

The Hidden dimension, by Edward T. Hall

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In-between space and time an invisible language arises that is the primary sense of communication. This daily non-verbalization is unknowingly the reason why this paper focuses on proxemics - a neologism created by the author which is the study of hidden distances between people and space.

In his book "The Hidden Dimension", published in 1966, American anthropologist Edward T. Hall conducts an in-depth analysis of space and of how the human being views and owns it.

Based on those interactions, both invisible and sensorial, Hall discusses a set of considerations that allows the reader to understand the reasons behind what you cannot touch. In his first book, "The Silent Language", published in 1959, Hall already discusses the not visible by analyzing the relations of a behavioral language which does not use words.

Returning to the book's title, it is impressive how the author understands different contexts of analysis and comparison, as is made evident in the cases of comparing proxemics in German, English, French cultures and between Japanese and Arab cultures. Different cultural realities lead to different relations.

In this scope he envisions and deconstructs a series of scenarios according to cultural realities that cause specific reactions among people, those scenarios and space, thus typifying certain hidden dimensions which, despite people's unawareness of them, do exist. Examples of this are the four possible distances in space sharing according to Hall: intimate, personal, social and public. Each of these is linked to a specific dimension.

He also refers how important the 5 senses are in understanding the "territory" that surrounds us and that we connect with this reality through different sensorial stimuli; all of us have, in our minds, a representation of the world through images, sounds and kinesthetic sensations. This "territory is, in every sense of the word, an extension of the



body, characterized by visual, verbal and smell signs" Space perception is divided into two types of receivers: "distance receivers" - eyes, ears and nose and "immediate receivers" - touch, sensations on the skin, mucous membranes and muscles.

The hidden dimension, by itself, is the space that brings us closer, that distances us and make our affections and human relations possible without us being aware of those evidences. It is closely linked to Architecture and to city planning.

To sum up, in fourteen chapters Edward T. Hall presents a set of evidences that support his study on the hidden dimension, culture and communication, contributing to an interpreting reasoning on our daily reactions and attitudes before the space around us. The book helps us understand that the cultural dimension of a given people is a major factor in understanding their behavioral differences.

Almost half a century after its first edition, the book and its assumptions are still relevant, as well as useful to fields such as Sociology, Architecture, Urban Planning, Space Anthropology, among others. Despite the book's indisputable importance and impact, a closer relation seems to be lacking between theory and practice in the past fifty years, which is why, at a time of global architecture, it is extremely interesting to reread this author's work.

Bibliography

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