge devices, the mind often faces disappointments, frustrations, defeats, and troubles. The cognitive process is meant mostly to meditate and produce, with detachment and creativity, ways to react to external stimuli.

Re-approaching slowness is possible if it continues to play a role in the human experience

A flower does not know when it will bloom and how long it will last, if it will be trampled on, or if it will dry up prematurely; nevertheless it blooms. It does not demand conditions, much less certainties, and it is precisely this that makes it wonderful. The beauty of flowers is taken as an example of transience and brevity and has always been admired as the very symbol of the fragility of beauty. Everything that is certain and uniform does not fascinate us, just as what we fear to lose captivates us because the power of attraction lies in the mystery, while programming expresses only necessity. Yet the organization of our lives is becoming increasingly rigid.

If we are embedded in a reality that asks us to always think and think quickly, our brain is forced to use the right hemisphere more by directing us towards automatic and rapid responses. The visual-spatial functions and the emotional components that make survival possible, such as fear, dislike, joy,

Photo credit: Fabio Carbone/ Flavia Stara private collection

and curiosity, are located in the right hemisphere. Rapid reactions take shape in this part of the brain, those that allow us to escape from a danger to give an example. If natural selection were to determine the evolutionary success of the "swift human being", the greater development of the right hemisphere could be transmitted from one generation to the next through DNA. The result would be the impoverishment of poetry, contemplation, reflection, and conversation.

Re-approaching emotional priorities by setting a limit to the interference of technology is inevitable, otherwise the subjugation of psycho-cognitive functions to information technology will estrange human beings from themselves. The diminishing of reproductive sexuality, with, as revealed by neuroscience, the consequent drop in libido and seduction mechanisms, is a consequence of social isolation; preventive, manipulative body interventions and all ergonomic genetic research will eventually lead to the homologation of bodies and minds.

There is no beauty in humans and their environments if deprived of uncertainty, risks, and hopes; if creativity moves to prefer artificial/virtual places, individuals are imprisoned within the known instead of being challenged to explore the unknown. A reality virtually experienced may be intriguing, but does it excite our intelligence? A sensorial approach compels us to dig in our interiority and appreciate the richness of details in our habitat recognized as a perfectible and mysterious space (Buhle et al. 2014).

For a new aesthetic of the interior and exterior landscape

At the end of the '60s, the artistic current Arte Povera, identified in the natural, primitive, simple, and anti-precious, found an alternative path to the consumer society, which, more than half a century ago, already showed insuperable limits. Michelangelo Pistoletto's *Venus of Rags*, the igloos by Mario Mertz, the live horses by Jannis Kounellis, and the experiences of Land Art and Body Art were the first signs of contrast to the civilization of machines based on a progressive increase in production and consumption (Celant 2011). At present, complex psycho-physical digital actions encourage choosing industrial products over artefacts, smooth translucent surfaces over rough and opaque surfaces, any technological device operated with wireless remote control over a tool subject to the action of time and the settling of dust and germs. Within the same criteria, smart cities are designed in which life takes place in aseptic ways, where mobility and well-being are remotely controlled. These avant-garde cities collect all data in a single cloud, bringing people and devices to maximum integration to achieve efficiency, which is the only goal of a fully realized modernity. Within this habitat, even corporeality has to clear any imperfection and eliminate signs of ageing using cosmetic resolutions in accordance with new fashions. It is a progress that risks depriving individuals of their history, pressing toward novelty, and accelerating the homologating to globalized canons. However, the future prospect of a bionic human being is not the only possible option: An ethical-aesthetic alternative exists, and is practicable, by re-educating body and mind to appreciate anything that is consumed, corroded by nature or by the passing of time which deposits its signs on people and objects. A refreshed idea of beauty can be affirmed by stressing the harmony of interactions among different rhythms.

The consent of citizens in the era of technological mobility depends mainly on the quality of their education and the degree of their awareness. Digital innovations inherent in the modes and times of production of different informative codes now occupy a central place in the configurations of democracy. From the world economy derives "world-communication", which designates the transformations and specific dimensions within the whole system of communication on a planetary scale. It is, therefore, paramount to question the implications of the digital revolution on the educational level. Through new technologies, perhaps it will be possible to convey to young people a multifaceted competence to rethink their own multi-identity. From a socio-educational perspective, it is essential to promote critical skills to distinguish between real and virtual languages and realize the progressive tendency towards the dematerialization of society as well as the introduction of new symbolic communication. Amidst a hectic movement of images and virtual simulations stands the urgency to enquire for dwelling in the immaterial identifies with a process of freedom or alienation (Augé 1995).

Mobility – physical and metaphorical – being the drive of contemporaneity, can lead to a countertendency to approach knowledge at a slower pace. The challenge is to exert the skills in technologies also as an exercise to discover and learn about different natural expressions and cultural traditions in order to rebalance digital and human interactions. Through a counter-movement in thinking that resizes the digital from a measure of separateness to a form of connection, it is possible to regain the awareness of the external world as a world that belongs to one's own identity. Virtual spaces and virtual cities provide information that can turn into knowledge and reflexivity when not used in a purely mechanical way. In the pluralistic universe, it is human action that determines the quality of life: between the way the world is and the way it should be, there is the unknown (conditional-hypothetical) of acting differently. The endeavour to reshape lifestyles that are too often univocally oriented represents a migration from the circle of pre-established solutions to gestures which can take on new value: a process of cognitive displacement. A cultural transfer takes creative paths to reassess existential paces as well as share solutions able to enhance relations of consonance and mutual recognition among individuals and their biological and social contexts. The current reality seems to confirm that is not enough to conform to a globalized mandate, ignoring the controversial steps that every historical cultural process produces. Being in motion means to achieve a nomadic and intercultural mindset, occupy a threshold position, empowered to be in sync with competences in transition but also mindful to constantly retrace one's own steps.

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Semiology in Spaces of Transfer

Keywords

non-places
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Grammar of Airports: Toward an Anthropology of Non-Places in a Public Space

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Abstract

This essay outlines Marc Augé's concept of non-places, taking as an example the way in which communication routes are organized and visualized at airports. Importantly, this topic is approached from an anthropological perspective, to show the changes – in the context of community relationships – that are currently taking place and their impact on people living in the postmodern world. In this article the author presents how we can read the grammar of airports, referring it to social and anthropological values. Using a graphical representation of the general concept of airfield construction as a transit space, several zones have been defined. As we are witnessing, the airport space can be divided primarily into two zones: external and internal. In addition, each of them is segmented, showing a very precise line in the "grammar" of human behaviour as predicted by airport planners and architects.

Introduction

The category of non-places was first singled out and named by Marc Augé in the 1990s. Studying the times he lived in, the French anthropologist noticed some major shifts and defined our age as one of "supermodernity". The concept of "supermodernity" relates to the current situation of excessive information and excessive space. For Augé, the world is dominated by three excesses: that of time (by means of accelerating history), space (by means of changing the scale and shifting the parameters), and ego (by means of individualization of references) (Augé 1997).

According to Augé, when discussing cultural phenomena today in accordance with the changes taking place in the modern world, we should pay close attention to the nomadic nature of certain notions. Some familiar terms have shifted from the sphere of interpersonal relations to the sphere of public space. Thus, the image and with it the understanding of the world have both changed. A good example of a similar re-evaluation of meanings is constituted by the contemporary understanding of the category of place.

Research carried out during the 20th century – especially the work of French sociologist Marcel Mauss – and the tradition of ethnology from that period feature descriptions of the category of place, conceived as something stable. Place has so far been understood in various cultures as a zone of trust, identity, and safety (Barth 2005). For most people, space and place have almost always been convergent and located somewhere. In supermodernity, a place loses the power of being a permanent and safe shelter. It ceases to belong solely to a specific time and territory.

The concept of space has become fluid, like the modern world we live in (Bauman 2007). At present, many places are only intended for the circulation of people, products, and goods. They serve only to move, performing transit functions. These are places such as railway stations, underpasses, airports, intersections, motorways, parking lots, and shopping malls, but also temporary refugee camps. Marc Augé calls these types of sites "non-places". For the description of spaces that form a network of interpersonal relations – which is associated with the sense of our identity as rooted in history– he suggests using the category "anthropological place". From his point of view, this category is in opposition to non-places. In his famous work *Non-Places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity,* writes

> "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place. The hypothesis advanced here is that supermodernity produces non-places, meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which, unlike Baudelairean modernity, do not integrate the earlier places: instead these are listed, classified, promoted

to the status of 'places of memory', and assigned to a circumscribed and specific position. (...) Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten. But non-places are the real measure of our time. "

<div align="right">Augé (1997: 76–79)</div>

Globalization, as well as the constantly developing new technologies that accompany it, has had a significant impact on changing the modern way of life. According to John Urry, the dynamics of social transformations in the era of globalization are also influencing the adoption of new research perspectives. We can currently speak of a "new paradigm of mobility" that is being reflected in social and anthropological sciences (Urry 2007).

Free inter-territorial communication has forced us to reorganize the space with which we are surrounded, also in visual terms. The community area, which was held dear – one spoke of their appurtenance to a given locality, nationality, or society – has been largely replaced by spaces with a unified structure. There is no doubt that this type of space is easier to decode as it lies beyond cultural differences and serves a specific purpose, for example, that of a more efficient movement. Paradoxically, however, what in its original assumption was supposed to help humankind – "to facilitate their being in the world" – ended up objectifying them. A person within similar spaces becomes an object devoid of identity. And as an object, they are to be transported from point A to point B. One type of such site – which can be recognized as non-places – is airports.

Theoretical Landscape

Augé is not, however, the first researcher to be interested in the category of the relationships between man and space in the postmodern world. For instance, since the early 1970s, humanistic geographers such as Yi-Fu Tuan, a Chinese American academic (1974), Anne Buttimer, an Irish professor (1976), and Edward Relph, a Canadian geographer (1976, 1981, 1993) have been working on the link between people and the space that surrounds them.

There are many approaches to seeing and describing human beings and their understanding of the modern world's structures. According to Jean Baudrillard, we live in a state of "hyperreality". Coming from the French school of sociology and philosophy of the Western culture, like Augé, Baudrillard remarked that we can no longer distinguish between reality and simulation. The simulation is no longer a representation of reality, and nor does it refer to it. The link between the map and the territory (in the meaning

of Jorge Luis Borges) has been wiped out, completely blurring the boundaries between them. In the postmodern world, the map-territory relationship has become an emptiness – it has turned into a blank symbol Baudrillard called a "simulacrum" (Baudrillard 1983).

Michel Foucault, another French modern social theorist exploring the relationship between people and space, noted that the world around us is full of "heterotopic places". In his understanding, heterotopia can be created by one real place that juxtaposes several spaces. It is a representation of a type of utopia or a parallel space (e.g., ships, cemeteries, bars, brothels, prisons, gardens of antiquity, fairs, and many more). His examples of heterotopia constitute the image of a contemporary world. In fact, according to Foucault, we live in cities with many heterotopias (such as crisis heterotopias, e.g., motel rooms; heterotopias of deviation, e.g., hospitals; heterotopias of time, e.g., museums; and heterotopias of ritual or purification, e.g., saunas). Nowadays, these places are not only perceived as a space with several places – to confirm the difference – but also as a means of escape from authoritarianism and repression (Foucault 1986).

Many years before the Western researchers, Florian Znaniecki wrote about the specificity of human experience of space, developing the context of humanistic sociology as well as social ecology. His findings were related to the trend of empirical sociology associated with the Chicago School. The Polish philosopher and scientist pointed out that the spatial values defined in the team can create a source of many social configurations. In conjunction with the dynamics of human life, they carry the potential of coexistence with what may come in the future (Znaniecki 1938).

***

Conducting my own field research, I became convinced that airports as non-places – within the meaning ascribed to them by Augé – have a specific character, their own idiosyncrasy. And I asked myself if this fact impacts the way we should think about airports today. Do airports continue to be non-places in view of their increasingly complex character – in the architectural as well as the social sense? And what about the geo-differences of airport data – how are we to understand them? After all, airports can vary significantly depending on their location. Seeking answers to these questions, I initiated qualitative research by conducting interviews with employees of airports in Great Britain and Poland. I asked my respondents about the nature of their work and their remarks regarding the behaviour of people at the airport. I also asked a question about their personal travel experiences. I asked them whether they paid attention to how other airports are organized when they use them as passengers. What drew their attention? I compared the information collected from my interlocutors with the experiences related by my acquaintances and friends, and with the perceptions that occurred to me during the participant observation.

Additionally, with the aim of confirming my research findings, I also carried out research on the Internet. I worked on existing materials such as airport plans, maps of communication zones, and airport glossaries. I also managed to collect ample photographic documentation. For comparison, I chose large international and multicultural airports as well as small and intimate ones – more local than global airports – even though their name featured the term "international".

Before I proceed with the analysis of my findings, I would first like to draw attention to the terminology I have opted to use. When describing the way airports are organized, I use the term the "grammar of a given place". This term was coined and then disseminated by the New-York-based philosopher of modernity, David Kolb. In his work *Sprawling Places*, Kolb refers to philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl, and Martin Heidegger. He states that the space that surrounds us must be governed by certain rules if it is to serve us at various levels while being easy to decode at the same time. This is caused by the "human need for conceptual rules and categories". In other words, Kolb claims that all places have their own grammar. It is revealed in the way of mapping out individual sites (home, street, court, park, etc.) and in their choreography. Considering places in this context, we will notice that within the given space, various regions conditioning our behaviour crystallize, so to speak, and they ultimately constitute the spatial landscape of action possibilities (Kolb 2008).

I am convinced that an airport has a similarly conceptualized grammar. Although Augé calls it a non-place and a "palimpsest on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten", it can be easily ascribed to the human order of categorizing space (Augé, 1995, p. 79).

Grammar of airports

In seeking the conceptual dependencies that can characterize airports, we will notice that in many places around the world, airports look quite different. The largest airports – such as those in the United States, China, and the United Arab Emirates – undeniably and significantly differ from their smaller counterparts in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean Islands, and Europe. These differences seem obvious due to the size of a given airport and its customs and architectural and design trends, dictated by both the climate zone of a given place and the governing culture of its respective country.

Significantly, Deyan Sudjic – the director of London's Design Museum – pointed out similar dependencies in the structure of the cities themselves, whose development is inextricably linked to the creation of places such as airports. Exploring the panorama of cities in the context of their particular language of communication, this investigator of modern urbanism stretches his deliberations between the given definition of a city and its very idea (Sudjic 2016). In his work, looking at various social-political, historical, and

urban planning issues, he answers the question about the nature of the city. Sudjic recalls, among others, the case of the Beijing airport. He indicates that significance of the airport there is not limited to its transit function: to move large numbers of people and goods back and forth. Equally important is its contribution to the visible creation of a new brand of China and its participation in building a modern symbolism for the country (Sudjic 2016: 148-149).

Therefore, airports can become a representation not only of the politics of a country but also images of the development of a modern city. It is worth noting, in the case of airports, even ones located in the same "landscape" – let us refer to them here as continental, national, or cultural – may be very different from each other. Let us consider the example of UK airports in London, Liverpool, or Birmingham, and airports in Poland, those located in Warsaw, Kraków, Rzeszów, or Lublin. Even within London itself, where six international airports are located as well as several smaller airports, differences in the way the usable space is managed are noticeable. The walls of the Gatwick Airport, for example, are decorated with large mosaic portraits made up of thousands of photographs (Taborska 2004: 105-109). This airport is also the first to have a sensory room created for people with mental disabilities who have problems concentrating in public places. One of my respondents gave the following account of the difference he had observed between several airports he had visited during his journeys.

"If you go through Spain, and you put your luggage in the x-ray and there (in your suitcase) will be lots of liquids, they would x-ray your luggage. You don't have to pull anything out of it. None of these liquids would be checked in Italy, as well. So, this is a crazy thing, as a passenger, it scares me a little bit.

There was another part which made me astonished as well, the International Airport in Prague. If you travel from there, you come into the air side area, where you scan your boarding pass, and you are mixed with arriving passengers. You are departing, but arriving passengers would be there as well. So all the shops would be there too; and people who are arriving to the country, and people who live in the country, would be there. It's a little confusing to find all this stuff in one place (…).

An interesting airport is Gatwick Airport, if we think about the uniqueness of some places like this. Currently, Gatwick is the first port in Great Britain, where they test something completely in order innovative, completely new which is a sensory room. It is a special room for passengers who have hidden disabilities and for their family members. This room would accommodate them for time, when they need to wait until the departure. It is a cozy space, where they can relax. We can find there a music, lots of screens to play with. This place has got lots of really good comments, so I think it's going to be even more developed and introduced to other airports, I guess. "

(Respondent no. 2, audio transcription based on an interview)

However, as airport statistics show, passengers consider Asian airports to be the most interesting in the world. They are perceived as the most environmentally friendly owing to such factors as a frequent use of green architecture elements in the terminal space. According to the respondents, the most famous and most beautiful airport is the Changi Airport in Singapore. It features beautifully designed interior botanical gardens, with many exotic plant species, fountains, and benches. The Istanbul airport can also boast of its elements of green architecture, which are integrated into the structure of the building. Also proving to be quite eye-catching are elements in the terminal space such as exotic sculptures (at least to the visitors coming from another cultural zone) and the décor of the shops in the duty-free zone (Airport Statistics and Data Centre).

The differences observed between the airports concerned primarily architecture, which is largely related to geopoetic dependencies. In addition to the differences between the observed objects, can we find any *loci communes* between them? The grammar of places – as suggested by Kolb – is something other than the architecture of a given place or the building itself (Kolb 2008). This is extremely important in relation to my research on airport space. The building can be adapted repeatedly to serve various activities. One could say that it is susceptible to changes in social identity. However, the grammar of a given place is a more permanent element. It is based on the function that given place has to fulfil as part of the tasks set out for it by the cultural and social context. The element connecting all the above-mentioned airports is, therefore, the common context of their functioning in the space of modern person.

Airports are mostly private properties that were created in response to the demand for the rapid relocation of billions of people around the world. They are supposed to provide security and make the flow of people as smooth as possible while being optimally pleasant and friendly at the same time. In overall terms, we can divide the airport space into two zones: the external and the internal. If we were to depict the grammar of airports using a graphical representation of their general concept, we could use models such as these below. For the requirements of this essay, I called them: The Grammar of an Airport: Space Divisions and Norms (no. 1 – External Zones, no. 2 – Internal Zones, and no. 3 – Internal Zone – Airside).

The Grammar of an Airport: Space Divisions and Norms

External Zones

Airside

ramps for aircraft for individual stands at each pier, fuel connectors, aircraft jetties, workshops for engineers; the whole system of access roads to the runway, as well as roads allowing the planes to rapidly drive off the runway upon landing; roads for ground handling vehicles; bilateral traffic: arrivals – departures; completely closed-off area for airport employees and travellers who have already completed the entire procedure associated with boarding a plane

Landside

area for everyone: parking lots, taxi stands, public transport stops and hotels; bilateral traffic is a norm here: entry – exit
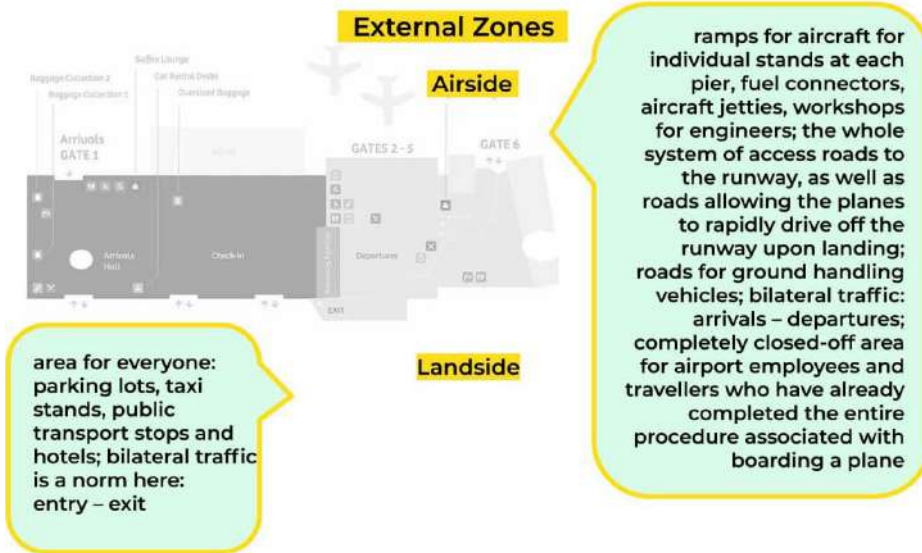
Figure 1. External Zones

Figure 1 shows the first zone – the external zone – which is located around the exterior of the building. It includes the entire infrastructure that is meant to improve the flow of arrivals and departures from the airport. These are open areas such as parking lots, taxi stands, public transport stops, and hotels. Bilateral traffic is the norm here: entry – exit. The external zone also includes the part of the airport whose task it is to streamline the movement of aircrafts (we will find here, among others, runways, workshops for engineers and engine rooms, ramps for aircraft for individual stands at each pier, fuel connectors, aircraft jetties, the whole system of access roads to the runway, including taxing positions for planes, as well as roads allowing the planes to rapidly drive off the runway upon landing; roads for ground handling vehicles: airport maintenance, luggage transport, fire brigade, cargo team; cleaning services: snow removal, de-icing). In spite of the fact that bilateral traffic is also a norm here (arrivals – departures), it is a completely closed-off area. It is intended for airport employees and travellers who have already completed the entire procedure associated with boarding a plane.

The Grammar of an Airport: Space Divisions and Norms

Internal Zones

Saffire Lounge

Baggage Collection 2   Car Rental Desks
  Baggage Collection 1   Oversized Baggage

Arrivals
GATE 1

Airside – border crossing, closed area one-sided traffic (only for passengers and airport employees), very restrictive norms indicated by visual signs

Arrivals
Hall   Check-In   Departures

EXIT

Landside – area for everyone, bilateral traffic: entry – exit, service and commercial infrastructure area, prayer room
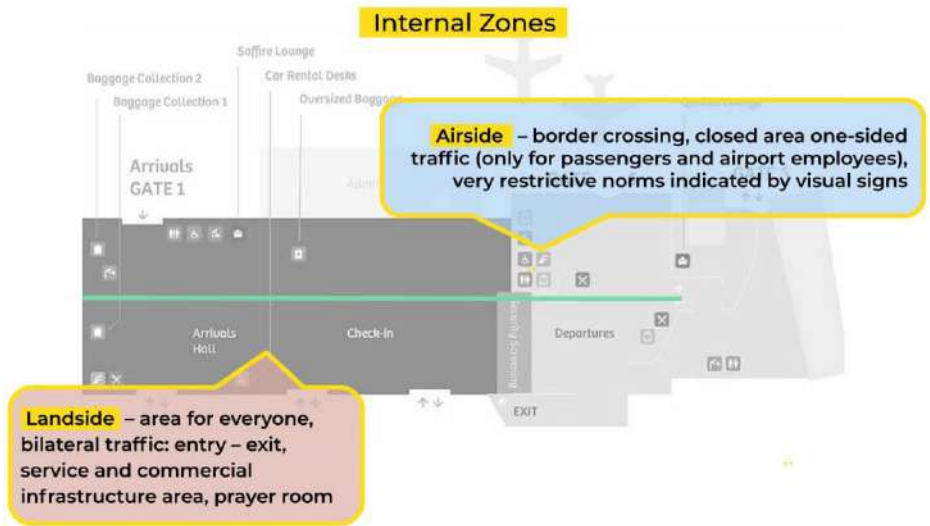
Figure 2. Internal Zones

Figure 2 shows the second zone of the airport – the internal zone – that is inside the building and encompasses two more zones. They are quite similar to the zones located around the building in relation to their purpose. The landside is a zone for everyone, and bilateral traffic is also a norm here. It is here that travellers can say goodbye to their loved ones if they are starting their journey or greet them upon their return from their travels. Although this zone is generally openly accessible, it is usually divided – at least visually (in the case of smaller airports) – into the check-in and the arrivals hall. Airside the second zone is completely closed off, with unilateral traffic and very restrictive norms indicated by visual signs. The airside, just like the landside, is additionally divided into departure and arrival zones.

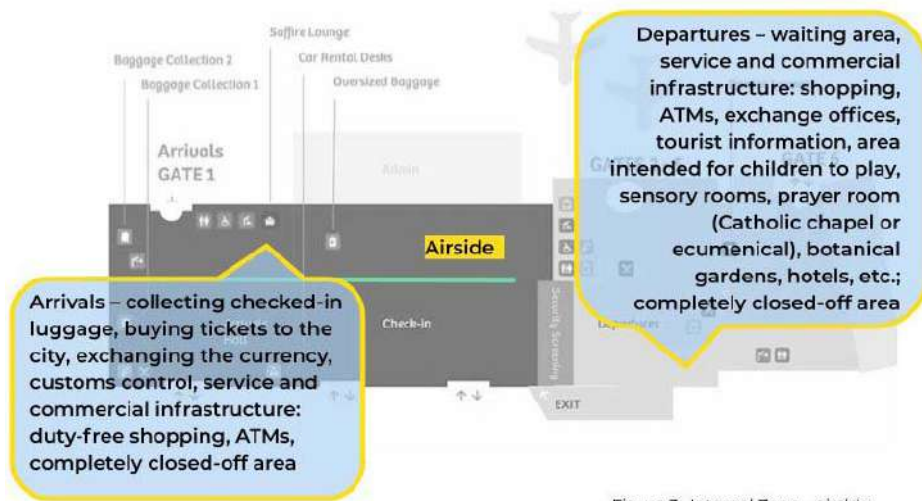# The Grammar of an Airport: Space Divisions and Norms

Figure 3. Internal Zone – airside

Figure No. 3 shows the structure of track planning from the point of view of accessibility for travellers and airport personnel only. Starting with the check-in area, after going through the security screening, we get to the terminal through the departures waiting area. In addition to the seats located within the entire zone, we can find here – sometimes strongly developed – service and commercial infrastructure. In order to be able to use it to the full, however, the traveller must produce their boarding pass. Depending on the size of the airport, this area is where you will usually find shops, restaurants, and fast-food outlets (sales and service zones), as well as other service points – where you can use ATMs, money exchange offices, etc., and a tourist information stand. There are also all sorts of mini places that are supposed to make the waiting time more enjoyable and more attractive for the travellers. These include play zones for children, sensory rooms, prayer rooms, and Catholic or ecumenical chapels (depending on the location, we can also encounter several rooms adapted for different religious denominations). Sometimes, this zone also houses botanical gardens, hotels, or a separate area for exclusive guests (VIP). When the time of departure arrives, the travellers head towards the gates, where they pass another security check and move towards the airport terminal before boarding the plane.

The second airside zone of the airport is intended for arrivals and is slightly less developed. Typically, this is where travellers must identify themselves (show their ID) as they are crossing a border, and then they collect their checked-in luggage, if they have any. This is where you can already buy tickets to get to the city or exchange currency. Next, there is the

customs control (where you declare various goods or choose the Nothing-To-Declare lane). At this point you can be detained and searched by the customs officers. In this zone you can also do some duty-free shopping before you head towards the exit from the airport.

If we consider the importance of airport grammar in the context of a metaphorical reference to functions that the syntax assigns to particular parts of speech, we will notice an interesting rule. It allows you to look at the space of airports from a slightly different perspective, which enables the act of observation of the modern world through the prism of certain anthropological and social dependencies. On the one hand, this is the perspective of the subject performing the given activity and, on the other hand, it is a perspective of the tasks that are performed in the given place.

Let us note that after accessing the restricted area of the terminal (airside – the heart of the airports) – after presenting the identity document and the boarding card – persons as individual entities cease to exist. They become part of a collective entity – they/us/people who are flying out on a journey and those who are returning from one. They are anonymous to each other, insignificant, often without even having physical access to one another. They move within designated separate routes for those departing and those arriving. Their encounter is impossible, as is the creation of mutual relations – they do not exist as a society. The only thing that connects them are procedures, although these are also distributed among the various zones of the airport.

If we can speak of any social identity in this case, it could only be the acultural and ahistorical identity of those departing from and those arriving at the airport. The they/us perceived from this perspective must identify themselves, stand in line, go through the check-in, go through the gates, leave/pick up their luggage, etc. Some activities can be performed if liked while others are banned (e.g., carrying a weapon, leaving your luggage unattended). The subjects may shop, eat, drink, sit, get up, go to the toilet, read, make it on time, or come late, etc. There are other groups of anonymous collective entities – constituting another set of 'they'. These are the employees of the airport handling services. They are often treated by travellers as 'they', as faceless beings devoid of identity – they are almost like machines whose task it is to fulfil the roles assigned to them.

Another group of impersonal, unnamed others, who remain anonymous to the majority – only recognizable by those nearest to them – are the group of 'they' who greet those arriving and who say goodbye to those departing. In each of these cases, the specific activities that belong to a given group are delineated by a specific order. This is the order of the airport "streets", "intersections", and even roundabouts (in the case of large airports), which are all scrupulously marked by visual signs.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that in each of these groups identified there may be people who create a kind of micro-community. This set can comprise, for example, people who travel (families, friends) or work together, or know each other (in relation to the employees). This does not change the fact that the grammar of airports inscribed in their architecture, functionality, and the type of social structures created within them defines the character of these places as spaces almost entirely devoid of community or historical functions. The spatial landscape of the possibilities for action in this place is quite restricted. According to Augé, such features are characteristic of non-places.

