CONSIDERING SPACE

A Critical Concept for the Social Sciences

EDITED BY DOMINIK BARTMANSKI, HENNING FÜLLER,
JOHANNA HOERNING AND GUNTER WEIDENHAUS

Considering Space

Considering Space demonstrates what has changed in the perception of space within the social sciences and how useful – indeed indispensable – this category is today.

While the seemingly deterritorializing effects of digitalization might suggest that space is a secondary consideration, this book proves such a presumption wrong, with territories, borders, distances, proximity, geographical ecologies, land use, physical infrastructures – as well as concepts of space – all being shown still to matter, perhaps more than ever before.

Seeking to show how society can and should be perceived as spatial, it will appeal to scholars of sociology, geography, architecture and urban studies.

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The Refiguration of Space
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Based on the premise that what is social always takes on a spatial form, this series explores the changes wrought in the relations of human beings to spaces and their spatial practices by current social transformations, conflicts, crises and uncertainties. Welcoming studies from disciplines across the social sciences, such as sociology, geography and urban studies, books in the series consider the ways in which people (re-)negotiate and (re-)construct special orders according to a common pattern of "refiguration", a process that often involves conflict and is frequently shaped by phenomena such as mediatization, translocalization and polycontexturalization.

Titles in the Series

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1 Introduction

An Invitation to Spatial Theorizing

Dominik Bartmanski and Henning Füller

Finding Space

When we look for a suitable apartment, an increasingly arduous task these days, we inevitably run into a variety of questions about space. 'Where is it?' 'How big is it?' The implied spatial concepts such as size and location seem inescapable. Indeed, they constitute necessary knowledge. But to understand how they help give rise to our sense of the homely, the domestic or the private, we must go beyond reified, static notions of standardized measurements. We must theorize the spatial in much 'thicker', multidimensional and dynamic ways. Yet everyday life is saturated with these seemingly self-evident, reductive habits of perception and evaluation. The British word 'flat' or the German term *Immobilie* (real estate) hints at this 'thin' static perception: they symptomatically single out specific characteristics of space, concealing a whole gamut of other spatial meanings. To develop new 'thicker' descriptions of the spatiality of social life, one needs to avoid both 'flat' materialism and rarified constructivism of major social scientific traditions and to unpack relational, emergent significance of space. Acknowledging the "thrown togetherness" of place, its formation out of a "particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus", Massey (1993: 66) underlines this problem and points to irreducible relationality of space. The move towards relational thinking is a move away from discursive idealism as well as essentialist reductionism.

One of the reasons why we start our introduction by invoking a flat to live in can be stated simply: it is a remarkably concrete but multifaceted heuristic object in which to anchor our project of thinking the social out of the spatial. It is a decisively modest but by the same token more relatable strategy to drive home new points about what Homi Bhabha (1994) famously called the 'location of culture'. While the metaphoric potential of spatial vocabulary has been extensively rehearsed in that work (and the social theory it inspired), the actual spatiality of social life was not. Yet it is precisely because "the recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions" (Bhabha 1994: 13) that such a turn towards space can prove fruitful. The gist of this observation is not a novelty to sociologists. In his 'Outline of a Theory of Practice', Pierre Bourdieu (2012: 89) made a crucially important point that "inhabited space – and above all the house – is the principal locus for the objectification of the generative schemes". It's just that when he wrote

it he was more preoccupied with the schemes themselves than with the reciprocal conditionalities that emerge between the spatial and the social.

So revisiting such spatial entities as private flats or public venues helps bring to light not only the importance of space as a 'room of one's own', but – even more significantly – it helps reconsider the under-developed nature of our socio-spatial consciousness. For example, as Kelcie Vercel and Terence McDonnell show in their contribution to this volume, apartments provide a useful testing ground for researching these issues sociologically. Looking at how commercial stagers of apartments influence potential buyers' perception of a given real estate, they shed light on the salient definition of space as the *arrangement of affordances* and therefore reveal space to be a kind of environment comprising 'ecologies of objects, spaces, and bodies'. They emphasize that while the so-defined space has its multiple identifiable phenomenological parameters, it is not as rigidly pre-signified as one might think; instead, it is open to interpretation and imaginative remaking within the limits of its relationally established and mutually elaborative properties, references and settings.

Exploring these potentialities and limits in concrete sociological settings proved transformative. For one thing, looking at how spatial design not only conventionally reflects human values but also variably performs them has inspired a variety of practical and theoretical domains. From the old architectural conception of 'private spaces' of Adolf Loos (Parcerisas 2017) to the new heavily surveilled apartment complexes of smart cities built from scratch one hundred years later (Bartmanski et al. 2022), apartments encapsulate and stage the predominant forms of our individual existence and our collective imaginaries. They are the stuff of our everyday life, equally so for their banal and sacred moments. And yet, their very spatiality has not been foregrounded; rather, it is subject to repeated trivializing reification which permeates also many other forms and objects of analysis, regardless of scale and time.

In short, palpable spatial actualities such as apartments are propitious springboards for much broader conversations about the relational meaning of space. They are both concrete and open-ended: finite as actual places of human life and potentially infinite as spaces of sense and meaning-making; they are concrete as built environments that we can feel sensuously, and open-ended as experiential spheres of possible meanings that we can contemplate intellectually. Approached in this spirit, such spaces can be shown to have more socio-cultural efficacy than typically assumed. As Nana Last (2008) demonstrated in her book 'Wittgenstein's House: Language, Space and Architecture', there exists a mutually constitutive set of relations between even the loftiest of philosophical ideas and seemingly most banal aspects of dwelling and house design. The experience of designing a house for his family member in Vienna gave Ludwig Wittgenstein an impulse to reconsider and then change his entire philosophical thinking. Some relevant aspects of this fascinating story are presented below in Nana Last's contribution to this volume.

Again, this line of reasoning is not entirely new, although it seems somewhat overshadowed today. In his famous yet singularly topical book 'The Poetics of

Space', Gaston Bachelard (2014) invites us to consider homes, flats and houses – no matter how humble – as repositories of crucial personal and social meanings. Bachelard – not unlike another Frenchman before him, Henri Bergson – bemoaned the conceptual restrictions of what he saw as the overly rationalistic twentieth-century positivist mindset. He attempted to expand social imagination by rejecting rigid traditional dichotomies of subject and object, mind and matter, active and passive, trying instead to use a new phenomenological analysis of homely spaces. His goal was to illuminate a more holistic perspective on human life. Once such a more multidimensional view was adopted, he could appreciate – for instance – the fact that we are both made by "material images" of spaces and that "we remake them in our turn" (Kearney 2014: xix). Similarly, in her analysis of the iconic modern work of Adolf Loos, especially his theory of architecture as clothing, Pilar Parcerisas (2017: 21) writes that to Loos "the interior is like casing, a dress that protects the individual and resolves the split between the individual being and the social being". Here another dualism was undone. When one recalls in this context Daniel Miller's (2010: 12) insistence that clothing is "not superficial" but – on the contrary – something anthropologically crucial, a set of productive conceptual connections emerges. We argue that foregrounding the notion of space makes them more palpable. The present volume aims to explore as many of them as possible within the confines of a single book.

This kind of reflexivity had not been commonplace in social scientific practice in the twentieth century. With a notable exception of geography, space for a long time remained a peripheral, residual category of analysis. Many social scientists who thematized and prioritized questions of nation, state, housing, architecture or urbanity would typically take 'space' for granted or hold a "static, the so-called 'container' view of space, something that remains unmapped because it does not have to undergo such representational transformation. And yet, "it is the unmapped and unmoored that allows for new moorings and mappings. Place, like the subject, is the site of becoming, the opening for politics" (Gibson-Graham 2006: xxxiii).

Considering material and social objects as entities *separated* from space seems now untenable. While this had been well understood by modern avant-garde sculptors who, like Katarzyna Kobro (2019: 19), saw their work as the relational 'shaping of space', classic social theory lagged behind art and architecture. Hence the challenge at hand – to find a right headspace for considering space anew, to account for the spatiality of social figurations. So, what exactly is to be done?

Space in Social Science

One must remember that talking about space is still a kind of provocation for many social scientists. As a fundamental aspect of being in the world, space appears as something immutable and given, and therefore, it has been left out of the scope of systematic research. The chief preoccupation was with time – social processes and dynamics – while space was seen as the rather unproblematic *surface*: a stable

sphere wherein a multiplicity of discrete things is dispersed. The spatial qualities of phenomena did not seem empirically problematic or theoretically fruitful for social science. For a long time, space had not been an integral part of what C. Wright Mills famously called 'the sociological imagination', nor was it systematically included in the critical theorizations of cognate disciplines such as anthropology. It was symptomatic that in his book, Bachelard criticized social scientific perspectives of his time for their rather tightly circumscribed imagination and saw his philosophy of space as a step towards redressing this problem.

This has arguably changed or began to change around 1989 when social reality seemed somewhat ahead of sociological imagination. At that time, several major disciplinary revaluations took place. As a result, the implicit everyday idea of space as a singular and pre-given background has received a more detailed critique and consideration in social and cultural sciences. New scientific journals featuring a spatial focus have been created. The 'spatial turn' is a common denominator for this shifting of interest towards the social construction of space, and as such, it has been included in the wave of 'cultural turns' that marked social sciences at the turn of centuries – among them the performative, the postcolonial and the iconic (Bachmann-Medick 2007). While spatiality does receive increasing attention now, especially as a contingent part of the social, and something to be under-stood relationally, it did not yet penetrate social scientific disciplines in a way that would be commensurate with its fundamental and multifaceted nature. Spaces are acknowledged as socially configured – as shaped, structured and invested with meaning. Space can be, and increasingly is, used to indicate the social – from dynamics of power to structures of everyday meaning-making. But there is less understanding about the reverse causal directionality, i.e. about how spatial forms shape our forms of life. As social scientists, we need to recognize that there is more to space than its indexical capacity; space is socially implicative through its affordances and constitutive relations. In addition to the social configuration of space, we need to ask questions about the spatiality of the social, especially how space anchors, frames, enables and constrains certain classes of action and order. This is one of the motivations behind this volume. In many significant contemporary theorizations of the social, space still tends to appear as a taken-for-granted and passive background rather than a composite consequential condition of life. Considering social change, space is mostly seen as an immobile unitary background where social and historical processes get inscribed, a screen for cultural projection. In his argument for a more reflective approach, Rob Shields (2017: 536) describes the typical sociological imagination of space: "[A] spatialization in which a three-dimensional, lived reality is permeated, skewered, by determining social forces that are abstract and one-dimensional, that is, temporal and historical".

An invitation to the spatial theory that we have in mind presupposes that it is productive to question this constrained traditional understanding. What if space is considered more seriously and multidimensionally, not only as something that 'expresses' social processes but as a central condition that 'impresses' itself on social life? Such a systematically developed and widely applicable conceptual turn towards space in social theory is yet to be accomplished. "Spaces are seen as social, but society is not perceived as spatial", as Martina Löw and Hubert Knoblauch

point out (2020: 264). This very gap motivates the collection of essays brought together in this volume. But our collective effort is not merely about closing this gap. It is about interrogating the origins of the problem and explaining the significance of potential solutions. For one thing, space helps revisit several fundamental issues, from the operations of political power as described by Foucault (Soja 1994) to the phenomenology of perception and the meaning of the body (Merleau-Ponty 2012; Johnson 2007).

An early and prominent example of taking space more systematically into account is Henri Lefebvre's (1996: 196) project of a 'science of the production of space'. Lefebvre underlined the inherent spatiality of the social and criticized the existing, compartmentalized approach in social sciences, where each subfield and discipline only engages with a specific, narrowly circumscribed aspect of the spatial. This divisional approach hinders an understanding of space as a sociological analytic category. In his critique, "science disperses itself in divisions and representations of space, without ever discovering […] the principles of understanding" (Lefebvre 1996: 196). Instead, the spatial should be acknowledged as an independent condition of the social, as a way of approaching and understanding our social world which could allow us to eschew usual binaries of the Western metaphysics, e.g. between a materialist fixation on structures and an idealist focus on subjective experiences (Schmid 2008). Because the late-modern social condition is defined by an essential rupture between experience and scientific knowledge, this appears even more important. "The thread is torn, between the Real and the Symbolic, between the existential experience of everyday spaces and their representation in ideology, science and culture" (Prigge 1991: 103, trans. HF). Lefebvre's proposal to rely on space as a way out of this dilemma is unique, unfinished and still appealing.

Another significant early proponent of a similar claim was the geographer Doreen Massey. She vigorously argued for a shift away from just seeing spaces as mere projections and expressions of social constructions. Instead, there is a dormant analytical potential in 'turning the coin', so to speak, and approaching the relation of space and the social from the other side: *to understand the spatiality of the social construction*. If the social is necessarily organized spatially, space is not only viable as an expression or an 'outcome' of social processes. The spatial organization of the social needs to be understood also as a vital factor in social development and cultural change. "In other words, and in its broadest formulation, society is necessarily constructed spatially, and that fact – the spatial organization of society – makes a difference to how it works" (Massey 1992: 70). Once we accept this formulation, a series of questions immediately arise. What difference does space make? What is the relation between space and other categories of social sciences? How could the 'spatial organization of the social' inform social theory? What exactly is to be gained from understanding the social with and through space? Or, to put it more concretely, does acknowledging the spatial construction of society allow for a better understanding of the social? How can this become operative in empirically observable situations where such categories as power or state are investigated? Insofar as Foucault was right to insist both on the 'power/knowledge' contraction and on the importance of space, then it is vital to ask questions about the 'power/space' contraction and see how they change our understanding of social construction.

Benefits to Consider the Spatiality of the Social

Each contribution in this volume aims to provide a range of answers to these questions. Our objective is not to reintroduce a new kind of conceptual hierarchy topped by space. Rather, it is about offering a series of more comprehensive perspectives that complement the already existing ones. It is an invitation to step back, to refresh the perception and to make more space for space in social theory and research. For example, sociologists have tended to assume that any issue or problem traditionally placed within their discipline stems 'out of the social'. Social outcomes could be traced back to a confluence of specific social variables. Things were declared to not be knowable 'in themselves'. They have been claimed to be always 'socially constructed', the 'surface signs' referring to the immaterial 'social depth', or a 'deep play' of culture. While this perspective offered some transformative insights, it was not the last word of social science. As we shall indicate, new forms of both constructivist and non-representational analysis have emerged. We nowadays witness strong calls to "explore human inhabitation – how humans inhabit their 'ecological niches' – and examine a number of conceptual developments that 'deconstruct' the binary distinction between organism and environment" (Rose, Birk, Manning 2021). New epistemologies have been tested, new social critiques articulated, and ontologies pluralized. The idea behind our volume is to make a decisive step towards collating a multiplicity of such voices, connecting the dots of extant space-related analysis and taking stock of our growing but still fragmented and dissipated spatial knowledge. In the remaining part of the introduction, before sketching out the structure of the volume, we want to underline a few benefits of the proposal 'to think the social out of the spatial'.

Benefit I – Questioning Assumptions and Concepts

The first benefit to consider space more explicitly for social theory is related to the fundamental status of *concept* as an intellectual tool. The ways in which we form and legitimize knowledge and the ways we access the empirical world, both concretely and abstractly, are invariably organized spatially. The power of spatial thinking is expressed for example in the ubiquity of spatial metaphors in language. But the naïve 'taken-for-granted' understanding of space can get in the way if it is put to work as a lens for analysing the social. When trying to figure out how space is made relevant in society, we must be careful not to reify or essentialize our own presumptions. Furthermore, a careful dissection of several meanings is especially needed with this over-determined concept. The usage of a common term 'space' for a range of different aspects of the social implies a connection between them without being able to define it. Territorializing parts of the planet or investing places with meaning are two spatial expressions of the social, but it is not clear if and how those expressions are related. If there is a quality of its own, undergirding some of the manifold spatial expressions of the social, this must be carefully delineated. Cautious analysis is advisable regarding the historical and social contingency of an often-presumed universality of the category of 'space' and regarding the slippages of meaning when applying the same concept to a range of social phenomena.

Asking the question of what space 'as such' is often does lead away from finding precise and relevant answers. Too much remains presupposed and 'black boxed' here. Broad and over-determined concepts such as *space* generally need to be carefully operationalized and related to an analytical purpose rather than investigated abstractly. What difference does space make for a specific relation, process or phenomenon (e.g. practices of territorialization, exercise of state power, military action, qualities of belonging and place-making, conceptions of geographical imaginations)? With the enigmatic work of Henri Lefebvre, we have a singular but powerful example for the opposing claim. Differentiating space according to its function has led to a "compartmentalization of the specialized sciences" (Lefebvre 1996: 196) but has left open the possibility to "recognize in the infinite mass of details the principles of understanding which prevail in a field" (ibid.). Could there be a benefit of (re)formulating our knowledge of the production of space rather than following several discretionary 'sciences of space', as Lefebvre suggests?

Rob Shields, for example, has recently reaffirmed this argument. He concretizes Lefebvre's expectation to take space as a means for a critical understanding of hegemony and the encompassing second nature of capitalist social relations. Instead of using space as a universal concept in analysis, the conception of space as such should be put into question. Given the fundamental importance of space in maintaining our epistemological categories, in order to think beyond the totality of the social condition, Lefebvre suggests considering the struggles "over the organization and meaning of space" (Shields 2013: 19). "Is not the near hegemony of the 'absolutist' view of social space only one possible stance among many?" (ibid.) Does not this implicit idea of a Cartesian, a priori and ineffable 'social space' provide an important but unacknowledged disposition for power and alienation? Similarly, David Graeber (2007) sensitizes us in his text 'There Never Was a West' to the intellectual liabilities and insidious politicization of such widely reproduced hegemonic categories as the 'Western' culture. Showing that the irresolvable contradictions of this term are not just a matter of misplaced linguistic traditions and misguided discursive strategies, he rightly argues – not unlike Bhabha – that "we need an entirely new set of categories" (Graeber 2007: 17), including 'emergence' of socio-spatial systems and zones of cultural contact and hybridity that continually define and redefine human conditions.

In this sense, fundamentally engaging with space can be fruitful for a critical social theory. Sketching out those opposing expectations towards space as a concept in social theory hints at an unresolved and productive ambiguity. Considering the conception of space is viable *for* social theory: to gain more precise tools for social analysis against the danger of letting the everyday concept of space slip into our analytical repertoire. But an engagement with the concept of space may be even viable *in* social theory: to use the production of space itself as a key for social understanding – following Lefebvre's idea of taking space to reflect our totalizing social condition.

Benefit II – Acknowledging Emergent Qualities

The second benefit of a spatial approach in social theory is the invitation to allow the material and the non-human to be part of the constitution of the social. One

general guiding definition of space offered by Martina Löw, which serves as the sociological reference point here, states that space is a distribution of material and symbolic phenomena that we could jointly call 'social goods'. Conceiving of space as an arrangement of affordances as we stated above or as a distribution of objects and material relations is practical because it moves away from abstract notions of space and towards more synthetic complex ones, whereby body, objects, environments, ecologies and meanings can be conjoined. Of course, materiality and the relationships of the human to non-human have been extensively theorized in disciplines concerned with the socially 'constructed' nature of reality (e.g. Miller 2005; Latour 2007; Elder-Vass 2012; Hodder 2012). Space offers a new conceptual plane of systematically relating to each other these heterogenous, often divergent social theories of materiality. One important consideration that we foreground here, however, is how to use space in a productively synthetic rather than analytically divisive way. We invite researchers to ask how we should reinscribe 'spatiality' into perennial questions of social sciences. That is to say, how to reconsider 'space' theoretically, so that it is neither essentialized as an 'inert background', nor reduced to a dependent disembodied and delocalized variable. How to avoid the pitfalls of materialistic reification as well as pernicious forms of structuralist idealism in which space is but a screen of our seemingly arbitrary cultural projections?

Sceptics could still argue that we should apply Occam's razor and just stick to words like distribution, constellations, configuration, objects, relations, assemblages, materiality, etc. There are at least three reasons why keeping 'spatiality' in our dictionary may be worthwhile, though. First, there is linguistic efficiency and communicative convenience to it: one word instead of several. Behind this efficiency is the intuitive utility of such everyday life concepts as 'space' or 'place' or 'site', as well as the distinctive scientific utility of derivative concepts. Second, it is sociologically essential to distinguish between perceptual and ontological levels of reality. Objects appear separate to us, but they can be aggregated into groups and they are also parts of greater wholes – a plant is part of an ecosystem, ecosystems form environments, environments form a biosphere, biosphere makes the planet 'alive', etc. At one end of this spectrum are our most general concepts. Space is one of them. Third, and perhaps most abstract, there are *emergent phenomena* associated with complex entwinement and aggregations of things: the qualities that are not reducible to a simple sum of ingredients, much less to any one element of the whole. There are collective multidimensional phenomena, such as human language, which are not reducible to what appears to be their constitutive parts or individual users. They are relational phenomena that can be said to 'supervene' on a variety of embedded connections or to 'emerge out' of a set of observable relationships. Space in our conception is such an entity.

These emergent entities are reducible neither to the form of discrete palpable 'objects' nor to purely mental 'constructs' or psychological 'contents'. There are not many viable templates to consider the so-conceived phenomenon of emergence. Yet it is this very in-betweenness where emergence is presumed to 'take place' and where its meaningfulness resides. For example, D.W. Winnicott's prominent psychoanalytical conception of the "location of cultural experience" sees it as

emerging in what he calls the "potential space" or "third space" (Winnicott 2005: 135). Cultural sociologists working within the material turn noticed and tested this conception in explanations of various patterns of cultural consumption and production. Ian Woodward (2011: 366) showed that Winnicott's approach "usefully suggests pathways for developing a model of consumption which neither reduces person–object exchanges to the psyche and assemblages of practices, or to the dead hand of social-structural forces". While the study does not talk about space as such, but only about object relations, this sociological application is compatible with one strand of our considerations regarding space as the relational arrangement of social goods with emergent effects. Space understood sociologically as relational distribution of clusters of affordances or as the array of material ecologies that 'nest' cultural experiences can also be considered along those theoretical lines. Like 'class', 'society', 'modernity' or 'structure', space in social sciences is a general composite term that has no simple ostensive definition but is nevertheless knowable through its correlative effects and affordances: distances, perspectives, relations, dimensions, positionalities, sites, effects, figurations, atmospheres, etc. It points to an aggregated level of the entwinements between objects of various kinds and scales.

From this point of view, space consists of a multiplicity of arrangements and relational configurations that permeate each other and yet can and should be analytically distinguished. Such a modern sociological understanding is expandable to and potentially combinable with other traditional ideas. For example, Jane Bennett evokes the idea of the Shi, prominent in Chinese philosophy, to make graspable this specific quality bound to spatiotemporal configurations.

> 'Shi is the style, energy, propensity, trajectory, or élan inherent to a specific arrangement of things. Originally a word used in military strategy – a good general must be able to read and then ride the shi of a configuration of moods, winds, historical trends, and armaments – shi names the dynamic force emanating from a spatiotemporal configuration rather than from any element within it.'
>
> (Bennett 2005: 461)

Similarly, the Japanese concept of *ma* – the space in between – comes to mind in this context. As Arata Isozaki writes,

> '*ma* is all the following: a slit, a distance, a crack, a difference, a split, a disposition, a boundary, a pause, a dispersion, a blank, a vacuum. One can say that its function is infinitely close to Derrida's *espacement* = becoming of space'.
>
> (Isozaki and Asada 2010: 5)

There are, of course, more examples of this mode of spatial thinking in contemporary social sciences, for example the concept of 'urban interstices' as sites of social critique (Brighenti 2013). The task is to connect the dots and raise awareness regarding the implicit and explicit roles that space does and can play in our thinking.

Benefit III – Current Urgency

In addition to these conceptual considerations, a spatial approach may also be fruitful given the most recent empirical reorientations. Such a shift seems even more urgent now as social reality is getting transformed many times over as we speak, quite literally so. Among the key processes of transformation today we recognize the ever-deeper mediatization and accelerated trans-localization of social life. Augmented by the new ontologies of the virtual, the actual physical sites of social life are being profoundly reconstituted, whereby space, time and society are brought to a radically new conjunction, pushing 'late modernity' to its limits. This is, of course, not new. Already in the 1990s, Anthony Giddens (1994) observed that "analyzing the conjunctions of time, space and modernity requires conceptual as well as substantive reorientation in social thought and research". We concur. Many societies have been at such a crossroads for quite some time now. Thus, a collective effort to codify the relevant formulations is in order – a 'refiguration' of social thought that dovetails the diagnosis of a 'refiguration' of social life.

When 27 years later Anthony Giddens gave a lecture from London to the members of our research centre in Berlin via Zoom in May 2021, we could not help reflecting that this occasion underlined yet another newly refigured conjunction of time, space and modernity. We were reflecting on the fact that if you can do your job from *anywhere*, this means your peers from *anywhere* may do it; we were pondering the challenges of 'globotics' – the fusion of globalization and robotics – and its potential to displace service workers *en masse* around the world; we were discussing the effects of the lockdown measures in the time of pandemic; we were considering massive geographical and social changes implicated in climate changes. It was clear that all those phenomena have significant spatial dimensions and non-trivial spatial ramifications. Suddenly, space seemed more urgent a consideration than it had been only a decade ago, when the spatial turn already sensitized researchers to the topic. Spatiality of social life, and spatiality of life generally, seems now inseparable from major problems of our time such as climate change, wars, state-backed settlers movements, military occupation of contested territories, surveillance capitalism and global biopolitical challenges such as worldwide pandemics. From relatively old critical themes to relatively fresh problems, space re-enters explanatory efforts as an indispensable factor. The seemingly de-territorializing effects of digitalization are clearly in need of new systematic clarification. As the development of smart cities indicates, localizing new digitalities and datafying new spatialities are among the key ways of reproducing social structures, reframing inequities and fabricating new forms of power (Bartmanski et al. 2022). In short, space is an urgent matter, both theoretically and empirically.

Structure of the Volume

Given those conceptual considerations, the specific ontological qualities of the spatial and the rapid transformation of the scales of current socio-political issues, the following collection brings together a set of essays that reflect on the multifaceted character of space in social life and aim at fleshing out new research vocabularies. In

short, we wish to offer a new discursive space for a transdisciplinary investigation of the spatiality of the social. As insisted repeatedly above, we share the Lefebvrian scepticism regarding the attempt to develop a systematic 'science of space'. There are good reasons to refrain from searching for a clear-cut or comprehensive thematization of space as a separate field. Instead, the contributions in this volume illustrate a range of analytical and synthetic benefits of thinking the social out of the spatial through a variety of examples. The broad bracket of 'considering space' that is binding the following collection of essays together, is surprisingly functional in this regard. The divergence of understandings and perspectives, an indispensable part of edited volumes and the way their production is organized, is a welcomed feature this time. There are three central conversations around which the structure of the volume is organized – hence the book's division into three substantive parts.

The first section – *Considering Space in Social Theory* – presents several suggestions on how to engage the spatial as a heuristic in theorizing and understanding the social. In the first contribution to this section, Martina Löw asks what it takes to *understand* space as a sociological phenomenon. She goes back to the Weberian category of 'Verstehen' (interpretive understanding) and recalls the core premise for the research agenda of 'Refiguration of Space' which is also one of the assumptions behind this volume: examining the current social condition through the lens of its spatial formations yields a uniquely valuable sociological angle. As Löw argues the concept of *refiguration* can serve as a particularly useful heuristic, especially if understood in a multidimensional relational way. She explains why social theory proved unable or unwilling to consider space as a systematic part of its explanations and points to some key benefits of relational thinking about space. The subsequent contributions in this section follow the stipulation to take the spatial as a point of departure for understanding the social. Each demonstrates the potential of this approach for refining and rethinking several strands of social theory.

Foregrounding space and refigurations of space allow Angelika Poferl to rethink Ulrich Beck's theory of reflexive modernization. To come to terms with a globalizing social condition demands a departure from categorical abstractions and instead a more situational, local approach and to acknowledge the manifold embeddedness of subjects. Strengthening space as an underdeveloped category in reflexive modernization theory allows Poferl to formulate her own proposal of a 'cosmopolitics of the social', illustrating the relationship between space and gender. Space can also be a tool for refining an understanding of the conceptual development of philosophical thought as Nana Last demonstrates. Her innovative explanation of how and why Wittgenstein radically shifted his views is rooted in the interpretation of the significance of his one-time architectural endeavour. Architectural conceptions, spatial experiences and his work on interior design provide additional doorways into Wittgenstein's 'second' philosophical edifice. Henning Füller adds another angle to this use of space as a heuristic for rethinking social theory. A specific quality of the spatial is the aspect of topology, i.e. the structural quality of connections and shapes. This quality of space can be taken as helpful guidance to enhance current proposals to assume a relational ontology of

the social world. Current assemblage theories or similar attempts to formulate less dualistic conceptions of human and non-human in social theory could be made more context-aware and power-oriented through a topological approach. Günter Weidenhaus both closes the circle of the first section and establishes the bridge to the following section. He again engages with current theories of globalization and details how different assumptions of the spatial constitution of the global are at play. A territorial differentiated world has been first replaced with the imagination of a 'smooth' and homogenous space of globalization in such theories, and this image is increasingly fragmented along differing lines again.

Epistemological considerations are underlying the volume as a whole and are made explicit in several of its contributions. The second section – *Considering Space in Global Epistemologies* – emphasizes the problem of the historical contingencies of conceptions of space itself. Far from being a universal part of the 'world of ideas', especially when used in social theory, the concept is strongly influenced by cultural settings and historical contexts. Johanna Hoerning invites us to consider the often-unquestioned bifurcated spatial divisions. Dividing North vs. South or Urban vs. Rural – quasi-second nature in our approach to space – entails a powerful bias in its epistemological framework. Manuela Boatcă and Fabio Santos bring this sensitivity to the example of Europe. Common depictions of Europe do unwillingly entail a universalizing gesture, propagating an essentialist and occidental view of the world. Walter Mignolo sustains the scepticism regarding space as a neutral or universal concept with a fundamental argument. Like 'time' and 'society', 'space' also must be seen in its deep connection to specific traditions of semiotic world-making that becomes coded in specific languages and eventually forms a specific cosmology. Spatial categories show a double face here. On the one hand, spatialization often is a mode of hiding inequalities. The frequently taken-for-granted spatializations of Europe – e.g. 'East' and 'West' – as well as various similar spatializations of the world bear hidden forms of power and colonial thought. On the other hand, space can also inform critical social analysis and help to point out inequalities. The example of the caste system in India allows Sanjana Krishnan to point out this benefit of adding a spatial sensorium in social research.

The third section – *Considering Space in Meaning Making* – takes up the under-represented issue of the entwinement of spatiality and materiality and their joint efficacy in shaping social processes of meaning-making. As such, it expands epistemological considerations of the previous part by asking: What do we mean exactly when we say that space is influenced by 'cultural settings' and 'historical contexts'? Is relational experiential space a part of those very 'settings' and 'contexts', and if yes, then what's their mutual interdependence? What's the impact of the relationally understood spatial regimes on significatory practices and vice versa? If 'space' is culture- and time-dependent and subject to epistemological distortions and symbolic violence, then we must thematize the issue of *how* our sense of space gets constituted and refigured – both as a scientific category and an aspect of social life. How does 'meaning' as a central human phenomenon enter the equation of 'thinking the social out of the spatial'? Working with such foundational

questions, this section aims to explore new ways in which cultural sociologists could re-connect epistemological and ontological considerations. By reflecting on how spatiality and cultural meaning are implicated in each other, this section aims to trace a series of pathways of their reciprocal conditioning in everyday life.

In his chapter, Dominik Bartmanski investigates the interdependence between a relational conception of space and non-representational aspects of meaning-making in practices of cultural production. The relationship between space and culture may have seemed to be a kind of 'dangerous liaison' as far as the language-based, constructivist social theories were concerned, but there are productive ways out of the perceived impasse. Bartmanski revisits the long-neglected yet vibrant phenomenological foundations of cultural and spatial analysis, especially Merleau-Ponty's conception of body in space, and applies a new understanding of space to the phenomenon of the 'music scene'. Reducible neither to the 'built environment' and objects considered as props of action, nor to the intentionality of its individual human members, any music scene worth its name – and any consolidated 'art world' more generally – can be better grasped in its meaningful potential as a space of cultural experience. Such a space is a conjuncture of motivated experiential potentialities rather than linear material determinisms, an ecology of the "distribution of the sensible" (Ranciere 2013), not just the arbitrary attribution of signification. Kelcie Vercel and Terence McDonnell develop a similar theme when they adopt a cultural sociological perspective to further elucidate the role of settings, object affordances and space in meaning-making. They argue that space understood as the arrangement of objects in an environment is not reducible to mere situational 'cues' for human action. Rather, it enables sociological interpretations of the possible when it comes to the ecologies of objects and bodies. Pavel Pospech thematizes 'locational meanings' as a neglected aspect of cultural socialization and explains the benefits of re-introducing this conception to cultural analysis, thereby providing a fresh sociological perspective on what 'location of culture' can mean. In particular, he shows that the variability of meaning-making cannot be understood without reference to the question of how place structures human sociability. Finally, Letteria Fasari brings together a cultural sociological performance theory and a notion of space, aiming to reveal how meanings of loss and social disruption are at once inscribed in and shaped by spatial conditions. Here, loss of space can be construed as a constitutive negative of the social. She frames this issue as one in which space is a kind of 'pre-condition' of meaning-making, a fertile ground of interpretive appropriation rather than simply a screen onto which social values are projected.

<div align="right">Berlin, February 2022</div>

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Part I

Considering Space in Social Theory

2 Understanding Social Change

Refiguration

Martina Löw

Introduction

Understanding is a key category of qualitative social science today. Insofar as the traditionally defined delineation of causal mechanisms is replaced by interpretative analysis in post-positivist human sciences, understanding the 'reasons', 'meanings' and 'sense' of social phenomena is now among the main goals. In contemporary sociology, the cultural and interpretive fields have come to shape the cutting edge of the discipline. The so-called meaning-centred research is present in a wide range of substantive and theoretical fields. Of course, at least since Max Weber the interpretation of sense (Sinn) of human action had been explicitly emphasized. But it was not widely adopted and only relatively recently managed to permeate sociology as a strongly elaborated epistemological perspective.

The category of 'Verstehen' (understanding) introduced by Max Weber implies "an understanding of the contexts of meaning and interpretation, and an understanding of the meaningful interrelationships of different elements and influencing variables" (Schmidt-Lux et al. 2016, my translation). It is thus an operation in which the cultural phenomena characterized by precisely these contexts can be meaningfully understood. Drawing on Weber again, we could say that only if we understand the meaning contexts and interrelations of a specific constellation can we explain how they led to a particular outcome (Schmidt-Lux et al. 2016: 43, my translation). In this view, interpretive understanding not only implies the competence of comprehending and communicating the implicit meaning of cultural phenomena of any kind; it also means that the specific meaning is created by a set of interrelated but diverse contexts and elements (see Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr 2008: 323). Alfred Schütz notes that context is "a universe of meaning" (2004: 163), albeit based on objective realities. The "meaningful interrelationships of different elements and influencing variables" always refer to shared experiences and practices (Wohlrab-Sahr 2015: 13) and as such to the "physical accomplishments" (Knoblauch 2020: 104). As Silke Steets explains in her sociological work on architecture, this perspective can be extended to and explained by material objectivations in relationally organized arrangements of the built environment (Steets 2015). Today a broad discursive plain referred to as "cultural sociologies of architecture" has become visible (Jones 2016), and the focus on

object affordances and material settings is gaining analytic purchase (see Vercel/ McDonnell in this volume). "Understanding material culture" has been codified as a field (Woodward 2007). As meaningful entities, objectivations may well 'share' intersubjective meanings, since the meaning is always constructed in discourse and legitimated by narrative and/or argumentative strategies.

The area of sociology focusing on interpretation and meaningful understanding looks back upon a long track record of various seminal texts (e.g. by Max Weber, George Herbert Mead, Alfred Schütz, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, among many others). It is currently gaining new momentum for researchers in cultural sociology like Monika Wohlrab-Sahr (2015) and in fresh approaches to communicative constructivism (e.g. Keller et al. 2012; Knoblauch 2020). The strength of interpretive sociology lies in focusing on the (re)construction of the intended meaning of the actors to explain social entities (Weber 1980 [1922]: 4ff.), which implies an understanding of actors' "orientation towards the behaviour of others" (Knoblauch 2020: 14) and an emphasis on the relational aspects of social action. At the same time, interpretive analyses have the potential to offer explanations for the relative stability of the social order created in the process. The objectivation, institutionalization and legitimation of routines but also their iterative nature (Berger/Luckmann 1966; Giddens 1984) are the basis for an explanation of this stability. As individuals are born into the structures of their lifeworld (Schütz/ Luckmann 1979, 1984), in other words, as they have accepted a cultural inheritance (Vinken 2021), understanding must be directed towards action and communication and find stability in objectifications (e.g. in a bodily expression) and objectivations (e.g. in material products of action, see Knoblauch 2020: 99ff.), in social institutions (ranging from the family to a greeting formula) and their legitimations. "We won't find intersubjectivity in the inner stream of our consciousness and in reflective acts, as Husserl suggested, but only out there, in the din and noise of a pre-conceived, pre-constructed world that precedes us; we are constantly reminded of this primacy by the many varied forms of objectified voices of others who were (already) there before us" (Wilke 2022: 58f., my translation). In his body-oriented phenomenology of perception, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2012) developed precisely this observation into a sociologically relevant perspective (see Bartmanski in this volume).

Perhaps it is the dynamics of a theory concentrating on the formative pre-existing structures of the lifeworld and the stability of the social order with a focus on communication that has side-lined issues of social change within the sociological interpretive paradigm organized around the problem of understanding. There are, of course, numerous empirical studies focusing on changing social practices (e.g. Wohlrab-Sahr 2006) and on changes in the way people communicate. These works mention the importance to understand "the changeability and transformability of cultures" (Schmidt-Lux et al. 2016: 20, my translation). Theoretically, however, the main focus of these studies is on the development of explanatory models accounting for the stability of the social order rather than social change. Having said this, interpretive social research that investigates social change frequently incorporates the spatial structure of social realities. Also, it is rarely disputed that we are experiencing a phase of social change classified as late or post-modernity. This phase

is open-ended as modernity's fundamental values such as democracy, scientific reasoning and rationality are challenged. An important question linking up with this, and the one my chapter will be concerned with, is the question of how to come to a deeper understanding (in Weber's sense of 'Verstehen') of the changing meaning contexts of and interrelations within the globality of much of contemporary social life. This question is not intended to imply a diagnostic predefinition as it does not refer to any aggregated characteristics of empirical findings on social change. Neither is it supposed to mean a methodical precept, although the worldwide scope and the sheer multitude of different elements and influencing variables operative in this immensely complex meaning context will present a major challenge for any methodology. Rather, the question is conceived, for now, as a *conceptual* strategy to find out which forces are at work and which relations must be brought into view to understand current processes of social change.

By not specifying or limiting the geographic reach in the inquiry, I certainly do not wish to reintroduce Western master narratives of the past – quite the opposite: this 'omission' takes into account the fact that it was modernity and its correlates of colonialism, internationalism, globalization and, more recently, digitalization that have created a situation in which it is no longer possible to define today's societies as enclosed, isolated and distinct entities (Weiß 2021). The term 'entanglements' (Randeria 2009; Therborn 2003) describes and emphasizes these manifold, inextricable interconnections and ties between far-away places, events and processes. Social change, in this light, is an *interactive* process, not a national issue. So how can contemporary social change be better understood? To provide answers, I want to, first, identify the kinds of processes of change that we are witnessing at present and look into what they have in common. Building on this, I will briefly illustrate two new conceptions of social change developed in the interpretive sociology paradigm (*Verstehenssoziologie*), both of which take into account spatial constitution aspects in systematic ways. In the last step, I will introduce the notion of "refiguration" inherent in these conceptions as a promising candidate for a better frame of understanding of current social changes.

Social Change Since the Long 1960s

The history of modernity is the story of territorial space as the central – and prevalent – form of spatial organization. Three social practices – topographic measuring, statistic and cartographic mapping (Gugerli/Speich 2002; Landwehr 2007) – have facilitated this development, along with the conviction (originating in Enlightenment) that territoriality can be generated by the nation-state (Balibar/Wallerstein 1991; Günzel/Nowak 2012; Jureit 2012: 22; Osterhammel 2000; Raffestin 1980). With cartography evolving into the defining medium of spatial representation, it also gradually permeated into everyday notions of space, spatial orientation practices and perceptions of space (Mignolo 2000; Shields 2013: 64). Hitherto diverse layers of power spheres and sovereignties were increasingly homogenized and centralized within the territory (Elias 1976 [1939]). The radical transformation of multi-ethnic imperial regimes into "the model of the homogenizing

nation-state since the 1860s" (von Hirschhausen/Leonhard 2011: 402) was coupled with the increasingly prevailing – and exclusive – notion of nation-state territory as a hegemonic model and it reinforced the tendency to homogenize space as modernity progressed (Harvey 1982, 1991: 155). The territory as a dominant structural principle is not limited to political space but also extends to urban space as reflected, for instance, in the development of homogenous zones in cities, such as playgrounds, pedestrian precincts, historic districts, recreational zones and many more. It is also reflected in familiar ideas about space as "container-like" enclosed entities (Löw 2018). The historian Charles S. Maier takes the view that territorializing practices are the twentieth century's most defining characteristics, "namely the emergence, ascendancy, and subsequent crisis of what is best labeled 'territoriality'" (Maier 2000: 807). He identifies the end of the territoriality (and related identity politics) period to lie around 1970. Here, Maier implicitly refers to the outset of radical social changes that continue into the present, which have resulted in the conspicuous pluralization of key spatial figures (Löw/Knoblauch 2021). These changes were caused by realignments, reframing and reorientation processes in the political, economic and media spheres. In some countries, the time of the Vietnam War functioned on the level of politics as the symbolic centre describing a period of upheaval also known as '1968', the year when totalitarian patterns of action and behaviour, linear narratives and homogenizing large-scale formats (like territories, containers and master plans) were beginning to lose legitimacy. Substantial evidence from many different societies points to the fact that besides the spatial figure of 'territorial space', new other figures like 'network space' and 'place' are increasingly gaining in importance (Löw 2020). Network space, which operates under the logic of association rather than closure and boundedness, has been topical since the 1970s, gaining significance in the process of globalization as a description for the substantial increase in networking and multilateral exchange processes worldwide. This includes an intensification of transnational relations and ties on the one hand and a massive increase in migration movements on the other (Faist 2000; Faist/Ette 2007), and both developments emphasize the particular relevance of multiple networked spaces. New digital technologies and media not only facilitate communication, but also simplify transfer payments or money transfers to the country of origin and allow for political and cultural participation in the country of origin, despite having migrated. At the same time, they enabled unprecedented forms of surveillance, social control and commodification of life with all its attendant anxieties. In the first half of the twentieth century, all this would have been unimaginable. As Pries (2008) shows new transnational practices of permanent, ongoing communication across the most diverse geographical places have become the standard. Manuel Castells (1996) famously argued that the radical changes in the field of media technologies have ushered in what he termed the 'information age'. Since the 1980s, he maintains, social change has correlated with the prevalence of a "space of flows", which radically changed communication structures and led to an enormous increase in the complexity of social relations.

With ever-growing numbers of trans- and multinational corporations (Barry 2006; Lash/Urry 1994), international interconnections, network-coordinated production schemes and commodity chains (Bathelt et al. 2004), we observe, at the same

time, a strengthening of locally specific logics and concentrations and of distinctive constellations of local institutions, (economic) practices and infrastructures that developed over time. But since corporate activities are no longer, as Lüthi et al. (2013) show, adherent to the model of "spatially nested hierarchies" (ibid.: 284f.), the new corporate organizational principle seems more appropriately defined as a set of overlapping, trans-scalar networks that have local spatial concentrations (ibid.: 291).

In those modern societies for which the year '1968' signified a phase of socio-political upheaval (Cuba included), a growing relevance of the spatial figure of 'place' (besides territorial space) articulated itself not merely through political state-ments such as 'the private is political' or the declaration of even the narrowest of spaces as 'nuclear-free zones' by anti-nuclear movements across the globe, thereby interweaving global threat and local action in previously unknown ways (Schregel 2011). The 1970s also witnessed a deep crisis of modern urban planning due to the debates on how much diversity and/or specificity was wanted for urban spaces in order for them to be perceived and experienced as attractive (Noller/Ronneberger 1995: 40). The impact of these discussions is still felt in many countries today (including Brazil and South Africa, less in China and North Korea), reflected in a fierce competition among cities to (re-)create themselves as a characteristic place apart from others, charged with its own identity and singularity, often symbolized by 'star architecture' (Alaily-Mattar et al. 2018; Berking/Löw 2008; Reckwitz 2017). Also, there is growing evidence that people's own homes as a 'special' place are becoming newly relevant. Studies corroborate the interpretation that this could, for the most part, be read as a strategy of 'hedging' against deep-seated uncertain-ties and the aforementioned anxieties that current social changes bring (Pohl u.a. 2022; Weidenhaus/Korte 2021).

However, social change is not a unidirectional process. It always implies and includes simultaneity and feedback effects as well as manifold forms of cultural and political backlash that counter and resist transformation, as reflected in a wide range of movements and tendencies, from Occupy Movement to political develop-ments such as 'Brexit', or in the fact that the world has never seen more fortified borders as we have today (Mau 2021). Militarization and imperialism are not things of the past. History has not ended in 1989, contradicting Fukuyama's notorious phrase. Quite the opposite, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine has indicated impe-rial figurations continue to have profound global implications. Across the globe, the Corona pandemic has shown how quickly territorial closure as a political meas-ure gets reactivated if deemed desirable by state and international agencies. The crucial feature of current social change is thus not the fact that territorial space has made an exit from the global stage to be replaced by another spatial figure. Rather, it is the concurrence and simultaneous relevance of various spatial figures (includ-ing the figure of 'trajectorial space' as a structuring element of urban, air and water spaces alike, in the form of marked-out paths, routes and lines), each with their own inherent logics and conducive to a poly-contextualization of social actions.

Needless to say, the description of the ongoing social changes could also focus on different aspects and perspectives than the ones mentioned here. What seems clear, however, is that *space and spatial processes* are important anchor points from

which to proceed in the quest for a better understanding of the meanings and relational contexts of social change. There is hardly any other social phenomenon that would typically encompass relational constellations based on the placing (in the broadest sense) of heterogeneous elements in need of their meaningful synthesis as space. There certainly have always been forms of spatial placing and spatial arrangements which defied territorial figurations in everyday practice. But now approaches to and reflection upon space are changing ("the spatial turn"), extending to the way how spaces are imagined (e.g. changes on the level of spatial orientation through the prevalence of digital navigation systems which replace older systems like geographical maps on paper), as well as the valorization and exploitation of spaces (economically and politically through the creation and growth of special economic zones, and the growing relevance of platform economies). Even social conflicts between, for instance, supporters and opponents of immigration, or advocates and opponents of lockdown measures, have a spatial grounding, although this is hardly ever made explicit. All this seems to call for a sociological re-conceptualization of social change in which space is systematically taken into account. In the following section, I will show that pioneering work in this direction has already been done, notably in the context of the interpretive paradigm of sociology.

Social Change and the Paradigm of Interpretive Sociology

Theories of social change often went hand in hand with a macro-sociological or structural-functional perspective (Parsons 1969 [1961]; Zapf 1969, 1994), which has never failed to raise criticism for lacking "an adequate micro-sociological basis" (Müller/Schmid 2016: 23). The crucial question is, however, which sociological authors and texts are considered relevant to be included in the body of sociological literature on social change (and why Max Weber, for one, is seldom or never considered, see Mommsen 1986) and whether research on social change has evolved over time to incorporate a more relational, action- and process-oriented perspective. In the field of sociological action and communication theory, two major approaches to social change can be distinguished. One proceeded from a (more or less) stable social order to explore social change as a persistently present, yet secondary, counter-dynamic force, with Anthony Giddens as one of the key proponents. The second line of thinking, pursued for example by Bernhard Giesen (2016), assumed the reverse, namely that social change is the rule, and social order must be created and maintained under conditions of permanent change.

Starting with Giddens's works, it quickly becomes evident that while the dynamics of structural reproduction and routine are at the core of his theory, social change is operationalized as a concomitant process (see Müller/Schmidt 2016: 39). Giddens rejects the idea that social change is primarily a temporal phenomenon. He argues that the temporality of agency implies that spatial aspects of action must also be taken into account. His analytical interest is thus focused on localizing social action. Spaces, in this perspective, are contexts of action capable of structuring action, e.g. through a division into different functional zones (Giddens 1984). Everyday life is conceptualized as essentially consisting of routines and recursive actions. Social order is created by constantly reiterating and

repeating arrangements, paths, configurations and lifestyles, thus providing a sense of "ontological security", as Giddens (1979: 219) writes with reference to Ronald David Laing. Nonetheless, we are constantly faced with deroutinization phenomena, and here Giddens introduces his idea of social change: "By 'deroutinisation' I refer to any influence that acts to counter the grip of the taken-for-granted character of day-to-day interaction. Routine is closely linked to tradition in the sense that tradition 'underwrites' the continuity of practices in the elapsing of time. Any influences which corrode or place in question traditional practices carry with them the likelihood of accelerating change" (Giddens 1979: 220). As social practices are changing (also in a spatial perspective) and interpretations are shifting, the result is a reconstruction of traditional values – or their loss. In Giddens's theory, social order is the norm and change represents the disruption of routines. Although he conceives of change as interaction, he still draws on a macro-sociological methodological grid. He suggests (1) taking into account the fact that societies and nation-states are connected, to complement the aspect of territoriality of nation-states which allows distinguishing between internal and external change, (2) paying attention to disparities in the development of different systems and regions (here, Giddens's focus is on differences in spatiotemporal paths with regard to class, ethnic background or territorial claims, (3) putting special emphasis on the critical stages of change and (4) recognizing that some societies could take a leading role as a result of the change, though in the long term this could turn into a disadvantage (for a more detailed account see Giddens 1979: 225ff.). Although these insights touch upon phenomena that remain relevant, especially in the form of the renewed critical evaluation of extreme inequalities (e.g. Piketty 2020), they have since received profound elaborations filtered through the subsequent interpretive 'turns' in social sciences (e.g. performative and material, see Bachmann-Medick 2007). Similarly, a turn towards acknowledging agency, vitality and entanglements of materiality reworked and fused the traditional categories of action and order in new ways.

Unlike Giddens, the German cultural sociologist Bernhard Giesen holds the view that "change is not a temporary disturbance of the social order, a mere turbulence on the way to establishing the structures of an ideal society, but a constant force and the standard case from which any analysis must proceed" (Giesen 2016: 229, my translation). Giesen's methodology draws on the distinction between code, situation and process. Codes are "systems of signs used to construct a model of the social world" (ibid.: 230). Language, utopias and myths are cited as examples. Codes are neither spatially nor temporally bound, as opposed to processes, whose structure is temporal and situations, whose structure is spatial. If processes are stalled, social change cannot take place, which is the case when codes are too rigid, or in a 'dominant' situation, which also encompasses, according to Giesen, the dominance of place. "The tension between the historical process and its factual constraint is inherent in the concept of 'social change'" (ibid.: 236). Given the many ways in which processes can be coupled with situations and codes, there's no way of knowing which code will prevail when and where, as Giesen concludes.

Coming back to my initial argument that social change increasingly articulates itself in, around and in terms of social space(s), the works of Giddens and Giesen are exemplary illustrations of the limits of action-oriented approaches to

space. In both theories, space is conceptualized as a pre-existing entity, as the local condition of action. Through our actions, spaces are structured and restructured under conditions of change, to create territories, regions, zones, et cetera. By conceiving space strictly within a network of always already localized actions, Giddens excludes the possibility of conceptualizing space and spatial constitution in relational terms. The idea that in one and the same place more spaces than one can emerge or that several spatial figures are being made relevant at the same time seems inconceivable in this perspective. As a consequence, it is also impossible for Giddens to conceive of space and place as relational constructs, as spatial figures that are in a relationship with other spatial figures. The same is true for Giesen's approach. Here again, the spatial aspects of the situation are framed as place-boundedness. Space, it seems, is basically a cipher allowing for a more nuanced description of change, to distinguish the 'here' from the 'there'. As a result, social change becomes contingent. Neither Giddens nor Giesen seems to consider the possibility that changes in *spatial* arrangements may trigger social change (instead of merely being an expression of it). Most importantly, however, the difference between place and space remains rather vague in both theories.

The reason why I go back here to these two theorists is to reveal them as exemplary of the broader tendency present in both German and Anglophone sociological theory up until the end of the twentieth century, namely treating space as a residual category and resorting to 'contingency' whenever explanations of change encountered problems. I would like to suggest that it is precisely because space was not accorded the status of an explanans that sociology remained unable to capture important dynamics of change. Moreover, it is the relational understanding of space which thematizes the mutually constitutive character of structure and practice, and discourses and materialities (see e.g. Reckwitz 2002) that allows us to re-inscribe spatiality of social life in sociological theory in a non-reductive and non-linear way.

Refiguration

The order bias in sociological research has often been criticized, mainly because it does not take into consideration "that which is external to order, that which evades it, that on which order can't get a hold, that which disturbs or destroys, subverts or transcends it" (Bröckling et al. 2018: 264). The explicit focus on social change (as in Giesen's approach) might indicate a slight relaxation of the rigorous methodology here, yet at the cost of not only sacrificing its predictive potential but also losing the ability to analytically capture the practical accomplishment of social order through action.

What remains to be done is to set out on the intellectually tantalizing journey of looking at the problem from a relational point of view and focus on the sets of relationships and web of connections between order and change. This would – in the long term – even allow us to historically and geographically identify and distinguish phases and places defined by order(liness) from those undergoing change and, at the same time, show how they relate to one another in their manifold

ways. In terms of space, the past two decades could be seen as a phase of radical change. At the same time, the relational view on order and change implies that change cannot be understood by solely focusing on that which is changing, as even in change order shows through and "the changing Becoming achieves coexistence with the more stable Being" (Boehm 2007: 34, my translation). In this light, globalization is not a matter of increasingly dissolving borders and boundaries, nor merely a paraphrase for the (unilateral) deterioration of the territorial nation-state (Sassen 2008). Rather, social change is pervaded by contradictions between spatial figures.

Within the Berlin Collaborative Research Centre, we are working with (and seeking to concretize) the rather open-ended concept of *refiguration* to analyse and explain contemporary social changes. We expressly renounce the more specific notion of *transformation*, which implies a transition from one state of affairs into another (Knoblauch/Löw 2020; Löw/Knoblauch 2021). Figuration is derived from the Latin verb *fingere* (to shape, form and build), which is the root of the semantically more condensed noun *figura* connoting plasticity and movement. As opposed to form or *forma*, *figura* does not refer to static entities, but is "flexible, more resonating" (Auerbach 1967: 57). In dance theory, a figure not only designates a specific body posture or shape, but also at the same time refers to the unity of movements and their combinatory rules – and, beyond that, to the unity of interpretation and figure-ground-relations (Brandstetter 1997: 599). An arabesque in dance, for instance, is a code, more precisely a body-and-movement code. The figure itself, though, is an abstraction, since it only exists through and in the performance and interpretation of the dancers, in the act of "rewriting it in the process of moving" (Brandstetter 2007: 13). An arabesque is thus "a figuration of movements in space", as Gabriele Brandstetter notes (ibid.: 15). In the context of pathos formulas which are capable of "reshaping our conventions of expression", she even uses the term "re-figuration of expressive gestures" to describe the actual reworking process (Brandstetter 2004: 51).

Dealing with a different subject, yet pointing to the same direction is the work of Norbert Elias who defined the concept of figuration as an ever-shifting network of interdependencies (1978: 15). He sees the central task of sociology in the continual development and enhancement of concepts to describe the social and cultural dimensions of action without recurring to magical-mythical thinking or scientism. These concepts should, he argues, connote or encompass movement and change whenever possible, although, he at once concedes, most Western languages are constructed in such a way that subjects and objects have the character of an isolated thing at rest, and it is only by adding a verb, this some-thing is being 'mobilised': " We say, 'The wind is blowing', as if the wind were actually a thing at rest which, at a given point in time, begins to move and blow" (Elias 1978: 112). The same, as he critically remarks, goes for sociological research with the typical line of thought starting from steady states as the standard case and then goes on to describing movement and change as the particular case (Elias 1978: 115). Elias makes use of the connotation of mobility in the term *figura* to refer to the incessant processual interweaving of people's actions in a web of interconnections in flux.

Interweaving here serves to stress the fundamental interdependences of human beings and social actions that build this web of connections. Figurations, in Elias's thinking, are essentially a "lattice-work of tensions" (Elias 1978: 130), a kind of fluctuating balance of power; and he conceptualized figurations as relational and spatial phenomena throughout his work (Hüttermann 2018: 15).

Elias's main interest lies in the description of long-term social change and the relationship between changes in the level of personality structure and changes in the social figurations, which interdependently acting human beings create (Elias 1976: X). He also focuses on the intertwining, fluid ties of interdependence between different nation-states and societies, albeit with a narrow focus on Europe. While the emphasis is on tendencies *and* counter-tendencies, on tensions and unequal developments in and during change, the idea of a slowly unfolding, flowing process of change is challenged. Taking a pragmatic stance, Elias prefers to speak instead of "developments" (Elias 1976, VII) to refer to the broad lines of social change.

'Figura's connotations of plasticity and mobility, and the tensile nature implied in 'figuration' (with the latter describing both social power structures and the concurrency of subjective-affective and structural-institutional articulations) are quite fruitful in designing a more complex and spatially based model of social change in relation to social order. The concept of refiguration as the incessantly dynamic flux of changing figurations and counter-figurations allows for "more autonomous ways for thinking and speaking" (Elias 1978: 18) about social change in its relational, spatial and contradictory aspects. Drawing on refiguration to investigate social change under current conditions of increasing interconnections and interdependencies (viz. globalization, digitization), we also postulate the need to include the spatial dimensions of communicative actions and their aggregations and institutionalizations in the sociological analysis. The global scope of change calls for a greater focus on simultaneities and the conflictual nature of unequal developments in the unfolding of events, which are to be compared internationally and locally. There are basic figures to which people and their actions regularly relate in the social world as in dance. In sociological refiguration research, we therefore focus on spatial figures as codes of spatial organization. We gather and systematize empirically grounded generalizations derived from the heterogeneity of possible relational placements and synthesizing processes. Identifying and distinguishing relevant spatial figures also allows us to discover differences in the logic of their arrangement. As noted earlier, it is precisely the pluralization of spatial figures that are simultaneously relevant which is the central characteristic of contemporary social change. Besides actors' orientation towards territorial space, also network space, trajectorial space and place are politically and economically relevant constructions used to make sense of the social world (on spatial figures see also Löw 2020; Löw/Knoblauch 2021). It is not unlikely that, at a later stage, even more and different spatial figures may be identified as a result of further empirical investigations. Each spatial figure correlates with its specific inherent logic of distribution, integration, exclusion and relevance. In some contexts, spatial figures intertwine and mesh harmoniously, e.g. when special economic zones become circulation platforms (Bach (2011) or when commodity chains depend on sequential

spatial figures (see Baur et al. 2021; Hering/Fülling 2021). In most situations, however, the pluralization of simultaneously relevant spatial figures leads to structural tensions, conflicts and contradictions (Bartmanski et al. 2022; Fasari in this volume). And it is precisely these tensions between different spatial figures and different spatial logics that give social change direction and intelligible form – this is the central hypothesis in sociological refiguration research (Löw/Knoblauch 2021). Moreover, and aside from tensions (and conflicts) between different spatial figures, refigurations also find their articulation in the complex ways the figures' intrinsic logics of action are interwoven.

In other words, as a processual analytical concept, refiguration is directed against the simplistic idea that social change manifests itself *in* social spaces. Instead, the characteristic dynamics of movement and embodied action embedded in the concept of refiguration are closely linked with the exploratory movement seeking to find out how social world changes *in and through* spatial entanglements and spatial conflicts. Or, to refer back to the definition of Schmidt-Lux, Wohlrab-Sahr and Leistner, only if we understand the contexts, the sets of relationships and connections between spatial constellations and figurations, can we explain the nature and meaning of the social change that is currently taking place. The idea to foreground relations and relationality in sociological understanding is in itself not new in the discipline; in fact, it goes all the way back to founding figures of human-istic sociology such as Znaniecki and the Chicago School. However, the notion of refiguration enables us to more precisely elaborate the reciprocal conditionality of different figurations and explain what we mean when we today say that social changes exhibit non-linear patterns and simultaneity of effects. Figuration and refiguration have been used too, but the spatiality of these phenomena has never been granted the explanatory autonomy that it should have and without which we run a risk of overlooking or misunderstanding social change.

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3 Space in the Theory of Reflexive Modernization

The Location of Subjects from a Cosmopolitan Perspective

Angelika Poferl

Introduction

The theory of reflexive modernization, developed significantly by Ulrich Beck in the 1980s, is centrally associated with the concept of the "risk" or "world risk society" (Beck 1986, 2007 [1999]) and, in its later continuations, with the concept of a "methodological cosmopolitanism" or "cosmopolitan vision".[1] The subtitles of the (partly German-, partly English-language) publications hint at programmatic problems and questions. With the development of the concept of risk society, Beck turns "toward a new modernity" (1986; engl. 1992); the preoccupation with world risk society focuses on the "search for lost security" (dt. 2007; engl. 1999, no subtitle). The "cosmopolitan view" irritates with the statement "War is peace" (dt. 2004a; engl. 2006, no subtitle) – by which is meant not the confusion of empirical phenomena, but the blurring of boundaries and categories related to them, categories that are supposed to be order-founding but have long since lost their significance. This is for a reason that is as simple as it is momentous: social relations in the age of planetary interdependencies have changed and burst the established routines of perceiving, thinking, and acting, all the way to the conceptual schemes of scientific analysis; they are characterized by transformations that (not only, but especially also) break through the territorial, nation-state ordering structure; the world itself has undergone a "metamorphosis" (Beck 2017 [2016]). With this latter concept of metamorphosis, Beck aims to radicalize his work's thesis of the transformation of modernity under the sign of structural reflexivity toward a metamorphosis of the world. The work on this has remained incomplete.[2]

The theory of reflexive modernization,[3] including its cosmopolitan turn, offers valuable suggestions for a spatial re-figuration theory of the social that will be explored. It is focused on the description of a globally interwoven, de-bounded fundamental change [Gestaltwandel] of modernity, as expressed, for example, in the concept of the "world risk society" and the "metamorphosis". Further points of contact result from the criticism of "methodological nationalism" (Beck 1998: 115–121; transl. A.P.; Wimmer/Glick Schiller 2002) and of a "container theory of society", which – according to Beck – is followed by "sociology as an intellectual power of order" (Beck 1998: 49–55; transl. A.P.). This is opposed by the program of a cosmopolitan sociology. Instructive is not least the idea of a "post-societal"

theory of society (Beck/Grande 2004: 175; transl. A.P.), which shows unmistakable features of a dynamically and constructivistically conceived concept of sociality. In the frame of reference of reflexive modernization, the category of space does not primarily come into play in terms of spatial sociology, but rather in terms of social theory and social diagnosis.

The paper elaborates the spatial theoretical implications of the theory of reflexive modernization and further proposes the concept of a symbolically and spatially mediated *cosmopolitics of the social*. This concept implies an understanding of spatial structures and spatial cultures based on the inclusion of the hitherto excluded and the suspension and reconfiguration of established distinctions relevant to spatial knowledge. First, social and cultural science research on globalization as well as the relationship between globality and locality will be discussed, which forms a thematic background for this (1). Subsequently, selected argumentations of the theory of reflexive modernization are examined with regard to world risk society, border politics, metamorphosis, methodological cosmopolitanism, dialogical imagination, and the idea of the "post-societal social" (2). The perspective of a cosmopolitan location of the subject in the context of multiple socialization, multiple world relations, and multiple horizons of relevance, condensed in the concept of the cosmopolitics of the social, is finally developed as a possible bridge between reflexive modernization and re-figuration and illustrated by the example of the relation between gender and space (3).

The "with Beck beyond Beck" thesis is that social and spatial transformations cannot be separated. This is the aim of the concept of *cosmopolitics of the social* as understood here; it refers to a dialectic of *inclusion* and *exclusion*, of *equality* and *difference*, which has political, social, cultural, and spatial dimensions. While equality is to be established politically (e.g., via human and civil rights), difference is expressed in socially and culturally produced, institutionally underpinned differences that are often asymmetrical in character. This dialectic of inclusion and exclusion also essentially makes itself felt in social and symbolic forms of the spatial. Re-figuration in this context means the interplay of *sociality*, *visibility*, *vulnerability*, and *legitimacy* in the context of multiple socialization [Vergesellschaftung], multiple world relations, and multiple horizons of relevance, which, according to the reasoning here, is to be thought from the subject and its (self-)location.

Notes on Globalization Theory and Research: Cross–border Interdependencies and ‚De-spatialized "Spaces"[4]

In the 2017 essay by Hubert Knoblauch and Martina Löw on the spatial re-figuration of the social world, it is pointed out in the introduction that there are studies on the social dimension of space, but conversely the spatial dimension of sociality – despite the *spatial turn* – is still underexposed (Knoblauch/Löw 2017: 2; see also Löw/Sturm 2019; Löw et al. 2021). This initially seems somewhat surprising as a diagnosis of the state of the discipline. Trying to understand the social without reference to space is conceivable as a theoretical idea (the theory of functional differentiation, for example, can do without reference to space), but it is alien to

the world and to reality with regard to the lifeworld-material and thus inevitably also spatial embedding of the social. Constitutive reasons, i.e., reasons aiming at the nature of the social itself, speak in favor of including the spatial dimension in the consideration of sociality. In this respect, and as intended in the Collaborative Research Centre CRC 1265 "Re-Figuration of Spaces", it also makes sense not to leave the question of the spatial re-figuration to individual "hyphen sociologies" but to take a more comprehensive approach in terms of social theory in order to open up a space for theory building and research.

However, if one looks at general social theory as well as current contemporary diagnoses, it is indeed striking that the question of space, the spatial grounding, shaping, and changing of the social is hardly dealt with systematically (or only in approaches that are decidedly designated as spatial theory/spatial sociology). This is also true for a large part of globalization theory and research, although it is precisely this research that – one might expect – should primarily deal with the category of space, the spatial dimension of social structure formation, social action, social ways of life, and modes of existence.

From the perspective of globalization theory and research, the spatial reference comes into view primarily through the discussion of *global* and *local* dimensions of the social. The issues of globality and locality, however, do not only concern globalization research, which is explicitly flagged as such. On the contrary, it affects every analysis of social reality that does not limit itself from the outset to phenomena that are supposedly or actually only locally relevant and wants to make a virtue out of this limitation. In international literature, globalization has been a topic of theory and research since the 1960s and increasingly since the 1980s and 1990s. Initial approaches, for example through the work of Marshall McLuhan, John Naisbitt, Theodor Levitt, and others, were particularly interested in media and economic developments. Political science approaches as well as those interested in a political geography took up the topic from the perspective of the bifurcation of politically relevant worlds and a critical discussion about the "state-centeredness" or "state-forgetfulness'" of globalization research (e.g., Rosenau 1990, 2003; Brenner 1999). As the debates have evolved, systematic social and cultural science theorizing and research have emerged that seeks to open up the issue of globalization to the question of social change. Increasingly, the social and cultural dimensions as well as the multifaceted nature of globalization have been emphasized.[5]

The international discussion of globalization has been and continues to be dominated by contributions from the Anglo-Saxon world and other world regions. Sociology in the German-speaking world was comparatively late in opening up to globalization as a relevant subject area of social analysis and – with a few exceptions (e.g., Beck 1998; Berking 1998, 2006) – often only hesitantly (this also has to do with the normative and ideological overloading of the topic – globalization functioned predominantly as a buzzword for "neoliberalism", from which the serious scientific approach initially had to free itself). In addition, linguistic-spatial, conceptual-historical, and theoretical-linguistic ramifications were already indicated early on. Theorizing and research explicitly related to "globalization" is not necessarily synonymous with social theoretical approaches that refer to the emergence of global

structural and communicative contexts. For example, world systems theory according to Immanuel Wallerstein (2010 [1983]) and others, which is in the Marxist tradition and was developed and refined during the 1970s, has gone its own way. Partly it is included in the globalization discussion, partly not, which is also true for Leslie Sklair's (1991) world system concept. Niklas Luhmann's concept of world society (1975) was hardly received internationally from the 1970s to the 1990s. In German-speaking sociology, however, the world society concept of system-theoretical provenance has become strong in the following years (Stichweh 2000), although this seems to be persistently barely touching Anglo-Saxon globalization research. At the same time, a reception of world society concepts from macro- and international development sociology around Peter Heintz (1980) and from the neo-institutionalist school around John Meyer (2005) has been taking place in the German-speaking world since the 1970s and the 1990s, which now form close links with approaches based on differentiation and integration theory.[6]

Both in the Anglo-Saxon world and in the German-language literature, theoretical inadequacies of the globalization debate have been criticized, but also the theoretical, empirical, and methodological challenges associated with the topic have been made known. Since the 1990s, the research object of globalization has been broken down into more specific questions and problems. This is connected with conceptual differentiations (e.g., globalism, globalization, globality, transnationalization, transculturality, translocality, etc.). Thus, the question of the constitution of "the global" comes to the fore. Furthermore, the relationship between locality and globality is increasingly discussed and still needs to be clarified.

The distinction between the global and the local does not refer to substantial properties of circumstances or objects. Neither should the two be confused with universality and particularity – a pair of terms that is on a completely different level and either refers to social, cultural, and ideological differences (resp. particularities) or to commonalities in the sense of normative generalities (resp. universalities). To speak of globality and locality is rather a question of *spatial perspectivization*, that is, of the respective setting of the perspective and the associated contouring of the subject area. Here, both theoretical and methodological aspects become relevant.

