THE SOCIAL (SOCIOLOGICAL) TURN IN THE DISCOURSE ABOUT SPACE

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ABSTRACT – Space is not a concrete physical element of reality but it is an interpreted social construction. It is a condition of possibility, which can only be observed in the multiple forms of appearance of beings. Space, time, the medium that makes them observable and the observer always "go together". The representation of space that we live in and experience indirectly is very similar to external reality and, thus, provides ontological certainty and a sense of feeling at home in the routine of our everyday life. Space (structure) is not an external cause but the functioning mode of the relations that connect those who exist together; it is a zeitgeist and context. In the final section, the author provides examples of the possible applications of the socio-spatial perspective presented in this paper.

Keywords: space, time, theories of space, social constructivism

INTRODUCTION

In ('Western') scholarship on space, one could observe the strengthening of anti-positivist and sociological perspectives since the 1970s. Previously dominant ideas, such as those concerning the absolute concept of space, have become questioned from the philosophy of science and epistemology viewpoint and more emphasis has been put on the *social* process through which different spatial phenomena are being constructed. Parallel to this, more importance has been given to daily practices and to the specific context and atmosphere of particular places. Accordingly, micro-sociological and anthropological approaches have moved in the foreground. On the whole, scholarship on space has redirected its focus on the interlinkage between society and space, on how human action becomes embedded in material(ized) space. The 'becoming' of space has become conceptualized in terms of the heterogeneous associations of human and non-human elements (Latour, 2005; Murdoch, 2005).

THE SOCIAL TURN IN THEORIES OF SPACE

Parallel to the spatial turn that has unfolded in the Social Sciences and the Humanities in the past decades, in the disciplines concerned with issues of space (e.g. Human Geography, Regional Studies), there has been a *social* (sociological, interpretive, phenomenological) *turn*. Spatiality has become treated as something inherently social. More and more scholars (Pred, 1985; Massey, 1995; Bærenholdt and Simonsen, 2004; Löw, 2008) have stressed that *the notions of space and society are interconnected*. In other words, *everything exists spatially; space as we experience it is the mode of functioning of society. Space and society are thus inseparable.* Space is not something "out there"; we, as social subjects, co-constitute space as we conceive and enact it.

Every social practice constitutes space (Crang and Thrift, 2000), the social becomes spatial, the spatial becomes social (Pred, 1985). Spatiality is constituted by social processes; everyday practices are mediating space and are also results of it (Soja, 1996). Studies on space have increasingly focused on the knowing of social subject who uses real spaces. It is through human meaning-giving and ordering that space, understood in terms of simultaneous interrelations, "makes sense". In other words, the meaningfulness of space as a set of relations can only be considered from the point of view of the social subject; neither space nor nature can be conceptualized without social meanings

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(Fitzsimmons, 1989). Space does not exist independently from society; rather, social existence entails the coming-together of things and humans, the relations and networks of which we define as space. "The spatial cannot be differentiated from the social since it is a specific form of the society. Spatial structures, like temporal structures, are forms of societal structures" (Löw, 2008, p. 38).

The above also entails that space should not only be regarded as socially constructed to the extent it is produced by society and societal modes of production (as suggested by Lefebvre, 1991). Space is not only social because humans "occupy" and use physical/geographical space. Rather, the notion of any space is a social construction. The cognitive representation of physical space is also a result of human interpretation and meaning-giving. For example, Human Geography's notion of (hierarchical) scale does not refer to some existing entity but, as Delaney and Leitner (1997) argued, it captures a dynamic set of space-constituting relations. Similarly, Swyngedouw (1997) conceptualized geographical scales in terms of the vertical structuration of social relations. Spatial concepts are thus rooted in social processes and newly forming spatial concepts shape social phenomena. This is what Soja (1989) calls socio-spatial dialectics. Any territorial categorization or localization entails making a difference, acts of inclusion/exclusion, and, hence, the drawing of boundaries.

