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'Spatialising' the Sociology of Education: Stand-points, Entry-points, Vantage-points

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In (2009) S. Ball, M. Apple and L. Gandin (eds) *Handbook of Sociology of Education*, London and New York: Routledge.

Introduction

All fields of enquiry must engage with the question of what constitutes the fundamental conceptual grammar of that field. They must identify the theoretical frameworks and categories to be used in the analysis of that conceptual grammar and reflect critically upon these to reveal the constitutive nature of theories. This is particularly important as social theory is an; “...irredeemably political form of thought” (Callinicos, 1999: 5). This *‘theory-conceptual grammar of the field’* dialectic must be continually reviewed, refined and transformed in order to take account of the dynamic nature of our social worlds.

This statement applies to the sociology of education, the field of enquiry I have been invited to reflect upon. However, in this essay I am particularly concerned with exploring the implications of an absence of a critical spatial lens in the conceptual grammar of the field, and the epistemological and political consequences of this absence. This is despite the fact that within the sociology of education we can observe:

- (i) a rich set of spatial references over the course of the development of the sociology of education—social selection, social stratification, social classes, classroom, field, decentralisation, to name but a few (cf. Havighurst and Neugarten, 1962; Morrison and McIntyre, 1971; Morrish, 1972; Apple, 1982; Bourdieu, 1984);
- (ii) unfolding political projects which depend upon space as both medium and resource in the re/structuring of existing world orders, states and education spaces (e.g. processes of globalisation, the construction of new regional territories, governance strategies such as decentralisation/centralisation);
- (iii) the lived spatial nature of education practices on social beings (e.g. the consequences of ‘tracking’ or ‘streaming’ for how we experience and are constituted by the state’s ‘education’ projects and practices); and
- (iv) the spatial nature of the social production of subjectivities (territorial/place-based e.g. a European citizen, working class boy); that our theoretical understanding of the work that space is doing in the conceptual grammar of the education sociology is under-developed.

However, I will be arguing that it is not sufficient to simply bring a spatial lexicon to our conceptual sentences (as in ‘geographies’ of classroom emotions; the school as a ‘place’; communities of practice). This is to fetishize space, leaving a particular medium of power, projects and politics—space—to go un-noticed. Rather, to apply a critical spatial lens to the sociology of education means seeing the difference that space, along with time and sociality—the two privileged angles of view in modernity to our understanding of contemporary knowledge formation, social reproduction and the constitution of subjectivities (Soja, 1996:71; Massey, 2005: 62). By tracing out the ways in which space is deeply implicated in power, production and social relations, I hope to reveal the complex processes at work in constituting the social relations of ‘education space’ as a crucial site, object, instrument and outcome in this process. And whilst this chapter can only be a preliminary sketch of ideas I have been working on over the past decade (cf. Robertson, Bonal and Dale, 2002; Robertson and Dale, 2002; Robertson and Dale, 2006; Robertson, 2007a; Robertson, 2007b), and which have been bubbling up in recent publications (see Gulson and Symes, 2007), the purpose here is to bring these scattered ideas together in a somewhat more systematic way so as to open up debate in order to generate further conceptual development. There will, therefore, be gaps to be filled, claims to be defended and reworked, and alternative entry points to be considered in the future; entry points that bring with them different ontological positions, such as Ingold’s (2008) suggestive

anthropological approach to ‘place’, premised on the collapse of the nature/society duality.

I’ll be proposing here that developing a ‘critical’ spatial lens in the sociology of education involves three moves: one, an outline of the ontological and epistemological premises of a critical theory of space (cf. Lefebvre, 1991; Smith (1992); Massey (1994); Jessop, Brenner and Jones, 2008); two, the specification of the central objects for enquiry to education and society; and three, bringing these theoretical and conceptual approaches together to open up an entry point for investigation, a vantage point from which to see education-society phenomena anew, and a standpoint from which to see how education space is produced and how it might be changed. By choosing a ‘critical’ theory entry point to the study of space, I recognise, as Harvey (2006: 271) also notes, this is not an innocent move. However critical theory is particularly appropriate to this task for it is not only aware of the co-constitutive relationship between theory and action, or that social systems are dynamic, contingent and open, but that ideas can be made to matter in the interests of change and social justice (Cox, 1996: 97).