In order to determine the relationship between the global and the local, four interpretive directions can be roughly identified in the widely ramified social and cultural science discussion: First, global developments *overform* the local: this often, but not always, results in assumptions of homogenization and standardization. The central reference is usually George Ritzer (2006) and his popularized concept of the cultural imperialist "McDonaldization". Second, global things (e.g., global norms, cultural practices, and ways of life) are *appropriated* locally and thereby *modified*. Here, the heterogenization and pluralization of social worlds are in the foreground, which arises precisely through the intertwining of global influences and local contexts and is further increased (see, for example, Watson 2006). Third, the local is increasingly itself a *product* of global developments. In the Anglo-Saxon literature, Roland Robertson (1992) has pointed this out since the early 1980s, referring to conceptualizations such as "glocalization" and "glocality". Robertson understood this not merely as global-local blending, but above

all as the global creation of the local (an example of this would be the invention of local traditions, the cultivation of homeland and tourist folklore, which can be observed globally and are actively promoted and pursued by governmental and non-governmental organizations; sporting events or social movements are also often "glocal" in nature). A separate, fourth strand is formed by approaches fed in particular by the postcolonial discussion, which critically address spatial, i.e., primarily national and territorial, determinations of culture and cultural representation and emphasize processes of *mixing* and *transgression*, *hybridity* or *hybridization*, the existence of "interstices" and a "third space" (Bhabha 2004 [1994], 1996), and develop various non-essentialist concepts of culture and identity. In the spectrum of social and cultural sciences, concepts of the global and the local have been spelled out differently against this background since the 1990s. They refer, for example, to the localization of culture (Bhabha 2004 [1994]), the presence of the global in the local (Prazniak/ Dirlik 2001), the production of locality (Appadurai 1996, 2001), and the emergence of a global "mélange" (Nederveen Pieterse 2009).[7]

But what does this mean for an understanding of spaces grounded in contemporary diagnosis and social theory?

Ulrich Beck has approached the topic of globalization from a modernity-theoretical perspective. He, in turn, conceives of globalization as living "in a world society, in the sense that notions of closed spaces become fictitious" (Beck 1998: 27–28). Central here is the principal *unenclosability of spaces*. A concept of space used in this way is not fixed to territoriality, but can also refer metaphorically to the description of socially, culturally, and institutionally more or less clearly delimited *contexts of experience, knowledge, and action*. If one understands – perhaps the lowest common denominator – globalization as the development of a "real-existing interdependence context" (Beck 2004a: 19; transl. A.P.), then the question of the nature of *interdependence* and the emergence of *new kinds of formations and entities* – understandable as *re-figuration?* – beyond the narrow focus on the "global" or the "local" breaks open. Similar problems are addressed in the discussion of "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt 2000, 2002), of "entangled modernities" (Randeria 1999, 2005), the various "routes" into and through modernity (Therborn 1995), in the context of postcolonial theorizing,[8] and also the "varieties" of reflexive modernity (Beck/Grande 2010). For its part, global history, which has been revitalized in recent years, draws attention to the fact that the unfolding of modernity does not precede global developments but, conversely, has emerged on the basis of far-reaching global interconnections through colonialism, trade, empire-building, and cultural exchange (Conrad/Eckert/Freitag 2007).

Reflexive Modernization as Re-figuration?

As the previous remarks show, the category of space almost always plays a certain role in the general discussion of globalization, but for research-related reasons, attention often shifts to other more specific issues and concepts – such as the capitalization of geographic space in David Harvey (2006), the emergence and

proliferation of networks in Manuel Castells (2003), questions of social inequality in Zygmunt Bauman (1998) or the development of translocal community life in Aihwa Ong (1999), and so on. To a large extent, this also applies to the theory of reflexive modernization, which has so far remained underexposed to spatial theory. Beck has become an inspiring author in the international globalization discussion since the mid-1990s.[9] His work on the foundations of reflexive modernization as well as on more issue-specific problems and the programmatic nature of a cosmopolitan sociology have contributed to this.

Can we speak of spatial theoretical implications of the theory of reflexive modernization in a narrower sense? And if so, how can this be related to the spatial re-figuration of the social? The connecting points are intertwined and shine through at various points in the theoretical material – like an underlying "fabric" that needs to be uncovered and reconstructed. In this respect, the following remarks also require some bold cuts in the subject matter. They start with the concept of "reflexive modernization" and "(world) risk society", move on to reflexive modernization as "border politics" and "metamorphosis", illuminate the perspective of a "methodological cosmopolitanism" and "dialogical imagination", and take up the idea of a "post-societal theory of society" (see also Poferl 2015a, 2019b).

The Theory of Reflexive Modernization: From a Risk Society to a World Risk Society

The theory of reflexive modernity (also called Second Modernity in contrast to classical First Modernity) sees its object in a "modernization of modernity" (Beck/Bonß 2001; transl. A.P.) that strikes back at the dominant categorical and institutional foundations of the classical model of modernity and undermines hitherto valid, stably held guiding ideas, distinctions, and coordinates of action. Reflexive modernization thus results from processes of progressive, radicalized modernization that initiate a "*meta-change*" of modernity (Beck/Bonß/Lau 2001: 12, emphasis in the original; transl. A.P.). What is meant by this is a change that affects not only individual areas of modern societies but fundamental premises of modernity – a modernity that in the common (also sociological) understanding has been defined primarily in Western-influenced, national, industrial-societal, andro-, ethno- and anthropocentric categories.

Of central importance for the claimed fundamental change [Gestaltwandel] is the theorem of *non-intended side effects* [Nebenfolgen] on which it rests. Thus, the transformations of modernity are neither due to intentional action nor to aggregation effects nor to reflection in the sense of increased knowledge. The concept of *reflexive* modernity rather means that principles and institutions, which have emerged in and with modernity, have a retroactive effect on the functioning and legitimation of modernity itself and make established structures of order fragile and their contradictions, limits, and fictions visible. The logic of change is determined by developments of *uncertainty*, *ambiguity,* and *insecurity* that have become problematic, which in principle permeate all areas of social action and, as "side effects [Nebenfolgen] of the *second order* [...] call social institutions into

question *from within*" (Beck/Bonß/Lau 2001: 32, emphasis in the original; transl. A.P.). The question of social and global inequality, nature-society relations, the change of the gender order, and many other processes of the transformation of modernity are examples of this. In contrast to simply unintended consequences of action (or side effects [Nebenfolgen] of the "first order"),[10] which can be managed in the conventional institutional mode, fundamental *institutional functional crises,* as well as *crises of legitimation,* occur in the course of technical-economic or cultural-political developments. The concrete manifestations of these crises, as well as the ways in which society deals with them, provide information about the sometimes gradual, sometimes rapid change in previous structural conditions, orientations of action, and societal patterns.

The concept of reflexive modernization thus draws attention to structural transformation processes that become culturally significant and call the understanding of modernity itself into question. Major, ideologically charged themes such as the notion of progress, enlightenment, rationality, freedom, and equality belong here just as much as the transformation of political culture, the emergence of sub-political public spheres and forms of power, and finally the question of the transformation of ways of life, lifestyles, everyday lifeworlds, milieus, identities, subjectivities, and their respective institutional, discursive, and cultural specifications down to the smallest ramifications of existence. While the concept of *risk society*, developed in the 1980s, focuses primarily on technical industrially induced risks as well as changes in social inequalities, changes in gainful employment, and shifts in gender relations in the course of individualization, the concept of *world risk* society (2007[1999], also Beck 2010, 2017 [2016]) brings the global dimension of civilizational hazards into view. The main topic is climate change, economic developments such as global financial crises, and the omnipresent threat of a globally acting fundamentalist terror are also taken into account. The main thesis is: A world-societal, reflexive modernity is emerging, which can no longer be pushed back into the old paths and orders and appears as a "world danger community" (Beck 2007: 27; transl. A.P.). Central to the concept of risk here is – and remains – the idea of *decision dependency* [Entscheidungsabhängigkeit], power of definition [Definitionsmacht] and *definitional relationships* [Definitionsverhältnisse] that are in flux (on this already Beck 1986 as well as e.g., Beck/Adam/Loon 2000). This concerns questions of interpretation and the attribution of interpretive power, of the legitimation and delegitimation of modes of action, which break open in the face of previously unimagined problems: "Where modernization risks are once, recognized" [...], "they develop an unprecedented political dynamic. They forfeit everything: their latency, their appeasing ,side-effect structure, their inevitability. Suddenly the problems stand there without justification and as a pure, explosive call to action" (Beck 1986: 103; transl. A.P.).

Furthermore, the concept of the world risk society points out that, in the face of global risks, there is no longer a nationally excludable "Other". Therein lies the *conditio humana* of the present and a cosmopolitan moment that reaches from that of a macroethics of planetary responsibility to the microlevel of everyday life: "Global risks confront us with the seemingly excluded Other. They tear down

national borders and mix the local with the foreign. The distant Other becomes the internal Other – not as a result of migration, but as a result of global risks. Everyday life becomes cosmopolitan: people must give meaning to their lives in exchange with others and no longer in the encounter with their own kind" (Beck 2007: 40; transl. A.P.).

This can also provoke opposing reactions of renationalization and xenophobia. Structurally, however, "everyone sits in a common danger space – without an exit" (Beck 2002b: 111; transl. A.P.). Having to relate to and act with one another becomes a *pragmatically* imposed constraint.

Reflexive Modernization as Border Politics, the Critique of "Methodological Nationalism", and the Notion of Metamorphosis

The epistemological and research interest of the theory of reflexive modernization is focused on the emergence of the new. It is concerned with the analysis of a new kind of rule structure, a new grammar of the social and political, although later versions of the theory (Beck/Bonß 2001; Beck/Lau 2005; Beck/Mulsow 2014) emphasize rather the interweaving of continuities and discontinuities instead of a historical structural break.

The argument focuses on both factual, temporal, and spatial phenomena of dissolution of boundaries, as well as on their multiplication and incongruity. Beck and others, however, resolutely oppose the "postmodern" notion of a complete dissolution of dualisms and definable social spheres. Rather, they assume a "transnational force field" of boundary dissolutions, decision constraints, border constructions, and border politics: "*Boundary dissolution [Entgrenzung] enforces decision: the more boundary dissolution [Entgrenzung], the more decision constraints, the more provisional-moral border constructions, that is, border politics*" (Beck/Bonß/Lau 2004: 15, emphasis in the original; transl. A.P.).

Against this background, it is not de-structuring but *re*-structuring, and here above all the "*politics of the border in de-marcated modernity*" (Beck/Bonß/Lau 2004: 15, emphasis in the original; transl. A.P.), that becomes a guiding concern of sociological clarification. Such a politics requires the development of an institutional logic that "no longer follows the principle of 'either-or' but 'both-as well'" (Beck/Bonß/Lau 2004: 16; transl. A.P.). Constitutive frameworks of thought and action of the nation-state -based, Western industrial society, which have become the epitome of modernity, but which for their part have already coagulated into "tradition", are thereby suspended and replaced: "Western modernity becomes itself an issue and a problem; its basic principles, basic distinctions, and key institutions dissolve from within in the course of radicalized modernization; the project of modernity must be renegotiated, revised, restructured" (Beck/Bonß/Lau 2004: 11; transl. A.P.).

The social sciences also have to take this into account. They are challenged to rearrange their frames of reference and conceptualizations, which is not only to be understood reactively but *projectively*: The task and challenge is to develop a new way of thinking beyond established structures of knowledge and beyond historically bound ways of looking at things. Only this makes it possible to

recognize the changes and upheavals taking place. The formula of "both/and" – deployed as a theoretical and as a methodological principle – is meant to help overcome false dichotomies and to grasp historical change more precisely, which also entails an "epistemological break" (Beck/Bonß/Lau 2004: 50; transl. A.P.) with the outdated frames of reference of a sociology that is wedded to the First Modernity. The (partly latent, partly manifest) notion of a *shaping* character of modernity as well as of its fundamental change (in its best and worst forms, cf. Beck/Sznaider 2011) runs through the writings like a red thread and is applied to the analysis of empirically observable social conditions as well as to the scientific vocabulary and the development of perspectives of description and observation. The theory of reflexive modernization thus draws – in more ways than one – "a picture that thinks of the relations of modernity as contingent, ambivalent, and (involuntarily) capable of being shaped politically. [...] The cage of modernity opens" (Beck 1999: 319). Here, the word "cage" itself becomes a strong metaphor for a practically and conceptually institutionalized space that cannot (any longer) remain closed.

The *critique of "methodological nationalism"* (Beck 1998: 115–121),[11] developed within the frame of reference of the theory of reflexive modernization, which has characterized Beck's work since the mid-1990s, argues that the categorization of society along national lines preserves the national gaze and thus excludes all other social realities beyond and across the national. This does not at all mean that nation-states as political organizations and as "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983) have become unimportant. They are and remain a powerful entity (Beck 2002b, 2011b) – but just one of manifold existing, varying, and interconnected contexts of action, which is very connectable to the term "polycontexturalization" used in the Berlin Collaborative Research Center (Knoblauch/Löw 2017: 3). The methodological and epistemological consequences are obvious: The question of the sociological units of investigation, which always has to be clarified anew – and under conditions of globalization more than ever – cannot be answered via tacitly assumed, national framings. Society (despite all its institutionalizations) is not a firmly established entity and also not a closed "container", which is why both concepts of substance and of territorial or nation-state fixations are unsuitable. The critique of methodological nationalism is – rather latently – also conceived as a critique of a collectivism of concepts, that is, of collective categories. When Beck distances himself from a national "we-sociology", it is not a matter of negating affiliations, collective interests, or identities. However, their significance can at best be proven empirically and must not be presupposed as an unquestioned premise of the social. It further follows that the study of collectivities must conversely be measured against a demanding concept of (institutionalized) individualization (cf. Beck/Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Poferl 2015a; Poferl 2019c) as well as against the question of the relationship between collectivization and individualization.

The term *metamorphosis* (Beck 2017 [2016]) radicalizes the analysis by focusing on the reference to "world", "worldviews", and to each individual's own understanding of the world. Spatial and temporal notions of "reconfiguration" are here densely interwoven: "The metamorphosis of the world is more and something

different than an evolution from the closed to the open, namely: an epochal change of worldviews, a reconfiguration of the national-centered worldview. However, this change is not brought about by wars, violence, or imperial aggression, but by the side-effects of successfully completed modernization steps – for example, by digitalization or the prediction of a man-made climate catastrophe. The nationally and internationally institutionalized *Weltbild** on the basis of which people understand the world has faded. 'Weltbild' means that for every *cosmos* there is an associated *nomos*, in which empirical and normative certainties combine to form a picture of what constitutes the respective world, past and future" (Beck 2017: 18, emphasis in the orig.; transl. A.P[12]).

Methodological Cosmopolitanism and Dialogical Imagination

Similar to the critique of methodological nationalism, the concept of "methodological cosmopolitanism" proposed by Beck (Beck 2000, 2002a: 19; 2004a, b) is also analytically consequential. The term *cosmopolitanization*, often used synonymously (which, unlike a philosophical cosmopolitanism, explicitly sets itself apart from normative conceptions), has a double meaning. On the one hand, it follows the *descriptive* view that "reality itself has become cosmopolitan" (Beck 2004a: 8; transl. A.P.). Processes of globalization and transnationalization have given rise to cross-border linkages and interdependencies that a nationally oriented approach (including the selection of relevant units of inquiry in each case, the formulation of questions, etc.) tends to conceal rather than reveal. The analysis of this changed world reality thus requires, on the other hand, an *episte-mological* and *methodological* conversion. This is what the "cosmopolitan vision" (Beck 2004a, b) stands for, without which the upheavals and transformations can neither be recognized nor "confirmed" or falsified; they elude analysis and remain systematically irrelevant (Poferl 2015a, 2019b). Accordingly, the theoretical-political claim to "enlightenment" also presupposes the cosmopolitan gaze in the form of a "conceptual restructuring of perception" (Beck 2004a: 8; transl. A.P.).

In this context, the notion of a recognition of the "otherness of the other" (Beck 2002a: 18), which is by no means essentialistically but *relationally* conceived, acquires decisive importance. It stands for the logic of "*inclusive oppositions* (including nature into society etc.)" (Beck 2002a: 19, emphasis in the original) and thus, in other words, for the other side of the distinction, the "non-identical", which is imposed on thinking, living and acting under conditions of reflexive modernity.[13] In the conception of an empirical-analytical, methodological cosmopolitanism developed as a counter-program to methodological nationalism, the way of think-ing of a sociology of the "both/and", which is central to the theory of reflexive modernization, again comes to bear. Under the sign of the "*internalized* other" (Beck 2002a: 18, emphasis in the original), there is no longer a privileged starting point of cognition. The cosmopolitan imagination is – in contrast to the national monologue – a "*dialogic imagination*" (Beck 2002a: 18, emphasis in the original). It requires the art of translation and the interplay of perspectives – in the reality of

society and in science alike: "The national perspective is a monologic imagination, which excludes the otherness of the other. The cosmopolitan perspective is an alternative imagination, an imagination of alternative ways of life and rationalities which includes the otherness of the other. It puts the negotiation of contradictory cultural experiences into the centre of activities: in the political, the economic, the scientific, and the social" (Beck 2002a: 18).

The concept of cosmopolitanization also shows that the theory of reflexive modernization is explicitly not to be regarded as a theory of a "better", "more reflective" modernity (this would be a misunderstanding, which, however, has always stubbornly followed it). Thus, Beck resolutely warns against a naïve "*cosmopolitan myth*" (Beck 2004b: 154, emphasis in the original) of all-round sympathy and friendly openness. The "positive", normative recognition of the Other as equal and different is only one of several possible variants. At the same time, both can be thought of together – otherness is difference and therein equality at the same time: "This indicates a world in which it has become a necessity to understand, reflect and criticize the otherness of others, and thereby confirm oneself and others as *different and therefore of equal value*" (Beck 2004b: 153, emphasis in the original).

Beck emphasizes the importance of *processes of perception, interpretation, and evaluation*, among other things, by using the example of global social inequalities and social (civil and human rights) norms of equality. The fading out of cross-border social inequality, as is usual from a national perspective, is thus broken up by the spread of equality norms and the standards linked to them. These make visible and comparable what previously could remain unrecognized and incompa-rable, and in this way contribute to the *de-legitimization* of social inequality in a global context (see also Beck/Poferl 2010): "The more norms of equality spread around the world, the more global inequality is deprived of the legitimizing basis of institutionalized looking away" (Beck 2008: 15; transl. A.P.).

The Outline of a Post-societal Social Theory

In their reflections on a "cosmopolitan Europe", Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande formulate a plea for a "*post*-societal social theory of Europeanization" (Beck/Grande 2004: 175, emphasis in the original; transl. A.P.). This is first of all a neologism directed against the convention of equating nation-state and society. It wants to follow an exogenous, "world-historical change of perspective[s] of globalized modernity" (Beck/Grande 2004: 175; transl. A.P.) and at the same time develop a "new concept of integration and identity" (Beck/Grande 2004: 28; transl. A.P.), "that enables, affirms, living together across borders without having to sacrifice idiosyncrasy and difference on the altar of assumed (national) sameness. 'Identity' and 'integration' are then no longer just other words for hegemony over the other or others, of the majority over minorities" (Beck/Grande 2004: 28; transl. A.P.).

Based on the criticism of sociology's "Europablindheit" and a "state -fixation" of European studies (Beck/Grande 2004: 147; transl. A.P.) and alongside proposals for a "horizontal", i.e., transnationally oriented empirical analysis (Beck/Grande

2004: 143–174; transl. A.P.), the draft aims at decoding European society as *interdependence*, as *mobility*, as *civil society*, as *civilization*, as *memory*,[14] as *meta-power play*, as *inequality dynamics*,[15] and as *regional world risk society* (Beck/Grande 2004: 175–206, emphasis in the original; transl. A.P.). This decisively changes the background foil of social analysis, its theoretical-methodological frame of reference, and the constitution of the object: not a nationally oriented understanding of society, but *globality* and *global, historical, and contemporary entanglements* form the starting point, in the logic of which Europeanization as a "specific inside-outside variability" and as a "contradictory border politics" (Beck/Grande 2004: 180; transl. A.P.) becomes the object of social science research. The possible applications of such a European "post-societal theory" range from the sphere of established politics to the lowlands of everyday life, touching on questions of autonomy, loyalty, identity, social coherence, and cohesion in their respective specific European expressions. The experience of Europeanization thus rests not on society, but on the experience of "*sociality*" (Beck/Grande 2004: 180, emphasis in the original; transl. A.P.). The idea of a Europe in the making, of a Europe as process and project, experiences its cosmopolitan turn with such a concept of society in a "constructivist spirit" (Beck/Grande 2004: 181; transl. A.P.).

Locating the Subject: Multiple Socialization, Multiple World Relations, Multiple Horizons of Relevance

Descriptively, methodologically, and epistemologically, the argumentations presented can be further developed beyond Beck's work. Moreover, they can be extended to a theory of multiple socialization [Vergesellschaftung], multiple world relations, and multiple horizons of relevance – a consideration that can only be hinted at here in conclusion. The perspective of a cosmopolitan location of the subject offers a possible bridge between reflexive modernization and the re-figuration of spaces. This is exemplified by the relationship between gender and space.

   The theory of reflexive modernization is not a sociology of space that is interested in social theory, but a social theory that is open to questions of space out of a critique of a territorially bound concept of society. It is primarily directed against national confinements of the social and has thus contributed significantly to opening the theoretical and methodological "space" for an analysis of society that avoids the often under-questioned presuppositions of (supposedly or actually) specific social structures and cultures. Only in this way can global and local contexts "transverse" to national frames of reference come into view. Nevertheless, the previously reconstructed connecting points alone are not sufficient to arrive at a social-theoretical as well as a methodologically sensitive approach to the meaning of spaces. The concept of the *cosmopolitics of the social* (Poferl 2018, 2021), which follows the theory of reflexive modernization but also goes beyond it, is proposed as a starting point for this. Initially developed in the context of dealing with a sociology of knowledge and human rights, (and here in particular with a view to gender orders and gender cultures of modernity) the concept starts from the analytically fundamental dynamics of inclusion and

exclusion, equality and difference, which concretize differently in space-time: it tries to grasp the *inclusion of the hitherto excluded* in the respective "own" space of experience and action, as well as the *suspension and reconfiguration of established distinctions guiding thought, perception, and action*. Such a cosmopolitics of the social – used as a theory-forming "sensitizing concept" (Blumer 1954: 7) – concerns the *boundaries of the social*, the empirically produced internal and external *differentiation*s and their *readjustment* within the sphere of the human (the distinction between the human and the non-human shall not be mentioned here). With regard to scientific constructions of the "second degree" (Schütz 2004 [1953]), the cosmopolitan approach implies – methodologically – the development of an observation perspective that allows us *to imagine* the respective other, the excluded, and to draw on it as *a possibility of re-constructing* and *re-interpreting*. This opens the view to a structure-forming mode of multiple socialization [Vergesellschaftung], which depends on sensitive, fine-grained captures of multiple world relations, multiple forms of problematization and multiple horizons of relevance.

Re-figuration in such a context can theoretically and methodologically mean to think the "post-societal" not only from a critique of nation-state and territorial settings but consistently *from the subject:* starting from its localization and self-localization, from its "view of the world", from its knowledge and experience of the world and of itself. In terms of social theory, this can hardly be separated from intersubjectivity and *sociality*.[16] Conversely, this also means: from its presence and its *visibility* in social contexts, its *vulnerability*, its *legitimacy* – i.e., the question of which "place" the subject, conceived here as a *person*, is able to occupy; when, where, how and under which circumstances such a "place" it is denied to it; or which "risks" and restrictions of access to which spaces it is subject to.

In this respect, the worldwide discussions on the human rights of women and girls bear witness to profound, historically, politically, socially, and culturally conditioned differences between world regions as well as to striking similarities. Thematically, for example, the worldwide phenomenon of gender-based violence points to the outstanding importance of the disposal of *one's own body*, which represents an existential element of female vulnerability and is spatially dimensioned.[17] Sexual and domestic violence, rape as a means of war, sexual abuse, assault, a *lack of security in public and private spaces* are signs that in the real social world, it is far from being possible to assume gender-generalized humanity and an actually realized "right" to presence *and* integrity. The mere attribution of formal legal subjectivity does not change this, even though it is an indispensable institutional prerequisite for sanctioning in the case of violations of the law (cf. Merry 2006). In addition to the physical and psychological integrity of the body, the problem of space and the intertwining of sociality, visibility, vulnerability, and legitimacy concerns another central aspect: the availability of *one's own money*, i.e., the possibility of securing one's own existence economically and of appearing as an economic subject (e.g., in the field of gainful employment and professional work, in organizations, companies, on markets). This touches elementary questions of social justice, social participation, economic independence,

and survival (cf. Degener/Rosenzweig 2020; more specifically on global poverty Rodenberg 2003), which also have a spatial component. Furthermore, *one's own political action* is socially, symbolically, and spatially interwoven in equal measure. Acting in the sphere of the political public sphere, participating in political processes, and engaging as a citizen, as a citoyenne, have not been historically cradled for women in bourgeois modernity; on the contrary. They had and still have to fight for rights of economic, social, and political participation and involvement in a lengthy, laborious way and often against tough opposition. In the conceptions of legitimacy of the bourgeois-modern gender order (Fraisse 1995), women were *not* intended from the outset to be equal members of society. This also applies in varying specific ways to other regions of the world (cf. Agosín 2001; Winkel/Poferl 2021). In addition to the disposal of one's own body, of one's own money, and of one's own political agency, and "overarching" these, as it were, the disposal or non-disposal of *space per se* in the physical and psychic, material, social, and symbolic senses is one of the most gender-differentiated preconditions of female existence. This is instructively pointed out not least by the existing spatial sociological research on the connection between space or spatial orders, spatial structures, and gender (cf. e.g., Beebeejaun 2017; Ruhne 2019).[18]

Global problems of gender inequality and gender difference, as the debates of Black Feminism (Kelly 2019), feminist standpoint theories (Harding 2004), and the (science-oriented) concept of "situated knowledge" (Haraway 1988) illustrate, manifest themselves in very different ways depending on social context and situatedness. From the point of view of the plurality of modernities, gender relations present themselves not as unity but as diversity (Winkel/Poferl 2021). Nevertheless, the global struggles for women's and girls' rights suggest that sociality, visibility, vulnerability, and legitimacy must be thought together. From a gender-related perspective, the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, of equality ascribed and difference asserted as "real", can hardly be traced and comprehended otherwise – not in their institutional sharpness, nor in the often blurred contours that characterize gender relations and gender constructions in the symbolic garb of gendered notions of essence, roles, and identity, as well as their ideological exaggeration. The "world risk society" still presents differently for women and girls in many respects. It is not only about the global major risks of societal transformations, but about risks of an everyday world that has gender-typical colorations – in the "private", in social communities as well as in the public sphere.

All dimensions of social participation and involvement addressed here – physical and psychic, economic, political, spatial – are both socially and symbolically overformed materialities and expressions of entitlement. They belong, so the assertion, to the *common (female) materialities* and *entitlements* of a human rights-defined being-in-the-world for women and also for girls – for example, in the Women's Global Charter for Humanity from 2005,[19] which went rather unnoticed by the world public (cf. Dackweiler 2020), all this was made an issue together. These common materialities and entitlements form constitutive conditions of female ways of life and modes of existence.[20] They liberate women and girls from dependence on *uncontrollable* power, from being dependent on

arbitrariness – be it of the husband or partner, be it of the family and kinship in the narrower and broader sense. At the same time, spacing and synthesis processes of spatial constitution in material, social, and symbolic respects come into view, which in many cases allows direct connections to a relational theory of space (Löw 2000; Löw/Sturm 2019). Gender cultures are always (also) "spatial cultures" (Löw/Knoblauch 2021) – literally and figuratively. Gender knowledge is always spatial knowledge – including the knowledge of who can move where, when, and how, which kind of moving, of staying in space is socially and symbolically "possible" and which is not. They regulate access to social spaces, the time spent in them, located action, placements and modes of arrangement, possibilities of use, mechanisms of domination and power, control and sanction procedures from the level of negotiated social orders and the complexity of situations (cf. conceptually Strauss 1978; Clarke 2005) through situational definitions (cf. Thomas 2018 [1923]) down to the finest capillaries of the (also) spatially situated and structured order of interaction (cf. Goffman 1994).

The exemplarily used relation of gender and space suggests it: Starting with a subject-oriented and micrological approach is not a renunciation of broader social analysis, nor is it a renunciation of macrosociological epistemological interests. The distinction between "micro" and "macro" simply does not hold water; it is at best a makeshift and may serve as a reminder to proceed neither subsumption-logically nor "inductivistically". To approach the location of the subject and to renounce national, territorial, or otherwise classifying, collectivizing preconceptions, requires to align oneself with fundamental dimensions of the social, which undeniably include space and spatiality. Appropriate access to globally asserting structures and local specifics cannot be gained "automatically" through international comparisons. Rather, the question of the respective units of investigation as well as their methodological development is posed anew.

The outlined debates about globality and locality, about interdependencies and "de-spatialized" spaces as well as the foundations and further developments of the theory of reflexive modernization offer numerous suggestions for the concept of a cosmopolitics of the social. The perspective of a cosmopolitan location of the subject takes up the "thread" of a post-societal theory of society and weaves it into the everyday, ordinary of a non-elitist, rooted "vernacular cosmopolitanism" (cf. Bhabha 2004 [1994]; Werbner 2006). How can this be done?

Ethnographic research methods are likely to be methodologically instructive and useful for further development. Ethnography starts with the empirical investigation of social action, lifeworlds, practices, institutional contexts and cultural orientations through observation, co-presence, longer-term participation, and involvement in the field under investigation. The attention of sociological ethnography is not directed to the analysis of a culture considered as a unity, but to social and cultural *differentiations*. It turns to cultural suborientations, small social lifeworlds, processes of institutionalization, specific practices, and ways of acting "in one's own" – that is, in one's own, supposedly familiar society. The term ethnography stands for research methods that are oriented towards participatory observation in the broad understanding of a context-sensitive, methodologically plural research strategy. While it was

already at the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that processes of social modernization and change promoted the development of ethnographic research in the course of industrialization, urbanization, and migration, in the second half of the twentieth century and in the still young twenty-first century ethnography finds its objects in a world that corresponds less and less to what is apparently known, to what is traditional, "normal" and has become self-evident – although this is in any case historically and culturally relative. The pluralization and heterogenization of life situations and lifestyles, of forms of living and of milieus, increasing functional differentiation and specialization, but also processes of globalization and transnationalization give rise more than ever to foreignness in one's "own" culture and, conversely, to a certain degree of familiarity in and with the foreign. Even the distinctions that have been practiced prove to be methodologically not very meaningful and orderly. What counts as "known" and "foreign" is changeable and fragile. The development of methodologies and methods, of concepts and theories is not unaffected by this (cf. Poferl/Schröer 2022).

According to the considerations developed here, a next step, which may seem self-evident for ethnography (and by far not always so for globalization research), is to distance oneself from foundational categorical abstractions (concepts such as "globalization", "society", or "modernity" are nothing else) and to proceed *locally*, *situationally*, and *focused*, that is: To start at the level of concrete localities and situations and from there to fan out the relevant relations, processes, and contexts for social action, interactions, identity and subjectivity, not least also for the formation of institutions and structures. This is explicitly not a plea for "smallness" in the sense of a limitation of perspectives but for a *microscopically precise* globalization research. Moreover, "focused" does not mean disregarding relations – on the contrary, the social is relationally woven; this is inscribed in the term, and it would make no sense without relations (neither socially nor in societal theory). But there must be a methodological starting point from which the reconstruction of relations and interactions unfolds.[21]

Against this background, thirdly, it would furthermore appear to make sense to start at the double meaning of the concept of the world as *globus* and as *mundus* and its "categorial difference" (Badura 2006: 12; transl. A.P.; Poferl 2015b). A version of the world as *globus* refers to planetary space and its extent. This is quite relevant for the analysis of social phenomena and processes: Through global interconnections and infrastructures, the world has become potentially accessible in its globality – it is larger and smaller at the same time, wider and more open than the restriction to a specific territory. This structures possible ranges of a global unfolding of socialities – in a historically unprecedented way. The world, however, is always and simultaneously present as *mundus*; i.e., as a *human* and *cultural* world "made" by human beings, as the elementary background of human world-experience, of the construction of human world-relations and of world-relations emerging from it, as lifeworld (Schütz/Luckmann 1973) and finally in the shape of plural constituted *social world*s (cf. B. Luckmann 1970; Strauss 1978). This is the classical, albeit theoretically differently spelled out area of sociological ethnography.

From this follows: If one takes *globus* and *mundus* together, then "the world" presents itself in the global whole as a *material*, *social* and *symbolic space*, beyond which only the extraterrestrial dwells, and within which we (thanks to communication, material infrastructures, formal memberships, and memory) are no longer completely excluded, as long as social addressings take effect.[22] Nevertheless – and this breaks open the perspective of a "total inclusion" – people can be *socially*, *symbolically*, and *spatially invisible* and get lost – if there is no (more) perception by others that can be *concretely experienced* in everyday life and the lifeworld, no memory, no resonance, no recognition, no space of inter-action, of intersubjectivity and of anchoring in the world filled with meaning. Here, globality is not to be confused with universality. While the former remains spatially-materially connoted (and would have to be examined, e.g., with regard to an actual "worldwide" validity of norms), the latter refers to symbolic mediations (e.g., of a claim to validity such as that of human rights, which in principle is supposed to apply to all people, but is de facto characterized by social and cultural selectivities and asymmetries; gender relations are an example of this).

To draw the bow from the world as *globus* to the world as *mundus* requires to develop an art of *scaling*, of *perspectivization*, of *translation* as well as a *methodology of permanent change of perspectives*. The "world-society" is of complicated materiality, its "webs of significance" (Geertz 1973: 5) are sophisticated. They consist of spatiality, matter, and body, but also of individuality, subjectivity, and sociality. Crude classifications and schematizing attributions of categories (for instance according to class, "race", and gender) are not sufficient to capture this. The highest "quality criterion" of ethnographic research is to find out something about the world that one does *not* know or does not know *yet*, in order to understand *more* of the world (as *globus* and *mundus*). Ultimately, it is a matter of opening up specific world relations and horizons of relevance, i.e., horizons of what is significant in each case as well as of things that matter (including their flip side of the insignificant and trivial) in their multiplicity and multiformity.

"Globalization, I want to suggest, always begins at home" – this statement (Bhabha 2004 [1994: XV] unmistakably reminds us that the local does not dissolve. It is much more likely that under the conditions of globalization, the concrete places, the environments, and spaces in their *material, social* and *symbolic* dimen-sions, the respective *local* impositions and, in addition to the *cognitive*, also the *sensual* and *affective*, i.e., *aesthetic* and *spiritual experience of the world* become increasingly important – for reasons of the constitution and construction of the social because only the interplay of all this gives the subject contour in its sociality, anchors, and shapes existence. The spatial re-figuration of the social would have to show up wherever people are and things happen. In other words: The social cannot exist without space.

Notes

1 See Beck (2000, 2002a, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011a); Beck/Sznaider (2006).
2 Ulrich Beck passed away on January 1, 2015. Until his death, he was Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the Ludwig-Maximilian-University of Munich (LMU). Previously, he held the Chair of Sociology and Social Structure Analysis at the Institute of Sociology

there from 1992 to 2014, following professorships in Münster (1979 to 1981) and Bamberg (1981 to 1992). Beck has held positions including Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Wales College of Cardiff (1995 to 1998), British Journal of Sociology Visiting Centennial Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) (1997 to 2014), and Professor at the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris (2011 to 2014). From 1999 to 2009, Beck was spokesperson for the German Research Foundation (DFG)-funded Collaborative Research Center 536: "Reflexive Modernization. Analyses of the Transformation of Industrial Modernity", from 2013 to 2014 Principal Investigator of the European Research Council (ERC) project „Methodological Cosmopolitanism – In the Laboratory of Climate Change". Information on his biography as well as a compilation of publications and projects can be found in the web archive Ulrich Beck of the University Archive of LMU Munich, which contains information on the life and work of the scientist: https://www.soziologie. uni-muenchen.de/forschung/beck-archiv-link/index.html (last accessed 30.03.2021).

3 In general, Beck/Giddens/Lash (1996); Beck/Bonß (2001); Beck/Bonß/Lau (2003); Beck/Lau (2005).

4 The following remarks are based in part on Working Paper No. 3 of SFB 1265, Poferl (2019a).

5 See, for example, Featherstone (1990); Giddens (1990); Lash/Urry (1994); Friedmann (1994); Featherstone/Lash/Robertson (1995); Albrow (1996); Hannerz (1996); Bauman (1998); Tomlinson (1999); Berger/Huntington (2002); cf. also Dürrschmidt (2002).

6 Cf. the contributions in Heintz/Münch/Tyrell (2005); for a critique of the world society concept, Holzinger (2018).

7 How the local and the global can be related to each other is, of course, also a topic of more specialized fields, such as the sociology of development, the sociology of space and cities, the sociology of migration, the sociology of religion, the sociology of inequality, gender studies, the sociology of human rights, family studies, the sociology of work and organization, and others.

8 The interdisciplinary discourse is now wide–ranging; see, by way of example as well as with particular reference to colonial foundations of modernity: Said (1979); Mohanty (1984); Spivak (1988); Hall/Grieben (1992); Gilroy (1993); Dirlik (1994); Randeria (1999, 2005); Mignolo (2000); Costa (2007); Chakrabarty (2010).

9 One of the contributing factors was an (endowed) professorship at the London School of Economics, which Beck held from 1997 until his death. At the LSE, intellectual debates of the rapidly developing globalization theory and research had been bundled. With respect to Beck's work, there has been a remarkable skewing of German and international reception since the 1990s.

10 The authors distinguish the concept of „*second–order* side effects [Nebenfolgen]" here from „side effects [Nebenfolgen] in general" (Beck/Bonß/Lau 2001: 32, emphasis in the original, transl. A.P.).

11 Beck sets himself apart from Smith (1995) with this critique.

12 The asterisk located in the original text indicates that the term "Weltbild" [worldview] was used in German in the original English version of the book manuscript.

13 Beck speaks of both the otherness of the others and the otherness of the Other, although the references are not always clear. This can be associated with either persons or social groups (e.g., members of other cultural groups) or other, even non-human, entities or abstracts. The use of the plural usually means persons or groups. The singular, on the other hand, refers to the ‚other' side of distinctions, which may involve the taxonomy of a wide variety of social phenomena, up to and including the boundaries of the social itself. For the cosmopolitanization approach, both usages are relevant.

14 See also Beck/Levy/Sznaider (2004); Beck/Levy (2013).

15 See also Beck (2008); Beck/Poferl (2010).

16 Already the constitutive, proto-sociologically graspable constellation of *ego* and *alter ego* refers to the basic intersubjective structure of proto-identity and proto-morality (Luckmann 2000).

17 Cf. Agosín (2001); Merry (2006); Butler et al. (2016); Koloma Beck (2017) and the chapters by Hagemann-White, Brückner und Göttsche in Rendtorff/Riegraf/Mahs (2014).
18 On socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion in general Kronauer/Häußermann (2019).
19 The charter emerged from the globalization-critical feminist action network „Women's World March against Poverty and Violence" and the two Women's World Marches in 2000 and 2005.
20 On the concept of mode of existence, cf. systematically Maihofer (1995).
21 Instructive are, in very different ways, e.g., the works of Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2004), Karin Knorr Cetina and Urs Brügger (2005), approaches of global ethnography (Burawoy 2000) and multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995; Falzon 2009) as well as existing discussions and reflections on ethnographic research under conditions of globalization (Lachenmann/Dannecker 2008; Nieswand 2008). Lifeworld analytic ethnography, primarily developed by Anne Honer (on this Honer/Hitzler 2022; Hitzler/Eisewicht 2020), also offers a fruitful starting point. The perspective of a focused ethnography was introduced by Knoblauch (2001).
22 Neo-institutionalist and differentiation-theoretical concepts of world society, for example, have also drawn attention to this.

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4   Wittgenstein's House

From Philosophy to Architecture to Philosophy

Nana Last

Between 1926 and 1928, the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein designed and built a house in Vienna for his sister, Margarethe Stonborough-Wittgenstein.[1] Designed as it is by a philosopher of language, the house in Vienna has long presented itself as a series of questions; central among these questions is what relation, if any, exists between Wittgenstein's philosophy and his architecture. How we address this question is critical. Too often, the concern with how architecture and philosophy relate to one another has implicitly suggested the existence of a gap separating Wittgenstein's house from his philosophy, one differing fundamentally from any similar separation between works in the same medium by the same author.

Addressing this question, the premise of this essay is that Wittgenstein's grappling with physical, habitable space in the design of the Stonborough-Wittgenstein house, contested the implicit restricted spatial logic that underlay his early philosophy of language. This way, the practice of architecture had a transformative impact on his philosophy. By providing a concrete site in which to simultaneously engage with space and spatial constructs, the design of the house served as an active place of interchange between philosophical, visual, spatial, temporal and material constructs, and conditions. Enacted through spatio-linguistic concepts on the one hand and sites of philosophical investigation on the other, the practice of architecture laid the groundwork for his later philosophy's understanding of language as a practice-based, "spatial and temporal phenomenon" (PI §108). Beginning with the opening sections devoted to the builders, architectural and spatial constructs emerge at crucial junctures in the later philosophy and continue throughout with his understanding of language as a practice of language-games, his concern with the complex functioning of boundaries, the definitive construct of family resemblance, and his use of spatial and architectural examples as models of linguistic meaning.

As Wittgenstein designed the Stonborough-Wittgenstein house during the final two years of his ten-year abandonment of philosophy—a period dividing his early philosophy as given in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) from his late *Philosophical Investigations* (1953)—any examination of the relations between Wittgenstein's philosophy and architecture must contend with not just one but two pertinent breaks or gaps of interest. Furthermore, as the distinction between early and late work denotes a decided philosophical shift (both historically and conceptually), two issues emerge in and around the history of the house's production:

relations between the house and philosophy on the one hand and those between his early and late philosophies on the other. While the first emanates from differences in media, the second builds on the long-debated concern with a connection between Wittgenstein's early and late philosophies.

This essay proposes that these temporally overlapping relations are not merely coincidental, however, but inextricably associated. As such, any lacunae seen to separate architecture from philosophy, and early from late, do not *divide* but rather *link* the pairs of relations one to the other. The philosophy/philosophy and architecture/philosophy distinctions in Wittgenstein's work would thus, while not sharing the same problem, share a "solution."

The "solution" I am proposing entails examining the philosophy/architecture association's role in evolving Wittgenstein's philosophy. Specifically, I posit the ways in which the Stonborough-Wittgenstein house does not separate early from late philosophy but entwines the two phases through a compilation of concepts and constructs unique to neither philosophy nor architecture. This approach rethinks the initial question by reimagining Wittgenstein not as a philosopher who designed a house, but rather as one whose philosophy was *always* deeply concerned with and indebted to inherently spatial constructs that cross media from philosophy to _architecture to philosophy. The crux of the issue—the key to understanding the architecture/philosophy association—lies in detailing the evolution from the *Tractatus*'s philosophy to that of the *Investigations* not around but *through* Wittgenstein's practice of architecture.

The core of this theory is the belief that Wittgenstein's early and late philosophical positions form oppositional (and unacknowledged) spatio-linguistic suppositions underlying each phase of production. Supplanting both media-based and phase-based distinctions as its operative framework, the spatio-linguistic logics that separate the two stages of philosophy from one another become sutured together by way of the house. The *Tractatus*'s approach to philosophy forms what I call the view from *outside* and *above* language. Its hallmark is a flattened and restrictive understanding of the space of language that, although concerned with spatial constructs such as limits, attempts to maintain itself outside of both space and time. By contrast, the *Investigations* develops what I call the view from *within* language. Indicative of this change in perspective, Wittgenstein declares in his later philosophy that he is "talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm" (PI §108).[2] Interceding between the two perspectives is the Stonborough-Wittgenstein house.

The View from Without

Beginning with its opening proposition, the *Tractatus* posits a series of coincident spatial limits that bracket the text and define relations between subjectivity, the world, language, and logic.

1   The world is all that is the case.
5.6   *The limits of my language* mean the limits of my world.

5.61   Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits. So, we cannot say in logic, "The world has this in it, and this, but not that."

5.632   The subject does not belong to the world; rather, it is a limit of the world.

7   What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence. (TLP)[3]

The propositions designating these neatly aligned limits are the products of the *Tractatus*'s demarcation of language into distinct realms that separate logically determinate language, declared meaningful, from logically indeterminate language, pronounced nonsense—or what language can meaningfully say from what it can only show. If one asks *how* these propositions come to be known, a corridor of thinking opens up, leading to the question: *from where* are such limits visible? Following this direction, the *Tractatus*'s ability to locate limits to language, the subject, and the world suggests it has both a complete and clear view of language, as if it were viewed from above and without.

The view from above constructs the *Tractatus*'s conception of language, literally described as the "picture theory." According to the picture theory, a proposition mirrors the things for which it stands. This yields a series of correlations between language and the world, linguistic propositions and states of affairs, representation and that which is represented, and logical pictures and spatial ones. Each correlation entails a specific—though unacknowledged—spatial component that, in effect, fixes subject and view, instilling a static relationship between language and the world.

There is a motive behind this stance. In lieu of engaging with ordinary language, the *Tractatus*'s view from without oversees it. Situated as it is, the view subtends clearly discernible relations among language, logic, and philosophy, proposing that all three share a coincident series of boundaries. In varying ways, the text draws these same limits again and again, tracing and retracing them, separating meaning from nonsense—distinguishing what language is able to say sensibly from what it can only show, all in accordance with the logical requirement that meaning be definitive. The aim of this is to produce a circumscribed realm deemed capable of diagnosing and solving philosophical problems.

The ability to capture language's limits in its sights lends the view from without its sense of being comprehensive. Yet, on inspection, the view from without is as restrictive as it is seemingly omniscient. The view constrains language as much as it does vision. In the reinscribing of these divisions, language and vision (philosophy and view) are bound together in mutual formation. View and limits go hand in hand, so that the *Tractatus*, in attempting to define the limits of the thinkable, is itself unthinkable outside of this severely restricted conception of space. The implications of this become undeniable in the text's closing lines. At the very moment the text tries vainly to see itself, it must acknowledge the picture theory's limitations that leave no place within language for self-reflection.

6.54   My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) (TLP)

In defining the limits of language and the world, the *Tractatus* paradoxically tries to say what it has claimed can only be shown, thereby violating its primary dictum to set limits to what can be sensibly said. Once the text recognizes this unresolvable conflict, there is no place for it to go, leaving Wittgenstein to conclude that the propositions must be transcended to "see the world aright" (TLP 6.54). The *Tractatus*'s fixed view, however, can only sustain silence *beyond* its prescribed limits. *Within* the text, transgression is not fully enacted, stalling at its edges without venturing from the ladder's perch. It is only in the post-practice of architecture (in the *Investigations*) when transgression proves productive in generating the inhabited view that transgression is fully enacted. This shift not only reimagines philosophy but also alters its attitude toward the philosophy/architecture relation. Consequently, whereas the early philosophy implies an epistemological schism existing between the modes of architecture and philosophy, the late philosophy denies it.

Enabling this philosophical transformation, Wittgenstein's practice of architecture provided a literal forum for spatio-linguistic constructs central to both early and late philosophy, including rule-following, boundaries, limits, practice, and resemblance. Manifested as an array of temporo-spatial formations, these constructs challenged the continued maintenance of the static, ideal, and restricted engagement with space imparted by the *Tractatus*'s view from above.

Without to Within

If the view from *without* characterizes the *Tractatus*'s engagement with language, the view from *within* it defines the *Investigations*. While the *Tractatus* sought definitive limits for sensible language, the *Investigations* turns its vision to the myriad ways everyday language functions. Against the *Tractatus*'s suggested comprehensiveness holding the limits of language in sight, the view from within results from a multiplicity of ambiguous, and at times conflicting, views, leaving it determinedly partial, incomplete, active, engaged, and subject-laden. Rather than following the *Tractatus*'s thinking and positing definitive and hierarchically ordered propositions, the *Investigations* unfolds dialectically, beginning with its twofold opening that couples—not accidentally—the division between early and late philosophy with that between philosophy and architecture. It effectuates this duality by conjoining a look back to the *Tractatus* with a constructive and open-ended response emanating from architectural practice.

The book opens with a quote from Augustine's *Confessions*, which Wittgenstein characterizes as offering "a particular picture of the essence of human language" (PI §1). Although Augustine's description lacks the *Tractatus*'s basis in logic, Wittgenstein uses the quote as a proxy for the *Tractatus*'s picture theory, as it evinces a comparably narrow description of language. To show, rather than tell, the description's implications, Wittgenstein subjects it to a practical test. He transposes Augustine's characterization into an everyday interchange between a shopper and shopkeeper in a manner that simultaneously fulfills Augustine's description while exaggerating the gulf between it and language's everyday operations. The resulting example demonstrates a shopkeeper responding to a shopper's requesting "five,"

"red," and "apples," not naturally but by consulting tables that directly relate words to meanings. The shopkeeper's actions, in fulfilling the *Tractatus*'s requirement that sensible language be logically definitive, yield a stilted exchange, clearly incommensurate with the everyday practices we call language.

In the second component of this dual opening, Wittgenstein introduces an alternate model—that of the builders.

"Let us imagine a language for which the description given by Augustine is right. The language is meant to serve for communication between builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose, they use a language consisting of the words "block," "pillar," "slab," "beam." A calls them out; - B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and -such a call.- Conceive this as a complete primitive language." (PI §2)

If the shopkeeper's enacting Augustine's description aimed to showcase its restricted nature, the builders' example is deployed to demonstrate a word's ability to exceed itself. Making this opposition explicit, Wittgenstein contrasts the narrowness of the Augustine example to the inherently expansive nature of building. Augustine, we might say, does describe a system of communication, only not everything that we call language is this system. And one has to say this in many cases where the question arises, "Is this an appropriate description or not?" The answer is: "Yes, it is appropriate, but only for this narrowly circumscribed region, not for the whole of what you are claiming to describe" (PI §3).

Unlike the shopkeeper example, the builders' words—"slab," "pillar," etc.—do expressly more than designating objects in a one-to-one correspondence. Serving as shorthand calls for the phrases "bring me a pillar" or "bring me a slab," the words elude the bounds of the shopkeeper's chart of word–meaning correlations. While both sets of words are object-nouns, the shopkeeper's usage removes them from everyday practice, while the builders' usage arises from their practice of building with building stones. Drawing from its origin in a constructive practice, this initially limited language-game is not static but evolves over the subsequent passages and pages of the text. This comparison between the shopkeeper's and builder's languages proves to be just the first of the text's significant and strategic couplings of the architecture/language and *Tractatus*/*Investigations* relations.

The text periodically returns, directly and indirectly, to the builders' language, considering how it and other language-games expand in scope and meaning as they encounter new needs, problems, tools, and purposes. Paralleling this, the *Investigations* rapidly expands from discussing the builder's four words to positing an amazing list of some of the endless "kinds of sentence" (PI §23). These span from the commonplace "assertion, question, and command" to "*countless* kinds" including specifically architectural examples—"[d]escribing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements" and "[c]onstructing an object from a description (a drawing)" (ibid.)—culminating in Wittgenstein's juxtaposing language's/ architecture's inherent multiplicity and expansiveness to the *Tractatus*'s/logic's narrow one. It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language and of the ways they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word and sentence, with

what logicians have said about the structure of language. (Including the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.) (ibid*.*)

The constructive logic of the builder's language-game leads the *Investigations* to grasp language as a socio-temporo-spatial practice. If the shopkeeper/*Tractatus* example presupposed a distinction between the needs of philosophical and ordinary language in its recourse to the chart/logic, introducing language as a practice unites, rather than divides, philosophical with everyday language. The text's instantiation of the view from within language thus discloses itself to be the view from within everyday linguistic practices, one whose entanglement of language and subject disallows the absolute clarity suggested from without. This thoroughgoing transformation leads Wittgenstein to reimagine not just language but the entire aims and workings of philosophy.

The repositioning of language-user/philosopher to within language is nowhere more evident than in the *Investigations*' rejection of the *Tractatus*'s logical method, which strives to rid language of ambiguity and contradictions in order to resolve (or really *dis*solve) philosophical problems. The *Tractatus* thought everyday language's ambiguous surface obscured its underlying logical form. This lack of clarity was not just seen as insufficient for the tasks of philosophy; the *Tractatus* held the more extreme view that philosophical problems are in effect linguistic chimera resulting from a proposition's logical form being hidden. This led to the determination that language needs to be logically clarified to function meaningfully. To achieve this aim, the *Tractatus* split philosophical language from everyday language along the line of precision, expelling everything deemed insufficiently definitive. In response, the *Investigations* aims to bridge this divide and return meaning to the everyday language-games that are its home. With this move, Wittgenstein replaces the aerial view of the *Tractatus* with the view from the streets that later emerges as de Certeau's notion of the "every day."[4]

Turning the *Tractatus*'s method around, the *Investigations* supplants the belief that philosophy needs to eradicate contradictions as a way of seeing, and thus solving, philosophical problems with a radically different proposition: philosophy need not resolve contradictions but instead understand their social status.

"It is the business of philosophy, not to resolve a contradiction by means of a mathematical or logico-mathematical discovery but to make it possible for us to get a clear view of the state of mathematics that troubles us: the state of affairs *before* the contradiction is resolved. (And this does not mean that one is sidestepping a difficulty.) The fundamental fact here is that we lay down rules, a technique, for a game, and that when we follow the rules, things do not turn out as we had assumed. That we are therefore as it were entangled in our own rules. This entanglement in our rules is what we want to understand (i.e., get a clear view of). It throws light on our concept of *meaning* something. For in those cases, things turn out otherwise than we had meant, foreseen. That is just what we say when, for example, a contradiction appears: "I didn't mean it like that." The civil status of a contradiction, or its status in civil life: there is the philosophical problem." (PI §125)

With this aim, a major task of the *Investigations* is to demonstrate how the *Tractatus*'s limiting of sensible language to the realm of logic does not present

language itself but rather a circumscribed view of it. To demonstrate this, the *Investigations* must both confront and dismantle the *Tractatus*'s singular, fixed image and build a new approach. This strategy has three main components: recognizing the narrowness of the *Tractatus*'s view, getting out of its grip, and surveying the wider realm of language that becomes visible as a result. This process of dismantling, rejecting, and surveying reappears in passages throughout the text. Example after example first recognizes the *Tractatus*'s imposed, idealized view of language, removes that imposition, and then turns to examples of ordinary linguistic practices to provide an alternate model of how language yields meaning. Two critical passages succinctly describe the moment in which the *Tractatus*'s literal circumscription of a singular, fixed, and narrow picture of language is discerned.

"The ideal, as we think of it, is unshakable. Where does this idea come from? It is like a pair of glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off."(PI §103)

"A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language, and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably." (PI §115)

These and other passages are, in effect, counterparts to the *Tractatus*'s list of reinscribed limits. However, rather than imposing limits, they identify and remove them. Conceding the glasses is the watershed moment wherein the *Investigations* declares the *Tractatus*'s view of language to *literally be a view*. Following this, the text accelerates the process of prying apart ordinary, unaided vision from logic's (the glasses) "improved" one.

"These concepts: proposition, language, thought, world, stand in line one behind the other, each equivalent to each. (But what are these words to be used for now? The language-game in which they are to be applied is missing.)" (PI §96)

Identifying the glasses engenders an ironic reversal: what was thought to aid vision is shown to have usurped it. If the *Tractatus* sought a hidden clarity beneath language's ambiguous surface, the *Investigations* reverses this method and diagnoses the distorting agent to be the *Tractatus*'s requirement that language behave as logic. Ramifications follow this revelation, one after another. As the *Investigations* systematically undoes the view from above (the *Tractatus*'s primary undertaking), logical clarity, completeness, sharp boundaries, absolute distinctions, and the general form of a proposition all fall by the wayside as the arbiters of the entirety of language's workings. In lieu of the coherence the *Tractatus*'s overview afforded, the *Investigations*' view from within must, then, of necessity, develop new measures for linguistic sense. Wittgenstein explores these by studying visuospatial-practical examples, famously encapsulated in his demand that the reader *not think but look*.

"Consider for example the proceedings that we call "games." I mean board-games, card—ames, ball—games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? Don't say: "There *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games'"—but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all. -For if you look at them, you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look!" (PI §66)

Instances of Wittgenstein's survey of everyday language-games populate the text, culminating in the central concept of family resemblance and its refutation of the assumption that all usages of a word share some aspect. Family resemblance, instead, proposes that no one gauge of perspicuity either needs or can pertain to language's myriad modes. From this determination, a cascade of language-games streams forth, equally at home in philosophical and spatial arenas. These include boundaries, methods of viewing, forms of representation, visualizations of rules, and guiding paths. The importance of Wittgenstein's choice of examples cannot be overstated, as they time and again employ architecture/language associations to mediate the primary relation between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*.

Against the *Tractatus*'s instantiation of limits and boundaries as logical functions, the later philosophy insists that boundaries are spatial phenomena, leading the *Investigations* to rethink the criteria for clarity and the functioning of boundaries as interdependent determinations. As Wittgenstein recruits examples of spatial practices to delaminate the *Tractatus*'s reified insistence on static limits, the text unleashes an array of behaviors, practices, modes of resemblance, spectrums of precision, and—perhaps most critically—posits a rethinking of how boundaries function. In this process, spatial boundaries supplant logic as the means of determining what measure of exactitude meaningful language—philosophical or otherwise—requires. In the course of the text's explorations, the discussion seamlessly migrates from spatial boundaries to rule-following and linguistic cases, a method (as with the notion of family resemblance) that sutures these realms together without requiring them to adhere to a single operative model.

"If I tell someone "Stand roughly here"—may not this explanation work perfectly? And cannot every other one fail too?

But isn't it an exact explanation? _Yes; why shouldn't we call it "inexact?" Only let us understand what "inexact" means. For it does not mean "unusable." And let us consider what we call an "exact" explanation in contrast with this one. Perhaps something like drawing a chalk line round an area? Here it strikes us at once that the line has breadth. So, a colour-edge would be more exact. But has this exactness still got a function here: Isn't the engine idling?? . . .

Thus the point here is what we call "the goal." Am I inexact when I do not give our distance from the sun to the nearest foot or tell a joiner the width of a table to the nearest thousandth of an inch?

"No *single* ideal of exactness has been laid down.... But you will find it difficult to hit upon such a convention; at least any that satisfies you." (PI §88)

Although by this point in the text it is apparent that neither games, boundaries, nor rules need to be logically ideal to be meaningful, the question remains whether the use of words like "game," "boundary," or "rule" behaves similarly. Does the same realm of thinking apply to words as it does to practices, language, and space? By transposing the spatial consideration of boundaries to those of sense, the text clearly answers "yes." With that, it severs linguistic meaning from the grip of logical determinacy. Space plays a role in this achievement in two predominant ways: in the exploration of boundaries and through a spatial rotation that changes where and how we look.

"We see that what we call "sentence" and "language" has not the formal unity that I imagined but is the family of structures more or less related to one another. But what becomes of logic now? Its rigor seems to be giving way here. But in that case doesn't logic altogether disappear? For how can it lose its rigour? Of course, not by our bargaining any of its rigour out of it. - The *preconceived idea* of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole examination round. (One might say: the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need.)" (PI §108)

The rotation about our real need culminates in Wittgenstein's resounding conclusion that "[w]e are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm" (ibid.). This ongoing spatio-temporal reformation has correlative material implications. Whereas the *Tractatus* sought to wrench philosophical problems from their material and practical substrates in order to see their logical core, the *Investigations* reverses this to return philosophical problems to the material and practical firmaments in which we encounter them.

The practice of architecture acted as such a site. For Wittgenstein, engaging in the design of the house meant working within habitable space and spatial constructs at odds with the *Tractatus*'s thinking. This generated a series of conflicts and responses evident in the design of the house. In effect, the house provided a means by which one might *look* at the spatio-linguistic concepts forming the core of the *Investigations*' development of a practice-based, spatial grasp of -language. We see this in the text's repetitive turning to this shared territory between architecture and philosophy as a primary site of philosophical investigation. Central to this, the house's interworking of vision, space, and movement enacts dynamic inter-changes, conditions, and conflicts among philosophical, spatial, and material constructs. These consolidate a collection of what Wittgenstein later defines as language-games: venues or instances of language's practice-based functioning. In the Stonborough-Wittgenstein house, these include its situated perspectives, use of various degrees of transparency, and competing centers that defy singular logics or rules. Many of these appear in and around what is, without doubt, the quintessential space of the Stonborough-Wittgenstein house: its central hall.

From without, the Stonborough-Wittgenstein house[5] presents an unadorned, white, modernist, asymmetric cubic building with a main central section and a largely regular grid of vertical windows that bestow on the house its particular character. To enter the house, visitors first pass through a pair of glass doors and enter a small vestibule, then proceed through a second pair of glass doors, and ascend dark stone stairs into the brightly lit U-shaped space of the central hall. The central hall acts as a counterpart to the *Investigations*' twofold opening. Connecting inside to out and orchestrating relations between rooms and outdoor spaces on the main floor, it is the paramount locus of the house's interworkings, the generator of complex spatial and visual interactions that consolidate many of the spatial issues later emerging in the *Investigations*.

While the central hall connects the rooms and terraces on the main floor, including the salon, a library, a dining room, a breakfast room, and Margarethe

Stonborough's private rooms, it is also a main space in its own right.[6] Engulfed by eight pairs of glass and steel doors on six different surfaces and three sides, the central hall is luminous. Looking to the left from the stairs, a glass wall and doors lead to the southwest terrace. On the right, paired metal doors open to the main salon. Straight ahead, the wall directly opposite the entry boasts two sets of paired translucent glass doors. Those on the left open to the dining room while the right pair access a hallway. Turning around 180 degrees to face the entry, four sets of glass doors become visible: the two center pairs through which the visitor passed, a left-hand pair leading to the library, and doors to the right leading to the breakfast room.

The makeup and disposition of the doors in the central hall serve as an amalgam of the spatio-philosophico-linguistic issues Wittgenstein contends with throughout his philosophy. Specifically, their complex unfolding lays the ground for many of the discussions of rule-following, boundaries, precision, and clarity later posed in the *Investigations*. Neither these concerns nor the doors themselves, however, can be comprehended in isolation. The doors are always part of a multifaceted spatial configuration. Set into both a solid wall and a glass plane, the glass doors are tall and structured by thin metal frames with one vertical division in each glass panel and no horizontal divisions. One exception to this is the pair of doors connecting the vestibule and the hall in which the glass is not subdivided but admits an unobstructed view of the entry beyond. Importantly, the doors, however, do not exactly repeat but subtly transform from one instance to the next. This yields an array of related cases, which enact and presage Wittgenstein's subsequent formulation of perhaps the most central construct of the later philosophy: family resemblance. The subject in "family" resemblance resonates here, as movement through space jeopardizes the maintenance of fixed relations between subject and language sought in the *Tractatus*. Spatial and temporal bodies (as those of the builders) are incommensurable with fixed views, similar to how the description of a single category of games is insufficient to encompass all practices we call games.

Across the space of the central hall, the doors' continual changes, relocations, recalibrations of light, transparency, opacity, proportion, and spatial and social roles offer sites of encounter by *looking* at them—the interrelated concerns of boundary, clarity, and rule-following. Occurring in pairs, or really as quartets, the doors create complex boundaries between one another and the spaces they link. Because of the climate, double exterior windows were common in Austria. Wittgenstein extended this doubling to the interior. With the exception of the doors to the breakfast room and those connecting the vestibule and the hall, all of the glass and steel doors in the interior are bi-paneled, double doors that always open out into the rooms they join in both directions. While the doors along the exterior are transparent glass on both sides, the interior doors vary. Those linking the living room and the hall are clear glass on both sides; those between the dining room and the central hall or the staircase and central hall are transparent on the hall side and translucent glass on the other. Displaying a range of boundary

conditions, the differences in opacity allow for degrees of separation and privacy dependent upon not only which panels are open or closed but where the viewer is located and which way they look. The unfolding multiplicity emanates jointly from the variability in the doors coupled with the inhabitants' spatial positions. The combination disallows a full understanding of the doors from any single viewpoint.

Matters surrounding rules and rule-following play a substantial role in both the house and the *Investigations*, where repeated use of visual and spatial cases to apprehend linguistic ones underscores how the philosophical, spatial, and linguistic aspects are not distinct. The disposition of the doors in the central hall actively produces such relations by creating sites where linear rules (more akin to the *Tractatus*'s logical requirements) must navigate embedded spatial challenges. In each instance in the hall where two degrees of transparency are brought together, the less transparent material is placed on the more private side of the doors and the more transparent material on the more public side. This would seem to form a rather straightforward approach, perhaps even constituting a rule. Yet, with the house's use of transparent or translucent glass, what initially seems to be simple declarative principles confront spatial juxtapositions that disrupt the direct implementation of preset, fixed rules. In the dining room, the glass doors to the hall share a wall with three similar exterior pairs that open to the southwest terrace. The situation creates a dilemma: Should the dining room-to-hall doors match the others along the same wall, as they do in size and detail, or should they also mark what is on their other side? In this spatial setting, the question that emerges is not about one-to-one correlation (as in the shopkeeper's word–meaning chart), but about more multifaceted, spatio-linguistic interdependencies: To which room and which wall do the doors belong? What spaces do they define? And what operations do the boundaries enact?

A similar situation to that in the dining room/terrace/central hall connection occurs with the double doors leading from the salon to Margarethe's private living room. As all of the salon's interior doors are metal, its doors do not combine two types of glass to create the transparent/translucent pairing, but rather glass and metal to form a transparent/opaque combination. As with the dining room, the doors share a wall bearing pairs of exterior doors opening out to a terrace. The choice of material becomes even more significant in the salon, as it is the sole room with metal doors. The connection between the salon and Margarethe's private living room thus navigates a series of three rules that generate spatially induced conflicts: the continuation of the glass doors along the exterior wall, the placing of the opaquer material on the private side, and the continued association of metal with the salon. All of these could not be satisfied at once. Ultimately, Wittgenstein opted to place metal on the salon side and clear glass on Margarethe's private living room side. This allowed the metal doors to remain solely associated with the salon, but it disrupted the series of glass doors along the same wall and left the private living space designated by the more transparent material.

In these and other cases, it is not a question of what design decision is correct but of how the problem comes to be defined—of what spatial situations need to be navigated. Returning to the dining room, Wittgenstein chose to place translucent glass on the dining room side and clear glass on the hall side. This decision distinguishes the two spaces even as it links them. In so doing, the doors present distinct faces when approached from opposite sides. The situation is echoed in the *Investigations*, when it describes philosophical confusion as spatially induced.

A philosophical problem has the form: "I don't know my way about" (PI §123).

Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from *one* side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about. (PI §203)

Similarly, identical parenthetical comments at the end of two passages again emphasize the role of spatial location in comprehending language: "A multitude of familiar paths lead off from these words in every direction" (PI §525; PI §534). In PI §426, we find the related notion that spatial terrains form the basis of the contrast between the *Tractatus*'s ideal views with ordinary ones: "In the actual use of expressions we make detours, we go by side-roads. We see the straight highway before us, but of course we cannot use it, because it is permanently closed" (PI §426).

The continual transformation or mutation of the glass doors produces what will emerge as a major theme of the *Investigations*: the repeated locating and relocating of an element as a way of knowing a word or practice. By examining such instances in a range of positions and in a variety of places, Wittgenstein focuses on the activities he later associates with the formation of a perspicuous representation, one that acts by "seeing connexions" and the "finding and inventing [of] *intermediate cases*" (PI §122). The central hall of the Stonborough-Wittgenstein house—as a distributor of space and spatial concepts—generates an unfolding series of such intermediary connections and cases later defined in the *Investigations* as the activity necessary for philosophy to achieve clarity. The repeated differentiation and specification of the doors play a crucial role here, yielding an array of compound situations whose conflicts add as much to the defining of the nature of the boundaries they produce as any fixed rule.

In these and other design decisions throughout the house—from floor joints to window and column placement—what initially suggests a singular and repeated image gives way to a multitude of possibilities arising from the specifics of the site and the complex demands of use and occupation. What the analysis of the doors on the main floor points to is how the space of the central hall disallows the stasis of a single view associated with the exact repetition of elements and the execution of singular prescribed rules. Rather than limiting possible views, the spatial complexity of the hall instead multiplies effects and situations and in so doing enacts many of the philosophical concerns (manifest in visual and spatial concepts) found throughout Wittgenstein's philosophy of language.

The practice of architecture proved thereby transformative for Wittgenstein, as it introduced a field of interactions through which the *Tractatus*'s narrow and

restricted characterization of language repeatedly confronted fully wrought spatio-philosophical issues. In that interchange, fixed images and idealized conditions repeatedly give way to commonplace vicissitudes of movement, space, and inhabitation. Absolute and clear limits, as sought by the *Tractatus*'s picture theory, dissolve in the face of spatial practices that approach matters such as limits, boundaries, rule-following correspondence, and so on from many points. The migration of the spatialized boundaries of the house into the spatial and visual examples in the *Investigations* underscores how spatial concepts cannot simultaneously be discarded and leave philosophical problems intact.

The practice of architecture served an inextricable role in metamorphosing Wittgenstein's philosophy of language from the logic-based approach advanced in the *Tractatus* to the practice-based method indicative of the *Investigations*. In undertaking his design of the house, Wittgenstein's movement outside philosophy into architecture ultimately formed the basis for both his re-engagement with and re-conceptualization of the discipline. Wittgenstein's practice of architecture was therefore impactful not because it *introduced* visuality and spatiality into his understanding of language but precisely because his thinking was *already* occupied with and indebted to spatial constructs. The movement from the *Tractatus* to the *Investigations* was thus not to the spatial, but rather to a transformed conception and enacting of language's relation to space, on the one hand, and the subject, on the other. Designing the Vienna house played a significant role in this as an arena in which the constrained spatial logic of the *Tractatus* contended with architecture's spatio-temporo-material one. In its literalization, manifestation, and materialization of the architectural process, the *Tractatus*'s delimited realm of sense was challenged, following which it emerged in the *Investigations* transformed.

Notes

1 The story of Wittgenstein's involvement in the design of his sister's house is well known. While his sister Margarethe Stonborough-Wittgenstein wanted her brother involved in its design from the start, she began the project by engaging architect Paul Engelmann. In the spring of 1926, Engelmann outlined the massing of the building and the basic layout of the rooms on the ground floor. Over time, Wittgenstein became increasingly involved in the process, first officially becoming co-architect for the house by September of that year and then taking control over the project completely. Wittgenstein was thus the sole architect during the later stages of the house's conception, during which he designed the house's interiors, windows, and finishes and made all final determinations on the house's massing.

2 All references to the *Philosophical Investigations* will be denoted "PI" followed by their associated section number (if not explicitly delineated in the main text).

3 All references to the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* will be denoted "TLP" followed by their associated decimal reference number (if not explicitly delineated in the main text).