They are a no-man's land, non-relational, non-historical, and non-identity spaces (at most, spaces of temporary identity). They respond above all to the requirements of a man who lives in supermodernity.

Summing up, it is time to state that airports are organized according to the *mise en abyme* structure. They are non-places, within which further non-places are situated (waiting rooms, border crossings, fast-food bars, toilets, etc.). All of them together, in their palimpsest arrangement, create the illusion of a city: with simulated crossroads and a tour route leading you around the shops and quick-rest places.

If we were to refer here to the ancient world where city-states were in regular existence, one could say by analogy that the modern world produces a new kind of space – the airport-city. This is noticeable when we look at the world's largest airports, such as that in Singapore. Perhaps, in the near future, airports will become a kind of "other space" that Michel Foucault wrote about. Like heterotopic places, they will be able to arrange different spaces within a terminal that are not compatible with each other under regular terms.

For the time being, city airports are tightly closed-off within their designated grammar – unidirectional and obligatorily stateless within the airside. How all this space is deprived of state or social structures – how deeply it is a non-place – became known to all those who, as a result of some problems with documents, got trapped in an airport. This issue is so extensive that it would be worth devoting to it a separate study – one reaching far beyond the topic I am discussing here. However, as such, I am thus giving an example that airports – despite their increasingly developed character in an architectural as well as a social sense, remain non-places.

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Personal Communication

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List of Figures

Actual Visual Art Creation in Public Spaces

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Abstract

Is public transport a place where visual art can be displayed, and if so, what is the advantage of this connection? How does the context of public transport motivate and form the content of an artwork? This essay monitors the change in the environment and the condition for transport in selected examples of visual art projects in the last three decades (the last three decades of the 20th century) that took place in public transport and the nearby surroundings, dealing with one specific form of visual communication in public transport – artwork made amongst and for passengers. It is assumed that the realization of an artwork in public transport influences the behaviour of people and they (people by their presence) influence the artwork and become part of it. I looked into how the context of public transport motivates and forms the content of works of art. I also reviewed how many artistic events have influenced the transport environment and how the aesthetic of means of transport has been transformed.

Introduction

In the contemporary urbanized environment, as passengers of public transport move through their day, they are exposed to general information campaigns and traffic operations as well as aesthetic sensations and visual perceptions. They also find artworks. The first form of art that entered the open public space was called public art, which originated in the 1960s in the United States of America. This influenced the development of the form of artwork presentation in different environments. The site where an artwork is presented plays a great role in today's visual arts since it can help complete the meaning of the work. Hence, I asked the question of whether public transport is a place where current art can be performed and presented to the public. I was interested in artworks that are somehow in contact with public transport, i.e., which take place in public transport (on buses, trams, trains) or in close vicinity to platforms, stations, underpasses, etc. Then, in my research, I dealt with a specific form of visual communication taking place in public transport – artworks created or presented among or for passengers as its spectators.

In the current context of contemporary art, public art defined in the theory of art is any artwork accessible to the public. Art in public spaces has different forms that express the specific meaning. It comprises statues, memorials and monuments, buildings, and various decorations in open public spaces as well as structures or events related to public transport. The ambition of public art (which differentiates it from other kinds of art in public spaces, as mentioned above) is to connect with the audience (spectators) in various ways.

Public art happens in public places by accommodating the artwork to the public space, to make a specific place neat and pleasant or encourage people to think about social problems by presenting artwork to the public. Public art generates pieces of art open to spectators where the artwork seeks dialogue by way of an artistic approach. As Patricia C. Philips (1995) points out:

> "Clearly, public art is not public just because it is outdoors, or in some identifiable civic space, or it is something everyone can apprehend; it is public because it is a manifestation of art activities and strategies that take the idea of a public as the genesis and subject for analysis "
>
> (Philips 1995: 61-62).

Public artworks are described by the artist Rachel Joynt (2009), who says: "For me, successful public artwork needs to have a sense of place, a freshness, some intrigue and playfulness, a bit like a frozen moment from a daydream". Transformations of traditional forms of presentation

of an artwork in a public space started as early as in the 1970s, when apart from objects in spaces, events and happenings emerged, as well as created situations and other conceptual approaches of fine art experimenting with materials, expression, and the media.

The idea of the advantage of connecting art and public transport emerged in the second half of the 20th century because

> "[t]he visual quality of the nation's mass transit systems has a profound impact on transit patrons and the community at large. Mass transit systems should be positive symbols for cities (…). Good design and art can improve the appearance and safety of a facility, give vibrancy to its public spaces, and make patrons feel welcome. Good design and art will also contribute to the goal that transit facilities help to create liveable communities."
>
> (Berazadi 2012).

Art is being increasingly incorporated into public transport and there are many strategies for the implementation of art in this specific environment. New cooperation programmes connected art with public infrastructure and sought to become more receptive and more open to new and varied media.

Taxonomy of art creation in public art

From the broad sphere of public art, we will focus only on the public transport where artistic creation takes place. For orientation, I have divided artistic creation in mass transit and its closest parts into three basic groups. The classification was carried out according to common elements that represent general characteristics of artistic approaches and performance. The individual groups are participation art, to which I devote a separate part of this article, art in collaboration with architecture, and unofficial art.

Unofficial art in mapping visual features in mass transit refers to artistic results that are non-standard, eccentric, unrestrained, unconventional, sometimes even aggressive in the context of the place, and are generally described as graffiti, stickers, viral advertisements, or guerrilla projects.[1]

The field called art in cooperation with architecture comprises art such as statues, mosaic, art design, and permanent art installations. Their common characteristic feature is that they are part of a design in mass transit

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1 Despite being able to find creators of contemporary fine arts among them, we seek official support of artistic work, and that is why this essay does not focus closer on this topic.

– their buildings or furnishings and accessories are necessarily connected with the public transport services, or they are separately standing pieces of art in public spaces related to public transport – they are a consistent component that helps identify the specific place. At the same time, we distinguish certain cooperation in art when artwork takes into consideration the needs of spectators/passengers and offers an aesthetic experience or satisfaction, but also challenges visual perception and forms of decoding the meaning, including things hidden for those most curious in the area of visual communication that sometimes require in-depth exploration.

The work of art by Jacquelin Poncelet called *Wrapper* has given a unique feel to the identity of Edgware Road station in London since 2012. At first glance it is a large-scale colour mosaic made of vitreous enamel that stretches over the structure of the station and adjacent wall to create a patterned grid. Its individual patterns refer to the adjacent surroundings, they are images of places near the station which Poncelet observed for three years, but the artist also depicted images from history in the monumental mosaic. While creating the mosaic, the artist was thinking about the impression residents and users of the station would have about the site. The meaning of the patterns is not just ornamental, according to Poncelet (2019), who says that "[a] pattern not only speaks of other places, but of changes in our culture and the passage of time".

To complete the concept of this group, here is another example – the work of art by Michael Hayden called *Arc en Ciel* (Arch in the Sky) in Yorkdale Subway Station in Toronto. In 1978, the line of the Toronto underground called Spadina was completed, and each new station featured an artwork the ambition of which was to help identify its appearance or make it visually different from the design of the whole line. The public art installation Arch in the Sky was created from a 570 ft-long light sculpture consisting of neon tubes that display a pulsating spectrum of colours in the sequence of arriving trains.[2] The original installation was made of mercury steam tubes in different colours and created a rainbow effect to which the title referred. Passengers enjoyed the aesthetic experience, and, at the same time, the abstract form played by the light directing attention to the unique natural phenomenon.

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2   Due to an insufficient allocation of maintenance funds, this beautiful light installation was removed in the early 1990s. But with the advent of LED technology and RGB colour, it's no longer necessary to go through such a laborious process. Not only that, but the use of LED lights also allows the artist to display a far wider range of colour in the new version of *Arc en ciel*. The art installation is prepared for re-creation and from July 2016 there is information about restarting this work of art in media.

Participation art tendencies in public transport

Participation in art depends on the discourses, contexts, places, or current happenings in society, but particularly on the creator of the project (artist), who, however, is not the final and sole performer of the artistic event based on the principle of participation. The creator of the participatory project sets the structure of the artistic event and decides the content of the event, i.e., what they will focus on or what they will express. However, the final object – the artwork – is influenced by factors such as spectators, active audience, context, etc. The creator takes into consideration active factors (co-creators) and envisages the implementation of the set structure of the work. Participatory art artists "design their works as open systems – as projects whose structure is filled in by other people actively engaged in it, most often common people" (Zalesak 2011: 9). Such openness provides the possibility to cooperate and anchor the meaning of the work according to the context in which the creator sets it.

The principle of cooperation did not arise out of the blue in the artistic world. The beginnings of participatory art were i.e., the tradition of collaboration, manifested as early as in the Avant Garde, futurism, Fluxus movement activities, happenings, and socially engaged art. In her essay, Clair Bishop says about participatory art that

> "artists use social situations to create dematerialised, anti-market and politically engaged projects which closely relate to the call of the historical Avant Garde to blur boundaries between art and life."

> (Bishop 2007: 13).

It was the Avant Garde that brought the question and call to break down the routine boundaries in art. The strongest roots reach to the activities of Marcel Duchamp and his ready-mades; he was crossing boundaries in art in creative ways and experimenting with how a specific "rule" in art (as of authorship and originality) can be contravened. In the book *Postproduction,* Nicolas Bourriaud responds to the situation initiated by Marcel Duchamp with his artistic intents and projects:

> "Pictures are made by their spectators, says Marcel Duchamp: this sentence is incomprehensible unless we relate it to the Duchamp intuition which marked the nascent new "culture of use", where the narrative arises from collaboration, from a certain kind of dialogue between an artist and those who come to see his/her work. "

> (Bourriaud 2004: 12).

Duchamp's artworks, generated by means of artistic situations using a well-established product and transforming its function, are conditioned by the sphere of spectator as well as the sphere of art and have encouraged dialogue which determined the form of perception of contemporary visual art in subsequent years.

The specified group of works of art in public transport is characterized by the temporary implementation of the work and the interconnection with passengers. By using the presence of people – passengers – the work of art usually concentrates on behaviour, functioning, and staying in the specific place or developing a situation prevalent in mass transit – waiting. Some works even take a passenger, in the role of temporary artwork spectator, as the means for implementation where they become a participant or, fill in the work with their presence and influence their menings. It is a moment of active (or face-to-face) collaboration in the work presentation. Accordingly, such artistic manifestation is designated as "art with participation" (participation art). The implemented pieces of art confront society with its everydayness and social problems, and we can also see efforts to aesthetically transform the environment in public transport.

The selected examples of projects of the last three decades (the turn of the 21st century) illustrate the artistic creation formed by the conditions of public transport or its environment. I investigated the most tipical artistic approaches, represented by happenings, performance and site-specific installations responding to or reflecting the space in which they are created.

One such project was the implementation of the *Tram Busker Tour*[3] prepared by the artist Kateřina Šedá[4] (Czech Republic) in Helsinki for the IHME Contemporary Art Festival in 2016. She located the art project in an item so iconic for Helsinki – a tram. It was kind of a social art intervention, and her goal was to make the tram a meeting place where passengers can experience something out of the ordinary and share it with others. Apart from the unusual venue, the line-up of musicians was also unexpected. The artist organized a music festival of the best buskers, ranging from outstanding African American musicians to Parisian chanson singers, and other surprising performers. The project thus brought the ambience

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3   The idea of the project was implemented four times in the Czech Republic as well, in the city of Jihlava, where the International Documentary Festival (2016) was held. Visitors to the festival were offered festival tickets with a bonus – a free ride on public transport, which demonstrates an interesting collaboration between culture and public transport services.

4   For a long time, the artistic creations of Kateřina Šedá have focused on socially conceived events which incorporate dozens or even hundreds of individuals who don't have anything to do with art. The events take place in a completely non-artistic environment. One of the objectives of these experiments with inter-personal relations is to guide participants out of experienced stereotypes or social isolation. For more, see: https://www.artlist.cz/en/katerina-seda-102651/.

of international metropolises – London, Paris, New York, and so on – and their multiculturalism into Helsinki's public transport.

The artistic project by Kateřina Šedá was a pleasant manifestation of the collaboration between art and public transport and the connection of internal forces to enrich the spectator's/passenger's experience. Another project I would like to mention is the audio-visual installation *Elsewhere* by Chilean artist Tania Ruiz Gutierrez (born in Chile, lives in France), which was presented on the platform of the Central Railway Station in Malmö in 2010. "The action (…) [was] part of a larger-scale project undertaken by the administration of the City Tunnel (Citytunneln), infrastructure to which this station belongs, in collaboration with the Swedish National Public Art Council. The overall project was born from the decision to eliminate advertising in all areas of the tunnel and replace it with art installations" (More Than Green 2019). Multi-projections of several videos aimed at making passengers' waiting time for the train pleasant and creating a new experience for passengers in the reinforced-concrete underground tunnel. The grey environment was confronted with views of landscapes seen from a train window at an unspecified time and in an unknown place. Although such work may appear theatrical, it particularly influences the quality of the infrastructure and public spaces in transport.

The element of a certain kind of commonness and everydayness is usually contained in the works of art designed for passive communication with the spectator in public spaces. The *New York Minute* by Gabriel Barcia-Colombo (USA) was presented on displays at the Fulton Centre station complex in New York through the spring of 2014. It was a large-scale 52-channel video installation featuring extremely slow-motion portraits of "everyday New Yorkers doing everyday things". It is an example of a site-specific screen-based work of art working with the faces of society, which we could call a basic mirror of the actual world or the everydayness in which we live. Gabriel Barcia-Colombo used new technologies to evoke a conceptual idea anchored in an adjusted moving picture. "The installation seeks to point out the things we miss when we rush around the city at a frantic pace. The comical street interactions that make New York such a unique city" (Barcia-Colombo 2019).

A conceptual approach is typical of the work by the artistic couple David Böhm & Jiří Franta (Czech Republic), who have been pursuing site-specific installations and drawings for the last fifteen years. In this case, Franta and Böhm are also the initiators of a process that is intended to evoke an abstract and ephemeral line through eloquent symbols that are dragged with their meanings from the romanticising notes of a drawn landscape to the vein lines of the burned rubber of motorbike tyres as well as string (or rope). The work *Painting No. 20*, realized as a performance in the New York Metro in 2011, is a part of their art cycle "Almost Nothing is Complete" and represents a long-term endeavour to push the boundaries of the medium and play with its performatively uncontrollable dimension. The artists describe

their performance of playing with the shapes of drawing as a simple situation of drawing a line: "One of us boarded the subway with one end of the string (rope) and the other one stayed with the reel in the station. The train left the station, and the string created the line of drawing lying in the yard" (Böhm & Franta 2011). The unusual long line is like moments we cannot stop and define in all shapes. Such an ephemeral status of the work saved only in photos also refers to the moment experienced while travelling where we move from one point to another one and the only thing left after us is an imaginary line, the trace of the presence gone, when we set off.

Note in conclusion

Art as part of public transport most often helps identify the site and forms the environment wherein passengers move. However, it can also help us perceive the historical and cultural importance associated with the specific site, motivate the community to resolve local problems, and connect people at the moment of using transport means or equipment. The objective of works of art in public transport is particularly important for complementing the specific service and providing an aesthetic experience; they build the relationship to the site or situation or help perceive cultural customs and differences in society unnecessarily exaggerated all the time.

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Keywords

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Image of a Man on Visual Ads in London's Streets

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Abstract

Advertisement is spreading into almost every bit of our everyday life in London. As a matter of fact, visual ads can be met mostly at London's underground stations or bus stops, but private companies use all sorts of media to get to as many prospect customers as possible. What is the general meaning of it? It is impossible to deny that advertising has a huge impact upon our lives, including our beliefs and system of values we support. It happens even though we do not always realise it. All the creators of ads aim at getting to people who are not aware that they are being convinced to buy something.

However, not only advertisement affects our lives. We also exert influence on it. British ads have been adjusted to our life - they show our culture, and often the reality of our dreams. Therefore, if we carefully look at them and human characters exposed by them, we can learn a lot about modern man, his life, aspirations and needs.

The range of social changes taking place in Europe and contemporary world is very vast. Our knowledge and approach to issues related to sex, sexism, stereotypes, gender roles and discrimination have undergone significant changes over the past years. The dynamics of these changes has brought to us not only new solutions, but also new, widely discussed issues today. One of them is the phenomenon of sexism and stereotypical perception of gender norms. It could seem that stereotypes regarding gender norms we notice in advertisements, affect women only - when we watch them limited to mostly female roles (including the role of sexual objects for men). However, it turns out that artificial stereotypes also affect men. There are several roles they are being squeezed into advertisements in the UK.

Introduction

In the early 1960s people began to think about recognising the meaning of images of women and men broadcasted in advertisements in the United States and western Europe. "Gender Advertisement" analysed by Erving Goffman is classic scientific research book, to which do refer other researchers focused on this subject. According to Goffman, the creators of advertisements reflect the shape of everyday life and the existing social order. Advertising does not create stereotypes of women and men, but only serves to marketing, or to product sales. Goffman believed that advertising represents people's behaviour taken from our everyday life and duplicates stereotypical concepts of social roles and relationships between the genders, which finally creates so called "hyper-sexualization" (Goffman 1976: 26 & 84).

On the other hand, Vivian Gornick (Goffman 1976: 26 & 84.) indicates that advertisements do not depict in full the way how gender representatives behave, but they do it the way we think about it. So, the exposed image serves usually to convince passers-by that men and women should just be like those ones portrayed on advertisements. It persuades that people want to or ought to be in a certain relation to themselves and to others (Goffman 1976: VII).

Joanna Bator, who is another theorist working on the subject mentioned here - indicates that advertising is a form of communication that does more that only reflecting already existing elements of cultural awareness, and somehow actively shapes them too. In her opinion, it is a mirror of stereotypes. The shape of that mirror depends on the trend of attractiveness of message that has to be passed on by means of advertisement (Bator 1998: 5). This is only one aspect of the advertisements' message. The other is that they can shape new behaviour patterns, which was pointed out by Krzysztof Arcimowicz (Arcimowicz 2019: 325-338.). He made an attempt to typologise models of the male role models and their social references. It was made according to a pattern capturing symbolic (visual or verbal) expression of the male behaviours, and analysed in prism of values being found as worth to carry out by the the general male population. It is interesting to what values of gender and gender differences advertising relates? Is there a place for advertising with images of men that go beyond the stereotypical perception of male roles?

Gender stereotypes are a group of beliefs, often negative - concerning roles, features and behaviours, which is characterized by permanence and simplification. Academic articles also include the definition of "stereotypes of gender roles", describing beliefs that particular behaviours characterize one gender and do not refer to another gender (Bator 1998: 5). The analysis of advertisements lead me to the conclusion that it can strengthen or weaken the strict border between genders, because male person is subjected to the pressure of two contradicting ways of interpretation. The first one uses gender stereotypes and emphasizes the differences between men and

women. Men, in this case, are being recognized through the prism of essence of masculinity based on a relationship between male person and the public space. The other way of interpretation is trying to fade out all the differences between genders (Melosik 1996: 216-256). This is not just about exposing the greater participation of men in family environment (caring for a child, performing household chores), but also about increasing the interest of men in condition of their bodies.

Both ways of interpretation appearing in advertisement reflect two different paradigms of masculinity: traditional and modern, competing each other in contemporary culture of ours. The concept of the masculinity paradigm is a set of ideas, values and practices that are the basis for the shape of our society, that is in fact a vision for culture and organization of social life. The traditional paradigm comes from the Judeo-Christian tradition, Greek philosophy and modern science. It is based on the dichotomy of gender roles, the asymmetry of male and female features. The compulsion of domination and suppression of feelings is visible. The modern paradigm of masculinity is related to postmodern thought, which emphasizes equality and partnership between men and women - recognizing these values as fundamental in creating a new social order.

The postmodern paradigm comprises the concepts of androginism and self-realisation taken as striving for the fulfilment of human being. The idea fix for men is then cooperation not domination. They become real partners for women and children (Arcimowicz: 325-338).

In the advertisements below, one can distinguish two categories of the image of a man. The first one falls into the category of the traditional masculinity paradigm: a professional, a boss, a husband, a family head, a lover. In the second category there are patterns of a child's guardian and a gentle man (modern image of masculinity).

Fot.1 *Leader,* private photo library

Leader: Men in advertisements are usually exposed as representatives of homogenous group of leaders, decision-makers and visionaries. Leadership is here the masculine booster. The man meets some stereotypical requirements: he is confident, he quickly makes decisions, he is created to lead a large team of people. He is so much responsible and emotionally stable that - better than any woman - can handle with financial risk. Perfectionism and dynamics allow male heroes of the advertising industry to participate in making decisions that are important to society. Advertisements are maintaining the impression that men are responsible for most of the important changes in economics, technology, science or politics.

Success is associated with great prestige and high standard of living, which relate to affluent and generally attractive people. What people omit is usually enormous psychological burden being carried by men living life of success. Statistics concerning suicides indicate that most deadly suicide attempts are supposed to be committed by men. This is implied by overwhelming side effects of social pressure about achieving success (Blisker, White 2011: 529-534).

Professional: it comes from the core of nineteenth century male identity – to be professional at work. The image of a man as a professional is very clear in today's advertising. Interestingly, more and more often we observe that professionals are specialists in fields that are widely considered as domain of women: cooking, washing, cleaning. In such advertisements men often advise women, instruct and suggest what product they should use.

Mostly men appearing in the role of a professional look like middle-aged, reliable, brave and intelligent persons. Man, thanks to these features, increases some admiration of women and children. Some characteristic behaviour in professional's image is using latest tech products like a tablet, smartphone or bank app. They let the professional spare much time and enable longer resting in a pool or on a bike. Professional is also a man traveling around the world and learning on distinctive cultures.

A man in advertising appears as a representative of various professions, but usually of those well-paid ones, what allows him to enjoy high prestige of life. He is then: a manager, a banker, a doctor, an architect. There are also engineers, chefs, bartenders as representatives of less prestigious professions but also quite well-paid. The fact the man is more frequently shown as a professional in advertisements is associated to gender stereotypes. It links attractive masculinity with precision and rationality, just opposite to femininity linked usually to creative chaos and emotionality.

Fot.3 *Boss*, private photo library

Boss: Male person is very often exposed in a role of a boss in contemporary advertisements, as well. Such men are leading teams and require obedience from their team members, who are women very often. Showing a man as the boss, and women as his assistants, reflects the existing hierarchy of genders with the higher social position of men. It also involves traditional features attributed to men and women, to masculinity and femininity. People link to men creativity and command of ruling. They also link passivity and complying to women. Then, it is understandable that, as Diane Barhel writes, the model of femininity in advertising is based on: *passivity, bliss, narcissism*, and the masculinity model relates to precision and making choices (Barthel 1988: 171).

Husband: The image of marriage in advertising usually refers to the traditional model with all roles stated clear: a man earns money; a woman is taking care about the household, children and her husband. Advertisements show men to whom their women usually serve, depicting husband sitting in an armchair and watching TV news or reading newspapers while wife is making dinner for instance.

Head of the family: The man in the role of the head of the family appears less often than as a professional or husband. The father - the family leader, makes important decisions regarding purchasing an insurance or a car, and also mows a lawn.

According to Goffman, in the advertising one can distinguish several non-verbal dimensions of presenting stereotypes of men and women. The most important ones include the body size and shape. Goffman claims that the arrangement in which the man occupies a central position and dominates over his wife because of his height, can symbolize the social positions occupied by the representatives of both genders in accordance with the concept that power is executed by those ones who are on top of our society (Goffman 1976: 43).

Lover: Beauty in the western culture has recently been one of the main areas of maintaining gender differences. It is still the essence of femininity, but a need to be beautiful starts to be more and more visible in the image of a man. Advertisements are full of more and more handsome and good-looking models. Barthel says that the advertisement implies more male interest in the shape of his body, what is mostly visible in cosmetics advertisements (Barthel 1992: 169). In this type of advertising, a man also appears as a lover. Barthel emphasizes that advertising contributes to the "feminisation" of culture, because men as consumers are similar to women and they also become objects of manipulation and subordination (Barthel 1992: 148).

We can say that the advertisements of cosmetics for males deconstruct the traditional concept of masculinity - applying perfumes or creams for day and night on male body, the fact of making it more attractive with chemical compounds, has not been stereotypically combined with masculinity. Thus the model of "Lover" in advertisements is a change from old model of masculinity, where the man expresses his masculinity by means of building family and becoming father. Barthel defines this pattern as: "a new man". Cosmetics can also increase a fear some men can find as a threat to general male identity. The use of them can be perceived as a sign of overuse or even as a sign of homosexuality. However, the scale of this stereotype weakens. But it is strong enough that the vast majority of advertisements of men's cosmetics or dietary supplements have to attempt yet to neutralize men's fears and anxieties for using them.

One of the strategies is to focus on the muscular body of the male model, which symbolizes strength and dominance. Beautiful female models that sometimes appear in advertisements of men's cosmetics prove that men,

Fot.4 *Husband*, private photo library

Fot. 5 *Head of the family*, private photo library

Fot. 6 *Lover*, private photo library

Fot. 7 *Lover,* private photo library

Fot. 8 *Masculinity*, private photo library

Fot. 9 *Masculinity*, private photo library

Spaces of Transfers and Visual Management of Human Mobility

thanks to cosmetics, can increase their success in relations with women. This is the simplest way neutralizing males' fears concerning stereotypes about using cosmetics that supposingly make men less masculine. In the advertisements for male cosmetics men triumphing over the elements of nature are very popular.

Another strategy to neutralize males' concerns about the use of cosmetics is to use well-known athletes or actors who are considered as very masculine. It can be also noticed in the advertisements of cosmetics for men that their brands are associated with power or force, such as "Boss" for instance. Colours dominating in such advertisements are also very characteristic - black, brown or gold. Hardly ever pastel ones.

The above examples of ads can be treated as disappearing differences between genders - what is confirmed by the wide use of cosmetics by men, what was chracteristic to femininity before. However, these advertisements differentiate genders, using perfect shape of male models' body, that symbolizes strength, activity and dominance, in comparison to the slim body of female models, which relates to gentleness, passivity and subordination. Women on such ads we see in London are only attractive supplement to the imaginary male world of permanent fight against the elements of nature.

New image of masculinity child carer

The traditional masculinity model requires from a man to be strong and not emotional. According to Barthel, "stereotype of father" is a man who is not present at home as "breadwinner". Therefore, it is difficult for him to create deep emotional ties with his children. During the last few decades, researchers dealing with the male identity issues, have emphasized for men all the benefits of the coming-outs regarding experiencing emotional ties with family.

Today's fathers dramatically come to the conclusion that it is worth to engage emotionally in family life and to care about children, because it provides new experiences and is beneficial to mental health. Therefore, more and more often such father image is presented in British advertisements.

Gentleman: In British advertisements we meet also the image of a man who breaks the traditional paradigm of masculinity. The man is somehow opposite to male domination of testosterone. Some features of the personality, that are traditionally associated with femininity, can be noticed here. It is: sensitivity and gentleness. Such a man can by an example of androgynous entity.

Fot.10 *Child carer*, private photo library

Fot.11 *Gentle man*, private photo library

Household keeper

An image of the man playing the role of kids' guardian is not the only example of abandoning the traditional masculine model of man in UK's advertising industry. One can meet also images of men dealing with chores at home, like: washing, cleaning, cooking. Sometimes even shopping becomes such a man is usually young and single.

It's worth to mention also about the image of men breaking the taboo of heterosexual orientation. Mostly such males are in British advertisements trending social projects fighting against discrimination because of sexual matters.

Conclusion

As it was stated before, advertisements can influence upon the shape of attitudes and behaviours of their recipients. As a bunch of images and repeatable slogans easy to remember they can have long lasting and strong impact, especially on young people (Siemieńska 1997). The broadcast of advertising images is much easier internalized by a child than by an adult, which is implied by psychological development of human beings. Their impact is clear in the vocabulary used by children who watch advertisements (Unnikrishnan, Bajpai 1996: 144-147)..

Professionals in advertisement industry know perfectly well that the best ad is the one with which people identify themselves. Such ad by itself is also supposed to shape beliefs, expectations and needs of consumers. Applying a stereotype into the ad – stereotype present in general consciousness of the society for years, seems to be the simplest way to succeed. The point is only that frequent misuse of the very simple image of femininity and masculinity turns into misidentification regarding it. Among all the effects of overdosing of gender stereotypes in British ads, the self-limitation to popular patterns of being male or female, creates pressure in human minds to match such patterns. Research have also discovered that watching commercials full with stereotypes leads women to decrease of self-motivation for challenges and increases bad view about their own abilities. On the other hand, men right after watching commercials showing almost naked women expressed more acceptance to sexual violence. It is also proved that showing perfect bodies in advertisements implies to spectators some dissatisfaction regarding their own bodies. It relates to in both genders. Ladies are worried that they are not slim and beautiful enough. Gentlemen find themselves as individuals with underdeveloped muscles. Overthinking about what we see in commercials leads to anorexia or bigorexia. It is hard to deny that they are serious social problems, with a great impact upon young people.