Accepting that there is a reality that exists independently of us, *from an epistemological point of view, any space (known to humans), and any knowledge of space is social(ly constructed)*. The term 'spatial' encompasses all aspects of social reality; the social and the spatial are always present simultaneously (Massey, 1995). Space and society are, as noted earlier, inseparable, which also means that it is redundant to denote space as social. However, this might cause confusion; hence, it might be useful to refer to "*sociospace*". This term helps to acknowledge that space is not a given aspect of "the world as it is", but that space as we know it always has a non-material (non-natural, non-physical) "element". Thus, space is always co-constituted by humans. For example, studying (what appear as) spatial facts, such as spatial disparities or centre-periphery relations, necessarily relies on an a priori distinctions (i.e. ascriptions of meaning) concerning what is more and less developed.

It should be noted that suggestions to extend the social in order to include everything have not been unanimously accepted. Recently, perspectives emphasizing bodily experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1989), the agency of things (Latour, 1999, 2005), and scientific method (Bloor, 1981) have counteracted the tendency to see everything as social. By including non-human factors and nature into social scientific thinking, these approaches have attempted to bridge the social and the physical sciences.

ON HOW SPACE AND TIME EXIST TOGETHER WITH THEIR "CONTENTS"

Space and time do not have an independent existence; space-time is the condition for anything to exist. There is no space that we can perceive "as such" with our sensory organs and that we can study "in itself"; to exist always means to exist spatially. Space and time are given to us as *historical conditions of our existence and as modes of perception*. Space, however, is not only a condition of existence; it is always something that has a spatiality, spatial structure or territory. In this sense, space is a parasite (Agnew, 2005) that always takes shape through that which exists. Space and time can be thought of without matter, but only as the observing human subject's way of seeing (Kant). The knowledge of concrete spaces is always tied to human experience that in turn is shaped by historically specific a priori ways of knowing. This means, as mentioned earlier, that not only is space and spatiality socially constructed, but also society exists and functions spatially; space and society are co-constituted.

Every concrete thing or event renders a particular, observable space-time that is "surrounded" by a certain set of relations (structure, atmosphere). Things and events can be seen as complexes of characteristics that become meaningful to us with their external sets of relations that are indispensable to their functioning. Space and time are only a priori conditions of possibility ("mediums") that help relations and necessary interplays take place and durable structures persist (objects, events, thoughts, in general the objects of our inquiry). The relations and effects that are made possible by space and time constitute a complex environment and create a framework of operation and the realm of human sense-making, and these together produce purposiveness. Everything becomes what it is and can fulfil

its function through the dimension of space-time. Abstract ideas become material, events concrete and actions realized in particular space-times. If we locate the same thing or event in another time, or another place, then it will have a different signification, meaning and function, and thus a different identity.

Space, time, the medium that makes them observable and the observer always "go together", which means that they do not exist independently of each other. So if there is no medium ("content"), then there is no observable space and time, and there is nothing to observe. The process of observing is a fourth (interpretive and meaning-giving) dynamic dimension (Figure 1). As the constituting part of the changing world, the countless intersections of these four dimensions represent the multitude of functioning entities.