4 See de Certeau (1984).

5 For a more in-depth discussion of many of these issues, see Last (2008, 2012).

6 The upper floors comprised of the private rooms for other family members and household workers are connected lineally.

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5 Mapping Assemblages

Analytical Benefits of Thinking with Space

Henning Füller

Introduction

At the end of his conversation with French geographers – editors of the journal Hérodote – Michel Foucault famously confessed: "geography must indeed necessarily lie at the heart of my concerns" (Foucault, 1991: 182). He probably does not want to express a disciplinary preference here, but he wants to stress a certain reconsideration. A spatial awareness must indeed necessarily lie at the heart of his concerns. Having been repeatedly asked to reflect on his use of spatial categories throughout the conversation, Foucault realizes how those categories are both fundamental for his work as they remain implicit. It can be fruitful to be more explicit and more aware of the spatiality of one's project – this is how Foucault concludes this conversation.

I take this confession as a starting point and orientation in the following. More specifically, I want to suggest a strong epistemological reading of this stated need "to put geography at the heart of understanding the social". As an existential quality of our being in the world, as an important bearer of meaning and way of ordering the world and as an assemblage of placed entities, space is fundamental for understanding the social in very different regards. This overdetermination of the concept also demands to be precise about what exactly is put into view when speaking of space and related concepts.

On the one hand, the social is always constituted spatially. Space is not simply 'there', but the result of a social construction. How we order the world with and through spatial concepts is historically contingent and as such an expression of power relations. Therefore, social change can be – and often has been – captured as a spatial phenomenon (Löw and Knoblauch, 2020). For some time now, and accelerated with the so-called spatial turn, everyday spaces such as home and the city but also abstract spaces such as the global or the nation-state are understood and analysed in this way – as more or less material social constructs and expressions of social change. Spatial qualities here serve as something to be understood in the social world and to think about.

This thinking about space is fruitful and established in social theory. Less considered is the second – epistemological – use of space for social theory. While the social is constituted spatially, the process of constitution itself is driven by

underlying tensions, structural predeterminations or a complex interplay of power relations. Those forces shaping the social are not spread out evenly but are interwoven and related. There is a spatiality to those drivers of social change, too. Considering space for social theory can and should also include thinking with space about the social to better understand such processes. Martina Löw and Hubert Knoblauch point out a deficit in theorizing the social by making use of this angle of view: "Spaces are seen as social, but society is not perceived as spatial" (Löw and Knoblauch, 2020: 264).

In the following, I argue to make use of space in such a way: on an epistemological level, as a helpful orientation to sharpen the tools we use to think about the social. Referring to space serves to improve the precision of the analytical toolset here: spatial qualities not as the object of analysis, but a spatial approach in theorizing the social.

The argument takes a recent empirical project as an example. The object of analysis in this project was a current innovation in public health monitoring – an automatized big data approach of pattern recognition that is making use of a continuously gathered collection of broad, unspecific near-real-time data. One version of this innovation has been employed in the US Public Health System under the label syndromic surveillance (Füller, 2022). The aim of my project was to consider the technopolitics of the installed technical system, i.e. to give credit to the active role of the tools in bringing forth certain practices and in establishing certain knowledge. Summarizing a fruitful position in Science and Technology Studies, Sheila Jasanoff underlines this perspective on the co-production of knowledge and tools. "Scientific knowledge […] both embeds and is embedded in social practices, identities, norms, conventions, discourses, instruments, and institutions — in short, in all the building blocks of what we term the social" (Jasanoff, 2002: 3). My approach intended to follow this and to allow an active role for the technical system of health monitoring in forming the way public health is conceived and eventually politically influenced and shaped.

But in following this stipulation to accept distributed agency in socio-technical systems, there is a danger of losing sight of structural frames, existing hierarchies and power relations. *Pars pro toto* for a broad group of critics, Lucas Bessire and David Bond warn against the unmoored form of speculative futurism that often characterizes such approaches (Bessire and Bond, 2014: 441). Neglecting structural aspects of the social is one of the central concerns of current assemblage thinking. This is not easily solved, as this neglection of structures, or pre-existing contexts, is exactly one of the features of such approaches that engage with the socio-technical in a more horizontal fashion as assemblages or thick descriptions of socio-material practices (Tsing, 2010). How can fruitful engagement with technopolitics and distributed agency still be moored in existing hierarchical social relations and pre-structured configurations of power and dominance?

Drawing back on the example of innovation in public health monitoring in the following, I argue for a spatial approach as a heuristic to mitigate this conceptual problem. Specifically, a topological approach allows for an enriched and more power-aware reading of technopolitics.

The chapter is structured as follows:

First, I want to detail this proposal of spatial sensitivity. Michel Foucault's conception of power is an orientation here. He both provided an early proposal for a radical relational understanding of the social and also hinted at a topological approach as an analytical consequence. Both invitations are well known but are still not considered explicitly. Going back to Foucault's ideas on power allows me to clarify the specific way of engaging space as a heuristic for social analysis that I am proposing in this contribution.

Second, the benefit of this heuristic is shown. Especially given the recent impulses to understand social construction in a more foundational, ontological fashion in social theory, the heuristic of a spatial analysis may provide a welcomed foundation for otherwise 'unmoored' speculations.

Third, this conceptual position and its proposed benefits are exemplified by drawing back on the specific case study example. Own research on the implications of a technological innovation in public health monitoring has been based on this spatial heuristic. The example allows to illustrate some of the benefits suggested before.

Topology of Relations

The first step is to clarify the specific epistemological proposal to make use of the concept of space I want to put forward here. The starting point is the suggestion cited in the conversation above: to put geography at the core of a concern to analyse power relations. I understand this suggestion as a claim for a topological perspective in analysing the social. In the following part, I want to flesh out what this could mean as a general guideline for making sense of the proposition of relational ontologies.

Postfoundational Social Theory – Power as Relational

A relational understanding of power is well established today. The fundamental shift of Foucault's proposal is broadly accepted and followed, namely to free power from being a resource and something to be possessed and instead reserve the term for the effects of strategic situations in society. "Foucault shows that power [...] is less a property than a strategy, and its effects cannot be attributed to an appropriation but to dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques, functioning" (Deleuze, 1988: 25).

Importantly, those strategic situations should not be understood as arrangements of powerful things that may generate certain effects. Instead, Foucault suggests a 'productive' concept of power. This is often understood as him stressing the enabling aspect of power – something that has been categorized as power in an Arendtschen tradition (in contrast to *power over* stressing power's forbidding aspect, see Göhler (2009)).

But Foucault can also be read as more radical in his relational approach following Oliver Marchart, I suggest seeing Foucault as an early proponent of

a 'radical relationism' in current postfoundational social thought (Marchart, 2013: 52). Relations are not understood as the result of things being connected in this thinking, but connections and relations instead are conceived as ontological preconditions for the things themselves. Marcus Doel clarified the difference in his reading of the works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. According to Doel, Deleuze/Guattari have influentially shown the constraints of thinking fixated on the essence of things (what is). A more fruitful approach would be to better understand the fixative, that is the conditions allowing phenomena to emerge and to receive their essential qualities. "Indeed, so obsessed are we with […]: What *is* …? – that we fail to inquire into the nature of the fixative which produces something or someone that can be given over for bonding and bondage in the first place." (Doel, 1996: 424)

Such relational conceptions regarding the foundation of being have been fundamental for several recent proposals to understand social phenomena. A growing interest here is to give more credit to non-human participants in shaping and influencing our social being in the world. There is a common thread in recent approaches to acknowledge agency as distributed among several human and non-human participants. Claims of a vital (Bennett, 2010) or 'new materialism' (Anderson and Wylie, 2009; Coole and Frost, 2010), conceptions of assemblages (DeLanda, 2006) and intra-actions (Barad, 2007) – all those approaches see assembled bundles of humans, non-humans, issues and things as foundational. The urge to unpack apparent permanencies and stabilities and the notion to show how the competencies and capacities of things are not intrinsic but derive from association (Bakker and Bridge, 2006: 16) are common traits here. An ontological conception of an emerging and contingent world essentially constituted out of relations is a common denominator of recent proposals in social theory.

Coming back to Foucault, his work can very well be read as an attempt to theorize this fixative with a conceptual toolset reaching from the subject to the arts of government. Power relations can be seen as productive in a literal sense, as procedural constellations of establishing their very objects – our subjectivities, things in the world and the way we conceive them (Lemke, 2015). In one of his lectures, Foucault describes several de-centrings that have been central to his approach. One such de-centring involved refusing to give oneself a ready-made object, be it mental illness, delinquency or sexuality. It involved not seeking to measure institutions, practices and knowledge in terms of the criteria and norms of an already given object. Instead, it involved grasping the movement by which a field of truth with objects of knowledge was constituted through these mobile technologies (Foucault, 2007: 118).

Underlining Foucault's radical relationism allows us to see how this conception of the social inherently invites the use of spatial sensitivity in the resulting analytical approach. The proposal asks for a 'cartography' of power, as Foucault once suggested. "I am a dealer in instruments, a recipe maker, […] a cartographer" (Ezine, 1985: 14). "[P]roblems of geography [are] crucial ones for me" (Foucault, 1991: 182). But what exactly is meant by 'problems of geography' here? In the conversation with French geographers, Foucault expands a little on this. He insists on a spatial perspective as a helpful heuristic to prescind oneself from a substantial

conception of discourse and power. Focusing on a phenomenon and its iterations in a vocabulary of time and development implicitly suggests considering it as something substantial. The focus is on change through time which assumes a certain substance to be modified and transformed. A spatial approach, in contrast, focuses not on the changing contents of, for example, a certain discourse or formation of knowledge, but specifically on the relations of formation themselves. "Endeavoring […] to decipher discourse through the use of spatial, strategic metaphors enables one to grasp precisely the points at which discourses are transformed in, through and on the basis of relations of power" (Foucault, 1991: 177).

Understanding the social according to dominant ideologies, shifting types of consciousness or a periodization of different historical phases often falls short of a precise understanding of power relations. Instead of such a time-based approach to periodization, a space-based approach of deciphering relations, ruptures and resistances is more advisable.

> The longer I continue, the more it seems to me that the formation of discourses and the genealogy of knowledge need to be analyzed, not in terms of types of consciousness, modes of perception and forms of ideology, but in terms of tactics and strategies of power. Tactics and strategies deployed through implantations, distributions, demarcations, control of territories and organizations of domains.
>
> (Foucault, 1991: 182)

Spatiality is used as a heuristic to help to employ the abstract idea of a relational understanding of power for analytical purposes. The proposal is to employ a topological perspective towards social phenomena. Foucault is therefore less a 'new historian' and more a 'new cartographer', drawing out points, relations and topologies (Thacker, 2005: 2).

Topology

Social analysis today is often sensitive to power/knowledge relations and follows the basic premise to understand the state and other institutions not as the source but as the effect of such relations. This interest in the constitution of 'fields of truth' via relations and technologies of power calls for an analytical strategy that is basically spatial in its approach. While the proposal of a relational understanding of power is broadly accepted, the complementing topological perspective is regularly left implicit or is simply stated (for an exception, see Collier (2009)). With this contribution, I claim to reach back to space as an epistemological heuristic to improve the precision of radical relational approaches. Considering explicitly and more in detail how those relational approaches can be formulated as topological approaches could especially allow to moore such analysis in existing hierarchies and structures of domination.

The phrase topology already has inspired the social imaginary to some extent recently (Lash, 2012; Lury, 2013; Shields, 2012). In this recent 'topological turn', the promise has been to take insights from mathematics as inspiration for analysing

current society and culture. Partly inspired by the work of Alain Badiou (2005), fundamental laws of how geometric objects retain certain properties through transformation and deformation are taken to rethink social ontologies and the political possible. Topology serves as a systematic bridge between mathematical truths and cultural analysis in those proposals. Several difficulties in such a seamless transfer of concepts have been shown (Phillips, 2013). My proposal here does follow the idea to make the topological quality of space a core tool for understanding the social. But topology in my suggestions only serves as a heuristic for understanding. The concept is used only to inform, orient and sharpen a certain assumption of social reality based on relations of power. In contrast to some of the recent referrals to topology, a loose, more metaphorical sense is propagated in the following. Still, also as such a heuristic, the idea of topology can be helpful in orienting an understanding of the social. Topology allows us to apply a spatial sensitivity not only to the way space is socially constructed but to provide better access to the relational ontology of the social as such.

The conceptual debate surrounding topology most importantly allows a distinction between a topographical and a topological perspective in dealing with spatial phenomena. Topology describes a specific concern here, abstracting spatial phenomena towards their rules of formation rather than describing and measuring their actual shape and form. The famous problem of the seven bridges of Königsburg may be helpful to clarify those distinct perspectives. The example eventually allowed Leonhard Euler to establish topology as a perspective in mathematics. In the eighteenth century, the task of finding a specific path to stroll through the city of Königsburg had been a popular pastime among noblemen. The stipulation was to find a way to cross each of its then seven bridges once and only once. Eventually, Leonhard Euler reduced this task to a formal mathematical problem, and he also managed to solve it with his own proof. His solution – and the famous introduction of topological thinking – consisted in an abstraction towards the mere spatiality of the problem. The problem of the seven bridges and its solution was not geometrical (topographical) at all, Euler concluded, but about the 'geometriae situs' (Euler, 1752 [1741]), about the spatial form or topology of the problem.

Detailing this distinction, Scott Lash underlines the topological focus as an interest in the distribution of relations. The topological object is a process, a space of figuration (Lash, 2012: 265), while the topographical pertains to the actual results of those distributions. This is an important insight for the following. The spatiality of a phenomenon can be fruitfully split into two aspects. On the one hand, phenomena are spatial as they have a certain spatial expression, that is, being geometrically located or moved in space. But on the other hand, phenomena are spatial as they have a certain spatiality, that is, the spatial structure of their relational configuration. Topological objects are not located in space at all. Topological objects are spaces (Lash, 2012: 265).

Geometrical objects are studied topologically regarding those of their features that remain consistent through projections or deformations. If one acknowledges a relational constitution of the social, there is then necessarily also a spatial quality involved that can be put into focus. A rich understanding of relations does

acknowledge differences in strength. It would demand a pale concept of relational ontology to allow just one type of relation. Also, relations have to be at least temporarily fixed and established in order to have a relevant and noticeable effect. Those two qualities, a temporarily stabilized set of relations of differentiated strengths do already establish a spatial formation. There is a spatiality of relations that can be analysed regarding its rules of formation. As I will show in the following, this possible focus can beneficially supplement and orient social theory then.

Illustration – Technopolitics of Public Health Monitoring

To sum up the argument in the first part, returning to the general debate on power as relational, the first part reconsidered the claim of postfoundational social thought. The assumption of a relational ontology also allows to include the spatial form as one of the features of those assumed relations in an analysis. Such use of space as part of the conceptual tools (thinking with) is already implied in versions of this relational perspective but rarely explicitly considered. To do so, a discussion of topology and the differentiation between topographical and topological quality can be helpful.

The following second part now aims to exemplify the benefit of introducing such spatial awareness at the level of analytically supposed relations. A recent project engaging with the technopolitics of public health monitoring will serve as an example here. Drawing on this example, some of the reorientations provided by considering the spatial form of relations in a supposedly relational ontology can be underlined.

The argument is twofold. A possible gain from a topological approach is first an additional proposal to integrate context into a generally context-avoiding relational conception of the social. Second, topology provides concrete directions to orient such an analytical strategy. The inside/outside and concentration/dispersion dichotomy can provide a useful heuristic to improve scope and precision.

Technopolitics as 'Unmoored Speculation'?

An important part of recent postfoundational conceptions of the social is the scepticism towards structural assumptions. This scepticism is defining and name-giving for poststructuralist thought but has been reinvigorated by recent conceptual proposals. The claim to be more sensitive towards the broad range of human and non-human actors formulated at first mainly in science and technology studies has been taken as a fruitful inspiration in several versions of so-called assemblage thinking recently. A new sensitivity for the minuscule intra-actions can be acquired only if one restrains from evoking contexts, so the argument goes. Reaching back to context would rather distract from the always emergent processes of '*truth-in-the-making*'. "To stabilize the frame as the one proper frame […] is always artificial" (Tsing, 2010: 64). The market, the nation and the global could be such explanatory frames that need to be avoided. The traditional opposition of agency/structure is slightly shifted towards the opposition of pattern-seeking and pattern-avoiding

positions here. A strong undertone in current postfoundational positions is directed against a strategy to rely on context in order to reduce complexity. Relational ontologies allow us to conceptualize those world-making interactions of the human and non-human much better without being constrained by additional frames. "In this project, context gets in the way: context identifies the actors in advance, making it impossible to attend to how they make themselves *through* networks" (Tsing, 2010: 47, emphasis in the original).

Instead of having an explanatory frame as a guiding principle, the relations themselves should be allowed to guide an analysis. Michele Lacione and Colin McFarlane point out this attention to the immanent in current 'assemblage thinking'. "Explanation [locates] less in pre-given claims […] or macrological frameworks […], but instead focuses on practices through which humans and non-humans are brought together or cast apart" (Lancione and McFarlane, 2016: 45).

But this sensitivity to the immanence of multiple 'truths-in-the-making' is paid with a lost orientation and guidance. A relational ontology may open the perspective for the otherwise missed agency of non-human participants in relational world-making. Doing so may open up new understandings and the possibility for another politics. But the necessary context-avoidance of radical relational conceptions can easily neglect established structures of dominance or biased prefigurations. As Lucas Bessire and David Bond underline, "an ontological turn replaces an ethnography of the actual with a sociology of the possible […] diverting attention away from the actually existing politics" (Bessire and Bond, 2014: 449), possibly missing existing structures of subordination and contestation. Relational ontology seems to tell only half the story: it reveals "motley assemblages (rather than things with essences) with rare clarity, yet says very little about how or why such assemblages are put together and is often silent about the tensions and contradictions that make the connections so precarious" (Bakker and Bridge, 2006: 17).

What is at stake here is another iteration of one of the fundamental biases in social theory – to either privilege agency or structure as the independent variable in explaining social processes. This time, the tension is framed as context-avoidance and context-seeking. The turn towards topology does not claim to solve this tension but to provide an additional orientation.

Any kind of social constructionism has to deal with the 'duality of structure', as Anthony Giddens famously termed the underlying problem. The task is to come to terms with the structure-building quality of social agency that at the same time is based on and made possible through those very structures. Structuralism dealt with this dilemma by introducing the level of the symbolic as something between the imaginary and the real and irreducible to either of those (Deleuze, 2004). The heuristic of topology provides a similar solution here while avoiding the structuralist implication of an overarching, encompassing single logic. Topology orients towards this very level of the symbolic – something dependent on empirical, measurable forms but distinguished from them. Topology is the identification of stable features regardless of concrete empirical forms. Transferred into the realm of social analysis, the idea of topology addresses the structuralist concern with the peculiar stability of intangible-but-real social entities. As Rob Shields underlines,

topology provides an orientation for post-structural empiricism that acknowledges the realism of entities such as a group or a mathematical set independent of the elements (Shields, 2012: 47f). Topology such allows a new approach to the role of context while still subscribing to ideas of emergence and relational becoming.

The benefit of topology is a decidedly non-structuralist perspective on this perceived level of the symbolic. Structure or context is explicitly conceived as a spatial figure here, taking into account relations in their distribution, demarcation and control of domains. With this approach, the structural is decidedly not conceived as overarching or encompassing, avoiding the pitfalls of other context-seeking approaches. The deciding idea of topology is exactly an awareness not for spatial forms but for their rules of figuration. As Scott Lash underlines: "Topology, while a systematic critique of form, is still a defense of the figure" (Lash, 2012: 265f).

Assuming the social as relational in a radical sense is therefore propagated as a strategy to include a broad range of relevant actants and start an analysis at the 'truth-in-the-making' not hindered by contextual assumptions. Coupling it with a topological perspective on figures of relations allows us to partly restructuralize this assumption.

Topological Heuristic Applied

In the final part of this contribution, I want to be a little more concrete about what this perspective could actually mean. I am drawing on a recent research example to illustrate two typical ways how the orientation towards topology can inform a relational understanding of social reality.

In a recent research project, I was concerned with the current socio-technical arrangements in public health monitoring (Füller, 2022). In order to answer the expectation of emergence – an unknown and unknowable trigger or agent with the potential for a cascading and eventually catastrophic development – automated systems of pattern recognition have been envisaged and employed for some time now as an additional tool in public health monitoring (Fearnley, 2008). The United States has been especially active here since 2001. The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the case of anthrax letters following shortly after were two markstones for proponents of increasing homeland security. Those examples of (bio-)terrorism also accelerated the ongoing securitization of public health, shifting the rationale for public health interventions. Public health is now explicitly imagined as part of homeland security after 9/11 (Bush, 2002: 12). This rearticulation of public health as an issue of national security (Lakoff, 2008) facilitated the funding and installation of new surveillance infrastructures at the level of states and nationwide at the CDC (Buehler et al., 2008).

The paradigmatic shift – and the reason for the label syndromic – is a turn away from diagnosed cases for the purpose of public health monitoring and to use a diverse pool of unspecific, often indirectly health-related data instead. In the applied system in the United States, data sources are predominantly chief complaints, expressed when entering the emergency room or hospital and as such registered before any medical diagnosis has happened. In addition, pharmacy

over-the-counter sales and other unspecific but health-related information such as school absenteeism are collected through the system. The core feature of the system is a way to automatically sort and classify those incoming data in order to allow constant algorithmic monitoring. The stream of near-real-time data is sorted and compared to previous days, and any unusual spikes can be flagged out automatically. The promise of this syndromic approach is mainly to be faster and to be open to unknown threats.

The so-called syndromic surveillance systems are such early examples of a now widespread trend of employing automated systems of decision-making based on broad, unspecified data sets (big data) (Kitchin, 2016; Yeung, 2017).

My research was concerned with the political implications of establishing such socio-technical arrangements. Approaching the case with the assumption of relational ontologies opened up the perspective for the manifold ways in which such arrangements are productive in proposing and stabilizing certain perspectives on public health. Public health is shaped as a certain knowable and actionable thing in the world through the interaction of those technical systems, the practices of their usage and accepted truths.

Spatial awareness was a helpful heuristic for this analysis.

As sketched out above, topology generally is interested in the rules of spatial formation, not the formation itself. At least two basic rules of spatial formation are especially helpful here. The two axes of inside/outside and concentration/dispersion describe two fundamental topological features to be distinguished. The first basic rule of spatial formation concerns its scope. A basic description is to discern what pertains to and constitutes a formation in contrast to its outside.

Second, spatial formations can be distinguished by describing their internal structure, points of density and dispersion. Both topological qualities are instructive as a heuristic in approaching the social with the assumption of relational ontology.

Approaching the case study of syndromic surveillance systems and their implementation in actual practice of public health monitoring, this orientation towards the spatial formation allowed us to understand otherwise probably opaque connections. The first analytical strategy takes the quality of inside/outside as an aspect of topology in order to enrich a relational understanding of the social.

This awareness of the spatiality of the supposed relations at play allows us to distinguish along an additional (spatial) level that is not related to the categories and separation in the field. Topological qualities provide an inside/outside axis on the level of relations themselves. This way, topology helps to prescind from social reality in order to be able to analyse more clearly. In the actual project of analysing public health monitoring technologies, this was, for example, relevant to see otherwise hidden connections and truth-effects.

The studied system of syndromic surveillance is a recent addition to the toolset of public health monitoring that is essentially based on a collection of unspecified proxy data and automated pattern recognition. Possible threats to the collective health situation are identified constantly by comparing data points against a baseline derived from former time periods. As such, syndromic surveillance represents a current trend for establishing automated systems of decision support. Decisions

and choices previously left to humans are increasingly delegated to algorithms (Mittelstadt et al., 2016).

This trend is already marked and researched, especially regarding its truth-effects. The epistemology that is underlying those attempts for automated pattern recognition has already been critically dissected, and typical doubts regarding the trustworthiness of those data-based truths have been detailed. Inconsistencies of the database, flaws in the automated pattern recognition and effects of the decision-making based on those systems have already been convincingly shown (Elragal and Klischewski, 2017; Frade, 2016; Frické, 2015; Gitelman and Jackson, 2013).

The topological-oriented approach in my case study allowed for an extended picture here. Critical engagement often takes the technical system and its functions as the analytical frame. Systems are analysed and described in their implications based on the way they function as isolated systems. Regularly in those critical engagements, the inside/outside differentiation is taken from the field, so to speak. The machinic capabilities of articulating truth statements are criticized on the one hand, and the political effects of those statements are evaluated on the other hand. A fruitful approach here would be to question this initial separation and the related imposition of absolutes. Instead, an analysis needs to centre on the complex affiliations of technical systems and their human actuators (Crandall, 2010). The mere existence of certain collections of information nudges to build tools around it. "Like corn and flies before them, data demand and build the human, organizational, and infrastructural worlds around them — enforcing a burden of care and work that disappears beneath [its] futuristic possibilities." (Ribes and Jackson, 2013: 164).

Here, topology helps in providing an analytical frame not mirroring the separation of systems and their use. Topology provides an alternative inside/outside separation based on an imagined spatial formation of the multiple relations at play. The intersection of socio-technical systems and practices itself is allowed to draw the frame of reference with this heuristic support.

In the case study, this allowed us to understand the truth-effects related to a new system of health monitoring from a broader angle. The systematic constraints of a data-based epistemology are well known among the professional users of those health-monitoring systems. Instead of blindly relying on the outcomes of the systems as supposed facts, users actively employ strategies to contextualize those data. Those informed interpretations are an influential part of how the system is used. Regularly, this contextualization replicates the positionality and the inherent bias of the epidemiologists and their predominantly well-educated, white Anglo-Saxon middle-class background. The active 'correction' of supposed errors and false positives of the surveillance system is an important part of the functioning of the system but is often missed in critical approaches based on the system as such.

Some signals are actively ignored and others are considered with great scrutiny, and the criteria for this selectionbias are both professional expertise and individual positionality of the epidemiologist at the monitoring screen. For decision-makers in health policy, the results still function as objective outcomes of the system, though. They have acquired the legitimacy of data-based truths. Such interference of informed users should be common with systems of data-based pattern recognition.

It is often missed as it becomes effective exactly in an interplay of machinic and human capabilities. Focusing on either the intended function or the actual use of such systems, this effect would be difficult to see. A topologically aware analysis, in contrast, allows to define the frame of analysis according to the relevant truth-making interactions that may well be diagonal to the usual separation of technical functions and use cases.

A further analytical strategy can be derived from a spatial-aware approach here. Besides the inside/outside distinction, a second general rule of spatial formations is the distinction between concentration and dispersion. This also provides helpful guidance for a postfoundational approach that seeks to get rid of substances or pre-given contexts as restraining barriers. As sketched out before, this avoidance helps to approach phenomena in-the-making but often detaches the analysis from acknowledging established structures of hierarchy and subordination.

This problem became also apparent in my own analysis of socio-technical arrangements of public health monitoring. Informed by recent proposals in science and technology studies, a primordial interest was to understand such socio-technical arrangements as active participants in the constitution of the problems at hand. The move here is to say that reality is a relational effect (Law and Urry, 2004: 395), as John Law and John Urry formulate the underlying program. Reality is produced and stabilized in interactions that are simultaneously material and social. But at the same time, my research and interest in this specific case were also motivated by a concern with certain forms of this stabilization. Another motivation was to point out the political implications of the newly introduced technologies, procedures and understandings. Besides being sensitive to the relational co-production, the aim was not to be agnostic regarding the manifold versions of how reality is stabilized. In this example, especially the ways that the rationale and agenda of public health become set and stabilized in those interactions with technical systems are politically performative. Another strong political implication is affected by how such monitoring systems also act as tools of anticipation. Based on automated pattern recognition of past data, this essentially means the rendering of the future as a stabilization of the present.

As already suggested above, underlining the topological quality of relations allows us to deal with these conflicting goals. The analysis remains based on the relations at play without the need to assume pre-given interests, hierarchies or structures. But detailing the topological qualities of those assumed relational figures allows us to underline their structured coherence and thus identify powerful effects and political significance. Especially, the topological distinction of concentration and dispersion is a helpful heuristic in this regard.

A similar thought is formulated by N. Katherine Hayles in her engagement with what she calls 'techno genesis' (Hayles, 2012: 5). In an attempt to theorize the mutual constitution of technical devices and human cognition, Hayles is faced with a similar dilemma. If one allows the thought of a symmetrical constitution here, how can it be explained which physical attributes happen to take part in this constitution? As a solution, she introduces the distinction between physicality and materiality. While physicality is the endless sum of possible attributes of things,

only certain physical attributes become invested with what she calls attention to. Through this attention, those aspects of technical ensembles receive materiality and partake in the mutual constitution of human consciousness that is technogenesis. "Materiality comes into existence, I argue, when attention fuses with physicality to identify and isolate some particular attribute (or attributes) of interest" (Hayles, 2012: 6). Framed in topological terms, this quality of attention/inattention towards attributes is perfectly mirrored as the concentration/dispersion of relations. In the end, any relational understanding has to privilege some relations. Topology, here especially the fundamental concentration/dispersion quality of spatial formations, provides a conceptual orientation for this privileging without referring to external forces, pre-given contexts, interests, etc.

The additional distinction of concentration/dispersion allowed us to better qualify the technopolitical effects of public health monitoring in the example. According to the premise of relational ontologies, in this case study, I tried to approach the new technology of syndromic surveillance as a socio-technical constellation. This meant taking into account the formative conceptions that have been necessary to establish this constellation as well as the formative effects of the constellation in its actual use. Several contradictions became apparent through this approach. Introduced, conceptualized and financed as a tool for the early detection of potentially catastrophic public health threats, the system fails exactly at this task, according to the epidemiologists using the system. The system is not working as a tool of biosecurity as initially thought and advertised on the level of everyday practice in the county health departments. But the system is used and often appreciated for a different task. Not for early detection of unusual events though, but as an effortless way for being assured about the usual situation, mirroring the state of public health affairs in near real time. "You just click a button and see", as one interviewee summed up this benefit. As a data-based representation, the system generally is uttering truth statements with a certain metric power (Beer, 2016). At the same time, users are also aware of the several constraints of the system. The database of the system is essentially biased in several regards, and this is well known to the users and reflected in their valorization of the results.

Diverse and partly contradictory relational effects are to be documented here. Taking into account those relations regarding their spatial formation allows us to see the actual political implications of the studied innovation in public health monitoring. In a classical formulation, Daniel Miller once defined technology as the range of methods used in order to produce patterned variations (Miller, 1987: 201). It is this patterned quality of their effects through which socio-technical constellations become powerful entities and are of political concern. The concentration/dispersion heuristic helps to sort the diverse and partly contradictory sets of relations regarding such pattern-producing coherences.

In the case study of syndromic surveillance, such a coherence can be shown in the fixation of a certain public health approach. Relational effects are especially thickening around a certain biomedical conception of public health with the help of the system. The fundamental promise of the system is to render the health of the population knowledgeable through a near-real-time gathering of mostly emergency

department data. In everyday use at the local and national health departments, statements received from the system are mostly a supplement, partly because the epidemiologist regularly is aware of the restrictions of the used database and the algorithmic rendering. But even with this caveats of the professional users, certain truth effects are produced. The ease of producing charts and cartographic representations using the system thickens the underlying biomedical premise. This kind of packaged knowledge travels with ease across disciplinary contexts getting stripped of the epidemiological caveats on its way. Especially the general media and policymakers demand exactly this kind of packaged statement about the health situation – clearly bordered, mapped and quantified. The explicit introduction of public health as an arena of national security with the discourse on bioterrorism and homeland security after 9/11 also increased the demand for this kind of packaged information among several institutions beyond the public health sector as such.

This short sketch from the example shows the technopolitics enacted through the installation and use of the syndromic surveillance system. The underlying mechanism here – that is, the automatic recognition of unusual patterns based on a record of past incidents – does spill over into the way public health is thought of and enacted. With the system, the focus shifts towards punctual exceptions from the average that are easily identifiable and depictable through automated pattern recognition. A topological awareness allows us to be aware of this fundamental event/baseline distinction as one specific point of concentration and at the same time of political concern. Insofar as such tools are not only solutions but also active in constituting the problem, a constrained understanding of public health is propagated with the installation and use of such socio-technical arrangements. Alternative approaches in contrast could perhaps stress structural conditions of health or put their focus on the strengthening of resilience and immunocompetence (Hinchliffe et al., 2013) instead of preparing for the event. The fixation on an event/baseline distinction when thinking about health is strengthened through the system. This also enacts a turn away from those renderings of public health as a question of the provision of the means and structures of well-being rather than an individualized medical problem.

Conclusion

To place geography "at the heart of concerns" when critically approaching the social, as Foucault once demanded, is still a promising stipulation. In this contribution, I argued to understand this primarily as a methodological argument. Spatial qualities are taken as something to think about rather than the object of analysis itself. The concept of topology, that is, the rules of formation of a spatial entity, is an important aspect then. This awareness of the 'rules of spatial formation', derived from a general debate in mathematics, can be used as a useful heuristic for analysing the social. This is especially useful if the conceptual approach is based on the assumption of a 'relational ontology' – an assumption central to current postfoundational social theory, underlying both modern conceptualizations of power and recent attempts to pluralize entities constituting the social.

While approaches based on such a relational assumption helped to open up important new understandings, there is also the often-lamented danger of neglecting the constraining structural situation such relations enfold within. Relational ontologies are often considered a "straitjacket that does not allow for a remainder or constitutive outside […] This gesture precisely risks to off-stage the political" (Swyngedouw and Ernstson, 2018: 4). Reaching back to a spatial vocabulary provides a way to better re-contextualize the perspective with this constitutive outside. The topology of those relations provides a helpful third perspective here that can be used as a heuristic to orient and anchor radical relational thinking.

Considering the social world as constituted through relations rather than things opens up the possibility to think about the spatial gestalt of those assumed relations. As illustrated referring to a recent case study on public health monitoring, this awareness could, for example, distinguish inside/outside or concentration/ dispersion as basic topological features. Sorting relations on this newly gained analytical level can provide a welcomed heuristic and middle ground to bridge the fundamental dilemma of context-averse assemblage thinking and the preconfigured worldview of a structuralist approach – mapping relations or rather noticing their topology as a methodological workaround for conceptual undecidability.

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6 The Invention of the Global

Constitutions of Space in Theories of Globalization

Gunter Weidenhaus

Introduction

It seems strange at first that physicists, most of them PhDs, regularly provide the most obvious and expected answers in interviews about their experience in space once they have their feet back on the ground. But the so-called "overview effect" does in fact appear to transform the sight of the earth as a whole into a profound observation that, as a new, unfamiliar experience often marks a defining point in one's biography. I would like to suggest that this turning point is not only to be explained as an effect of perceptual psychology, but essentially rests upon a prior understanding of the world as having always previously been partitioned. Only on the basis of this specific social construction of reality can the experience of seeing the world as one whole suggest itself as a revolutionary change.

This change in perspective, of constituting the world as a "smooth" rather than a "striated" space, a metaphor taken from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1992), owes a part of its fascination to a work published by the Club of Rome in 1972 that broached the issue of the limits of planetary growth and in the process lastingly globalized the thinking of other parts of the environmental movement. The same motif reappeared in business and economics in the 1990s when, against the backdrop of an expansive, politically motivated opening up of the capital market and neoliberal policies of deregulation, the world was increasingly understood as a single economic entity. This euphoria of globalization during the zeitgeist of the 1990s owed itself not least to the tremendous breadth of influence of the most prominent social science theories of globalization from the end of the 1980s to the early 2000s. Three of these theories – expounded in Manuel Castells' *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996); Ulrich Beck's *Risikogesellschaft* (1986) and *Weltrisikogesellschaft* (2007) (translated into English as *Risk Society* [1992] and *World at Risk* [2009], respectively); and Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (2000) – form the point of departure for the analysis of global spatiality presented here. Each of these works has been cited more than 10,000 times(!) according to figures from Google Scholar.

During the second half of the twentieth century, global space was reconstituted in a new manner: The world was constructed less and less from an assemblage of different territorial spaces, be they empires from the colonial era or various nation-states.

Instead, it was viewed ever more frequently as a single entity. In the last 15 years, social scientists have again begun to replace this picture of a unified world with new spatial divisions based on empirical analysis. Talk about the spatial disposition of the world no longer revolves solely around globalization, but rather around "glocalization", "regionalization", "reterritorialization", "renationalization", "trans nationalization", and "trans localization". Clearly, one can already discern a new lack of clarity with regard to the description of global spaces that should be viewed as a refiguration of space, and which describes a plethora of new striations of space, each of which simultaneously appear to pursue their own logics. In the course of this chapter, I shall argue that these differing spatial descriptions of the world all presuppose an idea of the world as smooth space and continue to carry this theme with them, as it were, like a background melody. In the process, I hope to provide an initial contribution to a more comprehensive understanding of the refiguration of spaces. Through refiguration, individual as well as collective actors develop new spatial orientations and references for action. The effect of these spatial changes on the social world can thus hardly be overestimated.

In the first part of this chapter, I shall present an analysis of this new form of spatial constitution by means of pertinent theories of globalization, first of all by differentiating them from the rather more classical form of spatial constitution one encounters in, for instance, the framework provided by Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis (1974). These globalization theories will be used as empirical material, reconstructing their apparent spatial constitutions of the global, and demonstrating the structural homology of these otherwise very different approaches from a spatial-analytic perspective.

On this basis, I shall in the second part argue that these holistic conceptions of the world as a "smooth space" provide the backdrop to definitions of space to this day, in the context of which the most divergent, and to some extent, contradictory spatial subdivisions have now become conceivable. I shall conceptualize these diverse recent "striations" – which manifest in the most varied of spatial forms (territorial spaces, networked spaces, trajectorial spaces, and places) – as the "refiguration of space".

The World as Smooth Space

The spatial conception of the world has, in connection with the matter of globalization, been radically altered from a striated to a smooth one. What is meant by this metaphor? The sea is "perhaps principal among smooth spaces, the hydraulic model par excellence" (Deleuze/Guattari 1980: 427). While it may indeed be subject to currents, it is undivided and not structured by pre-existing boundaries. Instead, it is homogenous and, in the case of the oceans, even placeless.

Smooth space is the space of nomads, while striated space is the space of sedentary cultivators or of a world of nation-states. Striated spaces are prestructured and differentiated through their boundaries and relatively stable locations. In smooth space, too, there are specific places (for example, where nomads pitch their tents), but these are subject to the trajectories of movement. By contrast, the

fields of sedentary agriculturalists are arranged around a central farmhouse; the movement (of cultivation) is subject to the place. Deleuze and Guattari speak of how, in smooth space, the point is dominated by the line; whereas in striated space, it is the line that dominates the point (see p. 426). In what follows, I should like to develop further (perhaps more cogent) categories from the theories of globalization, in order to bring the somewhat nebulous metaphor of "smooth space" into sharper conceptual focus, and to analyze the changes in the spatial conception of the "world".

In the context of the following observations, the focus will thus initially be placed on only one scale level (the global). Global space, I shall argue in this first section, is contrived by the main social science theories of globalization according to a single new constitutional principle that emphasizes above all the unity of the world (see also Poferl in this volume). In order to make plausible the theory of change in this constitutional principle, it is first of all necessary to provide a delimiting foil with which it can be shown that the world was not always conceived of as a smooth space, but, in the age of classical modernism, as a striated one. Wallerstein's world-systems analysis (1974) will function in the context of the current argument as such a counterpart.

World-Systems Analysis

The spatial unit employed in world-systems analysis is a world produced by the propagation of a system of the division of labor. This approach is nevertheless usually not counted among theories of globalization in social science discourse. This raises the question: Why not? The simple answer goes, because the constitution of this world-space differs from those of later globalization theories. In order to test the plausibility of this line of thought, a basic consideration of world-systems analysis needs to be first provided.

Immanuel Wallerstein, following the Marxist tradition, recognized in the opportunities for appropriation of surplus value the decisive factor for the social structuring of the world-system. In contrast to Marx, however, the chances of appropriation are essentially dependent upon the level of relative monopolization of production processes. Only those able to monopolize these processes of production relatively well have the chance of increasing their market returns to such an extent that their accumulation of capital can succeed on a significant scale. On the other hand, on the free market, with more competition and transparency, profit can barely be brought in. Capitalism is therefore not defined by the free market, but exclusively by free wage labor, the distribution of goods and services shaped by the market, and an endless accumulation of capital. At the heart of capitalism function is so-called "quasi-monopolies", in which capital is increasingly concentrated. These quasi-monopolies are dependent for their emergence and establishment of strong states.

Among other things, states must be in a position to protect the monopolists' capital from within and without, to prevent the acquisition of production technologies by third parties by enforcing patent rights, and to provide systems
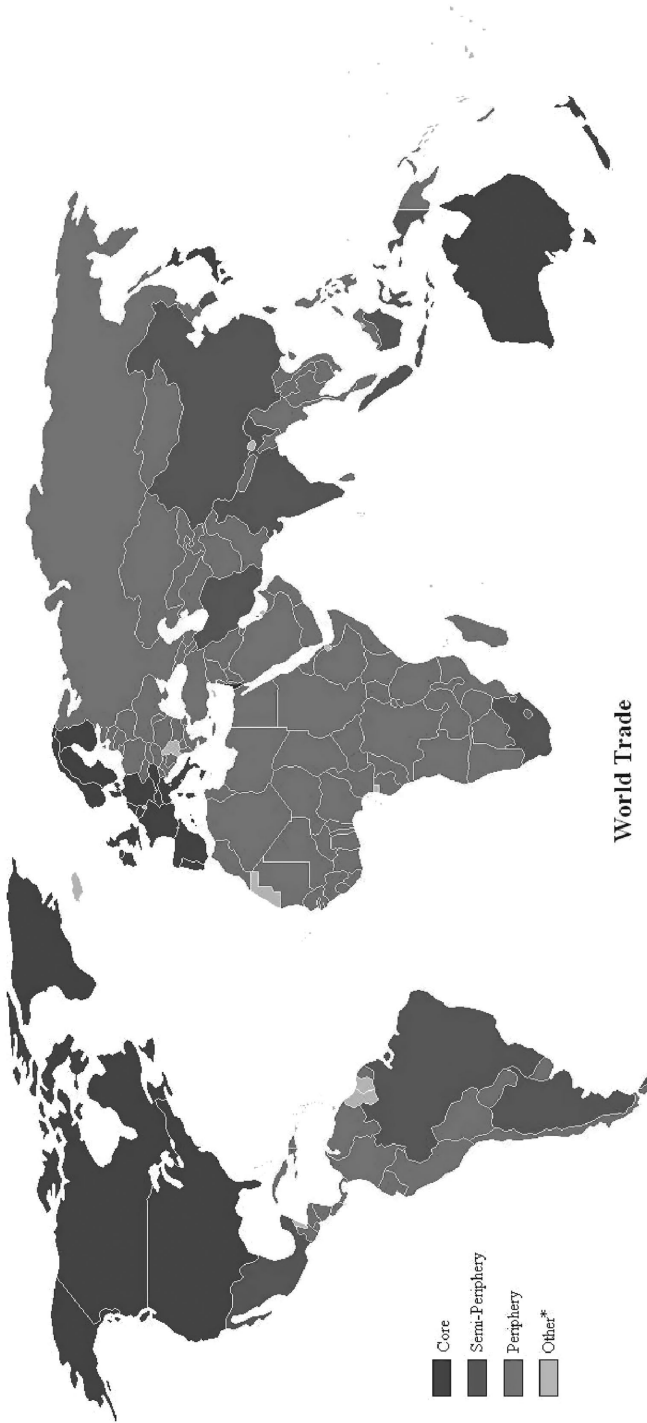
World Trade

Core
Semi-Periphery
Periphery
Other*

Figure 6.1 The core-periphery model around 2000: Countries at the core of world trade (blue), countries at the periphery (red), and countries at the semi-periphery (violet), after Chase-Dunn/Kawano/Brewer (2000). https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:World_trade_map.PNG

of education that ensure the quasi-monopolies' continued capacity for innovation in the future. Historically, the world system has been expanding its reach since the sixteenth century, becoming institutionalized as a system of division of labor as a result of the differences in the strengths of various states, some of which differences were initially small. Thus, there were created states with predominantly monopolized production, the so-called "core" of the world system; others with predominantly free-market production, at its "periphery"; and yet others with a mixture of more monopolized and free-market production processes, at the so-called "semi-periphery". This system enables the core states to appropriate surplus value from production processes at the periphery and semi-periphery, because products created by means of protected processes of production (sold at monopoly prices with high-profit margins) and those on the free market (enjoying hardly any profit margins) are exchanged unequally. Only by making this direct connection to statehood does analysis of the world system become explicitly spatial:

"Since quasi-monopolies depend on the patronage of strong states, they are largely located – juridically, physically, and in the terms of ownership – within such states. There is therefore a geographical consequence of the core-peripheral relationship." (Wallerstein 2004: 28)

According to Wallerstein, the world system exists only on the basis of the differences that enable the flow of capital toward its core. As such, the spatial subdivision of the world is constitutive of one's ability to think of the world as a whole, or as a world system. Global space is thus constituted from the outset as striated space.

The situation is viewed quite differently by more recent theories of globalization. The ideas of the network society, the world-risk society, or of empire each initially constitute global space as a smooth one. To substantiate this argument, I shall briefly extrapolate the global spatial constitutions of these three theoretical approaches, and in the process develop empirically valid categories for the description of smooth spaces.

The Space of Flows in the Network Society

Manuell Castells, as part of his concept of a "network society" (1996), directly addresses the alteration of space at the global level. Global space, he argues, has changed from a "space of places" into a "space of flows". The term "global" finds by far its most frequent use as an adjective in the collocations "global economy" and "global capital". Castells himself emphasizes the new quality of the space of flows, in contrast to Wallerstein:

The informational economy is global. A global economy is an historically new reality, distinct from a world economy. A world economy – that is, an economy in which capital accumulation proceeds throughout the world – has existed in the West at least since the sixteenth century, as Fernand Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein have taught us. A global economy is something

different: it is an economy with the capacity to work as a unit in real time, or chosen time, on a planetary scale.

(1996: 101)

From the perspective of social science spatial analysis, the world is constituted on the basis of its unity, not on the basis of its internal differences, as Wallerstein views it. This unity has emerged against the background of a new (digital) global infrastructure and simultaneously from policies of deregulation and liberalization. These elicited processes of spatial change in the late 1980s and 90s, because it was no longer only goods and services that were highly mobile, but also information and, above all, capital. This increase in mobility creates a space of flows, as Castells argues from a neo-Marxist perspective.

The structural logic of such a space of flows is initially without place. This means that capital can potentially be transferred from one location to any other at the speed of light. The spatial unity of the world stands in relation to the possibility – the potentiality – of investment capital to appear or disappear from anywhere. Nevertheless, Castells shows that urban networks form immediately, and become nodes within this space of flows.

"The space of flows is not placeless, although its structural logic is." (1996: 443).

Owing to its structural placelessness, however, cities find themselves in global competition within the space of flows and must make themselves attractive to capital. More on the spatial figure of the network will be given in the section on spatial reconfiguration, below. At this point, though, the crucial matter from the perspective of spatial analysis is that Castells clearly subordinates cities to flows, just as Deleuze and Guattari subordinate points to lines in their conceptualization of smooth space:

"In this network, no place exists by itself, since the positions are defined by the exchanges of flows in the network." (1996: 442).

In this constellation, the author recognizes a historically unprecedented spatial order and a shift of power away from nation-state governments to those that can determine the direction of capital flows. These are in some cases transnational corporations, but more decisive are the major players of financial market capitalism, such as investment banks and capital-rich funds.

In summary, it is apparent that the new quality of global space consists essentially of its *uniformity*, rising out of the *potential* that capital owns to appear or vanish from anywhere.

The World-Risk Society

In his two books, *Risk Society* (1992 [1986]) and *World at Risk* (2009 [2007]), Ulrich Beck presents a diagnosis of society that takes into account the altered social relations of the globalized age. In the context of these theories, the global is shaped by chiefly deterritorialized risks in three areas: ecological risks (such as climate change); a newly emerged, globally operating terrorism (such as al Qaeda's attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001); and economic risks emerging from the

effects of globalized capital in an uncontrollable world economy (such as the dot-com bubble in 2000). The adjective "global" most commonly appears in Beck's (world-)risk society in association with risk and its specific forms as "global risk" or "global terrorism".

Beck himself sees the crucial change as a shift in the spatial frame of reference in which these risks emerge and must be responded to:

"It is not the fact that new uncertainties and dangers arise that constitutes what is distinctive about the world-risk society – rather it is the guiding idea that these can be nationally controlled […] that disintegrates." (2007: 40)

Here, too, we meet the basic theme of virtually all theories of globalization, which proclaim that the spatial structuring of modernity – perceiving the world as divided into sovereign nation-states – is disintegrating, so that the description of the social can best be made within the respective nation-state space (methodological nationalism).

Beck argues, on the contrary, that the aforementioned risks give rise to communities with a shared destiny that transcend spatial proximity or other (e.g., ethnic) affiliations. For instance, island and coastal dwellers across the globe face a common threat from rising sea levels, suggesting that they might share a common political agenda to prevent global warming. A more detailed analysis of this line of thought is also provided in the section on spatial reconfiguration, below.

More significant for the understanding of global space is Beck's examination of the unique ontology of risk, which emphasizes the meaning of potentiality for the constitution of the global:

Risk is not the same as catastrophe, it is the anticipation of catastrophe. […] Risk thus leads a dubious, insidious existence full of innuendo. It is existent and non-existent, present and absent, doubtful and suspicious. Ultimately, it can be presumed to reside everywhere and so justifies a policy of prevention.
(2007: 335)

Risks such as terrorism, one can conclude, thus give rise to the global as a space that at first appears uniform and whole ("can be presumed to reside everywhere") and within which individual locations differ only with regard to the probabilities of occurrence of a future attack. In terms of spatial analysis, we encounter the same motifs consistently based on potentiality, as in Castells. To illustrate the structural homology from a spatial perspective, one might attempt the following thought experiment: Were one to replace the term "risk" with "capital", "catastrophe" with "investment", and "prevention" with "attraction" in the quotation above, one would obtain a formulation which Castells would probably readily agree:

Capital is not the same as investment, it is the anticipation of investment. […] Global capital thus leads a dubious, insidious existence full of innuendo. It is existent and non-existent, present and absent, doubtful and suspicious. Ultimately, it can be presumed to reside everywhere and so justifies a policy of attraction.

In Beck's analysis, policies of prevention are now being tangibly pursued, from the concrete bollards around every Christmas market in rural Germany to those that surround every luxury hotel in Nairobi. The simultaneity of existence and non-existence translates into a spatial "everywhere and nowhere" that covers the entire world with a single, placeless veil of threats of varying intensity. The present investigation owes to Beck its deeper insight into the ontology of the constitution of the world as smooth space. In Beck's analysis, too, the global can thus be described as a space constituted by means of potentialities.

The example of terrorism also demonstrates that such a constitution of the global functions primarily to reduce complexity: Spatially, terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda are mostly organized as networks with members, resources, depots, etc. in specific locations, with the aim of attacking specific targets. Law enforcement authorities and intelligence services naturally try to trace these specific locations and reconstruct the organization's network structure. Talk of global terrorism is of little assistance to them here. What always remains unclear, however, is whether their reconstructions of such networks are complete (and Beck emphasizes the simultaneity of knowledge and non-knowledge here). It therefore makes sense in many cases, both in practice and in theory, to speak as if terrorism were not a concrete phenomenon, whose networks can only exist in and affect certain places at a given time, but rather as a potential phenomenon operating globally and with the capacity to strike anywhere. In many cases, this simplification (a reduction in complexity), by means of which a concrete, highly complex, place-bound, and partly unknown phenomenon is reinterpreted as a global, placeless, and potential one, creates possibilities for dealing with the phenomenon in the first place. From this perspective, the invention of the global appears a counterfactual but highly functional strategy which (re)creates the possibility of acting in an (over)complex world.

In summary, it can be observed that global space is here constituted by its uniformity and potentiality, the latter suggesting an ontology of the world as smooth space that further distinguishes it from one conceived of in terms of striated space.

Empire

Antiono Negri and Michael Hardt adopt yet another perspective on globalization in their book *Empire* (2000): The authors focus neither on global risk nor on the networks of a global economy, but instead on a kind of sovereignty that has become global. The underlying assumption of their conclusions is that the smooth operation of global business requires a framework in which peace and the rule of law can at least nominally be guaranteed the world over. This framework has created a form of deterritorialized and decentralized, global sovereignty, that manifests itself in an apparent legal order. This appearance is exemplified by the fact that war is no longer being officially waged anywhere in the world. Military operations are almost always framed by all actors as policing operations, mostly in the name of international human rights or the campaign against terror, with the apparent aim of securing peace and justice.

Crucial here is the differentiation between an imperial sovereignty on the one hand, and an imperialistic or colonial sovereignty on the other. Colonialism produces a permanent "outside" which, because of its difference, is not to be fully integrated, but rather (and above all) to be exploited. Once a world market is finally realized, however, this subdividing of the world inhibits the further exploitation of capital. It is for this reason, according to Negri's and Hardt's analysis, that the imperialistic strategy transforms into an imperial one. The authors also make use of Deleuze's and Guattari's metaphor of smooth and striated space to highlight the spatial dimension of this shift:

"Imperialism is a machine of global striation, channeling, coding, and territorializing the flows of capital, blocking certain flows and facilitating others. The world market, in contrast, requires a smooth space of uncoded and deterritorialized flows." (Hardt/Negri 2000: 332–333).

The essential characteristic of imperial sovereignty is the dissolution of any division between "inside" and "outside" (ibid. 183). The territorial division of labor described by Wallerstein makes no sense in a fully realized world market (ibid. 233), and it can in fact be empirically argued that core, semi-periphery, and periphery can find themselves located in one and the same place (ibid. 336 f.). An example of this would be Los Angeles with its slums in Central City East, known as Skid Row (the periphery), the neighboring Downtown Industrial District (the semi-periphery), and the high-tech Silicon Beach region some 15 km to the west (the core). The global liberalization of markets undermines the linkage of certain production processes to territories and thus dissolves the connection of center, semi-periphery, and periphery to nation-states.

The possibility for interventions of global sovereignty derives, of course, from power, and the empire, like its historical archetype the Roman Empire, uses all forms of rule (monarchy, oligarchy, democracy) to the attainment of this end.

At the monarchical level, the United States with its potential for armed intervention should be mentioned first, alongside institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These actors are individually able to intervene either militarily or by decisively influencing global exchange rates. Negri and Hardt refer to the level of power that can decide the direction of global capital flows as oligarchic. These are essentially the large transnational corporations and the governments of nation-states. At the level of democratic rule are the United Nations and transnational NGOs, as well as religious groups that pursue political agendas.

In practice, owing to the lack of a central, global judiciary, and correspondingly binding global legal system, it is impossible to predict when, where, how, and in which instance such intervention might be realized within the framework of power outlined. Behind the dictum of global sovereignty, therefore, a very similar spatial logic emerges to that of the world-risk and network societies: Global sovereignty hovers over the globe in the form of a potential for powerful intervention, just like risks and capital.

How contingent such interventions of global sovereignty are can be illustrated by two examples: Probably nobody would have thought it possible that Greenpeace's call for a boycott of Shell in 1995, because of its plans to sink the Brent Spar

oil-storage buoy, would be such a worldwide success that the corporation would feel compelled to dismantle the platform onshore at great expense. The military removal from power of Saddam Hussein in Iraq by US troops on the basis of completely fictitious "evidence" of violations against the ban on weapons of mass destruction is emblematic of the arbitrariness observable precisely at the monarchical level of global sovereignty.

Global sovereignty thus hovers over the world, like capital or like risk, as a veil of potential intervention, unifying global space on the basis of a logic of "everywhere and nowhere".

"Perhaps the fundamental characteristic of imperial sovereignty is that *its space is always open*." (Negri/Hardt: 167 [emphasis in original])

Characteristics of Smooth Space

Although the theories of globalization presented here adopt quite different perspectives, focusing respectively on capital, risk, or sovereignty, I have shown that they constitute global space in nearly identical ways. In the following, the characteristics of this smooth space will again be briefly and systematically summarized in order to spell out the metaphor of smooth space, as distinct from striated space, by means of clear analytical categories.

Smooth space is first of all homogenous and deterritorialized, while striated space is necessarily differentiated within itself and is mostly territorially structured. (We shall see in the following section that territorialization does not present the only possibility for striation).

The constitution of smooth space is based on an ontologically different foundation from that of striated space. While striated space can be analyzed by reconstructing what concretely exists, smooth space is based on an intangible set of potential events. Striated space can thus be described by analyzing what is where, in relation to other goods and living beings (spacing), or which elements have been combined to form a space (synthesis), and can therefore be described superbly through relational concepts of space (Löw 2001; Löw/Weidenhaus 2017). Smooth space, by contrast, arises on the basis of the possible future occurrence of spatially undetermined events: that is, on the potential of events to occur at some time and in some place.

Because of its unique constitution, the "global" of recent globalization theories creates a number of difficulties even for the most recent constructivist, relational concepts. Within the context of these approaches, one can speak of a co-constitution of space and place (Löw 2001), because the concrete positions in which are located the goods and living beings that constitute a given space always function as places in that space. The smooth space of the global, however, is initially placeless. Every position in space might equally become a place.

From the ontological difference follows a difference in temporality surpassing the simple assessment that striated space is constituted through present positionings and smooth space through future, possible ones. The relatively stable territories of classical modernity promised a reliable framework with which, by means of planning, one could appropriate the future. But if one is unable to predict, in a given

Table 6.1 Characteristics of smooth and striated space

	Smooth space	*Striated space*
Spatial structure	Homogenous/ deterritorialized	Differentiated/territorialized
Ontology	Potential events	Concrete existence
Time 1 (Constitutional mode)	An eternal present	Linear
Time 2 (Appropriation of the future)	Keeping open to options/ gambling	Planning
Space-theoretical implications	Initially, placeless space in which everywhere can become a place	Joint creation of places and space

location, whether capital will suddenly be invested, or abruptly disappear due to factors beyond one's influence; or if a local weather disaster resulting from climate change might occur, destroying infrastructure that has taken generations to build; or if a terrorist attack might suddenly change the security status of a region, and thus people's way of life there; or if the conditions of global sovereignty will make a place the overnight target of military intervention, then planning as a mode of appropriating the future and dealing with uncertainty increasingly loses its meaning. Constitutions of time change in tandem with constitutions of space: Linear thinking, from the past via the present into the future, gives way to a conception of time in which the eternally present potentials of risk, capital, and global sovereignty shape the world. The appropriation of the future succeeds best by keeping a variety of options open for the different scenarios that can be envisaged, or by betting on one or more possible futures – a game that financial-market capitalism has already perfected.

The following table presents an overview of the theoretical and empirical implications and characteristics of the world as smooth and striated space, as they have been developed above.

It should here be emphasized once again how striking it is that a structurally almost identical spatial global constitution should be discovered within each of the three globalization theories. Each arrives at their conceptualization of the global from a different theoretical direction and focuses on quite different phenomena. While Castells is mainly occupied with economic developments from a neo-Marxist perspective, Beck concerns himself more with risk from the perspective of a theory of reflexive modernization. Finally, Negri and Hardt come from a more anarchist-political tradition of sociology and examine the changing shape of sovereignty. This section has nevertheless demonstrated that the metaphor of smooth space can be used equally well to describe all authors' spatial understanding of the world.

Spatial Refiguration

Deleuze and Guattari are less interested in merely defining smooth and striated space. Of greater significance to social scientists are the transitions from the one

to the other, and vice versa. Accordingly, the aim here is not only to identify the spatial constitution of the global as a smooth space, but also to pursue the thesis that this opening of space sets in motion a dynamic of reconfiguration that has been seized upon by theorists and contemporary observers in the last two decades in order to describe new spatial relations. The background to the argumentation presented here is that globalization has, from the perspective of spatial analysis, exhibited a dual nature. On the one hand, it is to be understood as an empirical phenomenon, in the context of which the dominant role of national territories as "societal containers" has decreased. On the other hand, especially with regard to the smoothing of space, it forms a concept that intellectually enables the social sciences, and other disciplines, to include completely different spatial figures beyond mere territories in their analyses.

The authors presented here do not themselves stop at constituting the world as a smooth space. Rather, starting from this holistic image of the world, they describe how new subdivisions, differentiations, and demarcations of boundaries assert themselves.

These striations have, however, gained in dynamism, reduced in stability, and become more varied in their form, since they can now be based on the most diverse of spatial figures. Networks, places, and trajectorial spaces can all be understood, in addition to territories, as spatial figures (Löw 2020). These will be briefly introduced, in order to provide a more detailed description of the processes of reconfiguration. It is characteristic of *trajectorial spaces* that they are constituted from the move-ments of goods and living beings that are synthesized to create them (Gebelein 2015). *Territories* emerge not only on the basis of synthesis and placement (Löw 2001) of the space-constituting elements, but also necessarily by means of the differentiation from other spaces. They therefore exhibit boundary constructions (Löw/Weidenhaus 2017) and have a homogenizing function. *Places* seem initially to be like small territories, but are qualitatively characterized by the fact they are already experienced as entities at the perceptual level, i.e., phenomenologically, and thus have a special potential to be something with which one identifies (Vinken 2008). Places can, of course, be an element within a trajectorial space, a territory, or a network; but in this case, they obtain their meaning from their position relative to these spaces, while as perceptual units, they are determined instead by their own logic. Finally, *networks* emerge from the connecting together of places distributed in physical space, whose meaning derives from their position within the overall network (Castells 2001).

All these spatial figures can function as striations in the world's now smooth space. New striations need not be made with reference to its pre-existing territorial divisions. That is, spatial differentiation of the world according to risk, capital flows, or sovereignty need not in the first instance refer to its subdivision into nation-states. On the contrary, the authors emphasize that these differentiations have been loosed of their nation-state containers.

In the following, I would like to show how the framework provided by the globalization theories already discussed, each adopting an image of the world as smooth space, can now be applied to each spatial figure in turn in order to describe the world. This analysis will be augmented with brief sidelong glances at other

contemporary diagnostic approaches that consider the classical theories of globalization by means of such terms as "glocalization", "regionalization", "reterritorialization", "renationalization", "trans nationalization", and "trans localization". On this basis, an initial sketch will be made of the processes subsumed under the term "spatial reconfiguration".

Trajectorial Spaces

Trajectorial spaces perhaps play the smallest role in present discourse on globalization. They are, nevertheless, mentioned by practically all authors. The dramatic increase in the volume of goods transported along the high-sea trade routes, like the increasing passenger numbers on flights, frequently serves as evidence of globalization itself. These transnational trajectorial spaces serve, in addition, as a good example for the theory of a globalized sovereignty manifested as a legal order, since something like global law is indeed enforced on the routes, to the greatest possible extent, in the name of peace and prosperity. Trajectorial spaces are nevertheless logically subordinated, in most cases, to the other spatial forms, serving in the context of theories and diagnoses to connect places and regions to the global economy, or as linkages within the logic of a network. Trajectorial spaces usually become the subject of public discussion (albeit then very vehemently) when they are subject to some functional crisis, such as when sea routes off the coast of Somalia became unsafe due to piracy, and naval ships from all over the world advanced with the greatest degree of consensus to avert a crisis. However, it has also become apparent – for example, in the discourse surrounding China's Belt and Road Initiative – that the constitution of trajectorially spaces does indeed itself carry geopolitical weight. It will be increasingly difficult for a spatial description of the world to avoid their constitution and analysis. Globalization is thus directly related to an increase in the relevance of trajectorial spaces.

Network Spaces

The network as a spatial figure inspires globalization theorists perhaps the most (Löw 2020) and is sometimes even considered the spatial organizing principle of postmodernism itself. In the context of Castells' analysis, it plays the most crucial role. Following on from his conceptualization of the space of flows, Castells describes the formation of networks whose nodes are cities at various hierarchical levels. Different networks emerge depending on the economic sector. For example, Tokyo, London, and New York are at the highest level of the hierarchy in the network of the financial sector, while in the entertainment industry, this position is occupied by Hong Kong, Mumbai, and Los Angeles. These overlapping, hierarchized networks produce a picture of the world that looks something like this:

The nodes of the networks are primarily connected by digital infrastructures in which the information flows. However, because capital can in theory exist anywhere in smooth space, cities are also in direct competition with one another and, according to Castells, attempt to attract permanent investors. Networks represent an institutionalization of the space of flows, and thus already function as striations
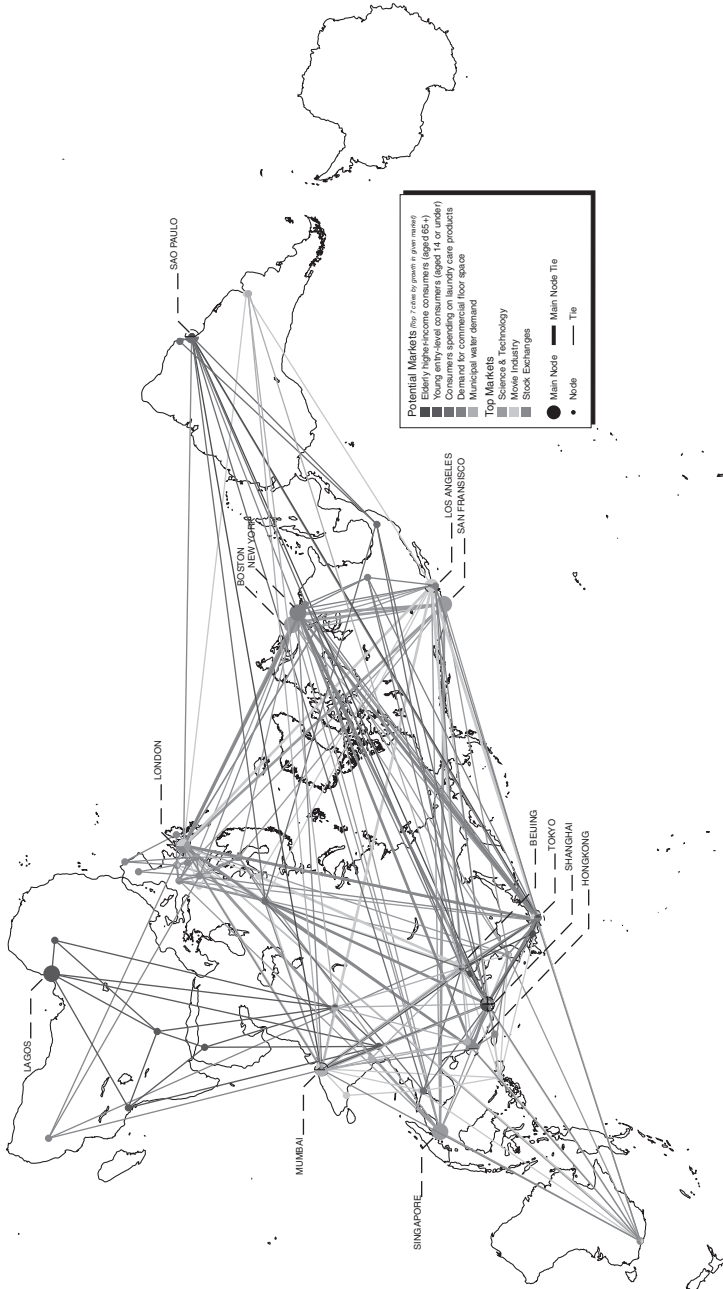
Figure 6.2 Own representation of the finance, entertainment, and high-tech industries. Map by Christopher Heidecke and Gunter Weidenhaus, employing the Fuller Projection Map, which displays the world with greatly increased fidelity to actual area and angle.

in smooth space. Unfortunately, Castells himself hardly differentiates conceptually between networks and the space of flows, although he clearly distinguishes between their structural logics. Networks are always a manifest institutionalization of the space of flows, whose form demonstrates a certain stability through its nodes (cities), on the basis of their various degrees of attractiveness to investment capital. An entire discourse on "creative cities" has developed following Castells' reflections on the importance of cities as nodes, extending deep into regional policies aiming to increase their "attractiveness to capital" (cf. Florida 2005). These policies are highly controversial in practice, because influxes of capital trigger processes of gentrification that aggravate urban social divisions (cf. Pratt 2011). On the whole, places gain a certain relevance in the network-society model, but remain subordinate to the network, that is, the spatial figure from which they obtain their significance (see quotation above). Globalization is thus directly related to an increase in the relevance of networks.

Places

Early on in the discourse surrounding globalization, voices emerged, mostly from a phenomenological and cultural-sociology direction, that attached increasing significance to places independent of networks or territories. The anthropological argument connected to this is that our picture of the world arises out of concrete perception of our environment – along the horizon of what is familiar (Berking 1998). From this perspective, global phenomena do not simply float above one's concrete social circumstances and influence them from beyond. Rather, the global must always be initially produced where one is. A typical example from the 1990s is the significance of McDonald's restaurants, whose spread was understood by Ritzer (1995) in his theory of the "McDonaldization of society" as a global phenomenon, but which - despite all milieu-specific differences - acquired different meanings in different places. In Moscow, "McDonaldization" was predominantly associated with progress and national awakening, while in Paris it was associated with cultural decline. Analytical diagnoses and theoretical approaches from this setting coined the term "glocalization" (Robertson 1992; see also Poferl in this volume) and continue to emphasize that processes of globalization lead to an intensified constitution of places (cities, especially), whose populations feel themselves challenged by the smooth space of the world to emphasize their distinctiveness and cultural specificity. Specific linkages between places have also been investigated recently, under the label of "trans localization" (Wehden/Stoltenberg 2019). In summary, it can be shown that globalization is directly related to an increase in the relevance of places.

Territorial Spaces

The image of a world that is to a significant degree spatially prestructured by the territorial space of the nation-state forms the delimiting foil of the theories of globalization discussed here. This finding is not, however, tantamount to a loss of significance of the territorial as a spatial figure. Already Castells emphasizes:

"Furthermore, globalization stimulates regionalization" (p. 412). Meant here are mostly those regions at a level below that of the nation-state, such as the San Francisco Bay Area with Silicon Valley, or the Guangdong province in China, which comprises several cities of over a million inhabitants and represents an enormous site of global industrial production. Such regions increasingly seek to connect themselves to the global network through coordinated political strategies. The motif of "regionalization" is even clearer in the work of Ulrich Beck, who emphasizes the formation of transnational regions in accordance with their par-ticular predispositions to being affected by certain constellations of risk. Cutting across national borders, there are regions forming which are connected within the world-risk society by specific threats (such as desertification) and shared common interests. Figure 3 shows a cartographic representation of the risk regions forming as a result of climate-change impacts alone.

To better differentiate between territorial scales, the following terms "area" for transnational territories and "region" for those beneath the national level will be used. Increased political cooperation among island states threatened by flooding from rises in sea level has been observed, for instance. Ulrich Beck describes a multitude of such areas, which are only constituted against a background of the world-risk society.