Fot.12 *Household keeper*, private photo library

Fot.13 *A new image of a man*, private photo library

Fot 14 *A man in a Swarovski ad campaign*,
private photo library

Fot.15 *A man in the anti-discrimination campaign*,
private photo library

One of the Polish researchers focused on advertisements - Dariusz Czaja - points out that one of the most characteristic features of modern culture is "over-presence of ideal body", that may be understood as multidimensional presence of perfect human body in visual messages without any historical precedent (Czaja 1997: 7).

Young and naked bodies are vastly present in UK's advertising industry. According to British psychologist Oliver James - beautiful female models and handsome male models make advanced capitalism working well. But the way they are misused has a negative impact on our mental health. They contribute to the fact that women and men are usually dissatisfied with their own bodies and bodies of their partners, by causing an increase of frustration about the low ability to achieve such a shape as presented on an image. James believes that advanced capitalism makes us suffer from lack of ideal form and then it relieves us by means of giving us material goods and stimulants (James 1997: 2-3).

Arcimowicz, says that advertisements multiplicate gender stereotypes, shaping over-rated picture of reality. Creative directors hardly ever decide to change the image of man, as products promoted in such a traditional way are more popular (Arcimowicz 2008: 2-22). However, research carried out in the United States and the United Kingdom indicates that images of both genders have been evolving over the past decades (Barthel 1992).

Today's ad-like man appears to be a person caring for children or doing home works. This image has been shaped since 1990s and is replacing the image of a boss or a tough guy. New male image is forced by both: cultural changes - better partnership of women and men, as well as by social campaigns. Postmodern culture and human psychology have dramatically contributed to the creation of a new paradigm of masculinity, promoting equality and partnership between men and women.

According to this paradigm, each individual has the same creative potential and therefore can perform very similar social roles - resulting from androgynytics and complementarity.

> "The belief of the new man is cooperation, not domination. The new paradigm allows you to display both masculine and feminine features and gives you the right to express your own emotions and desires"
>
> (Chmura-Ruthowska, Ostrouch 2007: 19).

So, this new image of the man has been forced by both: cultural changes implying greater partnership between men and women, as well as social campaigns for which British advertisements are frequently integral part of.

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List of illustrations

- Fot. 1 *Leader*, private photo library
- Fot. 2 *Professional*, private photo library
- Fot.3 *Boss*, private photo library
- Fot. 4 *Husband*, private photo library
- Fot. 5 *Head of the family*, private photo library
- Fot. 6 *Lover*, private photo library
- Fot. 7 *Lover*, private photo library
- Fot. 8 *Masculinity*, private photo library
- Fot. 9 *Masculinity*, private photo library
- Fot. 10 *Child carer*, private photo library
- Fot. 11 *Gentle man*, private photo library
- Fot. 12 *Household keeper*, private photo library
- Fot. 13 *A new image of a man*, private photo library
- Fot. 14 *A man in a Swarovski ad campaign*, private photo library
- Fot. 15 *A man in the anti-discrimination campaign*, private photo library

Keywords

Scooter Sign

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Abstract

The appearance of additional entities on Polish roads and pavements, i.e. scooters, especially electric ones, has revealed that there are no legal regulations regarding their use. One of the dimensions of this problem is the lack of visual information regarding the use of the scooter. The situation we have found ourselves in can be treated as a pedagogical situation, a chance for the implementation of new solutions that will be accepted by road users and pedestrians.

Introduction

The feature of the scooter is that it is small. In a city that lacks space, this is important. Meanwhile, reading books about the phenomenon of the city, I get the impression that this device is overlooked, unlike a bicycle. But the scooter is used in the streets. We see them, we pass them by. Maybe we use one ourselves. The scooter seems to be considered an irrelevant actor in the public space.

Perhaps this is because the scooter is something in between. Between walking and cycling. Between slow and fast. Between serious and frivolous. Between a utility vehicle and a play tool. Between the device found in the law and not having such a fixation. I can say about the scooter that it belongs to the city and is about moving. We associate this device, just like roller skates, with asphalt streets and, just like a bicycle, with traffic. Therefore, we are talking about a dynamic device in an urban landscape.

At the bottom of the Troll Ladder, one of Norway's most unusual roads, is a road sign warning of trolls. The ontological status of trolls is discussed. There are probably those who believe in them. Meanwhile, the presence of people on scooters is a fact. Therefore, it seems reasonable to set signs indicating the presence of scooters. Doubts are raised by the issue of their belonging. The following question arises: Is the scooter rider on the road, on the sidewalk or maybe a bike path?

Let's design a scooter sign and settle all doubts in the process of collective design. Let's design a sign that will be primarily an invitation, a sign that will mark the presence of the scooter, and, at the same time, decide in which part of the street it should be used. Jonathan F. P. Rose points to the need for social participation, showing that the wisdom of the crowd – collective action – serves the development of the city (Rose 2017). It is connected with the pedagogy of things, which asks how the relationship with things affects us by educating us (Chutorański and Makowska 2019). Designing a sign also means regaining agility in education: By designing the sign collectively, we potentially influence the behaviour of the city's residents in the future. This is in line with one of the basic assumptions of environmental psychology, i.e., the statement that there are reciprocity relations between human behaviour and the environment (Bell, Green, Fisher, Baum 2001).

Jane Jacobs emphasized two interrelated issues: that inhabitants would feel like hosts in their city, and that they would be proud of it. The city is obliged to strive for it (Jacobs 2016). Małgorzata Jacyno, a Polish sociologist, follows this lead and points to the following opposition: the city community and the alienated city. In the first, residents create reality; in the second, they do not have such opportunities. Jacyno states: "The public sphere is not only a place for the presence but also the opportunity to cooperate, to become an entity for which a street is a place specially created to be able to speak to the authority" (Jacyno 2016: 205). Emphasizing the complexity and subjectivity of the city and its inhabitants, Deyan Sudjic notes: "The city is humankind's

most complex and extraordinary creation. It can be understood as a living organism" (Sudjic 2016: 223).

Legal dimension

From a legal point of view, the basic concept we consider in this case is legal consciousness. Based on the sociology of law, it is assumed that "legal consciousness is expressed through participation in social interactions related to law and through the processes of creating and reproducing the social world, that lead to building legal institutions. Therefore, the final shape of these institutions is influenced by alike pro-legal, instrumental and anti-legal attitudes and views" (Cywiński 2016: 472). In other words, legal consciousness is assessing the law and, as a consequence, postulating the change of law in the direction desired by society (Silbey 2008).

Recognition of the possibility of influencing the shape of law is associated with the concept of living law: "Law is born in groups and communities as a tool stabilizing everyday life and maintaining order and internal peace. [...] Natural environment of living law are other norms and rules having a similar charter. A feature of living law is not uniformity and unification, it is not the same for all subjects subjected to state power" (Cywiński 2016: 377).

The feature of such a law is "to be alive also in social consciousness and through it's influence on social behavior" (Cywiński 2016: 377). Also, according to the postulate of legal pluralism, the following statement can be questioned: "that the only law is the law created by the state" (Kojder 2016: 298). Considering the above, I conclude that based on legal science, it is possible to postulate the process of choosing a scooter sign outside of state institutions. The creator of the concept of living law, Eugen Ehrlich, indicates: "The center of gravity of legal development therefore from time immemorial has not lain in the activity of the state, but in society itself, and must be sought there at the present time" (Ehrlich 2002: 390).

This is consistent with the World Charter for the Right to the City, according to which: "The Right to the City is defined as the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity, and social justice. It is the collective right of the inhabitants of cities, in particular of the vulnerable and marginalized groups, that confers upon them legitimacy of action and organization, based on their uses and customs, with the objective to achieve full exercise of the right to free self-determination and an adequate standard of living" (Article I.2.)

The perfect city

To indicate the context of the city in which the idea of selecting a scooter sign would arise, I would like to draw attention to the following words of Jan Gehl

"Achieving the vision of lively, safe, sustainable and healthy cities has become a general and urgent desire. All four key objectives — lively cities, safety, sustainability, and health — can be strengthened immeasurably by increasing the concern for pedestrians, cyclists and city life in general. A unified citywide political intervention to ensure that the residents of the city are invited to walk and bike as much as possible in connection with their daily activities is a strong reinforcement of the objectives.

The potential for a lively city is strengthened when more people are invited to walk, bike and stay in city space. [...]

The potential for a safe city is strengthened generally when more people move about and stay in city space. A city that invites people to walk must by definition have a reasonably cohesive structure that offers short walking distances, attractive public spaces and a variation of urban functions. [...]

The sustainable city is strengthened generally if a large part of the transport system can take place as "green mobility," that is, travel by foot, bike or public transport. These forms of transport provide marked benefits to the economy and the environment, reduce resource consumption, limit emissions, and decrease noise levels. [...]

The desire for a healthy city is strengthened dramatically if walking or biking can be a natural part of the pattern of daily activities. "

(Gehl 2010: 6-7).

The four goals mentioned: the fullness of life, safety, balance, and health, seem feasible provided that we understand the phenomenon of the city as a complex ecosystem (Rose 2017) and not as a resource to be consumed. Deyan Sudjica (2016: 155) indicates that the success of some cities resulted from the following formula: "The answer is a civic society based on a self-governing community rather than a self-defeating focus on individual gain. [...] When justice ruled with equity, reason and moderation, the city flourished".

We are talking about a crowded city full of people; people who are visible to each other and touchable. Deyan Sudjic points out: "A city without people is a dead city. The crowd is the essential sign of city life. A living city

is the embodiment of the people who inhabit it. They fill its streets and its public spaces; they pour in every day to find all that a city has to offer" (Sudjic 2016: 209). This is a specific conglomerate, difficult to describe, but full of potential, because: "[a] real city offers its citizens the freedom to be what they want to be. The idea of what makes a city is more elusive but is as significant as the data" (Sudjic 2016: 1). It should be emphasized that this concept is not intended primarily to equalize opportunities. Sudjic states: "The city at its best allows for difference, and tolerance" (Sudjic 2016: 76). Therefore, the city appears to be a classic sphere of freedom in which restrictions are dictated only by the good of other inhabitants. This means a city for people, not legal entities, which are in their extreme form universal corporations. In the sphere of management, Sudjic warns that: "[a] city is too complex system for the market to function on its own to deliver desirable results" (Sudjic 2016: 168).

To sum up after Jan Gehl: "Living cities, therefore, ones in which people can interact with one another, are always stimulating because they are rich in experiences, in contrast to lifeless cities, which can scarcely avoid being poor in experiences and thus dull" (Gehl 2011: 21). However, for the painted image to come true, the following condition must be met: "For leaders, overcoming obsolete thinking demands the resolve, courage, and grit to withstand the slings and arrows that inevitably follow change" (Sadik-Khan, Solomonow 2016: XV). So, in opposition to the city of four features postulated by Jan Gehl: full of life, safe, balanced, and healthy, we can be afraid of this city: dead, dangerous, full of inequality, and troubled by various diseases. It is logical that we should prevent this.

City space – what does it tell us?

The city is largely a communication space. The content of the messages presented will remain open. It is important who will influence the space because: "A space can shape how we interact, how we communicate" (Bernheimer 2017: loc. 14). There will always be a question about who the masters of the space are – big corporations or city citizens.

Maria Mendel, a Polish educator, notes: "Education [...] always takes place somewhere and has its place" (2006: 9). Then, let us consider a sign as a device in space that educates us, because place pedagogy describes activities that a person undertakes in a specific space, which is not only background but also something "relating to us with reciprocity" (2006: 10). So where is the place we want to put a sign? This question is important, because according to Mendel "It can, therefore, be said that a place educates and identifies the one with upbringing [...] in this optics, one can perceive a place as a cause. Man becomes himself with the educational help of the place. [...] Pedagogy of place becomes [...] the creation of the subject through the place" (2006: 26, 17). The situation we consider now concerns specific

place that is a city, which is a highly "swirled" realityof a city. Jane Jacobs points out: "To understand cities, we have to deal with outright combinations or mixtures of uses, not separate uses, as the essential phenomena" (1961: 144). This is not a disadvantage but a necessity if the city is to be live, though this "mixture of use, if it is to be sufficiently complex to sustain city safety, public contact and cross-use, needs an enormous diversity of ingredients. So the first question – and I think by far the most important question – about planning of the cities is: How can cities generate enough mixture among uses – enough diversity – throughout their territories, to sustain their own civilization?" (Jacobs 1961: 144).

Therefore, thinking about city and city communication should pay attention to two aspects:

- that city undertood as the place is "capable of subjective agency, but in connection with the fact that it interacts with various human entities and other elements of reality whose ontologies are mutually determined in this way" (2017: 301),
- that "[e]very city street has an underlying operating code. [...] The operating code is the underlying language that is given meaning when street design intersects with people" (Sadik-Khan, Solomonow 2016: 1).

Assuming after Alexander that "[i]t is essential, once you have learned to use the language, that you pay attention to the possibility of compressing many patterns together, in the smallest possible space" (Alexander 1977: xliv) – the necessity of the inclusion of a scooter sign is obvious. It is characteristic that Alexander (1977) wrote about the process of compressing in the city in the chapter entitled "The poetry of the language", pointing to the analogy with language and thus a way to communicate.

Moving around the city – moving as a communication

Cities

"support the ability of a city's people to be able to move around their city in any way and at any time they choose. A clear set of marked street names reflects a democratic openness. [...] This is not something that the autocrats who start some cities, and end up in control of others, are very enthusiastic about permitting. It makes them distrust cities in general, and streets in particular"

(Sudjic 2016: 69–70).

We are talking about a city that communicates and enables communication because: "A city needs a form of organization that allows its

citizens the maximum freedom to do whatever they want, without negatively impacting on others" (Sudjic 2016: 150). This is a prerequisite for the city to live.

In the system of a city there is almost a sign of equality between the process of moving and communication, because "[t]he actual meeting, merely being present, is furthermore the seed for other, more comprehensive forms of social activity. This connection is important in relation to physical planning" (2011: 13). Also: "Social activities occur spontaneously, as a direct consequence of people moving about and being in the same spaces" (Gehl 2011: 12), what happens at a relatively low speed because: "The organs of sense are for the most part designed to perceive and process the details and impressions that are received at walking and running speed, that is, 5 to 15 kilometers per hour (3 to 9 mph)" (Gehl 2011: 69). The choice of a sign for a scooter should mind this fact responding to Jan Gehl's claim to "strenghten the social function of city space as a meeting place that contributes toward the aims of social sustainability and an open and democratic society" (2010: 6). The sign is obviously a small element in the language of the city. Metaphorically, it can be compared to a punctuation mark, e.g. a comma. Following this lead, the lack of a comma impoverishes the language.

In Gehl's postulated city full of life, there are no simple and equal answers to emerging needs, but rather turn signals for values. "When the goal is to develop cities, when the human dimension and the meeting between people are prioritized, when you wish to invite people to walk and bike, it is essential to work carefully to encourage life in cities. It is important to remember that the answer is not to be found in simple, fixed principles about greater development of density and getting more people in buildings, but in working carefully on many fronts with city life as a process and the main attraction" (Gehl 2010: 59). The process of the design of a scooter sign should play part of such multifaceted action.

Retreat from car-centrism

We are witnessing a specific culture – a culture that manifests itself in the cult of the car, and the car industry has left an indelible mark on our cities.

"Cities today are designed for private vehicles not because it is the most efficient mode, but because most other transportation options were rendered impossible following planning decisions made decades ago. Instead of building new roads, urban planners need to start with building new transportation choices. If cities truly want a future where more people choose to take buses or trains, to bike or walk, then cities must invest in trains and buses, bikes and better streets"

(Sadik-Khan, Solomonow 2016: 64).

Justifications for the presence of a scooter in the city can be sought in claims that apply to bicycles or pedestrians. This is because, like them, the scooter is in opposition to the car and the culture associated with it. Observing the contemporary world these claims can be admitted to be effective, because "[p]articularly in recent decades, many urban areas around the world have worked hard to create better conditions for pedestrians and city life by making car traffic a lower priority [...] [because] as conditions conditions for bicyclists improve, a new bicycle culture is emerging. Children and seniors, business people and students, parents with young children, [...]. Bicycling in the city has become the way to get around. It is faster and cheaper than other transport options and also good for the environment and personal health" (Gehl 2010: 4-11). "Pedestrian and bicycle traffic use fewer resources and affect the environment less than any other form of transport. Users supply the energy, and this form of transport is cheap, near-silent and nonpolluting" (Gehl 2010: 105).

Then, if we want "[a] city whose streets invite people to walk, bike, and sit along them also inspires people to innovate, invest, and stay for good" (Sadik-Khan, Solomonow 2016: 3), we should "[b]uild a system of paths, marked clearly with a special, easily recognizable surface (for example, a red asphalt surface) running along local roads and major pedestrian paths. It should be "extra safe – entirely separate from automobiles, with lights and bridges at the crossings, with homes and shops along it, so that there are always many eyes on the path. [...] so that the children can roam freely on their bikes and trikes" (Alexander 1977: 295-296). I suggest accepting the claim that due to the previously mentioned ideas of combining functions, this system of paths should be also a place for scooters. A place where scooters have the right to. Then, by means of creation and implementation of the scooter sign the city can exhibit its bet on pedestrains, bicycles, and scooters, and communicate explicitly: we are turning back we are turning back from car-centrism.

The creation of a scooter sign would be a confirmation of the scooter's right to occupy some space in a city. It is, therefore, necessary to concretize this idea because "[n]avigating cities takes more than names and maps. They are shaped and given form by their streets and roads, by their landmarks as well as their topography" (Sudjic 2016: 74). They are shaped and re-shaped in the participatory process, because "[c]ollective efficacy and ordered complexity are two sides of the same coin. These twin forces are simple principles we can use to guide the creation and restoration of streets, buildings, and communities. They are tools to shape ourselves, our landscapes, and our future" (Bernheimer 2016: loc. 3476).

The collective design of a sign for a scooter may prove to be a form of revival in face of the fact concluded by Bernheimer that "[w]e are shaped by our homes, cities, and workspaces, but we have lost the agency we once had in shaping these spaces. Collectively, however, we hold the power to reshape our lives, society, and well-being through the ordered complexity of our small, collected actions" (Bernheimer 2016: loc. 3919). Bernheimer

emphasizes the collective and interactive dimensions of activity stating that "[t]o build a resilient future, we must take an active role in the shaping of our own environments – the shaping of us" (Bernheimer 2016: loc. 3947).

Design of the sign – communicate by using sign

It is characteristic that in the act of design, the dimension of the community is important, an attempt to capture the answer to the community's demand. Sudjic even calls a design a public service (2008: loc. 270) which is a kind of dialogue between the designer and those who will become familiar with the designed item in the future: The object should be intelligible, equipped with signals that communicate its purpose to a user who knows how to decode it, because unlike art, design has its roots in usefullness (Sudjic 2014: 2-11).

In his excellent book on design *The Language of Things* (2008), Sudjic made several important statements that can be read as justifications for designing a scooter sign in a living city:

"Design in all its manifestations is the DNA of an industrial society – or of a post-industrial society, if that's what we now have. It's the code that we need to explore if we are to stand a chance of understanding the nature of the modern world. It's a reflection of our economic systems. And it shows the imprint of the technology we have to work with. It's a kind of language, and it's a reflection of emotional and cultural values"

(loc. 457-461).

"Design is the language that a society uses to create objects that reflect its purposes and its values. It can be used in ways that are manipulative and cynical, or creative and purposeful. Design is the language that helps to define, or perhaps to signal, value"

(loc. 463–465).

"And it is design that can serve as the means for creating a sense of identity – civic, collective or personal"

(loc.474–475).

The collectively designed sign is a response to the communication challenges that residents of modern cities face, an element of a language. Ability to decode it is the key to understanding the man-made world (Sudjic 2008: loc. 486-488). The designed sign communicates, because "design

has become the language with which to shape those objects and to tailor the messages that they carry. The role of the most sophisticated designers today is as much to be storytellers, to make design that speaks in such a way as to convey these messages, as it is to resolve formal and functional problems" (Sudjic 2008: loc. 233-235). Like a storyteller, the sign will communicate not only the content it presents to the city's inhabitants but also, if it is the effect of collective design, the history of its creation.

The proposed procedure for selecting a scooter sign

The starting point is the assumption that traffic participants will want to get involved in the democratic scooter sign-making process, in which case there are several options. First, a full spectrum of behaviours serving this purpose is possible. Second, creation is possible at all stages of the procedure. It is possible, for example, to choose between two signs proposed in the virtual sphere or to make a decision by observing the numerous representation of signs in real conditions. I would like to propose the following two-step algorithm for sign extraction:

1. Selection of the sign extraction algorithm

It is difficult to indicate one possible algorithm for selecting a sign in a city. The criteria that should be taken into account are cost, efficiency and accessibility. Technical arrangement necessary for the process of engagement of respondents could perhaps use a smartphone application on which inhabitants can register their votes, or just require an urn standing in the main square. The choice of the algorithm for selecting the sing is important because we do not have any universal agreement regarding the issue of signing. We must first decide how we choose what weakens the authoritative factor if the citizens decide to choose the sign, why not let them decide on the way to choose the sign?

2. Choosing a sign

After choosing the algorithm, the choice of the sign itself should be proceeded. Certainly, this is not a simple process but care for transparency and respect for democratic principles will pay off in the future by providing a chance to internalize such a sign.

a. What values?

In the most general context, before a particular sign is chosen, attention should be paid to vernacularism, i.e. specificity and locality in both the linguistic and architectural dimensions. The combination of these two spheres creates a specific language of communication in the public sphere, characteristic in a particular city. This is a unique communication code understandable to residents.

The equivalent of this approach in the sphere of law is the concept of living law, which was mentioned earlier. Therefore, the identification of social representations about what values should have a sign in the public sphere in a particular city is a necessary element of the whole process. This is the initial stage in designing the sign.

b. What representations/objects?

Acquiring answers about the values expected by city residents will allow to formulate a preliminary sketch of the sign, determining what should be on it.

c. What exactly should the sign look like?

The final stage is the creation of a specific, designed sign chosen by the city's residents.

This is certainly a time-consuming process. However, if the rulers don't regulate it, a gap is created that ordinary people have the right to enter. So why not go this way? The adopted solution is an expression of faith in social justice: we use the streets, so we co-decide on their shape. In addition, technological progress is conducive to this. The possible selection process, thanks to electronic media, is convenient and cheap. The proposed algorithm is just a sketch. Each community should use it in its own individual way.

Conclusion

The scooter is primarily a means of transport, but it is also an expression of resistance against car traffic on city streets. The idea of legal pluralism implies a multitude of regulations, and thus ways to solve pressing social problems. According to the prevailing legal and political doctrines, we should watch and obey what the rulers establish, but on the other hand, ordinary citizens cannot be expected to renounce the possibility of establishing themselves in any sphere of their lives. The Holy Father Francis teaches in the apostolic exhortation Evangelii Gaudium: "234. An innate tension also exists between globalization and localization. We need to pay attention to the global so as to avoid narrowness and banality. Yet we also need to look to the local, which keeps our feet on the ground" (2013: 176).

Collective creation of a scooter sign could be treated as a lesson on the road to *politea* (derived from the word *polis* – "city-state"). "Aristotle's poleitai, the one in which power is assumed by all citizens with a view to the common good" (Wolff 2014*:* 801–802). It should be approached also as the execution of the right to the city, which David Harvey writes about, referring to the work of Henri Lefebvre from 1968:

"The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights"

(2012: 4).

Harvey, in an ontological dimension, emphasizes the radicalism of this philosophical approach:

"To claim the right to the city in the sense I mean it here is to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization, over the ways in which our cities are made and remade, and to do so in a fundamental and radical way"

(2012: 5).

To paraphrase Pascal's wager: we lose nothing if we believe in the idea of collective sign creation, but we can win a lot. We can strengthen civil society by empowering it.

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Spaces of Transfers and Visual Management of Human Mobility

Religious Images and Messages on Public Spaces of Kenya:

An analysis of some one hundred pictures taken in North Coast towns in 2018

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Abstract

The coastal region of Kenya is a convergence of many world religions in an otherwise Christian majority nation on account of the region's historic early exposure to world travelers and settlers. This article is based on an analysis of some one hundred pictures taken by a group of researchers in 2018 at public spaces of selected towns of Kenya's north coast, namely Mombasa, Mtwapa, Kilifi, Watamu, and Malindi. This analysis is aided by Harold D. Lasswell's insights into the politics of communication. The article investigates religious messages communicated in public urban spaces. It argues that religious images and messages are infused in almost all aspects of life, including advertisements for funeral services, traditional healers, car parking spaces, local *miraa* (drug), schools, and transport services such as *tuk tuk* (three-wheel vehicles), *matatu* (minibuses), and *boda boda* (motorbikes). Whereas local government legislation on religion has changed considerably over time, since the time of Arab occupation to British rule and thereafter to an independent state (1964), immigrant and evangelizing religions, specifically Islam and Christianity, have gained considerably compared to non-evangelizing religions such as Hindu and African Indigenous Religion[1]. An underlying competition for space is evident in posters such as "reserved

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1 Scholars of African Indigenous Religion such as John Mbiti, have argued for a unified religion as opposed to many religions in Africa, similarly they see Traditional as derogative/negative term. They prefer Indigenous. Therefore in this article I will maintain the use of the term African Indiginous Religion.

parking for Muslim Worshippers ONLY" despite a collegial effort by the religions to promote harmony and peaceful coexistence. Government orders, such as that of pulling down *mganga* (traditional healers) adverts on public roads in 2017, create a hierarchy of preferred religions by the state in contrast to a fast-growing appetite for Africa Indigenous Religions in the region. By and large, public space is highly religiously contested with conflicting interests between the visiting tourist, the local worshipper, and government agency.

Introduction

Although the current Kenyan constitution guarantees freedom of worship and equality of all faiths, as is the case in many other African states (Concha-Holmes 2012), the opposite has manifested more often than not (Hackett 2011). As Rosalind Hackett explains, "while the right to hold a particular belief is generally considered to be absolute, outward manifestations of religion may be subject to legitimate restrictions" (2011: 23). State-imposed restraints on the right to practice one's religion is rife with problems and ambiguities, especially as they relate to the protection of public safety, order, health, morals, and the fundamental rights and freedom of others (Gunn 2003). Recent efforts by the Kenyan government to regulate religious practice in order to protect citizens from fraudulent manipulations have not only failed but face unprecedented resistance from religious leaders (Sang 2019). The fast-changing religious scene in the country is witnessing a replacement of mainstream colonial and post-colonial religious organizations with newer religious formations dominated by revivalist Afro-Christian groups. However, the legislative structures, including the government and private bodies that control religious practice, treat these new militant and competitive religious forms with suspicion, preferring more established religious traditions. The situation is not different in Europe where the relatively liberal approach taken by the European court and commission of human rights is undermined at the manifestation stage by "nontraditional forms of practice receive little protection from the court or commission because the latter uses tests to determine what is necessary to a religion that favor the dominant culture" (Evans 2001). Therefore, as pointed out by James Richardson in his 2004 book *Regulating Religion: Case Studies from Around the Globe*, "regulation and recognition of religion and religious practices remain factors central to the challenging pattern of coexistence both between religions and between religion and the state". In Kenya, both regulation and the recognition of religion and religious practices have become catalysts for religious competition in the public space.

In the coastal region of Kenya, there is a convergence of many world religions in an otherwise Christian majority nation on account of the region's historic early exposure to world travelers and settlers. Whereas local government legislation on religion has changed considerably over

time, since the time of Arab occupation to British rule and thereafter to an independent state (1964), immigrant and evangelizing religions, specifically Islam and Christianity, have gained considerably compared to non-evangelizing religions such as Hindu and African indigenous religion.[2] The present article investigates religious messages communicated in public urban spaces. It is based on an analysis of some one hundred pictures taken by a group of researchers in 2018 of public spaces in selected towns on Kenya's north coast, namely: Mombasa, Mtwapa, Kilifi, Watamu, and Malindi. This analysis is aided by Harold Dwight Lasswell's insights into the politics of communication (Lasswell 1956). Lasswell, an American political scientist (February 13, 1902 – December 18, 1978) stated that a convenient way to describe an act of communication is to answer the following questions: who, says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect. What has come to be referred to as the Lasswell model has borrowed from functionalism to impact the process of communication and its function in society. Matthew R. Auer summarized Laswell's ideas well.

> "Lasswell (1948a: 39–40; 42–43) distinguished among several sets of actors in generic communication processes, including: (1) participants who detect trends and collect information in the larger world or environment ("surveyors"); (2) "controllers" or manipulators of message content (and to a lesser extent, "handlers" who relay (frequently, in unaltered form) communications to or from controllers); and (3) audiences or targets. To animate these categories of participants, Lasswell used world political affairs as a back drop. Hence, the first group of participants in communication processes – detectors of trends and conditions in the field – included diplomats, attaches, and foreign correspondents (1948a: 40); whereas the second group – the controllers and handlers – were constituted by news editors or censors who distilled or otherwise shaped field communications before transmitting."

> (Auer 2010: 42.)

A valuable contribution by Lasswell in the analysis of public messages, which is key in this discussion, is the attention to the larger political context. Therefore, each public message relates to the surveillance, entails a correlation of components of society, and is culturally transmitted between generations.