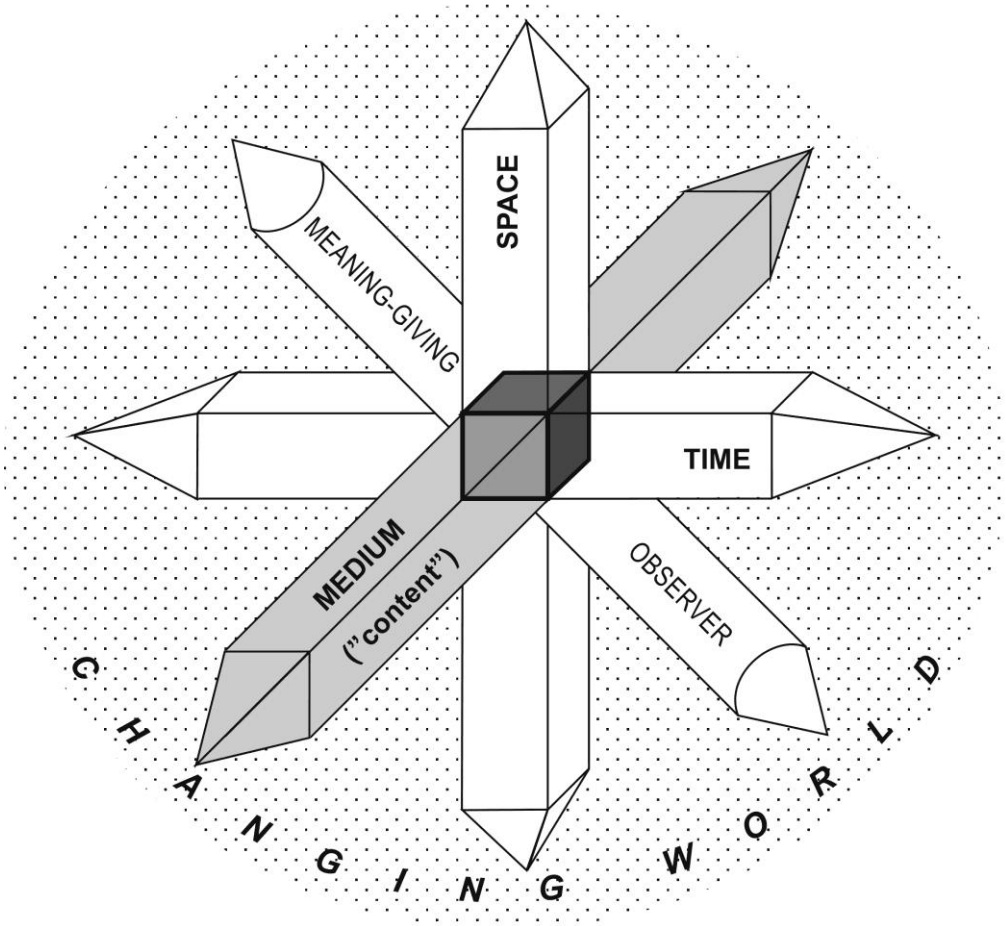

Figure 1. *The entity created at the intersection of space, time, "content" and interpretation*
Source: designed by author

Space and time play an important role in knowing the world: they provide a framework, a structuring perspective, and make part of the shared essence of the knowing subject and the object of knowledge (shared mode of existence). The object of knowledge is a carrier and medium; it is the condition of making space and time concrete and knowable, and vice versa. Knowing, studying, describing something contributes to the knowledge and description of (the structure of) space and time and their forms of appearance.

THE RELATIONAL, SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST UNDERSTANDING OF SPACE

Today, there seems to an ever-broader consensus that objects, people and events are not located in an abstract space but that we exist as part of a relational network that is the object of our interpretation. Within this network, no clear distinction can be made between entities that are social constructions and that are real. We contribute to the construction of space both epistemologically and ontologically.

"The world is what you pour into it", space is what you realize from a potential. We all order our individual worlds, create our real and virtual spaces and contribute to the construction and shaping of space. One can never inhabit the same space twice, the world is always unfinished (Faragó, 2013). Whenever we act and create something concrete, we create also relations, i.e. space. Due to synchrony, there are necessary relations and interactions between elementary places and events. These are constantly changing, "becoming" and disappearing, and so is the space we can observe. There are durable or frequently recurring actions that become objectified and institutionalized. The resulting realities are lived, perceived and interpreted differently, and these interpretations shape in turn our future actions and ideas of space.

Given the nature of knowing, from an epistemological point of view, all spaces can be regarded as social and meaningful ("space of meaning"). The status and orientation of the actor (knowing subject) and the situation in which (s)he acts define for her/him the space (s)he perceives. Different spatial structures, territorial systems always embody human intelligence and collective practices. There is no single "true" space. Rather, the observed relations that we see as space are the result of historically and culturally specific interpretations made by the context-dependent knowing subject. We capture the order of the world through structures existing in our mind. The meaning of space that is constructed this way can be understood through the intentions underlying its construction. Our understandings of space become collective interpretations through processes of communication and socialization. When we think and speak about space, then we do so about notions of space that are specific to our society and that represent the spatial order of our reality. The spatial world appears to us as we live the reality that we co-construct. As we construct our own lifeworlds, we also decide about what is real for us and we give value content to accepted "facts".

A particular space achieves its distinctiveness through the multitude of (functional) interrelations that occur among its constituting elements and make these belong together. Ontologically, any concrete spatial unit (which can be a settlement, region) creates itself; if some elements do not entertain relations with each other, they do not constitute a distinct space. The coherence of a space is rooted in particular functions, and the extension of spaces depends on the nature and intensity of functional relationships. The boundaries of a space run where these relationships stop or become of a different quality. Thus, spaces can be regarded as functional autopoietic systems that have functional relationships to their environment (Faragó, 2013).

