TSAKHKADZOR: THE SPACE OF "OTHER SPACES"

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The present epoch would perhaps rather be the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity; we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a great life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.

M. Foucault[1]

Modern urban space is multi-layered and uneven - we draw fine lines in it so that places that separate different life modes may be very close to each other. Many space zones in our life are arranged so strangely that the person who gets there begins to feel the mobility of the borders of "public" and "private", "familiar" and "unfamiliar", "here" and "there", "mine" and "other's", "near" and "far"etc. This is due to the transformation of the city that gives rise to new forms of organization of urban space and the flow of everyday life. The complexity of the urban environment tells that today we are dealing with instability and uncertainty of life contexts: different place codes overlap, pass into each other and hence - the connection in one space of heterogeneous, attached landscapes takes place. We do not live in an empty space in which individuals and things can be placed. Rather we live within a set of relationships that define different locations not reducible to each other. It is in this context that Foucault's notion of heterotopia can shed a new light.

Heterotopia: alterity in a commonplace. There are two polar codes that can be used to analyze the city through the optics of the "space" category - "utopia" and "heterotopia". Faucault defines utopias as emplacements with no real place. "They are emplacements that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of society. It is society itself perfected, or else it is society turned upside down, but in any case, these utopias essentially are fundamentally unreal spaces"[2]. The arrangement of a place designated in the logic of utopia seeks to clarity and the homogeneity. Formal rationality in this

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[1] **M. Foucault**. Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias/ Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory. Edited by N. Leach. NYC: Routledge, 1997. p.330.
[2] Ibid., p. 333.

case prevails over a variety of informal practices. For Foucault utopia is a fiction that refracts the reality (space) around the author who creates it. In contrast to utopia, heterotopia proves the impossibility of utopia's existence due to the specificities of real practices. It has the power to juxtapose several spaces in a single real place, several emplacements that are incompatible.The term was introduced by Michel Foucault in a lecture for architects (1967), pointing to various institutions and places that interrupt the apparent continuity and normality of ordinary everyday space. Since they inject alterity into the sameness, the commonplace, the topicality of everyday society, Foucault called these places "hetero-topias" – literally "other places"[3]. "There are also, and this probably in all culture, in all civilization, real places, effective places, places that are written into the institution of society itself, and that are a sort of counter-emplacements, a sort of effectively realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted; a kind of places that are outside all places, even though they are actually localizable. Since these places are absolutely other than all the emplacements that they reflect, and of which they speak, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias"[4]. The term was borrowed from the medical and biological contexts (even though Foucault never explicitly referred to this), where it was used to describe a phenomenon of atypical localization of tissues and parts of organs namely their presence in an unusual place, which does not impact normal functioning and development of the organism[5].

Heterotopia turned out to be a concept that can capture and denote a new relation to space and the world as a whole.When Michel Foucault coined the term, he wanted to draw attention to how this division of space is changing in modern societies, and more specifically in modern cities. Meanwhile Foucault himself strictly adhered to the principle of inconsistency, i.e. the irreducibility of the term to a coherent classification. His examples of practical implementation of heterotopias are from different contexts, they are united only by the property of combining functions and fragments of many spaces in one space. Heterotopias are associated also with a break in the normal flow of time, i.e. its subjective perception. What appears to be real in heterotopia is actually a parallel real world that reflects reality to the extent necessary for building the space of heterotopia. It is not only a specific place but also a way of seeing it, subjectively feeling it, and distinguishing it from the General space, both by a person and by a separate, local, "small" culture.

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[3] **M. Dehaene, L. De Cauter**. Heterotopia and the City Public Space in a Postcivil Society. London: Routledge, 2008.

[4] **M. Foucault**. Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias/ Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory. Edited by N. Leach. NYC: Routledge, 1997. p.330

[5] **S. Lax**. Heterotopia from a Biological and Medical Point of View/Other Spaces: The Affair of Heterotopia. Ed. By R. Ritter and B. Knaller-Vlay. Graz: HAD-DokumentezurArchitektur 10, p. 115.