Whereas the one hundred pictures did not necessarily focus on religion, it is striking that "religious messages" became a popular theme

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2 The use of the term 'African Traditional Religion' as well as the plural of term in plural as 'African Traditional Religions' have been contested among scholars. See Mbiti, J. S. (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger.

in the findings of the European Union-funded research project entitled Technologies of Imaging in Communication, Arts and Social Sciences (TICASS).[3] The present article, therefore, subjects these pictures to Lasswell's model to establish how religious messages are represented in public spaces along the coastal region of Kenya. It argues that whereas religious images and messages are infused in almost all aspects of life, including advertisements for funeral services, traditional healers, car parking spaces, local *miraa* (drug), schools, and transport services such as *tuk tuk* (three-wheel vehicles), *matatu* (minibuses), and *boda boda* (motorbikes), there is an underlying competition for space and recognition between religions and religious practices with a clear hierarchy of preferred religions by the state. In other words, a socio-political reading of the images unveils, as Laswell would have it, underlying religiously motivated propaganda in public communication through visuality.

Government policy on religion(s) in Mwambao (Kenya's coast region) since pre-colonial times

In the early 1590s, the Portuguese made Mombasa a base from which to control the East African coastal trade, which covered the capital Zanzibar and the coastal strip of Kenya and Tanzania. In Kenya, apart from Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu, the trade hegemony also covered parts of the Sabaki north bank, Chonyi, Kauma, and the Bajun area south of Kiunga (McConkey & McErlean 2007). Apart from a brief period between 1631 and 1632, the Portuguese dominated affairs in this region until they were expelled by the Omanis in 1698. During this time, the Portuguese introduced Catholic Christianity to the region, with converts counting to six hundred. However, by the time Ludwig Krapf, a missionary sent by the Church Missionary Society of Britain, set foot in the same region in 1844, there was hardly any evidence of surviving Christians except for a few historic monuments such as the Fort Jesus in Mombasa and Vasco da Gama Pillar in Malindi (Krapf 2013). While they made a significant socio-cultural mark with their new religion in a community dominated by Islam and African indigenous religions, the Portuguese reign was essentially more trade-oriented and less evangelistic. They imposed hardly any Christianity on their subjects.

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3   Technologies of Imaging in Communication, Art, and Social Sciences (TICASS) is a European Union-funded project (Grant agreement ID: 734602) under the MSCA-RISE – Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE). It brings together five academic institutions in Europe and Africa. The institutions are: Akademia Sztuki-AASZ (Poland), University of Macerata-UNIMC (Italy), Polish University Abroad-PU-NO (UK), Stowarzyszenie "Edukacja, Nauka, Kultura" Association for Education, Science and Culture-SENK (Poland), (Jan Evangelista University in Usti nad Labem- UJEP (Czech Republic), and Pwani University-PU (Kenya). See https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/207631_en.hfml/factsheet/en

Between 1698 and 1894, "the Kenyan Coast was under the rule of a political model inspired by Islam [...] a form of an Islamic sultanate" indirectly linked to the Oman dynasty (Ndzovu 2014). Its capital oscillated between Mombasa and Zanzibar, with a domain including what is today part of Kenya and the Tanzanian coast and islands. Hassan Ndzovu has rightly argued that this religion enjoyed a monopoly during this period; it was the preferred religion of the government of the day. He wrote

> "Until 1895, if an individual was to participate in the political affairs of the dominion such as holding an administrative office, one had to be a Muslim. This was because all the upper ranks in the sultan's administration were held by Omani Arabs who were by religious affiliation Muslims. The non-Muslims in the sultanate were free to practice their religion without interference, in return for recognizing and obeying the political authority of the sultan. It was not possible for non-Muslims to have the opportunity to rule the dominion because they were not members of the dominion's political community. It is evident that during this era religion gave legitimacy to the polity. The religion of the political elites of the sultanate was Ibadi (a subsect of Kharijite) Islam, and accordingly, the political leadership was reserved for Arab Muslims, especially of the Ibadi affiliation. This religious affiliation assisted in distinguishing the Omanis as a distinct class and caste in the Al-Busaid dominion of Zanzibar."

(Ndzovu 2014: 12.)

The Arabs, who were by far a minority, considered themselves the only entitled political class and race. This meant that only Arab Muslims were appointed in various parts of the dominion to represent the sultan as either Kadhi, or Liwali, or Mudi. The African majority, whether Muslim or otherwise, were not welcome in the political community. Islam was the state religion, with a firm grip on Sharia law. By the end of the 19th century, Sultan Barghash bin Said (1870– 1888), during the scramble for Africa in which European countries were dividing Africa, managed to seek protection from the British, "which recognized Zanzibar as a protected Arab state" (McConkey & McErlean 2007). Ndzovu rightly observes that this laid the foundation for future relations between the Kenyan state and Mwambao, the "historical coastal strip that was part of the Zanzibar sultanate – 2,116 square miles that extended from Kipini in the north to Vanga in the south, and stretching inland from the coast for ten nautical miles" (2014).

Following the collapse of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) in 1895, which in May 1887 had secured a concession by Sultan Barghash of Zanzibar to oversee the sultan dominion in the mainland for fifty years, the British government took over through a new treaty that was

signed in Mombasa, Lamu, and Kismayu in July 1895 (Cruise O'Brien 1995). What this meant was that the dominion was granted British protectorate status, ushering in British rule. It meant that the sultan no longer had any administrative authority over the region and that all his subjects would become employees of the British. More importantly, however, Islam was no longer technically the state religion, although the British continued to favour it under its indirect rule policy. The Muslim Arabs had to compete for political appointment with an array of many other ethnic communities in the region. As Ndzovu has shown, this transition was not immediate.

> "The British government [...] recognized the sultan's autonomy over the *mwambao*. This saw the colonial administration that governed the area as a protectorate being sympathetic to the religious and cultural heritage of the Muslims in the region. The Arabs and the colonial administration maintained a working relationship throughout the period of British rule over the Kenyan coast, incorporating the Liwalis (governor), Mudirs (lieutenant), and Kadhis (court judge) into the nascent colonial administration. Initially, Muslims – especially Arabs – were appointed as colonial administrative officials to assist the British officers, but their number dwindled over time. "

(Ndzovu 2014:13.)

Therefore, for the entire period under the rule of the British – that is, between 1895, the time of the Sultan's treaty, and 1963, when the Kenyan state became independent – the colonial government needed to ensure Islam autonomy over the region for easy governance on the one hand, and on the other hand was lenient to its native missionaries, who penetrated the interior after setting up a base in the *mwambao*.

As a minority race in the region, Arabs struggled to maintain their privileged political position. Meanwhile, African communities such as the Mijikenda allied with mainland communities to agitate for an independent state. The desperation of the Arabs worsened as it became clear that the Coast (*Mwambao*) would be part of the Kenya state and they would be under the rule of *washenzi*[4] (stupid), of which a good number had converted to Christianity (Cruise O'Brien 1995). The position of Arabs in *Mwambao*

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4   To justify the exclusion of the indigenous coastal Africans from the dominion leadership, the Arab elite regarded Africans as wajinga or washenzi (uncivilized), denoting ignoramuses. This rejection of the native Africans from the political community elucidates why, with the advent of nationalism, African Muslims supported the agenda for a united Kenya. See Ndzovu, H. J. (2014). *Muslims in Kenyan Politics: Political Involvement, Marginalization, and Minority Status.* Northwestern University Press.

is parallel to apartheid where Boers in South Africa used religion, this time Christianity, to legitimate their racialized political opportunity and lordship over majority races, even those of the same faith. However, Mwambao differs from its South Africa counterpart in that it is a region that has seen at least three distinct colonialization periods, each with a preferred religion: the Portuguese with Catholicism (1590–1697), Oman Arabs with Islam (1698 and 1894), and the British with Protestantism (1895–1963).

In very broad terms, therefore, we can speak of Christianity and Islam as the two dominant religious traditions in *Mwambao*, "with local forms of indigenous religious belief and practice still prevailing in some areas either as a bedrock or (less frequently) as an independent option" (Hackett 2011). As in the rest of Africa, except for North Africa, Kenya's Coast Region is renowned for its proliferation of new religious movements, both local and imported. Some of the extensive scholarship in this area has documented the contested relationship of several of these movements to the state and to each other (De Gruchy & Martin, n.d.).

The independent state wanted to galvanize ethnic communities into a united Kenya and therefore downplayed the religion factor. The constitution did not regard Kenya as secular but provided for Muslims to have Kadhi courts, a highly contested provision by the Kenyan Church during the 2010 constitution review (Ndzovu 2013). Muslims regard themselves as a minority and have remained vocal, casting doubts even on government census (Cruise O'Brien 1995). Whereas religions in *Mwambao* generally tolerated each other afterwards, thanks to efforts of bodies such as the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics (CICC), certain events have strained relations and created undue competition. These include Islamist Al-Shabaab extremist attacks on churches as a punitive act on a Kenyan Christian government in 2012 (Botha 2014) as well as the separatist ideologies of the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) in 2013.

Religions' contestation for public space and perception in Mwambao

The one hundred pictures were organized into five thematic categories – *public transport* means such as buses and matatus, *public places* such as worship centres and beaches, *transport points* such as railway stations and airports, *streets*, and *public parks*. A close investigation of each of the photos indicated that out of the one hundred pictures, fourteen had a religious message. These comprised a wide range of people's social life, including the names of streets, advertisements for animal products and supermarkets, sign posts on roads, and paintings on roadside walls. This further affirms the late John Mbiti's early claim that "Africans are notoriously religious" (Platvoet & van Rinsum 2003) (Mbiti 1969).

Religions' competition in public space

That Islam has been politicized in *Mwambao*, and to a large extent in the entire country, is a fact that has been debated widely (Ndzovu 2014). Hassan Mwakimako and others have even argued that Christianity has enjoyed favours by Kenyan governments to the exacerbation of Muslim political marginalization (Deacon, Gona, Mwakimako & Willis 2017), a view that has been sharply refuted by Ndzovu (2014). Nevertheless, the negative perception of marginalized Islamic zones in a country that has a Christian government has been popularized by Arab politicians for their own political gain since the onset of the independent state. A subtle competition for space and recognition between these religions in the region is evident in the pictures. A good example is the inscription in picture 1: "RESERVED PARKING FOR MUSLIM WORSHIPERS ONLY", found right outside a mosque gate in Kilifi. It shows the exclusion of non-Muslim members of the community from a presumably public parking space. The word "ONLY" in the inscription is written in red (instead of black, like all the other words in the inscription) to emphasize the prohibition. One may wonder whether this is a pragmatic solution for the shortage of parking spaces or simply an exclusion of others from sharing a "holy space".

Il. 1. Karolina Zawiślak, Aleksandra Łukaszewicz Alcaraz: *Reserved parking for Muslim worshipers only*
Category: Publica spaces (facilities). Type: Places of worship
2/2-1 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 330).

Il. 2 Rosita Deluigi: *Street Mngaga*
Category: Parrks, streets/ roads, square. Type: Mganga
advertisement
2/1-8 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 279).

Similarly, adherents of the African Indiginous Religion, commonly referred to as traditional healers, use advertisements that promise unparalleled wellness. These doctors claim to have solutions for all problems. Unlike herbalists who use herbs and extracts from trees for treatment, these healers claim to use special supernatural powers to solve people's problems. Advertisements showing traditional healers holding a calabash and sitting on a traditional three-legged stool (Il. 2), depicting a mood of divination in readiness to spread bones and cast a spell, are far too common in Mwambao. These are usually accompanied by the name of the doctor, telephone contacts, and a list of the treatable issues, such as court cases, lovers' affairs, casting evil spirits diseases. However, on 26 February 2014, the Mombasa County government pulled down the posters advertising services offered by traditional healers and arrested a few of them (Daily Nation 2014). The government claimed that they had not paid taxes

for the roadside adverts. However, the comments of the Mombasa County Commissioner, Mr Nelson Marwa, when he was speaking on the Mashujaa Day celebrations in October 2015, indicated otherwise. He ordered the arrest of all witch doctors operating in the county and the removal of the posters, saying that they portrayed a bad image of the county and had a negative effect on tourism. "The posters are an eyesore and not good for tourism or for children," said Marwa (Benyawa 2015).

This move was in contrast to the increasing appetite for the religion from tourists and locals. On 10 October 2018, Tonny Onyulo reported in the Religion News Service (RNS) that "more than 3,000 witch doctors work in the Kenyan coastal region, tourists normally come to Mombasa to watch dolphins from traditional dhows, deep-sea fish, snorkel around wrecks and lounge on sun-splashed beaches but also to seek the counsel of witch doctors to treat chronic diseases, exorcise evil spirits, end runs of bad luck, solve marriage problems and ensure success in business" (Onyulo 2018). Tsuma Nzai, the director of the Association of Mijikenda Cultural Groups, a tribal organization in the coastal region, observed that "these witch doctors are very important in our societies because they existed before even doctors and modern medicines came to existence, even the pastors who criticize witchcraft seek them out to perform miracles in their churches, they cannot do without us" (Onyulo 2018).

Therefore, whereas government embarrassment about the publicity of African Indiginous Religion compared to other religions is clear, the indigenous religion is adaptive to modern publicity techniques. African healers never advertised themselves in this way during pre-colonial times. In fact, the religion was essentially non-evangelistic. Embedded in the African people's way of life, and now being sold abroad as a tourist attraction, the religion will not be easily washed away by legislative pronouncements. It competes for public attention in the region, as does Islam and Christianity.

Christianity in the region is overly conscious of its longtime rival and competitor to the extent that any thuggery against its endeavors is blamed on Islam. This is most especially depicted in religious heritage cites or spaces, considering that the coast region was already Muslim-dominated when it became the entry path of Christianity preceding its major expansions in the interior. The heritage cites of the region, which date as early as 14th century AD and include Fort Jesus in Mombasa, Missionary Ludwig Krapf's wife's and son's graves in Nyali, the Vasco da Gama pillar of Malindi, and old town ruins of Mtwana, have become spaces of contestation between African Indigenous Religion, Islam, and Christianity. This manifests in the telling and retelling of the narratives as well as access to the cites. A good example is Fort Jesus, built by the Portuguese government in the 16th century and later controlled by Oman Muslims (Sarmento 2010). The bell-empty statute (Il. 3)

in Kengeleni[5] is a loud visual message of the community's painful memory of Muslim Arab merchants' slave ships and the deliverance of Christian European missionaries under the British flag. Islam narratives exonerate the religion from the evil of slavery whereas missionary records paint a picture of lazy Muslim Arabs and their torturous enslaving of Africans up until the late 19th century (Krapf 2013). These conflicting narratives permeate the way cultural heritage, land acquisition, and political history are told in the coast region.

Il. 3 Giuseppe Capriotti, Rosita Deluigi: *Bell Tower*
Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: A bell tower
2/1-12 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 296).

5 *Kengeleni* is a Swahili word for "place of the bell". The bell in the bell arch used to sound warnings when Arab slave ships were seen approaching Mombasa Island. After the abolition of the slavery, the meaning of the bell arch has changed and it's now a national monument to the horror of slavery. However, the bell itself was stolen. Picture 4

Il. 4 Stephen Muoki Joshua: *Missionary Ludwig Krapf Memorial*, 2018.

Il. 5 Stephen Muoki Joshua: *Missionary Ludwig Krapf Memorial*, 2018.

Il. 6 Stephen Muoki Joshua: *Fort Jesus*, Mombasa, 2018.

Spaces of Transfers and Visual Management of Human Mobility

The faith-business sector

The use of religious branding as a business strategy to capitalize on a certain calibre of customers was also an undeniable key feature in the pictures. The word 'halal' in Islam is used to mean that which is religiously acceptable or right. Consequently, it was used in reference to 'halal supermarket' and 'halal foods' to assure the faithful Muslim that the content was religiously 'clean' to buy and use. Similarly, a tuk tuk vehicle had the word 'mashaalah' printed on its front in order to target travelers of Muslim faith. The Shalom Academy in Mtwapa is a Christian school that has carefully used the name and publicized it on its logo and gates to attract Christians, assuring them that the ethics and teachings of the religion are upheld. The same applies for the Khairat Hospital in Mombasa; patients who identify with the hospital are easily reminded of the Hindu faith in the words imprinted on the gate, "And when I sicken He heals me".

Il. 7. Agnieszka Szajner: *Mashaallah Tuk Tuk*
Category: Public transport. Type: Tuk Tuk
2/3-16 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 430).

Il. 8 Rosita Deluigi: *Halal Supermarket*
Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: Muslim shops
2/1-19 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 325).

Il. 9. Ales Loziak: *Shalom Academy*
Category: Public spaces (facilities). Type: Logos and signs. – identification of buildings
2/2-4 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 339).

Il. 10 Karolina Zawiślak, Adela Machova: *Khairat Medical Centre*
Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares.
Type: Logos and signs. – identification of buildings (hospital)
2/2-5 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 342).

Religious Propaganda

Religious messages in *Mwambao* towns are carefully crafted to make exclusive claims, elicit a certain emotional attachment, and perpetuate propaganda. A good example is the re-naming of the Sir Mbarak al Hinawy Road from Vasco da Gama Road. Sheikh Hinawy was one of the most prominent Omani Arabs living at the coast during the first half of the 20th century. From 1937 to 1941, he was the liwali (governor) of Mombasa, and from then until 1959, he was the liwali of the Coast of Kenya. The renaming of the streets replaced a Christian Portuguese representative with a Muslim one. Such examples can be multiplied.

Exclusive statements written strategically, such as "There is no god except Allah" (Il. 13) as well as the destruction of the word "miracle" in a church advert, "Maximum Miracle Center" (Il. 14) are indicators of religions pushing and shoving – an ideological competition and a clamour for physical space and association.

Il. 10 Karolina Zawiślak, Adela Machova: *Khairat Medical Centre*
Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares.
Type: Logos and signs. – identification of buildings (hospital)
2/2-5 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 342).

Il. 12 Ales Loziak: *Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)*
Category: Public spaces (facilities). Type: Places of worship
2/2-3 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 336).

Il. 13. Karolina Zawiślak, Aleksandra Łukaszewicz Alcaraz: *Reserved parking for Muslim worshipers only*
Category: Publica spaces (facilities). Type: Places of worship
2/2-1a Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 331).

Il. 14 Ales Loziak: *Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)*
Category: Public spaces (facilities). Type: Places of worship
2/2-2 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 333).

Il. 15 Rosita Deluigi, Giuseppe Capriotti: *Usafi by Muslims*
Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: Old City tour – street
2/1-15 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 306).

Il. 16 Rosita Deluigi: Old Town Graffiti
Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: Old City of Mombasa – street
2/1-16 & 2/1-16b Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 311 & p. 312).

Il. 17 Rosita Deluigi: Old Town Graffiti
Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: Old City of Mombasa – street
2/1-16 & 2/1-16b Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
(Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 311 & p. 312).

The same could be said of the advertisement for the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Watamu (picture 12). Apart from the logo, there are words, "PCEA WATAMU" on the top of the board, and a bold red arrow pointing left, next to the words: SERVICE 10:30AM –12:30PM.

Religious propaganda is more evident in the graffiti in Old Mombasa town. Pictures 15, 16, and 17 indicate an association of Muslims with the cleanliness of the town as rendered by the Swahili words "Usafi Tafadhali (cleanliness please)". The authors of the graffiti claim to be Muslim and make propaganda statements that would resonate well with the Islamic agenda in *Mwambao*, such as "Dear Muslims, Allah said no fear … to hell with the genociders".

Words in the graffiti:

- "We always accept the rejected wives"
- "Nanini" (Swahili) – "At any time" (probably an author)
- "We blind Fuckn Haters"
- "I love you all"
- "Dear Muslims, Allah said no fear"
- "Dark Souls"
- "$ to hell with the genociders"
- "Ontory" (not identified – maybe the author)
- "Peace in Mombasa"
- "Why wast out time in this word of competition while the word is ----?" (Nanini 2010).

Conclusion

The multifaith context of *Mwambao* is unique in many ways. It is home to East Africa's religious heritage, experienced an early exposure to many faiths on account of its location, and has a politicized religiosity given its triad religio-colonialism (Muslim Arabs, Catholic Portuguese, and Protestant British). Although the citizens have learned to live with neighbours of different faiths, except in cases of external radicalization such as that witnessed during the *Kaya Bombo* political uprisings in 1998, al shabaab insurgence since 2012, and the separatist claims of Mombasa republicans (2002), there exists a steady competition between the religions that is usually unregulated by governments and exploited by the business class. A Lasswell analysis of the visual messages placed in public spaces indicates that ordinary life moments are inseparable from religious practices and ideologies.

Whereas some religions, such as Christianity and Islam, are more evangelistic than the African Indigenous religion and Hindu, all religions in *Mwambao* have learned to reinvent themselves in the changing socio-economic and political context in order to make themselves more visible. The footprints of religion(s) in the towns are unmistakably visible to visitors and locals alike. The government's legislation efforts are evidently frustrated as more charismatic and creative religious expressions are introduced. Indeed, politics and the socio-economic and technological advancement of the region are quite intertwined with religious content.

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List of illustrations

- Il. 1. Karolina Zawiślak, Aleksandra Łukaszewicz
  Alcaraz: Reserved parking for Muslim worshipers only
  Category: Publica spaces (facilities). Type: Places of worship
  2/2-1 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 330).

- Il. 2 Rosita Deluigi: Street Mngaga
  Category: Parrks, streets/ roads, square. Type: Mganga advertisement
  2/1-8 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 279).

- Il. 3 Giuseppe Capriotti, Rosita Deluigi: Bell Tower
  Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: A bell tower
  2/1-12 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 296).

- Il. 4 & il. 5 Stephen Muoki Joshua: Missionary Ludwig Krapf Memorial,
  2018.

- Il. 6 Stephen Muoki Joshua: Fort Jesus, Mombasa, 2018.

- Il. 7. Agnieszka Szajner: Mashaallah Tuk Tuk
  Category: Public transport. Type: Tuk Tuk
  2/3-16 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 430).

- Il. 8 Rosita Deluigi: Halal Supermarket
  Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: Muslim shops
  2/1-19 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 325).

- Il. 9. Ales Loziak: Shalom Academy
  Category: Public spaces (facilities). Type:Logos and signs. –
  identification of buildings
  2/2-4 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 339).

- Il. 10 Karolina Zawiślak, Adela Machova: Khairat Medical
  Centre Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type:
  Logos and signs. – identification of buildings (hospital)
  2/2-5 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 342).

- Il. 11 Rosita Deluigi, Maria Czerepianiak-Walczak,
  Stephen Muoki, Ales Loziak: Hitimy Talyani Road label
  Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: Streets' labels,
  numbers
  2/1-10 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 287).

- Il. 12 Ales Loziak: Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)
  Category: Public spaces (facilities). Type: Places of worship
  2/2-3 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 336).

- Il. 13. Karolina Zawiślak, Aleksandra Łukaszewicz
  Alcaraz: Reserved parking for Muslim worshipers only
  Category: Publica spaces (facilities). Type: Places of worship
  2/2-1a Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 331).

- Il. 14 Ales Loziak: Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)
  Category: Public spaces (facilities). Type: Places of worship
  2/2-2 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 333).

- Il. 15 Rosita Deluigi, Giuseppe Capriotti: Usafi by Muslims
  Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: Old City tour – street
  2/1-15 Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D. Lasswell
  (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 306).

- Il. 16 & il. 17 Rosita Deluigi: Old Town Graffiti
  Category: Parks, streets/ roads, squares. Type: Old City of Mombasa –
  street
  2/1-16 & 2/1-16b Visual Document Analysis Card according to H. D.
  Lasswell (Perzycka, Łukaszewicz Alcaraz 2019, p. 311 & p. 312).

Keywords

An Analysis of Advertisements of African Healers in Coastal Kenya Town Streets and Along Major Roads

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Abstract

African religion is commonly known to play a key role in addressing the crucial issues of health and well-being of individuals and society in general. Before the introduction of mobile phones in Kenya, traditional healers were mainly known for their famous healing powers or divination. This study analyses the effectiveness of traditional healers (*waganga wa kienyeji*) adverts that are placed along the main roads of major cities and town streets in Coastal Kenya. The wordings of the advertisements are not restricted to diseases but also mention holistic healing, employment *kazi*, love *mapenzi*, promotion *cheo*, prosperity in business *biashara*, court cases *kesi*, and impotency *nguvu za kiume*. Some of the billboards contain symbols of traditional pots, the moon, stars, and snakes. Pictures of the billboards containing the advertisements were taken along the Mombasa Malindi road in different areas – Nyali, Shanzu, Mtwapa, Kikambala, and Kilifi – in 2018 and 2019. The study used interviews and focus group discussions to determine the effectiveness of the adverts for society and traditional healers. As crucial health issues in Coastal Kenya seem to bypass modern forms of treatment, the visual language used by traditional healers along streets and main road may provide easy communication for those who require traditional health services.

Introduction

The use of visual language to display or communicate information about traditional health services to the public in Africa is a recent phenomenon. In the countryside of Malawi, as discussed by Chavunduka (1999), Kaya Mudzi-musha at Rabai, Kaya Fungo, and members of Malindi District Cultural association in Kenya as mentioned by Baya Mitsanze (2018), individuals who suffer health problems are first offered a spiritual diagnosis by diviners before being taken for treatment by experienced traditional health specialists. In most cases, diviners use objects such as a winnower, mirrors, and rattles to call upon spirits to reveal the health problem, its causes, and how the problem could be treated. Wande Abimbola (1997), an African religious specialist and a professor from Nigeria, explains the same process happens in Nigerian communities. The new trend of putting traditional health services advertisements on billboards in major cities and along major roads or town streets has created a new research platform for health and social scientists.

African perception of health and well-being

Health and well-being in African society is an all-round life situation that covers not only the diseases that affect the body but also the human being as a whole and that which is within the community, including domesticated animals, plants, and forests. African Indigenous Religions is commonly known to play a key role in engaging Africans to live in harmony among themselves, spirits, and nature. A healthy African community is that which is at peace and free from afflictions, such us poverty, drug abuse, child abuse, gender-based violence, and climate change, that later bring disaster. Health and well-being is therefore closely linked to faith and practice. Fiagbenu describes Africans as a people who can address health issues in unity by observing appropriate religious rituals and ceremonies in the indigenous thoughts, language, and philosophy with which they are fully familiar.

Fiagbenu (1996) views Africans as a people who take the obligation of protecting and improving health and well-being through corporate action within the framework of their religion. This concept of community involvement in activities that promote health and well-being for individuals and community is also discussed by Mbiti (1990), Busia (1962), Parrinder (1949), and Sarpong (1993). African Indigenous Religions have a health specialist role as they ensure protection from harmful spirits, foster happiness and peace, and neutralize both physical and psychological "evil" forces. Essentially, as a religion, AIR not only obliges individuals to participate in health promotion but also brings cohesion so that people can address health issues with a common voice. Mbiti (1986) and Musa Dube (2006) use a common African

philosophy, "I thou or I am because we are and since we are therefore I am" to emphasize the value of community life in Africa as an element in the health and well-being of society. Sindima (1995) and Mbiti and Parkin (1991), for example, mention how Africans conscientiously participate in ritual health activities for both humans and non-humans. Community involvement in health rituals that are usually conducted by religious specialists essentially promote the health and well-being of society.

Dube (2006) maintains that the African perception on health and well-being does not simply focus on sickness and the prevention of diseases but also justice, peace, and wealth within the community. She endorses Mmualefe's (2004) phrase: "Without others, one cannot be", a concept similar to that of Fiagbenu. In her arguments, she goes beyond the health of the body, spirit, and mind, acknowledging that health transcends to become a public factor affecting society's economic, political, and social matters. Ill-health, according to Dube, is often due to the oppression of the factors stated above, resulting in poverty, unequal exchanges, marginalization, and social exclusion. This notion is also supported by Sarpong (1975).

Dube's view on the African religion involvement in health is that it is a means of liberation, a divine tool to combat all oppression and all that attacks people's health and well-being. It can empower communities by helping them solve minor, as well as critical, health issues for both the community and individuals: disease, childlessness, death, and poverty, as well as political oppression, corruption, insecurity, and social injustice, all of which are the great enemies of society. In the book *My Faith as an African* (1988) by Ēla, there is a chapter entitled "The Health of Those Without Dignity", which discusses health and well-being as being the freedom of communities culturally, politically, socially, and economically. Ēlas' view of African Indigenous Religions faith is that it has been working from the ground level in communities. He maintains that the community needs to understand faith as a force touching the totality of the people and all the problems they encounter.

> "When faith seeks to understand itself … to verify itself and to account for itself, it must begin with the people's struggle to escape from the hellish circle in which they risk being permanently imprisoned. We must look at faith, then, at the ground level and clarify the paths faith can take in the structures of daily life."
>
> (1988: 67).

Ēla's concern is on the way African traditional services were interfered with by colonial and missionary domination, reducing their health and well-being activities in society. The imposition of the African witchcraft act in 1924 and the way missionaries pushed Africans to denounce the existing traditional health services affected African well-being.