It is not only in connection with global risk that territorial spaces in the form of areas and regions are increasingly being addressed. In fact, both regional and area studies are experiencing an increase rather than a decline with regard to globalization phenomena. This results, for example, from historically different forms of modernity having emerged in different areas of the world (Eisenstadt 2017). Furthermore, it is precisely because of globalization that an increased potential for conflict owing to different territorially conceived cultural spaces has been speculated (for instance, in Huntington 2002).

Such considerations do not even take into account the numerous empirically observable examples of a tendency toward renationalization, which certainly can be interpreted in connection with globalization (see, for example, Bude 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated, on the one hand, how globalized the world is, allowing the virus to spread to all continents before the danger had been clearly determined, and, on the other hand, how quickly the world dissolved again into nation-state containers once the matter of reducing further spread took priority. On the whole, it can be shown that globalization is directly related to an increase in the relevance of territorial spaces.

The concluding lines of the last four sections on the relevance of spatial figures are deliberately provocative. Having argued in the first part of this essay that the world has become a smooth space characterized by the very absence of spatial differentiation, I now argue that the world is obviously permanently spatially differ-entiated, not only along the lines of territorial spatial constitutions, but also those of spatial figures such as trajectorial spaces, networks, and places. It seems, however, that there is enough empirical evidence for the thesis that space has become smooth as there is for the thesis of increased differentiation among the spatial figures here discussed to grant both of theses a high degree of plausibility. This conclusion admits, first of all, of two interpretations regarding the reconfiguration of space,

Environmental Threats caused by
Climate Change
Areas exposed to rising sea-level
Areas exposed to extreme drought
Areas exposed to hurricanes
Arctic areas exposed to ice melting

Sources: OECD, Munich RE, UNEP
Imagery: Christopher Heidecke

Figure 6.3 Regions at risk in the wake of climate change: blue = rising sea levels; yellow = extreme drought; purple = hurricanes; green = thawing of permafrost soil. (Map by Christopher Heidecke and Gunter Weidenhaus).

each building on the other: On the one hand, the process of spatial smoothing as an aspect of globalization seems to be a prerequisite for renewed striations based upon different spatial figures. On the other hand, none of the spatial figures appear to hold hegemonic importance for the striation processes, as territories previously did in classical modernity. As such, it is no longer possible to speak of a spatial structure of the world. I shall now briefly elaborate on these two theses.

The argument for the thesis of the *smoothing of the world as a prerequisite for reconfiguration* is very simple: If the world, as for Wallerstein, is conceived from the outset as striated space, then any further spatial differentiation must be anchored in this initial differentiation, because it is only on the basis this provides that a world can at all be thought of as a whole. The logic of this first differentiation – the territorial logic of the nation-state system as it was formulated in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 – acts with imperious power on all attempts of redifferentiation, or even dedifferentiate, the space of the world. Only when global space is smoothed, when an "original" differentiation is no longer assumed, can global space be (re)opened to the different logics of trajectorial spaces, networks, places, and territories.

The thesis that *a global spatial structure is no longer discernible* can be justified thus: If no spatial figure has hegemonic importance as regards a spatial differentiation of the world, then the world can no longer be described in terms of spatial structures at all. The reason for this is that different constitutional logics underlie the various spatial figures upon which empirical spaces are based. Trajectorial spaces are defined by the permanent mobility of the essential goods and living beings that form them; networks necessarily subordinate the significance of the places they include to the relations that hold between them; places, by contrast, insist upon their own logic on the basis of their perceived wholeness (they cannot be subordinated to a network logic!); and territories must form on the basis of their differentiation from other territories, while networks depend much less on the constitution of an "outside". Had the world a spatial structure, it would need precisely *one* logic – its own structural logic – of spatial constitution, on the basis of which its structure could be described. The spatial constitution of the world can now be described as no more than *polycontexturality* (Luhmann 1984, Schimank 2021, Knoblauch 2021, Weidenhaus/Stollmann 2021). This means no less than that the spatial descriptions of the world follow multiple, irreconcilable logics (and not only that the world seems to be something different from different perspectives).

Spatial reconfiguration can thus be described first of all as a process that, on the basis of the conception of the global as a smooth space, makes it possible to consider the spatial constitution of the world by means of various, equally significant spatial figures simultaneously, and thus undermines the notion of a single spatial structure of the world. Instead, we must grapple with a mutual interpenetration of spaces, which involves much more than a juxtaposition or overlapping of multiple territorial spaces. The picture is more complex: Trajectorial spaces traverse multiple territorial regions, connecting places that are also nodes in networks. And moreover, these processes take place simultaneously at all scales. Which spatial figure is ascribed the greatest explanatory power for social figurations depends on the particular epistemological interest and the empirical analysis? The motif of

interpenetration is partly explained by the different constitutional logics of the spatial figurations: Concrete spaces need not displace one another at all, but are able to exist within, above, and alongside each other. This does not mean, of course, that conflicts will not occur or power relations not be negotiated. An activist in the transnational network Fridays for Future may very well have difficulties establishing a culture of ecological sustainability in her place of residence, Aschersleben in Saxony-Anhalt. But neither the place Aschersleben nor the network Fridays for Future can be made by such conflicts simply to disappear.

Conclusion

There are conspicuously few disputes and controversies observed in discourse about the spatial constitution of the world. Almost all authors behave as if they need only add another dimension to the description of the world, or simply present their view while largely ignoring other approaches, despite the findings being perfectly contradictory. As previously mentioned, a phenomenological view of the place as a perceptive unit from which a picture of the globe emerges does not logically concur with a perspective that subordinates the significance of all places to the relations inherent in a global network. The acceptance of this inconsistency requires explanation.

This discursive situation becomes comprehensible if it is assumed that the notion of smooth space continues to operate in the background of descriptions of spatial differentiation. The world consists neither of intersecting networks, nor of the total number of its places, nor of a system of trajectorial spaces, nor of a series of juxtaposed territories – it is, in fact, still viewed as the homogenous entity constituted in the 1990s. The world as a smooth space forms the background melody for permanent, reversible striations at the most diverse levels of scale and with the help of the most diverse spatial figures. Was it not for this, a dispute about the correct spatial description of the world would be inevitable? The authors of recent contemporary diagnoses of space do not seem, however, to recognize any need for an unambiguous definition of the spatial constitution of the world. In this sense, we are not "at the end of globalization" (Löw et al. 2021), but the focus of attention has shifted to differentiations that do not negate the original uniformity as it is conceptualized within theories of globalization. We are thus, instead, somewhat "beyond globalization".

The background of the argumentation presented here is that globalization has a double character from the perspective of spatial analysis: On the one hand, it is to be understood as an empirical phenomenon, within the framework of which the dominant role of territories in the form of nation-states as "societal containers" is actually decreasing, and on the other hand - especially with regard to the smoothing of space - as a figure of thought that enables not only the social sciences to include quite different spatial figures than just territories in their analysis.

From this perspective, the smoothing of global space dynamizes all spatial constitutions at all scales, whose respective relevance then becomes a matter for investigation on a case-by-case basis. In the absence of a global spatial structure, the most diverse of spaces lends itself to empirical, situational constitution.

The governments of the United States and China may, for instance, be fighting in tandem to keep the trajectorial spaces of global trade free of disruption, while the United States simultaneously seeks to form a military alliance with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, and other nations to contain China's feared territorial expansion in the Indo-Pacific (first constituted in 2007 [Gurpreet 2007] and already one of the most significant areas of geopolitical contention). Spatial constitutions might just as swiftly be again disregarded if an orientation toward them seems no longer relevant.

In conclusion, on the basis of the considerations thus elaborated, five theses on the reconfiguration of space can be formulated:

1 The world constituted as a smooth space between the late 1980s and the mid-2000s.
2 Global space was thus made open to striations on the basis of various spatial figures, none of which can claim hegemony.
3 A spatial account of the world no longer allows for the identification of any one structure, since the logic of striated space varies (it demonstrates polycontexturality).
4 Smooth space remains the background melody to any spatial description of the world. Logical contradictions are thus tolerated in spatial discourse, and
5 The production of space has empirically become increasingly dynamic and situational.

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Part II

Considering Space in Global Epistemologies

7 Dividing the 'World'

Spatial Binaries in Global Perspective

Johanna Hoerning

Over the last decades, much work has been put into elaborating and discussing critical epistemologies that account for a perspective beyond methodological nationalism and conceptual Occidentalism (Mignolo 2005; Bhambhra 2007; Connell 2007a; Santos 2014; Boatcă 2015; Go 2016). Apart from many other things, both, methodological nationalism and Occidentalism refer to social contexts within which knowledge is produced – and these contexts are just as much spatial as they are social. The prime context for 'Western' modernity, socially, politically and conceptually within the social sciences, has been the nation state. It may still be a pervasive, politically regulated and regulating context for people's lives, but as a primary analytical and heuristic category, though, it is flawed. This is not only the case because of processes of globalization and transnationalization (Sassen 2001; Faist 2009). It has also been argued to be true historically with a shift towards the category of empire (Go 2016). While these efforts to 're-orient' social sciences have been groundbreaking and opened many paths for rethinking concepts, re-approaching current phenomena and processes, less attention has been paid to the fact that the underlying binaries – 'Global North and South', 'West and East', 'Occident and Orient', 'West and Rest' – are spatial concepts. Obviously, their spatiality is immediately indicated by their geographical references. Consequently, this 'geographicality' has been rejected in so far as none of the categories is an exact or correct geographical indicator (Scott/Garofoli 2007). They are all highly arbitrary signs, plurisemantic, and overdetermined concepts. Yet, they remain spatial categories which continue to 'orient' knowledge production in the social sciences.

In this contribution, I discuss how binaries imply spatial divisions that foreground an understanding of meaningful contexts shaping the (social) 'world' in its entirety. Binaries that come to mind first are, certainly, 'Global North and South', 'West and East', 'Occident and Orient', 'West and Rest'. Another spatial binary suggesting to describe a division of meaningful socio-spatial contexts globally is the opposition of 'Urban and Rural'. What they all have in common is that they insinuate that by adding up the socio-spatial contexts thereby described, the entire (social) 'world' is laid out, and they – at least initially – imply that a person, an action can be situated either in one or the other, not in both. This is different for the binary of 'Public and Private'; while a spatial binary that supposedly describes

the entirety of meaningful socio-spatial contexts within which social action takes place, biographies, social relations, institutions etc., are essentially combinations of both. Historically, though, the binary of public and private has been discussed as an absolute division of social lives in terms of gender relations; yet, in any case, as far as spatial binaries are concerned, the public-private-binary structures social action on a different scale and will, therefore, not be included in my discussion. On a larger scale, one might think of the distinction between 'Leviathan and Behemoth' – land and sea – as another meaningful division of the 'world'. Other than those stated above, these two are metaphors for the power over territory and sea. As such, they are closely related to imperialism and interlink with the binaries at hand here, but they do not indicate an absolute division of the social world in its entirety, and hence will not be included in this review of concepts.

'North-South', 'West-East', 'West-Rest', 'Occident-Orient' and 'Urban-Rural' are all closely related to normative notions of development and knowledge, among others. As Sujata Patel (2006: 382) has pointed out, these binaries are "part of a matrix of other binaries, such as, the other against the I, […] the colonized against the imperialist, the traditional against the modern, the particular against the universal" which together form the core elements of the episteme of modernity and indicate that we can know 'the world' as a divided space, maintained by power asymmetries. For Patel, though, the particular and the universal, the 'other' and the 'us' are not opposed binaries: "Rather, all universalisms are generalizations that are made of particular empirical processes, in history of region(s) and/or group(s)" (ibid.: 382–383). So, the other is part of the us and the particular is part of the universal. But, does the same really account for the spatial binaries of North/South and East/West, of Orient/Occident, and of urban/rural? It seems obvious in the 'opposition' local-global, which is not surprising, as these are scales.[1] For the binaries under scrutiny here one always exists *alongside* the other, but that only makes them relational categories. They intrinsically refer to one another, seeing the world through one of them always means either to ignore the other or to relate your way of seeing, experiencing, and knowing the 'world' to yet another, different way of seeing, experiencing, and knowing 'the world'. But do they really exist *within* each other? The idea of the North in the South and vice versa, or more recent categories such as the 'rurban' seem to allude to this. Empirically, these hybridizations, combinations, overlapping, variations etc., are highly relevant – but they only come to the fore *through/by virtue of* the binaries. If I were not to distinguish analytically between the urban and the rural, I would most certainly find different categories to describe or explain the phenomena at hand than the concept of the 'rurban'. Hence, epistemologically, the binaries are based on exclusive categories.

My intention here is to scrutinize these binaries as spatial, normative, and analytical divisions and in their relation to one another by asking questions such as: What sort of categories are they? What kind of spaces are indicated by those categories? How are these spaces 'produced'? What are their underlying mechanisms? What functions or purposes do they serve? What can we see when looking

at the 'world' through these binaries? What is obscured? Hence, I am interested in unfolding the spatial epistemology of the binaries, rather than looking into the manifold contents insinuated by them. Yet, I will touch upon questions such as to what extent these divisions are related to local, regional, national, and global inequalities, and how they also represent transformations and social change (e.g., in relation to globalization). My intention is not to 'decipher' the categories in terms of *what* they signify – which I believe not to be entirely possible, as they are plurisemantic and even overdetermined. I will, though, engage with what it means to understand them as *spatial* binaries, building on the vast literature on each of the binaries. It is important to highlight that this does not mean to understand the binaries as geographical indicators (which they empirically may even be) but as relational spaces, spanning across locations and scales, forming different spaces such as territories, networks, pathways, and places. I consider this analysis to be central to a political sociology of space, which not only inquires into the epistemological consequences but also into the actors and practices that bring about the contingent spaces the binaries relate and produce relationally.

Introducing Spatial Binaries

It is a widely acknowledged fact that sociology has, for large parts of its existence as an academic discipline, not paid much (or sometimes even any) attention to the spatial dimensions of social conditions, relations, and dynamics (Knoblauch/Löw 2020). The discussion on globalization in the second half of the twentieth century seemed to offer even more reason for non-spatial sociology, claiming that even on a larger scale space (and, perhaps most prominently, the territory of the nation-state) was losing its relevance for social relations by virtue of communication and transportation technologies. Paradoxically, it was this globalization perspective that paved the way for a growing consciousness in sociology of its own biases. Radical perspectives about the de-spatialization of the social were largely set aside and more nuanced arguments were brought forward (Robertson 1994; Sassen 2001, 2006; Löw et al. 2021).

Yet, the neglect or rather a refusal of spatial categories in most social sciences is not mirrored by a non-spatiality of social theory. Rather, it reflects the obfuscation of underlying spatial division: "In terms of geopolitical location […] sociological theory has been unreflexive. […] With few exceptions, social theory sees and speaks from the global North" (Connell 2007b: 368). Raewyn Connell argues that theories of the post-/industrial, post-/modern or risk society "took no notice that the cluster of […] countries [thereby described] was also the global metropole" (ibid.: 369) and criticized globalization theories for leaping "straight to the level of the global, where they reify perceived trends as the nature of global society" (ibid.: 373), instead of "launching a fresh research agenda on a global scale" (ibid.: 376). This reification is stabilized by the "static polarity" (ibid.: 374) of the global-local-antinomy, as well as by the antinomies of homogeneity vs. difference and dispersed vs. concentrated power. Hence, even in the seemingly non-spatial approaches of social theory, spatial binaries have a role to play. But what exactly

are spatial binaries, what reasons may we identify for their conceptualization/ establishment, what functions are associated with them and what are their analytical consequences?

There is a vivid debate on certain binaries, firstly and most notably in development studies, where the binaries Orient/Occident, East/West, West/Rest have been more or less replaced by the binary of the Global North and South. Large parts of the discussion on the binaries stem from engaging with geopolitics, stating that the binaries correspond with geopolitical relations (Randall 2004). While there certainly have been seminal writings on the discursive construction of geopolitics (Ó Tuathail/Agnew 1992), the tendency to treat geopolitics as empirically observable features of social and political relations prevail. Geopolitics is then understood as "the analysis of power rivalries between different types of power authorities for ideological and economic dominance as well as for the control and domination of territory" (Peters 1999: 31). Thus, defining North-South and East-West divisions through geopolitics is defining them through the lens of strategic interest-driven politics for economic and political dominance. This might well be one of the central functions, but it is political and not analytical in terms of an understanding of the binaries.

Such empirical understandings of the terms also stem from geography and economics where authors tend to indicate that the binaries can be seen as imprecise descriptions (Scott/Garofoli 2007: 13). Even though it does make a difference to define the binaries as the (discursive) effect of political power plays or as imprecise descriptions, both share the perspective that we are looking at more or less accurate *descriptions* of global relations.

Secondly, the most prominent critics and theoretically most productive debates may be associated with post- and decolonial studies. Here, global spatial binaries have been discussed as both, as descriptions or indicators of real structures of inequality and as full-fledged discursive psychological constructs. In the first vein, Arif Dirlik (2002) describes the binaries as durable and "fundamental ways in which the world was fractured further into colonial spaces produced out of the material and cultural bonding between the colonizer and the colonized" (ibid.: 434). Similarly, authors such as Raewyn Connell (2007a) and David Slater (2004) understand them as indicators of real global division and persistent inequality that ought to be named and analyzed in order to address the global inequalities thereby produced, as "through all the ambiguities of terminology, the realities of global division show through" (Connell 2007a: 212), reproducing a general imperial pattern of 'metropole/periphery'. The binaries themselves appear as historically specific expressions of this general pattern: Whereas 'First/Third World' stems from modernization and dependency debates, the 'Global North/South' can be seen as the post-1989 expression based on the Brandt Report on Survival and International Development from 1980 (Slater 2004: 9).

In the second vein, Ashis Nandy (1992) maintains that the "West" ought to be understood as a psychological category, rather than geographic or historic and Walter Mignolo (2014) argues that the binaries even need to be addressed as "fictions", lacking any ontological correspondence. Examples of these fictions are

the etymologies of Maghreb (West of Mecca) and Occident (West of Jerusalem), which also shows that "naming and mapping is always an act of identification" *from a certain position*, which, if it is to be effective in overruling "local senses of territoriality" needs to be "done from a position of power" (ibid.). Lucidly, Mignolo contends that "naming cartographic regions carries the weight of imperial identification. There is never a direct relation between the name and the map on the one hand, and the people and the region on the other" (ibid.). Here, fictionality means that there is no "ontological configuration that corresponds to what is named and mapped" (ibid.).

How can the opposing perspectives – spatial binaries as real and fictional, as structures of inequalities and as psychological and epistemological perceptions – be brought into dialogue? Both shed light on important aspects. Understanding them as *spatial* binaries opens up a new angle. In a Lefebvrian understanding, space is simultaneously produced through lived, embodied practice, through the creation of symbolic meanings, and through discursive (powerful, or 'power-related') conception (cf. Lefebvre 1991). Seeing the Global North and South as relational spaces points to the fact that all three dimensions dialectically produce a space that *is* (material, geographic, embodied) and that *is not* (imaginary, discursive, symbolic) at the same time. Even though Edward Said's *Orientalism* was not intended in terms of a spatial theory, his pathbreaking contribution is highly informative in this sense, too. Spatial binaries for Said are arbitrary geographical distinctions that shape an "imaginative geography", a process in which distance and difference of the close and the far away are "dramatized" in order to "help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself" (Said 1979: 55). In this way, we can also understand the use of the binaries as performative acts: West, East, Orient, Occident, North, South etc., are brought into the world *through* their naming and mapping. But because the separations hereby implied are spatial, and the identity constructions thereby produced are not only positional (in terms of social positions) but also locational (in terms of geographical positions), they appear as natural divisions of the 'world' and of actions, places, and relations forming this 'world'.

The Production of Spatial Binaries

These seemingly natural divisions are actively brought into the world as asymmetrically related, "lopsided oppositions" (Eckl/Weber 2007: 4). We can identify an asymmetry between the representation *of the other* and *self*-representation, i.e., between the selective negative representation *of* the 'Third World' on the one hand (e.g., Brazilian violence instead of participatory budgeting) and a *self*-representation of the West on the other hand as "a model and measure of social progress for the world as a whole" (Slater 2004: 9). More generally, the binaries appear as expressions of "analytic bifurcation" (Go 2016: 106), meaning that the distinctions between the opposing elements are ontologized and separated rather than thought of as constitutive relations. For Julian Go, analytic bifurcation is not only at hand in explicit binaries, but also in methodological nationalism and the analysis of state formation while occluding the fact that these nation states were, in fact, empires

and, thus, based on their relations to colonies/colonial domination. Hence, analytic bifurcation (and spatial binaries as such) relates back to the imperial episteme's "law of division", which is "pervasive [and] it makes its appearance in social science not only as Orientalism but also in the ontological and methodological treatment of spaces, places, peoples, and entities as separate rather than related" (ibid.: 105).

Even spaces and places, though, are not simply "treated" in a specific way, but they are brought into being. Taking seriously the seminal notion of the social production of space (Lefebvre 1991) is an important first step. But why and how are these spaces produced? Is it simply because the

> mind requires order, and order is achieved by discriminating and taking note of everything, placing everything of which the mind is aware in a secure, refindable place, therefore giving things some role to play in the economy of objects and identities that make up an environment
>
> (Said 1979: 53)

What we may derive from this is that the distinctions are purposefully drawn and that "this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs' is a way of making geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary" (ibid.: 54). To someone familiar with sociology of space, this does reflect the idea most prominently laid out by Martina Löw (2016) that space is constituted by two analytically distinct practices, that of placing and that of synthesizing social goods and living beings. Hence, the relationships between the objects, places, times and their roles and meanings are contingent (as they are bound to social practice) and the concepts are arbitrary in the sense that not everyone that is assigned roles in the distinction may necessarily be aware or acknowledge the distinction itself. How are we to understand the spaces outlined by the concepts? Here, Said refers to Gaston Bachelar's "poetics of space": If the inside of a house is associated with intimacy, secrecy, and security, the "objective" space of a house, its corners, corridors, cellar, or rooms are less important than the "imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel […]. So, space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here" (Said 1979: 55).

Yet, this seemingly anthropological argument for the implementation of spatial binaries does not account for the whole picture. As contingent and arbitrary as the divisions might be, they are also products of systematic domination. As Dirlik (2002: 434) points out, they are the products of a purposeful fracturing of the world into colonial spaces and, as such, serve as legitimizing expressions of the colonial project of modernity, dividing "the peoples of the world into two groups, the traditional and the modern" (Patel 2006: 388). This leads us to several understandings of the functions of spatial binaries: legitimization, homogenization, demarcation, simplification, and identity formation.

The first, the *legitimization* of colonial and developmental domination (Patel 2006; Mignolo 2014) is not only related to geopolitical interest (Peters 1999) but also to ideological purposes (Shaji 2017; Hall 2019 [1992]). Even though Sujata Patel (2006: 388) refers to "orientalist binaries" when analyzing how they were "reframed to incorporate the tradition-modern dichotomies and legitimize the colonial project of modernity that divided the peoples of the world into two groups, the traditional and the modern", this points to the fact that they are related to the urban-rural-binary. Patel shows how this social distinction was organized spatially by determining the place of the traditional in the village, creating a space of division even within the nation-state, based on the colonial division. Still, the function of legitimization of colonial domination is very specific for the global binaries of East-West, Orient-Occident and North-South. In this vein, Mignolo (2014) contends that

> the 'East/West' division was an invention of western Christianity in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries […] to legitimize the centrality of Europe and its civilizing mission. From World War II onwards, there was a shift to a 'North/South' division, but this time it was needed to legitimize a mission of development and modernization.

Additionally, there are several functions that can be associated with other spatial binaries such as the urban-rural distinction more explicitly, too. One of the most obvious functions seems to be that of *homogenization* and *demarcation*:

> Changing sovereignties in nation-states have triggered a continuing debate within the globalisation discourse about whether traditional concepts of sub-dividing the world will make sense in the future. De-spatialisation, deterrito-rialisation and transnationalisation are terms used since the 1990s to describe the dissolution of the nation-state and the compression of space and time under globalisation. […] Despite all these de-spatialisations, our daily life and our perceptual world are often influenced by dichotomies and trichotomies that create spatial order and reveal social and regional disparities. […] The problem is that a homogenisation process – which is intended to create identity inwardly and selectively to emphasise differences outwardly – supports demarcations, thus making them possible and plausible in the first place.
>
> (Kreutzmann 2008: 675–682)

This is just as much true for the global North as it is for the global Urban. In this sense, the binaries function as (over-) *simplifications* and reduce complexity (Eckl/Weber 2007). Complexity reduction as a function of spatial binaries is not surprising, as every naming and meaning-making works in this way, condensing "a number of different characteristics into one picture" (Hall 2019[1992]: 143) and functions as a "system of representation" (ibid.). The concepts themselves, though, remain plurisemantic.

A rather complex function of spatial binaries is that of *identity* formation/ creation, which I have already referred to with Said (1979). While the notions of "urban identities" or "Northern identities" easily fall into the trap of reifying the spaces thereby insinuating just as well as into the trap of ontologizing identities, there is an aspect of placing oneself in the world. In this sense, spatial binaries are not so much an analytical concept but empirical, discursive formations that function as ideology, providing "a standard model of comparison" and "criteria of evaluation" for ranking societies "around which powerful positive and negative feelings cluster" (Hall 2019[1992]: 143).

We have, so far, identified different perspectives on how to understand spatial binaries and their functions. Some authors also allude to specific *consequences* or effects of the binaries. For instance, Colin McFarlane, arguing for an intellectual move towards "learning from one another", states that terms like "South" or "Third World" seem to do "little more than to 'fix' a country as immobile and static, to tie a country into a relation of equivalence between a set of problems and a category" (McFarlane 2006: 1414). Even though they seem to contribute very little intellec-tually, they are resilient, forming "active imaginative barriers that militate against the possibilities of different countries to learn from one another" (ibid.: 1415f.) That way, all these categories work as epistemic, material, and institutional divides, "carv[ing] up global space into worlds and peripheries" (ibid.: 1418). Here, we are reminded of the fact that the binaries we are dealing with seem to invoke the world in its entirety, a world of completeness, but that seems to be the actual fiction (cf. Mignolo 2014; Müller 2020: 734). Or, as Martin Müller states: "the binary [bina-ries, JH] of North and South [East and West, the West and the Rest, Orient and Occident, urban and rural, JH] creates a black hole" (ibid.). Müller means this quite literally, saying that there are numerous "societies" that are in between, neither South nor North, that fall into the hole, but we may also extend this understanding of a 'black hole' in imaginative, discursive, symbolic ways.

In order to get to a clearer picture of how, why, and by whom (and what) the binaries are produced as spaces, I will continue with three steps looking at the specific binaries at hand: the binaries carving up the 'world' in its entirety in 'West/Occident' and its 'other' (East, Rest, Orient); in 'North' and 'South'; and in 'urban' and 'rural'. It will be necessary to look more specifically into the material, symbolic, and discursive practices that place and synthesize bodies, goods, and social, political, cultural, and economic relations into meaningful socio-spatial contexts.

Dividing the 'World' into 'West(s)' and 'Other(s)'

As has become clear in the previous section, the spatial binaries of West and Rest, West and East, Orient and Occident are lopsided dichotomies. Even though self and others may be enunciated in both directions, there is a clear power asymmetry routed in colonial domination. The 'West', as Jean and John Comaroff tell us, has many antinomies:

the Ancient World, the Orient, the Primitive World, the Third World, the Underdeveloped World, the Developing World, and now the Global South – a place of parochial wisdom, of antiquarian traditions, of exotic ways and means. Above all, of unprocessed data […] as reservoirs of raw fact.

(Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 113–114)

What this shows is that the binaries are all oppositions of Othering. They are, as the Comaroffs indicate, all tied back to the understanding of Euro-America i.e., the West as the center of modernity, which is the place the others, i.e., the colonized have to reach. Only, if they ever do arrive it will always be "too late" (Fanon 1967: 121 cited by Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 114). Probably the clearest expression of this relationship is the binary of 'West and Rest', where the power asymmetry is most explicitly addressed. Strongly diverging positions can be attributed to this binary, from critical postcolonial scholars such as Stuart Hall, scrutinizing the Othering of the Rest, to neoconservative historian Niall Ferguson, claiming a 'civilizational' asymmetry. Whether actively reproduced or criticized, the binary itself relates to stereotypical othering. This accounts for both ideas, for *Orientalism* just as much as for *Occidentalism* (Furumizo 2005). The 'West' is represented as "decadent, faithless, goaded and guided only by an interest in money grubbing" (ibid.: 128), the 'East' as "oppos[ing] everything that reflects the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race" (ibid.) as well as "sensual, corrupt, vicious, lazy, and backward" (ibid.: 130). Tellingly, these labels (sensual, lazy etc.) appear like a list of most unwanted traits from the historical perspective of protestant virtues, which reminds us of Walter Mignolo's (2014) contention that the binary of West and East/Rest was an invention of Western Christianity.

These essentializations of course are highly revealing in terms of knowledge production, but in how far do they account for spatial constructions? Is 'the West' (also) a geographical category, an indicator of place? Many would claim that it is not, that it is rather the myth of unity and at best 'a good idea' – as pointed out by Mahatma Gandhi (Moazzam 2017: 64). In order to move beyond those binaries and from an engagement with Huntington's 'clash of civilizations'-thesis, Areeba Ahsanat Moazzam (2017: 75) contends that there are several similarities between the 'West' and the 'Rest':

there are similarities in both entities in the way they 'other' their adversary; there are similarities between them in terms of politics and economic dealings due to colonialism and globalisation; there is lack of a contained whole or complete 'self' or 'other' due to internal differences and pluralism in terms of ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, etc.; there are similarities in perception about the 'other' upon encountering it and there is unrecognised and unacknowledged yet real absorption from the perceived 'other'.

The idea of internal heterogeneity has also been brought forward by economic historians, albeit in relation to economic inequalities and their historical

development (Vries 2013; Nayyar 2014). Here, the concepts are not deconstructed but claimed – specifically the 'Rest' – as "vague category", seeing it was a "variegated lot" (Vries 2013: 316). Still using it as a category in order to analyze how far it "or at least big parts of it, is quickly catching up" (ibid: 316) tends to reproduce the binary uncritically.

In a more nuanced account of economic history, Deepak Nayyar (2014) sets out to explain economic divergence and inequality, affluence and poverty. Seen through the eyes of a historian, Nayyar highlights that the distinction is recent, arguing that the similarities in "demography, technology, and institutions" between Europe and other world regions were "far more significant" than the differences until the mid-eighteenth century:

> The dramatic transformation of the world economy began around 1820. Slowly but surely, the geographical divides in the world turned into economic divides and rapidly became a wide chasm. […] The rise of the 'West' was concentrated in Western Europe and North America. The decline and fall of the 'Rest' were concentrated in Asia […]. […] Between 1830 and 1913, the share of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in world manufacturing production […] collapsed from 60 percent to 7.5 percent, while the share of Europe, North America, and Japan rose from 40 percent to 92.5 percent, to remain at these levels until 1950. […] It led to the Great Specialization, which meant that Western Europe, followed by the United States, specialized in and exported manufactured goods while Asia, Africa, and Latin America specialized in and exported primary commodities.
>
> (Ibid.: 29–30)

Nayyar argues that the dynamics of divergence have transformed into dynamics of convergence, even though both cannot be taken as absolute categories, as both processes are always ongoing simultaneously. For the purpose of our analysis here, it is important to note that the industrialization processes leading to convergence and divergence are not identified to be the effect of a "magic of markets" (ibid.: 35), but of state intervention. So, even if it seems we are dealing with economic agency, the unequal spaces are brought about by political forces. Thus, our attention is driven towards state actors – and not continental or transcontinental structures. The problem Nayyar alludes to, even if not systematically, is that the moment you turn your attention from GDP and large shares of continents away to specific countries and, even more so, to social inequalities among people living there, the convergence trends are dissolved in stark divergence trends and accentuated inequalities. Nayyar contends that the strongest adversary of development is uneven distribution among people and regions within countries (ibid.: 39). That way, he accounts for internal factors to be decisive and external factors are reduced to "worsening terms of trade, restricted market access for exports, inadequate sources of external finance, or a crisis in the world economy" (ibid.). Thus, in this perspective, too, the responsibility for the development and a "catching up" to the 'West' is put into the hands of the 'underdeveloped' while the homogenous construction of the 'Rest' is

differentiated in order to make it less 'vague', the homogenous construction of the 'West' is taken for granted. In his account of Orientalism, Edward Said points out that it is exactly the "enormous, indiscriminate size plus an almost infinite capacity for subdivision" that forms "one of the chief characteristics of Orientalism" (Said 1979: 50).

What these different accounts show, too, is that the vagueness and ambivalence of the terms also enable a whole variety of speaker positions from which different perspectives on the relationality of the binary emerge. While the provocation of similarities against the backdrop of inequalities and power asymmetries runs the risk of disregarding the latter, it also points towards the strong, "immediate" and "concrete" "ties" between colonizers and colonized (Dirlik 2002: 435) and empha-sizes the relationality of the binary and it also makes it possible to see different versions of what the 'West' symbolizes. But, as Eckl and Weber (2007: 5) point out, East and West have served twice to "apportion" the world: "once giving expression to an imperial/colonial divide […], and once delineating the ideological frontier of the Cold War". For the latter, Müller (2020) portrays the East-West-division as "ideological" which "evaporated" alongside "the communist Other" (2020: 735) – the East, an ambivalent epistemic and liminal space falling "between the cracks", neither North nor South:

> The predicament of the East marks a dual exclusion: from the entitled Global North and from the marginalised Global South. […] The East is different, but similar, Other but not quite. […] The Global North, often in the guise of 'Europe', serves as the teleological horizon against which the East becomes a not-quite-North.
>
> (Ibid.: 738)

This way, the East seems to be a third category marking the "black hole" between Global North and Global South. The East in World Systems Theory is core, semi-periphery, and periphery, it is both colonizer and colonized, it is both "perpetrator and victim of racism" (ibid.: 740), and it seems

> stuck in stasis, whereas the rest of the world has moved on to be envel-oped in a net of global connections and mobilities. […] globality hap-pens elsewhere. Eastness is an inert condition, as though fallen out of time and space.
>
> (Ibid.: 741)

The East is not simply geographical, it is actually polysemic, malleable, "always elsewhere" (ibid.: 743), a "floating signifier" (ibid.: 744), it points "beyond fixed territorialities" (ibid.) Even though this may be especially true for the East, these characteristics may easily be transferred to the West (as well as the North and South).

This leads us back to the question of how far we can interpret the binary of the 'West' and its 'Other(s)' as a spatial binary. Seeing the 'West' as an idea and the

differentiation between 'Western' and 'Non-Western' as an ideology, Stuart Hall (2019[992]: 142) interprets the West as "a historical, not a geographical construct" that no longer has a clear location (in Europe). While this may be true (and not only for the 'West' and 'Europe'), it does not imply that the binary is non-spatial. Space as produced through social practice relates to locations, but it is not reduce-able to one specific location. Rather, it spans across locations and scales, shaping networks, territories, places, and pathways (cf. Löw 2020).

Introducing the concept of the "Global East", Müller draws attention towards topological thinking in relations:

> The Global East as relation – can be anywhere. Asking 'where is the Global East?' is therefore the wrong question, because it points us to territories. We would do better to ask 'what is the Global East?', directing us to relations.
>
> (Ibid.: 747)

Even though this provocation is highly useful to "destabilise the binary geopo-litical imagination" (ibid.: 749) of Global South and North, I do believe *both* ques-tions need to be addressed. One answer to the question "what is the Global East/West/North/South" is that it is a space, and this leads to the question of 'where' but not in terms of an identifiable place or territory, but in terms of spatial relations.

Dividing the 'World' into 'North' and 'South'

The Global South and North (GSN) opposition has been informing the debates on global subdivisions for the last decades in numerous ways: "The distinction between a richer, powerful Global North and a poorer, less-powerful Global South is perhaps the most influential way of categorising the world and thinking about global difference today" (Müller 2020: 735). As such, it is an "umbrella term to vaguely refer to the 'non-West', 'Third World', 'developing countries' or the structurally disadvantaged" (Haug 2020: 2). While in the beginning it was said to be less charged than the West-Rest and Third-First World binaries and to serve as a better descriptive denominator of global geopolitical, economic, and social relations, more recent contributions have charged specifically the Global South as an important epistemic, cultural, and social denominator of difference, not of inferiority ('Southern Theory'). Then again, at closer sight, even the seemingly less-charged division in Global South and Global North has always been driven by evaluative and unequal understandings of the differences in the world: David Slater (2004: 178) describes how "states of the South have given key importance to their own sovereignty" and still are characterized by 'the North' as lacking "effec-tiveness and modern authority", as exemplified in the terms of "quasi-states" and "failed states". 'The South', very often, is described through inferior traits and problems, instead of through the asymmetrical relation and historically forged positionality/relation to the North.[2]

What is most salient in the GSN distinction is that it can have very different functions, meanings, and structuring effects in relation to its political, economic,

socio-cultural and epistemic dimensions. Historically, the economic and (geo-) political dimensions have been most relevant for the establishment of the distinction itself as a meaningful way of describing the world in its macrostructural divisions. Institutionalized through the Brandt-line as a descriptor of the post-1989 inequalities in development, the GSN binary is argued to still demonstrate the unequal status of economies in the world: Scott and Storper (2003) claim that there is no convergence (as, for example, argued by Nayyar with reference to the West-East-binary), but that uneven spatial development is most accentuated even in the beginning of the twenty-first century:

> 50% of the global GDP today is produced by only 15% of the world's people, most of them concentrated in the Triad nations of the Global North. […] Moreover, world trade has become more concentrated among the Triad nations, to the relative detriment of North-South commercial relations.
>
> (Scott/Storper 2003: 585)

Contributions like these do not hesitate to state that Global North and Global South are relevant and empirically descriptive denominators useful for distinction in the social sciences. Others are warier of the terms but seem to have trouble letting go of them altogether: Pike et al. (2014: 22) argue in favor of an inter-action "within and between the Global North and South", but it remains unclear whereupon the statement of such categories is based. Global North and South are acknowledged as "different starting points and […] different pathways with highly uneven social and spatial outcomes", but they are seen to "confront common issues", such as "increased socio-spatial inequality" (ibid.: 24), "inter-territorial competition", "decentralization" or "state retrenchment and austerity" (ibid.: 25). Still, the historical geographies of contexts and places matter – only, to what extent? This contribution reveals how problematic it is to state the categories while aiming at deconstructing them. Naming them brings up the question of what they signify – the rejection to define them produces a vacuum that nevertheless reinstates the binary. What is apparent here, too, is that there are a number of different standpoints when it comes to the question of divergence and convergence. While Scott and Storper claim the prevailing unevenness, Jean-Philippe Thérien (1999: 726) sees the GSN divide as less "descriptive" due to the "widening gulf between the high-performance economies of East Asia and the stagnant economies of sub-Saharan Africa". Thérien argues that there are two competing world views explaining this differently: the Bretton-Woods and the UN paradigm. While the former interprets globalization as a process of integration and poverty as nationally induced, the latter views globalization as a process of intensifying inequalities and poverty as the result of a lack of international cooperation. The ready-made recipes derived from these analyses are liberalization to level nationally induced inequalities and sustainability to level globally inflicted inequalities. What is most commonly addressed by the GSN divide in this context, thus, are countries with different macro-economic features (Gini- or other statistical measures of inequality, GNP, economic sectors and industrialization, among the most important). Thereby,

countries are homogenized into world regions and fixed as being either South or North (cf. McFarlane 2006).

More recent contributions have tried to loosen this fixating grip of the GSN divide on countries by taking a closer look into the convergences on a smaller scale. Kevin Funk (2015) engages with two critical perspectives on the GSN division. While the postcolonial studies refer to persisting divergences between Global South and North in geographic terms, the "global capitalism school" maintains that socially the division is obsolete because of "transnational class-based configurations" (Funk 2015: 584). Funk argues that an intersectional perspective is required, addressing both, the social and the geographical in order to "understand the enduring relevance of the Global South subject within the context of a universalizing global capitalist system" (Funk 2015: 585). The transnational class formations have not led to the disappearance but to the reconstitution of the Global South: "The South lives on through the transnational poor and working-class. […] Crucially, the new North and South exist everywhere" (Funk 2015: 590). Funk quotes Arif Dirlik who maintains that the distinction between North and South is blurred by "capitalism's global march" (ibid.) and that the distinction is not an absolute one. This new closeness of the South and the North is symbolized by (or manifest in) specifically Latin America's urban reality to Funk: "[T]he Latin American experience heralds the partition of the world into two planets: one of the slums and the other of gated communities, located next to one another, separated by walls and privatized armed guards" (ibid.).

This description is highly interesting in two aspects: Spatially, the argument is that of approximation, of reducing the distance between what is denominated as North and South. Socially though, the choice of words ("partition of the world into two planets") indicates a widening gap between North and South (then no longer indicating two different parts of one world, but two different worlds altogether). Similarly, geographer Sebastian Haug (2020) suggests in his Firstspace[3] analysis of the Global South that on a subnational scale, we get a more nuanced perspective on what the binary can demarcate: "The subnational diversity of material development realities across continents has been discussed as the 'South' in the 'North' and the 'North' in the 'South'" (Haug 2020: 6). In a way, then, migration and uneven development patterns on a smaller scale show cracks in the absolute binary – or reveal how little such stark abstraction can relate to the complex interrelatedness of people and places in the world (and not only today). What good can such a binary, then, be to an understanding of the world? Is it simply a power-driven instrument of geopolitical strategies? And if so: What does that make it for people's lives and the social construction of the world we live in – and, consequently for social theory? Does this provide for a vicious circle, wherein power relations, segregated spaces and lived realities form a malicious alignment with knowledge production? Because the more we understand the world in this sense, the more we stabilize the underlying social inequalities and power asymmetries and thus contribute to a hegemonic world order.

These perspectives seem hard to integrate with notions of a general convergence. When it comes to convergence, Jean and John Comaroff (2012), though,

turn around the perspective for looking at the processes of how North and South are moving toward each other – describing how far it is actually the North that is becoming more like the South, the latter being the location of future modernity. This counter-hegemonic epistemic strategy of establishing 'ex-centricity' or 'ex-centrality' (ibid.: 127) holds on to the binary of center and periphery and the idea of modernity, even if detached from a 'superior' North (critically in this regard: Rosa 2014) because modernity is understood to have been "almost from the start, a North-South collaboration" and "both a universal project and a host of the specific, parochial emplacements a force for equality and simultaneously, a producer of difference" (Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 116–117). Stating that modernity is a collaborative project does not evade the powerful fact that its acclaimed center is the West, the Global North. It puts the South in the position of the adjutant but that who can never aspire to become the master him/herself. It seems more convincing to describe modernity as a context-dependent mechanism of placing and classifying.

This context-dependency shows up in the way the Comaroffs deal with the category of the Global South, even though they do identify a most common trait, that of having been a colony or protectorate at some point in time. North and South, though, are not introduced as groups of countries, but as "geo-scapes in which enclaves of wealth and order feed off, and sustain, large stretches of scarcity, violence and exclusion" (ibid.: 127). As a single category, the South is described as "inherently slippery, inchoate, unfixed" (ibid: 126), more complex in terms of its connotations than its predecessor, the "Third World", which

> assumes meaning by virtue not of its content, but of its context, of the way in which it points to something else in a field of signs – in this instance, to its antinomy to 'the Global North', an opposition that carries a great deal of imaginative baggage congealed around the contrast between centrality and marginality, free-market modernity and its absence. Patently, this opposition takes on a hard-edged political and economic reality in some institutional contexts, like the G-8 and world bond and credit markets. But it obscures as much as it describes.
>
> (Ibid.)

In order to explain this, Jean and John Comaroff turn to Balibar, who states that the "line of demarcation between 'North' and 'South,' between zones of prosperity and power and zones of 'development of underdevelopment,' is not actually drawn in a stable way" (Balibar 2013: 14, cited in Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 127). Here, we observe how the 'geographicality' is not dissolved empirically and socially, but epistemically. In this vein, Müller contends that

> [r]ather than mere geographical descriptors, the Global North and South today signify primarily a political and epistemological project: a turn away from the language of developmentalism […]; a re-orientation of knowledge production from the universalism and euro-centrism in the North and a valorisation

of a multiplicity of knowing practices as found in the Global South; and a political inspiration for the reconfiguration of global politics […].

(Müller 2020: 735)

As an "epistemological project" we can certainly understand accounts that try to disrupt the fact and understanding that the South should be "a mix of countries where knowledge travels *to* rather than *from*" (McFarlane 2006: 1417f.). While these accounts hold on to the distinction, they reinstate the "South" as a critical analytical category of its own. Connell uses the term Southern theory "not to name a sharply bounded category of states or societies, but to emphasise relations – authority, exclusion and inclusion, hegemony, partnership, sponsorship, appropriation – between intellectual and institutions in the metropole and those in the world periphery" (Connell 2007a: viii–ix). Hence, Southern Theory becomes equivalent to looking at the world and explaining it from the periphery, the margins.

What remains problematic, though, is that this does not evade the fact that the 'Southern' maintains its other, the 'Northern', and thus the binary, which remains a slippery description, revealing as much as obscuring. Julian Eckl and Ralph Weber (2007) consider the pitfalls in the North-South-binary – starting off with David Horowitz, who refers to the binary as the description of a "divided world", divided into two geographical areas (hemispheres) that go along with "economic disparity", based on nation-state level analysis. Considering the binary as geographical denominators, Eckl and Weber reflect upon their character as metaphor and metonymy (referring to Roman Jakobson):

> As far as the phrase is metaphorical, the question to be addressed is what similarity the metaphor is thought to express. […] the notion 'North-South' seems to be indicative of an above/below situation […] the 'North' might thus easily be taken as the dominant ide of a lopsided binary, standing for the more real, the better, and the higher. […] As far as the phrase 'North-South divide' is metonymical, the associated contiguity is of interest. […] metonymies work through deletion. […] This is fallacious, for it is not obvious that different users of a metonymy delete the same part or that they are even aware of the deletion (e.g., *the countries of the South, the governments of the South, the companies of the South, the people of the South*).
>
> (Ibid.: 5)

The result of this is that, even though the Global North-South binary is addressed as a divide in the singular, many different divides may be insinuated by different speakers: socioeconomic, political, ecological, institutional, digital, academic, nano-divide etc. Referring to China, Eckl and Weber (2007: 11–12) point out how one country can be very differently positioned in relation to different divides: China can, for example, be characterized as ecologically southern, academically and politically northern, and economically divided in itself. In this sense, the oversimplification of the North-South-binary "eclipses the heterogeneity within the two poles – both within and among states" (ibid.: 17). Multiple usages, though, are not

seen as problematic, but rather as underlining the "omnipresence of the North-South-divide" (ibid.). Eckl and Weber interpret this "as a strong sign" of reification, leading ultimately to the condition that "the world cannot be imagined without it" (ibid.).

If the world cannot be imagined without the GSN binary, it needs to be addressed as a powerful mechanism that orders and structures perception (observation and experience), but also as a "differentiation device" (Haug 2020: 2) that groups people and things with similar features. Global South and North, then, demarcate not only geographic world regions (as suggested, e.g., by the Brandt-line and its binary division of the world in rich/developed/North and poor/developing/South, cf. Haug 2020: 4), but also people and bodies no matter their current and specific location. As a representation of space cutting across scales (seeing that a body, a nation, as well as a world region can be defined as northern or southern), the binary structures knowledge production, the production of standpoint and perspective. If the "imagined geographies of multilateral alliances" (Haug 2020: 6) such as the 1955 Bandung conference, the Non-Aligned Movement from 1961, and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) from 1964 are powerful political representations of these spaces, they still do not describe the whole discursive production of the South and the North as spaces. They need to be addressed as multi-locational and multi-scalar, shaping representations of architectures (e.g., the high-rise office building as signaling a global North dominated global economy anywhere and everywhere), of people (e.g., people of color in Europe), as well as of countries and world regions. What is striking in this observation is, that even more than is the case for East-West, Orient-Occident, GSN is at the same time a geo-specific reference and a denominator independent of specific location, best described as "geo-scape" (Comaroff/Comaroff 2012). In a similar, but at the same time very distinct way, the urban-rural-binary goes along with specific locations and social and economic relations independent of location, as ongoing debates show.

Dividing the World into 'Urban' and 'Rural'

Similar to the debates on the question of convergence of the GSN and West-Other division, there are ongoing discussions about the question of whether or not the distinction between urban and rural is still an accurate description of the ways people live in this world (cf. Brenner 2014; Angelo 2016). I have argued elsewhere that the distinction needs to be understood as spaces that relate political practices of conflict and struggle over land, territory, and property (Hoerning 2019). While the discussion about whether or not the world we live in today is primarily urban relies heavily on economic and lifestyle-related arguments, the focus on the politics defining the urban and the rural as spaces shifts the perspective to the fundamental question on what grounds – quite literally – economic and cultural life can enroll.

While the West-Other and North-South binaries are clearly connected historically, socially, and politically and both rely on colonial and neo-colonial relations of domination, the urban-rural-binary may divide the social world spatially, too,

but on a different scale and with a different history. The most profound difference may be found in the fact that West-Other and North-South inequalities are deeply entangled with racial discrimination. From a spatial perspective, this brings the materiality of the body to the fore. Still, the binaries are not detached from each other: As I have pointed out referring to Sujata Patel (2006), all three binaries can be interpreted as part of the modern-traditional matrix, the episteme of modernity. The 'modern' is conventionally associated with the 'West', the global North as well as with the urban. And as far as conventional associations go: the place of the modern urban/urban modern has been typically perceived as 'northern'. Only with the notion of the 'urban age' in the first decade of the new millennium, a shift in perspective of the global South was introduced: While it was hitherto perceived as the place of the rural traditional/traditional rural, ongoing urbanization processes and the fact that most megacities were located in the global South were frequently interpreted now as a different, chaotic, even dangerous and non-progressive form of the urban, seen through the lens of problems and not of potentials (cf. Robinson 2011; Hoerning 2016). That said, it becomes clear that all three binaries are characterized by their lop-sidedness. In how far this lop-sidedness is based on actual domination differs: While for the West-Other and GSN-binaries domination is one of the driving forces of the dichotomies themselves, the urban-rural binary is characterized more specifically by different relations of domination which are attached to the ways (by whom, by what means etc.) land, territory, and property are governed, ordered, controlled, but also contested (Roy 2015; Hoerning 2019).

As is the case for the other binaries, the urban-rural-binary has been discussed and problematized in several ways. Both, in terms of knowledge production as well as of everyday perceptions, the lop-sidedness has been addressed as far as the definition of the rural is concerned insofar as it is most commonly defined negatively as the 'non-urban'. Thus, the binary has been thought of as a dichotomy, even though different forms of interrelation from rural-urban continuum (Pahl 1966) to rural-urban blurring (Woods 2009; Dymitrow/Stenseke 2016) and from urban-rural bridges to linkages (Davoudi/Stead 2002) have been highlighted. Disciplinary divisions underline the dichotomy, too: While both, urban and rural developments are studied extensively, they are hardly brought together, with some exceptions in rural geography attempting to define the rural-urban interface (e.g., Woods 2009; Dymitrow/Stenseke 2016), and in social movement research and conceptualizations of territory (e.g., Fernandes 2005; Halvorsen 2018). Urban theory, though, remains by and large occupied with the question of continuing urbanization and, thus, the tendency and even acceleration of urban dominance, stating that "rural places have become […] swallowed up by an 'urban fabric' […] ceaselessly corroding the residue of agrarian life" (Merrifield 2011: 474). Thereby, the rural is addressed "solely in terms of [its] […] relation to the urban" (Woods 2009: 852).

In order to be analytically precise about the binaries, the rural and the urban need to be distinguished from the countryside and the city. *City and countryside* are empirical phenomena, they are produced through productive contexts of social interaction as well as of societal praxis (cf. Lefebvre 1996). The use of their concrete materiality (roads, places, neighborhoods, paths, fields…) renders them

what they are. *Urban and rural*, yet, are heuristic concepts that address the way(s) in which this use is regulated and enabled (Hoerning 2019: 213). They link specific places (which, theoretically, can be located in cities just as much as in the countryside), spanning up political spaces characterized by – among other things – distinguishable, "specific regulations and logics of territory, land, and property" (Roy 2015). For us to analyze the urban and the rural as still useful concepts, it is necessary to detach the binary of disciplinary and modernization theory: Urban and rural do not represent empirical spaces that are linked to specific types of cultural and economic practices which translate spatial differences into temporal differences of development. Specific activities might be linked to urban and rural spaces (like industrial production as, first, urban and northern, and now urban, but also rural and southern), but these are historically specific formations of the relationship between the urban, the rural, and specific cultural and economic activities, not the basis of the analytical concepts. Thus, just because agrarian production in the countryside is being industrialized does not mean that the rural is dissolving and being 'swallowed up' by 'urban fabric'. Understanding them as political spaces, hence, is also about detaching the binary from the 'episteme of modernity', and thereby delinking it from normative, temporal ideas of progress and development. A critical analysis of the urban and the rural does not necessarily dissolve the categories, but it ought to acknowledge that traditional stereotypes certainly have seized to exist empirically, which has not led to a homogenization of contexts, but we need to address differences in social organization and understand the relations of power shaping both spaces differently (cf. Alentejano 2003). Both, the urban and the rural, can be understood as "hybrid and networked space[s]" (Woods 2009: 851) and, as such, as abstract totalities, produced imaginatively, materially, and practically – and not empirical places, shaped by specific practices, imaginaries, and materializations at a certain moment in time.

Spatial Binaries in Global Perspective

It is my understanding that the political production of space, be it urban or rural, northern or southern, western or eastern, lies in the conflicting uses, conceptualizations, and symbolizations of space. Both, political and space are relational concepts. If the political relates ideas and positions and the spatial relates materialities and locations, thinking of space as political requires addressing the ways in which interests to establish and maintain a spatial order collide with the interests of those who make use of those spaces, thereby altering them symbolically and/or materially (cf. Hoerning 2019: 220). Comparing the very distinct binaries that shape an understanding of the world in its entirety and thereby classify ways, levels, and places of being in this world leads to the conclusion that they need to be addressed as spaces in terms of their material (geographical as well as environmental), discursive, and symbolic production. This renders them per se historically specific – but not, in the first place, empirical phenomena. This way, I do not understand historicity as opposed to the spatiality of the binaries/concepts. Here, I disagree

with Stuart Hall (2019[1992]), who describes the West as historical *in opposition* to being a geographical construct.

How, then, can we deal with binaries that imply spatial divisions, that foreground an understanding of meaningful contexts shaping the (social) 'world' in its entirety, in how far are they relevant for social theory? It is my understanding, that, if we want them to be useful as heuristic concepts, we need to understand them spatially in relation to the temporal. Analyzing the binaries spatially, we can observe that these are not oppositions, but that they are intrinsically related. To say that the binaries are spatial constructs means that they as much historical as they are geographical. Hence, they can be understood as specific formations of social and spatial relations (Lefebvre 1991) which also need to be addressed as power relations. The global spatial binaries are not based on territoriality, but they synthesize places, bodies, languages, settlement types, and even landscapes and animals into epistemological spaces. In the same way they cannot be reduced to territorial regions, they do not simply align with a networked space: (capitalized) networked space spans *across* binaries. The binaries as spaces seem more 'eruptive', fragmentary, organized around a powerful core (the metropole, the urban, the West, the modern etc.) and extending irregularly, with offshoots and without being territorially limited. They are, as such, no fixed spatial category or scale, but they require the empirical analysis of how and what space exactly is produced by whom in specific contexts, with relation to specific subjects, processes, and meanings.

Notes

1 This seems to imply an easy separation of binaries and scales, which is not the case. For example, in my own research on nongovernmental, humanitarian organizations, there is a discursive strategy to relate 'the global' very closely to the 'Global North', where advocacy and politics 'take place', and 'the local' to the 'Global South', where humanitarian action 'takes place'.

2 See, for example, an edited volume by Rafael Reuveny and William R. Thompson (2008), who follow an outline organized in "problems of trade", "problems of development" and "points of conflict".

3 In the Firstspace analysis, Haug (2020) looks into the materiality of the Global South, in the Secondspace analysis into the representations of space, and, finally, in Thirdspace analysis, into the lived spaces of representation (Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1996).

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8 European Elsewheres

Global Sociologies of Space and Europe

Fabio Santos and Manuela Boatcă

Hardly noticed by international media and sociology, three independence referenda were held in New Caledonia in 2018, 2020, and 2021. A "*sui generis* collectivity" of France and an "overseas country and territory" of the European Union, the South Pacific archipelago east of Australia is listed by the United Nations as 1 of 17 non-self-governing territories, alongside the Falkland Islands/Malvinas in the South Atlantic and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Sea. New Caledonia's population, ethnically divided into European settlers, the indigenous Kanak population, and a smaller group of non-Kanak Pacific islanders, was asked to vote "yes" or "no" in response to the question "Do you want New Caledonia to attain full sovereignty and become independent?" After the narrow election results from the first two rounds, with 43.3 (2018) and 46.7 percent (2020) of the electorate voting for independence, the 2021 referendum resulted in only 3.5 percent voting for independence. The voter turnout, however, was only 43.9 percent due to a boycott by the largely pro-independence Kanak population amid disproportionately high mortality and mourning among indigenous communities following the Covid-19 pandemic (Fisher 2022). The call to postpone the third referendum to September 2022 out of respect for local mourning customs was rejected by the French government. The referendum date is said to be remembered as "a day of sadness and injustice" (United Nations 2022), raising critical questions about democratic principles so closely associated with Europe. Against this background, it is Europe's globally entangled spatiality and internal as well as external power relations that we seek to unpack in this chapter.

Despite growing attempts at theorizing Europe and space from relational and global perspectives, an Occidentalist worldview according to which "Europe", "the West", and "the Occident" are the privileged, quasi-natural sites of investigation and knowledge production still characterizes mainstream academic discussions on the topic. As historical and sociological research has shown, all of these blurry notions are pseudo-geographical, unmarked categories and silent referents distinguished from the other(ed) territories and peoples that make up the majority of the world (Chakrabarty 2000; Hall 1992; Todorova 2005). In 1992, Stuart Hall famously unmasked this artificial, colonial division by asking the seemingly simple question: "Where and what is the West?" (Hall 1992: 276 ff.). As if anticipating Hall's question – and echoing the sentiments of many of those the

West has othered – in 1990, Édouard Glissant pointed to a seeming paradox in stating that "The West is not in the West. It is a project, not a place" (Glissant 1990). For both Hall and Glissant, "the West" is therefore a historical rather than a geographical concept. The self-definition of the West as culturally, economically, and morally superior resulted in shorthand (and short-sighted) antinomies such as "the West and the Rest".

It is likely no coincidence that these caveats come from Caribbean scholars, whose relationship to Europe was hyphenated by historical and ongoing colonial entanglements: Jamaican-British in the case of Stuart Hall, Martinican-French in the case of Édouard Glissant. Drawing on their perspectives, we argue here that the spatial categories we use, be they "the West" or "Europe", are themselves products of the questions we ask and reflect the epistemic position we (implicitly or explicitly) assume. Against methodologically flawed conflations of Europe with the European Union or with a continental mass, often reproduced in standard sociological works on Europe and Europeanization, we situate Europe in a global and historical context (see also Santos and Boatcă 2022). In order to point to the shortcomings of treating Europe as an "unmarked category" (Todorova 2005), we shift the focus to its most marked variants, which we term "European elsewheres": far-flung entities whose Europeanness has been historically denied and is currently actively forgotten in a long-term process and project of producing a coherent narrative of Europe devoid of its colonial and imperial past and present. Current colonial realities become apparent when zooming in on the "European" and, by extension, "Western" status of New Caledonia, an example through which we draw attention to the many forgotten European elsewheres that today range from French Guiana and the Dutch Caribbean to Réunion and the Canary Islands. Without taking into account this long-neglected cartography of ongoing colonial entanglements, we argue, Europe's place in the world remains incomplete, while European elsewheres remain forgotten and out of place.

Our chapter picks up on several interrelated critiques of conceptualizing space not only as an irrelevant but also as an essentialist and absolute category within sociology. Accordingly, spaces are spanned when places and people are set in relation to each other. After delineating this relational – and increasingly global – approach to space developed at different times and with different nuances by spatial sociology, world-systems analysis, decolonial scholarship, as well as critical and feminist geography, we draw on these approaches in order to globalize and decolonize prevalent understandings of Europe: conventional sociologies of Europe, from which global and historical power relations are often missing, systematically produce distorted political and mental maps of a single, unmarked Europe. As a counter-narrative and -map to these distortions, we provide insights from European elsewheres across the world in the third section of the chapter, focusing on recent developments in Anguilla (Caribbean Sea), New Caledonia (South Pacific Ocean) and Mayotte (Indian Ocean). We thus expand on and connect some of our earlier arguments (Boatcă 2010, 2019, 2020; Santos 2019, 2021, 2022; Santos and Boatcă 2022) in order to propose a relational understanding of Europe as a globally and historically entangled space.

Relationality and Globality of Space

The spatial turn has had a significant impact on large parts of the humanities and social sciences (Soja 1989; Warf and Arias 2009). Theories of society have largely tended to focus on "the grand context" of the social and to describe "society" as the largest possible unit of analysis. As early as the 1980s, macro-sociological approaches such as world-systems analysis had cautioned against the resulting conflation of "society" with the nation-state and argued for taking the capitalist world-economy as a unit of analysis instead (Wallerstein 1986). The shift in the unit of analysis from nationally bounded societies to the world-economy as a whole enabled the world-systems approach to account for the link between the rise in global inequalities since the European colonial expansion and the systematic spatial shifts (Boatcă 2016, 2021). The capitalist world-economy is seen as comprising a single division of labor in which different areas perform different economic tasks. The unequal division of labor that emerged with Europe's colonial expansion into the Americas in the sixteenth century ensures the steady transfer of surplus from peripheral to the core areas of the world-economy, yet the locations of the structural positions of core, semiperiphery, and periphery shift with changes in global hegemony, while mechanisms of surplus transfer change in a "pattern of interplay between cyclical processes of expansion and contraction and the secular evolutionary processes that undermine the basic stability of the system" (Wallerstein 2000: 109).

This macro-structural approach remained a minority position within a sociological discipline organized around the notion of "society", the rethinking of which would have come with significant institutional costs. It was only around the turn of the millennium that large-scale and long-term economic, political, and technological transformations across the globe put theories of society under increasing pressure and prompted a systematic critique of methodological nationalism (Beck and Sznaider 2006; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). Sociology's avoidance of spatial issues was questioned around the turn of the millennium in several book-length analyses (e.g., Löw 2016; Tonkiss 2005; Urry 2000). Clearly distancing themselves from absolute conceptions of space (i.e., space-as-container), these relational and processual theories of space reinstate classical sociologists such as Simmel (1984 [1903], 1995 [1908]) and Lefebvre (1974) as spatial and relational sociologists *avant la lettre*. Löw, in particular, theorized space as being ingrained in social action and consolidated over time by drawing on Giddens' theory of structuration (1984). Crucially, she reminds us that "groups of people can […] constitute a space that is not bound to the surface on which they stand. Various social sub-groups can generate different spaces on the same ground. None of this can be explained through a purely territorial concept of space" (Löw 2016: 39). These considerations are in line with other sociological works having conceived of space as constructed out of social relations (Pries 2008; Schroer 2006). This does not mean that territorially based concepts of space have become obsolete. Rather, the now widely accepted argument was for sociology to open up to different ways of spatial constitutions.

Yet, before space was conceptualized as relational by what has become the almost consolidated subdiscipline of spatial sociology, feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1991, 1994, 2005, 2006) had already developed the notion of space as constructed out of social relations and accounted for historically rooted global inequalities resulting from colonialism. Integrating this approach is thus central to our aim of globalizing sociological theories of space.

Massey gave striking examples of the ways in which seemingly banal places such as streets and airports are imbued with the global, spanning up a space that is not at all locally restricted, but made up of multiple linkages. She used the example of Kilburn High Road in London to emphasize the impossibility of thinking of that road and, by extension, most other streets in London, "without bringing into play half the world and a considerable amount of British imperialist history" (Massey 1991: 28). A variety of religious, ethnic and political communities, she showed, shape and experience that road differently: Adopting the approach of multiple, non-essentialist identities to how places are experienced by different people, she claimed that "people's routes through the place, their favourite haunts within it, the connections they make (physically, or by phone or post, or in memory and imagination) between here and the rest of the world vary enormously" (Massey 1991: 28). Since Kilburn High Road is on the way to Heathrow Airport, one always sees at least one airplane when looking at the sky, Massey further described. Beyond conventional depictions of international airports as cosmopolitan places in a seemingly borderless world, she gave yet another example of the intricate connections between the local and the global through postcolonial migration patterns, unequal mobilities, and institutionalized racism: "And there are those from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, who come half way round the world only to get held up in an interrogation room at Heathrow" (Massey 1991: 26). As to the simplistic spatialities perpetuated on Eurocentric maps and in colonialist narratives, Massey criticized the equation often made in our imagination between space and the surface of a map or a territory:

> In this imagination, Hernán Cortés crosses space (the Atlantic, the neck of what was to become Mexico) and comes upon Tenochtitlán, capital of the Aztecs. In this imaginary there is only one active agent (the voyager). Those who are 'discovered' are implicitly conceptualised as located on this spatial surface which has been crossed, implicitly awaiting the arrival of the voyager. It is a classically colonial imagination, conceiving only the coloniser as active agent and in so doing depriving 'the other' both of autonomous active agency and of a history of their own.
>
> (Massey 2006: 92)

Massey used these examples to illustrate her relational and processual theory, at the center of which lie three assumptions: first, the recognition of "space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions; from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny". Thinking of space without human (inter)action across multiple scales, therefore, is deficient. Second, the description of space

"as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporary plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity". Consequently, space is constantly subject to negotiations, contestations, and crossings. Third, the fact that "space is always under construction", that is, intrinsically processual. Therefore, space has no ending: "It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far" (all quotes from Massey 2005: 9).

Which lessons, then, can sociologists of space learn from this relational understanding? Delineating stories in their provisional, precarious, ever-shifting, and ongoing character is perhaps the foremost task to be undertaken by the field of spatial sociology. This approach, Massey reminded us, is a real challenge to traditional cartography (Massey 2005: 107), which fails to adequately capture the entanglements of space and, as we highlight in the following section, Europe. It is also a challenge for sociology, which so far does not account for the intersections between spatial sociology on the one hand and the sociology of Europe on the other. In an attempt to fill this gap, we, therefore, sketch in the following the contours of a critical sociology of European space.

While Massey's oeuvre has already pointed out the global dimension of space in general terms, Europe was only touched upon implicitly or by way of examples. In line with Löw's theory of space, we agree that space is constituted not only by day-to-day actions (e.g., using maps to represent and locate world regions) but also by our perceptual and/or analytical synthesis (e.g., equating Europe with the EU or dividing EU member states into East and West in our research). As a result, we must self-critically reflect on how academia in general and sociology, in particular, are complicit in perpetuating one-sided notions of Europe and other entities called "regions", "areas", and "continents". As in the case of other constructed categories, our use of the notion of "Europe" is thus shaped by (and sometimes a direct product of) the scope and aim of the questions we ask. The location of Europe, as we posit in the following, was contested throughout history and continues to be so. While there was a self-defined, relatively stable center of where Europe was and is to be located, many borderlands shifted in the course of history and have remained blurry or forgotten until today.

Relationality and Globality of Unequal Europes

The textbook sociology of Europe and Europeanization has contributed to the active forgetting of European elsewheres by reproducing official and one-sided EU narratives alongside methodological nationalism and continentalism. As we have recently argued (Santos and Boatcă 2022), the standard literature on the topic is bound to remain at least incomplete and self-referential, and at times downright self-congratulatory, as long as it does not situate Europe and Europeanization in a global and historical context. This becomes apparent when addressing the controversial question of Europe's external and internal borders, implicitly tied to its status as a continent. Although widely criticized as obsolete, inadequate, and irrelevant for both physical and human geography, the division of the world

into seven continents is standard cartographic practice (Lewis and Wigen 1997). Among the continental landmasses commonly defined, the distinction between Europe and Asia is by far the least warranted in geographical terms. It sometimes leads cartographers to group the two together as a single continent of Eurasia—in which tiny Europe, however, is only one of six subcontinents (Lewis and Wigen 1997: 35ff.). For more than one reason, therefore, Europe is a cartographic anomaly. In addition to still treating Europe as a fully-fledged continent, geographers and non-geographers alike have repeatedly presented it as the norm, or the "archetypal continent". This methodological choice has momentous political, economic, and cultural consequences:

> Viewing Europe and Asia as parts of a single continent would have been far more geographically accurate, but it would also have failed to grant Europe the priority that Europeans and their descendants overseas believed it deserved. By positing a continental division between Europe and Asia, Western scholars were able to reinforce the notion of a cultural dichotomy between these two areas—a dichotomy that was essential to modern Europe's identity as a civilization.
>
> (Lewis and Wigen 1997: 36)

The meta-geographical East-West division has also served as the most common as well as the most long-standing internal differentiation within Europe, periodically transferring geopolitical, economic, and cultural divides into an ahistorical distinction between Eastern and Western Europe. The European East thereby sanctions Western Europe's position as the norm, while partly acquiring attributes of a larger East in being portrayed as Oriental or "somehow Asian" (Bakić-Hayden 1995; Lewis and Wigen 1997: 7). Various attempts at standard scientific orderliness have included pinpointing a third zone between East and West or further subdividing the geographically as well as conceptually slippery "Eastern" Europe into North, Central (nineteenth-century Mitteleuropa), and South-eastern Europe (the Balkans). Here, what Stuart Hall has termed "the Rest and its internal others" appears as instrumental for the West "to recognize and represent itself as the summit of human history" (1992: 313ff.). It thus reinforces, rather than questions, the overarching shorthand of "the West vs. the Rest".

It becomes increasingly clear that the concept of Europe has never had a mere geographic referent, but has instead always reflected the geopolitics as well as the epistemology of the various historical moments and the global power relations characterizing them. However, political maps that represent distinct continents not only naturalize them as commonsensical entities but also suggest that they are made up of nation-states that fit continental borders. Transcontinental states such as Turkey, Egypt, or Russia are thus posited as anomalies in need of explanation (Lewis and Wigen 1997: 9). In the case of Europe in particular, such naturalization has the absurd effect of generating anomalies from the definition of a continent that is itself anomalous. Thus, many European states have territories outside continental Europe: Cyprus is, strictly speaking, located in West Asia, on the Anatolian

Plate, while Malta and Sicily are on the African continental plate. If, however, geographical incongruities result in a few exceptions to the rule, it is colonial history that reveals exceptions as systematic and the rule itself as a function of the political economy of global capitalism (Boatcă 2019).