Move 1: A critical theory of space

Space is a highly contested concept in social science, particularly the geographical sciences. Different writers come to the concept of space via particular entry points. My task in this section is, therefore, to introduce the core vocabulary for a critical socio-spatial theory drawn from the leading theorists on space, including Lefebvre (1991), Soja (1996), Harvey (2006), Massey (1994), Smith (1992), Brenner (2003) and Jessop, Brenner and Jones (2008). This vocabulary, which has been developed over time and as a result of a series of spatial turns, offers us a set of theoretical and empirical concepts with which to work. At the heart of this approach are the following assumptions; that ontologically, space is social and real (Lefebvre, 1991), that spaces are social relations stretched out (Massey; 1994: 4), and that space is socially-produced (Lefebvre, 1991).

Epistemologically, space can be known through particular categories of ideas; as ‘perceived’, ‘conceived’ and ‘lived’ (Lefebvre, 1991), or as ‘absolute’, ‘relative’ and ‘relational’ (Harvey, 2006). These two framings will be developed in this chapter. Spaces are dynamic, overlapping and changing, in a shifting geometry of power (Massey, 1994). The organisation of socio-spatial relations can take multiple forms and dimensions. This is reflected in a rich spatial lexicon that has been developed by geographers and other social scientists over the past 30 years in order to make sense of the changing nature of production, (nation)state power, labour, knowledge, development and difference. Key concepts in this lexicon are ‘territory’, ‘place’, ‘scale’, ‘network’ and ‘positionality’. These concepts are seen as pertinent for the sociology of education which has, as its central point of enquiry, the role of education in re/producing modern societies, and the consequences of transformations within contemporary society’s (polity and economy) for education systems, education experiences, opportunities and outcomes (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough and Halsey, 2006).

An ontology of space

French philosopher, Henri Lefebvre, and British-born geographer, David Harvey, are both viewed as having transformed our understanding of space, from a largely geometrical/mathematical term denoting an empty area, to seeing space in more critical ways; as social, real, produced and socially constitutive. Both intellectuals produced key

works on space during the 1970s that have had a profound impact on how we critically view space. And while there are significant overlaps in their projects because of their mutual concern with capitalist production and development, there are also important differences (for instance Lefebvre's concern with the everyday or lived). Nevertheless, as we will see, Harvey's (2006) more recent work has sought to bring these two bodies of work together, as a platform for thinking spatially.

I shall begin here with Henri Lefebvre, whose corpus of work is extensive, spanning from the 1930s-1990s. Described by Soja (1996: 33) as a nomadic or meta-Marxist, largely because of his meta-philosophy, Lefebvre's is an intellectual project that explicitly worked with and beyond the binary of materialism and idealism. What marks out Lefebvre's meta-philosophical project is his concern with the possibilities for change by identifying 'third space' (Soja, 1996: 31), a space of radical openness. In other words, Lefebvre's approach is concerned not only with the forces of production and the social relations that are organised around them, but *also moving beyond* to new, an-Other, unanticipated possibilities. As Soja notes of Lefebvre:

Two terms are never enough, he would repeatedly write. *Il y a toujours "Autre.* There is always the Other, a third term that disrupts, disorders, and begins to reconstitute the conventional binary opposition into an-Other that comprehends but is more than just the sum of two parts (Soja, 1996: 31).

The introductory essay, 'The Plan' in *The Production of Space* (1991), is regarded as containing Lefebvre's key ideas. Lefebvre begins by arguing that through much of modernity, our understanding of space was profoundly shaped by mathematicians who invented all kinds of spaces that could be represented through calculations and techniques (ibid: 2), To Lefebvre, what was not clear was the relationship between these representations (mental space) and 'real space' - "...the space of people who deal with material things" (ibid: 4).

However Lefebvre was unhappy with pursuing an analytics of space centred on either continental philosophy or Marxism. He regarded this binary pairing as part of a conceptual dualism (conceived/idealism versus lived/materialism) closed to new, unanticipated outcomes. Lefebvre was particularly critical of the way continental philosophers, such as Foucault and Derrida, fetishized space, so that the mental realm, of ideas, representations, discourses, and signs enveloped and occluded social and physical spaces. To Lefebvre, semiology could not stand as a complete body of knowledge because it could not say much about space other than it was a text; a message to be read. Such thinking, he argued, was both political and ideological in that its science of space concealed the social relations of (capitalist) production and the role of that state in it (Lefebvre, 1991).