Appiah-Kubi's (1981) view about health and well-being in the African perspective is essentially grounded in having a sound relationship within oneself, with the other, and with the deity. His view is that to cause any breach in a relationship that harmoniously exists (or should exist) is to create alienation within an individual and their relationship with the other and the deity. The justification for this idea is that ill health can be the result of damaged relationships. Ill-health can be the result of not relating well with ancestors, lesser spirits, and those who matter such as parents, grandparents, children, neighbours, and God rather than just being a result of social, political, economic, and religious oppression. This argument is also supported by Dube, who asserts that

> "Unhealthy relationships, in other words, are held to be an integral part of one's ill-health … Physical healing of the body is thus accompanied by the healing of relationships. Consequently, healing is regarded as healing of relationships. Health is therefore closely tied to healthy relationships and ill-health is closely tied to unhealthy relationships".
>
> (Phiri, Nadar 2006: 143).

Using the Asante model, Sarpong (1989), like Appiah-Kubi, suggests that health and well-being in the African context seems to cover every aspect of life. Sarpong asserts that

> "Broken relationships may result in sickness, or even death of an individual. Natural misfortunes such as droughts, epidemics, or locust raids may also be attributed to broken relationships, and only when good relations are restored do things return to normal."
>
> (Sarpong 1993: 275).

Appiah-Kubi's view on ill-health as frequently offended relationships reveals how all humans have self-hatred, a dislike of others, and the capacity to create enmity and cause unhealthy situations. This leads to witchcraft, violence, and terrorism. Appiah-Kubi views African religion as a divine reconciliatory agent for restoring unhealthy relationships.

> "Everywhere and at all times, religion has taken healing as one of its principal objectives. Religion is described as the healing of alienation between man and his creator, the world and his fellow man."
>
> (Appiah-Kubi 1981: 125).

On the other hand, Roy discusses the diversity of the meanings of health extensively. He defines health as having sufficient food, a safe and clean water supply, proper drainage, self-reliance, and the ability to fight poverty and illiteracy. "Health is a condition of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (1978, p. 10).

Roy's experience in Africa helped him understand why Africans, when in a health crisis, prefer to go to traditional healers first and modern medical treatment later. In his medical experience in Africa, he discovered that nearly every patient, except for the most consistent Christians, used traditional healing remedies in times of sickness. Roy admits that he understood little about African perceptions on health, disease, and healing. On a daily basis, as a normal procedure, Christianity was explained to patients and prayers held before medical services started. Nevertheless, Roy noted that the western scientific medical approach did not fit in adequately with the comprehensive African view of health and well-being. Roy's views, like those of Granberg and Wilson, reveal that health is wholeness, and that Africans, as exemplified by Fiagbenu, Dube, Mbiti, and Ēla, live it the same way. Appiah-Kubi shows how Christianity failed to understand the African concept of health.

> "It could be argued that the church, through her various mission hospitals, has achieved a great deal in alleviating the physical sickness of the African Christian. But unfortunately this was done without any consideration of the people's own conception of the world in which they live and of the forces operating in it, a conception which undoubtedly influences or determines their understanding of health and disease."

(Appiah-Kubi cited in Roy 1978: 3).

History of traditional health specialists adverts

Africans value their religion and the religious specialists who are experts in specific fields of health and well-being. As has been explained, Africans face life-threatening situations that are caused by different circumstances. These threats need spiritual/religious attention and redress. Information gained from focus group discussions and interviews indicates that, in most cases, rural communities do not need adverts to tell them where to find experts who can attend to their health and well-being needs. Such experts are known for the competent services they offer, long experience, diverse skills, and knowledge of health problems. Normally, those in ill health know someone who was treated successfully or are referred in a spiritual way by diviners. It was confirmed that private medical clinics in rural areas do not need to advertise because community members know the location and the services they provide.

Major cities and towns accommodate cosmopolitan communities of different religious and cultural backgrounds who are not immune to health problems. In these big cities and towns, there are also religious experts that can handle difficult life situations. Due to the large population and size, it becomes difficult for these specialists to be known and located. Communication theory, as explained by Kim Marriott and Bernd Meyer (2012), emphasizes that communication is not only spoken and written; there are also other forms and components of human communication. Visual language has been recommended as a tool that can be used to convey messages to the public. The presentation of certain images, diagrams, maps, and symbols can explain a lot more than an oral recitation. Through the nature of symbols a message is conveyed, and a choice or decision is made according to the content (Spela Verovsek et al. 2013).

To test the visual language theory, I contacted informants, traditional health specialists in particular, who explained that the urge to advertise their health services to the public was due to the mass movement of people from the rural to urban areas. There was a high demand for traditional health services due to burgeoning urban populations. Unlike the rural areas where information about health services is passed on verbally, advertising to the public by use of symbols, diagrams, and pictures on billboards became paramount. As visual language, the adverts communicated to the public effectively. It was reported that the practice of advertising traditional health services became common during the term of the second president of Kenya, Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi. During this period, traditional healers were confident and felt free to serve society after attaining certificates from the government. In the earlier years after independence, the Kenyan government maintained the colonial witchcraft act and strictly condemned traditional health services. Traditional health workers practiced their expertise but in secrecy for fear of being taken to prison.

The second reason was based on the different areas of specialization so that those with specific needs would be attended without having to go to diviners for spiritual diagnosis. However, there are those who might have gone for spiritual diagnosis and are aware of what needs to be done. Advertisements play a key role in ensuring patients are able to contact the experts who are able to sort out their problems.

Thirdly, some service users, especially those in the middle and high classes, need privacy; they do not want to be seen being attended to by traditional healers due to the historic negative attitudes implanted by missionaries and colonial administrators. When personal or family problems arise and a need to consult traditional healers becomes a necessity, it may become a challenge to get information about where to get experts without advertisements. Some find it awkward to seek information even from friends, while others are affiliated to certain religions that do not encourage consulting traditional healers. Public advertisements seem to promote privacy and ensure security for service users.

Fourthly, after the government of Kenya agreed to provide service certificates to traditional healers for the purpose of identity, traditional healing became a contested space; there was stiff competition amongst traditional healers, and each had to advertise their services for recognition and consultation. The advertisements had to mention key health areas, such as the opportunity for promotion, business benefits, employment, impotency, and unhealthy relationships, which were common and would attract service users.

Effectiveness of visual language in public space

Traditional healers are the main stakeholders of the advertisements placed along town streets and major roads from Mombasa to Malindi of Coastal Kenya. Communicating information to the public through visual images – writings, pictures, and symbols – seemed to be profitable for traditional healers. Previously, as the majority of them expressed, service users came from places across the coast and sometimes from other regions of the country, but not so many. When adverts started to be placed and telephone numbers displayed on the billboards, the numbers of those, either individuals or groups, demanding services increased. Many of those seeking services were not suffering from diseases but had businesses that were not progressing well. Scrutinizing the advertisements, the word "business" appeared in Kiswahili – *biashara*. Business people showed an interest in the need for their businesses to prosper. Others who came for the services were hawkers, prominent Christian pastors who wanted their churches to grow in numbers, and sex workers who needed to have many rich customers. Next were those suffering in love, the majority being women who lamented being abandoned by their husbands or partners. In the advertisements, the Kiswahili word is *mapenzi*. A few came because of court cases, *kesi*, that might have been delayed or they saw no justice. They demanded the traditional amicable ways for sorting out cases in court, either through suspension or being completely revoked. Those with some types of diseases, such as STDs, *tego*, were not as common as previously; the claim was that they usually go to hospitals for treatment. However, asthmatic problems, epilepsy, and male impotency are common and still receive traditional treatment.

The argument applied between modern and traditional health adverts is that; within cities, the health medical centres only advertise treating of physical body ailments as opposed to the traditional that advertises on handling issues of economy, social, or political. Michael Wilson's view (1975) about society having many faces of health is well linked to the traditional adverts at the coast of Kenya. Wilson's view, which this paper supports, is that the concept of health as understood in the modern era was found in places such as Great Britain, which based health ideologies of prevention and treatment on modern medical knowledge. Unlike in Africa, discussing health

in the Western world without talking about diseases was not feasible. Health in the West meant getting rid of infections and diseases. Wilson asserts that

> "Traditionally, doctors have been trained to treat diseases, and only comparatively recently has the understanding of causation become sufficient for thoughts to be drawn positively towards prevention and in turn towards the desire for positive health."
>
> (1975: 1).

Most of the health problems advertised and dealt with in Coastal Kenya are spiritual or psychological rather than ordinary diseases. This corresponds to the explanation about African perception on health as diverse. It relates to daily life experiences – economic activities, the politics of the day, governance, and social relationships. Lyon, though not writing in the African context, explains that

> "Health is wholeness. It is related to every part of man and to all his activities, and human relationships. Health in its ultimate sense is the meaning of life. It affects the whole community of man. Until every man is whole, no one man can be whole. The health of society depends on the health of every individual."
>
> (1966: 24).

The aspects of health that are seen in the advertisements, being mostly personal, require privacy and confidentiality. Visual language attracts attention depending on the content of the message. Recipients become curious; individuals who might be going through difficulties and have tried many alternatives with no positive results might become interested in trying traditional healing systems. Some personal health issues need personal rather than collective decisions, without consulting others for guidance, which is why the traditional healer *mganga wa kienyeji* advertisements attract the attention of the public. Most clients, as explained by the traditional healers interviewed, are Christians and emphasize that their matters remain confidential for fear of being shamed in their places of worship and work and by close religious friends and family members. Through visual language advertised on billboards, traditional healers attract those with health needs. Traditional healers view health and well-being as an adventure and focus on community development; for rich, poor, developed, undeveloped, and developing communities of the world. According to them, health touches issues of peace, justice, poverty, gender-based violence, and child abuse.

Conclusion

The discussion in this paper was based on analysing the advertisements of traditional healers along town streets and major roads from Mombasa to Malindi of Coastal Kenya. To capture the value of these adverts, the paper discussed African perceptions of health and well-being at length and adopted the visual language theory to argue its case. Traditional healers based in urban cities and towns in Kenya began the system of advertising their services after their services were acknowledged by the government. The public gradually became used to the symbols in the adverts, enabling them to contact the experts through the telephone numbers provided. Despite the efforts of the regional commissioner in 2016 to campaign against the traditional healer's adverts and order them to be removed, both service providers and service users in African society appreciate visual language adverts as sources of needful information.

✱✱✱

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Designing and Living in New Realities

Keywords

Interdigital Humans: Visual Codes, Mobility, and Relational Fragility

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Abstract

The intersections and interferences between human and digital mobility give rise to new paradigms devoted to speed, fragmentation, and change in the categories of time and space. Relationships are increasingly mediated by images and communication channels that do not necessarily provide feedback, defining, in fact, target subjects rather than active interlocutors. In this way, there is an impoverishment of meanings, a reduction of multiplicities, and a homologation of heterogeneities increasingly simplified by technological transparency and self-referential individualism.

In today's complex society, we can imagine scenarios of communication and permanence in aspects of life that envisage logics that are not exclusively linked to efficiency, and that allow us to rediscover the density of reciprocal ties, enhancing human opacity and the slowness of lived and narrated experiences. Therefore, in order to initiate dialogue between relational interdependencies, languages, and forms of communication, it is necessary to creatively remain in contexts and design times and spaces for listening and reviewing one's self with others and in different situations.

Rapid travel interference

Relationships among people within various contexts represent a dual intersubjective and situated perspective. The growing opportunities in and need to move within large, delocalized geographies are intertwined with long-distance contacts in close interconnection between people and places. In this way, technology hybridizes space and time: time accelerates, and space shrinks in view of an efficiency of mobility that enables people to make rapid transits.

Access to information changes the strategies and requirements of communication, shifting the priorities of the informational function from community sharing to individual understanding within the community. Those who come into possession of data and news are part of an ingroup with which they do not necessarily interact. On the other hand, those who, for various reasons, do not access information by means of technology constitute a marginalized outgroup controlled by those who hold the power of information (Bauman 2007; 2011).

In today's competitive environment, is it possible to imagine a hybridization between the informational and relational functions of communication through a paradigm open to the sharing of multiple meanings? This question refers to the collective construction of knowledge where priority is given to interchange and interdependence and not to the supremacy of the individual (Morin 2000). The participatory dimension requires much more time, experiences of sharing, mediation of conflicts, and open and divergent dialogue between parties leading to revisable hypotheses. Choosing the community perspective means placing oneself in dynamic situations that, while not guaranteeing permanent and definitive solutions, can become more articulate and sustainable.

Thinking about the ways in which we move through space, using it as a temporary container to explore as many edges as possible, often alone, we can consider the objectives of mobility:

- If it is simply a transit between places, we will try to reach our destination quickly (e.g., a commute to school/work).
- If it is a journey of exploration, the effectiveness of the experience is conveyed above all by encounters (e.g., a journey to unknown lands).
- If embarking on the journey itself is the goal, we will immerse ourselves in a permanent transit to reach our destination (e.g., planning the itinerary of a voyage of discovery).

The speed or slowness with which we travel through places influences our approach to discovering ourselves, others, and different contexts.

The way in which we occupy spaces with our bodies can, on the one hand, communicate the desire for transparency and invisibility that accompanies transits, and on the other hand convey the desire to linger in environments to discover them through different channels of communication. We can glimpse a sort of relational architecture that we intentionally express through gestures, proxemics, the forms with which we populate the places we design, the silences that give voice to others, or the words that determine belonging and differences.

Often, as we move around, hunched over devices that act as our interface with the world, we do not meet others, at least not those flesh-and-blood people who pass us by and are mostly – and who remain – strangers. While walking, we talk to the contacts in our address book or listen to music; while on the bus, we type messages, read short texts, and press "like" on social networks; while driving, we talk through our earphones or on speakerphones. In the meantime, other lives flow around us anonymously, without leaving a trace, without creating interactions, destined to disappear into the oblivion of uncoded, recorded images, stored in digital archives that inexorably erode our analogue memory (photos 1–2).

Photo 1. Hyper-connected absences and indifferent transits

In 2019, the Province of Bolzano (Italy) launched an information campaign: "Stay Smart. Use your mobile phone consciously" to communicate the risks of excessive mobile phone use. Four key points were posed:

- **Are you there?** The risks of hyper-connection and distancing from daily reality.
- **Driving while chatting?** The risks of car accidents caused by incorrect mobile phone use.
- **Are you on the right wavelength?** An invitation to use the Wi-Fi

network to reduce electromagnetic pollution.

- ***Social Zombies!*** The risks of mobile phone addiction and consequent social withdrawal.

At the same time, fuchsia foam layers were wrapped around lamp posts at eye level in pedestrian areas of the city, attracting the attention of passers-by and going viral on social networks. The stylized silhouette of a little man walking with his head bent over his mobile phone prompts passers-by to reflect on the excessive use of mobile phones, which makes people lose sight of real life.

Photo 2. #staysmart[1]

The horizon expands on digital maps and large atlases where we place and see ourselves in motion, represented by darts and coloured dots that find their way thanks to satellite reflections (photo 3); meanwhile, the perception of the representations of reality made by others, narrated with numerous languages and creative ways of communicating that cannot be synthesized in the cold two-dimensionality of a touch-screen, shrinks and flattens.

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1 http://www.provincia.bz.it/informatica-digitalizzazione/digitalizzazione/stay-smart.asp
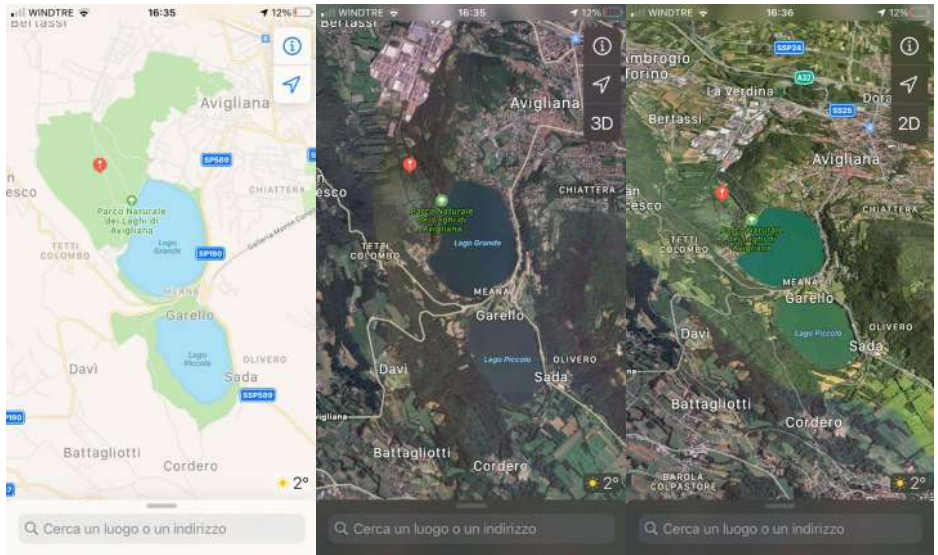
Photo 3. Human positioning in the light and shadow of maps and satellites

Digital connectivity alone does not replace human interdependence, and it is interesting to articulate a critical thought on the intentionality of mobility management modes, which are increasingly aimed at speed. There is definitely a gap between technology in the service of efficiency, always and in any case designed by people, and the poetics of the relationship (Glissant 1990) spread across the mesh of face-to-face interactions. From a socio-educational point of view, it is more interesting to expand analyses and research aimed at investigating possible "interferences" and viable hybridization aspects.

Slowly immersing oneself in plural contexts

The routine transit through spaces that assume increasingly habitual and worn-out forms can be thrown into crisis by an invitation to slowness by those who seek out unfamiliar territories, challenging the instantaneous rapidity of time. It is in these intentional slowdowns that we question different personal representations, co-constructing them in a decentralized way through interactions with otherness and elsewhere (Adichie 2009).

Some examples of suspending rapidity are dwelling on details considered insignificant, the increasing visibility of the dynamics of mobility, the intersections, and the dimensions that make up the weave of the social fabric and understanding the countless expressions of belonging within which our existence is articulated.

It is about being willing to live immersive experiences in the ordinariness of everyday life and initiating a dialogue between the independence, dependence, and interdependence of communication and relational channels. In this way, the exploration of one's self, of relationships, and of the real and virtual places in which we usually move is initiated.

At this point, an interesting question emerges: Is it possible to hybridize transit with permanence? We have to operate between the generality and the particularity of information and communication channels that need different lexicons and the ability to position oneself as an interlocutor and not only as a target subject.

The polyphonic reading of languages and meanings opens up plural mediations and describes the different potentialities of the human being, especially if placed in the paradigm of decolonization (Ngũgĩ 2015). This opens up different scenarios of participation and use of reality, between codified information and meanings of experience, in a constant challenge between lived time and inhabitable space. Imagining forms of communication that intercept different perspectives and enhance the nuances of human presence and plurality means actively developing a mobility from the self, creating places of encounter along with dialogical and problematizing proximity (Mayo 2013; Cadei & Deluigi 2019). Even though mobility scenarios are delimited by the variables of time and space, the human landscapes and their relationships can create interesting resonances aimed at continually encroaching on and overcoming the limits of ethnocentric or self-referential visions.

A very peculiar case of digital mobility worthy of note concerns the lockdown period experienced during the COVID-19 health emergency. Millions of people continued to feed interpersonal and professional communications and networks through digital media, bringing out opportunities for interaction as well as human frailties, learning opportunities and personal discomforts, individual retreats and social withdrawals, communicative creativity and new exclusions. Private spaces, such as the home, have been put under the spotlight, sometimes even with a certain intrusiveness, and the limitation of physical mobility has led to the dilation of time, transferring relationships into iconic and multiple communities in which new crises in the dynamics of mutual recognition and interaction have been generated (photo 4).
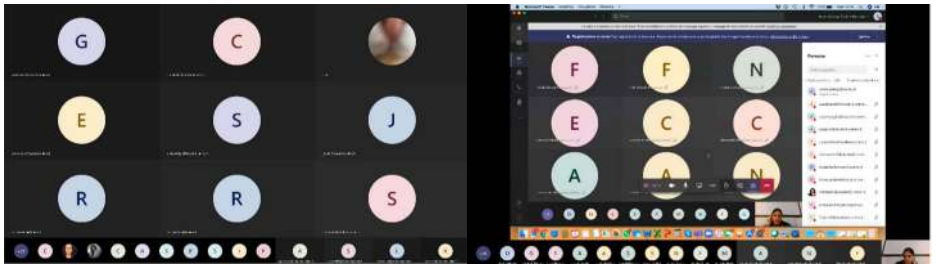
Photo 4. Human icons

In this current complexity, crossed by liquidity and strong negative emotions (Bauman 2005; Bauman & al. 2015; Benasayag 2019; Benasayag & Cohen 2020), we can refer to the paradigm of "interdigital communication" (Murero 2012) highlighting how post-digital media are more and more embedded in everyday life. Our movements leave (in)visible traces, which are even more interesting if we focus on communication and relational experiences.

Interdigital communication recalls how the population of an interconnected world communicates in plural ways, exchanging content and staying in touch through increasingly "social", dynamic, multimedia, interactive, interdependent, multisensory, convergent, and mobile media. This gives rise to a dynamic process, synchronous and asynchronous, taking place between two or more interdigital agents connected in a network, in mobile or fixed space in which digitized communication flows are condensed, preservable, shareable, and modifiable (Murero 2012). Media relations and multimedia information sharing constitute a communicative system whose logic is important to understand in order to design inter-communal ecological divergences and niches that bet on the development of networks and citizenships open to change.

We are still immersed in hyperculture (Bertman 1998), where the human cost of speed clearly emerges in a society organized around economic power and which demands instant gratification and obedience. The various forms of homologation to which we scrupulously adhere have generated a constant adaptation to technological innovation, neglecting an ethics of the human being that is more attentive to relational depths, preferring the consumption of immediate sensation. All this generates various forms of survival, deforming the human horizon towards the achievement of goals that redefine personal identities and forms of democratic communities.

Photo 5. Gali May Lucas, *Absorbed by Light*, Amsterdam 2018.[2]

In this regard, one of the installations that grabbed the most attention in the 2018 edition of the Amsterdam Light Festival was a piece by artist Gali May Lucas (Design Bridge) (Photo 5). Created with the help of sculptor Karoline Hinz, "Absorbed by Light" comments on our society's increasing addiction to our mobile devices. Placed outside the Hermitage and on view through January 20th, the light sculpture plays off the theme of that year's event – "the medium is the message"[3].

In this work of art, the real protagonists are all of us, depicted in an everyday life where the mobile phone becomes a prosthesis of our body and mind. The work emphasizes the illuminated faces of three life-size people sitting on a bench in an all-too-common position, hunched over, heads bowed, eyes fixed, and faces illuminated by the mobile phone screen: an image that becomes rather disturbing when it gets dark. The work invites us to reflect on it and to be reflected in this image, and passers-by are invited to sit on the bench to take a fresh look at their own relationship with digital devices.

2 http://karolinehinz.com/project/absorbed-by-light-iii/

3 https://arrestedmotion.com/2018/12/showing-absorbed-by-light-amsterdam-light-festival/

Photo 6. WEB 0.0

Another interesting project, called "WEB 0.0", was realized in 2016 for CVTÀ Street Fest – Civitacampomarano (CB) (Italy) (Photo 6). Civitacampomarano is a small village in the southern part of Italy with just 400 inhabitants, mainly elderly. In this village, rich in folk traditions, the Internet is a partially unknown world: mobile phones work with difficulty and the data connection is practically nonexistent. The provocative idea is to show that these virtual functions, considered by the vast majority of the population as necessary and essential to everyday life, also exist in the country, where the connection is hard to reach. This sort of Internet "in real life" is able to demonstrate that in traditions and popular culture, these instruments, though in other ways, have always existed, allowing people and families to have cultural exchanges, meet at the bar, and live the town's streets (Urban Contest Magazine)[4].

Instead of heading stubbornly along the information highway, we can decelerate our lives to generate individual and social dissent, claiming the opportunity to live with intensity on fragile, precarious, slow paths that require an uncertain pace and the possibility of stopping to reflect, an inalienable part of life for every human being.

4 http://www.biancoshock.com/web-00.html

In this regard, we need only think that time in industrialized and economically advanced societies seems to be a luxury. The hypothesis of moving from an addiction to speed to a slowdown calls for new planning regarding the quality of subjective and collective life. On the contrary, more and more often sucked in by the devices with which we simplify and codify reality in its immediacy, we neglect the urgency of interpreting and rereading it in a more in-depth way, subtracting space from the uncertainty of surprising human opacity and amplifying the value of the efficiency of technological transparency.

Digital transparency and human invisibility

The procedural nature of digital devices has altered the ways in which thought is constructed and articulated, inviting people to acceleration and the logic of transparency and mechanism, reducing the creative potential that is a constituent element of dynamic identities. This lack is especially noticeable in communications that involve self-sufficient messages and do not require critical feedback, only confirmations and endorsements.

Face-to-face interactions, analytical skills, dialectical exchange, and visions of the future have been replaced by phantom interlocutors immersed in a continuous present that can always be viewed through a screen. The subject has given way to a digital swarm of anonymous and isolated individuals, who move about as chaotically and unpredictably as insects. What happens, then, when a society renounces self-telling in order to count "likes"? And what are the consequences of the mutation of the private sphere into a public sphere that cannibalizes intimacy and privacy? (Han 2017).

Knowledge is apparently more accessible (to certain sections of the population), nut there is a risk of falling into the conception of "depository education" (Freire 1987; 1997), which involves an accumulation of ideas chosen and passed on by others. Moreover, given the amount of material available, it is complicated to validate the reliability of sources and to have sufficient mental storage space. The seduction of instantaneous communication modes hinders the conscious choice of reliable content, and in so doing slows down the processes of interpretation and systematization into complex paradigms of articulated and non-sectoral knowledge.

The illusion of monitoring everything, also thanks to technology, highlights transparency as a false ideal, becoming in fact the reference background of the most pervasive and insidious cultural forms of our time (Han 2015). Seeing everything and being seen and X-rayed in every fold of one's existence is not always and only a value. Claiming the right to opacity for all (Glissant 1990) means opening up to the hybridization and creolization of cultures (Baron 2011), and therefore of images, messages, and meanings, without imprisoning humanity in the logic of total understanding. It is a question of not setting oneself the objective of understanding in order

to reduce, to take possession of the others, to bring them back to one's own scales of values, but of articulating plural reflections in order to design scenarios of inter-in-dependence (Panikkar 2009).

If we want to redesign community dimensions in which there is room for heterogeneous singularities, which do not revert to the reproduction of the same, we will have to move towards porous cultures and rhizomatic communications open to metamorphosis and revision. A viable route is represented by participatory planning, and the activation of communities understood as places of relationship and intersection between opacities in research. The encounter between bearers of different cultures, origins, traditional roots, and future uncertainties calls for the ability to not overdo the immediate synthesis of different instances. Only the encounter with the other, which is both destabilizing and enlivening, can give each person their own identity and generate real co-constructed experience.

In order to combat the expulsion of the other (Han 2018), we need to recover intersubjective particularities and invest in relationships understood as essential links in the weave of a social fabric ready to welcome the uncertainties and precariousness of human beings. Urban space becomes social only if we move away from hyper-productive and competitive paradigms that feed on marginalization and the distancing of the weak. The ideal of smart cities must be based on relational cities in which there is time to listen to each other, time that is increasingly individual and increasingly taken up by hasty and technological mobility, which leads irreparably to the impoverishment of our lives.

In this haste, images play an essential role, and not having a grammar to decode them, interpret them and produce different meanings (Fleming & Lukaszewicz Alcaraz 2018; Lukaszewicz Alcaraz & Stara 2020) means turning into silent and inert masses that behave implosively. The masses are a black hole that absorbs without giving back; their power lies in the desire for the "here and now", the "all and now", and information, instead of transforming mass into energy, produces even more mass (Baudrillard 1978). Thus, social places become empty spaces devoid of desire, containers of superficial transits, elements in which a human presence that does not produce and does not generate profit is disturbing unless it becomes itself a source of income, through welfare, or an element of a submerged and invisible niche.

The real crossing must be done together, with an intra- and intersubjective mobility that creates new readings of the contexts and generates more sustainable forms, starting from the design of community themes in which communication has spaces and times to pause and generate reflection. The educational horizon that can be pursued is that of a critique of *homo videns* (Sartori 1998), in close connection with the countless functions of the media, including a different approach to the construction of accessible knowledge with which to dialogue responsibly.

It is therefore appropriate to analyse human mobility in real and virtual environments (not intended in a dichotomous sense), also starting from the

multi-modalities with which the tools of visual communication capture our attention, effectively conveying their message. In this sense, it is useful to develop a reflection on visual communication from an anthropological point of view, investigating the object-commodity with the same modalities generally reserved for people, identifying a strategic dimension in which power and conflict, tradition and change, and homologation and syncretism are concentrated (Canevacci 2001).

From the scent of time to the density of ties

The present time, lived in haste, quickly becomes a past without sediment. Caught up in the anxiety of reproducing daily survival processes, we lose sight of the essence of existence, which needs slower rhythms not dictated by hyper-productivity and successful performance. We are inevitably consumed by consumption itself; human identity is disintegrated, proceduralized, reduced to activities to be performed in a contemporary society that demands adaptation, homologation, and adherence to the model of having more.

One way of becoming critically aware is to linger, opening oneself up to the possibility of taking a long look at the world so as to give time back its permanent slowness, which smacks of remembrance and memory. The gaze immediately calls to mind the posture we assume in the world and about which we will have to be more aware, even from an educational point of view, to understand which horizons of meaning we are drawing and which paths of reciprocity we are following.