Today, the European Union includes 22 overseas entities resulting from the colonial involvement of five European member states: Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain. Of these, nine are part of France, Portugal, and Spain and thus full-fledged EU members; they are considered outermost regions (Figure 8.1) of the European Union and are subject to EU legislation (the acquis Communautaire) (European Parliament 2016). According to the official EU language, the remaining 13 "are not sovereign countries but depend to varying degrees on the three Member countries with which they maintain special links" (European Commission 2020). These Danish, Dutch, and French colonies – officially called "overseas countries and territories" (OCTs, Figure 8.2) – are not part of the single market, yet their nationals are EU citizens. With the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU in 2020, known as Brexit, 13 British Overseas Territories – including Anguilla, yet excluding continental Gibraltar – no longer form part of the OCTs[1]. As a whole, the OCTs feature among the regions in the European Commission's list of partners in "international cooperation and development", which also includes sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific in one category and the Americas and the Caribbean in another (European Commission 2022). While the entire list bespeaks blurry borders and inconsistent criteria, including the OCTs as a "region" is telling not only for the anomalous status they hold within the EU and ironic in the face of their being geographically spread across three of the world's oceans. The list also reveals the extent to which geographical and political categories–from "countries" and "territories" to "regions"—are used as placeholders for the appropriate term, "colonies", while their historical genealogies are disguised under euphemisms such as "special relations". As pointed out by the feminist political scientist Françoise Vergès in relation to the French *départements d'outre-mer*, not only does the term "overseas" (*outre-mer*) locate these territories "elsewhere" and render them invisible, but it also masks the appropriate term: "colonial" (Vergès 2017: 166). This critique aligns with theorizations of territory as a political technology encompassing techniques of measure and control (Elden 2010).

Hence, the formal acknowledgment of these "territories" – whether labeled OCTs, outermost regions, overseas departments, or otherwise – should not be mistaken for a critical engagement on the part of national and EU elites with past and present forms of colonialism. Quite the contrary. Official EU discourse foregrounds continental Europe to the detriment of all other, colonially acquired territories, which today are still part of European countries, but are geographically located on other continents or oceans, thus warranting the label "European elsewheres". In so doing, EU discourse links Europeanness to a narrowly defined physical location that excludes both the history and the present of Europe's colonial ties to other regions. With this discourse, often reproduced in the sociological literature on Europe and Europeanization, we thus witness the re-emergence of a "moral

Figure 8.1 Map of outermost regions of the European Union, showing EU borders in South America, the Caribbean, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Indian Ocean.

Source: European Commission, public domain: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/outermost-regions/.
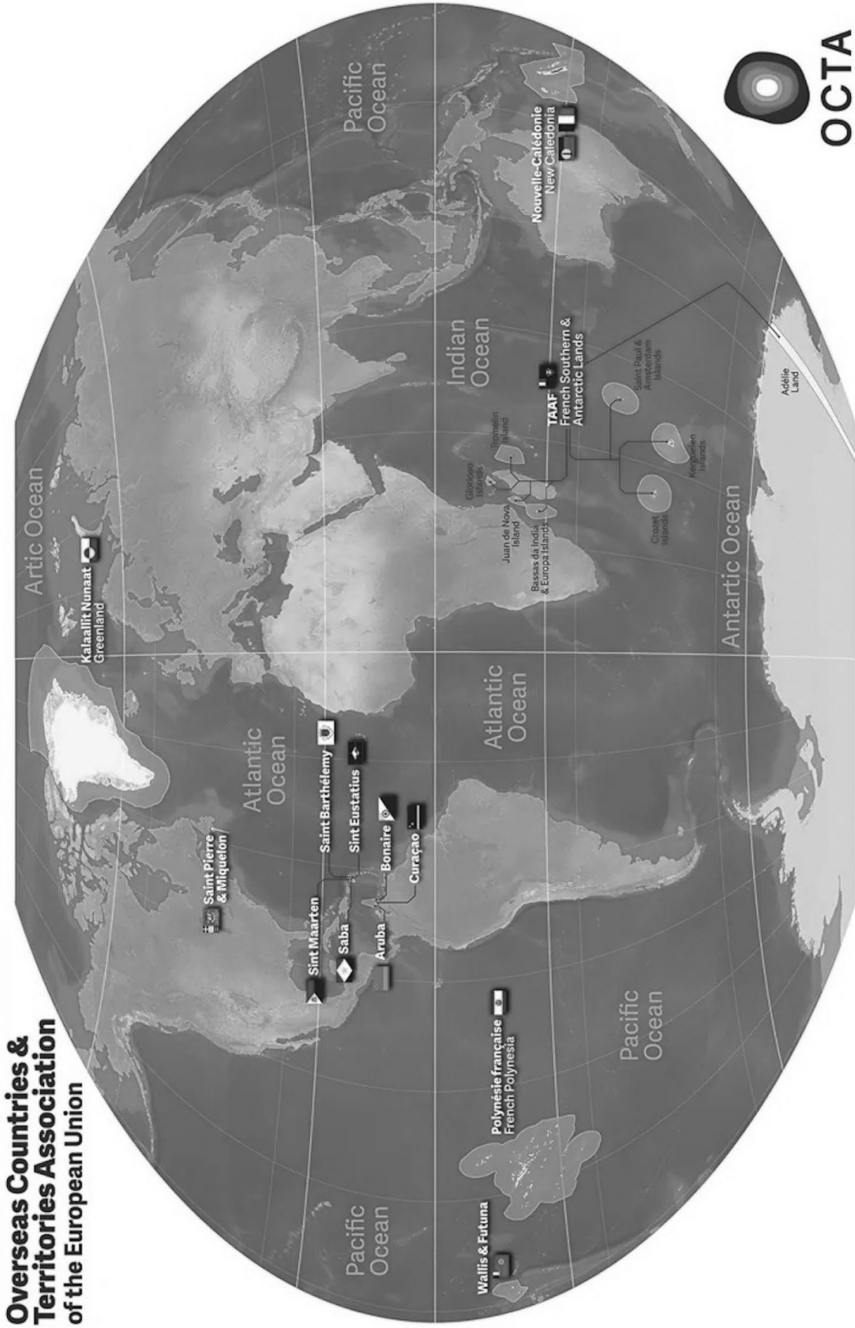
Figure 8.2 Map of overseas countries and territories association of the European Union (post-Brexit) across the world's oceans, 2021.

Source: European Commission, public domain: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/where-we-work/overseas-countries-and-territories_de.

geography" of the continent, with profound implications for the identity politics, citizenship rights, and military and monetary policy of the excluded countries (Muller 2001). The pervasive civilizing discourse situates the EU at the top of a value hierarchy derived from the historical legacy and the current political role of its member states, viewed as exemplary in both cases. This "moral geopolitics" (Böröcz 2006) of the EU results in a racialized identity politics and a related moral geography underlying it that continually shapes the political discourse and public perception of Europe and the European Union.

Global Entanglements and European Elsewheres

In what follows, we dwell on three European elsewheres and their corresponding forgotten borders. We employ them as a methodological magnifying glass that makes the current implications of Europe's long-standing colonial entanglements and spatial globality both visible and legible. By focusing on territories in three different world regions – Anguilla in the Caribbean Sea, New Caledonia in the Pacific Ocean, and Mayotte in the Indian Ocean – we claim that European elsewheres are no mere deviations from a politically and spatially clearly defined Europe, but the direct result of Europe's global entanglements in a world still shaped by colonial structures. The three cases illustrate how sociologies of space and Europe can be bridged in such a way that Europe is both theorized and empirically addressed as a globally and historically entangled space. We accordingly view European space as historically constructed and globally co-constituted by the power relations maintained and contested in and between continental Europe – containing core and semiperipheral regions – and "European elsewheres" – its peripheries.

In the context of the spatiality of critical epistemologies (see chapters by Hoerning and Mignolo in this volume), the category of "European elsewheres" highlights the spatial dimension of what has been conceptualized as "forgotten Europes": the (geopolitically and discursively) least visible group among the multiple and unequal Europes resulted from power shifts within and beyond the continent from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century (Boatcă 2018, 2019). The different Europes making up the hierarchy that the shifts in hegemony generated were in time associated with different and highly unequal roles in shaping the reigning definitions of Europe and modernity and in ensuring their propagation: Around the eighteenth century, the rising colonial powers France and England gradually emerged as a self-proclaimed "heroic Europe" and self-described as the producers of modernity's main revolutions, the French Revolution and industrialization. The power of definition thus acquired, together with the economic and political control France and England wrested away from other European competitors, rising to the core of the capitalist world-system, allowed them to relegate the declining colonial powers Spain and Portugal to the status of a "decadent Europe", which had lost both hegemony and the epistemic power of defining a hegemonic Self and its subaltern Others and had declined economically into the semiperiphery. In the hierarchical imaginary thus elaborated, the European East, best epitomized by South-eastern Europe and the Balkans, was assigned the role of an "epigonal

Europe", seen as lacking modernity's achievements and condemned to re-produce the stages covered by heroic Europe in the perpetual attempt to "catch up" with the West. Against this background, forgotten Europe, the colonial possessions which were economically indispensable for these achievements and administratively integral parts of Western European states until well into the twentieth century and some even today, played no part in the definition of either Europe or the modernity gradually associated with it. Economically and epistemically, they were consigned to the periphery.

Dispersed across the world, the entities called overseas countries, territories, and outermost regions cannot be easily pinpointed to any one location. The lack of a referent for these colonial outposts is a result of the coloniality of memory, a necessary element of the coloniality of power in the capitalist world-economy. The coloniality of memory has previously been defined as the discursive mechanism ensuring the systematic omission of enduring colonial ties from public discourse *on* Europe alongside the systematic avoidance of any overarching classification of current colonial territories as integral parts *of* Europe (Boatcă 2018). As such, the coloniality of memory prevents any overarching category from gaining legitimacy as being European. References that occasionally or more systematically feature in public discourse tend to be linked to the imperial history of individual states, as in the case of labels such as the "Dutch Caribbean", "French Polynesia", or the "British West Indies", yet never as recognizable regions of Europe. Through the notion of "European elsewheres", we aim to make this category thinkable and thereby provide a referent for a space that spans several parts of the world. At the same time, addressing "European elsewheres" makes visible Europe's colonial presence overseas and thereby helps counteract the coloniality of memory through which these and other Europes are actively and systematically forgotten (Boatcă 2018; Santos 2017).

Anguilla as European Elsewhere: Brexit in the Caribbean

Debates on the status of borders affected by Brexit have largely revolved around the Irish border and the Gibraltar-Spanish border. Themselves the result of colonial impositions, these borders have only become globally visible since their ambivalent post-Brexit status threatened to create immigration, customs, and trade chaos. Although in both cases the regional votes went to the option to remain in the EU (overwhelmingly so in Gibraltar at 96 percent; and a solid 56 percent in Northern Ireland) – the national leave vote prevailed. However, Britain's overseas territories, which are not part of the EU and its common customs area, were not even eligible to vote in the referendum. Even though, in some cases, their maritime borders with other EU territories were dramatically impacted by Brexit, they have not been the object of public debates and have not been addressed in Brexit negotiations (Boatcă 2020).

Britain controls 14 overseas territories with different forms of statehood and degrees of self-determination in the Caribbean, the West Atlantic, the South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific, and Europe (Clegg 2018). Among them, Anguilla,

the oldest British colony and a British territory since 1650, offers a striking mirror image of Britain's political borders in the Caribbean. Just like Britain, Anguilla shares a maritime border with France through its own "English Channel" – the Anguilla channel – which separates it from the French "overseas collectivity" of Saint Martin. Yet unlike Britain, Anguilla also borders the Netherlands to the south through Sint Maarten, a "constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands" on the same island as the French Saint Martin. Anguilla is dependent upon both for trade and transportation: planes bound for Anguilla can only land on the Dutch part, Sint Maarten, while the only cargo port, through which Anguilla receives most goods, is located in the French part of the island, Saint Martin.

Anguilla has no access to postal services, fuel, basic medical services, and educational special needs other than through the facilities located in the Dutch and French territories. Being an "internally self-governing British territory", as the official language has it, Anguilla is also ineligible for most British development aid. The European Union has therefore been its main source of funding so far, especially for reconstruction projects after a series of hurricanes. In the absence of clear post-Brexit provisions, EU funding is running out, while Anguilla's citizens feared the loss of unencumbered access to specialized medical care, postal services, and international travel located across the channel on the EU territories in Saint Martin. Blondel Cluff, until recently Anguilla's representative in London, hinted at Anguilla's location being a mirror image of Britain's borders when stating: "Saint Martin is our backyard, and we are theirs. Everyone has family there too. If that border becomes like Dover and Calais, that's going to make life very difficult for Anguilla" (as quoted in Connelly 2019).

While Brexit negotiations between the UK and the EU were ongoing, the Government of Anguilla published two reports signaling the urgency and importance of these issues, detailing Brexit risks and drafting possible avenues to prevent a mirror Brexit border in the Caribbean, such as a regional customs union and common travel area with the island of Saint Martin (Government of Anguilla 2017, 2018). Nevertheless, in the British government's framework document on Brexit, references to the overseas territories are both scarce and vague. They range from "seeking specific arrangements for the Crown Dependencies, Gibraltar and the other Overseas Territories" through "ensuring an appropriate and beneficial future relationship across the UK family" and up to "upholding their British sovereignty" (UK Parliament 2018). They remain as vague as to only commit to "meeting the needs of the wider UK family, including the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Territories" – with no mention of their maritime borders with EU territories – even as they are placed next to concrete plans regarding EU borders on the mainland, such as the plan to "protect the union, avoiding the need for any hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland" (UK Parliament 2018). After the last-minute Brexit deal, a solution for avoiding a hard border with the EU was negotiated only for Gibraltar (the only overseas territory located in continental Europe and the only full EU member among them): joining the Schengen zone. While ratifying this preliminary agreement as a treaty detailing the consequences for free movement, border control, and

fishing rights was expected to take six months, this still had not happened by the end of 2022. In the meantime, bilateral agreements with the French and Dutch governments ensuring British Overseas Territory citizens unchanged visa-free access for short stays have appeased fears in Anguilla. Yet the long uncertainty about losing the right to travel to these neighboring territories has contributed to demographic changes. Anguilla's population decreased from almost 17,000 people in 2016 to 13,500 in 2018 as people migrated in search of a less risky future (it did rise again in 2020, yet this was mainly due to the worldwide restrictions on movement during the COVID-19 pandemic, which halted emigration from Anguilla, too).

Quite unlike other dependent territories across the world today, Anguilla is the only British colony that ever fought to remain British – rather than belong to an independent island federation together with St. Kitts and Nevis. The long-drawn process, known on the island as the Anguilla revolution, included a declaration of independence from St. Kitts and Nevis in 1967, two referenda in 1967 and 1969, in which over 99.7 percent of the population voted for secession from the then state of St. Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla, and an infamous invasion of the island by Britain's metropolitan police in 1969, met with peaceful demonstrations by unarmed locals and ridiculed in the press of the time as the "Bay of Piglets" (Hannan 2019). Anguilla formally seceded from St. Kitts and Nevis in 1980 in order to remain a British colony.

Yet Anguilla is not alone in this decision for a formal colonial status. As the case of Mayotte discussed below will also show, such decisions can be of strategic self-interest. They result from weighing the risks posed by political upheaval, the small size of island economies, and the additional management capacity necessary after independence against the advantages that the maintenance of colonial ties offers and that in most cases include economic assistance, welfare provisions, as well as metropolitan citizenship and the mobility benefits it guarantees. In view of the fact that none of the several overseas territories with good prospects for independence at the end of the twentieth century have since chosen independence, Connell and Aldrich conclude that "Opposition to independence is not illogical. Brexit has shown how issues initially considered of no obvious relevance to OTs (overseas territories) and determined without reference to them can have powerful repercussions, ironically pointing to the virtues of an externally guaranteed security" (Connell and Aldrich 2020: 104).

More importantly, however, acknowledging this kind of "non-sovereign politics" (Bonilla 2015) as a deliberate and strategic option places the question of administrative decolonization in a global rather than a national framework: After centuries of colonization, independence should not just mean having a new national anthem and unfavorable passport, and thus continue to be what Caribbean scholars have called "flag independence" (Knight and Palmer 1989) – a partial autonomy obtained in the absence of a structural change in the global balance of power between former colonies and former colonizing countries. Instead, as anthropologist Yarimar Bonilla points out, "non-sovereign politics" reveals the insufficiencies of the notion of absolute sovereignty

by negotiating and navigating forms of entanglement that cannot – or perhaps should not – be easily broken. […] Non-sovereignty thus needs to be understood as both a positive project and a negative placeholder for an anticipated future characterized by something other than the search for sovereignty.

(Bonilla 2015: xiv)

The following section illustrates one of the most striking instances in which European elsewheres challenge the notion of sovereignty – New Caledonia, where politics are divided by almost equally strong pro- and anti-independence halves.

New Caledonia as European Elsewhere: The Promise of a Sovereign Future

The shifting nature of European borders around the world not only becomes apparent when looking at the consequences of Brexit in the Caribbean. In fact, the status of Europe's overseas borders is at stake in its most far-flung overseas country and territory: New Caledonia in the South Pacific Sea. As mentioned above, New Caledonia – or Kanaky, as preferred by some pro-independence activists – is currently witnessing a watershed moment determining its future status as an independent nation-state or non-independent overseas territory of France and the EU (see also Connell and Aldrich 2020: 195–225). The referenda held in 2018, 2020, and 2021 are the results of decades of heated debate and violent conflict, mainly between the indigenous Kanak population and European settlers (Andras 2020).[2]

After having been a French colony from 1853 until 1946, New Caledonia became an overseas territory of France, with citizenship granted to all New Caledonians in subsequent years. Despite this status change, colonial structures continued to shape New Caledonia and the wider region. This became blatantly visible in the 1960s, when "Charles De Gaulle reduced the autonomy of New Caledonia and French Polynesia to help pave the way to nuclear testing, triggering political demands for greater autonomy, and eventually calls for independence" (Chauchat 2019: 253). In tandem with the unequal exploitation of natural resources currently in high demand on the global capitalist market – New Caledonia holds 25 percent of the world's nickel reserves (Fisher 2019: 204) – the nuclear weapon tests carried out on the Tuamotu Archipelago in French Polynesia increased dissatisfaction with the political *status quo*, leading to a phase of violent conflicts in the 1980s. Amid growing demands for independence made by the *Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste* (FLNKS) – predominantly composed of Kanak – France convened a referendum in 1987. Because persons residing in New Caledonia for just three years (i.e., mostly European settlers) were eligible to vote and thus drastically influence the result, the referendum was largely boycotted by the Kanak population. In light of the predicted outcome against independence,

FLNKS frustration culminated in an attack on French police on Ouvéa Island, and the taking of police hostages to Gossanah Cave in April 1988, killing four of them. French authorities, rather than allowing negotiations

which might have brought the incident to a peaceful end, used force to rescue the hostages in early May, resulting in the deaths of 19 Kanak and two police.
    (Fisher 2019: 205; see also Andras 2020 for a book-length analysis of the
                    independence movement and the French military intervention)

After this political crisis, the Matignon-Oudinot accords were signed in 1988, including not only the spatial and, implicitly, ethnic division into three territorial provinces (South Province with a European majority and the Kanak-dominated North and Islands Provinces) but also the agreement on an independence referendum to be held in 1998. Yet, instead of carrying out the referendum in that year, the French government and the two opposing New Caledonian parties (pro-independence FLNKS and pro-French *Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République*) agreed to sign the Nouméa Accord, extending the date of the referendum by 20 years (Guyon and Trépied 2013: 109–112). The accord provided that, in case of a majority voting for remaining French, another election could be held if requested by a third of Congress members. If the result of that second vote remains pro-French, then a third and final referendum could be held on the same basis. This is what happened, leading to two referenda with relatively narrow results whose conduct has been appreciated by international experts, and one final referendum criticized for its impartiality and ignorance of indigenous concerns (Fisher 2022). Besides postponing the referendum, the accord restricted the electorate to people who, by 2014, had been living continuously in New Caledonia for at least 20 years. Despite excluding recent metropolitan migrants from the vote, this compromise did not result in a Kanak majority among the electorate, mirroring the demographic shift spurred by centuries-long colonial politics of migration from the metropole. However, in an unprecedented move of republican France, the existence of the Kanak people was officially recognized in the accord.

Even though the indigenous Kanak population – which largely overlaps with the FLNKS and the pro-independence movement – gained legal recognition, their position within New Caledonia's ethnically stratified society has barely changed: as summed up by the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Rights, "there are no Kanak lawyers, judges, university lecturers, police chiefs or doctors, and there are only six Kanak midwives registered with the State health system, out of a total of 300 midwives in New Caledonia" (as quoted in Fisher 2019: 210). Considering this colonially inherited lack of access to key positions in New Caledonian society, it is not surprising that the Kanak were structurally disadvantaged in the first election campaign: all local media as well as local and central government bodies ran a clear pro-France propaganda campaign (Chauchat 2019: 255). In light of this biased campaign, it can be seen as a success for the Kanak that "only" 56.40 percent voted to remain in France in 2018, as opposed to 43.60 percent voting for independence. The margin narrowed even further in the second referendum, with 53.26 percent voting in favor of the *status quo*, and 46.74 percent voting for independence.

For the Kanak population, these results have stirred hope in "non-sovereign futures". As discussed above, anthropologist Yarimar Bonilla (2015) coined this

term in the context of the Caribbean, where most territories are non-sovereign, in order to question the norm of sovereign nation-states. Besides OCTs, military zones, tax havens, privately owned islands, and other forms escaping standard conceptions of sovereignty, even formally independent states such as Haiti remain non-sovereign, Bonilla argues – global power asymmetries prevent the development of structures commonly associated with the modern ideal of sovereignty. Yet, unlike the Guadeloupean labor activists whose visions of non-sovereignty Bonilla traces in her ethnography, a significant number of New Caledonians strive for full independence rather than for an institutional setting allowing for equality under the French flag coupled with increased funding from the metropole (e.g., a higher minimum wage).

Prior to the third referendum, with a victory within their grasp, the indigenous pro-independence movement refused to play by the metropolitan and metro-centered rules: At the height of indigenous suffering and mourning from the COVID-19 pandemic, they asked for a postponement of the third vote in respect of their mourning ceremonies. Effectively reduced by the mortality of the pandemic, the indigenous electorate saw the implementation of the election as incompatible with, and disrespectful of, their cultural mourning rites lasting up to 12 months (Fisher 2022: 31). After the French government decided to proceed with the election procedure as planned, the indigenous and independence leaders "called for peaceful non-participation in the referendum […], couched in language critical of France's prioritizing its own national election cycle and no doubt mindful of France's own postponement of the 2020 referendum because of Covid" (Fisher 2022: 32) With an abstention of more than half of the electorate, the political validity of the vote has been severely undermined by the pro-independence parties and proponents.

The "non-sovereign futures" hence remain uncertain for the independence-seeking Kanak and their allies. While they have already requested another referendum, the self-proclaimed winners of the third referendum consider the question of independence to be resolved and seek to "integrate" New Caledonia within the national and European framework. Here, Mayotte serves as the latest model of how to do so with the willful acceptance of local divisions (see below). At the same time, it has become clear that New Caledonia's path has wider geopolitical implications: "Whatever is decided for New Caledonia", former diplomat and current policy analyst Denise Fisher (2022: 40) emphasizes, "can be sought by French Polynesia and potentially others of its overseas territories around the globe, and France does not want to lose these territories." By considering strategic assessments made by France in recent years, she argues that

> it is France's overseas' possessions in the three oceans (Atlantic, Indian and Pacific) which underpin its status as a global power, one of only five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, leader of the EU, member of NATO, and US ally.

Similar geopolitical considerations lay behind the decision to tie the Indian Ocean more closely to France and the European Union, with Mayotte becoming an "outermost region" in 2014.

Mayotte as European Elsewhere: A "Second Lampedusa" Joining the EU

While New Caledonia's future remains unclear, the Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte has shifted to an ever-closer relationship with France a few years ago. In a referendum held in 2009, 95 percent of Mahorans, as Mayotte's population is locally called, voted in favor of *départementalisation*, that is, becoming a French overseas department. At the European level, this translated into a delayed recognition as "outermost region" in 2014. Anthropologist Iain Walker (2020: 203–204) describes this shift as "the culmination of more than 50 years of political agitation on the island", with full incorporation implying

> a number of changes that many Maorais […] had not fully understood or expected: the abolition of Islamic civil law, touching particularly on inheritance and marriage (polygamy would henceforth be illegal), the imposition of various laws concerning taxation, labour, employment and so on, the loss of customary systems of land tenure.

In one stroke, yet barely noticed by international media, the EU gained nearly 200,000 Black and Muslim citizens living on the island between Madagascar and Mozambique. While being a fully-fledged EU territory, Mayotte is deeply – geographically, culturally, and socially – tied to the Union of the Comoros. A former French colony, the Comoros are an independent state consisting of the three islands Ngazidja (known in French as Grande Comore), Mwali (Mohéli), and Ndzuani (Anjouan), and having a claim on Mayotte (Maore in Comorian) until today.

The background of Mayotte's disputed status is the 1974 Comorian independence referendum. The inhabitants of all four islands belonging to the archipelago (Grande Comore, Mohéli, Anjouan, and Mayotte) were asked to answer "yes" or "no" to the question "Do you want the Comoros' territory to become independent?" Although the overall result clearly reflects the will for independence (94.57 percent voting "yes"), Mayotte stood out for its pro-French vote, with only 36.78 percent voting "yes". Due to the controversial move of the French government to count the votes island by island rather than as a whole, Mayotte remained under French control, whereas the other three islands became independent. After intensive lobbying from the French side to maintain the *status quo*, a new referendum was held two years later in Mayotte, which resulted in a 99.4 percent approval, but was still not recognized internationally. According to the UN, carrying out a separate referendum in Mayotte was illegal. Besides legal reasons, it remains unclear "which 'people' has the right to vote for self-determination – the Mahorans, never a people, or all Comorians, who share a language, a culture, and a religion …?" (Muller 2013: 189). Notwithstanding this international criticism, France decided to push for closer integration, carrying out a referendum on the future *départementalisation* in 2000: with 73 percent of the Mahorans voting in favor of further integration, in 2001, Mayotte was turned into a *collectivité territoriale*, a transitional status preparing the legislative assimilation process over a period of ten years. After the 2009 referendum mentioned above, Mayotte became France's 101st department

in 2011 (Roinsard 2012). For Muller (2013), the Mahorans were faced with a choice between two options (France or the Comoros), neither of which they fully supported. Weighing the colonially inherited differences in terms of wealth, political stability, and access to basic goods and resources, they chose France: "For the Mahorans, sovereignty cannot signify independence, but instead only the freedom to choose between one master or the other, and few choose Moroni [capital of the Comoros]" (Muller 2013: 190).

Over the past decades, the different statuses of the islands forming part of the archipelago and the resulting discrepancies have led to huge migratory movements, especially after the introduction of the highly disputed Balladur Visa, which was intended to hinder Comoran citizens from entering the sister island Mayotte, thus turning the neighboring inhabitants of a historically deeply interconnected archipelago into "illegal" immigrants (Benoît 2020; Tchokothe 2018; Walker 2020: 203). Parallels to the endangered mobilities between Anguilla and Saint Martin after Brexit as well as to unequal mobility patterns in the Caribbean more generally are apparent (Boatcă and Santos 2023). Effectively, the introduction of the unequal mobility scheme in Mayotte created "a second Lampedusa" (Muller 2013: 193), with overloaded fishing boats attempting to reach Mayotte, located 43 miles from Anjouan. Day by day, life-threatening dramas take place off the coast of Mayotte, which people try to reach in their hopes of a safer life, better health care, quality education, stable employment, and related reasons. "The disasters", Sellström (2015: 318) writes,

> bear a close resemblance to those occurring when African refugees and economic migrants try to reach the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa, Italy, in search of EU shelter and jobs. In the case of Mayotte, they take place in silence, far away from any international media coverage or public debate.

As he further explains, "Dead bodies are regularly washed ashore on the beaches of western Mayotte. Those lucky enough to avoid death and detention join Mayotte's huge illegal population" (Sellström 2015: 318).

The deadly sea crossings have continued after Mayotte's formal EU accession in 2014. Local newspapers provide information on the arrival and deaths of people from the neighboring Comoros on a weekly basis, yet metropolitan French – let alone other European – media rarely report on the tragedies taking place around the EU's southern border in the Indian Ocean. Most recent estimates suggest that at least 12,000 people have died since 1995 in attempting to reach the shores of Mayotte (Benoît 2020: 236). Mayotte has a "foreign" (i.e., mostly Comoran) population of 45 percent, and its estimated "undocumented foreign population" amounts to 35 percent (Benoît 2020: 222). What happens to those surviving the life-threatening journey? The vast majority faces deportation back to the Comoros, as official French statistics from 2016 strikingly illustrate: while 12,961 individuals were deported from mainland France, 17,943 people were forcibly sent back from tiny Mayotte (Benoît 2020: 225). The fact that these developments are silenced by official EU discourse and conventional sociologies of Europe bespeaks the difficulty

to account for hundreds of thousands of "Muslim-French-European Africans" (Muller 2013: 192). As a consequence, it also bespeaks ignorance with regard to the historical connection between European integration and colonialism in Africa (Hansen and Jonsson 2014). Mayotte's accession to the EU is a telling, yet silenced echo of this colonial nexus (Santos 2015).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have connected critical sociologies of space and Europe countering essentialist and Occidentalist worldviews. Drawing on spatial sociology, world-systems analysis, decoloniality, as well as feminist and critical geographies, we have underscored the mutually enriching perspectives constituting the contours of an emerging spatial sociology of Europe in a global context. Accordingly, critical sociological inquiry should not continue to work with an unmarked category called "Europe". Neither is Europe simply a place on a territorial surface nor is it sociology's natural or even default unit of analysis, but a globally and historically constituted, entangled space of continental Europe and European elsewheres. Europe's place in the world thus cannot be pinpointed to any one location and remains incomprehensible without taking into account the past and present realities of its far-flung colonial dependencies across the world. This is not to make Europe's location aleatory but to point to its embeddedness in a colonial matrix of power that still shapes both definitions of Europeanness and positions in a hierarchy of multiple and unequal Europes whose normative and geopolitical weight shifted in time. Today's Europe comprises core and semiperipheries on the continent and peripheries in its colonial possessions.

Using an interdisciplinary theoretical matrix and exemplary cases of peripheral, forgotten Europes whose global spatiality is captured by the term "European elsewheres", we have drawn attention to the understudied ways in which both the European Union and the borders of the European continental mass – two overlapping, yet not synonymous understandings of Europe – continue to be closely interlinked with and crisscrossed by territories such as Anguilla, New Caledonia, and Mayotte and their inhabitants. Actively forgotten through the coloniality of memory characteristic of dominant EU discourse and research, these overseas countries, territories, and outermost regions offer a prime vantage point for upending dominant understandings and representations of Europe. We have chosen examples from the Caribbean Sea, the South Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean, whose global character comes not only from their spatial dispersion across several of the world's oceans but also, and maybe even more so, from the structural similarities their histories and non-sovereign presents exhibit despite their distinct – and distant – locations. These European elsewheres, therefore, signal the need to address Europe's structural links to its "last colonies" (Connell and Aldrich 2020; see also Adler-Nissen and Gad 2013) through a sociology of systematic colonial continuities – rather than view them as sociologically irrelevant anomalies in a world of sovereign nation-states for which European nations have long served as

models to be imitated. This critical task has remained unaddressed by unconnected, conventional sociologies of space and Europe.

European elsewheres and their corresponding forgotten borders, we have argued, offer the magnifying glass needed for making the current implications of Europe's long-standing colonial entanglements and spatial globality both visible and legible. While the prevalent political and societal struggles differ from context to context – ranging from the question of how to deal with Brexit-induced border shifts in the interconnected Caribbean (Anguilla) to the promise of a sovereign future (New Caledonia) and life-threatening migration attempts at the shores of the EU's latest outermost region (Mayotte) – they all share the legacy of falling out of the sociological and media spotlight. It is time to illuminate these European elsewheres and the battles fought by their inhabitants.

Notes

1 Overall, the United Kingdom currently administers 14 overseas territories, but only 13 of them were previously counted as overseas countries and territories within the EU framework, excluding continental Gibraltar.
2 As of 2019, the Kanak represent 41.2 percent of the population, whereas Europeans represent 24.1 percent. 11.3 percent is composed of "several communities" (meaning mixed-race), 8.3 percent of Wallisian or Futunian origin, and 7.5 percent of "other communities" (e.g., Indonesians, Tahitians, Ni-Vanuatu and Vietnamese). The remaining 7.5 percent did not indicate an ethnic community or indicated Caledonian. See https://www.isee.nc/population/recensement/communautes.

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9 The Refiguration of the Social and the Re-Configuration of the Communal

Walter D. Mignolo

I

In the invitation to contribute to this volume, I was asked to address "epistemologies beyond methodological nationalism and conceptual occidentalism" within the general frame of the volume to "scrutinize the social through a processual and relational perspective which is connected to the concept of re-figuration," assuming "that these re-figurations are radically linked to shifts in spatial and temporal regimes." I am pleased to address some of these issues. But before moving onto the specific issue of "processual and relational perspective," which is connected to the concept of re-figuration of the social, my argument walks toward "the re-configuration of the communal."[1] The re-configuration of the social presupposes the frame of Western cosmology while the re-configuration of the communal presupposes the frame of non-Western cosmologies, in this case the cosmology of Nahuatl speakers, known as the Aztecs. However, these two cosmologies since 1500 are no longer independent of each other. They are entangled in a power differential: Western cosmology destituted Aztec cosmology. Destituted but did not erase. Today, we in the planet are witnessing the reconstitution of destituted cosmologies. Border thinking and border gnoseology are a necessity to delink from the pretended territorial universality of Western cosmology.

Limiting this vast domain to the human species, biological research has shown that we, members of the humankind, have sense organs located in the inner ear that allow us to orient ourselves regarding directions, places and contours.[2] Besides, we members of the humankind have become languaging animals at some point in our history. Since our ancestors brought about, and we today ourselves are effecting, the sophistication in the use of our mouth to articulate complex meaning through sounds (a coded degree of sounds above those emitted by birds, for example, to connect themselves) and the use of our hands to inscribe signs on flat surfaces (stone, trees, paper) by means of instruments that extended the use of our hands (stone carving tools, feather and ink, typewriters or computers), the animals of the humankind cultivated storytelling to make sense of themselves/ourselves, the universe and life on planet earth. There is no evolution in this domain. We are doing the same as our ancestors. There is, however, an enormous expansion of our skills of languaging by mouth and hands and to create instruments in both spheres

(from complex conversations to sophisticated theories and from stone carving tools to computers).

I.1

The trust of these observations is the following: through the years of *Homo sapiens* walking on the planet, the biological needs of living together (e.g., ants, bees, llamas, fish) in language and storytelling motivated the creation of particular coded languages (sounds and visual inscriptions) that emerged from the human capacity for languaging. Storytelling made sense of life and the universe, it did not *represent* life and the universe: storytelling was and is a tool of world-making rather than a representation of a world already made. Therefore, particular languages (Nahuatl, Wolof, Aymara, German, English, Mandarin, Arabic, Urdu, etc.) have their own self-communal organization: phonetic, syntax and semantic. There is no one single language in the human capacity for languaging that could supplant any other. If the languages are coded on the bases of the human organism capability for languaging, then *space, time, society, human, animal,* etc. are all regional concepts that could be translated to other languages of Western cosmology (or civilization if you wish), but do not translate equally well to, say, Mandarin or Urdu or Aymara. Conversely, whatever signs people speaking those languages have to refer to what in the restricted universe of Western cosmology is referred as space, time, society, etc., will not translate equally well either. One key example: in the majority of coded languages beyond the Western vernaculars based on Greek and Latin, the intermingling of all the living has not been limited by the wall that separates us, the West, from what in the Western languages is called "nature." There is no "nature" beyond Western vocabulary. Nature is not an entity semiotically *represented*, but it is an invention of specific semiotic world-making coded in specific languages and cosmology. The same argument obtains if we consider the concepts of *space, time and society*.

To make this argument more explicit I will elaborate on the cosmology of ancient Aztecs to argue that for the "re-configuration of the communal" today, space and time do not have the same relevance and/or meaning that space has in the "re-figuration of the social.' I use here "re-configuration of the communal" as a decolonial concept/expression and I take "re-figuration of the social" to be a European modern, or perhaps post-modern, expression. I do not intend to supplant or replace the latter from the former. They coexist and my argument shall be read keeping both the coexistence in mind and the power differential that entangles and differentiates the decolonial (a Third World concept) from the modern/postmodern (a First World concept). Consequently, instead of space and time, I will elaborate on Nahuatl *tlacauhtli,* with the following caveat.

My argument is not a decolonial interpretation of Aztec cosmology but learning from Aztec cosmology to build a decolonial argument on the re-configuration of the *communal*. The argument delinks and confronts the hegemony of Western concepts of space, time and society (e.g., the *social*). It is not an *anti*-argument but, on the contrary, *in support* of building pluriversality (truth in parenthesis) and

delinking from universality (truth without parenthesis). Reversing the directional-ity of the argument (from object to subject rather than from subject to object) is crucial to understand my argument: I will be addressing the re-configuration of the communal today, grounding myself on what is known about Mesoamerican cosmology both by scholars in the field and the lived experience of Indigenous thinkers who know and sense it through the transmitted memories inscribed in the languages of their ancestors. Section IV is devoted to this issue.

II.2

To take this step, I decolonially reconstitute the concept of gnoseology to displace (but not replace) the modern concept of epistemology. On this I am following Valentin Y. Mudimbe's steps in his classic book. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (1988). The meaning of *gnosis* in Ancient Greek, Mudimbe stresses, is related to *gnosko* which means to know, inquiry or wary of knowing. It is distinguished from *doxa* (opinion) and *episteme* (founda-tions of philosophical and rational regulation of knowing). The meaning I gave to gnoseology in this context is un-disciplined (detached from any specific discipline) and decolonial following up on Aníbal Quijano's (1992) formulation of decolo-niality confronting colonial modernity: in this frame the decolonial task engages "epistemological reconstitution." Thirty years later, two aspects of this formulation became clear to me. First, that by "epistemological reconstitution" Quijano was not aiming at "fixing or repairing" epistemology but delinking from it (*desprendernos*, was his term). His call for epistemological reconstitutions was stated in the same essay in which he was claiming to extricate (to delink) ourselves from modernity/rationality. Secondly, I understand that his call for epistemological reconstitution was a demand to start from someplace else and "look at" epistemology as a con-cept that belongs to Western philosophy. For that reason, I found in *gnoseology* an anchor to step outside of epistemology. In fact, epistemology destituted gno-seology from the theory of knowledge and, in general, the term was destituted by Christianity and secular culture by highlighting the connexions of the word with an "heretic" facets of an anti-Christian organization in the second century BC. The history of the word and its usage is long and complicated.[3] What I take from Mudimbe is his move to displace philosophy by gnoseology: instead of writ-ing a report on African philosophy as he was invited to do, he ended up writing a landmark book on "gnosis, philosophy and the order of knowledge" in Africa (Mudimbe 1988). African languages, knowledges and ways of knowing did not fit into Western philosophical and epistemological demands. I am restituting, there-fore, the original meaning of the word, *gnosis,* to know, way of knowing to reduce epistemology (a limited way of knowing) to its own well-deserved dimension.

For Mudimbe, gnoseology was necessary for the reconstitution of African knowing and knowledges, destituted by the intrusion of Western philosophy and epistemology. For me, gnoseology is necessary to bring forward (reconstituting) knowledges and regions of knowing and wisdoms that epistemology and philos-ophy destituted in the process of constituting themselves as the gatekeepers of

universal knowledge. This self-fashioning came into being in two trajectories: one in the history of Europe itself where philosophy and epistemology were constituted by reworking the Greek legacy in the theological (Saint Thomas Aquinas) and secular spheres (Descartes, Kant). The second trajectory surfaced since 1500 in the European encounters with people they did not know existed: certainly these "unknown" people did not know about Greek philosophy and Christian theology; and, certainly, they had no need to. But of course, they have their languages, knowledges, ways of knowing and praxes of living equivalent and parallel to ancient Greeks and their Europeans contemporary. Nevertheless, Spaniards and Portuguese, followed by British, French and Germans considered that non-European people who did not know Greek philosophy, Latin and the Bible were epistemologically deficient and ontologically inferior.

Recently, the high representative of the European Union diplomacy made a remarkable "diplomatic" statement summarizing a deep-seated emotional belief: Europe is a garden and the rest of the world a jungle.[4]

It is precisely alluding to this second trajectory that Quijano addressed the question of the totality of knowledge in the essay mentioned above, observing *that any and all cosmologies presuppose the totality of their storytelling*. Western cosmology became a totalitarian totality impinging and destituting coexisting ones. Quijano called epistemic Eurocentrism the deep-seated belief that so eloquently summarizes Joseph Borrell. Consequently, Quijano *claimed* demanded and enacted epistemological reconstitutions from the exteriority (the jungle) of Western philosophy and epistemology (modernity/rationality in his vocabulary) and at the crossroads of Western cosmology (and subsequently philosophy and epistemology). The colonial exteriority and the millenarian Andean cosmology was destituted but not "killed."

II

With this caveat in mind, I move to address *space and the re-figuration* of the social from the perspective of *tlacauhtli*, and *the re-configuration of the communal*. What is *tlacauhtli*, many readers would ask? I could give you a translation, but a translation (as I noted before) will place me back in the territory from which I am delinking. I start with two anecdotes instead.

The first one is the story of Chapter 5 of *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* (Mignolo 1995). At the time of writing it, I had neither the vocabulary nor the conceptual frame that I outlined above; and I was not aware of Quijano's vision of the decolonial task. However, I had the sense, the intuition if you wish, that prepared me for the "eureka" when I encountered the concepts of coloniality and epistemological reconstitution. Part III of the book is titled "The Colonialization of Space," including Chapter 5 titled "The Moveable Center: Ethnicity, Geometric Projections and Coexisting Territorialities." It was an attempt to look at Western cartography, which is one area in which the Western totality of knowledge was more radically *constituting its own idea of space* by destitution of all previous and coexisting mental and/or graphic figurations, directions and territorial and celestial

delineations (e.g., the frontiers determined in the map in this case). The case in point was the cartographic destitution of Chinese design and management of directions and delineations in the well-known "map" of nested rectangles.[5] Since the sixteenth century, the circumnavigations of the planet created the conditions for the "mapamundi" (world map). Gerardus Mercator (1512–1594) and Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598) mapped the planet with all its land and water masses. It was the first time that members of the human species could have a visual diagram of the entire planet whether in the *globus terraqueus* and/or in the planiform rectangular disposition, since the horizontal surface of the planet are more extensive than the vertical ones. The specific ramifications of the Western colonization of Chinese sense and diagrams of directions and delineations, were twofold with a surprising result. The world map was a spectacular appropriation of *space* which also created the conditions for the re-figuration of planetary *time*: the establishment of the linear unfolding of time in the history of the human species. A few centuries later, Hegel would tell this story in his lessons in the philosophy of history. In one stroke, the map anchored the space and time of global history as told from the European perspective: the center of the world, the present of time and the management of the future. The totality of knowledge of a singular cosmology—and of space and time—became totalitarian.

II.1

I move now to the second and related anecdote that introduces the argument I have announced: *tlacauhtli* and the re-configuration of the communal. Toward 2012, Daniel Esteban Astorga Poblete, a Chilean, was a graduate student at Duke. When he came, he was already well acquainted with the wide array of literature of the so-called "colonial period;" in the retrospective Latin America history, although Latin America was an invention of the nineteenth century as there was no Latin America in sight during the colonial period. The point is relevant for my argument. The invention of "Latin America" in the nineteenth century has two simultaneous consequences. In one of them, the theological frame of Western cosmology was introduced in the colonies by Spain and Portugal which, by the mid of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was displaced by the French and British versions of the same cosmology. On the other hand, First Nations and people of the African diaspora cosmologies were destituted once again, this time by the native creole and mestizo/a population. There is a question of multiple temporalities and decentered geographies in the sheer fact naming. The reference is the same but the meaning it is not. The morning star and the evening star both refer to planet Venus. Reference is the same, meaning is not.

Consequently, while *space and the re-figuration* of the social makes sense for the population of European descent in the Americas, then two corollaries derived from the previous observation require attention: on the one hand, the population of European descent in the Americas is an extension of Western cosmology with a significant power differential between Anglo and French America (the US and Canada) and Spanish and Portuguese America and the Caribbean. The US and Canada are

First World or developed countries. The rest of the Americas are Third World or developing countries, some with emerging economies. On the other hand, First Nations and the population of the African diaspora are not of European descent, and coexist (multiple chronologies, time) in their own cosmologies entangled in a power differential with the respective state they inhabit (multiple territorialities, space). If space and the re-figuration of the social are relevant in these situations, power differentials cannot be avoided. Power *differentials are constitutive of* the colonial differences—a technology of destitution—in all spheres of life and of inter-state relations.[6] The point here is that the African diaspora doesn't dwell in Latin America but in La Gran Comarca and First Nations dwell in Abya Yala. Only people of European descent dwells in America (Anglo and Latin). To have arrived at this point, gnoseological (knowledge) and aesthetic (sensing) reconstitutions of epistemological and aesthetic destitution were necessary. I could not have made this argument from within the disciplinary regulations of epistemology and aesthetics. The "space" of Latin America has been redrawn, the *social* constituted and the First Nations and the Afro communal destituted. What you have here, in the multilayered history, is the constitution of the European imperial society (time and space) and the colonial destitution of coexisting chronologies and territorialities.

As the conversations unfolded around these and similar issues, one day Daniel came to the office and said something like, "Professor Mignolo, I realized that the Spanish did not colonize Aztec space because the Aztecs did not have space." And he continued, "the Spaniards colonized the Aztecs *Tlacauhtli.*" I realized that at that point Daniel had a thesis. And he really did, the title was: "La colonización del *Tlacauhtli* y la invención del espacio en el México colonial."[7] *Tlacauhtli* is generally translated as "space, capacity, something relinquished or left over."[8] The translation as "space, capacity, something relinquished or left over" could be understood both as "contour" (space, capacity) and "distance" (relinquished, left over), for if the Aztecs "did not have space" but it was invented *for them by the Spaniards describing them*, the Aztecs did not have a word equivalent to the Western word experience and concept of space. And that is fine. Europeans did not have a word like *tlacauhtli.* Hence, what happened in the first historical invasion of non-European praxis of living and thinking (the Spaniards first and then Portuguese French, Dutch and British) was the creation of the New World, and in subsequent invasions of Asian and African cultures and civilizations, was *the colonial figuration of the social* while destituting the *existing configurations of communal praxes of living and thinking.* Space destituted *tlacauhtli.*

This is one of the reasons why today the decolonial task at large consists of the *re-configuration of the communal* that has been destituted by the colonial figuration of the social, for if the Aztecs "did not have space," it follows that they "did not have society" either. However, they have a sense of directions of movement, a sense of monument building, a sense of the world above and the world below, and a sense of *vincularidad* (the *network,* in computing vocabulary) of all that there is (material and conceptual) that the energy of a living planet and the cosmos weave together. They did not have society, but they have a good sense of communal organization. The *altepetl* and the *calpulli* were words and concepts of their own

configurations of the communal (vincularidad among all the humans and life in the cosmos) and their praxis of living organized around the four directions of the earth (known as cardinal points, in Western vocabularies) as well as the constant flow of life in the cosmos and on earth. The configuration of Western societal destituted the communal in the name of Western modern theological rational first and then secular rational configurations of the social among human beings cut off from the energy of the cosmos (e.g., *nature*).

II.2

Let's then explore the Nahuatl perceptions of *directions* and *durations* in their con-figuration of the communal. To understand the destituted weaved *configurations* of the communal by the *configuration* of the Western social, it is necessary to imagine *re-configurations* of the communal parallel and coexisting with re-*configurations* of the social, in the same way that to imagine the re-configuration of the social requires understanding the existing configurations within the same cosmology that intents to be re-configured.

For the Nahuatl, directions and durations are common to all living organisms in the planet, including human beings, that can displace themselves/ourselves on land, water or air today as well as thousands and millions of years ago. In the West, *space and time* are two concepts singling out both biological cognitions organizing directions and durations and, among the humans, for measuring distances and the constant movement of the sun and the moon around the earth (geocentric), first, and the earth and moon around the sun, later (heliocentric). But also, for record keeping of past event or present transactions. Space and time are not onto-logically universal[9] or they are only considered universal by the speaker of certain languages embedded in the totalitarian totality of Western knowledge. Space and time are two words of Western vocabulary to name distances between things and/ or emptiness around things and to name durations and repetitions. If universal-ity needs to be addressed, what is universal are *directions* and *duration* (which are factored according to cosmologies, languages and local praxes of living) not the particular and regional vocabulary of one single cosmology to deal with and implant their own words for sense of direction and durations to other cosmologies. In this respect, it would be equally valid to talk about space/time intersections as to talk about *tlacauhtli.* Each vocabulary implies diverse universes of meaning rather than the universality of one vocabulary holding the privileges over non-Western languages and cosmologies. Since the invasion of the First Nations' territoriality in the sixteenth century to the invasion of other territorialities in Asia and Africa in the subsequent centuries, Western cosmology got entangled with the diversity of planetary coexisting cosmologies. But Western vocabulary became dominant without erasing, certainly, the vocabulary and memories of the speaker dwelling in invaded territorialities. While I am saying what I am saying, you have to keep in mind that I was schooled (emotionally and mentally) within Western cosmology. Mesoamerican cosmology, I have learned. Consequently, I began to question the limits and regionality of my own schooling, that I was taken as universals, when

I began to learn about other cosmologies and the power differentials that modernity/coloniality instills in all of us, caught in its spider web.

With these provisos in mind, I move now to the entanglement of Spanish (Western) and Aztec cosmologies. As mentioned above, I am not intending to propose a "new" interpretation of Aztec cosmology. On the contrary, Aztec cosmology is helping to highlight the regionality of Western concepts and experiences of space and time, a basic necessary step to understand what today is taking place as "re-configuration of the communal" and to distinguish it from the "re-figuration of the social." Let us, then, take the first step towards understanding the Nahuatl configuration of directions and duration and their relational weaving in/of the *tlacauhtli*. And the first step towards understanding Western re-configuration of the social through Nahuatl speakers' configuration of the communal.

In Figure 9.1 the marked direction goes from sunrise to sunset. Colors are attributed to each direction. Specific colors associated with directions varied according to the self-knowledge of the community. The sunrise and not the magnetic compass determines the priority of the Orient over the North. This orientation of cardinal points was common to every civilization in the planet before the magnetic compass. Allegedly, the magnetic compass for navigation was invented in China by the eleventh century. The West followed suit by the twelfth century. However,
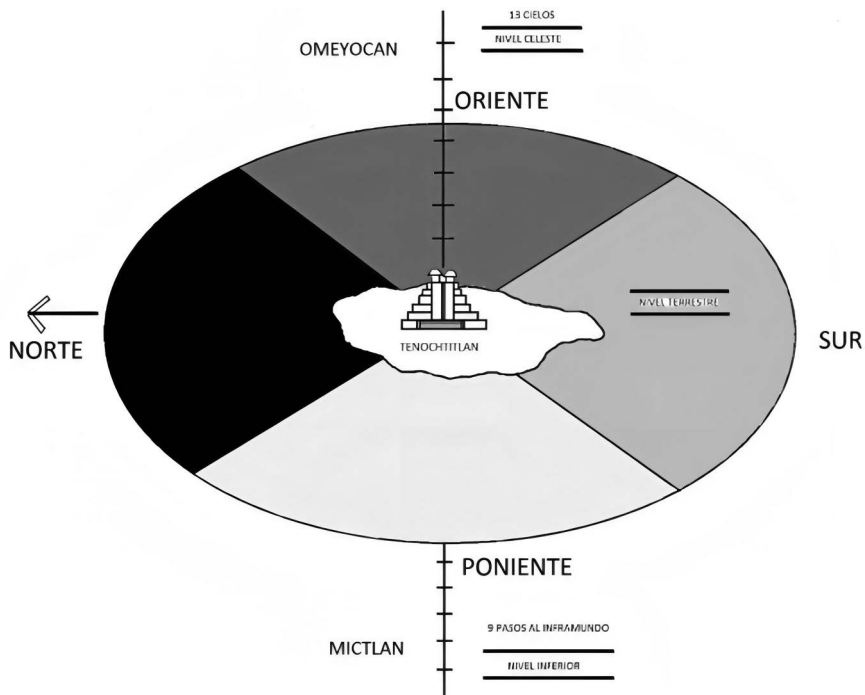
Figure 9.1 The four cardinal directions in Mesoamerican cosmology.[10]

in both cases, the Orient was the point of "orientation" in Chinese and Western cosmologies. The North replaced the East at the top of the cardinal directions when navigations and commerce became more relevant than cosmology.

- Direction: *East* (Tlapallan) Deity: Tlaloc; Color: Red, blood, generation of life Signs: *Reed*
- Direction: *North* (Mictlampa) Deity: Tezcatlipoca; Color: Black—regulates life and death, guardian, supporter, evaluator Signs: *Flint*
- Direction: *West* (Cihuatlampa) Deity: Quetzalcoatl; Color: Yellow—participated in the creation of the world, giver of wisdom Signs: *House*
- Direction: *South* (Huitzlampa) Deity: Huitzilopochtli; Color: Blue—the energy of war and sacrifice to maintain the life of the sun Signs: *Rabbit*

What we shall retain from this brief description are, on the one hand, the energies weaving the material and spiritual and, on the other, the colors weaving directions and durations. For most First Nation cosmologies, the energy of sunlight generates rain and germinates the land. The colors indicate also durations: the processes of seeding and harvesting, determined by the displacements (movement, *ollin)* of the sun and the moon and the transforming and mutation processes of being born, living and dying, indicated in the directions to the right and the left of the sunrise and sunset. Finally, each direction is identified with a name, the name of the energy and forces located in them. The names named energies, not gods or goddesses, although the energies that were distinguished as feminines or masculines permeate and coexist in all that there is in the world.

The cosmos was not (and it is not today either for the millions of First Nations people inhabiting Abya Yala) an entity to be measured and rendered in mathematical formulae. On the contrary, it was a constant flow of life generating, regenerating and crossed by distinct energies and events associated with each direction and duration. The solar and lunar "calendars" were not determined by numbers of durations and directions (distances) but by the Aztecs lived experiences in the planet and the cosmos. In other words, the Aztecs had neither space nor gods, but complex markers: colors, types of energies and names of energies, that the Spaniards called "gods." It was only by the believer in a cosmology governed by one God that, according to their own/our limited experience, everyone in the planet *has to have* God, and if they don't they were destituted and relegated to the exteriority of the totalitarian totality. Spanish missionaries (and later on, Western European colonizers) had difficulties in understanding how a river or a mountain could be a God since for Western Christians, God was conceived as an invisible but fixed entity. So that the constant flows of energies that populated First Nations cosmologies were beyond the idea that the cosmos is populated by things and entities, not by the invisible flow of energies. When ignorance is coupled with arrogance, both are detrimental for the life of/in the planet and, therefore, for human beings.

There is still another lesson from Mesoamerican cosmologies that escaped the colonizer attention and that nevertheless persists today. And that is the grammar of

non-Western languages. In Western languages, the grammatical marked component is the noun that names things, entities; in indigenous languages, as many other languages not derived from Greek and Latin, the verb is the marked grammatical component that underscores movement, flows and processes which are difficult to fix, measure and render in mathematical formulae. For that reason, the names and the colors assigned to each direction and energies vary, the cosmos and the planet move constantly, but also the communities who perceive and experience life in the planet and the cosmos are in constant flux. What remains constant is the quadripartite configuration and the marked directions of sunrise and sunset. Furthermore, the quadripartite configuration is the same for counting of the solar and the lunar cycles (e.g., calendar).

II.3

Let's return to Figure 9.1. As you see in Figure 9.1, each direction is also identified with a sign: *Reed, House, Flint and Rabbit*, while the proper names identify energies and forces: *Tlaloc Tezcatlipoca, Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli*. What do they mean? Mesoamerican cosmologies (Nahuatl and the diverse Mayan languages) had some features in common with other cosmologies in Asia and Africa, for example. In these cosmologies there are names to identify the origination of the universe. Before that moment there was void and emptiness. For the Greeks it was Chaos before the advent of Cosmos. In the Judeo-Christian narrative before the Genesis was emptiness and darkness. Beyond Judeo-Christian narrative, the proper name referring to the origination of what there is was not God, but proper names that could be forces or energies originating what there is. In Big Bang narratives there was an exponential expansion of the universe and extreme coldness. The Big Bang brought heat and light. What is relevant in many cosmologies is not the entity that generates the world but the void, emptiness, nothingness (chaos in Greek cosmology) out of which the world is created. In a nutshell:

> […] our inability to conceive of such a void is well captured in the book of Job, who cannot reply when God asks him (Job 38:4): "Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding." Our own era's physical theories about the Big Bang cannot quite reach back to an ultimate beginning from nothing—although in mathematics we can generate all numbers from the empty set. Nothingness as the state out of which alone we can freely make our own natures lies at the heart of existentialism, which flourished in the mid-20th century.[11]

In Nahuatl language the name for the energy that creates the world was *Teotl*. From this energy the cosmic duality emerged, called *Ometecuhtli* (translated as Two-Lords or the Lord of Duality) and *Omecihuatl* (Two Lady or Lady of Duality). Now we understand why the attribution was masculine where the sun rises and feminine where the sun sets. First, masculine and feminine are not opposite but amalgamated in a double complementary: both energies are Lords of the duality.

Feminine and masculine were not identified with "woman" and "man." And more importantly, it was not a singular feature of "humans" but of all living organisms on earth.[12] Imagine the disconcertment of Spanish missionaries facing something that for them was so difficult to understand because they were unable to concede that their way of thinking was not universal. So, they did translate and mutilate what they half understood. *All these observations are crucial but to understand that the re-configuration of the communal shall be distinguished from and cannot be subsumed to the re-figuration of the social.*[13]

The two moieties at the two extremes of sunrise and sunset (Figure 9.1) are markers of the generation and regeneration of life of all living organisms that regenerate themselves, including the organisms of the humankind. The other two moieties, at the right and left of the sunrise, indicate the life duration of living organisms, their living and dying. These four complementary moieties are not fixed, and are not entities, but rather are markers of constant flows and processes of the cosmos and of planet earth. They identified by the word *tlācatl* (*persons*), the living organisms that they (the kind of living organism to which the narrators) identified themselves. The concept of the person in Aztec (as well as other cosmologies) cannot be translated as "human" for "huma" are the *individuals* that Western cosmology (particularly Judeo/Christian) has been separated from "nature" and cajoled on abstract and measurable space and time. *Tlācatl* was traversed by three cosmic forces: *tonally, teyolia and ihiyotl. Tonally* was located in the head, *teyolia* in the heart and *ihiyotl* in the kidney. The three forces connect all the livings with the cosmos and among themselves because all living organisms are spirited (hence the Western concept of "animism") by these three forces, whose locations depend on the "body" (organism) of a given kind of organism.

II.4

But this not all. Let's take a look at Figure 9.2. In Mesoamerican cosmology there were two calendars, the Solar and the Lunar. Both were based in the 20 units (the *veintena* in Spanish) counted from sunrise to sunset (one *day* in Western vocabulary). The Solar calendar consisted in 18 cycles of the *veintena*, which totals 360 cycles from sunrise to sunset. Each minimal unit of the sun cycle has a name and when they repeat in the Western vocabulary they say "day" and they have a count of seven days. When the seven days repeat themselves four times, they call it "a month" and they have 12 of those cycles $7 \times 4 = 28$. They added five *useless days* for a total of 365 cycles. In the lunar calendar, there were 13 instead of 18 cycles, which totals 260 cycles of the moonrise to the moonset.

Here you see 20 signs, named the *veintena* (Spanish-name). Each sign names the unit of the cycle of the sun from sunrise to sunset. In Western cosmology this unit of time is named "a day" but, as you can begin to imagine, it would be a self-serving translation and simultaneous destitution of Aztec thought to say that each sign "means one day." Of interest for my argument is that the four signs allotted to each of the four directions just described are the four signs at the center of the rectangular distribution of the *veintena*: *House, Rabbit, Reed and Flint.* Which

cipactli crocodile	ehecatl wind	calli house	cuetzpalin lizard	coatl snake
miquiztli death	mazatl deer	tochtli rabbit	atl water	itzcuintli dog
ozomahtli monkey	malinalli grass	acatl reed	ocelotl jaguar	cuauhtli eagle
cozcacuauhtli vulture	ollin motion	tecpatl flint	quiahuitl rain	xochitl flower

Figure 9.2 The signs of the days.[14]

means that the four signs are at once markers of directions, distances and delimitations as well as of durations and repetitions. The *veintena* was multiplied by 18, a number determined by observing the sun's displacement in the sky and the turning points of what in Western perception are identified as "equinox" and "solstice." It would have been obvious to any attentive observer that the variations between cold and heat and the inter-process of heat moving to cold and cold moving to heat (complementary *vincularidad*), recurrently happen characterizing four durations that in the West are called "seasons." For our ancestors of the human species the four seasons were of great relevance to harvest and to other basic needs of everyday life. Now, it so happens that the four said signs are simultaneous markers of direction ("space" in Western vocabulary) and of specific durations and repetitions ("time" in Western vocabulary). Therefore, we begin to see why the number four in the *four directions* and why the number four in *four durations* that in the West are called "four seasons." There is a movement (*ollin*) that connects and interrelates the four directions with the four durations. *Tlacauhtli* bypasses space and time as *ollin* installs the flows (vascularity and complementarity) over and between the entities (things). If Martin Heidegger would have been a *tlamatini* (wise person, generally translated as "philosopher"), he would not have written *Being and Time*, even less *What is a Thing?* (Heidegger 1967).

Daniel explained his understanding of *tlacauhtli* to me like this:

> The way *tlacauthli* word is understood is through a conjunction of differ-
> ent elements: time, space, movement, force and balance. All of this helps to
> explain the cosmography of the Central Valley of Mexico. Those elements
> would appear on the "maps." Hence, each chapter tried to see how balance,
> movement and force are presented.[15]

There were not "things" in that cosmology since what there is in constant flow
and in inter-relations. If a "thing" is necessary that will be the always-changing
and moving "energy" that cannot be (a)trapped with mathematics and measure-
ments. Daniel used the terms of "space" and "time" to explain this to me; I am
using instead directions, place and delimitations instead of space and durations and
repetitions instead of time.[16] In any event *tlacauthli* translated as "space" would be
a severe destitution of Aztec thought. However, I understand that space and time
in Daniel's description of *tlacauhtli* implies that they are just two aspects of *tla-
cauthli* or that *tlacauthli* is beyond space and time. Hence, the Aztecs did not have
space truly and, therefore, the re-configuration of the communal cannot be reduced
to the re-figuration of the social. Each of them belongs to a different cosmology.
However, today these cosmologies are entangled in a clear power differential.
The enduring entanglement originated during the Spanish invasion of Abya Yala
and remained through subsequent Western understanding—with the exception of
works mentioned in footnote 10—of what the Aztecs were doing and what they had
rather than on their thoughts.

II.5

There is still more. Let's take a short cut. If you multiply the *veintena*, 20
units × 18 units, you end up with 360 units. I am not sure yet how the number
18 was established, but the result of the multiplication is close to what in the
West is considered one year. But not quite: they needed still five more units to
count the duration for the sun and the moon to complete a cycle in which they
would re-appear and follow the same route that they followed 365 units before.
The Aztecs found these five days following their own logic. Let's take a look
at Figure 9.3.

The lunar calendar (260 cycles of the moon) coincides with the period of regen-
eration of life, from the moment the spark of life enters the ovum of an organism of
the human animal until the newborn leaves the ovum and enters the world. In the
West this is a nine-month cycle (approximately 270 days). Western calendar sub-
sumed the sacred into the solar/business cycle of 12 months. The Western calendar
privileges male over female organisms.

Here we see the *veintena* shown in a circle rather than in horizontal and verti-
cal alignment as in Figure 9.2. In a sphere there is no privileged place, unlike the
vertical center-line in Figure 9.2. In Figure 9.3 the four signs of the directions are
distributed equitably in the circle. Let's do a count starting from *Reed*, the sign of

Figure 9.3 The *veintena*.[17]

the sunrise direction, moving counter clockwise, from *Reed* to *Flint*, then from *Flint* to *House* (named "Temple" in this diagram), and then from *House* to *Rabbit*. And finally, from *Rabbit* to *Reed*. The count between each of the four signs of the four directions is five. So those are the five units (without names) needed to reach the 365 units of duration for sunrise to repeat the trajectory that happened 365 units before. Furthermore, looking at Figure 9.1 we see that the four directions join at the center. It reads: *order and equilibrium*. Order and equilibrium determined their philosophy of life: living for the Aztec was not to "pursue happiness" but to maintain order, equilibrium and balance because of the *slippery earth in which they/we live* (Burkhart 1989; Purcell 2017). An horizon that today is orienting the political re-configuration of the communal captured in expressions such as *Sumak Kawsay and Suma Quamaña* (see Section IV). Five is the number of the four cardinal points plus the center (*order and equilibrium*) and the number of Suns in the foundational storytelling known as *The Legend of the Fifth Sun,* whose most outstanding

narrative was told in what is today known as *La Piedra del Sol,* which can be admired in the Museo de Antropologia in Mexico City.

Two caveats before taking another step. My description would have been easier if I used the words "day" to name the *veintena* and "month" to name the number 18 multiplied by 20 to reach 360 units. And if I used "year" referring to the 365 unit-cycle for the sun and moon to repeat their trajectories from rising to setting. But if I had done that, I would have *prevented you from thinking about Aztec thought* and secured your comfort by translating a complex cosmo-vivencia and the constant flow of life into days, and years, and weeks and months; that is a concept of "things," static things, that dispenses with relationality. That is not what the Aztecs were thinking. Their own configurations of the flows (movements (*ollin*)) of distances, directions and delineations was neither based on measurements (hours, months, years) nor on scales. When Daniel told me that the Aztecs "did not have space" I concluded that if that was the case, they "did not have time either." And more so: they did not need them. Their reckoning of durations and repetitions was entrenched with locations, distance and delineations weaved with the flows and movements of earths and cosmos's energies. That is why they have names for different energies in constant movement (*ollin*), and they did not have gods to name. In Europe and for European readers, all of this may look as a curiosity or a topic for anthropology. For Nahuatl speakers, as well as many other First Nations of the continent, their own languages and cosmology is of the essence, it is a question of life and daily struggles with the imposition of Western cosmology by the mediation of people of European descent that control the state, the economy, the education, and have their European languages as national languages, from Canada to the South of Chile and Argentina. We could guess the same is the case for people in Asia and Africa.

In summary, Aztec's living experience and thinking (logic) was not based on measurements. The clock, known in the Renaissance (living aside the invention of the clock in China during the Tang Dynasty (608–907)) acquired prominence in the sixteenth century to measure something that doesn't exist and it was called *time*. Or it exists like Madame Bovary, a fictional existence. The clock created the idea of *time* that could be measured and that superseded the lived experience of *Chronos* in Western cosmology and shattered the idea of the *Movement* in Aztec's cosmology. Measured temporality displaced living chronology and the movements and flows of life. By extension, distances and directions began to be measured and the space was invented. Measurement of extensions or distance is not measuring space, which doesn't exist, but inventing a concept that could be sustained by measurement. The organic, so to speak, became increasingly mechanic. *Tlacauhtli* referred to a complex experiential organization of the praxis of living integrated to the cosmos and to the planet (Crosby 1996).

For these reasons, the materiality of human organism (body) was correlated with cosmic energies and to the *veintena*, as well as the counting of both the solar calendar (the cycle of 365 units) and the moon calendar (260 units) obtained by multiplying the *veintena* by 13 (20 × 13 = 260). Why 13? It is not clear. Some interpretations suggest that it was related to the 13 skies. Others think that the 13
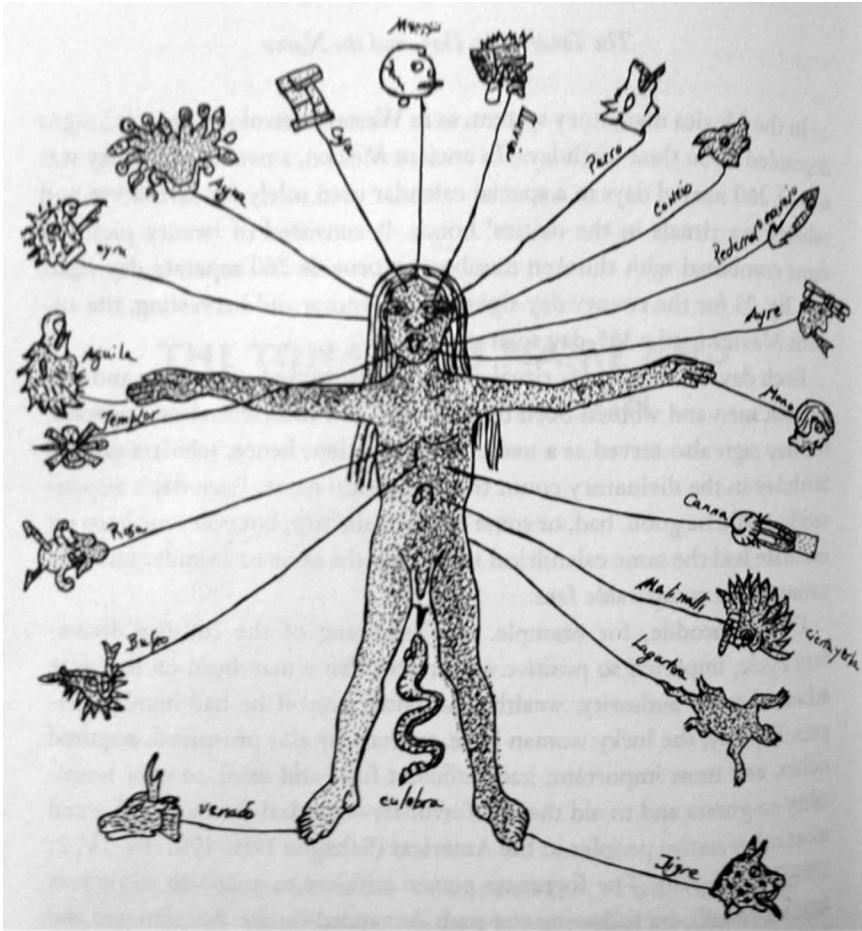
Figure 9.4 The deep-rooted interrelations (not a separation, like in Western cosmology) between the animal human organism and the cosmos.[18]

skies above and 9 skies below earth was a Christian rendering following Dante Alighieri's cosmology. Or perhaps because already having the *veintena* as the basic unit of counting the number of the sun cycle from sunrise to sunset, 13 was the number needed to multiply by the *veintena* in order to reach a cycle in which the number of units in this case from the moon rising and setting, accounts for the duration of pregnancy in the generation and regeneration of life. Be as it may what is relevant in this configuration is that the energies and spirituality connected with the cycles of the life of the organism (body) are determined by identifying energies connecting with the cosmos. The signs of the *veintena* were correlated to the organism of every *tlācatl*, which connected the organism with earth and the cosmos (Figure 9.4), which was mainly the function of the moon calendar. The cellular autopoietic working of the organism cannot be separated from the astronomic solar

and lunar cycles. It is similar to Indian and Chinese cosmologies, and certainly to the wheel of life among all First Nations in the Americas.

