BERNADETT CSURGÓ

SPACE AND SOCIETY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Space and spatial differences have gained increasing attention in social sciences in recent years. An eclectic range of scholars, such as Michel Foucault (2000), Antony Giddens (1985), Derek Gregory and John Urry (1985), Henri Lefebvre (1992) Nigel Thrift (2006) and even Manuel Castells (2009) highlighted the significance of spatiality in social life. Space and place offer inspiring frameworks for all of the topics studied within sociology and related social sciences. It is also reflected in the large number of papers submitted for this Special Issue. As a result of a rigorous selection and review process eleven articles are presented in this Special Issue. Each of the articles contributes important insights into the relationships between society and space. Although the papers do not include all of the problems linked to space in social sciences, all of them are connected to this issue and discuss contemporary problems of space and society.

The dynamics of social and spatial relationships with a focus on inequality, poverty and ethnicity are presented in the first four papers which emphasise social and spatial exclusions. The first paper by *Tünde Virág* presents the formation of a Roma ghetto in a small rural town in Hungary. Her analysis shows how urban policies and institutional changes resulted in the transformation of a socially and ethnically heterogeneous neighbourhood into a stigmatized ghetto. *Kata Fehér* also analyses the question of spatial and social segregation in a micro community from a former industrial mid-sized-town in Hungary with a focus on the spatial construction of symbolic and social boundaries. *András Vigvári* analyses the question of spatial inequalities in Hungary from a new perspective. By investigating the lives of poor Budapest residents who originated from rural areas, his paper provides a new approach to understanding rural-urban relations and spatial inequalities in Eastern European societies. Rural-urban division and symbolic struggle are also at the centre of *Cecilia Fe L Sta Maria's* paper. Based on an analysis of photographs, maps, field notes and interviews, the paper demonstrates the spatial consequences of urbanisation and the monumentalisation of urban environments utilising Lefebvre's, Bourdieu's and Giddens's concepts on space in Matnog, Sorsogon, Philippines. The paper presents the spatial machinations which are orchestrated to construct polemical spaces that deftly conceal spaces occupied by the poor.

The subsequent four papers provide insights into different aspects of rural-urban relationships. *Peter Ehrström's* paper discusses new producer-consumer relations concerning local food in the context of rural gentrification in a suburban community in Finland. The local food is the focus of *Riccardo Brozzi* and his co-authors' – *Agnieszka Elzbieta Stawinoga, Christian Hoffmann, Thomas Streifeneder's* – paper. The analysis of a representative sample of 498 consumers in South Tyrol proves that consumers' cultural background and their place of residence as a spatial pattern significantly influence attitudes towards local food purchase. Another

aspect of rural-urban relationships and the role of urban newcomers in rural places are presented in the paper by *Judit Farkas.* In her paper, the urban-rural dichotomy is presented through an analysis of the narratives of urban newcomers in the case of a Hungarian ecovillage. *Máté Tamáska's* paper analyses the process of suburbanisation in Hungary through the case of a small historical town Komárom–Koppánymonostor. The paper analyses the formation of a suburban townscape with a special focus on its morphological aspects.

The last three papers explore different aspects of local and territorial developments. *Krzysztof Gorlach* and his co-authors *Martyna Wierzba-Kubat, Anna Jastrzębiec-Witowska* and *Piotr Nowak* analyse the role of food in regional rural development in Poland. They suggest and apply a new extra-human approach combined with a neo-endogenous perspective to the analysis of local food products in the rural development context. *Eliza Bodor-Eranus, Hanna Kónya* and *László Letenyei's* paper presents research on collaboration networks of local governments in the Kaposvár subregion in Hungary. This paper identifies the actors who benefited from the structural characteristics of the collaboration network of local governments. Finally, the last paper, *Anna Augustyn* and *Gusztav Nemes's* work presents an analysis of social marketing components of projects in the European Network for Rural Development database. They highlight that the values related to social networking and bottom-up rural development approaches are essential for food-driven innovation in rural areas.

Papers in this Special Issue investigate many aspects of spatiality in various social contexts. The presented research outcomes highlight the mutual influence of space and society. Most of the papers focus on places and localities, however it does not mean that only the micro-spaces of everyday life are important. Macro-spaces at regional, national or even global level are also considered. All of the papers place significant emphasis on the heterogeneity of territorial context and place-relatedness of social life. It is hoped that the papers selected and presented in this Special Issue will inspire social scientists to include spatial aspects more often in their research and analysis. This Special Issue aims to highlight the growing interest of sociologists in the concept of space too.

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