If we do not listen attentively, and for a long time, to the contexts in which we pass, we will not be able to grasp the trajectories that each subject carries out individually, adapting to or moving away from social standardization. The first movement to make is towards ourselves, as agents of transformation and subjects capable of deconstructing the static nature of concepts, representations and categories portrayed in striking images that do not impact the quality of relationships or discourage the co-construction of knowledge.

Stopping, waiting, lingering, moving slowly, in small steps, being willing to go back, retracing one's steps, diverging into other trajectories, lengthening one's stride, finding shortcuts, going around the roundabout twice to decide where to go... these are not just physical movements but the call for questioning human mobility, the ability to lose oneself in order to find oneself again, the possibility of pausing in the discovery of oneself in unfamiliar spaces (Deluigi 2020).

The image poetically described by Byung-Chul Han (2017) brings to mind the enchantment of lingering so that things reveal their beauty and essence, settling in time. The author tells of the incense clock of ancient China (*hsiang yin*, 香鐘, 香钟, literally, "perfume seal" or "fragrance clock")

(Photo 7), which measures time with the burning of a fragrant incense seal. At the end, a special remnant is left, an aroma that fills space, that lingers in the air in a suspended and dense moment that opens up to happiness. In this way we return to giving a form, a value, a weight to time, stimulating the perception of the senses and the density of a memory that takes on non-linear and geometric forms, like those of analogue or digital clocks. Surplus over measurement; meaning over necessity; emotional value over efficiency; personal meaning over common logic.

Photo 7. Hsiang yin, 香鐘, 香钟

The dynamism of interactions takes on a variety of irregular forms in immersive experiences and new trajectories of discovery of self and others in the contexts in which we move. Among the images that catch our attention and that lead us on paths that have already been designed, we can still look for and create spaces in which we can go beyond uniformity and absolute rationalization in favour of different interpretations that enhance interdependent subjectivities.

The density of the bonds in which we are involved, although always precarious and unstable, calls for the possibility of placing uncertain situations alongside the search for stimuli and creative energy. The crossing of borders, thresholds, and frontiers (geographical and relational) constantly challenges our glossy certainties and invites us to reformulate thoughts and languages that know how to linger, open up to the unprecedented, and create scenarios of cultural and social participation. The heterogeneity of the experiences in which we are guests also brings us back to the continuous challenge of intensely living the time available in an attempt to generate habitable and hospitable places. Finally, the narrative modalities that we will choose to describe the complexity of these processes will allow for dialogical reflections and scenarios of creative action whose reverberations will become an orientation for new and different inter-human mobilities.

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List of illustrations

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Keywords

Visualization of Multidimensional Data using Animation

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Abstract

Data visualization is necessary in data analysis in various fields. There are several methods of transcoding numerical data into easily comparable images that include 2D or 3D graphs. This article aims at proving that thanks to the animation techniques (animated graphs in general), visual information is processed in a different way by a human brain, thus helping to detect important features of data sets. Provided examples (images/ graphs and animations) allow one to personally investigate this phenomenon and compare various visualization methods. In conclusion, further research is suggested to test to extrapolate described methods into much more complex systems of data analysis, based on human brain computing power, rather than a purely algebraical analysis.

Introduction

The visualization of numerical data has accompanied humankind for centuries, even millennia. Contrary to popular belief, examples of pictorial representation of numerical values can be found in archaeological findings dating to the sixth millennium BC (Dragicevic, Jansen 2012). It is safe to assume that the motivation to use visualization was the natural human desire to reduce the mental effort needed for information processing. Today, not only scientists but nearly everyone is faced with various data sets that require their attention and understanding. This article exemplifies simple and complex methods of data visualization with a goal to prove that animation techniques can significantly improve the recognition of important features of data sets.

1D and 2D data sets

The easiest way to prove the superiority of visual data representation is to compare two or more multi-digit numbers or series of values (regardless of the number of digits in each). Let's conduct a simple test – the example below shows a list of numbers that the human mind can easily process without spending significant resources of its computing power on it.

> **1, 10, 5, 2**

Fig. 1.

We can easily identify the largest number (10) and the smallest (1) among them, arrange them in ascending order (1, 2, 5, 10), and a significant part of the population can easily calculate in memory their arithmetic mean (1 + 10 + 5 + 2 = 18; 18: 4 = 4.5) or the median (2 + 5 = 7; 7: 2 = 3.5). However, the situation becomes significantly more complicated for multi-digit numbers:

> **11125534542, 2276890570, 399678764**

Fig. 2 .

The indication of the highest number alone requires introducing the numbers in a different arrangement (vertically, right-justified):

11125534542
2276890570
399678764
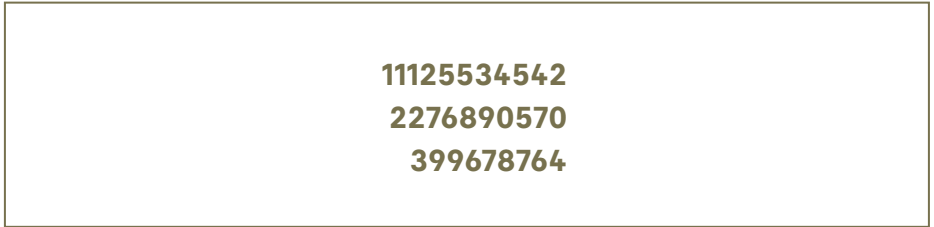
Fig. 3.

And then grouping the numbers for an easier estimation of orders of magnitude:

11 125 534 542
2 276 890 570
399 678 764

Fig. 4.

Although in the first notation (Fig. 3) our intuition tells us that the second number is the largest (it has the number 2 at the beginning and is of similar length to the first, so it is of the same order), after introducing the vertical layout and grouping the digits, it becomes visible that it is an order of smaller magnitude (2 billion instead of 11 billion). This proves that in this case, the estimation process is done visually, not mathematically – both the different arrangement of numbers and the grouping of their digits, as well as estimating values based on the length of the string of digits, refer to their graphical representations, not to their value – the human mind takes a shortcut in this case, comparing images rather than actual numbers.

A commonly used method of data visualization is graphs, which are nothing more than a pictorial representation of values that are easy to compare with each other using image analysis methods.
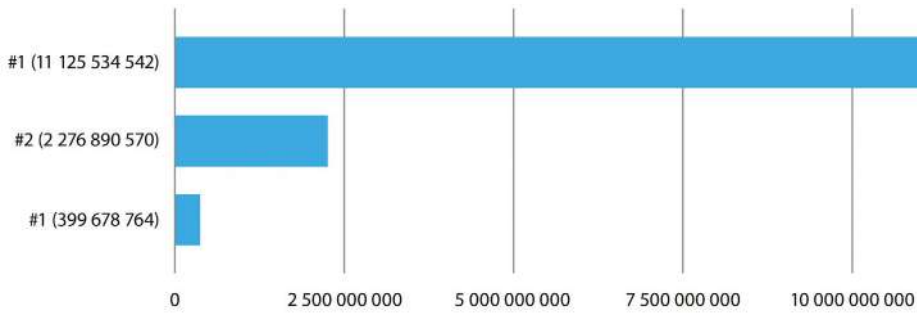
Fig. 5.

Based on the bar graph in fig. 5, we can not only quickly answer the question which number is the largest but also visually estimate how much it is greater than the others with the help of vertical grid lines (the 1st value is about four times greater than the 2nd value). It is also easy to spot the arithmetic mean of any two numbers by drawing a line between the right edges of the bars, finding its centre, and reading its value by using the scale at the bottom (Fig. 6).
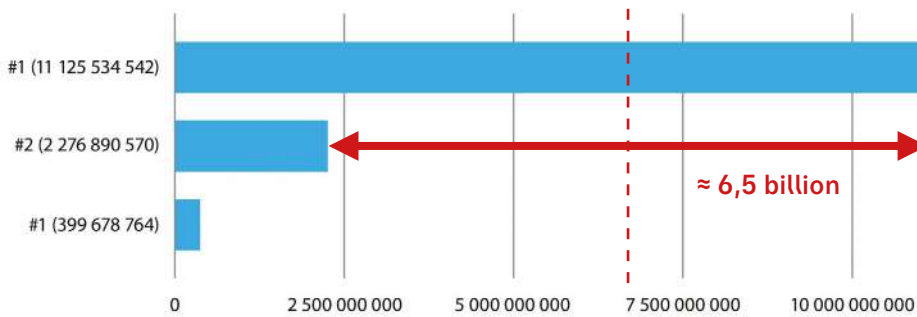
Fig. 6.

There are several types of graphs: bar graph, circular graph, line graph, column graph, and bubble graph. These are two-dimensional (2D) graphs because they visualize values with two variables – in the above examples, they represent values (11125534542, 2276890570, 399678764) and their names (Value 1, 2, and 3).

3D and multidimensional data sets

The number of dimensions in the graph depends on the number of variables describing each value. Three-dimensional (3D) graphs allow us to compare data of greater complexity, such as values that vary over time, geographic data, or laboratory results obtained in several samples (Fig. 7, 8, and 9).
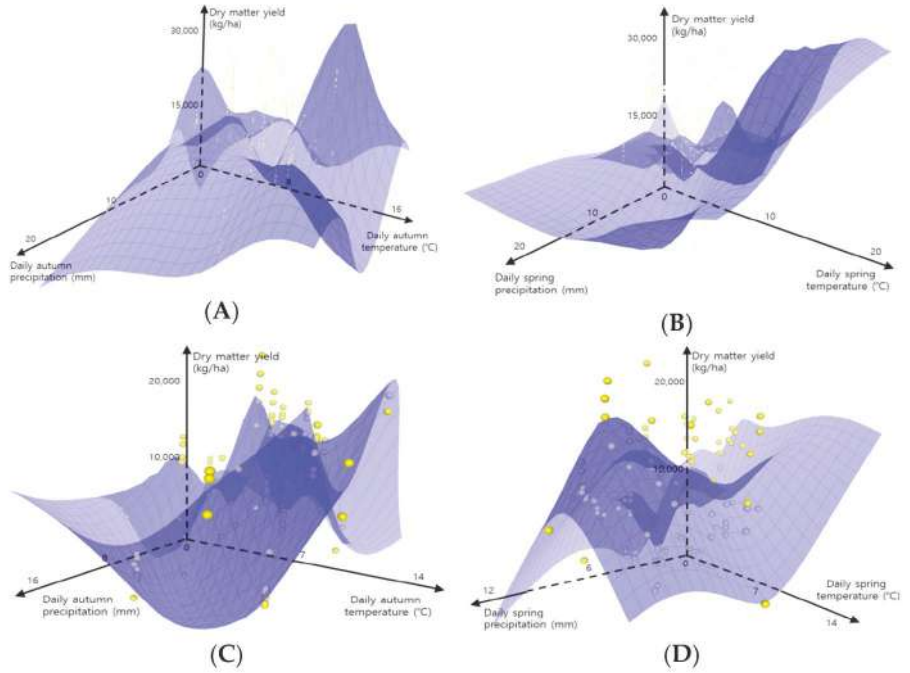
Fig. 7. An example of a 3D surface graph.

(Kim, M., Sung, K. Comparison of Causality of Temperature and Precipitation on Italian Ryegrass (Lolium Multiflorum Lam.) Yield between Cultivation Fields via Multi-Group Structural Equation Model Analysis in the Republic of Korea. *Agriculture* 2019, 9, 254. https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture9120254)
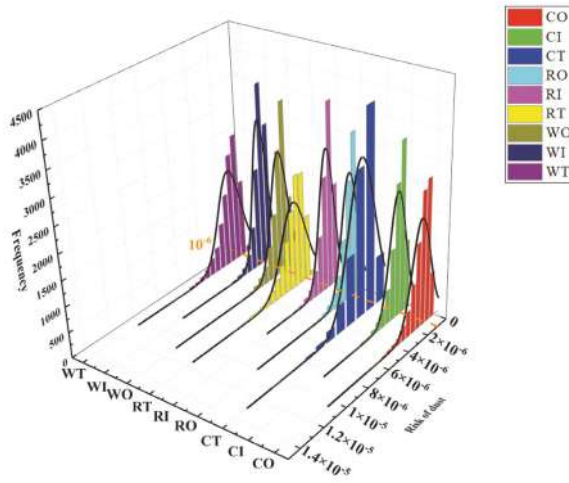
Fig. 8. An example of a 3D bar plot
Cui, P.; Zhang, T., Chen, X., Yang, X. Levels, Sources, and Health Damage of Dust in Grain Transportation and Storage: A Case Study of Chinese Grain Storage Companies. *Atmosphere* 2021, 12, 1025. https://doi.org/10.3390/atmos12081025
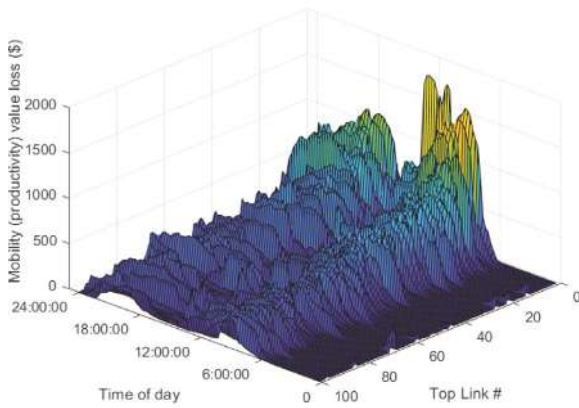
Fig. 9. An example of a 3D bar/surface graph
(Troutman K., Mobiliti: A Game Changer for Analyzing Traffic Congestion, downloaded from: https://crd.lbl.gov/news-and-publications/news/2019/mobiliti-a-game-changer-for-analyzing-traffic-congestion/)

Both 2D and 3D graphs are commonly used in numerical data analysis. Visual interpretation helps to discern the relationships between values or a series of values, highlighting patterns or anomalies. However,

data sets may include series consisting of vectors with four or more variables. This is where the human mind reaches its limits, unable to process information about the number of dimensions greater than three (length, width, height) without special preparation. The world we live in is three-dimensional from the human point of view, so our imagination, and thus the ability to visualize and process visual data, includes only one, two, and three-dimensional images. Multidimensional data sets can be found in many fields, not only in quantum physics. For example, let's consider visualizing traffic data in a city. The graph must visualize the following variables:

- position of a point on the map (longitude and latitude – 2 variables)
- average traffic volume in the rush hour (1 variable)
- probability of a road collision based on data from the last 10 years (1 variable)

Visualization of any three variables from this set is relatively easy – on the plane representing the city map, lines can be drawn connecting points whose position in the third axis corresponds to the average traffic volume in rush hour (Fig. 10).
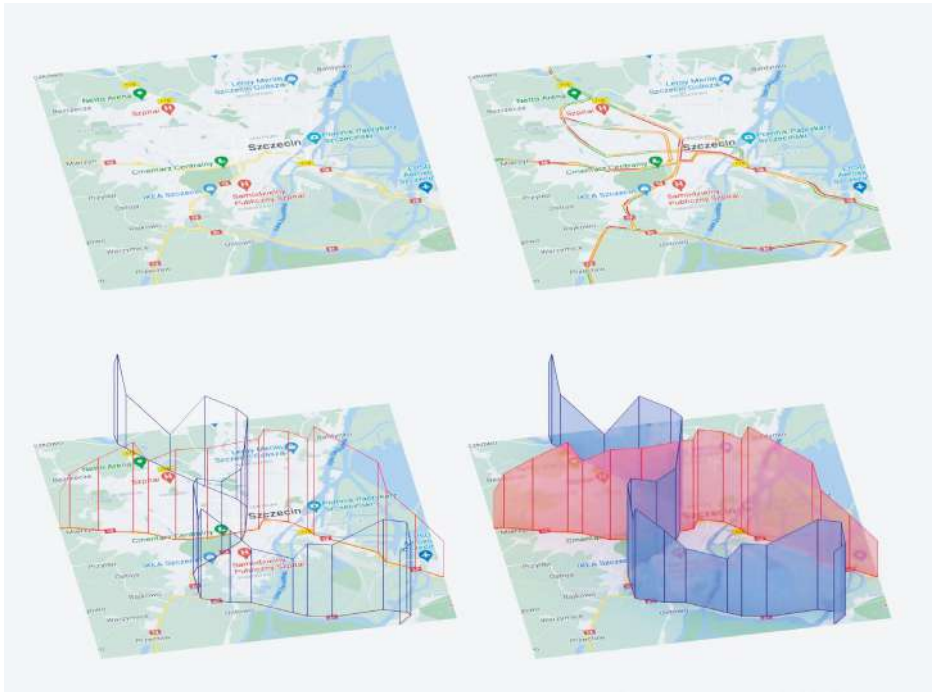
Fig 10. A 3D graph depicting average weekly traffic volume on selected streets of Szczecin, Poland.

It is also possible to mark points on the same map, the size of which corresponds to the probability of a collision on a given road section. However, the mentioned probability is then presented with a limited accuracy, determined by the image area covered by a given point – the points must be placed in certain intervals to maintain their legibility. The greater the distance between the points, the less it shows at which point of the studied section collisions occur most often (Fig. 11). Therefore, these values must be quantified – instead of illustrating all possible values from a set (from a series of numbers or a mathematical function that describes them), they are treated selectively or summed up in certain intervals. Referring to the given example of the likelihood of a collision on an urban road, instead of giving the actual values resulting from the exact location of all collisions on a given street, the values are summed up and given collectively for the entire street, thus preventing the detection of the most dangerous section of a single street.

Fig. 11. A 2D graph depicting the number of traffic collisions on selected streets in Szczecin, Poland. Source: own study using exemplary data, map data ©Google, GeoBasis-DE/BKG (2009).

Fortunately, the world of science has found a solution to this problem by adding a fourth dimension represented not spatially but with the help of colour, making it possible to visualize data without significantly reducing their accuracy, or, more precisely, linearly, without quantifying

or sampling. The most used systems for coding numbers using colour are the colour intensity or brightness scales, as well as the colour values (Fig. 12), known from hypsometric maps. In each case, such a graph is accompanied by a colour scale with assigned values (Fig. 13).
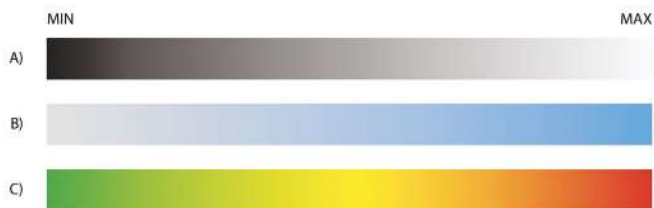

Fig. 12 A comparison of three types of colour scales used for visualisation of numerical data. A) brightness, B) colour intensity, C) colour map.
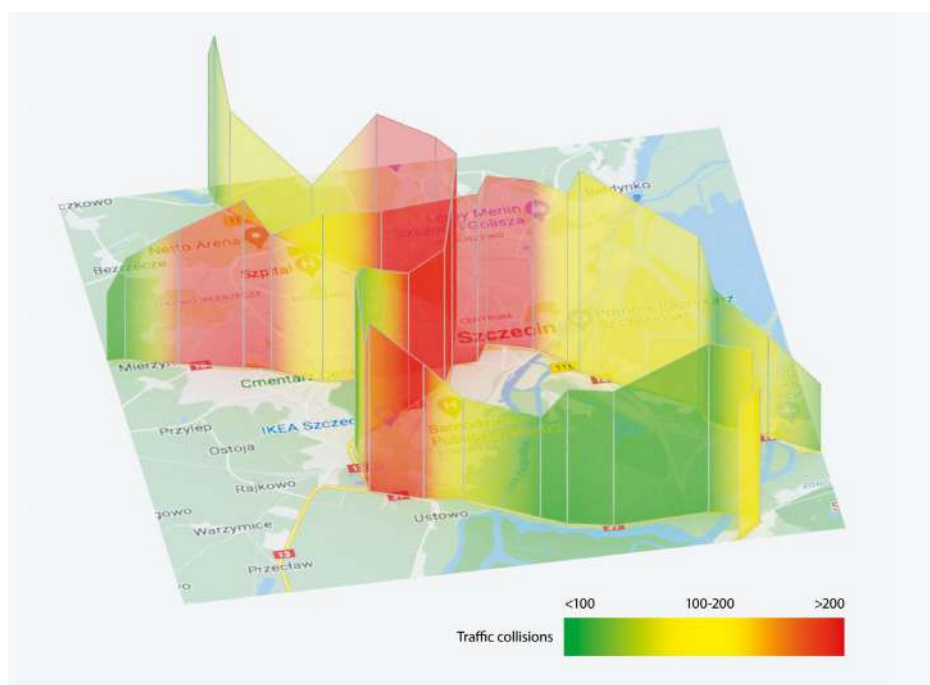

Fig. 13. An example of a four-dimensional graph that uses colour map scale to visualise data regarding the quantity of traffic collisions. The traffic volume is presented as graph height, while the geographical longitudes and latitudes of each point are mapped onto a two-dimensional surface. Source: own study, map data ©Google, GeoBasis-DE/BKG (2009).

Spaces of Transfers and Visual Management of Human Mobility

Following this path, it is worth asking whether the peculiar curl of the "invisible" fourth dimension cannot be extrapolated to the third dimension, thus significantly simplifying the process of creating the image in the human mind and its subsequent analysis by the recipients. The fourth dimension (collision probability) can then be represented by colour coding along the scale, and the third dimension (traffic volume) by the line thickness (Fig. 14). The resulting image is a two-dimensional graph showing four-dimensional data.
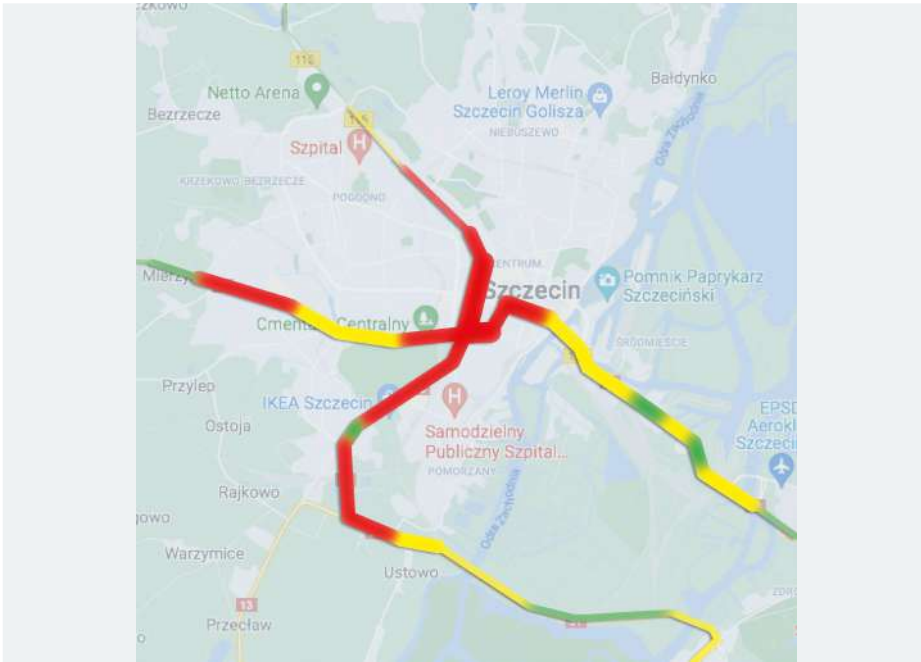
Fig. 14. An example of a four-dimensional graph flattened to 2D graph depicting both traffic volume and the quantity of traffic collisions. Source: own study, map data ©Google, GeoBasis-DE/BKG (2009).

The graph in fig. 14 can be easily interpreted on many levels, without the need for mathematical calculations. The same data stored in the form of a matrix in a tabular layout (fig. 15) is nearly impossible to process and deduce without visualization.

Latitude	Longitude	Traffic level	Collision count*
53.471360794035064	14.48609443218547	4	<100
53.45849648038834	14.501978624965641	1	<100
53.44654162447694	14.520911515134683	3	100-200
53.433103696284995	14.54021513252475	6	>200
53.42274255263014	14.535433210744804	9	>200
...	...	...	...

Fig. 15. Source data for the first 5 data points (the north-south path) used for the graphs on fig. 13 and 14 in tabular form. Source: own study.

It would seem that the limit of data visualization in a way that is easily assimilated by the human mind has been reached at this stage (having four variables). However, the visualization of five variables is still possible.

In physics, most events are described in a four-dimensional space called space-time. The orbital motion of the planets and the collision of a car with a obstacle can be described by four-dimensional equations, where apart from determining the position of objects, there is also a change in their position in time.

Animated graphs

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from fig. 15; for example, which streets are most congested during rush hour, where collisions occur most often, and whether or not this is related to traffic. However, as the traffic situation is not the same every day of the week, nor every hour, it is worth analysing the change in these parameters over time.

When it comes to conveying visual information on traditional media, such as paper, the only reasonable solution seems to be to present several graphs side by side (e.g., for 8:00, 12:00 and 18:00 hours). But this solution will be as inaccurate as visualizing the collision probability with points of different sizes on the map. Firstly, quantifying the value in the time domain will not allow detecting momentary changes in traffic volume or collision probability, and the more graphs are shown (e.g., for each hour of the day or for each minute of the day), the greater the amount of data is to be processed

through the mind of the recipient, making the process of the analysis similar to the analysis of tabular data in fig. 15. Moreover, it will not be possible to detect repetitive sequences or anomalies unless the data is presented in a linear form on the same image area since focusing on the next graph restarts the process of image acquisition in the visual cortex, increasing the difficulty of detecting significant relationships between the data sets without physically superimposing the graphs.

The solution to this problem is the use of image animation techniques, i.e., displaying a sequence of multiple images one after another over the same area. Naturally, this solution is possible only in visual communication technologies that allow images to change on a device over time, i.e., a computer screen, multimedia beamer, TV, LED display, or mobile device.

While the human mind has a limited ability to acquire and collectively process a series of images placed next to each other, it is perfectly capable of analysing movement in the field of view (MacGillivray 2007). Although in both cases the information is processed by the optic nerves and the visual cortex in the brain, in the case of a series of images, these first need to be stored in memory prior to their analysis. This requires recalling each image from memory separately and comparing it with other stored images. However, as proven in the selective attention test by Simons and Chabris (1999), the visual message in the form of animation is analysed "on the fly" – individual images (animation frames) are not stored in memory but processed in terms of movement. A person's eyes and brain follow moving elements with higher contrast and – unless provided with a task to spot any particular elements – one can only store selected information regarding the objects in motion. If, however, the recipient is asked to provide specific intervals between certain events or describe all the elements visible in a particular moment, many of them will be omitted in the memorization process.

Fig. 16 shows twelve surface 3D graphs visualizing four-dimensional data broken down into individual measurement moments. The attached QR code leads to an animation created on the basis of the same data set but presented in the form of a 3D animation, where the fourth variable has not been quantified but changes linearly in proportion to the time elapsed since the beginning of the animation. This example allows an easy comparison between these two methods of data visualization and the human ability to process them.
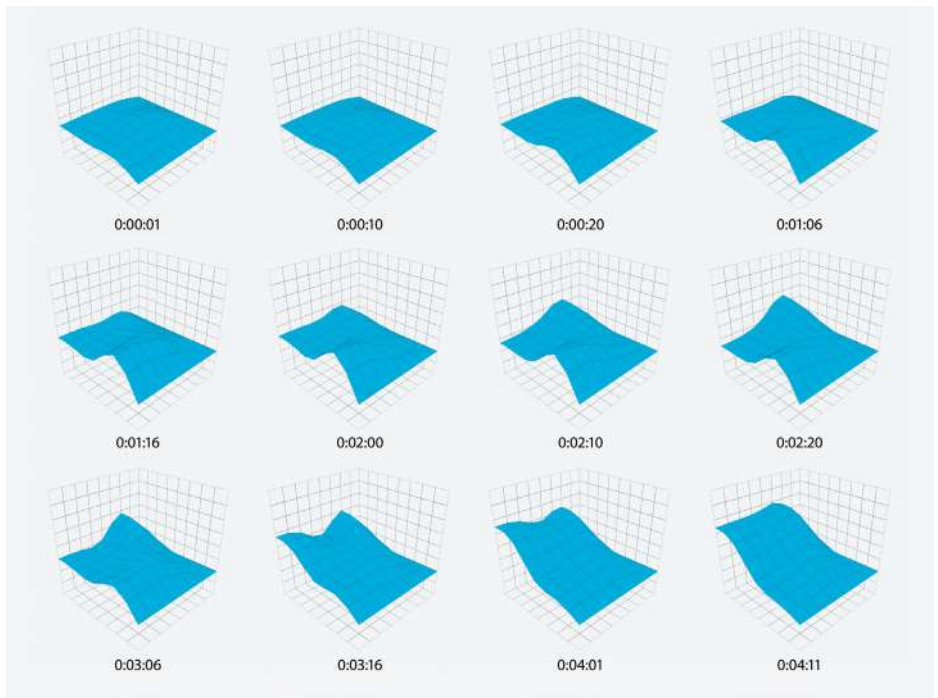
Fig. 16. A four-dimensional animated 3D surface graph presented as a series of snapshots. Follow the QR code or visit (...) to view its animated version online. Source: own study

The following features are impossible to notice on a series of graphs but are clearly visible on an animation:

1. Momentary increase of two values between... and... second of the animation,
2. Rhythm in the movement of the same two values between... and... second of animation,
3. Phase shift of two values between... and... second of animation.