All of which correlates with the three forces mentioned before: *tonalli*, located in the brain (the organ brain, not the mind), *teyolia* in the heart and *ihiyotl* in the kidney. These three energies animate the body which is also correlated with each of the signs of the *veintena*. *Tonally* is neither the soul nor the mind. Its universe of meaning is framed in Mesoamerican's cosmology, not Western although as I mentioned they are entangled. However, the re-configuration of the communal has to deal with the entanglement and the power differential.

III

Aztecs and Europeans—between 1519 and 1530 in Mexico, to pick up a date—were not of course the only people inhabiting the planet in that period. But in Anahuac (Aztec's territoriality) the Western conception of time and space destituted the Aztec's *tlacauhtli,* their own conception of their living experience of the planet and the cosmos. The denial of and destitution of *tlacauhtli* according to "our spatiality and temporality" was a double destitution: one destitution saw "them" in the past of history, and in the second their own sense of living was destituted. The entanglement subsisted. Current conceptions of space and time owe much to Kant, in spite of the fact that Henry Lefebvre and David Harvey connected on the other side of Immanuel Kant, space with capitalism. Lefebvre noted that space is not something that is there but, rather, is *produced* (Lefebvre 1992; Harvey 2006). In Kant's vocabulary the question was not its production but the *representation* of something that doesn't have an ontic existence. Kant said:

> Space is not an empirical concept which has been derived from outer experiences. For in order that certain sensations be referred to something outside me (that is, to something in another region of space from that in which I find myself), and similarly in order that I may be able to conjuring them up as outside myself and alongside one another, and accordingly as not only different but as in different places, the invention of space (space cannot be represented since it doesn't exist) must already underlie them [dazu muß die Vorstellung des Raumes schon zum Grunde liegen]. *Therefore, the representation* (of an idea in the vocabulary of Western cosmology) *of space cannot be obtained through experience from the relations of outer appearance; this outer experience is itself possible at all only through that representation* (A23/B38).[19]

In a way, Kant is not far from Lefebvre: space is not an existing entity but it exists in the act of *representing* (e.g., of inventing) it. Kant and Lefebvre agree in that space is a creation, as well as an invention, of the perceiver. However, both fall short in noticing that there is something yet unsaid: that space, created either by *representation* (Kant) or by production (Lefebvre), *is the way that Europeans named, conceived and theorized their own experience with directions, locations and contour and of durations and repetitions. One of the consequences of blending of the explanation with what is explained is that the explanation is taken to be*

what is explained disguising the fact that the explanation is what the enunciator of the explanation (individually or collective) thinks and/or believes the explained is. That blending coupled with Western expansion in all spheres of life and of naming, descriptions, storytelling and explanations in modern Western European languages, constituted the universality (or totality in Quijano's word) of knowing, established knowledge and ways of knowing. It was assumed that their own enunciation was universal (whatever was named and described was assumed to be what it was, and not what they thought and believed it was) which led them to believe that what people outside of Europe thought of themselves, of the European intruders and of their own praxis of living, was what people outside of Europe thought about their own praxis of living. Lefebvre was aware of the Aztecs' cosmology and respectful of the difference. Kant was aware also of the contemporary inhabitants of the planet but did not show much respect. Lefebvre's respectful attitude toward the Aztec's "production of space" was nothing else than Lefebvre's *belief* of how Aztec space is produced. It was neither what the Aztecs did nor what they thought out their organization of distance, orientations, repetitions and transformations.

Lefebvre's approach to how space is sensed was based on three axes: the perceived space of a daily praxis of living; the conceptual or theoretical space of cartographers, urban planners, and developers; and the meta-discourse that could transcend both the perceived and the lived space. He quotes Magritte as one of his examples and he approached and understood Aztec's "production of space" from this triad. Sidelining *tlacauhtli* (or perhaps not aware or ignoring it) Lefebvre did the same as the Christian missionaries did in the sixteenth century and German, French and British travelers in the nineteenth century: to assume that their own regional perception of the world was what the other people did and if did not do they had to be civilized and brought into Western cosmology. My learning from the Aztecs and current thoughts of First Nations intellectuals in the Americas allows me to imagine that reading Lefebvre's (or Harvey's) assumptions in their theoretical constructions of space tells me that they have eliminated the cosmological dimension and consequently reduced the production of space to the cosmology of Western modernity and in relation to capitalist economy. Aztec economy was not capitalist, it was rather like most of the economies around the planet at the time regulated upon principles of sustainable life (not sustainable development), of balance and equilibrium. If we look back to Figure 9.1, we see that the center is occupied by the "order and equilibrium" of *tlacauhtli.* That was the goal of living on a slippery earth, as the expression goes.[20]

To imagine, think and act upon—the one hand—on the *re-figuration of the social considering space and*—on the other—on *the re-configuration of the communal considering the cosmic conception of life that Aztecs conceptualized in the tlacauhtli* does not imply to "become Aztec." It means to recognize that the regionality of Western concepts of time has destituted what today is becoming more and more relevant to *the reconfiguration of living in the planet.* The reconfiguration of the communal is one option under way. There are many alternatives to what the mainstream claim that there is no alternative to capitalism and democracy. If there were not alternatives to capitalism and democracy, then it

would be the end of life for all living organisms in the planet. Think as one example, "nourriture." Zilkia Janer puts it succinctly: "Nature is the source of human subsistence but the transformation of nature into food is a cultural process that is not independent of power relations" (Janer 2007). The separation of the body from the cosmos, as well as the mutation of the body as organism into the body as machine,[21] was part of the technology of measurement of measurement and of the Western conceptualizaton of space and time. However, wanting to eliminate the invented enemies too priority over convivial living, respect and listening to other needs. National security is valid for everyone, not just for Westerners. *Re-figuring the social today* cannot avoid working on the reconstitution of what was destituted. This task is also crucial in *the re-figuration of the communal*. But the second cannot be reduced and absorbed into the first, unless what is intended is to preserve the coloniality of knowing and being inaugurated in the sixteenth century.

IV

IV.1

I close the argument with some references to ongoing labor of thinking/doing to remove the layers of the global dominance of languages and the corresponding models (aural, written, visual) to re-configure the communal. As scholars, our influence in the sphere of the State, inter-State relations, financial and economic designs, and technological innovation to serve the economy and the States, is limited. Our potential lies in the transformation of the public sphere, confronting the corporative and official mass media. Space and the re-figuration of the social is pegged to Western cosmology, not only in Europe but wherever in the planet the cosmology and its derivation has made its inroad. Mexican society at large is framed in Western cosmology, but the Zapatistas and indigenous communities in Southern Mexico are keeping alive Nahuatls's and Maya's legacies. Nevertheless, concepts like *tlacauhtli* and equivalent concepts in non-Western languages to name and conceive territoriality beyond the State territory, are unavoidable today the re-configuration of the communal. The restitution of non-European cosmologies in the corresponding languages are following today two paths: one is the intramural reconstitutions of the communities living in and speaking their own languages. Indigenous thinkers in Ecuador and Colombia call that thinking and doing *intra-cultural* and the Afro-Ecuadorian and Colombian *casa adentro* (in-house). The second path takes place in the domain of disobedient States (e.g., the nation doesn't participate in the inter-national relations of the state) re-configuring their present by reviving their own past, not the past of Western civilization and knowledges. Entanglement, I underscore, is unavoidable at any level, the acting of the political society beyond the State and the disobedient States in the inter-state system. The first path is decolonial at large, in its planetary diversity and in the public sphere. The second path is dewestern at large in its planetary inter-state relations. The Ukrainian situation today is the tip of the iceberg and a manifestation of the forces

of de-Westernization that the West (OTAN, US, EU) are desperately attempting to "contain."

Two examples of ongoing undertakings *re-configurations* come to mind. One is the reconfiguration of the communal in the public sphere and the other is the reconfiguration of the cifilizational among inter-state relations. Both are overcoming nation-state. While "considering space for the re-figuration of the social" may be relevant within the local Western cosmology, whether in Europe itself or in non-European countries whose governments, education and official languages are pegged to colonial legacies, the re-fituration of the communal and civilizational ¨spaces¨ are relevant for in the areas of the planet that have endured the devastating consequences of Western modernity.[22]

However, inter-state re-configuration of the civilizational (e.g., de-Westernization) introduces a significant variation for "considering space" in the inter-state relations and in the modern/colonial hemispheric partition East–West. This partition was introduced in Western vocabulary in the sixteenth century: the cartographic invention of Indias Occidentales and Indias Orientales first and of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres later divided the planet according to Western imaginary. Furthermore, the adaptation of the nation-state model of governance outside of Europe since the nineteenth century in the Americas, and later on in Asia and Africa, introduced significant alterations to existing local forms of governance and praxes of living. The nation-state form of governance outside of Europe impacted regions differently. During the Cold War, imperial colonial settlers were replaced by local settlers of European of European descents. That is, by the natives of the land where modern/colonial nation-states were formed: in Asia, Africa and, during the nineteenth century, Latin America. All of this meant the destitution of the *communal* and the *constitution* of the social in former colonial territories. Furthermore, there are civilizational histories and formations that were never colonized by settlers but did not escape coloniality. Four states today are in this category, and they are precisely those states that have initiated the conversation on their civilizational past to be reenacted in the present (de-Westernizers) rather than the affirmation of a national present that has destituted their civilizational past. These four states are China, Russia, Iran and Turkey (and perhaps India). Whatever your or my opinion may be on whether this is "good" or "bad" is beyond the point. Since it is an historical unfolding the irreversible mutation of curent nation-states into civilizations-states, the refiguration of the Westerm social in local histories disturbed by modernity/coloniality is losing its original attraction. All of this, no doubt, is impacting the idea of "space and the social" manufactured in and by Western modernity and maintained by cultural postmodernity and political/economic to preserve Western privileges.

IV.2

As for the *re-configuration of the communal*, three major concerns are land, knowledge and education, rather than space.[23]

Land: Since the infamous Spanish *Requerimiento,* land dispossession by force rhetorically and argumentatively justified, was a consistent procedure of settler colonialism around the planet to figure and consolidate their own concept of space and time by dispossession and appropriation of land regarding space and by denying coevalness to the people of two coexisting civilizations and cultures. The Western belief in their rightfulness and in the wrongness of everything else (e.g., the "garden" and the "jungle") is ingrained in the subjectivity and intersubjective relations of Westerners, either in Europe as well as the supporters and believers of Eurocentrism in the former colonies, or in the U.S. and its allies beyond Europe. The historical details are particular to each case and region but the logic was and still is similar across the planet and through the centuries: Western concepts of space and time were consolidated in tandem with processes of dispossession, appropriation and destitutions in the name of salvation and betterment of the people dispossessed and destituted. The logic of coloniality was, and still is, the underlying technology of dispossession. Coloniality is not over, it is all over, to borrow an expression of one my former students. Stories and histories about the settlers' use of *their law* to legalize transactions that were not clearly understood by people whose communal configurations were based on principles and regulations alien to Western law, ended up on the losing side of the agreement. Neal McLeod of the Cree nation in Canada refers to "spatial exile":

> Exile involves the removal of people from their land. Politically, ideologically and economically. Indigenous nations have often been overwhelmed by either the former colonial settlers followed by their descendants (Latin America) and then by the formation of the modern/colonial nation-states ruled by native elites (Asia and Africa). One could call this the colonization of indigenous being (of Indigenous worldview and life-world) and the destitution of communal praxis of living, thinking, doing. It is the imposition on an ancient people of a new, colonial order and new way of making sense of the world. The effects of this spatial and spiritual exile are devastating, as the alienation exists both in our hearts (spiritual exile) and in our physical alienation from the land (spatial exile).
>
> (McLeod 2013)

Neal McLeod is a Cree and Swedish. He grew up on the James Smith Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. He uses the word "space," which is not a word from his native Cree language, but a word from the language of the settler. While there is nothing wrong using the word, non-Indigenous readers should remember that McLeod is talking about something else when he uses the word "space." In his narrative "space" signifies in the universe of meaning of Cree's cosmology, not of Western's cosmology. McLeod is appropriating the word. That is how border thinking works. When he talks about being removed from the land, physically and spiritually because the land for Cree and all First Nations is not a commodity but the sacred source of living. *Land* is not a *space*, an extension, a thing: it

is the union of the cosmic energies with all living organisms including humans. Some Westerners today are learning from Indigenous wisdom and questioning the pretended singularity and exceptionalism of Western narratives. The meaning of *land* to Indigenous population did not escape Fanon's attention while in Algeria. Although for the African diasporic people the land has a different meaning, he did not fail to notice that. "For a colonized people the most essential value, because [it is] the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity" (Fanon 2003). *Land*, not *space*, is of the essence to the *re-configuration of the communal* (Vuh 2011).

Knowledge and Education. Although these two categories are connected, each of them has life of their own, I condense them into one. Both, together with land, are the movers of communal re-configuration. The category "space" is irrelevant in non-Western languages, memories and praxis of living, until Western invasions, as Astorga Poblete argued in his dissertation. During the colonial period in the Americas (1500–1750), knowledges and education were implanted by European settlers. Universities, school, convents were created, teaching in Spanish, Portuguese and Latin. Indigenous languages were destituted from the public sphere and demoted to the families and separated indigenous communities. While in Indigenous cosmologies *land* means life and spirituality, *knowledge* and *education* are the necessary component of spirituality, to secure the correlation of life with the cosmos. Geometry, measurement and classifications are not necessary for living, but are necessary to control and dominate. McLeod quotes Smith Atimoyoo, the first director of the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College, when Atimoyoo stresses the significance of knowing who they (First Nations) are: "It is very important that we, as Indian people, realize that we must learn to know who we are and what we should be doing." "Knowing who we are" is a telling statement: coloniality disrupted the long continuity of who their ancestors were, sending them to the zone of non-being. French and British colonialism in Canada, and the global logic of coloniality, arrived, invaded imposing their language and education to remove them from their land.

In Ecuador the *Pluriversity Amawtay Wasi*, created for the reconstitution of knowledge and languages through education, which was forced to close by former settler president Rafael Correa, was driven by "learning to be," a statement echoing Atimoyoo's dictum. Amawtay Wasi was an Indigenous project of higher education, conceived and led for all, not just Indigenous people. In spite of the political destitution and budgetary suspension, Amawtay Wasi planted a seed that will continue to grow in Ecuador and in other countries. In the same vein, the impact and significance of Maori educator and activist, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, since the publication of her ground-breaking book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People* (1999), continues to be a benchmark achievement for the reconstitution of knowledges, languages and education and the re-configuration of First Nations communal. The annotated edition of the *Popol Vuth,* a narrative that for Maya-Quiche people is equivalent to the significance of the Bible for Christians, edited by Maya-Quiche scholar Sam Colop, is another sign-post in the ongoing re-configuration of the communal.[24] The colonization of being, in McLeod's words

quoted above, demands the decolonization of Western knowledge concurrent to the gnoseological and aesthesic reconstitutions of their own languages, knowledges and education. Decolonizing being is a political conceptual operation, that requires to delink from the centrality of the Individual (the Ego) in Western society towards the reconstitution of the communal living organisms of personhood interrelated with all the living on earth and the cosmic energies that makes of Earth what Earth is. The book by Aymara intellectual, activist and educator, Fernando Huanacuni Mamani's *Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir: Filosofía, Políticas, Estrategis y experiencias de los Pueblos Ancestrales* (2010) is a tour de force of gnoseological and aesthesic reconstitution of ancestral knowledges recast into the Bolivia political present. The book in its seventh edition is a telling sign of the issues at stake in the current processes of re-configuring the communal. Much has been said and debated in South America about Sumak Kawsay/Sumak Quamaña by non-Indigenous scholars and intellectuals.

While the debates had given non-Indigenous scholars, intellectuals and activists new admonitions to recast the limits of development (and indirectly of liberal democracy), non-Indigenous arguments are meaningful for the "re-figuration of the social" in the former Third World and dependent nation-states, and whether space is or is not explicitly invoked here, for Indigenous intellectuals like Mamani himself as well as other Aymaran scholars and activists like Simon Yampara, what is at stake is the reconstitutions of their own knowing and being. Next to the cases I just mentioned, when the Zapatistas understood that expecting sensible agreements with the State was a dead-end, they moved to the reconstitution of their own government (*Los caracoles*) and their own education (*La escuelita Zapatista)*, which reinforced their own autonomous territoriality.[25] To the Zapatistas's long-lasting experience (almost 30 years) re-configuring the communal hand in hand with the reconstitution of knowledge and being, we shall add the Kurds in Rojava. Take this brief description by Hawzhin Azeez: "Rojava is a women's revolution, Jineology is a woman's science," to better understand what I mean by ongoing processes of re-configuring the communal:

> The revolution in Rojava in western Kurdistan has been gaining international traction across leftist groups and organizations. Despite the immense socio-political gains and the colossal fundamental changes that have occurred within the spheres of gender, democracy, and ecology, the international media still regards Rojava from perspectives that are dominated by Eurocentric and Orientalist views of the Kurds, especially Kurdish female fighters. Less attention, even on the left, has been awarded to the ideology driving the women fighters forward, which has ensured a solid, democratic, and feminist foundation for Rojava. Media interest, if at all, has been in regard to radical democracy and its "anarchist" roots in connection with Murray Bookchin's *Libertarian Municipalism. It is, however, the ideology behind women's liberation known as Jineology (womenology) that is the force underpinning the radical democracy of Democratic Confederalism. This school of thought has been produced entirely by Kurdish women activists and fighters. It is*

this ideology, in connection with stateless democracy, which requires further exploration and attention in Rojava.[26]

Feminismo comunitario in the Mayan area, south of Mexico and Guatemala, is a telling parallel to Rojava. Lorena Cabnal formulation of "la sanación político-cósmica¨ (Cabnal 2020; Mayorga 2020) (cosmic-political healing) intersects "el territorio-cuerpo y el territorio-tierra" (territory-body and territory-land). Space is not the concern, but the blending of tierra-cuerpo (land-body) and cuerpo-tierra, to enact healing colonial wounds through the politics of "sanación politico-cósmica" (political-cosmic healing). In Cabnal's saying, if they touch my body, they touch my land and if they touch my land, they touch my body. Land and territoriality are amalgamated with the organism, the body, which takes us to the legacies of the Aztec weaving of the body with cosmic energies and the sings of the *veintena*. Briefly, when I asked Aymaran friend and scholar Marcelo Fernández Osco about their conception of space and time, he responded with a smile: *El Cielo, El suelo y El vuelo* (the sky, the ground and the fly). I took it to be an expression of experiencing cosmological and planetary conceptualization of everyday praxes of living. Which again takes us back to the ancestral flow of memory through generations, of what for the ancient Aztecs may have meant *tlacauhtli* in their daily sensing, living and knowing. The re-configuration of the communal that is underway today coexists with civilizational re-configurations and with Western needs to re-figure the social.

For the re-configuration of the communal, Western-inherited categories are of little help. It is imperative to relinquisth (delink from) them which means: a) to underscore their regional scope (which I attempted to do here) and to create categories emerging from the experiences of the destituted (which I illustrated in this last section).

Notes

1 The privilege of *time* over *space* and *movement* has been called into question by Indigenous scholars, public intellectuals and activists. See for instance, Jefferey D. Anderson, "Space, Time and Unified Knowledge: Following the Path of Vine Deloria." *Counterpoints. Indigenous Philosophies and Critical Education: A Reader.* 379, 92–108, 2011. The reference to time in Western scholarship (e.g., Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2004; Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time.* New York: Riverside Book, 2018 (a New York Times bestseller)), needs a modifier: the *On the Western Semantics of Historical Time* and *The Order of Time according to Western Physics*. The semantics and order of time that Kosellek and Rovelli are talking about are Eurocentric or North Atlantic-centered concepts of time.

2 Jakob von Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans. With a Theory of Meaning.* [1934] Translated by Joseph D O'Neil. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

3 Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion.* New York: Bacon Press, 1958. For my previous reflexion of *gnosis* see *Local Histories/Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000 (second print with a new Foreword, 2012). There is a significant bibliography in Spanish and

Italian on gnoseology and epistemology. In English, curiously, the bibliography on gnoseology focusses on mysticism.

4 You will be one engine of this multiple-layer identity-building. Believe me, Europe is a good example for many things. The world needs Europe. My experience of travelling around the world is that people look at us as a beacon. Why [do] so many people come to Europe? Are there flows of illegal or irregular migrants going to Russia? Not many. No, they are coming to Europe but for good reasons.

Keep the garden, be good gardeners. But your duty will not be to take care of the garden itself but [of] the jungle outside.¨

Opening Remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell at the Inauguration of the opening progam. October 13, 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-diplomatic-academy-opening-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-inauguration_en. Later on he apologized, for what he said. It doesn´t mean that he stop thinking that way.

5 Richard J. Smith, *Mapping China and Managing the World: Culture, Cartography and Cosmology in Late Imperial Times (Asia's Transformations/Critical Asian Scholarship)*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. http://www.myoldmaps.com/53-world-maps-in-china17.pdf. Cordell D. K. Yee, "Traditional Chinese Cartography and the Myth of Westernization. In *Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies, Volume Two, Book Two*. J. B. Harley and David Woodward, editors. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press: 1994. 170–202. https://press.uchicago.edu/books/HOC/HOC_V2_B2/HOC_VOLUME2_Book2_chapter7.pdf

6 Territoriality in First Nations cosmology is more than "territorial space" on the surface of the earth. Territoriality mean an undenied sense of sky, earth and underground as well as the spiritual relations with the perception of the cosmos from the location of a given territoriality. Similarly, Afro-descendants in South America (particularly Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil) build their territoriality as La Gran Comarca, disregarding the frontiers that separate one State from the other. Latin America, on the other hand, is "the space-territory" of each State and a supra-inter-state unit, the "space" of Latin America. See my *The Idea of Latin America*. London: Blackwell, 2006.

7 Daniel Esteban Astorga Poblete, *La colonización del Tlacauhtli y la invención del espacio en el México Central*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

8 *Tlacauthli* is difficult to translate into a modern languages. In the Aztec's cosmology Tlacauhtli is not a thing and entity but a compound of directions, horizontal and vertical, of movement, of durations, symbolic colors and names of the energies located in a given direction. Disconcerted Spanish called them "gods" missing the points that were not gods but the name of energies and forces, physical and spiritual, equivalents to the names that secular sciences (that is, decoded concepts of the earth and the universe) invent to identify the diversity of material energy and electric forces. In my understanding *tlacauhtli* could be best translated into the description of territoriality that I provided in endnote v.

9 Michel-Rolph Trouillo, abstract universals.

10 https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teotlalpan

11 Robert Kaplan, "What Is the Origin of Zero?" *Scientific American*. January 16, 2007. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/what-is-the-origin-of-zer/. Anthony Aveni, *Empires of Time. Calendars, Clocks and Cultures*. New York: Harper Collins, 1989, Part III.

12 A few basic readings for audiences not familiar with Mesoamerican cosmologies: Miguel Leon-Portilla, *Aztec Thoughts and Culture*, translated by Jack Emory Davis. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963; James Maffie, *Aztec Philosophy. Understanding a World in Motion*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2014. Ana Díaz, "El andar de los días en el calendario Azteca", *Cultura UNAM. Revista de la Universidad*, 2018. https://www.revistadelauniversidad.mx/articles/e6f36629-c8fa-4e23-a9a4-5cf92d702cb1/el-andar-de-los-dias. Ana Díaz, editor. *Reshaping the World. Debates on Mesoamerican Cosmologies*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2020.

13 A proposal for the re-configuration of the communal coming from the South American Andes could be found in Fernando Huanacuni Mamani, *Buen Vivir/Bien Vivir. Filosofía, políticas, estragegis y experiencias regionales andina.* Oxfam América y Solidaridad Suecia América Latina, 2010. https://www.escr-net.org/sites/default/files/Libro%20 Buen%20Vivir%20y%20Vivir%20Bien_0.pdf. In Southern Mexico, the almost 30 years of Zapatistas building is another decolonial case of re-configuring the communal. Pablo González Casanova, "Los 'Caracoles' zapatistas: redes de resistencia y autonomía", en revista Memoria, no. 176, México, octubre de 2003. 14–19.

14 https://blogs.uoregon.edu/mesoinstitute/about/curriculum-unit-development/calendars/

15 Email exchange, February of 2021.

16 For more details see Walter D. Mignolo, "(De) Coloniality at Large: Time and the Colonial Difference." In *The Darker Side of Western Modernity.* Durham: Duke University Press: 2011. 149–180.

17 https://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2014/celebrate_life.html

18 The Human body and the cosmos, Alfredo Lopez Austin, *Cuerpo Humano e Ideología*. Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de México, Lamina V.

19 Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Kant's View of Space and Time." 2016, 3.2. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-spacetime/

20 See Burkhart, *Slippery Earth*…

21 The *volte face* in the history of Western thoughts was consolidated during the Renaissance from Galileo to Descartes. Living organisms were reconceptualized as machines and the planet and the cosmos subjugated by the physical sciences. Medicine was redefined according to the body as a machine. See Keekok Lee, *The Philosophical Foundations of Modern Medicine*. London: Palgrave McMillan, 2012.

22 For readers not familiar with the issue the op-ed by Adrian Pabst provides a short summary: "China, Russia and the return of the civilizational state." *New Statement*. May 2019. https://www.newstatesman.com/2019/05/china-russia-and-return-civilisational-state. For a supportive argument see Zhang Weiwei, *The China Wave. Rise of Civilization State.* Hakenshack: World Century, 2011. For an adverse argument see Christopher Coker, *The Rise of the Civilizational State*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.

23 I addressed this issue in "Coloniality and Globalization: A Decolonial Take." In *Globalizations*, Special issue edited by Barrie Axford, October 2020. https://www.tand-fonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14747731.2020.1842094?needAccess=true

24 *Popol Vuh*, translated and annotated by Sam Colop. Guatemala: F&G editors, 2011 (Segunda edición).

25 On la escuelita Zapatista, see, for example, Plataforma Vasca in Solidaridad con Chiapas, "El sistema autónomo de educación Zapatista: resistencia, palabra y futuro." *Pueblos. Revista de Información y Debate*. 24 de Marzo de 2013. http://www.revistapueblos. org/blog/2013/05/24/14277/; On Los caracoles (Council of Good Government), Pablo González Casanova, "Los "Caracoles" Zapatistas: Redes de resistencia y autonomía." OSAL, Observatorio Social de América Latina, IV/11, 2003. http://biblioteca.clacso. edu.ar/clacso/osal/20110221035814/2d1casanova.pdf

26 https://www.documenta14.de/en/calendar/1014/-28-rojava-is-a-women-s-revolution-jineology-as-women-s-science

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10 Caste, Class and Space

Inequalities in India

Sanjana Krishnan

Introduction

Despite being largely agrarian and rural in terms of its demography, India's social system is not only produced in rural spaces. With the declining agriculture and dissolution of caste-based occupation, India has been evidently flourishing as a modern political society with a liberal Constitution that has institutionalized political democracy (Jodhka 2015). Despite these transformations, the caste system has persisted and evolved with the changes. One may argue that it has been institutionalized in present times due to affirmative action and quota system, while popular and mainstream media attribute the persistence of caste to electoral 'vote bank' politics that politicize and perpetuate the system. Caste however determines more than just a cultural reading of Indian society and is not limited to votes and quotas. It is a system of social and economic inequality that determines opportunities and values in India. Despite the constitutional[1] provision to eradicate caste as a social system, caste continues to matter. This has raised pertinent empirical political questions.

In this context this article aims to engage in the caste question by — (a) presenting how the reproduction of caste-based inequality related to spaces within India and (b) approaching caste as a system of ascribed hierarchy that is reproduced perpetually in relation to other systems of global inequality. This paper attempts to raise new questions related to the concept of space and thereby contributes to the recent and current scholarship and critical analysis of spatiality and space in the Indian context. In this chapter, the urban and rural will be considered as 'ideas' that revolve around concepts like nation, region, state, etc. (Roy 2015). I first discuss how the caste system is nurtured distinctively in the spatial contexts of the urban and rural realities of India. The impact of space on the notions of inequality and untouchability has specific regional norms and forms. The aim is to present spatiality not only as a repository of caste structures but also as a systemic influence in the production of social identities, i.e., touchable or untouchable. Dr. Ambedkar first dealt with caste and untouchability in India dismantling the notions of caste pride and status quo among the existing scholarship in India. In highlighting the genesis and mechanisms of caste in India, he presented the need to understand why caste is a system of inequality that needs to be annihilated structurally using legal, political and social means (Ambedkar 1936). Even though his work was pioneering and has

served as a reference for Indian and global scholarship on the topic, his ideas have rarely been connected to the idea of space. Here, I will discuss caste-led inequality as a socio-spatial phenomenon. Following this discussion, I locate caste as a system of inequality similar to Weber's (1946) idea of status and Bourdieu's (1984) notion of symbolic violence, for developing a comparative understanding of the system in the context of global inequalities, for the complex interwovenness of structures of inequality can only be understood by developing a more global perspective, challenging and relating different understandings from different contexts. It is plausible to note here that I am using space as the central question in analyzing and explaining the transformation of Indian society. The social negotiation of space within the country is largely done through caste-based atrocities, violence and communal riots. The 'ideas' of urban and rural put to test in a globalized society help us articulate the contestations over space in a political unit like India, the meaning of space in a caste society and the reproduction of inequality in modern forms. The perception and representation of space depend on the subjects 'within it' (Grosz 1995), i.e., the spatial context determined by the subjects and vice versa. Guha (2013) critiques the absence of spatial aspects in studying social segregation especially in relation to caste hierarchy and dominance. Dirks (1987: 26) states, '…spatial organization of a group if related to the nature and extent of dominance of and by the group'. The system of untouchability and identification of individuals as untouchable depend much on the spatial context as much as the notions of social systems.

The term 'untouchable' will be used in this paper instead of the more widely accepted term 'Dalit'.[2] The term 'untouchable' was originally used by Ambedkar to create the idea of an oppressed national minority in India, which was absent before the 1920s. The usage of the term eliminates regional identities of heterogeneous groups of people assumed to be a part of the majority Hindu population. The caste system has always needed the existence of the 'outsider or the other' to sustain. The other has been the untouchable body. And untouchability is the center of the system, like Anupama Rao (2009) states, 'the Dalit[3] body has always been a site of repeated stigmatization making it a continuous object of suffering'. Untouchable bodies have been the focus of disgust in Indian society. In sociological groups like that of Subaltern Studies, the untouchable is reduced to a laborer or peasant and the caste question remains largely unaddressed. In mainstream media and cinema, the Brahmin remains the rescuer of the broom-wielding untouchable. Beyond theoretical musings of the untouchable body, the aim here is to acknowledge the construct in the way we think about space and the human body in a time and age where 'social distance' has become the new 'norm'. How do these norms re-construct a way of thinking about space and the human body? The second purpose of using the word is to create discomfort and present a reality that the erasure of the word untouchable or replacement with Dalit or Harijan, for example, did not change the means of production or social relations in Hindu society. Replacing one word while continuing to use labels like Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and so on indicating social identities, caste-based stratification and themes of purity and hierarchy based on birth remains a futile exercise in understanding the politics of inequality

from the perspective of the state that remains largely controlled by the upper caste groups as well as the dominant socio-cultural implications of using the terms. This chapter therefore very consciously chooses the word untouchable against the caste-based concepts that remain unchallenged in Indian sociology even today.

Against the backdrop of what has already been discussed, it is pertinent to note that the production of space in India is mainly through splits of caste, class, religion and gender. While class explains income inequality and residential segregation in terms of the types of housing, especially in cities, it does not explain the co-existence of groups (castes, religions and genders) and the pronounced instances of inequalities existing thereof. An analysis of space in this regard will provide insights into how India has found new forms of regulating caste instead of over-coming these forms of inequalities. This chapter also aims to highlight the contours in the socio-spatial co-existence of various groups in understanding contemporary caste-based inequalities in India.

Conceptualizing Caste

What is examined while studying caste inequality? Is it a socio-cultural or political subject? Does sociological understanding of caste have to consider that caste cannot be limited to a Hindu social structure? How do we determine the interrogation of the subject spatially? In order to distinguish caste as a system of inequality, a theoretical conceptualization beyond that of methodological nationalism is necessary. Béteille (1965: 46) defines caste as 'a small group characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership and lifestyle which includes pursuit of a traditional occupation'. Similarly, Sinha (1967: 94) describes caste as 'a hierarchy of endogamous groups, organized in a hereditary division of labor'. Endogamy is the constant that characterizes caste and the preservation of the system. However, inter-caste marriages[4] have been on the rise in recent years in India (Sharma 2007), not without repercussions. The discourse (Srinivas 1959; Leach 1960; Appadurai 1986; Béteille 1997; Rao 2009; Omvedt 2011; Guru and Sarukkai 2012; Jodhka 2015) on the caste system on whether it is a unique phenomenon or one aspect of the many processes of social segregation is a highly debated question among sociologists in India and around the world. Caste is fundamental to Hinduism but is also noticed among Buddhists, Christians and Muslims in India. This is not a contradiction in the nature of the system of caste but the dominance of Hinduism and its impact on other religions that co-exist in India. For instance, conversion to Islam for a person or family belonging to untouchable caste groups may offer religious respite in terms of access to the mosque but a mosque built for untouchable converts, the same goes for conversion to Christianity or Buddhism. The segregation of spaces of access does not change with the change in religion. The deep entrenchment and influence of Hinduism are often misunderstood as a contradiction in the caste system, much like Weber's confusion in noting (cited in Leach 1960: 3) 'the presence of Caste among Mohammedans of India'. Dumont's (1971) work on caste and his influence on the subject, even when critiqued (Gupta 1981; Béteille 1986; Dirks 2001) through the 1950s to 1980s could not approach caste critically. Scholars like

Omvedt (2011), Jodhka (2015) and Guru (2009) located caste in the framework of power and domination; the view that caste is a traditional and socio-cultural system specific to India has been largely dominant. The implications of such theories led to caste not being considered an aspect of economic growth, poverty and development. The debates around inequality only focused on parameters like income, assets, productivity and class questions despite empirical studies showing the prevalence and influence of caste in the rural social structure impacting economic inequality and stigmatization of untouchables and other lower caste groups.

The selective theorization of caste by the dominant modes of thinking, assuming caste would diminish with modernity, has led to the acceptance of this worldview in the sense that the Indian 'left' and 'right' have a common perception toward the topic. This needs to be attributed to the social theories of early 20th century Western Europe and their application to the Indian context. The idea that Caste will be a thing of the past and modernization will replace caste with modern systems is based on achieved status like those of the Western societies. Caste has been a 'text-book' case of traditional institution (Jodhka 2015) for modernization theories of the post-Second World War era to conceptualize Indian society. The evolution of social structures with the growth of urban industrial societies in the West led to the transformation of the community (Gemeinschaft) to society (Gesellschaft). The assumption was that this new social order based on individual choice would be replicated in India (ibid.).

In this context, I would like to bring forth the idea that individual identity is significantly irrelevant in a traditional social structure. It is the community or group identity that matters and influences the individual identity. The rise of the city and its complex organizational structure in India has led to the rise of individual identity much like a functional necessity. The options for mobility based on ideas of individual merit became debated. From the Marxist perspective, caste remains an agrarian social structure in the 'idyllic villages of India', and it continues to dominate popular notions of Indian middle and upper classes across regions. The idea that caste is a thing of the past is a rural phenomenon. In the 'archeology of untouchability', Guru (2012) emphasizes the subtleties needed to decode untouchability in modern times and understand the principle of equality where all bodies are worthy of respect. Guru's methodology may not be applied in rural spaces where untouchability is practiced 'in your face', but in urban spaces, when one interrogates and distinguishes the relationship between individuals and groups in personal and public spheres, the dynamics of caste come to be noticed. Guru fascinatingly describe how the upper caste tries to manifest its sovereignty as upper caste in personal spaces while upholding the enforced universal identities in the public spaces and how the untouchables find personal spaces as a testing ground for facing discrimination and re-instilling their historic caste identities vis-à-vis the universal identity offered to them by the constitution (Guru 2012: 220–221). This brings out the relevance for a spatial perspective that unfolds in the operation of caste and probably answers the previous question on the extent of scales of caste-based inequalities that can be understood by connecting public and personal spaces. The ostensible castelessness among the upper castes discussed by Deshpande (2013)

and the enforced caste identity on untouchables also give a different meaning while attempting to understand caste in various spatial dimensions, like village, city, country, or the globe.

Caste, Space and Its Rural-Urban Linkages

The idea of the 'city' continues to be a viable space for millions of Indians from rural India to migrate everyday in search of livelihood or simply give up a space of oppression. Every Indian city has its own unique story of emergence and growth; the emergence of new kinds of housing, infrastructural development, creation of jobs, options for mobility and transportation are all factors that make today's city attractive. In the context of Indian society and the caste system which has been associated with strong social and spatial segregation, I will attempt to explain the extent to which processes in India have changed caste-based spatial segregation or strengthened inequalities through socio-spatial divisions at different scales.

Ambedkar's work on caste in India and its impact on Indian society (Zelliot 2004) is often a point of discussion among sociologists in India. His work is rarely connected to its spatial connotations and relevance to understand the Indian social structure. For Ambedkar, 'space' was a crucial factor in the perpetuation of untouchability through strict territorialization and segregation of spaces representing the interests of upper- caste Hindus, irrespective of their class position. In envisioning independent India, Ambedkar described the ideal society as a space of free movement and multiple modes of association within settlements (1936) ending isolation and nurturing respect towards individuals. A society following the principles of fraternity was not offered by the Indian village, and in Ambedkarite philosophy, he urged untouchables to leave the village and settle in cities (ibid.). Zelliot (2004) and Gooptu (2001) in their studies describe the city as an escape for untouchables from across India in the early 20th century to practice various occupations that helped them break away from their social relation of work in the village (Gooptu 2001). For Ambedkar, the city was a space to challenge preconceived notions about people and imagine and re-figure social relationships beyond caste relations (Zelliot 2004). In his memoir Waiting for a Visa, Ambedkar (1990) mentions his time in London and New York as a time when he forgot he was an untouchable. This interesting revelation seemingly highlights the relationship between space, untouchability (caste) and geographical mobility. In a crowded setting like that of a city, social divisions weren't fixed like in the village, and legal and political mechanisms had a role to play against social discrimination. For example, an urban setting has to follow the law and rules to treat all people alike since classification on caste is impossible (Ambedkar1936). Therefore, space becomes an active factor in the development of social relationships and beyond. Space has a crucial value in the socio-political construction of pre- and post-independence India. The rural and the urban heavily carry two very distinct ideas of social production of spaces.

The Indian village is a small, tightly structured social and commercial space with two main groups — touchables and untouchables. The spatial organization

of an Indian village clearly demarcates which caste group gets access to the best location and which group lives on the fringe of the village, away from the school, temple, shops, etc. The spatial demarcation makes it fairly simple to practice untouchability and distinguish communities. The city being bigger makes it complex to follow the practice of untouchability and norms of the Hindu social order. It therefore manifests as modern forms of untouchability in urban India. In 1936, Ambedkar propagated the 'Annihilation of Caste'. He argued that caste is not only a division of labor, but also a system of division of laborers, and it is a pity that the system has its defenders even today (Ambedkar 1936). From 1936 to 2020, in the social, cultural, political and economic transformations of India, its villages and cities, caste has remained a constant system of control and maneuvering space.

During the independence movement across India in the first half of the 20th century, the British government was being challenged by the then 'nationalists' imagination of what independent India would look like. The traditional village was offered as an alternative space and vision to end the colonial structure by upholding it as a site of cultural and moral autonomy by then nationalists (Bayly 2011). The village was presented as the legitimate form of social organization in the public discourse and became a symbol of uniting people from across the geography as Indians. Gandhi's advocacy for the village as a representation of India, free from colonial influence, made the village an image to condemn cities, which were Western constructions. Gandhi (1966: 288–289) writes in his newsletter Young India:

> …Cities are not India. India lives in the seven and half lakh villages and cities live on the villages… The city people are brokers and agents for the big houses of Europe, America and Japan. The cities have co-operated with the latter in the bleeding process that has gone on for the past two hundred years.

The representation and perception of the village by Gandhi bring in the notion of space, as pointed out by Lefebvre (2007), as a deeply political social construct. The absence of a precise location in Gandhi's description of an Indian village and his attempt to use the idea of a village as a symbol of being 'Indian' in opposing colonialism were the articulation of space within his own political perceptions. Gandhi's perception of the Indian village was not inclusive of the practice of untouchability and experience of low-caste groups in the village thus shaping spatiality to solely serve the politics of upper-caste groups.

The rise of Indian communism and Nehruvian politics challenged the reverence offered to the Indian village in Gandhian politics. But Ambedkar's politics did not take it as a given that the village as a space offered any constructive space to untouchables. In advocating for the emancipation of untouchables, Ambedkar claimed that irrespective of sharing common religious beliefs, untouchability and segregation based on caste made untouchable communities stand out of the Hindu social structure. He took on the Gandhian rejection of the city, with the argument that the Indian village remains a major reason for the propagation of untouchability. Referring to Gandhi's condemnation of city life as primitive, Ambedkar

saw the rejection as an outdated repetition of European intellectuals (Ambedkar 1946). 'Gandhi is merely repeating the views of Rousseau, Ruskin, Tolstoy and their school' (ibid.).

Ambedkar's recollection of being denied any services by the washerman, barber and other services in the village despite being able to afford it because of the family belonging to an untouchable caste questions the glorification of the Indian village. Addressing the constituent assembly debate of 1948, Ambedkar defined the Indian village as a 'sink of localism, a den of ignorance, and narrow-mindedness' (1948). In contrast to the Western contexts, where segregation is discussed as a largely urban phenomenon, the geography of any Indian village in 2020 is also a clear demarcation of land and space for touchables and untouchables. A majority of the touchable population lives in the central village, with easy access to schools, hospitals, temples, farms and other services, while untouchables live physically away from the center of the village, mostly toward the south of the village. In understanding the spatial structure of an Indian village, it is important to note that spatial segregation is not merely social separation but a clear territorial separation that demarcates the sacred and the profane with no possibilities of physical movement, making the village a space of social exclusion and inequality. This spatial segregation is perpetuated by the social and economic networks in communities, which also allows punishing untouchables for breaking the rules of separation.[5] Recent cases in the limelight from the state of Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh,[6] and Maharashtra[7] where untouchables were killed, lynched, raped or brutally attacked explain the social condition of untouchables in occupying space that is not 'theirs'.

This takes me back to Ambedkar's documentation of life in the village as an untouchable and the relationship between untouchability and a spatial context. For example, untouchables in villages were, sometimes even today, required to wear certain inferior names, not wear jewelry or clean clothes, not to from enter temples, mosques and churches and not to enter temples, mosques and churches accessed by touchables. They are also denied water from the wells and taps used by touchables or walking through the main streets. The association of space with touchability, in essence, makes it inaccessible for untouchables within that spatial context. As subjects that occupy the same space, the Hindus are enabled to identify untouchables and mark them out of the spaces touchables claim as theirs, thereby creating a template for the spatial organization of the village. Ambedkar in his work 'States and Minorities' (1947: 425–426[8]) stated that 're-organisation of space would lead to the re-alignment of social life and established patterns of oppression'. This clearly implies that practices of untouchability, then and now in India, are not a result of social systems alone but also determined by spatial features.

This brings me to the first point about space as a social product that is continuously produced by the relationship and interaction between individuals and communities (Massey 2005). The village therefore is continuously produced through social processes and relations, just like the spaces within a village like temples, schools, public water sources, etc., produce ideas of sacred and profane. Therefore, it is also safe to say that the production of social relationships is also a result of their spatial contexts. The definitions of untouchability also change as

a result of this, with time and space. They are produced and reproduced by the transforming relationship of individuals within certain spaces (Cháirez-Garza 2014). It is this transforming but consistent spatial organization of the village that perpetuates distinctive forms of segregation with every passing decade while keeping the caste system and its inequalities intact. Benbabaali (2018) in her ethnographic study of *Kamma*s[9] demonstrated how a spatial approach to caste inequality can be helpful to understand the mechanism of the upper-caste groups to continue to dominate in economic, social and political spaces not restricted to rural landholding but across cities where upper-caste groups have migrated and gained access to key positions in state power, culture, media and other aspects of the urban economy that aids them in promoting their caste and class interests.

The city does not make caste irrelevant, it attempts at 'making caste structures invisible' (Rehbein 2020). The continuous interaction of caste with class, gender, religion and migration also shapes life-worlds and opportunities in the city. While moving to the city includes expectations of liberation from oppressive village structures, caste stratification and stigma do not vanish but are reproduced and reformulated as caste groups start forming in the urban context.[10] While the nature of atrocities and caste violence is less prevalent in cities, the new forms of discrimination are evident, for example, in the processes of hiring or not hiring untouchables or not renting homes to selected caste groups (Sethi and Nayak 2016). In their study of urban segregation by caste, Singh et al. (2019) quote narratives[11] of untouchables who struggle to find housing in the city unless their caste identity is a secret, which opens up another vulnerability of being exposed and threatened if the identity is revealed. The consequences of spatial mobility open up occupational diversity but often fails to translate into social mobility for untouchables. On the contrary, for Brahmins or other upper castes, the absence of economic support does not take away the social position and respect conferred in the caste hierarchy.

While the urban and rural may seem like categories that are exclusive to each other, these are spaces that are governmental categories (Roy 2015) on the one hand but also spaces created by those on the upper end of the hierarchy to proliferate their politics and status quo albeit in different forms, i.e., political spaces (Hoerning 2019). Therefore, the spatial nature of caste and inequalities emerging out of the system needs to be looked at in the ways it evolves and reproduces itself in different scales and the construction of these scales to determine how spatial inequalities flourish. While conceptualizing and understanding the symbolic meaning of space in the production and reproduction of caste-based inequalities, it would benefit to introduce space as a tool used by those who aim to control and maintain supremacy in the system of hierarchy.

Re-figuration of Caste

Caste has evolved and transformed radically in the decades since independence, due to Dalit social movements, constitutional provisions for safety and affirmative action policies for those on the lower end of the caste hierarchy as well as from the socio-economic transformation and urbanization of India. Sociologists and social

anthropologists like Béteille (1971), and Breman (1974) recorded the decline of caste in their studies in the 1970s and 1980s. Mendelsohn (1993) noted that the idea of 'dominant caste' as studied by M N Srinivas (1959) was not irrelevant since 'land and authority' were now disconnected. Similar claims were made by M.N. Srinivas (2003) where he noted that caste was disappearing from the villages of India, as well as other modern scholars of caste in India (Karanth 1996; Béteille 1997; Gupta 2000; Prasad 2010). While sociological evidence is pointing to the decline of caste, how is it becoming visible and complex? The rising interest in the caste question not only within academics but also in the mainstream media and popular culture presents multiple dimensions of its modernized complex ways of functioning. Jodhka (2015) shows that while capitalist development has led to the traditional framework of a social organisation redundant in rural agrarian spaces, it has not led to the disappearance of caste-based hierarchies and identity formation. How do we then understand the escalation of caste-based inequalities in modern Indian society? How does the meaning of caste change in different spatial contexts and if and how do these spaces stabilize caste-based inequalities? What new meanings do caste-based inequalities have in India and how are they being reproduced across the country and the world?

With the decline of agriculture and awareness of constitutional remedies, lower-caste groups experienced the idea of inequality with inherent changes in how they understood themselves vis-a-vis the dominant/upper-caste groups. Participation in electoral politics and possibilities of ownership of land and access to common property resources in the village which were exclusively controlled by upper castes enabled a formal participation of lower-caste groups in socio-political life. In the world view of the upper caste groups, this assertion has been viewed as a challenge to their position of power and domination leading to boycott and violence toward ex-untouchable castes, which led to the enactment of the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (prevention of atrocities) Act, 1989. The need for legislation like this in modern India certainly proves that caste inequality is a serious problem and not a perception of a few. The increase in of violence against ex-untouchable communities despite the weakening of their traditional structure (Teltumbde 2010; Gorringe 2012) shows a trend — a contestation and negotiation of power. With upward mobility, participation in electoral politics, migration to cities and emerging out of traditional occupations into entrepreneurs (see, DICCI India) have made these negotiations possible in a language that benefits their position in the structure without radically changing the structure itself. In India, caste-based communities hold on to their monopolies in any business and the business economy is therefore hugely reliant on this kinship network which brings in capital from public and private networks. Lower castes do not have these assets or any 'kinds of capital' (Bourdieu 1986) in addition to the active biases against them in everyday living, reproducing socio-economic and political inequalities. Irrespective of the spaces the communities chose to live and work in, the reinforcement of caste identities makes it impossible to bring about any sense of equality (Jodhka 2010).

The ideas of a neo-liberal economy and open market therefore remain utopias of textbook sociology, economics and politics for lower caste groups in modern

urban spaces as well. In the case of corporate multinationals who hire students from universities in India, Deshpande and Newman (2007) in their study reported that the companies deny considering caste in their recruitment. However, in the hiring processes, a first-generation educated job-seeker was identified by asking questions about their 'family background'. The burden of being from a lower caste despite being highly qualified for the global urban economy was on students from ex-untouchable groups. Ajit, Donker and Saxena (2012) point to the fact that 92.5 percent of corporate board members from over 1,000 companies in India belonged to upper-caste groups as opposed to 3 percent from ex-untouchable and tribal communities together. The literature available on social inequality in India points to the fact that the caste system aids in restricting the mobility of groups belonging to lower castes (Omvedt 2005; Thorat 2007; Jodhka 2010; Thorat and Newman 2010). From migrating to cities and moving from traditional laboring occupations to insecure jobs in India's informal economy, the system of caste continues in modern forms in modern spaces rather than diminishing structurally. Dupont (2004) presents a pattern in residential housing and caste-based segregation across cities in India where upper castes, middles castes and ex-untouchables occupied and were concentrated in different parts of the cities.[12] Rather than economic status, caste remains the main aspect of urban residential segregation (Vithayathil and Singh 2012; Singh et al. 2019). The process of urbanization and migration from villages in this sense has only transferred the spaces of inequality and not the structures in present day India with new and modern forms of discrimination. For instance, one may argue that race or gender does not necessarily imply biological superiority, but racism and patriarchy are means to justify slavery and discrimination based on gender identities. These ideas affect the construction of scales whereby they operate and have tangible effects on different groups — in the case of North America, African-Americans or the Hispanic/Latino population. With the surge of the Black Lives Matter movement in the USA and Dalit lives matter in India and across the world, the argument that post-race (Bonilla-Silva 2013) and post-caste societies are ideal cover-ups for maintaining privilege (white and upper caste), thereby nurturing inequality at all levels in society, helps us understand how inequality scales up from local to trans-national limits. From harmless racist/casteist slangs to institutional racism/casteism, these new modes of exclusion and discrimination ensure that certain caste and racial groups occupy only a limited space in society. The same applies to gender. Patriarchy constructs spaces with little or no sovereignty to women, restricting them to the domain of the kitchen in most cases, inflicting violence through intimidation in personal spaces. For an untouchable woman the burden of inequality triples, of being lower caste, of being a woman and of being economically marginalized. While the roots of caste lie in South Asia, it is not a secret that countries like India associate 'light/fair skin' to be of higher value than 'dark skin'. The purity of race is entrenched in the idea of caste and is evident from the treatment of persons of African or Mongolian descent in India, presenting an intrinsic form of racism.

While caste transcends race in many aspects as discussed already, the skin determines who is elected to power, is represented in films and who is worthy

of marriage or assumed to belong to a caste group depending on the color of the skin. What also distinguishes or perhaps connects caste to other forms of inequality is that there is no escape from it. A person is born in a caste and is in a position of emancipation only by death and rebirth into another which is determined by 'actions of past lives'. This rigid institutionalized idea determines how individuals are treated irrespective of their class positions and occupational mobility or what spaces mean when accessed by untouchable groups or by other upper-caste groups.

Conclusion

What is the relationship between the persistence of caste inequalities and other forms of inequality? What do we learn and how do we research caste-based inequalities in this sense? What do we derive theoretically and methodologically to understand these inequalities? The question of caste cannot be explained by economics and class alone as most empirical studies have already shown. Then, how do we then understand and theorize caste inequality in today's society?

From the discussion presented in this paper, it seems fair to state that sociocultural and spatial inequalities are a product of the caste system in India. This structure enables one section to acquire unparalleled social, cultural and symbolic capital and bans another section from all of it (Kumar 2014). These capital structures help upper castes transcend the secular democratic institutions and enable domination across local, regional and national governance, education, health, economy, etc., furthering the exclusion of lower castes. While the exploitation of an upper- caste woman is based on her gender and class, the ex-untouchable woman is exploited on the basis of class, caste and gender. This and the production of other forms of complex unequal structures need to be located when trying to theorize caste. The weakening of old structures of caste inequality and the idea of being impure as a result of birth and contestations to access social, political and economic spaces have evidence in various socio-political and economic studies (Deliège 1999). In spite of these evolutions, social inequality continues to be structured by caste. The studies on poverty and domination show a connection between caste and economic mobility (Himanshu et al. 2013; Still 2015; Deshpande 2018). The population on the higher economic strata are represented by upper-caste groups while those on the weaker economic strata are largely represented by ex-untouchable and tribal communities (Gupta 2007). These class-based categories, however, do not help in holistically approaching the conceptualization of caste reality in India today. The assumption of diminishing caste inequalities as a result of class segregations has been falsified. Caste does not even limit itself to the Hindu tradition today. Ex-untouchables converting to Islam, Christianity and Buddhism have not been de-stigmatized by mere conversion. They continue to remain stigmatized as ex-untouchables who cannot access churches, temples and mosques accessed by upper castes in the same localities. The transformation of India into a globalized neo-liberal economy did not lead to the abrogation of caste hierarchies across villages and cities.

The inheritance of identities leads to the reproduction of inequalities aided by social biases and the available mechanisms and social capital. With communities that were barred from access to education and housing now competing for political and economic positions held by Brahmins and other upper-caste groups for centuries, the friction has been even more visible and active. The representation and participation of ex-untouchables, tribal and backward caste groups in electoral politics and higher education have challenged the status quo of dominant caste groups resenting these modern changes. The discourse around the question of caste inequality should be opened up and reframed in a way that does not make it a question of Hindu identity making and India's nation-building project. The question of caste is way more complex, encompassing different communities across regions, religions, genders and class positions in the Indian subcontinent and across the world. Caste in a sense fits a form of power and domination that generates social inequality beyond geographies and is comparable to other global forms of social inequality. Caste varies conceptually from class, and the reproduction of caste-based inequalities isn't a continuation of tradition. It is reproduced and narrated in modern complex ways that scale up from an individual, community and regions to institutions of education, healthcare, capitalist markets and spaces of formal and informal economies. In this context, I propose a conceptualization of caste in a framework of inequality and spatiality as a sociological process which is enabled and sustained actively through discrimination, leading to the production of new forms of inequality. This framework of inequality needs to follow a scalar approach that identifies caste discrimination not only as a macro-narrative but one that affects different individuals and groups differently in various spatialities. Taking space into account is important to analyze the changes in the scales and nature of caste inequality in India. For decades, sociological writings about the body and its role in social inequality have taken an intersectional approach. It would be interesting to locate the body as a scale for understanding inequalities that originate from the body, as in the case of caste, being born into a certain caste, produces mechanisms of inequality. Understanding caste from this perspective would enable drawing comparisons with other forms of inequalities in the world— and interrogating the multiple processes of production of caste without strictly orienting caste studies to methodological nationalism. This perspective can be applied practically by outlining interventions in the forms of social policy, social movements and so on.

The radical changes in Indian society in the last century in terms of social and economic transformations have been significant. Despite the advent of democracy, neo-liberal economic models and an open market, India's social structure remains rigid and caste remains a crucial constant in the production and reproduction of inequalities — social, cultural, political and economic. I would invite a reading into the sociology of space and inequality from the point of caste that would help articulate methods beyond a clustered approach of Marxist categories which fails to independently address the question of inequality in India. Locating the construct of caste-inequality in a historical situation and understanding its contemporary nature so that we can offer a space of social security for everybody is a necessity. The last I remember was getting repeated flak from non-resident Indians while critiquing

the dominant narrative of Hindu festivals in a global forum. The argument that dominant Hindu festivals, like Diwali, Holi and Dussehra, celebrate the murder of individuals belonging to another group is ridiculed for a notion that the upper-caste hero is the good who has emerged victorious over the lower-caste or dark-skinned evil. It is a deconstruction that dominant groups have a natural solidarity for, possibly due to the 'fear of the unequals and their protest' (Therborn 2013: 163). This control of space, from local to virtual in an age of social distancing, is certainly a new-age manifestation of inequality. When we think of human rights now, how do we look at it beyond just survival and capability? Through which prisms do we view inequality in the new age? How do we choose a side to articulate and deploy theory in a manner of unifying and triggering transformative politics? I have made no philosophical attempt to understand inequality and space but merely attempted to describe it in order to expand the conceptual categories associated with them and thereby present the problems of theorizing caste intrinsic to the discourse on inequality.

Notes

 1 Article 15 and Article 17 of the Indian constitution abolishes untouchability and its practice in any form and differentiation on the basis of caste.
 2 Dalit was first used by Mahatma Phule to address the Depressed Classes. It was later popularized by the Dalit Panther movement in the 1970s and is used as an umbrella term to refer to the ex-untouchable communities and tribal groups today.
 3 The term Dalit is often used interchangeably with terms like Schedules Castes, untouchables and lower castes in academics. It will not be used in this paper other than when quoted as reference to other studies which have used it as is, referring to the untouchable groups.
 4 Inter-caste marriages are defined as marriages where one partner belongs to the scheduled caste or scheduled tribe community and the other belongs to one of the upper caste groups. Marriages between two different upper- caste groups are not inter-caste marriages in the constitutional sense of the term and remain so in this chapter. Inter-caste marriages differ from inter-religious marriages in India in the sense that religion like Islam and Christianity are not bereft of the caste system. Brahmin Hindus converted to Christianity or Islam may still not engage in marriage with untouchable Hindus who have converted to any other religion. The nuances of inter-religious marriages are often missed out in sociologically understanding the grasp of caste across religions in India.
 5 For a detailed discussion on the rigidity in segregation and a trans-national comparative perspective on various systems of segregation, see, https://roundtableindia.co.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2975:untouchables-or-the-children-of-indias-ghetto-part-i&catid=116&Itemid=128
 6 https://www.licas.news/2020/10/14/caste-based-violence-against-dalits-not-uncommon-in-indias-uttar-pradesh
 7 https://navayana.org/blog/2017/01/22/the-entire-village-was-involved-sir-entire-village-bhaiyalal-bhotmange/?v=3a52f3c22ed6
 8 *India is admittedly a land of villages and so long as the village system provides an easy method of marking out and identifying the Untouchables, the Untouchable has no escape from Untouchability. It is the system of the Village plus the Ghetto which perpetuates Untouchability and the Untouchables therefore demand that the nexus should be broken and the Untouchables who are as a matter of fact socially separate should*

be made separate geographically and territorially also, and be settled into separate villages exclusively of Untouchables in which the distinction of the high and the low and of Touchable and Untouchable will find no place. See, State and Minorities, Dr. Ambedkar, 1947.

 9 A dominant upper caste group in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
10 See Guru, 2012 for a discussion around modern forms of untouchability and how caste continues to reproduce itself within different contexts.
11 The authors Singh et al. (2019) cite Limbale, 'The city is made of herds of castes. Even localities are identified by caste names.'
12 Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Ahmadabad and Hyderabad.

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Part III

Considering Space in Meaning Making

11 A Dangerous Liaison?

Space and the Field of Cultural Production

Dominik Bartmanski

Introduction

When Saint Augustine was asked 'what is time' he replied: 'If no one asks me I know what it is, but if I wish to explain it, I don't know.' The concept of space appears at first to be easier to grasp. We think we know what it is, even at the very moment we are asked to define it. After all, it seems to be so obvious an aspect of our lives that we could hardly ever doubt what it *is*. And yet, at closer inspection, it resists description and eludes understanding. When it comes to meaning-centered social sciences, space had been one of the least interrogated and therefore least understood of our most intuitive categories. Within sociology, space was a kind of "theoretical absence" (Friedland and Boden 1994: 4), something that was often shunned by foundational social theories. This created the situation of "peripheralization of spatial theory" (Löw 2021: 499). The reasons why it was the case are manifold and complex. Suffice it to say, space has stayed somewhat under the theoretical radar, at once obvious and unexamined, prominent and low key, concrete and abstract, omnipresent and non-fungible, familiar and threatening. Ambivalence abounded. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2014: 265) observed that space and perception "mark a communication with the world more ancient than thought, and this is why they at once "saturate consciousness and are opaque to reflection." Thus, in addition to the daily 'naturalization' of space in lay contexts, it is also a certain lack of transparency in its conceptual form that has made it a taken-for-granted 'background' category in social scientific contexts. Space is important not only in itself but also as an example of a 'taken-for-granted' and/or suppressed category. Reclaiming such categories means advancing social theory.

In the spirit of Saint Augustine, one might say that a particular difficulty regarding spatiality was its highly deceptive familiarity. That is to say, it exhibited apparent resistance to be couched in a non-trivial language that eschewed both naïve empiricism and idealistic rationalism. It was the case because the very attempt to 'capture' space with typical tools of social sciences either obscured it or trivialized it. In his "Phenomenology of Perception" Merleau-Ponty (2014: 280) explicitly wrote that the "critical attitude of verification" that had permeated the Western social scientific landscape is precisely something that "reduces the phenomenon and blocks us from attaining it itself". This did not mean, however, that a different,

productive footing for thinking about space in human sciences was not feasible. On his part, Merleau-Ponty developed a phenomenology of perception that tackled the issue of space directly and which he saw as a systematic alternative to all reductive frameworks, be it idealist, materialist, or rationalistic ones. The sociological benefits of this profound framework are yet to be elaborated and tested – "philosophers in the English-speaking world have over the last 50 years been slow to recognize the significance of his work, which resists easy classification" (Carman in Merleau-Ponty 2014). Sociologists were no different. But to systematically reconsider space, they do need to revisit phenomenology, which in turn requires, as Judith Butler (Merleau-Ponty 2014: ii) suggests, revisiting the richness of Merleau-Ponty's vocabulary and its social scientific ramifications. Whenever they have, the results have been remarkable, as I shall indicate below.

The present chapter is a conceptual reconnaissance designed to discuss some non-reductive vocabularies of social theory of space and their usefulness for social theory of culture. In what follows I first briefly discuss 'space' as a sociological category, especially how it had originally been positioned in the seminal works of Henri Lefebvre and Pierre Bourdieu. Then I ask what it would take to reinscribe it systematically as a part of 'field of cultural production'. That is to say, I ask how can sociologists understand space as a factor in meaning-making. Haunted at once by the specters of essentialism and materialism, the relation between space and culture may have come across as a dangerous liaison of sorts. This risk is avoidable, though. One way to avoid it is to more resolutely bring phenomenological thinking back into sociological analysis. After several theoretical considerations, I exemplify my conception with a discussion of the notion of the music scene. Reducible neither to materialities of the built environment nor to attributive conceptions of discursive signification, scenes both implicate and explicate the tripartite conception of spatiality in meaning making. First, as a mode of cultural production and play, the scene can be viewed as what British psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott defined as 'third area' or 'space of cultural experience'. Second, as a mode of cultural contestation and social alterity, scenes evince characteristics of what Michel Foucault called 'heterotopia'. Third, scenes are also co-produced by what I would provisionally designate as 'Raumgeist' – an experiential environment that helps specify and disambiguate a given space (*Raum*), just like certain collective feelings – and corresponding collective representations – help define a given historical period as its *Zeitgeist*. I thereby attempt to create a multifaceted conceptual ecology in which one can reconsider the spatiality of meaning.

Space as a Sociological Category

The peripheralization of space in sociology has not meant its total absence in social and cultural analysis. Rather, it revealed the prevailing dynamics of certain discursive powers in modern sociology that (1) shaped the center/periphery dynamic inside sociological discourse and (2) did not operationalize space as an environment of action. The former problem stemmed from the fact that the foundational discourses of sociology have for a long time been circumscribed

to just a few nationally and philosophically defined 'metropolitan' traditions and rarely if ever ventured beyond themselves in order to re-examine their own epistemic and ontological biases. In short, there remain 'centers' and 'peripheries' in knowledge production that often had more to do with material, political and geographic constraints than intellectual arguments (Rodriguez Medina 2014: 5). The latter problem consisted in the widespread sociological conviction that such categories as 'society' shape *how humans act on* the physical environment which, to most sociologists, has been relevant only insofar as it is potentially interpretable and actually appropriated for social purposes. Consequently, sociology sidelined spatial considerations, especially that the disciplines such as geography had by definition been more sensitized to elaborate space as one of its key categories. This division of scholarly labor was an issue because in the twentieth-century social and cultural theory, "to be labeled a geographer was an intellectual curse, a demeaning association with an academic discipline so far removed from the grand houses of modern social theory and philosophy as to appear beyond the pale of critical relevance" (Soja 1994: 135).

There were notable exceptions, of course. Yet even if eloquently employed by the leading social theorists, 'space' often threatened to be a broad-brush concept that seemed to have yielded heuristic insights but few concrete principles regarding the depth of theoretical relevance and the scope of empirical applicability. Take Henri Lefebvre (2014) and the extension of his celebrated spatial theory to the field of architecture – the posthumously published volume "Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment". It is an instructive case in point. One might expect that Lefebvre was best placed to make a profoundly programmatic statement on this "beguiling area of study" called 'sociology of architecture (Jones 2016: 465), one that would generate a whole range of new terms of description and explanation. Such a systematic intervention would be welcome because, as Paul Jones (ibid.) rightly observes, it is a "deceptively challenging terrain of study" and because the 'architectures of enjoyment' are less explored than 'social problems' prioritized by sociologists and urban scholars. But Lefebvre appears to be much better at developing a sharp critique of structuralist simplifications than proposing a detailed positive explanatory program. While his choice of topical area (spaces of pleasure) is timely and points to a fundamental locus of creativity and social contestation (unlocking and re-channeling of libidinal cultural energies), he does not offer a conceptual apparatus fine-grained enough to re-capture 'architecture' as something plural and more 'active' than 'spatial product'. There is no elaborated operationalization of architecture as a site of intertwined 'spatialities' that are themselves variably and jointly effective as 'social forces and objectifying processes of emplacement. He did suggest, however, that this seems sometimes to be the case, for example when he reiterated the sociological importance of the "elementary distinction between signification and meaning". When he writes that architecture not only *has* meaning but it *is* meaning, Lefebvre hints at a crucially important topic of non-representational layers of meaning- and sense-making. Thus, he indicated great sociological importance of such categories as presence, material and expression. In this respect he shares a common ground with Merleau-Ponty who argued that "objectifying

acts are not representations" (2014: 307) and that we "must acknowledge 'expressive experiences' (*Ausdruckserlebnisse*) as prior to 'acts of signification' and 'expressive sense' (*Ausdrucks-Sinn*) as prior to 'significative sense' (*Zeichen-Sinn*)" (2014: 304). As I shall show below, this move is highly consequential for cultural and spatial theory and provides one of the key impulses for the present exploration. No less important was Lefebvre's suggestion that architectural spaces are examples of *transversal* entities, i.e., cutting across various ontological categories (Stanek 2014: lix). Nonetheless, also here we have been left with rather cursory propositions regarding the range of procedures with which cultural scientists could use 'space' and its derivative notions. It is also not clear how the different ontological categories involved in the architectural production of space intersect with one another, nor is it certain whether the variability of such intersections could explain the variety of cultural effects of architecture. These are still significant lacunae in sociological knowledge, each of which breeds vexing research questions. While no single work can hope to achieve this task, it is important to highlight the problem and begin the process of offering concrete examples that illuminate it.

Similarly general and therefore lacking in actionable concreteness were the acknowledgements of space in the next generation of influential social theorists. More than a quarter of a century ago, British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1994) wrote the foreword to a seminal volume about space-time considerations edited by Roger Friedland and Deidre Boden (1994). He regarded space as significant by showing how certain key social processes make themselves observable and relevant *in it*. Giddens (Friedland and Boden 1994: xi) stated there that "modernity is precisely the transmutation of time and space – or at least such a transmutation is at the core of the institutional dynamism which has torn apart traditional orders and lodged all of us aboard a careering juggernaut whose track and destination we only partially control." The technological and institutional transformations of the social we have since observed everywhere have only compounded (and complexified) the diagnosis expressed by Giddens, going beyond what he then could have conceptualized. Moreover, the accumulated spatial changes feed back to social systems as much as they reflect them. In this sense, Giddens's observation appears neither complete nor unprecedented. Years before him, Michel Foucault had surmised that if the nineteenth century was the century of time (i.e., a zeitgeist privileging the meta-narratives of the state,) then the twentieth century was presumably the century of space (i.e., a zeitgeist privileging the meta-narratives of globality).