The Foucauldian "trinity" that characterizes heterotopias, namely their ability to represent, challenge and invert other spaces within themselves, appears as a productive and attractive way to take a fresh look at the world around. In the essay "On other spaces: utopias and heterotopias", the author emphasizes that modernity is characterized not by time, as in the XIX century, but by space, and not by space as a set of places (as in the Middle Ages) or length (as in Modern times), but by space as an emplacement. This view assumes that space is seen as a set of neighborhood relations between points and elements that can be described as "series", "trees", or "networks". Foucault speaks of space as the relationship between elements, defined both: by techniques for manipulating these relationships and by the knowledge that defines them. Thus, space appears to us as a set of different emplacements (relations between objects), that interact with each other, neutralize, suspend, and even reverse the relationships that underlie other spaces. Thereby these are spaces in which the ordinary normative order is modified, or rather more precisely, where certain norms of ordinary life are questioned. At the same time, Foucault emphasizes that heterotopias perform a compensatory function in relation to other spaces: as spaces of representations, they give a new, changing idea of what is happening in other spaces.

Tsakhadzor: distinctive features and topicality. Tsaghkadzor is a resort town and urban municipal community, located north of the capital Yerevan in the Kotayk Province. According to the 2016 census, the town has a population of 900.The town has a highly developed tourism infrastructure, including number of luxurious hotels, resorts and amusement facilities. Tsaghkadzor ski resort, which is located just above the town, was fully modernized during the first decade of the 21st century. It is the second Armenian city after Yerevan to have the largest number of hotels. Many luxury hotels and resorts were opened recently to serve the town during the summer and winter seasons. Besides, Tsaghkadzor is among the 3 towns of Armenia that are allowed to accommodate gambling houses and activities within urban area.

The case is noteworthy given the fact that the town space is strictly divided to three completely different zones, such as
– living space,
– luxury rest space,
– gambling activities space.

Thus Tsakhkadzor appears as a single space where non-combinable emplacements are actually combined. These physical, concrete and localizable spaces draw not only the physical fine lines, but also the boundaries of the imaginable, an area in which people's thought encounters objects or patterns that it can neither locate nor order They break the explicit continuity and "normality" of ordinary everyday space of inhabitants, imposing "otherness" into their commonplace.These special spaces have interesting features: on the one

hand, they are in contact with the ordinary everyday spaces they are able to influence, on the other—they strictly contradict them. From the dual nature of contact and rejection grow the main characteristics of Tsakhkadzor given as a heterotopias, namely

    − the separation from other spaces (both symbolic and practical),

    − the ability to reconcile objects within other spaces on the basis of the principles of heterotopy itself.

Next let us turn to the analysis of more specific indicators of the Tsakhkadzor space based on the results of applied sociological research, which allows to identify the phenomena of combination of non-combinable spaces and hence – life contexts in a single space that interrupt the apparent continuity and normality of ordinary everyday space.

Urban community: social connections, safety and trust. According to the results of the study[6], the absolute majority of residents consider the town to be a kind of oasis of safety and security. Perception of the safety of the urban environment is closely related to the density of social connections and a high degree of social trust that in conjunction comprises a community.

Chart 1

Frequency distribution of responses to the question
"In your opinion, is Tsakhkadzor a secure place to live?"
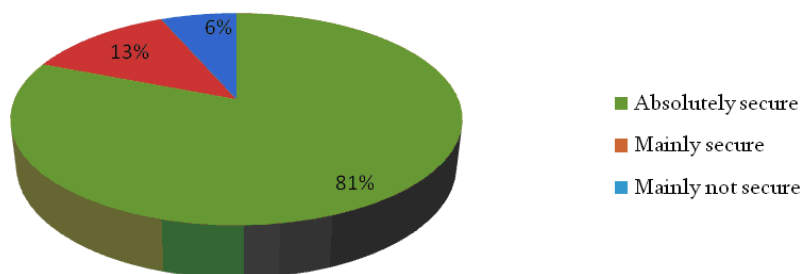
■ Absolutely secure
■ Mainly secure
■ Mainly not secure

Here are some indicators that give a picture of an ordinary everyday space of Tsakhkadzor and, in our view, are typical for a rural community.

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[6] The analysis draws on data from 165 standardized interviews conducted with Tsakhkadzor residents in March-April 2019. The sample population was designed according to the multi-stage random sample with 90% confidence interval (the general population amounted to 1,288 people and the mean square deviation was equal to 0.25). No significant correlations or dependences were found between given distributions and socio-demographic or geographical parameters.