Space is shaped through the interplay between actions and simultaneously existing and emerging structures. Martina Löw's sociology of space (2001, 2008) and actor-network theory (ANT) (Latour, 2005) are integrating human (bodily, subject-related) and non-human (material, natural, technological) factors. These approaches work with a notion of heterogeneous agency and assume that it is non-human "natural" and artificial things and social relations that *together* actively constitute space. Processes of structuration occur through the interplay between human (symbolic) and non-human (material) factors in particular sites. As Löw puts it: „Spaces are created in performative action by synthesizing and relationally ordering objects and people. This is enacted in pre-arranged spaces and happens in day-to-day activities with recourse to institutionalized orderings and spatial structures" (Löw, 2008, p. 43).

THE "OVERLAP" BETWEEN REAL AND PERCEIVED SPACE

But, if all spatial knowledge is a subjective construction, then, some might wonder how can we find our way in our physical/natural environment, and how do we develop our practical ways of doing without constantly hitting the limits of nature and clashing with others' use of space? However, saying that the world can be different from the way we perceive it does not entail that experience and

reality always necessarily differ. As Merleau-Ponty suggested, worldly reality is actualized but not created by human perception, whereby the latter is not just an experience of objects, but it results from the involvement with them. The lived body is in active relation with the world (discussed by Simonsen, 2007). Concrete places are formed as experiences full of sensory and mental experiences. The spaces we live in, use and construct appear in a different way in our consciousness than other concepts (one might say that they are processed by different parts of our brain and stored in different files). We do not only know things that we have constructed ourselves (as Giovanni Battista Vicora has thought); we also know a lot about (the spatiality and physical form of) things through *bodily experience*. Concerning knowledge related to everyday practices and lived spaces, direct causal physical experience is of greater significance. The objects of everyday life and distance do not simply exist in the mind; rather the embodied subject experiences these in the course of specific actions. From the point of view of practice, the representations of these spatial experiences correspond to external reality and they are present in a different place in the nervous system. Our attention is largely focused on our indirect environment and the objects in it; as result, our experiences are confirmed or modified. Eventually, the cognitive picture becomes sharper, with a better reflection of physical reality. Those with whom we share our experiences develop cognitive pictures that are similar to ours, and these can be further refined through inter-subjective communication. This is why we can say that the lived world and concrete places (in particular the place we call home) have a different role in our lives than abstract notions and categories of space (that shape the former). Certain concepts and modes of action become embedded in daily practices and become also anchored in particular spaces and territories, attached to certain places. Spaces become places in concrete situations and through intentional meanings. This provides us with some kind of ontological certainty and a sense of feeling at home in the routine of our everyday life.

For Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1989), the moving body is central to perceiving and experiencing the world. When the body sees, touches, moves, it fills a series of places and becomes a physical part of the same world. Embodiment and the experiences gained through everyday movement help us link perceived and real space. According to Merleau-Ponty, bodily movement structures space in an objective way. Space is embodied in personal existence. The movement and the interactions of the body (seeing, smelling) occur in space and this is possible because we exist in space; the relationship between the body and the world is characterized by immediacy. Our body is not located in space as objects are; the body is lived and it adapts to space. Bodily movement and physical perception make the existence of the physical environment necessary, and human consciousness takes it into account when structuring space. In this case, the difference between practical and theoretical structuration is dissolved. The spatiality of the lived body is characterized by ontological and epistemological unity.