Thinking dialectically, we might venture to say that the twenty-first century is one where these categories can finally be synthesized. But it would be more adequate to say that the entwinement of time and space has always been the case – only the social scientific theories did not work with appropriately integrative and multi-dimensional conceptual templates, settling instead for more homogenous and more clear-cut binary conceptions of social reality. One of the more promising concepts is Foucault's 'heterotopia' – a fertile if the provisional example of how one could incorporate spatial considerations into a constructivist, discourse-oriented and historicized research agenda. The bad news is that, as Friedland and Boden (1994: 26) argued, while Foucault is useful because he "spatializes power,"

he at the same time "delocalizes discourse". Indeed, just like Lefebvre, he did not specify a variety of sociological protocols as to how one could and should break down concepts such as 'heterotopia' into their constitutive parts. There is no book on 'space as category' in Foucault's prolific oeuvre, even though – like Lefebvre – he did take interest in such issues as territory or the uses of spaces of pleasure. The good news is, as Edward Soja (1994: 134–136) documents, that "Foucault persistently explored what he called the 'fatal intersection of time with space' from the first to the last of his writings." Importantly, in one of the interviews Foucault had explicitly admitted: "where geography itself was concerned, I either left the question hanging or established a series of arbitrary connections… Geography must indeed lie at the heart of my concerns" (Foucault in Soja 1994: 136). Maintaining his own historicist discursive approach, he nevertheless added: "a whole history remains to be written of *spaces*" (ibid.).

At the time which was heavily influenced by the analytic authority of Foucault, one of the "deceptively challenging" problems was to avoid both the reified notion of space as a fixed physical 'container' of action and the structuralist simplification of social action as text. In the sociology of the 1990s, especially in the subdiscipline of sociology of culture as well as in the increasingly autonomous cultural sociology, neither of the two challenges was yet systematically interrogated. Friedland's and Boden's intervention was a timely attempt to redress this issue in the Anglophone social and cultural theory. It was the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu that opened up a fruitful conceptual sphere capable of a multi-dimensional synthesis. In particular, his theory of cultural production (Bourdieu 1993) as well as earlier theories of practice, habitus and embodiment (Bourdieu 2012) launched far-reaching international debates. Among other things, just like Friedland and Boden, Bourdieu had shown that looking merely at the "field of discourse" the way Foucault famously did was not sufficient for meaning-oriented cultural sociology; he wished instead to expand the analysis to a more broadly conceptualized field of cultural production, whereby a variety of 'conditions of possibility' functioned as the relational locus of social meaning-making (1993: 32–33). If Foucault acknowledged space explicitly as a significant factor but never decisively departed from the field of discourse analysis, then Bourdieu expanded the field of cultural analysis but did not extensively discuss space as a structuring factor. I will now turn to Bourdieu's work to gauge what and how his practice theory and the notion of field might contribute to the new spatio-cultural analysis.

Cultural Production and Space

Because Bourdieu identified some of the key sociological dimensions of meaning production that to this day retains considerable analytic purchase, it is worth looking closer at the benefits and costs of his approach. Crucially, he attempted to synthesize the material and the discursive, the structural and the symbolic (Reckwitz 1997: 84). Along the way, a series of transformative concepts arose: symbolic power and symbolic violence, cultural production and cultural consumption, etc. These are just the most famous among other influential themes of his sociology.

Bourdieu's work suggests that cultural production and cultural consumption are two sides of the same coin, not only in the classical sense of the relation between the producer and the receiver, the actor and the spectator, but also in the sense of mutually elaborative dynamics between these phenomena. Taken together, cultural production and cultural consumption have formed one of the most powerful intellectual currencies in contemporary social science, and Bourdieu became synonymous with the new field and its most cited researcher (Santoro 2016: 193). His landmark work "The Field of Cultural Production" (1993) brought together key terms of the preceding debates about symbolic systems and cultural practices, and it subsequently streamlined the majority of the germane inquiries to follow. The interest in the theme shows no signs of abating. On the contrary, digital technologies developed and coordinated by corporate powers pulled questions of the symbolic economy towards the core of both economic and semiotic sciences. The enormous number of pertinent studies rendered it a rich subfield that continues to be highly relevant, extendable and renewable as a research program (Sapiro 2016: 102). Some of the most influential and broadly cited works of social science emerged in this subfield.

It is partly for this reason that Bourdieu's works remain a significant point of reference for scholars interested in symbolic practices. But his seminal writings are instructive not only because of what they do but also because of what they do not do or mention only in passing. The topic of space remained one of the relatively unelaborated aspects despite the fact that the central conceptual metaphor in Bourdieu's classic formulation – *field* – is distinctly spatial. In fact, it is quite often used by him interchangeably with *space* (Löw 2001: 180–181). The concept of field and related ones such as "space of social positions" figure prominently in his research and they have subsequently served sociology for decades to come. Yet, as the explanatory category, the *field* (or space) of cultural production has been just that – metaphor. No less but also no more than the metonymic theoretical image that was devised for the purpose of framing what Howard Becker called "art worlds". Those 'worlds' were seen by Bourdieu as conditioned by social structural positions and related distributions of symbolic capital. More materially understood, space and its relational properties remained largely a residual category, valid insofar as it served sociology in the capacity of 'appropriated geographical space', and even in this role its explanatory status was not on a par with 'cultural capital'. Although Bourdieu's view was not as static as it may have seemed, in the end it didn't decidedly advance the question of 'spatiality' of cultural production. His approach to culture evolved over time, for example moving away from a notion of cultural appropriation as a cold cognitive act toward aesthetic appreciation as a mode of knowing that is also sensory and embodied (Bourdieu 1996: 315; Lizardo 2011: 38). In this respect we see again how sociology reached a possibility of gravitating towards the phenomenological position worked out by Merleau-Ponty (2014: 307) who explicitly connected space and body to perception and habitus.

Yet this evolution of Bourdieu's thinking could be understood as a process of fine-tuning of his own brand of synthetic structuralism rather than as an act of

forging an entirely new research program capable of making spatiality of cultural production central to sociology in general, and to field theory in particular. Taken literally as an object of human appropriation, 'space' may have seemed to represent a danger of reification and essentialization, not a promise of a genuine sociological advancement. Put differently, the relation between space and culture could have appeared to be a kind of dangerous liaison. Therefore, in order to be employed conceptually at all, it had to be qualified as 'social' space, metaphorized and abstracted to the level of structural analysis. As Bourdieu wrote, a specific, socio-logically relevant *space* is a "field of forces (irreducible to a mere aggregate of material points)" and the *forces* that he had in mind were first and foremost the actionable interests and power relations based on them as well as kinds of capital framed by the objective social constraints which shape available capabilities within any and all kinds of cultural production (1993: 184).

To the extent that Bourdieu's sociology identified a series of fundamental questions about "the conditions of possibility" of cultural production and offered plausible answers to them, it may have seemed justified in its relative neglect of space as a separate sociological category. Just like Laplace famously had no need for God as the hypothesis to make his conception of the solar system work, so Bourdieu felt no need to elevate space to the rung of key explanatory hypotheses in his conception of the social. After all, the division of academic labor seemed to have sequestered the tasks rather neatly. If space counted mostly as an object of human appropriation, then – to sociologists at least – the modes and consequences of appropriation would matter most, and these appear to be predominantly social, economic and symbolic.

Bourdieu (1993: 184) admitted that his brand of the structuralist conception of the relation between social positions and actions taken by humans occupying them "does not entail a mechanistic determination." Unlike other structuralist research programs that remained too biased by rule-oriented culturalism, the synthetic struc-turalism of Bourdieu permitted thinking in terms of reciprocity between various structuring forces (Reckwitz 1997: 84). As early as in his "Outline" he reflected on the status of both linguistic structures and material structures. He exemplified it by pointing out that (1) the constitutive power that is granted to ordinary language lies not in the language itself but in the group that authorizes it (Bourdieu 2012: 21), and (2) "the house lends itself to a deciphering which does not forget that the 'book' from which the children learn their vision of the world is read with the body, in and through the movements and displacements which make the space within which they are enacted as much as they are made by it" (Bourdieu 2012: 90).

Bourdieu was also aware that a mix of manifold, partly subjective factors do play their significant roles, for example, human creativity and "perception of the available possibilities afforded by the categories of perception and appreciation inscribed in habitus" (ibid.: 1993: 184). Although movement and perception pre-suppose engagement and responsiveness to space, here again, it was the *body* rather than *space* that has come to be treated as the *locus* of significant inscriptions of cultural meaning. In short, part of the attractiveness of his approach to the field of cultural production was its calibrated balance between symbolic structuralism

and socio-material relationality and his emphasis on the body which was largely absent in research programs strongly indebted to the linguistic turn. In the end, however, in the center of Bourdieu's main works were habitus and field, not *spatialities* and *affordances* immanent to the formation of the embodied consciousness. I will return to this issue below.

This handling of space has been representative of many contemporaneous and subsequent sociological contributions to the relevant subdisciplines. For example, Richard A. Peterson who pioneered studies of cultural production in Anglophone academia alongside Howard Becker did not use space as an integral part of his influential "six-facets" model; moreover, as Marco Santoro (2016: 203) documents, "neither (post)structuralism nor hermeneutics entered Peterson's conceptual toolkit, nor those of his close colleagues and students". In this perspective, Bourdieu's work appeared more clearly synthetic and at least in principle open to revision regarding the meaning of space as a 'condition of possibility'. That Bourdieu could become a globally dominant sociologist of his era the way he did was reflective not so much of his innovative perspective but more of an effect of the structural distribution of intellectual tendencies of sociology at that time – the recognition that his own theory would endorse. The early twenty-first century virtualization of cultural production made the analytical model of Bourdieu seem even more generalizable. The increasingly predatory, technologically driven semiotic power of social media rendered his conceptualization of 'symbolic violence' enduringly relevant. It has been the case because his work could be viewed as applicable to virtual spaces that seemed to have everything to do with semiotic 'network' and seemingly nothing to do with 'territory' and 'place'. Not unexpectedly, the culturalist schools that were more fiercely constructivist have been even less inclined to incorporate 'space' into their toolboxes. Yet the 'field of cultural production' as a metaphorical notion retained its capacity to be translatable to space-oriented discourses, and it has become inspirational to new relational conceptions of space such as the one by Löw (2001) who paired it with ideas of phenomenology and sociology of knowledge.

Spatiality, Phenomenology, and Play

While Bourdieu de-individualized and demystified human perception and its impact on cultural production, he did it at the cost of (1) anti-psychological culturalism that deprived personality of its own structuring power (Reckwitz 1997: 92), and (2) de-emphasizing the phenomenological impact of environments – both the ecological and the built/material – on aesthetic perception. There was little effort in his main works on cultural production to work out new bridging concepts that would explicitly connect body and space or the subjective acts of perception and the objectifications of the perceived world. Affordance is one such bridge concept (see Vercel and McDonnell in this section of the book). This epistemological gap that had persisted until the end of the twentieth century became hardly tolerable in the 2000s when material culture studies demonstrated the impact of physical affordances on meaning-making (e.g., Miller 2005). Consequently, it became

clear that at least in certain kinds of cultural production the material affordances are as consequential as the symbolic structures and associated cultural 'content'. The "setting" has become as vital as the discourse, and the 'substance' of the products as vital for social effects as their design (McDonnell 2010; Bartmanski and Fuller 2018). Similarly, new art sociology advanced arguments for treating 'artistic' forms and 'aesthetic' problems not as topical domains of peripheral interest to sociology but instead as an irreducible dimension of many if not all cultural practices (see de la Fuente 2013). This seemed particularly relevant in the context of urban environments but was not exactly a new revelation in art history. For example, in the 1960s George Kubler had observed that the concentration of power and abundant material conditions of creative life and work in cities are conducive to a high level of training and cultural production (see Kubler 2008: 85–88). Metropolitan centers become synonymous with specific "cultural techniques" that gave rise to whole meaning formations such as Renaissance (Belting 2012a: 25). Kubler's mentor Henri Focillon famously insisted that what's conventionally called 'form' has its own meaning-making capacity, that even "the most attentive study of the most homogenous milieu, of the most closely woven concatenation of circumstances, will not serve to give us the design of the towers of Laon" (Focillon 2021: 13).

Today some cultural sociologists elaborate on such a perspective showing how a variety of architectural spatialities and built environments have relative autonomy, just like symbolic structures do. They therefore can be considered to be part and parcel of meaning making through their corresponding experiential qualities (Stets 2016; Neubert 2018: 181). Contemporary architecture and archaeology, the fields intimately connected to space and materiality, have elaborated on these aspects and synthesized some of the evidence for the crucial functionality of site, style and substance (Feldman 2014). They also understood that the sheer *presence* of spaces "manifests itself as a cluster of affects" (Moussavi 2014: 37). Expressive cultures provide telling cases in point, epitomized not only by politically potent expressive symbols in music and dance (Melville 2020) but also symbolic politics more generally (Bartmanski and Fuller 2018). I will address this problem in greater detail below, linking it with the role of urban concentrations – or co-locations – in constituting civic values. This, in turn, is a key condition for the emergence of certain scenes and cultural production.

Now, it is important to state that this set of perspectives began to decisively influence the meaning-oriented sociology only when the new understandings of space and materiality matured in the 2000s (see Woodward 2007). That process required a more fine-grained comprehension of how different classes of objects alter significatory practices (see especially Keane 2005), as well as a better elaboration of the mutually constitutive relation of spaces and symbols, one that "avoids most obvious pitfalls" of dualistic thinking (see Kipnis 2013: 5). This process has validated Lefebvre's aforementioned critique of structuralism and opened up new avenues of investigation. For example, there appeared conceptions regarding the status of artifacts in explanation of cultural practices and the psychoanalytically inspired understanding of consumer cultures (e.g., Reckwitz 2002 and Woodward

2011, respectively). On the other hand, the theory of the "city as experiential space" productive of shared meanings has been proposed (Löw 2013).

Martina Löw's (2001) sociology of space (*Raumsoziologie*) attempted to work out a vocabulary that would be sufficiently complex and synthetic to "overcome subject/object division" (2001: 196). It aimed to theorize how "the everyday constitution of space is bound to perceptual processes" (Löw 2016: 165). Neither a physical 'container' nor a mere 'representation', space is the *experiential surround* that we *sense* (*das Spüren der Umgebung*) and which simultaneously influences our sensing of it. Thus, as far as sociologists are concerned, space can be seen as constituted by a powerful synthesis of perceptual (corporeal) and vibrant (material) goods, and it is this synthesis that helps avoid both the reductions of structurally deterministic habitus and idealistic tendencies of 'strong' culturalism (Löw 2001: 195–196). According to this conception, a key point is that the external efficacy of what Löw calls 'social goods' cannot be explained solely as a significatory effect (ibid.: 194). Although the English phrase 'social goods' can come across as too static a category, the German formulation eschews passive voice and reveals neutrally understood 'social goods' as affecting the constitution of space. This conception corresponds with Merleau-Ponty's (2014: 253–254, emphasis mine) argument that "space is not the milieu (real or logical) *in which* things are laid out, but rather the means *by which* the position of things becomes possible… the universal *power* of their connections …[that] are only sustained through *a subject who traces them out*", an existential "synthesis of an entirely different kind."

It is instructive to note that the aforementioned German noun *das Spüren* (sensing), related to the verb *spüren* (to sense/to perceive something), is also etymologically proximal to the verb *aufspüren* (to detect, to trace, to track) and the noun *die Spüren* (traces, marks). The relationality of the semantic fields of these words is not a mere tangent in the discussion. It indicates that the corporeal perception denotes the consciousness and experience of 'traces' and 'marks' that the perceived leaves on the perceiver, especially when culturally regularized. These traces/marks can become signs but they are not signs in the first place. Rather, they are indices of practice, not unlike a path which is an index of routine social practice. As Löw (ibid.: 195) states, "in perception the sensory impressions thicken (*verdichten sich*) into a process, into a sensing of one's surroundings". This conceptual formulation reveals again the affinity between Löw's idea of spatiality as "spacing" inherent in human life and Merleau-Ponty's notions of sensing and space. Consider this statement: 'sensing' is the "living communication with the world … the perceived object and the perceiving subject owe their *thickness* to sensing" (Merleau-Ponty 2014: 53, emphasis mine). Ultimately, Merleau-Ponty arrives at a notion of non-referential space viewed as "third spatiality", i.e., space as neither solely material thing nor purely formal object; rather, it is "anchored in appearances" but "nevertheless not given with them in the realist manner", transcending form/content binary (ibid.: 258–259).

While the vocabulary of existential "thickness" and "thickening" or "condensation" of impressions may at first strike us as overly metaphorical, it appears immediately more concrete when connected to the influential culturalist methodology of

the so-called thick description. For example, take the starting formulation of this volume: 'to think the social out of the spatial'. Approached phenomenologically, it means – inter alia – to strive for a "thicker description", one that tries to do justice to the thickness that Merleau-Ponty talks about (Bartmanski 2022: 178). Theorizing culture without reference to such a thicker description makes cultural sociological analysis of space incomplete. In short, I posit that this phenomeno-logical/sociological terminology enhances our understanding of cultural produc-tion because it enables us to go "beyond the cultural arbitrary" in search of the other relevant "sources of cultural power" (Smilde and Zubrzycki 2016). It enables scholars of cultural production and of cultural play to integrate the extant literal and metaphorical notions of 'the location of culture' without which sociology threatens to become divorced from vital environmental concerns.

It is revealing that the psychoanalytical perspective on cultural experience and transitional objects by D.W. Winnicott's is rooted in similar conceptual intuitions and spatially inspired words. In his paper "The Location of Cultural Experience" he argues that "the place where cultural experience is located is the *potential space* between the individual and the environment", one that can be understood as the "third area" which is a "product of the experiences in the environment that obtains" (Winnicott 2005: 143). Readily adaptable to sociological investigations devoted to cultural consumption/production, it offers the view which "neither reduces person-object exchanges to the psyche, assemblages of practices, or to the dead hand of social structural forces (Woodward 2011: 366). As such it helps to redress the aforementioned anti-psychological bias of Bourdieu's theory as well as the biases of strong constructivist culturalisms.

In what follows I will use the field of independent music production and the notion of the *scene* to illustrate and further concretize this non-reductive, phenomenologically inspired context of meaning making. The scene is reduc-ible neither to its human members nor to cities and infrastructures. Every scene exists as a kind of Winnicott's 'third area', as a space of play and cultural experi-ence. Every field of cultural production is also a phenomenal field. *Considering artistic 'scenes',* sociologists naturally think first about Bourdieuian 'field' or Becker's 'art world', and they also employ such auxiliary categories as *milieu, community of taste, performance, resonance* and *event*. However, while quite intuitive, the ontological character of these complex phenomena remains at least partially black boxed. How is the 'world' of art-world constituted? What supports the 'field' in which cultural production takes place? What stabilizes it enough to be relatively durable and thus recognizable as such? This opacity is the case partly because the constructivist programs in social sciences have prioritized the epistemic, referential and discursive aspects of these categories, treating them as chiefly representational social phenomena. I tackled this issue in greater detail elsewhere (Bartmanski 2018). Here I restrict my argument to the claim that it is fruitful, at least in cases of certain kinds of 'spaces of cultural production', to re-contextualize *art world* as life-world and field as scene. It is in this sense that *scenes as experiential phenomena* are complex spaces of cultural production and consumption.

Affordance and Event

Affordance is an important category with which to elaborate the aforementioned recontextualization. For one thing, it enables sociologists to fulfill Lefebvre's call for a new non-reductive sociological analysis of space. It is a relational category that refers to materially mediated meanings of actions that material environments "afford" or make possible for people (see Vercel and McDonnel in this volume). This type of conceptualization can prove particularly useful if we look not only at small-scale entities with which terms like an aura of an art object or a place is typically associated but also with spatially distributed networked practices and emplaced, bigger scale events that contribute to the creation of an artistic scene or even a whole cultural movement. This use of 'space' could be characterized as re-linking of the well-known but often too isolated aspects of cultural production: creator/producer, audience/consumer, mis-en-scene, media, economy of symbolic production, resonance, politics, zeitgeist, etc. Such explicit incorporation of the notion of space has typically been lacking in meaning-centered sociology, even in the otherwise sensitive cognate treatments of 'event' and 'performance'.

For example, Robin Wagner-Pacifici (2017: 12) offers a nuanced account of "what is an event" from a cultural sociological perspective and, unlike most predecessors in her discipline, admits at the outset that it is critically important "to know the natures and signification capacities of different forms" which also leads her to repeatedly reference space in the analysis of meanings of events. And yet it is telling that her use of space is far less extensive than her use of time. While the derivative category of *temporality* features prominently in the book's index, the logical counterpart – 'spatiality' – does not at all. At the same time, Wagner-Pacifici's treatment of event as a cultural category indicates that space does play a role in more than one way and she even uses a spatial metaphor in this respect. She suggests that the "ground from which events erupt" does in fact include space but that it is normally relegated to the collective unconscious (2017: 42). It is precisely in moments like this one that phenomenology becomes useful in questioning the received culturalist conceptions of meaning-making shaped by the linguistic turn.

According to Merleau-Ponty, humans are not unaware of their being enveloped by meaningfully radiant spaces of the world, even if they may be unable or unwilling to act discursively on these sensations. He argues: "I can live more things than I can represent to myself … every sensation is already pregnant with a sense, inserted into a confused or clear configuration" (Merleau-Ponty 2014: 310). This is discernible in revolutionary conditions and processes of their iconization. But more routine acts of cultural production are shaped by these dynamics as well. In short, such a phenomenologically grounded notion of spatiality allows us to detect the co-presence of "sources" from which meaningful events "erupt", or entanglements *through which they emerge*. 'Space' rarely if ever can be said to be a unitary 'factor' in cultural explanation. Instead, it is a composite, relational milieu of human action known to sociologists through corporeal and perceptual facts of life and therefore analytically useful in its adjectival and adverbial forms. It is better graspable when viewed as what Martina Low calls the figuration of social goods whose

arrangement – or perceptual spatiality – makes them recognizable as objects of existential orientation and conducive to the production of shared meanings. When plugged into the investigation of aesthetic scenes and their events, such a relational, phenomenological perspective may help us *see better what* space actually 'accomplishes'.

At least one important caveat is in order here before empirical exemplifications are considered. There exist a whole variety of different aesthetic practices, events and scenes belonging to different 'spaces of cultural production', each of which is situation-dependent, thus demanding properly adjusted consideration. They involve different combinations of materialities and emplacements that make them culturally effective. Space may figure differently in each of them. Echoing Wagner-Pacifici's directive, we can say that just like various objects are differently subject to processes of signification and re-signification, so are the different areas of cultural production variably subject to spatial determinations. Here I will refer to independent music scenes and their 'spaces of enjoyment' as examples that capture the relationship between the formative DIY ethos (Bennett and Peterson 2004) and the "urban ecologies" that "host" this sensibility and are in turn rewired and remapped by its spatial enactment (Amin and Thrift 2017; Melville 2020). Once these ecological aspects are understood in their reciprocal conditionality, we can begin to discuss what it means when we say that space *constitutes* a missing link in cultural analysis. It is not quite enough to settle for the observation that co-location of socio-material resources, institutions and forms of capital gives rise to vibrant urban scenes. As Bourdieu rightly observed, it's not a matter of a "mere aggregation of things", certainly not in the context of complex phenomena such as cities and burgeoning networked entertainment industries.

Take, for example, New York City in the 1950s when jazz was rapidly becoming a major scene there and the city itself a major stage for what defined late modern musical sensibilities. So much more was happening for jazz to attain the status of what Belting would call a "cultural technique". Both in micro scale (jazz band) and macro scale (jazz scene) it was certainly more than the mere additive 'aggregation of social forces'. We need to know how a given spatiality occasions this rather than that meaning making practices. As was the case in other music contexts, the success story of jazz makes visible a range of micro mediations and macro conditions coming together 'at the right time in the right places.' "The resonances of agglomeration are always mediated, folded into a wider force field" (Amin and Thrift 2017: 102). Framing cultural production through notions such as *scene* allows us to plug the notion of spatiality into a much wider sociological field.

(Music) Scene as (Cultural) Space

Music scenes are socially meaningful phenomena in part because they make sense as spatial and sensory phenomena. Put more concretely, the scene is *ensconced* in a specific spatial world describable sociologically as entanglements of affordances which are in turn correlated with *emergent* cultural effects. 'To be ensconced' means etymologically to *be in a safe space*, to be free from harm, or to hide from

the outside, potentially hostile environment. It means an effect of an "ecological niche" (Rose, Birk, and Manning 2021). As such, it can be a version of what used to be called in ancient Rome *locus amoenus* – a utopian space of safety and comfort. I will return to this utopian aspect below. But it is also useful here to recall that a *sconce* denotes a candleholder or a lamp, something that has a radiant power or something that supports a source of such power, capable of sending signals outwards, not simply concealing its existence. This double meaning captures well the situation of many independent music scenes, especially in their formative periods. Claiming independence implies a dissensus or a subaltern social position, or what Foucault (2003: 7) called "the insurrection of subjugated knowledges". It thus incurs distinct existential risks of material and mental kinds associated with adversities that "are inscribed into the bodies and souls of human beings" (Rose, Birk, Manning, ibid.). Having or creating a safe space is essential for such scenes to emerge and last. At the same time, independent, alternative or avant-garde scenes are not just inwardly oriented movements. They aspire to be seen; they want to be discoverable but preferably on their own terms. They aim to transcend the most basic confines of place and time. Just like any cultural production, music makes cultural sense only in a series of relations to actual and potential consumers, present and future.

Finally, the adjective *emergent* refers here to the quality of a whole that is not reducible to its parts and that does not have a simple ostensive definition. Instead, it is a kind of effect that transcends simple additive function and derives its specificity from relations and interactions between the elements. This logic applies not only to different elements of a situation or a process but also to the heterogenous and trans-local character of scenes. As the different localized movements and their emplaced ecologies recognize each other as cognate phenomena and forge a variety of linkages and relationships, they give rise to a cultural web whose meanings transcend the significance of any one of its sites. Here the spatial units like venue or neighborhood are elements or nodes in a web of ecological niches based on family resemblances rather than isolated phenomena.

Of course, such scenes are always communities of real people who actualize them within these conditions. But my argument here conceives of scenes as spaces of cultural production that emerge by giving rise to spheres of embodied and emplaced meanings. As Jacques Ranciere (2011: 57) pointed out, "an aesthetic community is not a community of aesthetes. It is a community of sense." I see this observation as compatible with the phenomenological idea of sense-making and use it to show that (1) scenes are not merely the social effects of the linear aggregation of individual objects, persons and 'field positions' who fulfill certain formal criteria, and that (2) scenes are *spaces of sense* and cultural experience, i.e. they are distributions of the sensible (Ranciere 2013). These qualities tend to be recognized in forms of specific atmosphere, style, identity, or cultural myth, each of which produces recognizable aesthetic formations. These scene-specific styles, values, identities, symbols and myths are often crucially authenticated through spatial references, such as the "roots" and "origins" as well as through iconic institutionalization or emplaced belonging. The figure below summarizes this description
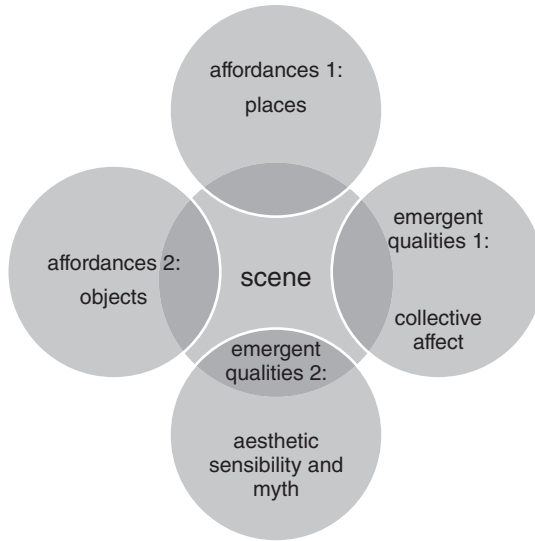
Figure 11.1 The four-sphere scheme as a heuristic for scene analysis.

in a basic heuristic form that might be called 'the four orbit scheme', whereby each 'orbit' is mutually elaborative and productive of a scene.

This kind of understanding can yield distinct sociological advantages. On the one hand, it aims to avoid the dangers of nostalgic idealization of 'community' as opposed to supposedly 'atomized society'. On the other hand, it also aims to avoid the danger of seeing independent cultural fields as harmonious, autonomous environments as opposed to the competitive, conflict-ridden 'market'. While they always stand enveloped by markets, they are not determined by them. There is always a surplus of sense to them. Not unlike Merleau-Ponty (2014: 304) who spoke about "the symbolic 'pregnancy' of form", John Dewey argued that a given 'space of sense' is "pregnant" with a certain range of affective topographies rather than with others. He wrote that "sense qualities are the carriers of meanings, not as vehicles carry goods but as a mother carries a baby when the baby is part of her own organism. Works of art are literally pregnant with meaning. Meanings … are not added on by 'association'" (Dewey 2005: 122–123). This is a crucial point that has been taken up over decades in a variety of guises, from the manifesto of Marshall McLuhan to Hal Foster's notion of '*art-architecture complex*' that means work that is "able to carve out spaces for experiences that are not scripted or even expected" and that therefore "the question of medium is not an academic one, for an important struggle is waged between practices [of] embodiment and emplacement and a spectacle culture that aims to dissolve all such awareness" (Foster 2013: xi). Working in this vein, Ian Woodward and I tried to show that a sound carrier and music production format, for example, the analog record first perfected in its modern form in the 1950s, is not a 'container' for aesthetic content but

rather an integral part of the aesthetic experience of music that makes it culturally meaningful (Bartmanski and Woodward 2015).

In short, instead of seeing space merely as a passive stage *on which* humans 'make' meaning and things happen according to the scripts of a given discursive formation, we may consider it as a complex means *of* action that is itself potent – a sensory formation that 'envelops' and conditions cultural production, a phenomenologically impactful world underwriting any artistic endeavor as a mediating 'third area' *through which* creation is enabled and constrained. Even if vital elements of cultural production appear to happen nowadays online or otherwise in the seemingly de-territorialized electronic sphere 'guided' by AI algorithms (e.g., digital music production, consumption and dissemination), it is still the case that gigs, DJ sets and club performances require co-presence of persons on location to be fully meaningful as such. This, in turn, forms an indispensable dimension of the cultural production I call here 'independent music scene'.

Cultural production in music worlds as we have known them, especially but not exclusively in independent DIY scenes, has not been reducible to the production of aesthetic 'artefacts' that can be neatly separable for analytical purposes as commodities or scripted practices of commodification; it includes the emergence of aesthetic 'experiences', which may or may not be commodifiable. Aesthetic experiences – as Dewey showed – are always parts of broader and necessarily spatialized performances. The understanding of space proposed here means that we ought not only to ask 'where' certain experiences happen but also *how* they *can* happen. These are 'spatial' questions too. *Space is a distributive conditionality rather than an attributive effect* and therefore answering the question 'how experience can happen' requires a keen awareness of its spatiality. This means asking, inter alia, 'how an experience takes place' and 'with what consequences.'

It should be clearer by now that in order to do justice to this research agenda, we can privilege neither the traditional analytic philosophical conceptions nor the purely structuralist views of meaning, each of which – despite their differences – tends to reduce meaning to its conceptual, discursive and propositional aspects. Such theories – (de)formed by dualistic rationalistic Western metaphysics – are "eviscerated" conceptions of meaning (Johnson 2007: x). From an open-ended space-oriented perspective rehearsed here, they seem anachronistically divorced from experiential meanings of human life that constantly influence our ideas about what does and what does not 'make sense'. Hence, I propose to heuristically extend the conceptions of 'bodily depths' to the topic of 'spatial depths'. This proposition stems from the phenomenological intuition that human experiences of collective effervescence that matter for music scenes are resonant *body-in-space experiences*. This set of notions comprises a vocabulary in which fruitful other conceptions, for instance, the praxeological theory of "affective spaces" could gain new traction (Reckwitz 2012). This is a synthetic discourse that is congenial to the agenda advanced here because – as Reckwitz showed – it eschews both the complete culturalization and total naturalization of affects, suggesting that in order to explain cultural change "the analysis of the emergence of new artefact-space complexes is indispensable". In short, there is a kind of broad tacit convergence between a wide

range of perspectives on cultural production which, when taken together, offer a powerful toolkit capable of going beyond the confines of this field alone.

Independent Music Scenes as Heterotopias

The music scene is a term that is particularly 'good to think with' about space because it is at once a symbolic relational field in Bourdieu's sense and a distributive, transversal phenomenon intelligible in terms of Lefebvre's and Ranciere's conceptions: it exists at once within urban ecology, symbolic-discursive sphere, and technological material sphere, i.e., it cuts across a variety of distinct ontological layers of social life. At the same time, it is not definable by reference to any one of those dimensions, only at specific and mutable intersections of those dimensions. In addition to being transversal, scenes are also *trans-local*: spanning various, potentially distant socio-material contexts. As such, scenes are an assemblage of cognate 'spaces of sense' and 'cultural techniques' that bound together collectives of producers and consumers, as well as like-minded groups coming from places that may be unlike each other when it comes to some cultural variables (language, nationality, etc.) but similar in others (aesthetic taste, sexuality, etc.). This enables sociologists not only to decouple the notion of space from the rigid purely territorial concepts of administratively or geographically delimited sites, and move it instead toward relational understandings of plural yet connected spatialities; it also helps to reveal meanings of scene creation associated with the spatialized awareness of being separate yet connected, of being unique and related to the 'outside', of the specific 'here and now' and the 'beyond' in a spatio-temporal sense.

Reflecting on the traditionally strong association between the original emergence of the techno music scene and the city of Detroit, one of the founding figures of the scene Jeff Mills (2010: 326) observed that it was a mixture of specific local historical conditions of the city (relatively wealthy, with relatively advanced technologies, heavily industrialized, on the border between two different but linguistically identical countries, etc.) and the trans-local connectedness to the global and futuristic "beyond" that these conditions continually referenced and increasingly enabled. Mills' own brand of musical futurism made him emblematic of the so-construed urban ecology of Detroit, as well as of a larger cultural sensibility associated with the city. This 'space of sense' was articulated and authenticated by the Detroit experience of that time but was shared elsewhere too. Insofar as scenes assume cultural rather than strictly professional artistic resonance, they tend to be trans-local and experienced as more broadly existential and aesthetic phenomena, not simply musical preferences. They are consolidated 'cultural techniques' in Belting's sense, not only projections of contingent fads; we might go so far as to say that they are 'techniques of the self' in Foucault's sense, not just structures of discourse (Foucault 1985). But in music, scenes have also been the fields of the outsider or queer culture: a 'counter-culture', 'sub-culture', 'alternative culture', 'underground culture', 'the subaltern', etc. Referring again to Bourdieu we may say that artistic scenes tend to activate a particularly fateful 'reversal' of the dominant economic world. As Ian Woodward and I argued in our study of

independent labels in techno and house music (Bartmanski and Woodward 2020), this scene is no different, although 'material economy' and 'symbolic economy' are inextricably linked and spatially conditioned. What is sociologically instructive is that in their formative periods, these scenes are often place-specific, locally active, socially marginal, and aesthetically contesting the larger cultural status quo in order to imagine and embody a cultural difference.

Various independent scenes that emerged in the post-WWII era are illustrious cases in point. However different they may be, their original outsiderdom appears to be a common denominator for them. From the jazz of the 50s and the soul of the 60s in American cities (Cosgrove 2016) to the punk and post-punk movements in British cities at the turn of the 70s and 80s (Reynolds 2005), and on to the house and techno of the 90s in U.S. American and European cities (Collin 2018), many different scenes shared the initial status of urban avant-garde. They were originally underground or subaltern 'street cultures', niche styles of under-represented or excluded groups that carved out figurative and literal spaces of alterity, whereby they could celebrate their heterogeneity or freely and safely express what Umi Vaughan (2013) calls "renegade stance". These movements were never merely and narrowly musical phenomena. They had artistic roots (Barcewell 2007) and were experienced as broader social and aesthetic sensibilities too, ensconced in places that could amplify and frame their message on their terms. This was not only the case of the by now well-known scenes of the 50s, the 60s and a variety of post-1968 genres, but also of the seemingly more hedonistic electronic dance music cultures that emerged from the 1980s on (Reynolds 2013). For example, as Martin James (2020: 27, emphasis mine) writes in his reconstruction of the British 1990s rave and Drum'n'Bass scenes, "the will to create *pleasure spaces* outside of the economic and legislative structures that shaped and dictated our leisure time represented a profound political step." Here we hear again an echo of Lefebvre's conception of the '*spaces of enjoyment*' as crucial devices in the process of unlocking creative, socially transformative energies. Similarly, reflecting on the importance of that British scene, Caspar Melville (2020: 11) wrote that it was not merely about the creation of a new musical current worthy of journalistic critics' attention but instead "about the everyday politics of diversity and the role that music cultures have played in creating spaces for living with and through difference."

In other words, those scenes sought and created their own quasi-utopian spaces of relative safety, otherness and freedom of expression with specific musical style as their chosen mode of expression. They all strove to invert what they saw as the 'mainstream' or 'hegemonic' values, generating along the way new and frequently unplanned forms of contestation of dominant regimes of worth. In time they made aesthetic difference and raised social awareness. It is precisely here where it is useful to adopt one important meaning of Michel Foucault's notion of 'heterotopia' to capture the fact that these scenes were simultaneously actual and metaphorical 'spaces of difference'. Foucault offered a fertile formulation when he wrote that 'heterotopia' is "a place of otherness, a kind of 'actually realized utopia in which all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are represented, contested and reversed" (1998: 187). Put differently, it is a kind of *locus amoenus*

conceived of as a space carved out in a given 'landscape of meaning' (Reed 2011) (e.g., 'art world' in the sense of Howard Becker) and, at the same time, as an actual materialized emplacement – as Foucault insists – which enables these meanings to be socially resonant.

When it comes to the late modern music scenes – and especially to what John Cage (2011: 87) might have more broadly called "sound and rhythm" music – their cultural meanings become socially resonant when they can be literally resonant in multiple spaces. Forming repeated embodied experiences which are amenable to collective effervescence is critically important, and so are material music-related technologies that form new 'technologies of the self' (DeNora). It is here where Foucault's notion of heterotopia expanded by new congenial theories such as the somaesthetics of Richard Schusterman enhances the extant sociology of cultural production as a 'field of positions and capital distribution'. While Bourdieu had also been cognizant of how independent scenes thrived on the reversal of dominant value orders (and how symbolic orders were embodied in the form of habitus), he didn't deem spatiality of social action as a significant condition that makes action socially potent and culturally transformative. Among vital spatialities are – inter alia – (1) proximity understood as the potential condition of creating cultural exchange and social values (Fuller and Ren 2019); (2) 'urban ecologies' and affective spaces that enable and mediate such proximity (Reckwitz 2012); (3) localized material affordances that propagate what Julian Henriquez (2007) calls the fusion of "heterogenous acoustic space and discontinuous ritual time"; and last but not least, (4) trans-local identifications between cognate groups which transcend particularized meanings and therefore amplify the feeling of an inclusive community of sense.

These spatial conditions are increasingly cited in various contemporary accounts of new forms of cultural production and became more obviously discussed under the pandemic-related lockdown conditions. When it comes to the contemporary intersections of music scenes and urban spaces, the emergent consequences have been articulated most explicitly and directly by Caspar Melville (2020) in his study tellingly titled "It's a London Thing: How Rare Groove, Acid House, and Jungle Remapped the City". He starts by evoking Paul Gilroy and describes the selected musical scenes as "moral economies", not merely musical economies. He also draws on Gilroy's work when he identifies a major gap in research, namely the fact that the scene's "mechanisms of cultural transmission are poorly understood and only partially mapped". The gist of Melville's spatial argument is that insofar as these movements became morally and politically significant in the UK and beyond, it was due to the music's ability to procure space for its own sonic and cultural purposes, and therefore "divert space" (Melville 2020: 5–6). Following Lefebvre, he argues that these scenes showed how music can eroticize spaces, recoding the libidinal energies of the post-industrial city. As a result, while the scenes have been growing, they could "reconstitute, remix the moral and political geographies of everyday life in the city", in this specific case – to remap the post-colonial space of London, "the beneficiary-in-chief of Empire" (see, ibid.: 3–15). This music-driven and space-related post-colonial transformation is an important example of how

Lefebvre's basic conception of spaces of pleasure could be brought to fruition in a non-trivial way, grounded in concrete social movements with real-life implications that go far beyond music proper.

It is in this context that clubs and bars are perhaps the most obvious – although not the only – exemplifications of the socio-acoustic spaces of enjoyment through which scenes can engage in the aforementioned transformative performances. Thus, they can be classified as what Philip Smith (1999) calls the "liminal places" in his typology of "elementary forms of place". These are spaces that facilitate putting everyday norms on hold and can therefore satisfy the ludic or even sub-versive needs of a community. To the extent that this cultural role prevails as one of the key motives, the ritualistic rhythms of dance music that are made resonant through such spaces create an atmosphere in which routine rhythms of everyday life are suspended, temporarily forgotten and potentially also questioned. In short, far more than negatively marginal or 'sub-cultural', those scenes have been hetero-topias that became platforms for positive transformative cultural production which generated their own enduring symbolic gravity, social relevance and independent economic impact.

Last but not least, it is significant that the names of cities where a given musi-cal style is said to originate become synonymous with styles and scenes, from the aforementioned Detroit techno to Chicago house to the Bristol Sound of the 1990s to New Orleans jazz, to Seattle grunge, etc. These associative signifiers are not purely arbitrary or conventional shortcuts that merely 'localized' and aes-theticize the elective affinities between urban roots and musical sensibilities. They are authenticated as resonant spatialities which in turn are able to define whole temporal cultural eras, way beyond the original geographical confines, as was the case with the "roaring 20s" in Berlin or the "swinging 60s" in London. But while cultural analysts are familiar with discussions of social temporalities and aware of the usefulness of such notion as '*zeitgeist*', there is no correspondingly elabo-rated concept to capture the constitutive spatialities through which transformative zeitgeists erupt and change society. That is to say, there is no developed discourse of '*Raumgeist*' in sociological language, the term to which the German language lends itself easily and which in fact has already been coined in academia but never fleshed out in or outside it. Treating this situation as yet another symptom of the historically peripheral status of 'space' in social science, I will discuss its potential significance in lieu of the conclusion.

Recapitulation: Between Zeitgeist and 'Raumgeist'

Independent music scenes as fields of heterotopic cultural production gain social traction and cultural resonance when they are propitiously 'mediated' or 'framed' not just by communication, aesthetic technologies of play and the "right" zeit-geist but also when they are distributed within cultural techniques and material affordances – i.e., ensconced in a felicitous 'Raumgeist.' I propose to subsume at least some of the aforementioned emergent effects of scenes under this common term created by analogy to the German *zeitgeist* (German *Raum* means space; *Geist*

means spirit or mindset). At first glance, 'Raumgeist' is a spatio-cultural complex facilitating collective feelings and atmospheres that fuse specific sense and sensibility in a tantalizing way. Although 'Raumgeist' was mentioned by Edward Soja in an essay translated into German (Soja in Döring and Thielmann 2008: 241–262), the concept was not systematically developed by him there, nor has it been disseminated in Anglophone cultural sciences thereafter. The hybrid nature of this German neologism seems particularly useful here because it indicates a sociological utility of 'space' as both an incursive and recursive condition of social life. What I mean by this is that the aforementioned spatial conditions shape cultural production intensively and repeatedly. The term conjoins the material sensuous substrate with the seemingly 'immaterial' referential product, or what is conventionally designated by 'Geist'; it points to one of the cultural notions utilized here, namely that space is an entanglement of affordances that ground, frame and authenticate our perception and emergent cultural meanings.

This means that 'Raumgeist' would refer neither to immutable physical determinations nor to habitual psychological reactions, although research that frames the city as a "two-way psychological process" (Landry and Murray 2017) is perhaps not entirely without its merits. But by reinscribing intuitive neologisms such as 'Raumgeist' in the cultural sociological discourse we can redress the aforementioned imbalance between the sense-making capabilities accorded to discourses, temporalities and spatialities. Specifically, we can delineate more precisely the formation of various sustained scenes in specific urban ecologies because so much in those scenes depends on affective engagement with a given spatial setting and what happens within it. Moreover, 'Raumgeist' has more to do with intersubjective feelings shared in a concrete situation than with the 'subjective' emotions of an individual. As Paul Gilroy argues, each music scene is embedded in specific "structures of feelings" which are irreducible to structures of textuality as a form of expressive culture (Gilroy 1999: 77). Introducing Raumgeist as a specific category, and spatiality more generally, responds to the call formulated by Gilroy that poststructuralist theory requires a different register of analytic concepts (ibid.: 78). In this context Raumgeist could be understood as a kind of 'meaning architecture' implicated in specific "spaces of sense", or specific distributions of the sensible in Ranciere's sense, rather than articulated in discursive formations. Of course, we do possess more sensuous cultural concepts that can be relevant here, for example, the atmosphere of architectural spaces (Böhme 2014) or traditional notions like *genius loci*. Yet 'Raumgeist' as an encapsulation of the emergent meanings outlined above affords additional complexity as far as cultural thick description is concerned. Just like 'zeitgeist' conveys more semantic richness than 'period', 'occasion' or 'era', so could 'Raumgeist' be more sociologically apt than 'context' and more generalizable than 'setting', at least when it comes to the aesthetic entwinements I have sketched above.

Another benefit of grouping the joint spatial effects under the umbrella term of 'Raumgeist' is its compatibility with what we could call 'space of resonance' or activation space. If zeitgeist is a broad temporal condition that enables certain collective feelings to be not only heard and recognizable but also relatable and moving,

then 'Raumgeist' means a spatiality of sense making within which certain 'area of cultural experience' become possible and amplified, and within which certain acts are thinkable and encouraged and activated. Music scenes are instructive in this respect. They not only codify 'separate' style, as structuralists might say, or articulate and formalize 'typical' taste, but they also resonate with people to activate them in new ways, to make them do things they would not do otherwise. Far from being merely about communication or 'about sound' and technical comprehension of music, scenes embody and instantiate an entire sensory formation in which all senses are engaged and stimulated in deeper existential sense. They provide what Brian Eno (2013) calls a stylistic "trigger", artistic performance that moves you, that makes something happen, which according to him one "can see very clearly in dance music." Iconic producers are the ones who offer quintessential performances of this kind. Iconic music scenes are the ones that attain powerfully resonant development, which requires affectively arresting alignment or synthesis of play and 'Raumgeist'. Of course, what counts as 'affectively arresting' in a given context is not simply 'naturally' given, inherently determined and then faithfully represented in language or sound. But performative meaning of the cultural message is not just a matter of the attributive mediation of discourse but hinges also on distributive spatialization of meaning.

Consider again a jazz-related story of the iconic trio assembled by the pianist Bill Evans. He rose to prominence in New York City at the end of the 1950s, eventually joining Miles Davis who was then at a peak of his career and with whom he recorded what turned out to be the best-selling jazz album of all times – *Kind of Blue*. By the standards of the field, Evans embraced a uniquely lyrical and emotional approach but he was also analytically inclined. He offered Miles Davis not only pitch-perfect musical notes but also reasoned liner notes – the back cover text about the art of improvisation. Being at the vanguard of the jazz development at the heyday of this genre, he subsequently formed a new super group. It had what artists call a unique chemistry between its members, a "telepathic rapport that had to be heard to be believed" (James 1973) and that could be sensed and publicly witnessed especially during concerts. Evans' signature style was a draw card but it was the emergent quality of the group performing together that established it quickly as a quintessential aesthetic intervention into its field, one that acted as a "trigger" for collective effervescence within the scene. The live performances in the summer of 1961 in the intimate setting of a famed NYC-based basement club *The Village Vanguard* riveted attention and yielded recordings that garnered both popular and critical acclaim. But the tragic death of the bassist Scott LaFaro days later occasioned the end of the band. While it turned out to be short-lived, what the trio accomplished in concert and recorded on tape proved transformative for and iconic of the scene. Evans reflected on the story in succinct but moving words: "what is most important is not the style but how the style is developed and how you can play within it … rarely did everything fall into place, but when it did, we thought it was sensational. Of course, it may not mean much to listener, as most people in clubs do not listen on that level anyway … The music developed as we performed, and what you heard came through actual performance"

(Evans in Pettinger 2002: 114). One may add that enough people did happen to listen on that level, a broader resonance was achieved. One implication is that performative meaning making is not shaped by the pre-established inherited scripts of culture. Nor is it generated by the *attribution* of value that sticks. Rather, we need to ask what makes it stick, and as I have tried to indicate we must add the theory of the phenomenological distribution to the equation. Not any kind of projection or attribution of meaning is equally possible anywhere. In fact, meaningful cultural production is hardly simply a 'projection'. This metaphor is no longer sufficient. Relationally understood 'Raumgeist' can help expand the relevant sociological vocabulary. Each instantiation of 'Raumgeist' sensitizes the scene participants to a certain cluster of sensibilities and meanings more than to others, setting the phenomenological brackets of plausible 'projections', articulations and resignifications. Humans do not 'possess' Raumgeist like an object or a flat; rather, they inhabit it like a home, or – better – share it like a dancefloor. This formulation matters because it recognizes spatiality as a fundamental existential context, which nevertheless has so far not been sufficiently elucidated, or "mapped", as Gilroy aptly put it. While the extant perspectives did much to widen the field of 'social forces' that condition cultural production, they did less to fathom its spatial affordances. The present exploratory discussion attempts to incorporate the phenomenological spatiality of cultural production in a way that might be generative of new actionable sociological concepts. It is in this sense that 'space' can be seen as a missing link in a larger chain of previously overlooked concepts or residual categories. While we can't – and shouldn't – concretely isolate it from other things, we can hardly do without *spatiality* if the meaningfulness of cultural production is to be adequately understood, let alone 'explained'. I have suggested that one helpful strategy is to revisit phenomenology of collective effervescence – all those things that 'hold us together', to use Antoine Hennion's celebrated phrase (2007). Re-considering space means creating a headspace for a new terminological sphere in which the interplay between 'meaning' and 'sense' can have much more traction and, therefore, attraction.

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12 Object Affordances, Space, and Meaning

The Case of Real Estate Staging

Kelcie Vercel and Terence E. McDonnell

How do objects shape the meaning of place? How can arrangements of built environments, objects, and people channel imagination? These essential questions motivate analyses that push the sociology of space beyond the study of situations to the study of *possibilities*. Taking lessons from work on the materiality of objects and meaning-making, we elaborate sociological theories of space by moving beyond treatments of objects as simple cues that tell people "What situation we're in" and "where we are." Certainly, objects do this work of indexing place—understood as cultural and cognitive associations tied to the built environment. Alternatively, we emphasize the ways space—as the physical and material arrangements of objects in an environment—evokes interpretations of the possible through questions of "what can we do?" This shift prioritizes analyzing space before place, "position" before "location" (Griswold, Mangione, and McDonnell 2013). If research on place accounts for what *should* be done, a focus on space considers what *could* be done in this environment through attention to ecologies of objects, spaces, and bodies. Environments treated as *space* are not pre-signified or constant, but open to interpretation and imagination.

We address these questions with a study of real estate stagers—people who prepare a home for sale by changing the feel of the home so as to increase the value and likelihood of sale.[1] They do this by strategically repainting interior walls; reconfiguring spaces; and by switching out furniture, art, and other objects. In their everyday practice, home stagers labor to reshape the meaning of the home for potential buyers. Their hope is to reconfigure the space in ways that enable potential buyers to *imagine* themselves and their lives in the home.

In effect, the work of home stagers is to change the *affordances* of the environment. The concept of affordances comes from ecological psychologist J.J. Gibson. Following Gibson (1986), we argue that the environment and objects in a home largely determine the meanings available to home buyers and those meanings are the actions the material environment "affords" or makes possible for them. We argue that this is an act of *imagination*—not something predetermined by the environment, but made manifest in the possibilities for action that emerge in the *interaction* between buyer and home.

Home staging is a persuasion project, and stagers have well-developed ideas about what will persuade buyers of a home's livability. They construct affordances

to support imaginings that will encourage buyers to make an offer. Below, we articulate how the literature on affordances is essential to understanding the work of home stagers. From there, we discuss the strategies stagers adopt to materially reshape the home in ways that lead buyers to perceive affordances of (1) relaxation and self-indulgence and (2) daily life and autonomy. We then consider constraints on home stagers' construction of affordances and describe how stagers—in their cultivation of and reliance on open affordances and buyers' imaginations—differ from others who construct affordances and reveal new connections between space, meaning, action, and imagination.

Affordances: Conceptual Overview & History

In recent decades, a generation of scholars has sought to center the role of objects in human action (McDonnell and Vercel 2017). Debates over the degree of agency ascribed to objects have led to doubts about the divide between subject and object (e.g., Barad 2003; Gell 1998; Miller 2005) and have invigorated the theorization of objects and material space. A growing consensus views objects and spaces as actively shaping meaning-making and action (e.g., Callon 1986; Ingold 2007; Keane 2005; Latour 1992; Pickering 1995) and not as passive receptors of human-ascribed meaning or inert tools that humans simply put to use. Cognitive processing is not all in the head, but instead "distributed" (Clark 2004) *through* material objects and spaces (Henare, Holbraad, and Wastell 2007; Turkle 2007). Taking an "extended mind" approach (Clark and Chalmers 1998) emphasizes the centrality of non-human objects in processes of human cognition and problem-solving. Dynamic interaction between people and their object-ful surroundings shapes emergent understandings of the meaning and function of space (Babon 2006; Giddens 1979; Gieryn 2002; Griswold, Mangione, and McDonnell 2013; Kidder 2009; Lefebvre 1976; Löw 2008; McDonnell 2010). What analytical tools do we have to understand these interactions and meaning-making processes?

Affordance theory offers conceptual tools for making sense of the iterative and contingent relationship people have with the material environment. Davis defines affordances as the "multifaceted relational structure between an object/technology and the use that enables or constrains potential behavioral outcomes in a particular context" (2020:6). To "object/technology" we'd add "space." Importantly, Davis notes that objects "don't make people do things but instead push, pull, enable, and constrain" and "affordances are *how* objects shape action for social situated subjects" (ibid.). Ecological psychologist J.J. Gibson developed the concept of affordances in his work *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* in 1986. Emphasizing the interplay between surfaces, perception, and action, the theory of affordances helps scholars explain how specific grounded actions emerge from the range of possible actions in an environment. The concept of affordances has been taken up by scholars researching the role of materiality in social action. Scholars have used the concept to understand music as a space for action and meaning-making (DeNora 2000), the paths by which the material qualities of objects enable unexpected action across settings (McDonnell 2010),

and how the physical arrangement of space directs the interpretive possibilities in art exhibitions (Griswold et al. 2013).

Scholars not directly engaged in this "material turn" have also employed affordance theory in a variety of ways. Because affordance theory emphasizes that possibilities for action emerge in the specific interaction between individual and environment, it opens up a route for investigating patterns in what a particular space affords for *different* groups of people. Schwartz and Neff (Schwartz and Neff 2019) describe the "gendered affordances" of Craigslist that enable different actions for men and women using their platform. Affordances have also been used as a lens for revealing unequal experiences with education technologies among students with special learning needs (Antonenko, Dawson, and Sahay 2017), understanding how social inequalities structure the environments in which children develop motor skills (Flôres et al. 2019) and determining how differently abled bodies move through physical space (van der Meer 1997).

An Analytical Bridge Connecting Space & Meaning-Making

Throughout this history, affordance has often been simplified conceptually—or used practically—to refer essentially to qualities of objects and the actions those qualities facilitate. In that type of conception, affordances themselves become something of a property of the object or the environment: Affordances reside in the material qualities of an object and individuals simply activate them. This may suit analyses and applications that are most concerned with technology design and user function, as with much research in communication studies, human-computer interaction, and design studies (Norman 1999). However, this conceptualization of affordances shifts Gibson's initial emphasis and also makes the concept less useful for the study of locally grounded meaning-making. While it is consistent with Gibson's argument to interrogate what a space or object *affords* for human action, he emphasizes, and we seek to reiterate (along with others like Stoffregen 2003), that affordances are properly a quality of the *interaction* between the human actor and the environment. Affordances emerge in this interaction and describe "the complementarity of the animal and the environment" (Gibson 1986:127). The affordances emerging in a particular interaction between a human and a material space are contingent on that specific encounter. It is this contingent and emergent nature of affordances that make them so effective for theorizing and explaining how meaning-making is grounded in material space.

In Gibson's view, to *perceive* an affordance *is to make meaning* about the relationship of one's body to one's environment. To perceive an affordance is to discover an opportunity for meaningful action. While many of Gibson's descriptions and examples are simple and concrete—a bench has the material qualities of hardness, levelness, and knee-high height and is likely to be perceived as "sit-on-able" because its qualities correspond to the bodily action of sitting (Gibson 1986:128)—this conception of affordances may be applied to more complex objects and environments. Two considerations are central to this type of extrapolation. First, as Gibson points out, humans act upon their environment in ways that

change the environment and open up new affordances for action while foreclosing others. Acknowledging this allows us to pursue questions of the manipulation of the environment for particular, situated ends and the new affordances that emerge for particular individuals (as well as the different affordances other individuals may activate in that same environment). In this way, it is possible to trace meaning thus: An environment facilitates certain meaningful actions; human actors employ that meaningful action to alter the environment; these alterations open up new possibilities for meaningful action.

Secondly, while imagination is not a prominent dimension of Gibson's model, integrating it more fully into our understanding of affordances clarifies how meaning emerges in human-object interactions. Nagy and Neff (2015), who are critical of the tendency to collapse the distinction between an object's qualities and its affordances in communication theory, argue for an intentional incorporation of imagination. The moment of visual perception and apprehension where Gibson grounds meaning may be conceptualized as having a second phase in which imagination is integral. Human action is often not neatly linear or rational, but rather tentative, tested, and imagined prior to being implemented. Human reasoning rests upon situated imagination, and the meaning humans make in their environments relies on this imagining. They imaginatively project the possibilities of their bodily action into the environment to discern affordances and to activate those affordances. They also imagine themselves or other actors when they attempt to alter their environment to generate new affordances.

The Case of Real Estate Staging

We are not the first to apply the concept of affordances to the home environment[2] nor to connect the concept explicitly to the meaning of home.[3] However, examining the work home stagers do to prepare homes for sale allows us to demonstrate how affordances can be used to think systematically about the dynamic relationship between space, function, and meaning.

The work home stagers do to prepare homes for sale reveals the type of multistage spatial meaning-making process described above: When someone puts a home up for sale, it is likely that the home no longer affords all of the action and interaction desired by that person. Indeed, when homebuyers describe their motivations for moving and evaluate their options for new housing, they consistently emphasize the desire to (and retrospectively interpret their choice as a) move from a worse housing situation to one what will suit them better (Christie, Smith, and Munro 2008). Nonetheless, many and varied affordances exist in this relationship between occupant and domestic space, and occupants inevitably alter their domestic environment in small and large ways to facilitate their specific lifestyle behaviors. The stager's job is to evaluate the potential affordances of that space and alter the material qualities of the home in order to optimize the affordances future potential occupants will perceive in the home. In this effort, home stagers draw on the broad and rich semiotic space defining the home (Vercel 2021, 2023), translate that

meaning into the surfaces and features of the home, and hope that this new environment facilitates desired imagined affordances in potential buyers.

This case allows us to distinguish the work of those who produce objects and environments—like home stagers, designers, architects, and builders—and the qualities and functions they attempt and intend to create, from the affordances that emerge in grounded interaction with particular individuals after the material space has been arranged. The great value of affordances as a theoretical concept is not as a framework for identifying every possible function or latent potential action that someone has programmed into an object or space—or that someone might possibly activate in their interaction with that object or space. The great value of affordances as a theoretical concept is in its ability to help us explain *how* and *why* particular opportunities for action emerge in *specific* human–object interactions. Stagers attempt to create domestic environments in which likely buyers will perceive desirable affordances for action. Viewing their work through the lens of affordances allows us to trace the lines from their specific material choices, to the actions they value in the home, to their broader meanings of home, drawn from shared cultural ideas of the function of the home in social life.

Stagers work to create, emphasize, and foreclose certain affordances. In this work, they are not unlike curators who choreograph bodily movement through a space to encourage tacit meaning-making (Overhill 2015) and make space legible to visitors (Griswold et al. 2013). They attempt to calibrate and articulate a complicated sociocultural and spatial terrain; they seek to convey practical functions as well as desirable cultural meanings and favorable economic comparisons. They attempt to convey function, evoke emotion, and guide imagination through their arrangement of the material environment. Their work reveals that bodily action, affect, and imagination are all essential for understanding how meaning is spatially made.

Affording Hygiene, Relaxation, and Body Celebration

The twentieth century, with its technological advances, introduced the modern bathroom into the single-family home (Madigan and Munro 1996). Bathrooms are spaces inhabitants expect to afford privacy, as seen in the scheduled rotation of family members through shared bathrooms (Douglas 1991) and in the separation of the master suite bathroom from the children's bathroom in contemporary homes (Chapman and Hockey 2002). They are expected to afford hygiene-related actions like washing and drying one's body, hair, and hands and eliminating bodily waste discretely. However, bathrooms are not only a place for utilitarian hygiene needs but also they are increasingly valued as a space for relaxation, self-indulgence, and "body celebration" (Avitts 2010; Chapman 2002; Madigan and Munro 2002). Stagers attempt to convey all of these affordances through the material objects and surfaces of bathrooms.

Stagers use scents, as well as tactile and visual elements, in order to encourage buyers' perceptions of desirable affordances. One stager suggests, "To create a spa-like ambience that evokes relaxation and tranquility, try folding and layering bright

white or colorful fluffy towels on countertops and towel bars. Lightly scented candles, soaps, and lotions with attractive packaging will provide a feeling of self-indulgence."[4] Here, the stager uses specific objects and surfaces to create a visual, tactile, and olfactory space that he/she hopes will trigger positive associations with spas and relaxation, resulting in feelings of "relaxation" and "tranquility," as well as imagined future "self-indulgence." The buyer is meant to be able to imagine what they will do, feel, and experience in this space.

Affording Daily Life and Autonomy

Stagers target another complicated set of perceptions, actions, and imaginings when they try to balance demonstrations of mundane function with an optimal level of personalization. Stagers have strong ideas about how buyers interact with home spaces. They are skeptical about buyers' ability to perceive affordances for daily living, so they devote substantial effort to making these affordances plain. Consider these descriptions of home buyers: "Because many buyers have difficulty envisioning a room in any other way than the way they see it, it's important to either show or tell them the potential uses for the room."[5] Or, "Buyers can struggle in picturing themselves moving in if a home is left empty…If your listing is vacant, consider staging it to bring in furniture and accessories to help define the various rooms' functions.[6] These pieces of advice demonstrate stagers' lack of confidence in buyers' perceptive capacities. One stager offers the following advice for direct-ing buyers' imagined affordances:

Leave your barbecue out for the winter and uncover it for showings if your outdoor entertaining space is located in close proximity to the kitchen…If you're having an open house, open up the barbecue lid (make sure it's clean inside), set out a plate, and place some barbecue utensils next to the side grill. No harm in help-ing buyers envision the possibilities.[7]

Clarifying the function of rooms within the house can also be a way of pre-venting undesirable affordances, like necessary renovations or mandatory expen-ditures. Rooms that appear awkward or superfluous might cue buyers to begin thinking about the renovations they will have to do or the furniture they will have to buy before the room will be functional. As the below quote emphasizes, dem-onstrating the usability of rooms within a house can encourage buyers to see the house as affording the use of their important domestic objects.

[Staging benefits vacant homes because] empty rooms look smaller to buyers, who more often than not will think their favorite sectional or king-sized bed is too big. In larger homes, buyers will question if they have enough furniture. Either way, they'll be calculating the additional cost of new furniture rather than focusing on the home.[8]

In addition to highlighting practical affordances for daily living, stagers work to reform the material environment of homes so that potential buyers will perceive affordances for *their* future life in the home, rather than features that afford the idiosyncratic lives of the current or previous owners. As people inhabit a home, they work on the environment and adapt it to their needs. This is part of home*making*

(Mackay and Perkins 2019; Moisio and Beruchashvili 2016) or the craft of home (Halton 2008). These alterations reflect the idiosyncratic daily lives of the inhabitants. Stagers' work is to undo unconventional affordances created by the current or previous owners and align the home's affordances with anticipated buyers' desires. This task reflects how the actions of daily life and meanings of autonomy are wrapped up together in the home environment.

In the United States, the home is closely associated with the self and with personal autonomy: Traces of previous owners in one's home are often objectionable and disruptive (Hockey 2002; Miller 2001). Stagers seek to depersonalize houses, so that they are less specific to the particular current inhabitants and more accessible to potential buyers. The following pieces of advice from stagers demonstrate this effort.

It's harder for buyers to picture themselves in your home when they're looking at your family photos, collectibles, and knickknacks. Pack up all your personal decorations.[9]

Remove anything that will distract buyers from seeing your property, including personal collections (yes, that sports memorabilia room has to go!), a wall of family photos, newspapers, books and magazines, etc.[10]

A sense of alignment between the self and the home is central to the home-buying decision (Christie et al. 2008; Sirgy, Grzeskowiak, and Su 2005), and this experience of alignment *is* the perception of affordances for one's future life within a house. Note the way the following quote asserts the impossibility of a material space simultaneously affording the current and future occupants' daily lives.

Get rid of the wall photos…They only distract your buyer from the home and they make it feel like your home, not their new one. Remember that buying is what you do when it "Feels right." …Make it Feel Right to Them.[11]

Home stagers' efforts of depersonalization make perfect sense when considered through the lens of affordance theory and its emphasis on the different affordances that emerge in specific actor-environment interactions. In the space of the home, the essential bodily actions of eating, sleeping, and sitting cannot be disentangled from the emotional and cultural actions of personalizing, memorializing, and establishing one's autonomy. Homebuyers perceive the affordances for all of these in the spaces and surfaces of the home.

Limits on the Production of Affordances

There are limits on what home stagers can do to shape these interactions and buyers' resultant imaginings. As Gibson notes, the environment is comprised of "attached" and "detached" objects (1986:34). This distinction allows us to understand constraints on home stagers when altering the environment. Small objects and decorations are detached—easy to remove or add. The structure of the home, though, is very much *attached*, thereby limiting the kinds of adaptations possible in home staging. Removing family pictures from a wall and replacing them with a dramatic painting to guide the eye through the room is easy enough. Tearing down that wall to create an open floor plan, or rearranging the structure of the house, is

much more difficult. In this way, stagers often must use detached objects to distract buyers' attention from less desirable attached elements or guide attention toward desirable visions of what the home affords.

This distinction clarifies the potential potency of affordances created by stagers. Davis and Chouinard have argued for thinking of "mechanisms" of affordances, or how objects and environments can "request, demand, allow, encourage, discourage, and refuse" (2017:1). The material environment of a house may present all of these types of mechanisms, but they are not all equally open to manipulation by home stagers. A two-story home *demands* more effort from elderly homebuyers who struggle climbing stairs. Because it is "attached," the built environment tends to request, demand, allow, or refuse in ways that a stager has little influence over. Stagers predominantly work to *encourage* and *discourage* particular lines of imagining. In this sense, stagers' material modifications produce *symbolic* affordances that allow buyers to project themselves and their lives onto the home. Stagers take a brush and add the last flourishes to an already painted canvas—and some canvases are in better shape than others.

Stagers must also strike a careful balance between openness and specificity in their production of affordances. By open, we mean the staged objects' capacity to afford desirable uses for a large swath of potential buyers and that the affordances do not restrict their imaginations. There is cultural power in objects that are open to interpretation (Griswold 1987) because people can see themselves in the home and have their own aspirations validated by the home. But, as we've shown, stagers also seek to channel buyers' imaginations toward *particular* ideal visions that stagers believe will help to sell the home. In this way, they have specific feelings they seek to evoke and meanings they seek to convey. Their strategies reveal their concern that too much specificity will restrict the number of people who can imagine themselves living in a home, but that too much openness will fail to evoke the desired feelings and aspirational visions. Therefore, stagers must walk a tightrope—using objects specific enough to channel buyers' visions toward meanings that will make the home desirable, but not so specific as to alienate any particular buyer.

Stagers develop techniques for staging homes that privilege activities most people can imagine engaging in: taking a bath or eating barbecue on the back deck. In this sense, the affordances attempt to universalize. That said, they often stage homes with objects that bring to mind specific cultural imaginings for that space. A bath is not just a bath, but a *spa* with gleaming white fluffy towels, aromatherapy diffusers, and elegant baskets full of inviting shampoos and soaps. A backyard transforms into a *garden party* with a clean and open grill, a table set for eight with napkins that match the patio umbrella, and a giant Mason jar lemonade dispenser complete with sliced lemons. Even if the buyer lacks nice towels or coordinated patio furniture, they can imagine treating themselves to a bubble bath or convivially sharing an afternoon outside with their new neighbors. Stagers seek to guide buyers to specific visions of luxury, self-care, family life, and community—visions grounded in aspirational and middle-class meanings of the home (Avitts 2010; Chapman 2002) and communicated through specific material cues.

Stagers are patterned and strategic in their material alterations. They introduce into a home object that almost all people can engage, that define a space and give it a feeling, but do not close off affordances by being so specific that only a few buyers can imagine themselves in that space. Stagers often prefer abstract art that draws the eye but is not an attention-getting "conversation piece"; that way, buyers' objections to the art do not bleed into buyers' interpretations of the home. Stagers often remove art that is too culturally specific so as not to alienate buyers from other cultural backgrounds. As one stager notes, "The place must look up-to-date (although not necessarily frankly "modern") in both style and color, and the furniture and artwork selected must be unobtrusive and abstract enough that they are not distractions. They must form a backdrop upon which the average buyer can visually project their own lives and tastes." Objects, and wall paint, and furniture, are meant to be blank canvases, open enough to invite contemplation and imagination, but specific enough to do the work stagers require: leading buyers to imagining desired feelings of comfort, pleasure, community, autonomy, and privacy.

This interplay of openness and specificity is a fundamentally different kind of work than the production of affordances in a field like industrial design or architecture. As Norman (1999) has discussed in industrial design, the affordances built into a product's design tell the user exactly how it is meant to be used. In this sense, industrial designers value the specificity of affordances. If people do not know exactly what to do with a product or can imagine using the product in unintended ways, designers have failed in their job. Home stagers face a different set of conditions. Stagers avoid creating affordances that are determinatively specific: If one puts out golf clubs and a practice putting cup in a home office, it might turn off potential buyers who don't play or dislike golf. Like with family photos, specificity risks channeling buyers' imaginings in undesirable directions. Instead, stagers work to *discourage* overly specific affordances. Stagers encourage a general sensibility, rather than insisting on a specific use, in order to allow the buyers' imaginations to close the gap between "generically appealing" and "perfectly suited to me."

Additionally, stagers' practice is distinct from industrial designers and architects in that they typically do not design or craft the objects. As such, they often ask objects to afford more than they were designed to do. Every object has more affordances than a designer could imagine, which permits the creative repurposing of objects (de Certeau 1984; McDonnell 2016). Stagers emphasize different affordances of an object or home than an industrial designer or architect might. In this sense, they take objects designed for specific tasks—say a barbecue grill or a soap dispenser—and turn the aesthetic qualities of these objects toward the work of channeling the imagination of homebuyers.