Importantly, animated data visualization techniques can be applied not only to four- and five-dimensional data sets but also to one, two, and three-dimensional sets, transferring one of the variables into the time domain. Examples of such applications may be the visualization of spatial data for objects with a complex internal structure, e.g., the distribution of stresses inside a steel l-beam – the graph then shows a two-dimensional cross-section of the object while the point at which the measurement is made changes in the time domain (Fig. 17). It would be difficult to show this on a 3D graph since the stress values on the surface and in the centre of the object must be analysed at the same time.

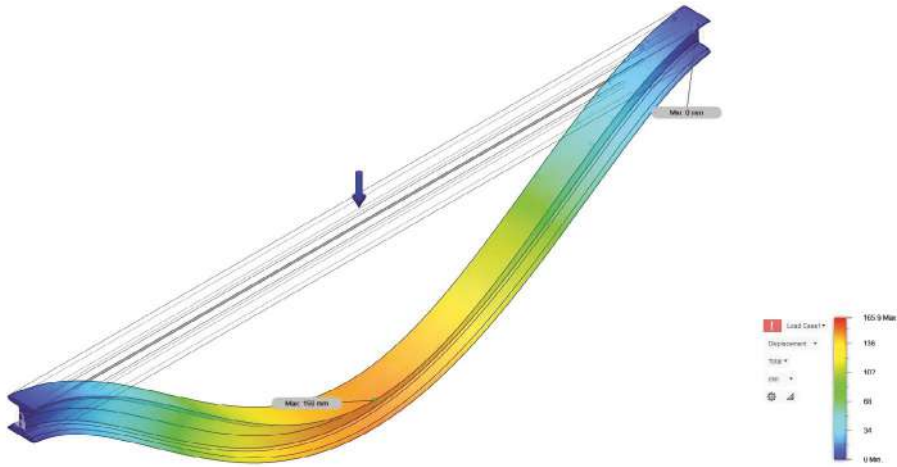Spaces of Transfers and Visual Management of Human Mobility

Fig. 17. A five-dimensional animated 3D graph depicting forces distribution inside I-beam during bending. The data is displayed on a 3D object (3 variables) using colour maps to visualise stress data (4th variable) in time (5th variable). Follow the QR code or visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7767XlUG50 to view its animated version online. Source: Engineering Juice, Static Stress Simulation: I-Beam Bending in Fusion 360!, published April 2020, accessed December 2021.

The use of animation techniques for data visualization can also be expanded to an interactive version in which the user has the ability to smoothly scroll through the animation; in other words, manually indicate any point in time or independently generate a sequence of images that will be analysed by their brain in the time domain. A popular application of this technology is the digitization of flat objects, e.g., coins, called RTI (Reflectance Transformation Imaging), where the user, by moving the computer mouse cursor, feeds the program with two variables (X, Y) that change the position of the light source above the object, thus emphasizing certain inequalities on the surface of the analysed object (Fig. 18).

Fig. 18. An example of an online RTI viewer, using three different positions of the light source. Source: Pickup Ch., William II Coin Obverse RTI Demo, Institute of Information Science and Technologies "Alessandro Faedo", downloaded from https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/cp-rti/Anja-Coin. HTML, accessed December 2021.

Summary

The use of animation to visualize numerical data allows for a significant reduction in the amount of data supplied to the visual cortex and allows the recipient's attention to be focused on the analysis of the variability of selected parameters over time, and thus to detect the important features and relationships between them. Animation in a visualization can be applied to both one-, two- and three-dimensional data, and, in select cases, to series with four and five variables. The visualization of multidimensional sets, with more than five variables, requires the use of other senses, such as hearing (left and right ear – 2 variables) and touch (haptic stimulation – many variables that stimulate selected nervous system endings). Therefore, further research is suggested to define the boundary of human perception; in other words, to find out how many variables the human mind can process in real time before their accumulation turns into noise, making it difficult to detect dependencies, repetitive patterns, or anomalies in the analysed data set.

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List of figures

dimensional surface. Source: own study, map data ©Google, GeoBasis-DE/BKG (2009).

- Fig. 14. An example of a four-dimensional graph flattened to 2D graph depicting both traffic volume and the quantity of traffic collisions. Source: own study, map data ©Google, GeoBasis-DE/BKG (2009).

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- Fig. 18. An example of an online RTI viewer, using three different positions of the light source. Source: Pickup Ch., William II Coin Obverse RTI Demo, Institute of Information Science and Technologies "Alessandro Faedo", downloaded from https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/cp-rti/Anja-Coin. HTML, accessed December 2021.

List of QR codes

QR code for fig. 16

QR code for fig. 17

Keywords

Living Among Simulacra – Augmented Reality as a Commonplace

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Abstract

This essay is focused on fundamental aspects of augmented reality and new media. The main idea of the work is to read this technology in the light of Jean Baudrillard's treatise *Simulacra and Simulation*. Baudrillard claimed there that augmented reality (as a kind of parallel reality) can be regarded as a kind of representation of a precession of simulacra. At the same time, he explored the possibility of understanding the role played by similar simulations today and in the future. The aim of this paper is to indicate the universal possibilities new technologies open up in everyday life. In the first part, I talk about how to understand the concept of augmented reality. In this section, the concepts of the types of parallel realities we know today are put together, differentiating between augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mixed reality (MR). In the next part of the paper, I present basic AR tools as well as examples of using this technology in everyday life.

"To challenge and to cope with this paradoxical state of things, we need a paradoxical way of thinking; since the world drifts into delirium, we must adopt a delirious point of view. We must no longer assume any principle of truth, of causality, or any discursive norm. Instead, we must grant both the poetic singularity of events and the radical uncertainty of events. It is not easy. We usually think that holding to the protocols of experimentation and verification is the most difficult thing. But in fact the most difficult thing is to renounce the truth and the possibility of verification, to remain as long as possible on the enigmatic, ambivalent, and reversible side of thought".

(Baudrillard 2000:68.)

Introduction

What is augmented reality (AR)? In a few words, one could say it is a kind of expansion of human perception by enabling the simultaneous experience of parallel reality. "Parallel reality" is in this case a collection of objects existing in digital form. AR technology uses the visual representation of digital information to enrich the world we live in. This is done by projecting visual objects such as signs, captions, graphics, or 3D animations onto the surrounding space. The extension can also include sound as an additional layer of information.

According to Indonesian researcher Andar Erandaru, who deals with interactive media, 3D modelling, animation, and game design, augmented reality can be interpreted in the light of Baudrillard's "Simulacra and Simulation". Erandaru notes

"Simulation today according to Baudrillard (1997: 1) «is the generation by models of a 'real' without origins or reality». What he meant was that simulation has reached the phase to be considered real, yet it does not actually exist. For example, one could create a simple note with a keyboard, tweak the pitch in sound-editing software to mimic a whale's sound and then record it. A person who listens to the recording will eventually mistake it for a recording of a real whale. It is not the sound of a whale but considered to be one because it meets all the physical characteristics that one could perceive as a whale sound."

(2008)

In this essay, I examine to what extent Baudrillard's theory of the precession of simulacra, which is represented in augmented reality, can be seen as a viable vision of the end of the world and to what extent

it can be read as an announcement of the creation of new dimensions of reality. In other words, I am interested in the level to which the simulacra created in augmented reality meet the pessimistic prophecy of the French postmodernist, and to what extent they bring hope for new technological solutions that can become the basis for the redefinition of the phenomena surrounding us.

The purpose of this essay is to show the possibilities offered by the involvement of new technologies associated with augmented reality in everyday life. At the beginning of my reflections, I will explain what augmented reality is in relation to virtual reality; I will also describe the devices through which we can experience the new reality. Finally, I will give some examples of the application of augmented reality.

How to understand the concept of augmented reality

Thinking about the earliest human notions of a virtual world, we will almost instantly find ourselves in Plato's cave. However, the shadows reflected on the wall, which are a kind of virtual reflection of the world of ideas, had nothing to do with the ideas that postmodernity can offer about augmented reality. The contemporary understanding of the concept of augmented reality is founded on literature. One of the first ideas of producing parallel worlds with the use of a specialized tool that gives an insight into what is under the surface of the visible world can be found especially in the literature of science-fiction and fantasy (Norman 2004-2019). An excellent example is L. Frank Baum's novel *The Master Key* from 1901[1].

The main character of *The Master Key* acquires exceptional glasses called Character Markers. After wearing them, the boy can see the character essence of his interlocutor. This information is displayed as a given letter of the alphabet. In the book we read:

> "The good will bear the letter 'G,' the evil the letter 'E.' The wise will be marked with a 'W' and the foolish with an 'F.' The kind will show a 'K' upon their foreheads and the cruel a letter 'C. Thus you may determine by a single look the true natures of all those you encounter."

> (Baum 1901:42).

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1 L. F. Baum is known to a wider audience for his book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.*

The character marker device has been viewed retrospectively as an early foreshadowing of features analogous to those obtainable in augmented reality.

However, it took more than half a century for the fairy-tale idea to become part of the real world. In 1968 Ivan Sutherland at the University of Utah created the first virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) head-mounted display system. The device was so large and heavy that it had to be fixed to the ceiling, and its dangerous appearance inspired its name: the Sword of Damocles. The device had a very simple interface and the virtual environment it visualized had the form of framed models.

The term 'augmented reality' itself was first used in the 1990s by Tom Caudell though in a slightly different sense than we assume today (Norman 2004–2019). Even today, augmented reality is often confused with virtual reality (VR), and if we add another, often-used term mixed reality (XR, MR) the situation becomes even more complicated. The terminological issues in the field of research on digitally generated realities are actually only in the process of becoming tangible and creating specific sets of meanings. In order to understand the difficulties in recognizing virtual worlds, we need to refer to existing concepts and individual descriptions of virtual phenomena.

AR is a technology by means of which additional layers of digital information, such as new visuals, are overlaid on the image of the real world. These can be multidimensional 3D models, reproductions of those we know well from everyday life, e.g., a TV, desk, or chair generated with the use of 3D graphics software. But they can also be other objects not related in their appearance to the real world, as is a case with, for example, avatars. Avatars usually act as a kind of assistants, informing us about where we are and what we can or should do. Such avatars can take on any shape or form, such as a dragon, a Pokémon, an angel, or a flying fairy. An AR device can add them to our field of perception. An important characteristic of the existence of both worlds – ours and the generated one – is the possibility of interaction between them, between us and digital information, in a way we know from everyday experience.

It is assumed that AR technology will be able to create hyper-realistic objects in the near future, not only illusory ones imitating the real ones but also mimicking their behaviour, mechanics, and interactions, as well as known laws of physics. It is easy to imagine that with the relevant device, i.e., a smartphone or smart glasses, we will be able to watch a movie on a virtual screen, a virtual TV set located exactly where we want it to be, or browse the Internet in a virtual browser controlled by gestures or voice commands.

In augmented reality, the representation of additional digital information is accessible and experienced through an appropriate interface. Such an interface is a device which, thanks to a system of cameras, distance sensors, and gyros, is able to analyse the surrounding space. The device analyses the space around it, processes it, and translates it into digital

objects. These objects are representations of the real ones. This process is known as mapping. It is needed for the device to orient the user in the digital reality and has to be created live during the use of a given device. Additionally, through the use of various types of projections, it also creates and locates the illusion of the physical presence of a digital object. The real space is mapped as a topographic map, which becomes its digital simulation. These types of virtual maps will become more accurate and complex as the technological possibilities increase. The map modelled in this way serves as a reference for the implementation of three-dimensional objects, their mechanics, and the rules of their interaction on to our real space. These objects can also be independent, shared like any other information, and received as an inspiration.

If AR technology tries to connect two parallel worlds – the one where we can sit safely on a physical chair with one where the chair is virtual and only our digital avatar can sit safely on it – what is virtual reality about? What is the difference between AR and VR? Although both realities use technology to generate 3D objects and distribute them in our field of view, they do so in their own way. VR takes us to a computer-generated space from which the physical world is completely removed. We have to quickly learn how to navigate and interact with a new environment completely designed for us. This happens thanks to the phenomenal ability of our brain to adapt and find itself in different spatial situations as well as the implement of basic rules, known to us from everyday experience, in the virtual world. We can be easily deluded by the generated illusion of the world, e.g., a computer game, which quickly becomes a new reality for us, provoking a series of behavioural events. It is enough to observe the reactions of people moving in virtual spaces to see how far the illusion of this world can reach. VR is a powerful tool, able to completely absorb the people using it and "transfer" them into a world generated by a computer. Because of this immersion, VR is very widely used not only in entertainment (e.g., computer games) but also in education (training, tutorials), social platforms (e.g., a second life), and social projects that sensitize people to the problems faced by the modern world.

As an example, I would like to recall the VR installation *Carne y Arena* shown at the Cannes Film Festival in 2017.

"The users initially enters a prison-like waiting area, where they are kept in isolation for up to 10 minutes and asked to remove their shoes and socks before being ushered into the main staging area by a siren and accompanying flashing red light.

Inside, where the ground is covered with coarse sand, the user don an Oculus Rift headset, headphones, and a computer cleverly disguised in a rucksack before being transported to a desert landscape. The arena is mapped by the VR technology, allowing users free movement around the space.

Spaces of Transfers and Visual Management of Human Mobility

There, they join a group of migrants attempting to cross the border into the US, evading border patrol and battling with the elements along the way."

(Grater 2017).

To immerse ourselves completely in the VR experience, we need a special device that will take us into the virtual world. To be able to embark on this expedition, we also need to have a safe place, a space that does not require constant control, a kind of bedroom, isolated from everyday life, in which we calmly "fall asleep", cut off from the noise of the world outside. VR requires users to give themself completely because they are invited to open the door to another world, one designed especially for them. Users disappear in it completely. Comparing VR to a deep sleep in which we can navigate ourselves and, to some extent, control the space around us as well as connect with other users, it is easy to imagine the fulfilment of the esoteric dream of experiencing the same unreal participation of another dimension of reality together. Through VR we can already become co-users of the same dream.

If VR can be compared to a deep dream that many people can dream at the same time, then to AR should be assigned phenomena from the realm of visions or hallucinations. It should be noted that AR can also become part of a shared experience. For example, AR users, who are in the same room, can all try to sit on a chair in the middle of a created world. However, while the AR puts additional visualizations on the real world, leaving us with the possibility to see and control the physical environment, VR becomes a visualization that replaces the physical world. VR builds the world that completely surrounds us, influences our behaviour, and forces us to adapt to the new space, while AR's impact on our behaviour in the real world does not seem so obvious. After all, when experiencing AR, we are still in contact with the physical environment.

In one of the studies on the influence of the AR on social behaviour carried out at Stanford University, scientists came to unexpected conclusions.

"Researchers found that all participants who wore the AR headset sat on the empty chair next to Chris [virtual avatar] instead of sitting right on the avatar. Of those participants who were asked to take off the headset before choosing their seat, 72 percent still chose to sit in the empty chair next to where Chris sat previously. «The fact that not a single one of the subjects with headsets took the seat where the avatar sat was a bit of a surprise», Bailenson said. «These results highlight how AR content integrates with your physical space, affecting the way you interact with it. The presence of AR content also appears to linger after the goggles are taken off»"

(Shashkevich, 2019)

Figure 1. The picture shows the participant and what he saw during the research.
The area marked with a dotted line contains digital content, such as avatar Chris.
Image credit: Mark Miller and Stanford's Virtual Human Interaction Lab.

Another study also confirms the fact that our behaviour can be strongly influenced by objects that do not exist in reality.

"[The] study replicated a traditional psychology finding known as social inhibition. Just as people complete easy tasks with ease and struggle with more challenging ones when they have a person watching them in the real world, the same held true when an avatar was watching study participants in augmented reality, the researchers found."

(Miller, Jun, Herrera, Yu Villa, Welch, Bailenson 2019.).

Similar, very spontaneous, incorporation of 3D objects into a set of real objects occurs when we have the ability to manipulate objects like buttons, sliders, and manipulators. These are usually simple visualizations imitating objects whose operation and use we know from everyday life, such as buttons in elevators or the car horn. It turns out that in AR we adjust our expectations to the specifics of a given object, recognized by us from the real world, projecting our behaviour back on the holographic image. An example can be pressing with one finger a virtual button the size of the one we know from an elevator, and with the whole hand a button the size similar to our hand. We intuitively expect that unreal objects are going to behave in a manner analogous to physical objects known to us (video sources: *HoloLens 2 AR Headset: On Stage Live Demonstration*).

We expect that a familiar-looking digital object – existing only thanks to advanced technology, and only when we use it – will have a mass and weight corresponding to the imitated material. Moreover, we expect it to resist when moving it and to make familiar sounds. However, these objects happen only in some generated space; they are virtual. Someone could say that they exist in a different dimension, and we can experience them only when we use specialized devices and software that can mix different realities. But are you absolutely sure that they cannot influence the real world? However, as the Stanford experiment shows, the vast majority of the participants modified their actions and behaviour, assuming that avatar Chris was still sitting on a particular chair. This may mean that most of us naturally allow for the existence of other realities, and not only the possibility of interaction with them but also their interference with reality.

Another interesting fact about AR technology is that being users of it, we can successfully perform other activities – moving around, engaging in the daily routine in ordinary physical spaces – while having access to all kinds of additional information displayed before our eyes. This is the specificity of AR that distinguishes it from VR, the specificity of which results from obscuring reality with virtuality. However, it causes a different kind of technical difficulty. AR applications and devices, thanks to the advanced modules that retrieve a collection of information from the outside world, recognize the space around them in order to be able to imitate the behaviour and characteristics of real objects and transpose them into digital ones. For example, a computer-generated dinosaur walking on our desk can fall on the floor, roll over, stand up, and continue its performance. This is all thanks to object detection. The same generated dinosaur can jump out of a real open book, expanding the static text with new audiovisual features. These are already available possibilities when we are, using apps installed on regular smartphones.

In order to understand the places where the two technologies described above are located, we can use a linear scale: a reality– virtuality continuum.
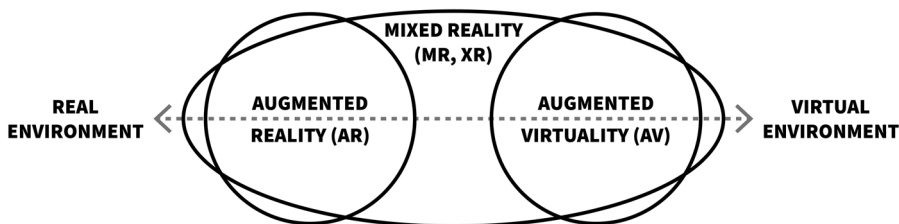

Figure 2. Jarosław Solecki, Reality-virtuality continuum

It is a scale on which one end is what we call reality and the other is what is 100% virtual. Between these two poles we have a whole gradation of mixed reality – XR, MR. In the range of XR, there are, for example, books published in the paper version that contain a kind of QR code, with the help of which the relevant application on the smartphone calls up and overwrites the image from its camera, with, for example, 3D animation, which is a complement to the text of a given publication.

The gradation of digital entities on the scale proceeds by covering reality with subsequent layers of information until it is completely replaced by the virtual world.

AR tools

The existence and recognition of AR is possible by using specific devices and software. The most basic and simplest of them is a smartphone with applications relevant to AR installed on it. Among the most popular are selfie overlays, so-called face filters such as Lens in Snapchat or FB. Thanks to them, we can put various kinds of funny accessories on the selected image or face appearing in real time in front of the phone camera: noses, bunny ears, glasses, and so on. It may seem trivially simple, even suppressing the feeling that you are dealing with AR. But there is an advanced coding hidden behind this seemingly simple application, technology for face detection, and head positioning analysis. It creates an illusion where a real object coexists with the one generated by device. All this happens in real time and is displayed on your smartphone screen. Not only yours but also the screen of those you are chatting with. On the basis of this example alone, we can observe the multiplication of simulations, meta narrations, non-existent things, and simulacra.

Similar applications adapted to smartphones are used as virtual measures, probes, and sensors interacting with the environment. The rules generated in this way are not yet precise. The problem lies in the proper recognition of the space surrounding a given object and rendering it to a digital map of the surface of their extremities and corners. The use of AR in this aspect is still limited. It is not only about the speed of processors used in smartphones, sophisticated algorithms for data analysis, and processing but also about their battery capacity. The processes occurring during an augmentation of reality are not energy-saving. Perhaps the next models of smartphones will be better prepared to effectively use the potentiality offered by AR or perhaps the market will be redirected to new devices, for example, improved smart glasses.

Smart glasses are another device created with the AR concept in mind, or actually completely dedicated to it. Some of them function as a kind of display that can be connected to a smartphone, but the ideal seems to be natural looking glasses, giving the illusion of virtual objects

in a real environment. There are different solutions – from small transparent screens built into glass, similar to glasses and projections on the glasses themselves to projections directly on the retina. They are special devices whose task is to mix different realities. The starting point here is the idea of producing illusions of three-dimensional objects projected on the real world and smart glasses constitute a completely different category of interfaces, giving us access to the digital objects. Such a device potentially eliminates the need for a TV set, computer monitor, or smartphone screen, as well as – thanks to properly designed manipulators or gesture detection – keyboards or touch screens. Unlike smartphones, smart glasses give us the ability to move freely in a physical environment. With them we do not need to keep our smartphone in hand. They allow us to perform our daily activities, while being surrounded by objects belonging to another – as Baudrillard wanted – non-existent world of simulacra.

It is important to note here, what is characteristic for this tool, that smart glasses allow us to move freely through a mix of realities. This activity could be compared to the introduction of Baudrillard's simulacra into everyday life. Therefore, it seems to be a logical step in the development of digital interfaces.

Smart glasses may be called a kind of portable computer, designed and dedicated to analyse and process images from cameras and sensors. They are capable of mapping the environment and translating it into digital language so it can be augmented. Everything must be done in real time. And it is not only the face, as in the Snapchat Lens I mentioned above. We're dealing here with very complicated spaces, like the room we're in. All this must be reproduced to fulfil the promise of extending the world with new dimensions.

AR devices have to cope with a detailed mapping of space: remembering it, orienting the user in new realities, rendering 3D objects, displaying them with the analysis of the light "falling" on them, and the perspective of the viewer, which – due to their ability to move freely – is highly variable. The process is called simultaneous localization and mapping (SLAM). If you place a 3D object in one place in the room and turn around to deal with something else for a while, that 3D object should be in the same place as before when you turn around again. Thus, AR gives the promise of combining two different worlds. One of them is experienced every day as a "real" entity, along with its implications, for example, purely physical interactions with our senses and body such as the threats we encounter while walking down the street in the real world. The other world is a world in which an avatar Chris, as well as other virtual objects generated by the device, imitate something that they are not in reality. However, by their resemblance to the real world, they become beings equally real in our consciousness. Smart glasses enable a dialogue between different realities, making them very attractive for use in all areas of life.
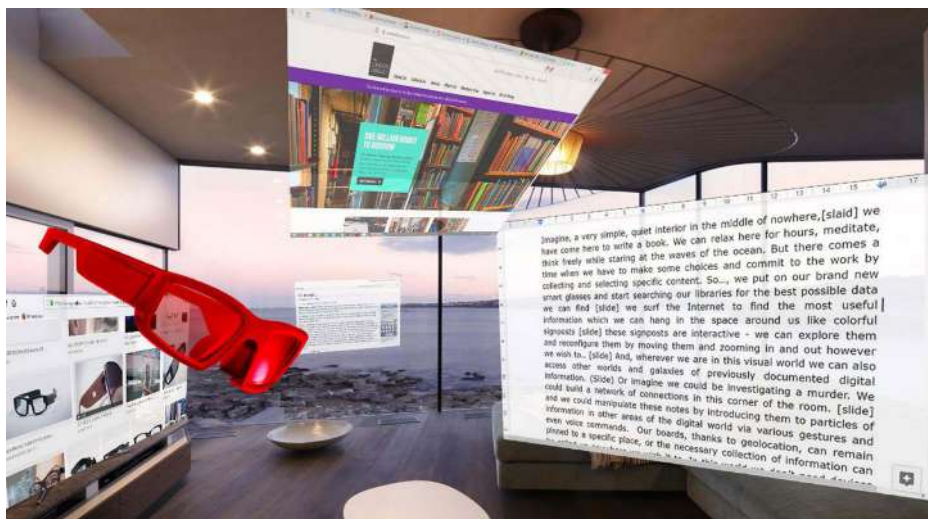
Figure 3. Jarosław Solecki, Artist's vision of augmented reality

AR technology is extremely promising from the perspective of the tasks that are assigned to VR. It seems that it may even take its place in the near future. It turns out that, despite the extraordinary excitement and promotion of virtual reality, people prefer to spend more time in real, tangible spaces than in those generated by computers. Perhaps this is related to the sense of security that AR gives as it is in constant contact with both worlds, not just one of them (McAlorum 2019).

As such, AR seems to have a better chance of practical application in everyday life. Smart glasses AR can become as popular as the smartphone. Soon they will be part of our everyday equipment and accompany us to work, study, and play, as a tablet does now, and before that a laptop, mobile phone, TV, notebook, or book.

AR in everyday life

Since the dawn of time, people have used visual methods to remember and communicate information. Examples of this include rock paintings, hieroglyphs, calligraphy, and, later, printed text, as well as paintings and various types of film art. Each of these examples is accessible to the average viewer thanks to new technologies. Nowadays, we can get access to them via computers or smartphones while surfing the Internet. AR, therefore, seems to be a logical development of this trend.

AR has unexplored cognitive potential as a kind of expansion of traditional information carrier and is a great opportunity for education. Medicine and aviation have long used real-space simulations in their everyday

educational work. The information we can assimilate with the help of this technology can take the form of stickers, banners, signs, icons, and three-dimensional scenes – everything we know from the flat screen of a computer or a smartphone. These include, for example, information from Google Maps or tutorials from YouTube. All of them are extended by movements, gestures, and gamification.

To realise the potential of the AR, we just need to imagine, for example, that we – complete amateurs – need to replace the oil and a filter in a diesel engine. We have no experience in this work. We are unable to locate the filter; we are unable to change the oil. The very word "diesel" is, at best, associated with the type of fuel we pour into the tank. We probably more closely connect "diesel" with the name of an Italian clothing company. However, using the Internet, we can find information that puts our knowledge in order. We can watch a tutorial on a smartphone or a computer screen that describes, step by step, the various tasks that need to be performed when changing the oil and its filter in a car with a diesel engine. However, the next stages of our work may be difficult. We have to memorize the individual steps and then recreate them. Although it is possible to play the tutorial again and again in real time if we have access to the Internet but it can be uncomfortable, sometimes even extremely difficult because of our dirty hands. What if AR technology was involved in this work? Wouldn't it be better if particular activities were displayed to us directly on the engine elements in the right order, along with all the useful tips?

In the case of using AR technology, the key moments of the tutorial together with detailed descriptions of necessary actions can be visualized directly on the repaired mechanism. All information can be given in various forms, e.g., short video clips or 3D animations. Through them we will learn the order of tightening screws and other activities – in other words, everything that even an amateur can do with the help of relevant tools. This kind of simulation will be great training for a trainee mechanic. It will also be useful for an experienced employee. Thanks to this technology, we can perform even very complicated specialised tasks without many hours of training. It is sufficient to follow the successive instructions of the tutorial. As we know already, we learn most quickly through action.

Similar examples provide us with an infinite number of opportunities for AR applications. The technology is already used by some garages, such as BMW, as well as huge warehouses, where optimization and speed of work are crucial. Because of this technology, we can reduce training time to an absolute minimum.

In the case of Honeywell, the goal is not only to efficiently absorb knowledge but also to transfer it. The company has a very experienced team of employees who have been gaining knowledge for years. Now, with AR headsets, a professional employee can capture the various stages of the task and add comments to them. Training materials prepared in this way are played back by new employees. It is estimated that with the help of

AR devices, trainees assimilate up to 80 percent of the material compared to 20 – 30 percent when they only read the manual (Overby 2019). This type of statement almost coincides with the Neuro-Insight company's 'Layered' studies based on the imaging of brain activity, which measure brain response to different types of stimulation.

> "Across the series of cognitive function measures carried out as part of the study, AR delivered almost double (1.9 times) the levels of visual attention compared to their non-AR equivalent.
>
> What we found in 'Layered' was that memory encoding was 70% higher in the AR tasks compared to the non-AR tasks. What this means is that AR can be a particularly powerful way to deliver information that is subsequently retained. Despite seeing higher visual attention for younger people, and stronger approach for men, the memory encoding response was similarly high for all groups of respondents.
>
> With the users' heightened emotional connection witnessed in the neuroscience study, simulation of interpersonal scenarios can also be powerful through AR. This can change the traditionally passive desktop video into a much more powerful and memorable training module. AR can create these situations where the user interacts with a holographic video to practice the given scenario. The heightened reality of the holographic video drives a deeper emotional reaction: the user's attention is 35% higher compared to traditional screen-based activity."

(Andrew 2018)

Technological achievements of AR technology are currently used, for example, in factories, where there is a need to operate various types of process control elements such as valves, switches, etc. Operating manuals can be designed for individual parts of the plant in real time and in the required order. The entire process can be more a game than guide or instruction. In theory, a serious task can be performed in an appropriate, predetermined way without prior preparation. As you can deduce from the example of the above-mentioned studies, the whole process is almost twice as efficient as using traditional methods, e.g. a printed manual.