This did not mean Lefebvre embraced Marxism unproblematically. Though Lefebvre's project aimed to reveal the way the social relations of production projected themselves onto space (ibid: 129), he was critical of the way Marxist theorists, on the one hand fetishised temporality, and on the other hand reduced 'lived space' to labour and products, ignoring the complexities of all spheres of life (such as art, politics, the judiciary) and their attendant social relations. A more expansive idea of production was embraced to take account of the multiplicity of ways in which *ideas are produced, humans are created and labour, histories are constructed and minds are made* (Lefebvre, 1991: 70-72). For Lefebvre, "...social space subsumes things produced; and encompasses their

relationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and their/or their relative disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence or set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object” (ibid: 73). Similarly mindful of the need to avoid fetishizing space over time and vice versa, theorists like Harvey (1989) and Massey (1994: 2) refer to ‘space-time’ to emphasise the integral nature of space and time, whilst Massey (1994) and Rose (1993) have advanced theoretical projects around gender as a social relation that is also profoundly spatially organised.

The twin ideas of ‘space’ and ‘production’ are central to Lefebvre’s analysis. Using an approach he calls ‘analysis followed by exposition’, Lefebvre’s project is to make space’s transparency and claim to innocence opaque, and therefore visible and interested. A ‘truth of space’, he argued, would enable us to see that capital and capitalism influence space in practical (buildings, investment and so on) *and* political ways (classes, hegemony via culture and knowledge). It is thus possible to demonstrate the role of space—as knowledge and action—in the existing capitalist mode of production (including its contradictions), to reveal the ways in which spaces are ‘produced’, and to show that each society had its own mode of production and produces its own space. Furthermore, if—as he argued was the case—the transition from one mode of production to another over time entailed the production of new spaces, then it follows that our analyses must also be directed by both the need to account for its temporality *and* also its spatiality.

David Harvey’s most recent outline of his approach to space is contained in an essay ‘Space as a Keyword’ (2006). Drawing upon a Marxist ontology of historical materialism, Harvey’s project, like Lefebvre, has been to understand processes of development, including urban development, under capitalism. Unlike Lefebvre, however who was also concerned with the everyday and realisation of new spatial relations, Harvey’s central focus has centred upon capitalist temporalities and spatialities, specifically the contradiction between capital’s concern to annihilate space/time in the circuit of capital, and capital’s dependence on embedded social relations to stabilise the conditions of production and reproduction (Harvey, 1982; 1989). Nevertheless, for both writers the production of space, the making of history and the composition of social relations or society, is welded together in a complex linkage of space, time and sociality, or what Soja has called the ‘trialectics of spatiality’ (1996).

Epistemologies of space

If epistemology is concerned with how we know, then the question of how to know space is also complicated by the multiple ways in which we imagine, sense and experience space. We travel through space, albeit aided by different means. We also attach ourselves to particular spaces, like places of belonging, giving such places psycho-social meaning.

Lefebvre’s theoretical approach is to unite these different epistemologies of space. In other words, in order to “...expose the actual production of space...” (ibid: 16)... “...we are concerned with logico-epistemological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias” (ibid: 11-12) These claims led Lefebvre to identify and develop three conceptualisations of space at work all of the time in relation to any event or social practice: **spatial practice** (the material, or *perceived space*); **representations of space** (or conceptualised space; or *conceived space*); and **representational spaces** (it overlays physical space and is directly lived through its associated images and symbols; or

lived space) (Lefebvre, 1991: 38-39). Like his meta-philosophical embrace of idealism and materialism, Lefebvre's epistemology is never to privilege one spatial dimension over another, for instance conceived space over lived space. Rather the three dimensions are part of a totality; a "trialectics of being" (Soja, 1996: 71).