The 2014 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to John M. O'Keefe, May-Britt Moser and Edvard I. Moser for their discoveries of nerve cells in the brain that enable a sense of place and navigation[2]. The assumption of philosophers that there is an "inner" map in our brain and that our brain can perceive places (GPS), allowing us to remember places and to orientate ourselves, became confirmed. This is one of the most complex functions of the brain. O'Keefe discovered in the hippocampus the existence of place-coded neurones that signal our position and assure the remembrance of places. Place-coded neurones also enable notions of distance. They become activated in different places ("remapping") and this supplies us with the inner map of our environment. Particular combinations of these place-coded neurones correspond to particular places. Bodily experience as described by Merleau-Ponty fills up these "storage places" with concrete spatial knowledge. May-Britt Moser and Edvard I. Moser discovered the "grid cells" that constitute a coordinate system that allows for spatial navigation. Perceiving a place signifies the position of the body in its environment. Orientation means perceiving distance and directions and it is based on comparing movement and previous positions. In fact, this is what Immanuel Kant suspected in the 18th century, when he suggested that there are mental abilities independent of experience. The cognitive map represents the environment as the totality of parts and makes it possible for us to orientate and to

[2] http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/2014/advanced-medicineprize2014.pdf

perceive places. The "grid" constituting a coordinate system allows us to assess distance during movement and it supplies a metric system for the inner map created by place-coded neurons.

Davidson's (2001) concept of "triangulation" also helps us understand our relationship with the world and how our environment and lived spaces become our well-known, common world. The observer, the other members of society and the environment are in constant interaction with each other. Our sensory experience and response to external stimuli are similar, and through communication with others, we, as actors, can determine what happens in our environment. In society, there is a coherent view of the world. As different subjective experiences are discussed, a particular idea of the world becomes confirmed and this can be viewed as relatively objective, similar to reality. People are in constant interaction with things during their actions and they learn about how others experience the world. As result, the set of beliefs relating to the world that surrounds us becomes more consistent. If others' reactions are consistently similar to ours, then we can assume the same "causes", stimuli (for example objects of the same form, extension or consistency) behind these similar effects. This theory also emphasizes the relevance of lived places about which experience is shared, even though increased mobility and technological development has extended the territorial borders of places.

THE FUNCTIONING OF (THE STRUCTURE OF) SOCIOSPACE

What keeps simultaneous differences (objects, phenomena, events) together? Can we regard the world as something the elements of which are held together by a space similar to physical force (e.g. gravitation)? Space does not function as a universal glue or cement; it is not a residual something or add-on to the whole that has a different substance from the elements that it connects. Reality has no distinct part that explains the *togetherness of the most diverse factors* and that could be the sole object of research about space. But, if it is not space that "keeps together" the elements, then how does space, as an already existing order and structure work, and how does its interpretation shape human action and spatial thinking? How do the interpretation of space and the corresponding use of it create and order the perceived world into vertical and horizontal networks of relations?

Abstract space means only a potential for connection, interplay and realization. What we generally understand by the concept of space is a system of interconnections. *It is the system of interrelations between things and people that constitutes space* and defines (spatial) units. Systems of interrelations between elements appear as particular patterns and structures to us through processes of interpretation shaped by our teleological intentionality. The effect of the structure of physical space on people does not only depend on itself. Physical space is also always interpreted space.

Given that space is built up from elementary units ("filled-up places") and the relations between them, whenever we speak of structure, we speak of the spatial structure of something. In other words, structure always means spatial structure. It is by interpreting the spatial mode of existence of different – existing or virtual – systems that we reveal the structure of a concrete phenomenon, and vice versa. If we study the structure of something (of a material, of the economy), then we study its spatiality, i.e. how it exists and functions in space.

Space has no independent existence or causal force and, given that structures are always the spatial form of something, they do not have an independent existence either. The structure as an "operational rule", zeitgeist, context and atmosphere, exists only in collective consciousness and becomes concrete in localized actions.

Sructuralism puts emphasis on the totality of society and not on its constituting parts (Giddens, 1984). In other words, it assumes that people's position in society is of key importance. Structure (in particular the capitalist mode of production) stands above all elements and sub-systems. It exists independently from them and affects them even if we are not aware of it. Societal-economic structures are thus (quasi-)deterministic (although sometimes mediated) casual forces and any particular position in them embodies certain advantages and disadvantages. "Spatial structure provides the context of action and it acquires meaning as the medium for or as the obstacle to achieving certain aims" (Benedek, 2000, p. 141). Structuralists tend to consider the totality of a system or structure as an

enduring, externally given norm or regularity that influences (enhances or restricts) the possibilities of elements.