– 45.2% of respondents personally know 91-100% of Tsakhkadzor residents, 35.5% know 81-90% of them and 6.5% are acquainted with 71-80% of residents;

– 91.7% of respondents do not block the door of the house, and 87.1% can keep the door open even leaving the apartment/house for a short time;

– 90.3% of respondents usually leave the front door keysat with the neighbors or in another accessible place;

– 96.8% of respondents open the door when strangers knock;

– 80.6% of respondents do not use security systems that protect the house/building (video cameras, door phone, etc.);

– 87.1% of respondents do not have window bars in their apartments/houses;

– 94% of respondents move around the city only on foot;

– 83.9% of respondents can easily walk around the city alone in the late evening or at night time.

Besides given characteristics, the emotional attachment to the place is also very pronounced among the respondents. This is evidenced by the reluctance of the absolute majority (77%) to change their place of residence if there are opportunities. This reluctance is due solely to subjective factors, such as

– shared memories,
– biography,
– place significance,
– people.

This is exactly the case when we can confidently talk about the rootedness of a place. From this point of view, we can speak of the city as reproducible stable relations (inherently communal) localized in space. It can be resumed that

– Tsakhkadzor is a space of social connections, safety, solidarity, trust, care and common destiny.

– This is the city that sociologists think about in terms of memory, shared destiny, communities, localities, attractions, established routes, familiar faces, and shared benefits.
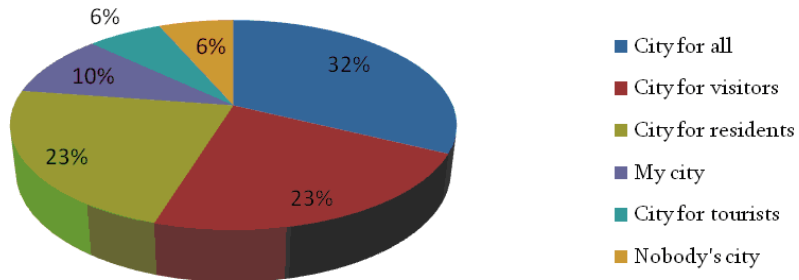
– This is a city where personal memories echo common ones, a space that is conceptualized in terms of community and local identity.

Meanwhile, despite of the fact that characteristics of urban space stated below comply with classical sociological conceptualization of a community, we can find significant inconsistencies in perception, which arise from the very logic of urban space that do not allow to stop the analysis at this point.

Other spaces: combination of non-combinable. Throughout the study we received fairly interesting data regarding the question of who actually owns the city in the subjective perception of residents.

Chart 2

**Frequency distrubution of responces to the question
"In your opinion, whose city is Tsakhkadzor?"**

- City for all
- City for visitors
- City for residents
- My city
- City for tourists
- Nobody's city

In response to the question "Whose city is Tsakhkadzor?" 23% of residents say "visitors" and exactly the same number believes that the city belongs to local residents. It is noteworthy that only 6% of respondents consider the city to be "their own". Moreover it is equal to the number of responses according to which Tsakhkadzor is "nobody's place". We get approximately the same distribution when answering the question about the purpose of the city itself. Only 48% of respondents consider Tsakhkadzor to be a place to live, while 39% of residents perceive it as a space for rest.

Chart 3

**Frequency distribution of responses to the question
"What is the main purpose of the city?"**

- Living
- Rest
- Work
- Fun
- Solitude
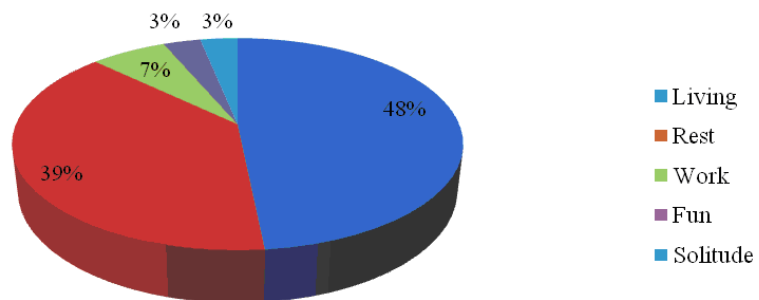
These results are not surprising given the fact that on both sides of people (local community), in close physical proximity, there is a completely different life. It is so different from their own that it is as if "in some other place" and they are separated from it by a line that cannot be crossed. These places have characteristic features.

– The common feature of these spaces is while being in it, one can say – "I am here, but I am not here" or "I am another."

– Different spaces of this kind cannot be built in a linear sequence; they are mutually juxtaposed, infiltrated in each other.

– These spaces and counter-spaces are related to all other places that they repeat and simultaneously negate.

