

The project focuses on processes of emergence and reproduction of local urban communities and cultural mechanisms of these processes. We assume that contemporary cities are the space for development of varied forms of local communities, which go far beyond neighbourhood and neighbour relationships or cultural community detached from the territorial context, such as lifestyle community or virtual community. We perceive city as space in which territorial context and cultural consciousness interact with each other leading to the development of various types of community practices, and thus creating community. We assume that culture plays a vital role in this process: symbolical meanings of territory define the character of community behaviors, through which shared cultural identity is shaped. The basic research question we attempt to answer is: "How different cultural features of territory define the community behavior of people and what are cultural mechanisms through which these behaviors lead to shaping of certain social wholes?". The research will enable us to identify types of communal behaviors that exist in big cities as well as types of local communities they lead to, the way in which these communities emerge and cultural features of territory that influence it.

The research will consist of two closely related and complementary parts: (1) quantitative research aimed at explanation of the impact of cultural features of territory on the sense of belonging and attachment to place, as well as communal behaviours of individuals, and (2) qualitative research, oriented to the exploration of mechanisms of emergence of local urban communities. In the quantitative research, survey technique will be used. It will be conducted on representative sample of inhabitants of Warsaw, Cracow and Katowice. In turn, within qualitative research, various cases of urban communities that exist in the investigated cities will be examined. The research will employ various techniques: in-depth individual interview (30-50 interviews in each city), walking interview, observation and visual ethnography.

As a result of the project, theoretical model explaining spatial-cultural processes of emergence and reproduction of urban communities and their cultural mechanisms will be developed. The development of such a conception will benefit our understanding of spatial-cultural character of contemporary urban communities, and thus, to a significant degree, will enrich achievements of sociology in threads to which little attention has been paid so far. The research results will also enable us to answer the questions on effectiveness of different types of tools of urban cultural policies, cultural urban planning and cultural interventions such as place-making, revitalization or regeneration, and thus indicate the desired directions of their development.