Space and time figure centrally to Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration. For Giddens (1984), structures are the space-time rules of actions that exist virtually. The social system is the actual spatial patterning of social relations along rules of structuration. Social structure is both the medium and the result of recurring actions. Furthermore, space is the context of social interactions, the effect of which we do not experience directly, so space-time is not a concrete tangible thing but a "structuring factor" that contributes to the reproduction of social practices. Structure, as result of social practices, is the "source of constraints", the "ordering principle" of society. Structuration is a process in the course of which the structural characteristics of different societies become expressed through everyday practices. At the same time, these everyday practices create social structures. The individual actions of everyday life build up abstract structures, but these "rules" do not have an independent existence, they are immanent to action and actors.

Pierre Bourdieu worked with different concepts than Giddens, but his perspective on societal mechanisms is very similar. Bourdieu (1998) considers social fields as objectively existing structures with their own "rules of function". We do not create these but we are born into them. The opportunities and actions of people cannot (only) be explained by the rationality and intentionality of autonomous individuals, but (also) with the *complex interplay of objective structures and subjective constructs*.

A key point of critique (de Certeau, 2010) concerning extreme views of structuralism is that determination is not direct and unambiguous. Although the opportunities available to people are restricted by the given natural and social system in which they live, they are nonetheless capable of adopting and shaping the prevailing system through their actions in particular ways. Structures are being shaped in the course of the everyday "struggle" of social actors.

Of course, structural thinking cannot be fully eliminated from spatial thinking. In some way, every theory of space is structuralist. In poststructuralist approaches, linguistic discourses and certain moral considerations play a similar role. Actor-network theory assumes that (spatial) order is constituted through the relations among human and non-human actants. Networks of actions order and structure elements.

Poststructuralists do not question the existence of structure or that it is important to study it, but emphasize that no construction is stable. Spatial structures are in constant transformation; they cannot be detached from the elements and processes that bring them into existence and they cannot be revealed in their full complexity. Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault stress the role of language in constructing knowledge. They challenge "grand narratives" (e.g. of God, objectivity and truth), essentialism and the rigidity of perception, and argue that meanings are fundamentally unstable and that epistemology precedes ontology. Society is not structured by some external, absolute space, but according to its "self-reference" (Luhmann, 2013). Spatial structure is constituted by the relationally networked sub-systems of society, and language and communication play an important part in this process of constitution.

Contemporary theories of Human Geography have primarily taken shape as the negation and deconstruction of totalizing approaches, structuralist Marxist in particular. However, they are not anti-, but poststructuralists, for they are principally "dynamizing" structuralist ideas (Varró, 2004, p. 79); as such, they are related to Marxist traditions and Critical Geography. In fact, from the point of view of theorizing space, these perspectives could also be labelled as neostructuralist. For them, there is no fully closed structure (space), no already given fixed point, and no exclusive objective reference point. The particular vantage point and approach/intention have a key influence on interpreting and knowing space. Defining concrete orderings (structures) and places is seen as an epistemological, rather than an ontological question. Spatial relations and differences are in constant transformation, the spatial structure is a permanently changing scheme. The (structure of) sociospace necessarily manifests itself in the localized practices of concrete social groups. Space, understood as the structure of different phenomena, is constantly recreated in practice.

Most poststructuralists assume the priority of elements (things, people) and that (spatial) structures are secondary effects of these. This does not entail neglecting that these elements always exist as part of larger structures, systems and networks, to the contrary. According to poststructuralists, the functioning of a particular element in a given system or network and the functioning of the system or network as a whole is closely interrelated.

Whenever we interpret the world around us, we treat particular elements and processes separately or together as part of a given system. We interpret complex phenomena by ordering things in a certain (spatial) structure; spatial ordering and delimitation is intentional. Whatever we "see" as space is the result of the interplay between existing patterns and our interpretation of it. We take away (ignore or do not consider relevant) something from reality and add our own point of view.

Martina Löw (2008) conceptualizes the operation mechanisms of space in terms of "atmosphere" that can have an effect on people even against their will. Atmospheres denote objects and the external effects of their ordering together with the perception and interpretation of these. From this follows that an atmosphere may differ from person to person or from society to society because everyone perceives and interprets it in a different way. "Spaces develop their own potentiality which can influence feelings. This potentiality of space I call 'atmosphere'" (Löw, 2008, p. 44). The "atmosphere" is the shared reality of the perceived and the perceiving. The "atmosphere" of concrete places is created by the combined external effects of the complexity made up by objects and people. It affects the emotions and perception of those living in that place and shapes their actions. Atmospheres can also be formed deliberately. A given structure (established order) comes into being in the course of ordering as the structural dimension of action. (Socio)space as the context of actions is constructed as social structures manifest themselves. Individuals as social actors create space but their actions depend on economic, social, cultural and other structures. Space makes action possible, but restricts it as well through these structures.

