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City Urbanism and Planning through Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy

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Introduction

Deleuze's philosophy has sought to challenge the intellectual legacy of the enlightenment and modernity, as well as the taken-for-granted assumptions of the subject-object, self-other, human-nature, ideal and real, and so on. From beginning to end, Deleuze has been the thinker of the “event” and has emphasized the concept of “becoming”. When we consider being on the concept of “becoming”, then concepts such as “essence” and “nature” lose their meaning; As a result, all the concepts and understandings we have of existence are constantly being constructed.

Deleuze has been influenced by other philosophers such as Henri Bergson, David Hume, Gottfried Leibniz, Immanuel Kant, and Baruch Spinoza. He was a philosopher who challenged essentialist, idealistic, and interpretive philosophies, and introduced a philosophy which based upon “agency” is not limited to humans and can be produced from the heterogeneous and more-than-humans elements through agencements. In terms of a Deleuzian topology, the processes of reterritorialization and deterritorialization represent a kind of process of differentiation through which spaces are produced. So, in short, Deleuze sought to expose “the geography of philosophy” or “Geophilosophy” through this kind of “spatial awareness” (in opposition to one-dimensional historicism). This shows that why Deleuze's philosophy has a language that is either geographical concepts or spatial metaphors. Such a potential in Deleuze's philosophy has been a very productive and creative lore to be used for the spatial understanding of contemporary cities and what urban planning can do. So, in this article, the main question is what Deleuzian approach and philosophy can do for urbanism and urban planning rather than what it means.

Materials & Methods

The inquiries that done in this article, provides a Deleuzian reading of the spatial dynamics of the city and urban planning. This reading can present us with new fields and horizons so that through them we can reach a deeper and more appropriate understanding of contemporary urban spatiality. To do this, first, the main ideas and concepts in the three major books Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, such as “*Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*”, “*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*” and “*What Is Philosophy?*” (among others) has extracted and then, with the help of the reading of other urbanisms and urban planners from Deleuzian philosophy, the concept of “city as agencement” and “planning for the city through the Deleuze's philosophy” has been presented as a new horizon to the contemporary urbanism and urban planning and use Deleuzoguattarian concepts as an analytical or/and critical framework that help us

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understand the way the world around us comes into being and changes over time.

Discussion of Results & Conclusions

- Deleuze's philosophy in urbanism: city as agencement

For Deleuze, a philosophical concept never operates in isolation and independence, but acquires its characteristic and meaning in relation to other understandings in specific and often unpredictable ways. In reality, this type of “in connection with” makes “agencement” or “heterogeneous and heterogeneous generalities”. “In general, “agencement” refers to a property that is becoming (as a process) as an emergent whole (such as community, neighborhood, social movement, organization, region, city, country) from a set of interactions and intertwined events between heterogeneous components or parts (objects or meanings). The existence of this feature depends on the type of relations between the components and the parts. Existence of these properties would be depended to interactions between this components or parts, and while their state, quantity, quality and type of relations changed, then agencement properties will change or disappear too.” Such a definition suggests that the concept of “agencement” is somewhat different from the concept of “assemblage” which meaning “gathering of things together into unities”; because “agencement” in short means “an arrangement or layout of heterogeneous elements.” So, agencement is more than simply an assemblage. It is a process of agencing.

In Deleuzian philosophy, the basic structure of an “agencement” in general includes “conditions”, “elements”, “agents” and “topology”. In addition, the four main types of “agencement” can be identified on the basis of Deleuzian philosophy: “territorial”, “state”, “capitalist” and “nomadic”. These four main types of “agencement” operate based on the processes of reterritorialization and deterritorialization.

The application of the concept of “agencement” in urbanism or urban studies has been to solve some conflicts and emerging phenomena during “spatial turn”, “cultural turn” and “relational turn” across the social sciences and humanities. By looking at the city as “agencement”, there is an assumption that urban identities derive their form, efficiency, and meaning from their situation and relationships. This emphasis on the processuality and relationality of identities is in “actant-rhizome ontology”, “actor-network theory” and “more-than-human agencies” too. Such an approach has had very important implications for the interaction between nature and society, body and technology, and space and time.

In particular, the understanding of space (noun) as spatiality (verb) has led to the emergence of a kind of view to the urban dynamics that did not exist before. This type of view is generally based on “relational thinking” and “socially-constructed category”. In this regard, we can mention the research of McFarlane, Anderson, Featherstone, Dittmer, Wachsmuth and Madden (among others) who have tried to read the city and urban spatiality according to the concepts of “agencement” and “assemblage”. Their research shows that the application of the concept of assemblage in urbanism and urban study has led to significant changes in ontology and methodology in terms of “spatialities of urbanity” and “deconstructive cartographies”. *The great lesson of Deleuze's philosophy for urban studies and urban planning is that all our knowledge of the urban world is “situatedness”, “reflexive” and in the state of “constant becoming”. So, Deleuze's first*

lesson in urbanism and urban studies can be viewing to the urbanity as “dynamic process in becoming” not as a fixed substance.

- Deleuze's philosophy in urban planning

It is really difficult to read Deleuze's (and Guattari's) texts, and even more difficult is the relevance and application of his philosophy in other fields such as urban planning, which generally deals with the everyday lives of individuals. One reason for this difficulty is Deleuze's use of language and vocabulary in other disciplines such as biology, geology, differential geometry, psychoanalysis, linguistics, and the arts. Another reason is that Deleuze did not use such words and ideas merely as metaphors for his philosophy, but reproduced them in the form of words and concepts with specific functions. Thus, in Deleuze's philosophy, concepts such as rhizome, agency, machine, nature, universal unity, multiplicity, plateau, folding, stratum, striation, smoothness, space, etc., should be seen as concepts that do a very special work. Among the most relevant concepts of Deleuzian approach and philosophy to urban planning, we can refer to “agencement”, “space”, “machine” and “nature”. Respectively, each of these concepts has a number of implications which has led to fundamental shifts in the attention of urban planners to the “*geography of relations rather than relations themselves*”, “*understanding processes of reterritorialisation of striated spaces and the processes of deterritorialization of smooth spaces*”, “*working with the urban elements, not on them*” and “*adopting a kind of symbiotic-based ecosophy instead of control-based ecology*”.

Keywords: Agencement/assemblage, Gilles Deleuze, urbanism, urban studies, philosophy of the city



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