Conclusion

We've argued that understanding how stagers construct affordances gives us insight into how the imagined uses of objects and spaces can be just as important as the actual uses. Indeed, home-stagers strategically reconstitute homes with new objects

that bring to mind particular feelings and imaginings for homebuyers. In this, we agree with Bartmański (2011) who argued that objects' materiality and the affordances that materiality conveys constitute landscapes of meaning. Stagers turn the rooms of a home into such landscapes, crafted environments arranged to persuade people to buy a new house. In this, objects afford differently than designed—most people will never use those objects as they were intended to be used. Instead, the material affordances become aesthetic. As Alexander writes, "the surface, or form, of a material object is a magnet, a vacuum cleaner that sucks the feeling viewer into meaning" (2008:783). Through the manipulation of affordances, stagers do the work of managing whether the meaning of a home *attracts or repels* by harnessing the materiality of objects.

Risks emerge in this work. Sometimes the condition of a home overwhelms the affordances of the stagers carefully selected and arranged objects. Working to make spaces open to a broad audience can lead to spaces being read as not distinctive enough. The commitment to neutrality and avoidance of specificity that emerges as a strategy takes as normal a white, middle-class vision. Such imaginings may not appeal to all potential buyers and may alienate communities that don't fit stagers' upper-middle-class tastes. While the work of stagers is always open to disruption—unintended meanings or imaginings might undermine persuasion projects (McDonnell 2016)—their power lies in producing affordances that direct how buyers imagine themselves in the home. In this, they make homes more attractive for potential owners, while simultaneously reinforcing as neutral, normal, and even desirable the tastes and aspirations of bourgeois culture.

Ultimately, we've argued that home stagers manipulate the material affordances of space to shape the imagined possibilities of place. This case reveals how people may interact with material space to resist the expected meanings of homes as places and harness the possibilities of homes as sites of potential. As people seek to reconfigure the built environment—such as turning shopping malls into schools[12] or homes for the elderly[13]— affordances reveal potential energy and open up place *changing.* Rather than reaffirming the "established" meaning of place, examining the material affordances of space unmoors analysis from the anchor of "where are we" questions and opens up "what could we be doing" questions. The meaning of place is therefore contingent, rife with possibility, and open to revision through the qualities of the built environment.

Notes

1 Argument and analysis based on research conducted by the first author between 2015 and 2018, drawing primarily from an analysis of 195 home-staging professionalization documents. Full description available in Vercel (2023).
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3 See, Lewinson (2011); Sixsmith et al. (2014); Voelkl et al. (2003).
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13 Like a Child in a Supermarket

Locational Meanings and Locational Socialisation Revisited

Pavel Pospěch

"Have you ever seen a mother after a wandering child has unloaded one entire supermarket shelf onto the floor?", Lyn Lofland asks in *The World of Strangers* (1973: 102). Her question invites us to consider two related concepts, both of which address the relationship between space and cultural knowledge: first, *locational socialisation* refers to a process through which we learn to code and understand particular locations: a supermarket is a place to shop, not to play – as opposed to a playground, which is where one can play, but one is expected to share the slides and climbing frames with others. Second, *locational meanings* are those bodies of knowledge which are transmitted through the process of locational socialisation. Lofland argues that understanding these meanings turns us into competent users of supermarkets, catholic churches, children's playgrounds or illegal casinos. At the same time, the meanings of places are subject to change through their use.

While Lofland's book has deservedly achieved the status of a classic in urban sociology, this discussion of space and cultural learning has gone all but unnoticed. The concept of locational socialisation has only been picked up by the sociologist Melinda Milligan (1998, 2003) and with locational meanings, the trail has gone completely cold. In this essay, I explore the possibility of re-introducing these concepts into the cultural analysis of space and place. What can we learn from the study of locational meanings and locational socialisation? How do these concepts differ from other culturalist perspectives in the study of space, like those summarised by Borer (2006)? I will show that the concepts have explanatory power and practical value for both sociologists and urban planners since they allow us to understand the various kinds of sociability taking place in various places. Locational meanings can make us obey rules without the formal impetus to do so, but they can also make us transgress institutionalised expectations. Underlying these concepts is the process of *recognition*: places have meanings, both discursive and practical, which must be recognised for the place to be understood, made meaningful, and for a shared interaction order to emerge. While recognition is a work that must be done by individuals, it's not an individual work – it's a cultural work. As such, it is amenable to change and intervention. Rebuilding places by changing their locational meanings or altering the paths of locational socialisation may be easier than rebuilding them with bricks and mortar – but it can be equally effective.

In this chapter, I first use my own empirical work on shopping malls to explore the usefulness of the concept. Second, I situate the concepts within the contemporary discussions of space, place and culture. In the second half of the paper, I review some studies in the interactionist tradition to demonstrate how they relate to Lofland's concepts. I conclude the paper with a proposition to carve out a distinct theoretical space for locational meanings and locational socialisation and I sketch out empirical challenges related to the contemporary study of these phenomena.

Shopping Malls

The interest in shopping malls as specific kinds of urban spaces has increased rapidly over the past 25 years, following the discussions of privatisation, right to the city and the shifting of research focus towards issues of inclusion and exclusion (Kohn 2004, Mitchell 2003). For many sociologists and geographers, malls became poster spaces for these developments. Researchers have described various means of control of conduct, including strict house rules (Helten & Fischer 2004, Pospěch 2016) enforced by private security services (Abaza 2001, Flint 2006), aggressive use of surveillance and CCTV systems (Helten & Fischer 2004, Saetnan, Lomell & Wiecek 2004) and targeted design solutions (Manzo 2005). These measures are orchestrated to create a tight, controllable and predictable space which excludes non-consumers, minorities and various groups of Others who may be seen as problematic for the commercial profit of mall owners (Staeheli & Mitchell 2006). As shopping malls are a global phenomenon, typically run by global companies, similar developments were observed around the world (Abaza 2001, Erkip 2003, Pospěch 2016).

In my own research on the post-2000 boom of shopping malls in the Czech Republic (Pospěch 2015, 2016, 2017), I observed similar phenomena: strict exclusionary measures, supported by excessive house rules and ever-present surveillance. Yet, beyond them, images and representations were communicated which reached beyond the brute force of these control measures. In their promotion and self-understanding, mall managers referred to malls as "family spaces". In an ostensible opposition to the purportedly dirty and dangerous cities, malls were presented as safe, comfortable and clean spaces where "the world is still in order" (Pospěch 2017: 76). The language of family-friendliness was also wrapped around control measures: the presence of CCTV was justified with reference to cases "when a child falls from an escalator", alarm buttons were there for children who get lost in the building and ban on taking photographs was explained by the claim that "like in any other family, if someone comes to your child and starts taking pictures (…), you wouldn't like it. Therefore, we like to know who and for what purposes is taking pictures of our centre." (Pospěch 2017: 74).

The references to the family also covered contradictions: malls presented themselves as "spaces for the whole family", yet not all family members were equally welcome. There were Children's corners where children could be dropped so as not to interfere with the parents' shopping and increasingly also "Men' corners", where male visitors were invited to drink coffee and watch football, while the women – the

stereotypical agents of consumption in the middle-class family – did the shopping (Pospěch 2017). Also, the mall was, ostensibly, a family space, but not the kind of family space where you can turn up unkempt, in your home outfit, and your relatives won't care. Malls are not a forgiving family. The pomposity, cleanliness and carefully organised diversity of the environment had their effect on visitors, too. In comparison to the street crowd, mall patrons were dressed smarter and the general way of behaviour seemed held back and relaxed. Parents were quick to intervene when their children started climbing into flowerpots, even without a security staff member in sight. The mall felt like a strangely obedient and conflict-free place. During my participant observation, I thought about how we behave differently in a backpacker hostel and a 5-star hotel. Perhaps this cultural halo of a place was something to focus on?

While not as numerous as those which focus on the "hard" control measures, there are also studies which notice the cultural meanings associated with mall space. An out-of-town mall is a destination and an end to our trip, Lehtonen and Mäenpää (1997) note. Once you have reached it, there is no further way through. You can relax and enjoy yourself. This observation is reminiscent of Shields' (2013) study of the Niagara Falls as a place on the margin. No one "just passes through" Niagara Falls, just like no one passes through an out-of-town mall. These places are destinations, liminal spaces (Smith 1999) which encourage out-of-the-everyday behaviour: one can "let go", "spoil oneself" and emerge fully in the ludic experience of consumption. Goss' (1993) work on the "magic of the mall" emphasises this aspect: the liminality of the mall is described as a permanent carnival in the Bakhtinian sense. Allen's concept of Ambient power (2006) aims in a similar direction: writing on Berlin's Potsdamer Platz, Allen identifies a form of power which employs atmosphere, setting and gentle manipulation of sound, lighting and material to produce a seductive effect: here, you may find yourself doing something you would not normally do, Allen notes.

From a different perspective, shopping malls have been studied as carriers of spatial meanings by Voyce. Drawing on a concept from Osborne and Rose (1999), Voyce argues: the group of shoppers thus formed (…) project their norms in the sense that the space becomes a 'political' norm through what has been called the 'spatialization of virtue' (…). This 'virtue' links the particular form of architecture and security with the view of the middle-class righteousness of the new public space. This 'virtue' of space thus both reinforces and establishes proper behaviour for the new public space (Voyce 2006: 281).

In malls, the spatialisation of virtue has been notably successful. Wehrheim's empirical work on German malls has described the latter spaces as surprisingly harmonious (Wehrheim 2007). As if to confirm the marketised family-friendliness, German patrons describe malls as "stress-free, familiar, harmonic, comprehensible and safe" (Wehrheim 2007: 278). When asked about their policing preferences, visitors suggested banning the same activities that were in fact addressed by the mall house rules. The reason for this compliance lies, according to Wehrheim, in the role of homogeneity which malls reproduce. The plurality of roles, so typical for the urban "world of strangers", is suppressed: there are no commuters running

to catch their train, no honking drivers, no joggers who will bump into you on a crowded pavement. And indeed, Wehrheim's respondents expressed greater levels of certainty over others and their roles in the mall than they did on a city street. The expected norm results in a self-reproducing normality: a normality of a place is functional for both visitors (whose surroundings are made more predictable) and for mall management (who seek to avoid all potential sources of conflict). Like any locally specific interaction order (Goffman 1983), this place-based normality offers mutual protection. For visitors, it becomes desirable to stay within the norm as it protects them against a potentially highly visible transgression.

Wehrheim's approach partly sidesteps the hard measures of social control which makes it potentially useful for analysing other settings than malls. In European cities, Christian churches provide an interesting counter-case to shopping malls. Beyond the ubiquitous metaphor of malls as "cathedrals of consumption", there are similarities: like malls, churches are visited by heterogeneous groups of people and like malls, they are tight spaces (Goffman 1963) with strict rules of conduct. Yet, there are no security guards and surveillance networks in a typical church. Perhaps, the pacification is achieved through sacredness: "Nearing the sacred place a penumbra of solemnity imposes itself on human behaviour, inviting, for example, the hushed tones, the straightened back, silent footsteps, slow breathing…" (Smith 1999: 19). Smith's understanding of sacredness is Durkheimian and not necessarily religious. Thus, one might think of similar behavioural effects in other places – including large, iconic malls. Do we not feel a certain upheaval when entering the Mall of America or the West Edmonton Mall?

From Culturalism to Interactionism

In an attempt to systematise various kinds of culturally informed analysis in urban studies, Borer has described an urban culturalist approach as a "fourth school of urban sociology" (Borer 2006). Borer's contribution addresses a neglected area in urban studies and it has rightfully earned significant attention. However, his review tends to gravitate towards a "large-scale" culture: much of the research identified as culturalist focuses on collective memories, myths and narratives and social representations pronounced on a societal- or community- scale. This range also includes the quasi-natural identities bestowed upon places by political actors, like national sites and memorials (Oláh 2015) or those produced commercially, like city branding (Vanolo 2017). Mall managers' attempts to create a representational space defined by the ideology of family-friendliness could fit here as well. Borer's thinking remains on a macro level even when discussing place identities. These, for him, can change over time "dependent on such factors as the demographics of the population inhabiting the area and its surroundings, and the fluctuation or movement of dominant industries in and out of the area" (Borer 2010: 97). The ways in which meanings and identities of places are negotiated in everyday life and reproduced through the personal experience of locational socialisation fall largely outside of this scope. Reading Borer's review, one feels compelled to ask: what about that child in the supermarket? Is this not an example of cultural work?

Borer's work on the symbolic framings of places has seen many applications in studies of the identity and reputation of place (Aptekar 2017, Zelner 2015). Smith's (1999) classification of places into sacred, profane, mundane and liminal and their associated themes of ascent, descent, normality and absurdity also fall within Borer's range, as Smith's own example of the changing meanings of *La Bastille* follows changes in framing of a place in the national imagination. If we want to get closer to the everyday practical meanings that Lofland's example of a child in a supermarket implies, we are better off with those works which focus on normative definitions of places. These include studies in cultural geography (Dixon, Levine & McAuley 2006, Valentine 1998) as well as ethnographic accounts of specific urban settings (Anderson 2010, Baumgartner 2010). Anderson's study of a locally contingent interaction order is not included in Borer's culturalist overview, yet the path from *street etiquette* to *street wisdom* is a very fitting ethnographic description of locational socialisation. Apart from inquiring about the normative definitions of a place, Anderson's and, to a lesser extent, Baumgartner's works also focus heavily on interaction among strangers in public spaces. This is an important lead, as indeed, Goffmanian and post-Goffmanian interactionist analyses contain important cues towards a re-discovery of locational meanings and locational socialisation.

Symbolic interactionism has always acknowledged the importance of culture, yet studying culture as attached to specific places rather than to interaction itself became possible only after Goffman's intervention. Goffman (1963, 1971) introduced new classes of spaces into interactionist thought, from the notorious *frontstage* and *backstage* to *stalls, shields, open regions* and *nod lines*, all of which shape interactions and carry meanings that the actors must recognise and learn to apply in order to produce a socially competent person (1967). Normality, as "interactionally produced transparency of situations" (Srubar 2007: 431), attaches itself to places and allows social life to go on in a manner of routine and trust, or, if things turn bad, to stop and stall (Misztal 2001). Goffman's perhaps most famous observation was that trivial, everyday gestures are signs – and, as signs, they carry deep meaning. In his own work, however, Goffman never allowed places to be signs, too. Rather, he sometimes stubbornly insisted on treating places as "settings" or containers in which interaction takes place (Smith 1999). Yet, his own theory has outgrown this shortcoming and some of the most interesting observations on the cultural coding of places come from Goffman's interactionist followers.

"Not men and their moments, rather moments and their men", Goffman (1967: 2) remarks to point out how social selves are created in the interaction ritual. With some licences, this could be extended to places, too. Places are also made in moments: the moment when a mother reproaches a child for unloading a supermarket shelf on the floor is crucial for the reproduction of the meanings attached to the place. The shared definition of what a supermarket is for, and how it is to be used, is strengthened and made explicit for everyone in the room. If the mother never turned up, and neither would any other adult and if other children joined in the fun of turning an orderly supermarket into a battlefield of flying fruit and falling bottles of ketchup – then the locational meanings of the place would change gradually. At a certain point, incoming shoppers would be warned (*locational socialisation*)

that this particular place has been taken over by raging kids and can no longer be considered a regular supermarket.

Specific places are upheld by ritualised production of normal appearances (Goffman 1971). Therefore, a man running with a heavy suitcase will be coded as normal in the street, especially if it's near the railway station. In an out-of-town shopping mall, the same man will cause what Goffman calls *alarm*: did he perhaps steal something from the shops? These interactional tensions will be experienced regardless of the formal social control measures that the mall employs. This is an important observation vis-à-vis the research on shopping malls. Whether the man with the suitcase is being monitored by CCTV cameras or whether he is being followed by security personnel does not make a difference. His transgression is in conflict with the locational meanings of the place. These meanings are reproduced and strengthened by the fact that we all adjust our behaviour to them: like any local interaction order, the interaction order of the shopping mall is mutual: by observing the rules of a place, we are protecting the normality which protects ourselves, too, from the unexpected and the potentially threatening.

Post-Goffman interactionist research has brought a range of studies focusing on specific places. Trondsen's (1976) study of an art museum presents a paradigmatic example: Trondsen identifies minimum audibility, minimum visibility and civil inattention as three elements of a normative system of a museum. There are guards in the museum, Trondsen notes, but a vast majority of visitors know how to behave there – and the guards know that the visitors know. This cultural competence includes sophisticated spatial manoeuvres, such as sharing "viewing spaces" in front of paintings or a ritual "transfer of privilege", whereby the current occupant of a viewing space signals her readiness to give up her position in favour of the next approaching visitor. Apart from interactionist studies like Trondsen's, some historical works also offer insights into the everyday normativity and normality of places: consider Bale's (1993) work on sports stadiums or Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht's (2009) cultural history of the American sidewalk.

Within interactionist studies, the focus is typically on the normative requirements associated with place and on the interaction rituals through which compliance with these requirements is secured. Ritualisation is the strongest in places where there is a potential for contamination or conflict. It is no wonder then, that many interactionist studies focus on those places where the private body encounters the social space. It is at this boundary that the do's and don'ts are particularly strict and effective locational socialisation is necessary. Cahill's (Cahill et al. 1985) work on public bathrooms as physical and moral boundaries is an example, as well as Sassatelli's (1999) analysis of the interaction order in the gym and Scott's (2009, 2010) ethnographic studies of swimming pools, the latter aptly named "How to look good (nearly) naked: The performative regulation of the swimmer's body". In all these accounts, the framing of the body and the ritualisation of (near) nakedness is the key problem. A particular sub-genre of urban interactionism is then presented by studies of pornographic places (Donnelly 1981, Karp 1973, Sundholm 1973).

The spaces where the body and its functions meet – or threaten to meet – the public eye, are culturally vulnerable and must be clearly demarcated (Scott 2009,

Sundholm 1973). There is an array of non-human actors, including signs, portals, printed warnings and decoration patterns which emphasise the specific character of the spaces in question and the corresponding normative requirements: signs prepare visitors for what to expect and exclusionary measures are put in place to prevent the entry of men, women or under-age visitors. Kaufmann's (2006) brilliant analysis of topless behaviour on French public beaches is perhaps the best example in this area: how is it possible, Kaufmann asks, that women are going topless on the beach and no one seems to notice? For him, the answer lies in the banalization of the naked body – a large-scale interactional cover-up which can only take place in a designated space: on the beach. Looks and gestures are carefully regulated as all interactions include elements of banalization and de-erotisation of the body. Everyday life, Kaufmann notes, is a repetition of repetition. Only through a careful repetition of the proper patterns of conduct and subsequent reinforcement of its locational meanings is a "beach" as a normatively particular place established and reproduced. Not places and their moments, but moments and their places.

Studying Locational Meanings

Here we are then, back in the supermarket. The shelf of goods has been unloaded on the floor and, even though there are, like in shopping malls, CCTV cameras in operation and security guards rushing to check the damage, we do not really need them to see what's wrong. Rather, what is needed, is the mother's scolding of the poor child. By performing this act of locational socialisation, the mother acknowledges the fact that the locational meanings attached to the supermarket are intact. For the onlookers, there is no need to question the situation and their role in it. Rather, by calling the cleaning personnel or even by acting as if nothing happened, other visitors contribute their own part in re-establishing the meanings of the supermarket as a formal, organised and essentially peaceful place. A similar process takes place in a shopping mall: beyond the ostentatious security measures, there are ground-level social expectations embedded in the everyday interaction which establish what is in place and what is out of place. They relate to the overarching imperative of family-friendliness (Pospěch 2017) but also to the cognitive codes and typifications (Berger & Luckmann 1966). When I asked mall managers about their treatment of homeless people in the mall, I got some answers which pointed to a self-exclusion, based on these typifications: homeless people don't come inside, managers informed me, because they don't feel they belong here (Pospěch 2015).

   Locational meanings are bodies of knowledge which define places on the everyday level but they are susceptible to institutional changes, too. The locational meanings of the Louvre Museum can be transformed by institutional interventions, such as the opening of the adjacent *Carrousel du Louvre* mall (McTavish 1998). Yet, a temporary transformation occurs also when a group of misfits decide to compete for the fastest run through the museum, like in Godard's *Bande à part*. Milligan points out this double meaning of "construction of places": In general, the permanent (or relatively permanent) physical aspects of a site are constructed

by individuals who may be thought of as the set designers of the stages for social interaction (…) The social construction of the built environment, however, is much more under the control of actors in the sense that the meanings of specific objects, including the site itself, emerge in the ongoing processes of interaction. (Milligan 1998: 2).

Milligan uses the term *interactional past* to describe a set of expectations that we attach to a place as a result of locational socialisation: "Our expectations stem from a wide range of experiences, including those that have transpired in the actual site and others elsewhere from which we have learned general lessons" (Milligan 1998: 16). These expectations serve as practical guides for decoding the conduct of others, as well as for our own conduct. In Zelner's (2015) work on the inter-actional maintaining of a neighbourhood's reputation, deference and demeanour rituals are identified as central in reproducing the meanings of the shared spaces in the neighbourhood.

The conceptual toolbox for studying locational meanings can also include Kärrholm's (2007) notion of *territorial stabilisation*, whereby places are perceived and coded in a certain way: a supermarket will remain a supermarket, even when future generations of children continue throwing packages of goods on the ground. Among the modes of stabilisation, Kärrholm identifies *stabilisation by sort*: A territory can be produced by way of association, where the proper usage is induced by the association of one place with another of the same 'sort' (…) For example, one might recognise a place as a 'public library' and therefore behave accordingly. (…) A certain scent, a configuration of artefacts and the sense of an atmosphere can make us recognise a certain type or sort of place (a bakery, a city hall, a restaurant, a park, a dog exercise yard, etc.) and also bring to mind some of the 'proper' and territorialised ways of behaving in this sort of place. (Kärrholm 2008: 1917).

Such typifications are very close to the original concept of locational meanings. It is also practical knowledge, one that De Certeau (1984) traces all the way back to Immanuel Kant's Faculty of judgement. On the list of theoretical affinities, a final mention should be made of Foucault's work, notably his lecture *Utopia and Literature* which Foucault opens with an example of children making tents and dens in the garden or under the covers of their parents' bed: the children's play produces a different space, a counter-space which nonetheless mirrors its surroundings (Johnson 2006: 76). Here, Foucault's idea aligns with the dynamic through which locational meanings are attached to places.

Conclusion: Challenges for the Study of Locational Meanings and Socialisation

Drawing on Kärrholm's work, we can argue that for the existence of locational meanings and locational socialisation as well as for the analytical potential of these concepts, the issue of recognition is crucial. A certain place must be recognised as carrying specific meanings. Our ability to recognise this is related to the process of locational socialisation. Locational meanings can include a discursive level (like "family-friendliness" in my mall research) but they must always operate on

a practical level: as place-related typifications, they guide our conduct and our understanding of spaces and places and ensure the existence of a locally specific interaction order and, correspondingly, an intersubjective normality, in both specific places and specific "sorts" (Kärrholm 2008) of places. Like locational meanings, locational socialisation can have an explicit, even written form (ranging from formal house rules and prohibitive signs to tourist guides and "cultural know-how" handbooks for travelling businesspeople). Beyond this, however, lies an implicit system of meanings, rules and expectations which can only be obtained first-hand. Returning to Kaufmann's (2006) study, one must *be at a beach* to understand *how to be there*.

While both locational meanings and locational socialisation can be linked, as I described in this chapter, to other theoretical tools and approaches, there are empirical challenges which must be taken into account when we seek to use Lofland's 1973 concepts as tools in current research. While a comprehensive review of such challenges would be beyond the scope of this chapter, at least some issues deserve to be mentioned here. First, the interactionist approach, which lies at the root of Lofland's thought, has been criticised for presupposing a largely undifferentiated society with a monolithic culture. In reality, there may be competing locational meanings attached to places like shopping malls: the "cathedral of consumption" can also be a teenage hangout or a safe place for women to meet (Flint 2006), depending on the perspective of the group in question. Informal social control probably works better in a local church, frequented by members of a local community, than it does in the Montserrat Monastery, swarmed by visitors from around the world on a daily basis. Reflecting on this point, Wouters (2004) suggests that in conditions of real, or expected, social heterogeneity, formal and external social controls play a more important role, as there is not enough cultural "common ground" to rely on shared normality to do its disciplining job.

Second, recognition implies a recognisable terrain, and, consequently, a certain level of clarity in frames: when a mother scolds her child by saying "this is a supermarket, not a playground", she pre-supposes a common framing of the place: we all must be sure that this is indeed a supermarket – not a community centre which also sells food, or a food corner of an entertainment park. I am referring here to Cover's (2003) commentary on the postmodern erosion of place-based behavioural expectations. A "modernist" library is a place with an unambiguous framing, marked by rules of spatial segregation, silence and respectfulness. A hybrid, "postmodern" library, perhaps combined with a community centre and a café, may be more difficult to recognise as a correct "sort" of place which can lead to confusion in locational meanings and behavioural expectations. Third, when restoring 1970s concepts for analytical use half a century later, attention must be paid to an otherwise obvious topic of digitalisation: locational socialisation has taken new forms upon itself, with Google Street view being a paradigmatic example of a virtual space-before-space. Like a virtual 3-D tour of a flat we consider renting, the Street view is, in a Baudrillardian sense, somewhat more "real" than its real-world opposite, as it is grounded in shared sets of images, capturing for the masses of online viewers (and robotic compilators) a certain moment in a certain time, with certain

lighting and atmosphere. This shared experience can be considered more "real" than the idiosyncratic, changing-from-day-to-day experience of actually "being there". In a similar sense, postcards of Paris may seem more like "real Paris" than my five-year-old experience of the city when it was raining all the time and the *Arc de Triomphe* was covered in scaffolding.

These are but some limitations related to the use of Lofland's original concepts, and I am sure many others may emerge, both on empirical and theoretical level. Yet, I also believe that there are reasons why the terms locational meanings and locational socialisation should not be relegated to oblivion in the way they have been for nearly 50 years. For one, culture has power and locational meanings and locational socialisation play an important part in the cultural life of places. In Kaufmann's beach study, for example, visitors were placidly ignoring the naked bodies of others in their immediate vicinity, casually denying the power of what is usually considered a fundamental biological drive. They were only able to do so because of shared interactional rules and place-specific locational meanings. No wonder then, that mall visitors behave in a quiet, restrained way, even with no formal control measures in sight. Like children in supermarket, we are socialised into the meanings and normalities of places around us. Yet, unlike in Lofland's example, we are both children and mothers at the same time.

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14 Placing Performance into a Distressed Space

The Case of San Berillo

Letteria G. Fassari

What kind of relationship exists between spatial action and performance? Moreover, what are the conditions for a transformative performance? These are, in summary, the objectives of this chapter, addressed through a case study that focuses on a distressed space located in Catania, a city in southern Italy.

The appropriation of space that produces the uniqueness of a place cannot come about without the space-related actions of which the space itself is the pre-condition. When space is seriously decomposed, performance becomes a mere representation that will struggle to succeed in transforming the given conditions in which it unfolds and to produce processes subjectively oriented towards change. The unravelled space is a space subject to domination because it does not allow transformative performance rooted in space.

The term performance has a complex genealogy, used to express both the power of new forms of domination and the subjectivization processes occurring through the body. Concerning this domain, especially with reference to contemporary spaces, the media interfaces that pervade social life (Gras 1997) require continuous on-demand performances, just as a performative communication is dictated by the so-called new regime of historicity (Hartog 2003) characterized by the affirmation of communication on the action (Perniola 2009). Performance is also linked to the aesthetic imperative that has its origin in what some authors have called the new spirit of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999) and aesthetic capitalism (Murphy and de La Fuente 2014). On the side of subjectivization, performance constitutes an aesthetic reflexivity, which carries out a critique of universals by the aesthetic particular (Lash 2000), in a predominantly extra-discursive direction. A performance, as Schechner and Appel (1989) argue, is a dialectic of 'flow', i.e. of spontaneous movement in which action and 'reflexivity' are indistinguishable. Placing itself in this ford, between domination and subjectivization, performance is proposed as a predominantly 'affective' analytic construct (Deleuze 1988, Massumi 2002), aimed at overcoming the mind/body, material/immaterial, individual/social dichotomies that go across a large part of the social sphere. Performance is, there-fore, a concept sensitive to the ambivalences of contemporaneity. Still, following Schechner (2013, p. 4), it is above all a concept in tune 'with the avant-garde, the marginal, the unusual, the minority, the subversive, the twisted, the queer, the black people and the formerly colonized'; it has, therefore, its own strength in unhinging

structured spatial orders, offering itself as a picklock to subvert the hierarchy of beliefs, ideas, people and objects that have settled in space and are structured as a domain.

Starting from these considerations, in this chapter, I would like to problematize the question of the relationship between performance and space. My thesis is that domination today is experienced mainly in terms of the decomposition of space. Space is perceived more as the disorganization and fragmentation of logics that are difficult to summarize and whose recomposition requires an effort and a reflective capacity that we can read in terms of subjectivization. This representation helps us to understand how, in the absence of resources of subjectivization, a destroyed space, i.e. poor in structures in which materiality, imagination and signification are grafted, cannot generate and cannot be activated by transformative performances. This happens above all in those areas that we could define as partially excluded from economic globalization or rather that have not found a competitive role in the global division of labour, but that suffer the effects of this division. An example may be given by some areas of social hardship in southern Italy, where I have chosen to empirically anchor the theoretical reflections expressed in this essay.

I have chosen to treat space by making reference to the relational approach of Martina Löw (2016, p. 135), according to which space is the result of two different processes. The first, defined as 'spacing', is constituted through the 'deploying or positioning of the social goods and people' and 'by the positioning of markings which are primarily symbolic'. The second, which Löw defines as the 'operation of synthesis', through which goods and people are amalgamated to spaces, involves the mediation of 'perception, memory and imagination'. This relational approach seems particularly fruitful because it places the relationship between space and performance in terms of reciprocity: how does space activate performance, and how is it activated in turn by performance? Given the interdisciplinarity that can be understood through a genealogical perspective on performance and considering the aforementioned relational approach to space, in order to understand the problem that performance poses to the study of the dynamics of space, I have identified as an empirical field the historic district of San Berillo located in Catania, a large city in southern Italy.

I have structured the chapter as follows: first of all, I have drawn a map that, although partial and limited, allows us to lay down the different meanings of performance and the representations of space that can be associated with them. Subsequently, to bring out the interdependence between performance and space, I placed performance in a concrete space characterized by uncertainty and social inequality. Finally, I conclude the chapter by problematizing the transformative power of performance and the conditions necessary to unfold its subversive strength. The research work consists for the most part of an analysis of the documentary and visual material; daily ethnographic walks in the lanes of the neighbourhood on various days of the week, in daylight and after dark, with subsequent writing up of research notes and video-photographic data collection; the carrying out of interviews with informants and residents; and participation in public events located in

the neighbourhood. The duration of the fieldwork stretched over one year, with three periods of research, each lasting two weeks.

Space through Performance

Over the past few decades, we have seen a proliferation of theoretical approaches to performance. These frames correspond to different definitions of subjectivity and power and different articulations of the two poles (Gregson and Rose 2000). Among the original and most influential formulations of the term, it could be made reference to Erving Goffman's (1959) analysis of 'social interaction', Austin's (1962) linguistic theory of 'expressions performative', which was subsequently developed by Butler (1988) and, influenced by Schechner (1977), Victor Turner's (1986) ethnographic descriptions of ritual as a procedural form of 'social drama'. In the sociological field, following the contribution of Goffman, it is important to take into account the contributions of the two interpretative strands related to performance, that of cultural sociology and cultural studies. Over time, other disciplinary perspectives have fruitfully crossed both areas. For example, Alexander (2003), one of the founders of cultural sociology, while maintaining some structuralist assumptions, in an attempt to describe the concretely observable manifestations of social action, combines the thought of Turner, Schechner and Burke (Cossu 2006), while some authors dealing with cultural studies (e.g. Johnson 2003, Bell 2007, Blackman 2008) hybridize with the objects and theories of continental philosophical thought, including Lacan, Foucault, Kristeva and Butler, to take a stand in the controversial dynamic subjection/ subjectivization. In an attempt to draw such a map, I have interpreted the term performance according to three distinct meanings: dramaturgical, liminal and ambivalent. This is only a provisional analytical device aimed at reducing performance's genealogical complexity and tracing its specific relationship with space.

Goffman is the starting point for the first dramaturgical meaning. In 1959, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman used the concept of performance to interpret the way individuals act in social situations. Much of the scholar's work has focused on the limitations of the 'presentational self', of what happens when presentation fails or breaks with the result of 'losing face' or in an experience of embarrassment, shame or humiliation. Following Goffman, Alexander (2004, 2017) plays an important role in the dramaturgical approach, looking at performance in terms of social drama. For him, when the social system and the community are complex and pluralistic, the elements of performance are de-fused. In a context of increasing social complexity, successful performances develop only through a process of re-fusion. Alexander argues that social theorists must resort to the tools of dramaturgy, drama theory and theatre criticism to develop a contemporary cultural sociology in order to understand social performance as a device for remodelling previously fragmented elements. Goffman seems to have in mind how performance can help avoid the failure of interaction. Similarly, Alexander only indirectly refers to space, because he is primarily interested in the factors that make a performance convincing or perceived as authentic by the audience. Among

these factors, he mentions space as an element that contributes to the 'authenticity' of the performance in the sense that to be credible, the performance must happen in a specific place and with a specific duration, which avoids the inappropriateness of place and time (Alexander 2006). However, both authors seem obsessed with removing embarrassment from the interaction (Probyn 2005).

We can thus infer that for both authors, space is intended as a device functional for managing emotions and regulating feelings, finalized to avoid the failure of the interaction. Yet, it also should be pointed out that, in an attempt to unravel the normative logic of face-to-face interactions, Goffman explores a great variety of physical spaces and objects. They are not only the scenario in which the interactions take place, but, as Frehse (2008) emphasizes, they actively intervene on the scene by breaking in with their own logic. In the dramaturgical characterization of the 'facade', there are furniture, decorations, physical appearance and other background elements that intervene in the actions. They are scenic and communicative resources that Goffman includes, we would say today with Latour (2005), as actants in the social assembly.

If the cracks, the uncertainties and the temporariness in the dramaturgical sense are considered by the performer primarily a problem to be avoided, the liminal frame performance opens up to something absolutely unexpected, sudden and extra-discursive. Here, performance is above all a unique creative output, a representation without reproduction (Phelan 2010). The liminal meaning of performance is identified with the body; through it, borders are explored, the loss of meaning is denounced, and escape routes are traced (Phelan 1996). The space activated by this meaning of performance is indeterminate, experimental and fluid. Indeed, we should say that it is the body that creates space. A certain assonance with the artistic performances of the 1960s and 1970s helps us to fully understand the radical nature of the criticism entrusted to the body and its *creating space*. Wounded bodies, covered in blood, bodies stripped or forced into unnatural poses or simply defenceless at the mercy of others, assign an extraordinarily critical value to the body. The body enhances its aesthetic and symbolic values until slipping into shamanism (Dantini 2005; Wood 2018). The space activated by the body becomes a visionary, magical space, almost on the verge of madness; in it, all forms of mediation are abolished, and the norm is suspended. It is a dialogical, fleeting and risky space, as suggested by Thrift (2008, p. 136), centred on the relationship between body and environment without mediations, especially those associated with the social role.

In the third connotation of performance, defined as ambivalent, the starting point is Judith Butler's influential work on gender and queer studies, but, above all, the debate that followed (see Blackman 2008). This focuses on the implicit ambivalence that the term performativity[1] brings to the dynamics of subjectivization/subjugation, from which there is no way out. For Butler (1993), referring to Foucault, one cannot free oneself from power. There is no space whose freedom can transcend power relations. It is about living within a time matrix to understand what is possible. Among what is possible to do, there are parodic practices, useful to denature and re-signify, in a subversive way, the corporeal categories by projecting them beyond the frame of binarism. The parody of the genre, like

that of a drag queen or drag king, is a subversive repetitive practice. For Butler, it is a politics of despair, through which the gender marginalized from the real reveals the aspect of non-reality (Butler 1990). Although Butler works largely in a temporal rather than spatial register, Thrift (2008) suggests that Butler manages to emphasize the importance of context, as its demarcation already foreshadows the outcome. For her (2011), space has a materiality that must be recognized; elements such as floors, streets, squares and architecture represent necessary conditions, for example, in activating public space, but it is the bodies that animate them by reconfiguring the material of the environments. In essence, it is performativity that creates the quality of the space as an audience. Butler's most stinging criticism comes from Nussbaum, who argues against Butler's allusive and abstruse style, which she blames for bracketing out the real dimension of life, ultimately neglecting emplaced situations. In the vein of Nussbaum's critique, it can be argued that the reduction in performance to the mere gestural dimension represents space as a void to be filled. In the next paragraph, I will discuss an alternative idea: that performance continuously and inescapably interacts with space.

This concise and necessarily incomplete cartography of performance is nevertheless useful to make us understand the role of performance in structuring space, both in social integration and individualistic competition and in the oppositional statement with respect to the social representation originated by the norm. The dramaturgical performance attributes the task of recasting elements previously held together by the institutional programme (Dubet 2002) and today precisely defused. Unlike in Alexander, in Goffman we find the sociology of space but always within a framework that is dependent on social expectations. For authors mainly dealing with performance studies, however, it retains something resistant and resilient that cannot be traced back to the discursive representations of the social sphere. Here it is the performer who activates the space or rather *creates space*. In the third sense, ambivalent in its production of subjectivization/subjection, space is present primarily as a structure that generates and organizes performance, which in turn reveals the dominance of the norm. We can therefore argue that performance maintains a dynamic tension towards space in all three areas analysed. Space is never placed outside the performance. As Schechner (2013, p. 3) states, the performance reveals the quality of liveness inherent to 'bodies, affect, process qualities, informal texts, fragments of architecture, visual observations, or any other object or artefact of art or culture *considered not in itself* (my italics), but as actors of continuous relationships'.

Space and performance are two concepts that force us to account for the materiality and affectivity inherent in the social sphere. Space is material, ontic-kinetic, factual, vital, experiential, imaginary; the performance takes place in a practical space that becomes the medium of an ongoing experience. In the next paragraph, I will try to use the concept of performance to interpret a real context. Performance is adopted as an interpretative construct with regard to a specific space whose material and social aspects are disorganized. It will be argued that the contextual absence of a structured space finds in performance the only way to re-figure it. It is important to underline that when I speak of the structuring of space, I am

referring not only to materiality but also to the imaginary dimension that is grafted onto material objects. Part of the significance of materiality inheres in its capacity to function as that on which people project meanings and imaginaries. The social therefore emerges as a material, cognitive and symbolic structure.

In a deconstructed space, performance takes on the burden of organizing the missing space, the one in which meanings, imaginaries and materiality are settled – we can also define it as institutional. Performance under these conditions takes on the effort of recomposing logics that are fragmented, however, at the same time, weakening its transformative capacity. The observed area is a neighbourhood of Catania. It is a poor neighbourhood lacking in dynamism within a relatively affluent and constantly moving society. The experience of the subjects who live there is conflicting, moving between the desire to be part of society and the unfeasibility to fulfil such a wish.

San Berillo

The history of San Berillo is marked by a history of traumatic events and migratory processes. The former has always triggered a movement of bodies, an element from which the latter originates, generating a double movement (internal/external, external/internal). For this and other historical reasons, the pre-existing space has been emptied and filled every time. The first event is this gigantic demolition work called 'gutting' (*sventramento*)[2] of San Berillo, started in February 1957 and was interrupted ten years later, following which 240,000 square metres of the entire existing urban fabric of houses, shops and roads were demolished, including squares, alleys and courtyards. Thirty thousand inhabitants were forced into exile, and about half of them moved to a peripheral area. It is the original trauma, accompanied by the first great migration. In the following decades, in the residual part of the neighbourhood, there was a growing influx of prostitutes of almost always South American origin. Their bodies occupied the space abandoned by the old residents, transforming it into the largest red-light district in southern Italy. A police raid where houses were evacuated and then bricked up and people expelled or arrested caused the second violent trauma.

In recent years, globalization has erupted in the neighbourhood, with the subjects of the new migrations, especially from Senegal and to a lesser extent young people from Gambia. With progressive inflows, space is refilled by restoring balance, even if unstable and precarious. The bodies of the people of San Berillo carried the memory of the trauma suffered in the place they fled from as well as the perception of those who suffered in the hosting neighbourhood. Today, San Berillo appears as a quadrilateral, in which about 1,200 families live, mainly of Senegalese origin. It is a refuge for the homeless, is chosen by prostitutes and transgender people and is inhabited by illegal migrants who find there a very first landing. A cultural association, *Trame di Quartiere,* operates in the neighbourhood. Through action-research, Trame intends to subvert the logic of exclusion and marginalization of San Berillo's residents. *Trame* enables grassroots practices, encouraging the participation of individual and collective actors in both public and private contexts.

Trame basically works by supporting the re-figuration (Knoblauch and Löw 2017) of San Berillo's space. The activities of *Trame* include a series of projects from which emerges, as a distinctive feature, the constant implication of performative reflexivity as an inspiring principle and implementation method. In essence, the social and aesthetic dimensions of San Berillo seem to be primarily performative for several reasons. The first concerns precisely the place and the trauma of the *sventramento*, which represented a real social drama; the second concerns the specificity of the social figures who live there; the third refers to the type of activities that take place; and the fourth, of a methodological nature, concerns *Trame di Quartiere*'s way to re-figurate space.

The social performance that most characterizes San Berillo is the *sventramento*, so cruelly defined to highlight the wound inflicted to this portion of the space. It represents a historical trauma for the city but fails to be a convincing performance. Following Alexander (2012), trauma is not only an event in itself but also the product of a social representation resulting from a complex spiral of signification. San Berillo as a collectivity has failed to merge the elements of the scene to persuade and promote a decisive action for its recovery and relaunch. Despite the unquestionable discomfort caused by the forced uprooting of entire families, prostitutes have been forced to move to the dark and less safe provincial roads, the nature of the lower-class victims, generally considered marginal and irredeemable, has probably influenced the lack of empathic complicity between the residents and the other citizens. We should add to this the media campaign aimed at justifying and spreading the rhetoric, very present in the 1960s, based on the communication binomial gutting-modernization. This is why the gutting has never represented for the city an 'effective performance' such as to convey interest in the change in the situation. The gutting, or rather its failure as a social performance, has given the neighbourhood that sense of incompleteness that today manifests through the neglect of spaces characterized by the presence of waste and the absence of basic services: water, electricity, essential sanitation, schools and pharmacies.

In the maze of alleys and streets of the neighbourhood, you come across numerous ruins, the crumbling structures of buildings invaded by spontaneous vegetation, the pipes that protrude from the walls, the many walled doors of the houses, the uneven pavement, the rubble, fragments of bottles, used masks, abandoned waste. Crossing some alleys, used as toilets, one continually subjects the sense of smell to unpleasant stresses. Part of the waste is hidden in the ravines and empty spaces of buildings and street furniture. Observing San Berillo's space, what is the performance that is immediately grasped by the observer and combines spacing and synthesis together? The performance that emblematically collects all the others, subsuming the way people are related to space, is *Waiting*. This is the main performance present in the space and through the space. In this sense, San Berillo is structured around suspension. Prostitutes wait for customers; the young Gambians who are stationed in the street wait for drug consumers; the police, just outside the perimeter of San Berillo, wait for the fight that will require an intervention. Waiting is also a broad expectation of the consequences of the announcements, whether miraculous or traumatic, of the coming new 'urban regeneration',[3] which

will probably become a new trauma for the inhabitants because, as it happened in the past, they will be displaced or more simply removed. San Berillo seems to constitute a space of immediate waiting, for the next customer or consumer, and of hopeful waiting, which as already known will be disregarded, to change one's conditions of existence from precarious, unstable and insecure to that of a less risky instability. Expectation and disregard are the ghosts that repeatedly 'haunt' and thus structure the space of San Berillo, marking its malacotic atmosphere.

Another performance that combines spacing and performance in the constitution of space consists of *crossing*. San Berillo is always crossed quickly, head down and without expressing opinions. Even being a tourist in San Berillo is a bodily ambivalent experience. How do you observe is much more important than what you observe. It is quite difficult not to be attracted by the improvised performances of the dancing prostitutes, not to stop to observe the glamorous clothing of the trans people, not to be suddenly frightened by the screams of a fight or not to be disgusted by the waste or pleasantly impressed by the creative care of some corners. The specificity of the neighbourhood is so marked that the entrance of a stranger is immediately evident; the inhabitants experience his or her presence as an opportunity for a look, for a gentle but almost always mocking exchange. The stranger, in turn, immediately perceives this condition, assumes it and adapts to it, understanding that San Berillo does not justify any stay but only crossings, which thus determines its passage into space. This embodied reflexivity, to which all the actors are forced, as we have said, is constitutive of the performance. Despite this, San Berillo appears as an ever-elusive attempt to make it a home, to domesticate space.

Space appears to be the premise and consequence of this interplay with the tensions expressed there, structured, above all, by worn objects in various locations. By the many chairs scattered among the alleys with different shapes and materials used by prostitutes, the empty bottles of all kinds, the mattresses used as makeshift beds, the old unusable bikes stacked on the sides of the streets, the worn armchairs used by migrants and the votive shrines robbed of the statues inside them. The gutting has represented a traumatic breakdown of the social script that was originally organized around the heterogeneous presence of artisans, traders, dockers and large working-class families. Today, the neighbourhood is experiencing the effects of that unhealed fracture. The social space inside appears rigidly subdivided, not very integrated even if contiguous. These are immaterial boundaries, sounds, food and lifestyles, which, however, constitute real dividing lines. The territory occupied by young Gambians is separated from that in which the Senegalese families reside, just as the area of historical prostitutes is distinct from the first two. Young Gambians camp out for the whole day along an internal road that is their home space. There they spend the night and consume the hours of the day often intent on carrying out small dealings. As night falls, they become annoying and noisy; stunned by alcohol and drugs, they fight each other.

San Berillo, however, is not only degradation. In the neighbourhood, there is a resilient tension of the opposite sign; in several places, space is transformed by a growing number of small renovated buildings, whose appearance contrasts

with the conditions of abandonment and decay observed previously. The space inhabited by the Senegalese community appears as an ordinary space, punctuated by the presence of groups of men in front of their respective homes, while women almost always stay indoors and children play outdoors, especially in the afternoon. The overall appearance returns an image of normal life, typical of a low-income neighbourhood. Prostitutes keep their space always clean and tidy. It is a multi-dimensional space: it is historical because it keeps the memory of the past; it is affected, meaning affection both as pure bodily intensity and as emotion, for example about the feeling of friendship, expressed by the relationship of mutual support between the prostitutes; it is a space, in some cases, of tenderness, which transforms occasional relationships with customers into friendships. Furthermore, the creative stitching of the tears and the attempt to make space liveable are increasingly evident: increasingly frequent is the presence of graffiti drawn by writers on the external walls and the walled houses, the aesthetic care of little common areas with vases of plants and flowers, benches and various furnishings built with recycled materials and other small details (windows, frames, balconies, facades).

The Transformative Reflexivity of Trame di Quartiere

San Berillo seems to be a performative neighbourhood. This specific feature is behind the action of *Trame di Quartiere,*[4] the cultural association mentioned above aimed at reactivating abandoned spaces. *Trame* defines itself as an interdisciplinary working group that promotes and facilitates action and research practices in the San Berillo area, intending to lay the foundations of an urban transformation for an inclusive and cohesive city and conceiving and enhancing diversity as a resource. A regeneration that includes vulnerable people, attention to a space of rights, the integration of migrants, the co-design of public spaces and the promotion of tangible and intangible heritage are their main goals. The implementation of urban sustainability actions always requires a reflexively oriented mapping of the multiple and concrete ways of using the space by the residents. *Trame*'s choice to settle within the neighbourhood, becoming an integral part of it, while not resolving the inevitable and latent conflict, gives it back the right to be recognized as a place of intercultural intersections, production of symbols and practices for the constitution of space. With its action, *Trame* also monitors the gap between the top-down representations of the neighbourhood and the spatial performances that emerge from below, i.e. the sedimentation of memories, relationships, meanings and incorporations that reshape the space on a daily basis. Practices, which are not antagonistic but alternative to the discourse of economic interest, guide the inhabitants in acquiring a voice (Hirschman 1981) and the ability to aspire (Appadurai 2004).

Trame constructs a counter-narrative based on the neighbourhood's resilient bodies. It is the spokesperson for the overturning of the stigma and strengthens its multiformity by giving voice through storytelling, artistic performances and dramaturgy. Thus, the inhabitants are listened to and seen in their tiring and painful paths of subjectivization. The performative reflexivity that *Trame* implements through creative projects and actions, of which the residents are the protagonists, seems

to act on the ability to transform isolated stories into collective ones, of common meaning, a choral space. Next to the images of insecurity, material poverty and very precarious conditions of existence, we can see emerging affirmation, determination and a strong tension towards subjectivization. This is not a romanticization of exclusion but an attempt that legitimizes bodies and claims to be included in the design processes of common spaces. To do this, *Trame* mediates, negotiates and, in some respects, minimizes conflicts between groups, emphasizing the possibility of coexistence. *Trame* is deeply involved in a community-building operation through the practices of sharing historical and present memories. All these activities converge into what we can define as performative reflexivity. It expresses a position: a rewriting that focuses on the body, both in its physical contamination with space and by considering bodies as subjects. By operating a continuous connection between materiality and relationality, the practices implemented by the association constitute a virtuous example of the methodological power of performance. Understanding how people act in space and how they transform it requires a methodological approach committed to transformation (Conquergood 1998). It is for this reason that the methodology implemented by *Trame* is also performative, using laboratories, audio-visual experiments and dramaturgical languages. Through the use of this methodology and the creative forms it produces, *Trame* allows itself to be a co-witness of the space, by sharing its daily and participatory constitution. Reflexivity through performance underlines simultaneously the materiality of the actions contrasting the traumatic description of the neighbourhood and the miraculous nature of the announcements on the regeneration of San Berillo.

Space as Producer of Re-figurative Performance

In the experience of San Berillo, performance seems to be saturated by the experience of the trauma and the prevailing space in its disorganized aspects, emblematically represented by rubble, garbage and excrement. The performances of excess and noisy bodies in the neighbourhood seem to be, at the moment, the only possible response to the aggression of the removal of San Berillo and the ever-present ghost of the transfer or evacuation, already experienced in the past but which remain like a sword of Damocles constantly hovering over their heads. This leads us to address the question of space as a generator of transformative performances and to capture the role of spatial structures as symbolic and material resources in the constitution of performance. We can speak of spatial structures when the constitution of space as spacing and synthesis (Löw 2016, p. 233) 'is inscribed in rules and ensured by resources, which are recursively incorporated into institutions independent of places and time points'. Spatial structures are the result of processes of signification, incorporation and resources that are material and symbolic. What happens, however, when space is so severely de-institutionalized or where the institution is fictitious? Here, performances are pure self-expression, reiterated and desperate. The performance in San Berillo can only develop as *waiting* or as a spectacle. It shall not come as a surprise that San Berillo has mainly become, among the citizens of Catania, a space of spectacularizing.

San Berillo's space reminds an artistic installation. Space as installation, in the abstract, is a polyphonic whole in which texts, bodies memories, meanings and movements overlap. In a space seen as an installation, we find flexible models of narratives and alternative forms of experience and creativity, an imaginary that can be both utopian and dystopian. It can be a space open to participation and creative involvement. Space as an installation, however, has an unavoidable criticality. It is a space that functions mainly for dominant groups or for those who possess the resources for subjectivization or are capable of affirmative construction of themselves. In contexts of uncertainty and social exclusion, space as an installation is deconstructive, becoming, on the contrary, an experience of the splitting of the social context and the subjects themselves (McDonald 1999). San Berillo lacks water, electricity, sewage, logistics, sanitation and education. The bodies that structure the material and emotional space are performative bodies. They are bodies weakened by the burden of making up for the lack of spatial structures and of making themselves social infrastructure. In the absence of resources, this action of literally creating space ends up being a tiring and impossible performance. There are bodies that carry the weight of community disorganization, which experience participation in society mainly in terms of exclusion and in which subjectivization risks becoming only resentment or depression. They are trapped bodies. Structuring the space through rules ensured by resources incorporated in institutions is not a question of making a neo-Marxist or nostalgic discourse but of affirming the conditions for which performance can be transformative. The people of San Berillo live in a kind of informal settlement. The quality of life is haphazard, fleeting and occasional; it can happen one day and disappear the next, precisely because the quality of the spaces is not culturally, materially and symbolically structured.

Institutional infrastructures, as Amin and Thrift (2017, p. 3) recall, are primarily 'machinic qualities' that create rights; they are common urban public goods that generate the public sphere. The miraculous and traumatic spirit of the announcements about the neighbourhood's revitalization plans alternates with trauma. Trauma, as Perniola (2009) says, is in complicity with miraculousness. A miracle is always expected in San Berillo; devotion and prayers are very present practices. Unfortunately, they are literalized by the theft of the statues of the numerous votive shrines in the neighbourhood. However, what is worrying is miraculous as a social logic: by entering the emporiums managed by the migrants, social opportunity is on sale. Dirty and worn gaming machines are increasingly crowded even during the night hours.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have introduced performance as a concept that amalgamates body, affection and processualism in the re-figuration of space (Knoblauch and Löw 2017). Starting from the polyphony of the concept, I tried to address the interpretative implications of space. Performance as an analytic construct has its own strength that draws from being an appropriate concept to enlighten the liminality of

the transitional place and the subjectivities in between, such as those of migrants, refugees and border identities. Performance introduces the theme of dislocation, which is expressed both in the great themes of discrimination and exclusion and in the ordinary construction of social life, revealing the constant presence of a dimension of bodily life that cannot be fully represented. I argue that performance is, embodied wanting to use the words of Löw (2016), an 'operation of synthesis', aimed at distilling the complexity of the social sphere and giving it meaning through the body; it represents a sort of tactile language, a posture and a positioning that goes beyond cognitive reflexivity. In short, it is an affective, material and imaginative practice, in some cases of survival from domination and in others of creative reinvention of the social context.

Starting from the idea of re-figuration of space, I have attempted to underline that in conditions of lack of material and symbolic infrastructural spaces, the performance can give way to spectacularizing and remaining trapped in a vicious circle that makes changing the given conditions impossible. The processes of deconstruction and de-institutionalization of the space of modernity coexist with the restructuring and institutionalization of the new spaces of contemporaneity: aesthetic, communicative and technological. Performance is a perfect candidate to be a key concept that subsumes the tension between body docility and reactive libidinal force.[5] The point is that it can be re-figurative in a constructive or deconstructive sense, only within a tension with space. In the case of San Berillo, the relationship between performance and space revolves around the rubble, garbage and scattered armchairs and refers to the liminality of *waiting*. The more the space is disorganized, the more the performance loses its transformative power. Performances can be intense and touching but too weak to undermine the existing spatial order. San Berillo, as an emblematic space, risks to produce self-referential performances, in which the temporal register of repetition predominates.

Notes

1 For Butler, performativity must not be confused with performance. The latter requires an already existing subject to perform it, while performativity precedes the subject and is what gives rise to the subject. However, this process is continuous in the sense that it is never full or completed (Butler 1994).

2 The word 'sventramento' in Italian evokes a gash caused in the belly.

3 Announcements are made from time to time about the neighbourhood's rebirth. The so-called technical working groups are activated to summon the owners of the buildings and regenerate and clean up the area. Months of oblivion by the administration follow these moments.

4 To learn more about the projects started by Trame di Quartiere, please refer to the website https://www.tramediquartiere.org/.

5 The concept of libidinal forces is part of a debate that we report here through Lash (2000). He trying to root the sociology of action in the unconscious, returns to Nietzsche, Foucault and Deleuze's genealogy and describes their differences. Nietzsche conceives of the body using discourse, Foucault states how the order of discourse acts on the body, and Deleuze criticizes him for attributing reactive libidinal forces to the body. Kerslake, the author of 'Deleuze and the Unconscious' (2007) in fact, captures in the scholar a Bergsonian root more akin to the Jungian hypothesis of libido as a

universal vital drive, as an energetic value attributable to any sphere of activity: power, hunger, hatred, sexuality, etc. The Jungian perspective is useful to Deleuze to reduce the complexity of Eros to the drive or not to sexualize desire, as happens in the Freudian context. Deleuze's critique of Foucault is re-launched, from another perspective, by Vikki Bell (2007), who highlights how Deleuze believes that bodies' resistance is creative in this sense. When power becomes biopower, the resistance of the actor becomes the life force.

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15 Epilogue

Johanna Hoerning and Gunter Weidenhaus

The contributions in this volume have highlighted different ways in which space or spatial perspectives become relevant in the analysis of contemporary social structures and open up new angles on the world(s) we live in. Overall, we have argued that spatial considerations ought to be part of social theory in order to grasp how social structures, knowledge and meaning are produced within and out of the materiality of our lives. This may seem at first obvious but in social sciences preoccupied with discourses, values, norms, beliefs and now also data, the significance of the spatio-material was for a long time un- or underacknowledged. The contributions to the present volume have moved bodies, objects, directions, movements and locations, among others, into the focus of their analyses in order to better understand the macro-structures and developments of contemporary societies (Weidenhaus and Poferl), inequalities and social structures (Krishnan), as well as various foundational dimensions of social theory, for example epistemological (Hoerning, Santos and Boatcă), gnoseological (Mignolo) and topological ones (Füller). They also tied spatial considerations to a key sociological question of meaning making (Bartmanski, McDonnell and Vercel) and explored how space and a series of derivative categories shape meaning production in various contexts (Pospech, Fassari, Last). While we are certainly not implying that every social theory requires a spatial analysis, we are convinced that our world cannot be grasped fully without it. Even if a vast number of social phenomena seemingly detach themselves from the material geography of our world, like a company's value as expressed through shares and financial derivatives, or digitalized social communication, there are still underlying materialities (e.g., offices and production facilities, servers, cables, the body) that at the very least inform those seemingly non-spatial aspects of social life. What our contributions show over a diverse array of different perspectives of analysis is, on the one hand, what we lose or can miss if social theory continues to be spatially blind, and, on the other hand, what we gain by zooming in on the spatial sociality not only in terms of empirical phenomena, but also in terms of theorizing.

Social Theory

What the contributions of this section reveal most sharply is that social theory concerned with distinguishable social relations, as well as social theory

interested in the social world globally reflects on borderings and partitionings of the world as socially constituted. The spatial often merely acts as a mold here. Contributions in the first section remind us sharply on the benefit of considering the spatial as constitutive for the social. Certain assumptions about space influence and inform the very conceptualizations of the global social world or distinguishable social relations in social theory. In this way space in part constitutes social theory. This is an important contribution to a general social theory of space, which has, by and large, looked into the social constitution of the spatial (Lefebvre 1991; Löw 2016; Massey 2005). Even though they look into contemporary social structures on different scales, Martina Löw, Angelika Poferl, Nana Last, Henning Füller and Gunter Weidenhaus show how social theory, global social structure, as well as specific manifestations of social inequality and, last but not least, considering the global itself require a spatially sensitive sociology. Importantly, this means to question the often-assumed universality and unidimensionality of space. Our authors highlight time and again that the spatial cannot be taken for granted in territorial understandings. An awareness for space as constitutional in social theory allows the spatial to be of a range of qualities and to dissect the complex overlapping of different spatial relations – networks, territories, places and paths, to name the most apparent – that shape our contemporary world (see also Löw, Weidenhaus and Hoerning in this volume). It is neither simply the territorial nation-state nor the urban–rural dichotomy nor the 'world society' that forms the basis for an understanding of social inequality, but a multitude of different relations linking and transgressing different sociospatial scales.

Martina Löw shows how a social theory informed by spatial sociology, based on the paradigm of an understanding sociology, can lead to a diagnosis of the present that can be captured by the concept of reconfiguration. An important conclusion of this contribution to Considering Space is that social change is not simply expressed in space, but that the corporeality and moving materiality of the social has always already ensured that the social world cannot be properly grasped until its spatiality is also apprehended.

Turning our attention towards the dynamics of globalization, Poferl shows how the theory of reflexive modernization (Beck/Giddens/Lash 1996) and the analysis of the world-risk-society (Beck 2007) can be brought together with a social theory of space. This enables us to understand why and how globalization does not mean that the world becomes placeless, and, thus, cannot be thought of as non-spatial. Rather, in the context of a forced cosmopolitanization, it is about reflecting on one's own location and thus one's own point of view. Therefore, places are gaining relevance in the course of globalization.

Nana Last reminds us to understand the social world as a cultural universe that cannot be described in terms of unambiguous logical references. This is true for mundane practices as well as philosophical understanding of social life. In dealing with architecture, for example, Wittgenstein had to learn that language in the social world does not function as a logically coherent system of statements, but functions in different logics simultaneously.

With Henning Füller's contribution, we move towards specific categories of analysis that can be derived from a topological approach. Füller argues for a systematic inclusion of materiality in social scientific analysis through the relations of inside/outside and center/dispersion. Based on this methodological argument, the author places space (together with the relational understanding of power in the sense of Foucault) in the center of social theorizing.

In this sense it is highly informative to take a close look into how the global and a globalized society can actually be conceptualized, as Weidenhaus shows. Overcoming 'flat' theories of globalization which have pointed to a non-spatial global opens up the perspective for very different ways in which the global and processes of globalization actually are enacted and thought of. A non-spatial 'global' covers up inequalities as well as epistemological shortcuts, especially the tendency to normatively superimpose the global North as reference for the 'global'. Hence the necessity to think the 'global' as a relation of different spatial figures, such as the territory, place, networks and paths, as Weidenhaus shows. This way, we may actually also understand how the 'global' has been produced historically in differing ways. While the abstract idea of a non-spatial global also runs the risk of understanding it as a non-temporal, ahistorical configuration, a spatially informed analysis reveals that the contemporary 'global' appears as a smooth space of accelerated social relations, where no spatial figure (network, territory, place, path) is hegemonic, but they overlap dynamically and polycontextually. All in all, this section shows how important it is to think of the social spatially already in terms of its production and thus points to the necessity of a social theory informed by spatial analysis.

Global Epistemologies

What do we mean, though, when we say 'space'? And how do specific categories that foreground our understanding of the world (the global South, the West, European, urban, rural, center and periphery, to name a few of the highlighted notions) imply certain spatialities? The second section of the book illustrates the need for and benefits of spatially grounded perspectives in social science research – but it also calls for a critical reflection on the category of space, itself. What our contributions show is that spatiality is an underlying dimension of a wide range of social science categories. However, it is precisely these spatial references that threaten to become the focal point of untenable essentializations if they are made without reflection and if the production of space is not thought in strictly relational terms. This, however, does not argue against an inclusion of space in philosophy of science, but on the contrary for the explicit reference to space. Our contributions develop this idea in the context of a critical epistemology of global spatial binaries (Hoerning), a critical epistemology of Europe as relational space (Boatcă/Santos), a gnoseology of the relationship between the communal and the 'spatial' (Mignolo) and the scrutinization of concepts of inequality (Krishnan).

The unreflective use of spatial determinations of any kind involves multiple risks, which have been elaborated by the authors of this section. For example, there

is a risk of normatively charged attributions in the case of the use of spatial binaries such as the juxtaposition of global North and South (Hoerning) or essentializations through geographical standardization (Boatcă/Santos), as well as inappropriate generalization and universalization of (territorial) space (Mignolo). Instead, it is important to engage in a reflexive treatment of space within the framework of scientific theoretical considerations. Such an understanding of space prevents spatial difference from being translated into normatively charged historical difference as apparent in theories of modernization, which translates into spatial othering, attesting inferiority to specific places, regions and subjects (bodies as well as ideas).

In direct continuation of and adding to the perspective on how the global is insinuated as such (Weidenhaus), this section moves to the perspective on how the global is actually produced through spatial binaries and thus not produced as a smooth, abstract space, but as a space of severe inequalities and sharply distinguishable perspectives and experiences of the world (Hoerning). This does not necessarily imply that the spatial binaries are to be ignored as normatively charged in social theory. On the contrary, binary spatial determinations can also function as cognitive guides, provided that they are read as what they actually are: As historically specific meaning making and enactment of such. Thus, it is crucial not to fix these spatial differences firmly territorially, but to follow their dynamics.

Similarly, Boatcă and Santos, using the example of European overseas territories, argue that Europe cannot be determined as a spatial unity in the sense of a place or a distinguishable location, but must be reconstructed relationally in spatial as well as historical terms. Common understandings of Europe only rarely point towards its spatial constitution – thereby unreflectively essentializing it as a territory. Again, we can see that a spatial shortcoming is related to a temporal one: Reducing Europe to a place and geographic region, it can be related to a linear development of its idea and political reasoning. Understanding it relationally opens up the perspective for its entangled constitution, which is historically as well as spatially globally interrelated.

These insights relate very closely to cautionary perspectives Walter Mignolo points us towards with his contribution, questioning in a radical way the epistemological contents of the terms 'space' and 'time' themselves. Referring to the Aztec constitution of the communal, we can see what difficulties arise when space and time are fixated to socially and historically specific contents of meaning and significance. What also becomes very apparent is that chronology and territory have been established as quasi-natural expressions of time and space, which have also been implemented to destitute other understandings through colonial interference. Shifting our analysis towards directions and durations can make us question the ways in which the spatial is used as a universal reference – and make us aware that other concepts (here: tlacauhtli) may offer critical impulses for rethinking the relationship between the social/communal and its spatial and historical relationality.

But local differentiations not only show from the perspective of globalization theory, but are relevant to an analysis of social inequality in more general terms. As the debate on global inequalities (Boatcă 2015; Milanović 2016; Therborn 2013; Weiß 2017) shows, methodological nationalism and its spatial implication, that

we were actually able to distinguish socially differentiated territories, have led to sincere shortcomings in understanding social structures of inequality. Others have also argued in favor of subnational differentiations for a sociology of inequality (Lobao/Tickamyer 2007). In this vein, but also with the intention to expand theorization of inequality rendering it not only global in analytical, but also in empirical ways, Krishnan shows how essential it is to scrutinize concepts of inequality (here: caste) spatially. Detaching the analysis of caste of its spatial constitution seriously runs the risk of misinterpreting it, biased by a modernist understanding of class inequalities. Krishnan shows how both reproduction and transformation of the Indian caste system are mediated through space, and, most harshly, through the body. With this focus it becomes clear that caste inequality is based on othering – the caste system itself is intrinsically stabilized through a bodily enacted and established othering of untouchables. Understanding the strong relationship between space and inequality as mediated through territory, segregation and the body is an important analytical shift which may also inform global comparison and a global theorization of social inequalities more specifically.

Overall, this section of the book clearly demonstrates the need for an epistemology and a critical scrutinization of the conceptual fundamentals informed by spatial theory for the social sciences from many perspectives.

Meaning Making and Affordances

Moving from discursive meaning and knowledge to meaning making as differentially conditioned by specific arrays of materialities, the section 'Meaning making and affordances' develops the strength of a spatio-cultural analysis from a diverse set of empirical research. This shift in analysis may, as Dominik Bartmanski reveals in the first contribution to this section, actually fill an existing gap in cultural sociology: It is the gap between practices of phenomenologically understood subjectivities, on the one hand, and the emergence of cultural patterns on the other. Considering space in the context of cultural sociological theorizing can close this gap in multiple ways. A social theory of cultural production is developed alongside three main concepts that can serve as bridging categories: affordances (Bartmanski; Vercel and McDonnel), place-based socialization (Pospěch) and performance (Fassari).

Affordances can be understood on the basis of clusters of relationally understood qualities that make new linkages between producers, consumers, media and economies of culture analyzable (Bartmanski). Crucially, they help appreciate the fact that meaning making in cultural production is not wholly arbitrary, as orthodox structuralist and representational theories of culture claimed, but instead feature complex patterns of spatio-material conditioning. The reconstruction of the affordances at hand also enables the analysis of the cultural reproduction and self-affirmation practices of socio-structural groups such as the upper middle class (Vercel/McDonnell). What we learn from the contributions here is, too, that we can understand place-related meaning making as shaped through two crucial socio-cultural practices, that of enablement and that of limitation: The affordances of

homes as stages for potential buyers (Vercel/McDonnell) point towards the potentiality (what could be done) rather than the specific location (where we are), while drawing on a limited set of affordances that make sense for specific social groups. Analyzing space and place culturally in terms of locational socialization and meaning as enacted in situations as well as places, which are bound to recognition as a cultural practice (Pospěch), points towards social control of materially regulated practice. The child in the supermarket, the man running with a suitcase in the mall, naked bodies at the beach (and their being 'ignored') all highlight how a (temporally defined) situation produces meaning only in the concrete context of a materially defined place (bodies and objects, among others). Hence, Pavel Pospěch shows how much socialization theory benefits from a spatial analysis perspective. Socialization always means forms of knowledge and learning that conditions our interpretation of what behavior is appropriate in which places. Hence, socialization theory without an understanding of space is in danger of missing out on masses of highly significant data.

A theory of performative body techniques is also dependent on a foundation in spatial theory (Fassari). In this context, performance is both space-producing and influenced by spaces, and it is this mutually constitutive or elaborative nature of cultural practice that makes it meaningful in life and more resistant to reductionist explanations in science. Letteria Fassari argues that very specific spaces are necessary to enable transformative performance that can change culture. Overall, the contributions to this section show what the consideration of space can achieve within the framework of cultural sociology and that without a stable reference to spatial theory, fundamental sociological concepts such as socialization, culture- or group-specific reproduction of norms and values remain incomplete.

Space is surely not considered for the first time in social sciences and the breadth of scope and perspective represented in the contributions hints at the lasting stipulation through such fundamental concept. In this way the volume intends rather to open up trajectories than having an authoritative last word on its questions. Our focus on global perspectives, epistemologies and meaning making is in some way an arbitrary way of making spatial awareness a more integral part of social theory. But this sorting is also the result of a longer process and has eventually turned out as a quite useful triangulation for us. The stipulation of space for social theory can and should be extended and can very well be investigated against several more phenomena such as transactions (economics of production and information), conflict and negotiation of interests, socio-ecological relationships, as well as imaginaries of the future, to name but a few. The triangulation and the still broad range of perspectives brought together here underline the predicaments of a non-spatial social theory, as well as the advantages with and gains through spatially informed social theory as concerns our three dimensions, global perspectives, epistemologies and meaning making.

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