Certain representatives of post-structuralism, especially of actor-network theory (Urry, 2004; Law and Hassard, 1999; Latour, 2005) regard space as a complex system without any dominant structure, different scales, a systemic world or lifeworld; without anything that builds on the difference or juxtaposition of essential elements. According to Latour (2005), the world has no fundamental structure; there is no unified, consistent world. It is inconceivable that structure is independent from those individuals who created it. Sociospace cannot function as an underlying structure or power, but it is something brought about by constantly moving systems of associations, by relations between things. Society is thus not one of the things that exist, but it is the mode of functioning of a multitude of beings. Paraphrasing Latour, there is no independent structure or order, but we have to do with a constantly forming sociospace. The way from the local to the global is mediated through the tools, institutions and networks that we use in everyday life. If we follow events step by step, then we never cross the mysterious line that separates the local from the global. The local and the global are merely different vantage points that offer different views on networks (Latour, 1999).

CONCLUSION

The value of a theory depends on its practical usefulness. The social constructivist approach presented and advocated in this paper sheds a different light on numerous phenomena, and it allows for revealing different relationships than, for example, the assumption concerning the existence of an absolute space and the possibility of objective knowledge. Instead of summarizing the points made above, I demonstrate through some examples how this approach offers new insights about certain concepts and phenomena, and how this might open up new avenues for research.

From a social constructivist perspective, the emphasis in the case of territorial capital is not on localized absolute endowments, but on their internal and external relations, on the relational functioning potential of the particular set of resources that is to be found in a concrete geographical-administrative territory. In this sense, territorial capital is the functioning localized space itself, a place, and expresses how material goods can act together with social, immaterial goods (as a latourian collective), producing a certain output. It is a particular physical and social order, the interconnection and systemic functioning of elements that brings about territorial capital and allows for certain

performance and the development of certain capabilities. Existing together in a given territory implies a particular, locally specific set of relations.

The connections discussed here shed a different light on globalization as well. Principally, globalization is the spatial construction of the capitalist economy and society; it is the process of spatial expansion and restructuring (Harvey, 2001). Space-forming forces make a part of local things and actions connected to new systems, new networks of relations; these things and actions become part of global spatial structure. It is those local actions that become global, the relations of which are dominantly not local, regional, national, but that can be connected to the totality of the network of places on the Earth's surface. Global phenomena, such as global production, are place-independent to the extent that they are shaped not by national, regional or local institutions that are characterized by territorial-cultural attachments and territorial limits of authority, but by internationally present cooperation networks of companies and institutions. *Ontologically speaking, global and local processes take place on the same level*. They do not represent two different spatial scales or dimensions but two different, yet interlinked systems of relations. Global phenomena exist locally; they rely on "territorially fixed" things and, thus, they are re-territorialized. In most places, globalism and localism exist and develop effects together and as a hybrid. This is called glocalism. Concrete places and local societies are not simply enduring processes "from outside" but are active participants and elements of them.

From the perspective of this paper, *the forming of "real" regions* is a social process in the ontological sense through which supra-local connections become established and regularized. *Regionalism* denotes theories and performative actions aiming at the formation of regions that may become elevated to a doctrine of government, spatial policy and development policy in a particular time and space. *Regionalization* refers to the delimitation and institutionalization of regional units according to a particular form of regionalism that is dominant (accepted in a certain time and space). Regionalism as spatial policy and as a normative prescription appears primarily as a question of government and administration and aims at the establishment of new units of political authority and public administration. It implies a power struggle for the division of space. Regional relations are formed through network-building and cooperation that reach beyond the local level. The region is a social and political construct that is formed with the help of discursive language and that becomes meaningful in actual practice.

The above-discussed sociospatial perspective may be useful for rethinking other spatial phenomena and concepts.

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