– The city space is thought of as fundamentally heterogeneous - "mine", "someone else's", "someone else's in an existential sense", and therefore it is unequal to itself and manifests itself as socially stratified, multiplying in subjective perception and combining a variety of heterotopies and heterochrony.

– These spaces are strictly divided. If previously, people moved between different places and all remained part of a single whole, now "other places" or boundaries are increasingly built to separate people in a various emplacements within the same space. And this is not only physical (geographical) separation but also emotional sense of differentiation, which is reflected in everyday practices of people.

It turns out that within the same urban space, on the "city-community", "city of solidarity", or on "our familiar city" is overlaid a "city for others",a "city for all", an "unfamiliar city", which appears as an opening and invitation for everyone. But that's not all. In the"city-community" and "city-discovery" is embedded one more "another space" – a "city-fiction", a "city-image", which appears as an enchanting spectacle, a kaleidoscope of individual, extremely attractive, well-selling and changing images. This is a photographed, projected, imaginative city, a "city for sale", which is characterized by design, aesthetics, aggressive advertising, diversification of services and speed. This is an attractive, spectacular, alluring, hyper-modern, impersonal space in which there is no significant, personal, common. These are places that are existing and non-existing at the same time. On the one hand, Tsakhkadzor can be considered an urban space in which "their own city " (that according to respondents include living areas, a city square, the Orbeli Brothers House Museum and the Kecharis monastery) coexist with "other spaces" - places of entertainment that residents do not include in the list of significant urban places of "their city".At the same time, when asked what makes this particular city different, i.e. what comprises the constitutive core of the city; the most frequent answers of respondents are – "local residents", "tourists" and "snow". It turns out that the perception of residents constitutive core of the city does not include urban places, instead it is comprised of people (along with snow) while the presence of "others" is considered as an integral element of the city.

ՍՈՆԱ ՍԱՂԱԹԵԼՅԱՆ – *Ծաղկաձոր. «այլ տարածությունների» տարա-*
ծությունը – Հոդվածում ցույց են տրված Մ. Ֆուկոյի «հետերոտոպիա» հասկա-
ցության կիրառման արդիականությունը և հնարավորությունները ժամանա-
կակից քաղաքային տարածության սոցիոլոգիական իմաստավորման շրջա-
նակներում: Հիմնվելով կիրառական սոցիոլոգիական հետազոտության արդ-
յունքների վրա՝ փորձ է արվում դիտարկել Ծաղկաձորի՝ իբրև հանգստավայ-
րի և քաղաքային համայնքի տարածությունը որպես հետերոտոպիա կամ այլ
տարածությունների տարածություն: Այս մոտեցումը թույլ է տալիս բացահայ-
տել չհամակցվող տարածությունների համակցման և հետևաբար՝ կենսական
տարբեր համատեքստերի համագոյության տրամաբանությունը մեկ տարա-
ծության մեջ, որոնք խախտում են քաղաքային առօրեական տարածության
թվացյալ շարունակականությունը և սովորական կարգը:

Բանալի բառեր – *Ծաղկաձոր, քաղաքային տարածություն, հետերոտոպիա, հա-*
մայնք, սովորական կարգ, «այլ տարածություններ»

СОНА САГАТЕЛЯН – *Цахкадзор. пространство "иных пространств"* –
Обосновывается актуальность и возможности применения концепции "геterото-
пии" Фуко в рамках социологического понимания современного городского про-
странства. На основе результатов прикладного социологического исследования
предпринята попытка рассмотреть пространство курортного города и городского
муниципального сообщества Цахкадзор как гетеротопию или пространство иных
пространств. Данный подход позволяет выявить особенности сочетания несоче-
таемых элементов и, следовательно, жизненных контекстов в едином пространст-
ве, которые нарушают кажущуюся непрерывностьи порядок обыденного повсе-
дневного пространства.

Ключевые слова – *Тсахкадзор, городское пространство, гетеротопия, место,*
сообщество, обычный порядок, "другие пространства"

ABSTRACT

The relevance and application of Foucault's concept of "heterotopy" within the framework of the sociological understanding of modern urban space is substantiated. Based on the results of applied sociological research, an attempt was made to consider the space of the resort town and the urban municipal community of Tsaghkadzor as a heterotopy or space of other spaces. This approach allows us to identify the peculiarities of the combination of incongruous elements and, consequently, life contexts in a single space, which violate the seeming continuity and order of the ordinary everyday space.

Keywords: Tsakhkadzor, urban space, heterotopia, emplacement, community, commonplace, other spaces

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