The future that comes with the new technologies is not likely to be the world of students sitting on the benches, trying to absorb as many rules as possible in the form of text or dry information. Already today, with still considerable hardware limitations, AR appears to be a very practical technology that allows us to learn and solve problems much faster and thus more efficiently. AR is not just a simple projection of digital objects, which can only be compared to a thoughtless simulacrum precession. By introducing the interaction of generated objects with real ones, it also

gives the opportunity to communicate with other people, for example, specialists in a given field, who can direct our actions in real time from anywhere in the world. The AR technology gives us a possibility that we have not had before: almost completely omitting the tedious methods of learning, with a simultaneous increase in involvement in the teaching process itself. AR also enhances the self-confidence of learners, which in turn is of great importance for their activities. Involvement of this technology in the daily routine is also a significant achievement for disabled people. It helps to counteract social exclusion, paving the way to a normal life for many people.

Conclusion

As we have seen, augmented reality can be seen as an extremely interesting phenomenon. It may illustrate all aspects of culture and reveal educational and creative possibilities as well as the potential of being a permanent element of every human activity. It seems to be a tool with which we can optimize not only excursions in previously unknown spaces of the virtual world. I am convinced that AR also makes it more possible to thrive in the ever more complicated and volatile world of senses, references, and relations between different meanings, identities, symbols, and objects, which until recently were completely different – more stable.

Maybe it is a promise to discover a new way of getting to the many truths that surround us. Or maybe is it just another gadget and will only give us the illusion of unfettered freedom? Perhaps some dangerous restrictions can soon be built into AR devices and their software to prevent the spread of content that is inconsistent with the policy of given states, institutions, religions, and so on. Thinking about such developments can be frightening. Here we are beginning to reflect on the ethical problems of the whole venture: privacy issues, the question of cybercrime, and all the risks involved. But that is a formidable topic for another essay.

According to Baudrillard in *Precession of Simulacra*, we are dealing with four phases of an image: 1) It is the reflection of a profound reality; 2) It masks and denatures a profound reality; 3) It masks the absence of a profound reality; 4) It has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own simulacrum (1997: 6) Since some time, we have been learning to live in a world full of similar simulacrum. We are also creating tools and new technologies such as AR or VR to experience this kind of reality in greater depth. After all, perhaps when the end of our time will come, some of us will become avatars of themselves, immersed in a total simulation that can save our lives. We don't know the future, but one thing is certain, these new technologies open up new exciting opportunities.

To conclude, in my opinion, Baudrillard's theory of the precession of simulacrum, which is represented in AR, seems to indicate the

emergence of new dimensions of human existence in the postmodern world. The simulacrum – understood in this way – created in virtual reality likely bring hope for new technological solutions that will redefine the world around us. AR does not completely replace the real world with the world of simulacrum but opens the door for them more widely, becoming in their nature a unique bridge between many different realities. Simulacrum become an inherent part of reality.

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List of figures

Keywords

"The Tourist Gaze" as a Visual Experience

(theoretical and empirical reflections on the concept of tourism perceived as John Urry's visual consumption)

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Abstract

Experience from my research trip to Kenya within the TICASS project inspired me to examine John Urry's "tourist gaze". The article follows John Urry's thesis about the tourist experience being dominated by their sensual, mostly visual impressions. It attempts to provide theoretical and empirical reflections on the subject. According to Urry, the tourist experience is essentially visual and stimulates tourists to reflect on the destinations visited. The reflection is created and authorized by various social life-oriented discourses. The article outlines the background of the considerations with the description of the contemporary tourist and contemporary tourism as well as what we call the tourist experience. Then, it reflects on travelling and tourism as a form of visual consumption as conceptualized by John Urry. The theoretical part is supplemented with the description of the author's own experience and reflection on the tourist gaze. I also share my impressions (in a sense of subjective experiences and feelings) related to the tourist gaze (as a visual experience) from my research trip to Kenya. The article ends with a summary that includes comments on education, preparing to exercise free time activities, and tourism.

Introduction

Globalization, which is often used as a context for pondering on contemporary times and is a major contributor to the image of contemporary world, provides many premises upon which to reflect the condition of the world and human experience. The analyses of the processes and consequences of the global transformation (i.e., growing multicultural societies, different understandings of time and space as social categories, mobility, and migration) provide a valid contribution to the discussion of changes and the nature of individual and collective experiences and their development in ambiguous, ambivalent, and multicultural times.

As metaphorically described by Thomas Friedman[1], the separation between a Lexus and an olive tree reflects the nature of human reaction to globalization exceptionally well. The two trends compete with one another as regards individual experience and that of an ethnic group, but it is also true in the global social space. Therefore, human spatial and social mobility, with its variety of motivations, factors, and structural and functional diversity, is at the heart of interdisciplinary debates on the condition of a person as a participant of global changes. Today, people are more eager to move around, and they do it more frequently, but those changes are not definite. This creates an obstacle while examining relations between social and spatial mobility since they have become more complex. In current social conditions, we observe a number of impulses prompting us to redefine mobility and search for new interesting contexts for its interpretation. One of them is the entanglement of the ordinary (and extraordinary) experiences of a contemporary person in visuality and visualization, which defines and determines its functioning in virtually all fields of life. It is difficult to remain indifferent to all these phenomena, especially when visual messages are omnipresent and not only complement verbal messages but frequently substitute them as more accessible, clear, and comprehensible, especially for the younger generation. Visual messages provide new opportunities for interpersonal communication but also, in a broader context, intercultural communication. They have become important instruments and categories in mediated communication, as well as communication hampered by multidimensional social, cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. They are important components for communicating knowledge about ourselves and the surrounding world, and they often facilitate actual consensus and versatile understanding.

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1   See: Friedman 2001. While describing the nature of globalization, Friedman juxtaposes two clashing trends. The symbol of the first one is a Lexus – which means modernization, mobility, massive nature, and privatization as conditions determining economic success. The biblical olive tree symbolizes people's attachment to their roots, regardless how primitive or poor they are. These roots contribute to group identity, loyalty, solidarity, and trust. They are the foundation of the sense of security.

Globalization facilitates and promotes increased mobility and influences the directions and functions of the trips we make. Travelling, or spatial mobility, encompasses migration, commuting, and tourism. Tourism is a cultural phenomenon that enables us to meet other people and convey cultural values and content. It plays a cultural function or is the cultural function itself. Relations between tourism and culture represent cultural values and content and promote cultural exchange or diffusion, the understanding of different cultures, and assessment of interpersonal relations.

In a similar fashion to globalization, tourism has become an element and a product as well as a means of conveying culture. It is tourism, an interesting and prevailing form of contemporary mobility, which seems to be heavily entangled in interpretation contexts with the use of elements of visual culture. The experience of a tourist primarily depends on their perception. And since the perception depends on signs, tourism involves collecting images. "A tourist sees everything as signs (…). Across the world, an army of anonymous semiotics, the tourists, are fanning out in search of signs of Frenchness, typically Italian behaviour, characteristic oriental sites, typically American highways, and traditional English pubs" (Urry 2007: 7). Following John Urry, this article adopts the thesis about the domination of tourist experience by sensory-visual experience, and consequently it attempts to present theoretical and empirical reflections.

Tourism, tourist, and tourist experience
– sketch of the background

Tourism gained the status of an important and recognized field of social life at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, it became a subject of methodical interdisciplinary scientific reflection. In social sciences, tourism is "a sum of spatial mobility phenomena related to voluntary and temporary change of place in space, rhythm and environment and entering in personal contact with the environment in the destination (natural, cultural, or social)" (Przecławski 2003: 16). It involves a voluntary, temporary change of place, a trip, and a temporary stay outside our permanent place of domicile.

In a narrow sense, tourism is merely one type of travelling. It is a "destination-oriented" trip, service, product, and a consumption good (Podemski 2005: 9). In this sense, each trip involves consumption, in has economic and material sense as well as, in principle, metaphorically (while referring to use of senses, or "visual" consumption of impressions). However, not every trip is a holistic service itself. A trip may have an "open" formula, when a traveller-tourist chooses his/her destination, forms of contact and social environment (examples of such tourism include scientific, religious, and commercial trips, trips by correspondents and reporters, diplomatic

missions, and visits to family members or friends, i.e., unorganized tourism). Some authors and researchers (e.g., K. Podemski) refer to a *package tour*, a closed-formula trip with a package of services during the trip and stay at the destination, as a proper tourism (Podemski 2007: 9). This closed formula is presented, in particular, in travel catalogues, which show locations and describe the standard of accommodation (town, hotel), meals, and sometimes the opening and closing hours of the tourist attractions. The catalogue/package offers also indicate the "free time" that tourists may enjoy. The definition of tourism, adopted for the purpose of this article, does not include spatial mobility forms such as vagrancy, roaming, and vagabondism (Podemski 2007: 8).

John Urry has emphasized that the tourist experience is diverse in terms of its history and sociology. However, one may distinguish several main social practices described as tourism: 1) a method of spending one's free time, which in modern societies is a separate and organized form of a social practice (as opposed to working time), which is voluntary, free, discretional, non-profit oriented, and focused on satisfaction; 2) trips and temporary stays in a new location (locations) — the goal is to travel and stay at a venue beyond one's domicile, "elsewhere" for a short time; each tourist trip involves a return home after a relatively short time. The locations visited by tourists are not connected with their work and usually provide refuge from work (work involving earning a living but not necessarily), for which reason tourism has become increasingly popular free time activity in modern societies, and this mass interest in the activity is matched by new tourist services. The criteria for selecting a destination include expected and actual pleasant experiences in specific locations that should be different from what we experience on a regular basis. Due to a major social interest in tourism, there is a growing number of specialists in restoration of existing and building of new tourist facilities that cater for ever-changing tastes among tourists who represent various parts of the society, gender groups, or generations. (Urry 2007: 15–17).

The literature uses other common and broad understandings of tourism as the act of sightseeing, or visual consumption as it is increasingly often described. In this particular sense, tourism does not necessarily involve travelling and specific activities since it becomes more of an attitude to the surrounding world. "Sightseeing can be enjoyed not only by a *traveller*, *vagabond, immigrant*, but also *a resident.* (…) In this sense, one can become a tourist in their home town. (…) Leaving our home and moving to a new environment, however, is conducive to *sightseeing*, but sightseeing is not a necessary condition for travelling just as travelling is not a necessary condition for sightseeing" (Podemski 2005: 34).

Cognitively potent categories such as tourism and, in particular, a tourist (in the broad understanding of the term) have been discussed by humanists in the psychological and sociological contexts while referring to contemporary people (MacCannell 2002; Rojek, Urry 1997; Cohen 1997; Bauman 2011). Dean MacCannell, in A *New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1989),

which the author himself described as a new ethnographic report on the status of a modern society, describes an interesting idea. He defined a tourist as "an early postmodern figure: alienated but seeking fulfilment in his own alienation – nomadic, placeless, a kind of subjectivity without spirit, a "dead subject"" (MacCannell 2002: XIV). In a similar fashion, to replace Weber's pilgrim (from the modern world, still foreseeable, and with vision of cohesive future), Zygmunt Bauman proposed a category of a stroller, wanderer, tourist, and player ["from postmodernity, from trail which cannot be planned, since road network changes every day and new less and less clear signs are set at mobile crossroads (Bauman 1993: 17)]. A tourist has become a kind of a metaphor for someone who travels all his/her life, often without any guidance or maps, collecting various experiences and developing himself/herself and the world, not only the social world.

Theoretical and research analyses of travelling and tourism were institutionalized initially in the form of tourism sociology (one of sociology's sub-disciplines), and then in the 1990s, they attracted the interest of humanities and a multitude of other disciplines (Chłopecki 2010, pp. 264–274). These categories are now a fixed element of considerations and scientific research (not only by humanists) and continue to inspire separate reflections in this fairly new area, which is particularly interesting from the point of view of research, knowledge, and methodology.

Travelling and tourism as visual consumption in John Urry's concept

The inspiration to become involved in travelling and tourism to collect sensual experiences can be derived from a number of interesting publications by theoreticians and researchers of the sociology of tourism (Rojek, Urry 1997, MacCannell 2002, Urry 2007), sociology of leisure travel (Podemski 2005) and other scientific disciplines (Benjamin 1996, Bauman 2011). Although most of the authors referred to above consider tourism as an activity dominated by sight, it is not possible to reduce travel and tourist experience to this sense only. In many instances, a polysensoric travel experience cannot be treated solely "as a phenomenon comparable to watching a film or browsing webpages on the Internet", as emphasized by Krzysztof Podemski (2005: 13). A metaphorical approach to travelling (life as travel, surfing the Internet as travel) may certainly be an opportunity to understand the phenomena concerned, but it obstructs the actual understanding of tourism and travel, notions that can be reflected upon without reducing them to a kind of contemporary "voyeurism" (images available only on cinema, television, computer, or smartphone screens) (Podemski 2005: 13).

Regardless of the above, John Urry's The *Tourist Gaze* provides a basic inspiration for theoretical and empirical studies, as indicated in the introduction. According to earlier publications, for example, Eric Cohen

(1997), tourists seek a new spiritual centre. According to Dean MacCannell, tourists look for authentism whereas according to Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman 2011: 452), tourists leave home to find impressions and stories about those impressions – these are the only trophies they bring home and care about. Although the researchers above describe tourists as contemporary pilgrims, Zygmunt Bauman (2011) highlights that the tourist is no longer Weber's pilgrim, whereas the tourists discovered and described by John Urry do not look for anything; they merely look, watch, and gaze. They are deprived of all the features of a pilgrim described by Victor Turner who is rather an onlooker, a passer-by, and Walter Benjamin's *flaneur* (Podemski 2005: 75).

While making his overview of tourism, John Urry refers directly to the concept of a clinic and the clinical-medical gaze developed by Michel Foucault. In the introduction to his book, he justifies his thesis with a quote.

> "The clinic is perhaps the first attempt to subordinate the science and power to decisions based on the gaze […], a medical gaze is organized in a completely new manner. Primarily, it is no longer a gaze of just any observer, but a gaze of a doctor supported and legitimized by the institution […]. It is a gaze that is not restricted by a fine mesh of the structure […], but one which can and should recognize colours, changes, and slightest anomalies."

(Foucault 1999: 120–121)

After such an association and channelling his readers' attention, John Urry puts us at ease by saying that his book is not about such serious disciplines as medicine. On the contrary, "it is a book about pleasurable things, about tourism and travelling […]. About the consumption of goods and services, which in a way are not rudimentary but should produce pleasant and unusual experiences. […] While "on a trip" we observe our surroundings with much interest and curiosity. The world around us gives us joy, or at least this is what we expect it to do" (Urry 2005: 13–14). Our gaze at the world is socially organized and generates an association with a medical gaze. Although the scenario differs, while creating our free time pleasure, we are supported by numerous specialists "who teach us how to develop and improve the tourist gaze" (Urry 2005: 14). Therefore, our experiences may resemble those of a clinical nature.

According to John Urry, the tourist gaze involves the analysis of the visual tourist experience. However, the visual nature of tourism does not mean that it is purely image-oriented and individual. It is sometimes the contrary. For John Urry, the tourist gaze depends on the period, society, and social group (Urry 2005: 117–118). "The nature of visual perception is often collective and depends on multitude of social discourses that are organized by professionals, including photographers, writing travellers, tourist agents, tour operators, television presenters and tourism policy makers" (Crawshaw, Urry 1997: 176). In such a case, although sometimes it is one of main tourist

goals, it is difficult to develop an intimate relationship with the place we visit. Therefore, John Urry distinguishes two basic types of tourist gaze – romantic and collective. At the same time, he recognizes a number of functions they represent. The romantic gaze is something we experience alone, in private, with a personal attitude to the facility/site visited. It signifies a spiritual dimension and focuses on contemplating natural untarnished beauty (Urry 2007: 77–78). In such circumstances, the presence of other people or crowds diminishes the quality of the experience and makes the tourist gaze incomplete. The romantic gaze is sought by the tourist who wants to climb a mountain in solitude or stroll along a deserted beach (Urry 2007: 77–78). The development of mass tourism is destructive to this particular tourist gaze (Urry 2007: 78–89; Podemski 2005: 82–83). Paradoxically, the "romantic tourist", through their growing interest in sightseeing, adds to the destruction of the natural and untarnished beauty they seek and admire.

The opposite to the romantic gaze is the collective tourist gaze, which involves a group of people or a family. In contrast to the solitude of the romantic gaze, sociability is an important attribute. The experience is strengthened by creating a relevant group (collective) atmosphere during the visual consumption of the site visited/admired. The collective gaze involves a large number of other people. "It is the presence of tourists, people like us, that makes certain places attractive. We experience them collectively" (Urry 2007: 79). According to John Urry, an excellent example of the collective gaze is sightseeing in large cosmopolitan cities.

Tourism, in the opinion of John Urry, is a particular form of consumption related to the "consumption of places" (Urry 1995). According to the author, places are elements of space that are linked to the process of consumption/ utilization in free time, which is a temporal category distinct from work and designated to leisure, entertainment, and versatile development. Places can be consumed in one's free time "directly" and literally, when we consume the significance and identity determined by their designation (e.g. industry, history, architecture, environment), or indirectly by their use for the symbolic placement of products or services in regions related to them (e.g., wine from Burgundy, Bordeaux, or Champagne) (Podemski 2005: 77–78). Nevertheless, it is a visual consumption – Ford-like – when massive and standardized, and post-Ford-like when used for expressing diversity and individual character. The tourist gaze gives structure to contact with the strange, separates various types of pleasure related to locations and time, and determines the "extraordinary" as opposed to the "ordinary". The essence of the tourist gaze is to recognize and delineate distinct places which visually differ from images we encounter every day. According to Urry, the key to understanding the sense of tourism is the dichotomy of *sacrum* and *profanum*, ordinary and extraordinary, as well as common and uncommon. A contemporary tourist wants to see something distinctly different, something exotic, something that provides at least momentary (sometimes only apparent) detachment from everyday life and familiar places where they work and live. This is a sort of an escapism and pleasure (although condensed and visual only).

In the clinical understanding of the tourist gaze (following Michel Foucault), John Urry recognizes the major role played by photography as a new form of visual perception (Urry 2007: 200). Taking photographs is in a sense a relationship verging on power and knowledge, and it may lead to the appropriation of the object photographed. Apparently, it is an activity that reflects and preserves the reality. In fact, the interpretation of that reality gives and builds a new sense in the process of looking, seeing, and observing. "A photographer […] is also observed and photographed himself. He is simultaneously the spectator and the party observed. […] He is also a component of travelling and tourism" (Urry 2007: 204).

Urry has emphasized that since anyone can be a photographer, anyone can also be a semiotician – amateur – and photography is a mechanism that promotes the democratization of all forms of human experience "[…] which provides a structure to travelling. It is a pretext to stop and (click) take a picture and then continue the trip. (…) To a large extent, tourism has become a search for photogenic objects, whereas the trip is guided by a strategy of picture taking, or materialization and privatization of memories […]" (Urry 2007: 205–206). Thus, photography plays a tremendously important role in the process of tourism democratization. Tourism and photography are entwined in a double helix. Both practices have set the contemporary world in motion, leading to (promoting) what John Urry refers to as the tourist gaze (Urry 2007: 236–240). Such tourist and tourism status strengthens J. Urry's opinion on the subordination of other senses involved in a tourist experience to the principal role played by visual impressions of various types (Urry distinguishes romantic gaze and collective gaze, as well as a spectator, divine, anthropological, ecological, and mediated gazes). Nevertheless, it is always one or the other form of a visual consumption of places we visit.

Own experience and reflections on the tourist gaze (African impressions of a tourist-researcher from Europe)

A research trip is a form of tourism based on an open formula according to which a traveller-tourist chooses a place, the form of contact with that place, and the social environment. It is a kind of journey with specific goals related to discovery, research, study, or documentation. Apart from the formal goals of a research project, a participant (participants) of the journey seeks his/her individual goals which are defined by individual needs, experience, and interests. In this part of the article, I provide a brief overview of my individual impressions (understood as reactions, experiences, and subjective feelings) related to experience/tourist gaze (visual experience) during a science and research trip to Kenya[2].

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2 Project TICASS (MSCA Research and Innovation Staff Exchange – Horizon 2020; Grant Agreement Number: 734602).

Undoubtedly, apart from the implementation of project goals, the trip was designed to produce personal benefits from a visit to an unknown location, a location which was exotic and very intriguing for a European traveller. The place visited evokes associations with the exceptional beauty of nature (both fauna and flora) and numerous familiar media images of the poverty and suffering encountered by African people. Some places were well known from popular movies (*Out of Africa*, director: S. Pollack; 1985; *The White Masai*, director: H. Huntgeburth, 2005) and important from a historical point of view. The same also applies to locations we learn about from travel guide books (full of visual messages), literary publications (Blixen 2011, Wood 2007), reports (Wojciechowska 2012; Gierak 2016), and press articles. To a large extent, the "narrative imagination" has contributed much to the image of the location (in terms of physical and social space as well as the relations between their components). It translates into the ability to understand the

> "situation of a person who is different than us (and even put oneself into the position of that person), being an inquisitive reader of that person's history, and trying to understand that person's emotions, wishes and desires. The narrative imagination is free from criticism since we place ourselves and our opinions into relations with others. Although we can associate ourselves with an unknown person whose life we can only imagine, it does not mean that we actually identify ourselves with that person. It only means that we can perceive that person through our own goals and aspirations. The first step to the understanding of the world from the point of view of «Others» is fundamental for any informed judgement, since otherwise we do not know what we actually judge unless we understand what «Others» do and comprehend the sense of what they consider important in the context of their historical and social experience."

> (Nussbaum 2008: 19)

Our personal contact with that space (both physical and social), imagined and known, as far as reported by other people, led to reflections, tourist reflections including and related to the visual saturation of our experience of other places. In her speech, Olga Tokarczuk (writer and this year's Noble Prize winner) drew our attention to the experience of a contemporary tourist: "There is no longer a need to write a journal, since we can take pictures and send those pictures through social media to the rest of the world and anyone instantaneously" (Tokarczuk 2019). This has also been my experience. I watched and took pictures, and I shared my pictures with others on social media. The tourist gaze usually precedes other senses and the integration of sensual experiences into the perception of a new world. My tourist gaze was more of a romantic than a collective type. It involved

"solitude, privacy and a personal, slightly spiritual attitude to the object. A romantic tourist wants to experience a place while being alone, or possibly in the company of people he/she considers "important". [...] The romantic experience is a continuous search for such objects to be contemplated in solitude [...]" (Urry 2007: 237). My gaze was a reflective humanist gaze of anti-colonial, existential, and "feminine" types (Podemski 2005: 226–302). Considering that my tourist gaze required solitude, privacy, and a personal relationship with the object, the solitude of the Kenyan people became an object in itself. During my exploration of the tourist destination (Kenya), I noticed that solitude is an important experience of its citizens. Solitude may have different faces, inspiring us in theoretical and empirical studies. In my reflection, I assume that solitude is a state intentionally selected by a person (provoking creativity, supporting self-reflection and self-fulfilment), but in the case of loneliness, it may also lead to depression, stagnation, and regression. I was inspired to reflect on it in the photographs taken during my study visit and my tourist experience in the vicinity of Mombasa and Kilifi, Kenya. While analysing the photographs taken during the trip, I selected the following categories of my tourist gaze on the solitude of Kenyan people: the creative solitude, the solitude of a woman, the solitude of a child, the solitude in a crowd, the solitude of another person, the solitude in illness and disability, and the solitude of a white man in black Africa.

My reflections comprise a learning and reporting etude that can be used to illustrate my own experience of a tourist gaze on the one hand, and to bring back and organize my memories on the other hand. This has become a *post factum* trip journal, developed after my return from a tourist destination. While using photographs as a source and a method to record the reality, I followed Urry's comments regarding photography and a message encapsulated in words once said by Jerzy Busza: "The mere act of releasing the shutter in a camera to preserve an image on a light-sensitive film is, at the same time, a symbolic record of photographer's mental view when he takes a picture" (1981: 26). Therefore, the photographs presented below betray my subjective attitude of a researcher-tourist who is sensitive to signs of solitude in the area concerned.

Photo 1. The creative solitude
(Author: L. Marek, Kenya, March 2018)

Photo 2. The solitude of a child
(Author: L. Marek, Kenya, December 2018)

Spaces of Transfers and Visual Management of Human Mobility

Photo 3. The solitude of a child
(Author: L. Marek, Kenya, March 2018)

Photo 4. The solitude of a white man in black Africa
(Author: L. Marek, Kenya, December 2018)

Photo 5. The solitude of a house
(Author: L. Marek, Kenya, December 2018)

At this point, it is worth referring to the Urry's statement that a tourist experience is essentially of a visual type and conducive to reflections on the venue explored. It is created and authorized by various social life discourses. My observations, experiences, and reflections are close to what Urry claimed. In any moment of the tourist experience, various senses contribute to the awareness of people and things in space and time (Urry 2008: 231). Although the tourist experience is polysensory by nature and virtually involves all of our senses, these senses are subordinate to the visual perception. The experience comprises static and dynamic forms of the visual consumption of locations we visit. At the same time, it promotes the experience described as the tourist gaze.

Summary

The contemporary tourist experience may (although it does not have to) have a polysensoric character. The tourist industry has developed toward offering numerous possibilities of exploring views and tourist attractions involving various senses (Hulten, Broweus, van Dijk 2011). Senses ceased to be treated solely as biologically developed acquisition instruments, and since they are biological, they do not follow social conventions. Their unquestionable correlation with the prevailing cultural behaviour code and model is used effectively by the tourist industry. Despite the common acceptance of the polysensoric nature of a tourist experience, many researchers consider travelling (and impressions related to it) as a primarily visual exercise (Urry 2007; Rojek, Urry 1997; Cohen 1997). Undoubtedly, the omnipresence of pictures (visual content, iconography) which accompany the experience and are placed in the social environment is one of reasons for this. The contemporary versatile experience is saturated with visual content.

"Everything that is visual has become an important experience in human life" (Barnard, citation from Sztompka 2005: 11), or "it is central for any visual experience in our everyday life" (Mirzoeff, citation from Sztompka 2005: 11).

Contemporary culture is saturated with images. The specific and omnipresent visual *entourage* has become a constituent part of our ordinary experience in various fields of our lives. Some experiences involve more images and visual symbols than others. An example of the above is tourism, the tourist experience, and the industry related to it. The tourist gaze is more *visuality* than *vision*. It is guided by different principles, and the development of visual perception fields takes place beyond our physical perception of objects. Therefore, we may actually distinguish meaningful elements (views, tourist attractions) that comprise a picture which represents reality already subjected to a preliminary interpretation (selection, processing, and reconstruction) by a tourist. Since the end of the 19th century, photography has been used to record (prolong, "capture") the tourist gaze.

A tourist experience is dominated and, in fact, determined by eyesight, and as such it is subject to criticism. "A person who relies solely on his/her sight is ridiculous. The collectors of images, in particular those with photographic cameras hanging on their necks, are reproached for their superficial contact with the environment, people, and places. […] The mere admiration of sights can be discrediting. Sight can be one of the most superficial of all senses, obstructing our true experience which should involve also other senses, and which requires time needed to become fully immersed" (Buzard 1993; Wordhsworth 1984; citation from: Urry 2007: 235-236). Increasingly often, people emphasize the need/value of education in the preparation for full participation in a "tourist situation", for a complete and true tourist experience. The experience necessitates cautiously exercised mindfulness and in-depth reflection. Tourist culture, or its proper use, necessitates a responsible engagement and concentration, although the opposite might be a common belief. Among our other free time activities, tourism is "free from concerns, problems and duties", and as such is mistakenly considered less important in the process of education. Free time education (including education for tourism) "is an important element of promoting human activity on individual and collective levels. It is a long-term (life-long), intentional process […]. On the one hand, its teleology concentrates on personal competences to organize one's free time and, on the other hand, on raising social awareness to give and maintain a relevant importance of the quality of life (including free time)" (Marek 2012: 160). The application of a democratic free time paradigm (supportive and participative education) seems to be particularly valuable in the development of responsible and versatile tourist behaviours (Marek 2012: 163). It should focus on building critical awareness regarding one's free time. Such an education paradigm is emancipative in its nature and frees awareness regarding the (auto)creation of true and complete experience, an experience which is responsible but at the same time free of barriers (perceptive, personal, and cultural).

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List of illustrations

- Photo 1. *Creative solitude* (Author: L. Marek, Kenya, March 2018).

- Photo 2. *The solitude of a child* (Author: L. Marek, Kenya, December 2018).

- Photo 3. *The solitude of a child* (Author: L. Marek, Kenya, March 2018).

- Photo 4. *The solitude of a white man in black Africa* (Author: L. Marek, Kenya, December 2018).

- Photo 5. *The solitude of a house* (Author: L. Marek, Kenya, December 2018).

"The ways in which people engage with their environment and with each other have changed as a result of transformations in communication, mobility, and ways to access information. This collection of essays, written by scholars and researchers from a range of countries, offers theoretical insights, provides case studies, and analyzes strategies on the scope of visual communication as well as of geo-cultural management of mobility, to understand new spaces and dynamics of human interaction."

- Prof. Flavia Stara