In sum, Lefebvre's is a theoretical, practical and political project, as he notes below:

The path I shall be outlining here is thus bound up with a strategic hypothesis – that is to say, with a long-range theoretical and practical project. Are we talking about a political project? Yes and no. It certainly embodies a politics of space, but at the same time goes beyond politics inasmuch as it presumes a critical analysis of all spatial politics as of all politics in general. By seeking to point the way toward different space, toward a different (social) life and of a different mode of production, this project straddles the breach between science and utopia, reality and ideality, conceived and lived. It aspires to surmount these oppositions by exploring the dialectical relationship between the 'possible' and 'impossible' and this both objectively and subjectively (1991: 60).

As he observes: "...the moment the body is envisioned as a practico-sensory totality, a decentring and recentering of knowledge occurs" (ibid: 62), moving us away from the tendency to analyse objects or 'things in space', focusing attention instead on space itself with a view to uncovering embedded social relationships so as to move beyond them.

Harvey's epistemology of space is somewhat different to Lefebvre's, though Harvey brings the two together into a productive conversation in his work. Though both agree upon the materiality of space, or which Harvey calls 'absolute space' whilst Lefebvre refers to it as 'perceived space', Harvey offers two alternative concepts to make up a somewhat different tripartite division; that of 'relative space' and 'relational space'. The modality of 'relative space' is influenced by Einstein's theory of relativity. Applied to social space, space is relative in the sense that there are multiple geometries from which to choose (or not), and that the spatial frame is dependent upon what is being relativised and by whom (Harvey, 2006: 272). So, for instance, we can create very different maps of relative locations depending on topological relations, the various frictions enabling movements through space is different, the different spatio-temporal logics at work, and so on. The idea of 'relational space' is intended to capture the notion that there is no such thing as time and space outside of the processes that define them. This leads to a very important and powerful claim by Harvey; of internal relations. In other words, "...an event or a thing at a point in space cannot be understood by appeal to what exists only at a particular point. It depends upon everything that is going on around it...the past, present and the future concentrate and congeal at a certain point..." (Harvey, 2006: 274). This point is particularly pertinent for a critical theory of education and society, for it is to argue that it is critical to see 'events'—in relation to wider sets of social, economic and political processes.

The spatiality and geometry of power

In the arguments advanced so far, the idea that space is a form of power is implicit. Doreen Massey (1994; 2005) makes this explicit. Space is not only social relations stretched out, but that these social relations constitute a 'geometry of power' (Massey: 1994: 4). This is a dynamic and changing process.

This dynamic, shifting, geometry of power and attendant meanings implies a plurality (Lefebvre, 1991) or “...lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces” (Massey, 1994: 3); of uncountable sets of social spatial practices made up of networks and pathways, bunches and clusters of relationships, all of which interpenetrate each and superimpose themselves on one another (Lefebvre, 1991: 86). This multiplicity of spaces is “...cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one-another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism” (Massey, 1994: 3). To insist on multiplicity and plurality, argues Massey, is not just to make an intellectual point. Rather it is a way of thinking able to reveal the spatial as “...constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales, from the global reach of finance and telecommunications through the geography of the tentacles of national political power, to the social relations within the town, the settlement, the household and the workplace” (Massey, 1994: 4).

Massey’s (2005: 147) relational politics of space is also more in tune with Lefebvre’s; of a framing imagination—like ‘anOther’—that keeps things more open to negotiation, and which takes fuller account of the “constant and conflictual process of the constitution of the social, both human and non-human” (*ibid*). In Massey’s view (2025: 148) this is not to give ground to the modernist project, of no space, and all time, or the post modern project, of all space and no time, but to argue for configurations of multiple histories, multiple entanglements, multiple geographies, out of which difference is constituted, and where differences count.

The organisation of spatial relations – a methodology

In this section I now introduce a spatial lexicon that has emerged from the various spatial turns, triggered by Lefebvre’ and Harvey’s work, which have proven methodologically useful. For Jessop et al (2008), this lexicon includes ‘territory’, ‘place’, ‘scale’, ‘network’ and ‘positionality’. For sociologists of education these concepts have been deployed in various ways; for instance to understand ideas like school zones, sovereignty and autonomy over policymaking space, the rescaling of the labour of education governance, new governance networks, and so on (cf. Gulson and Symes, 2007)

‘Territory’ refers to the boundaries which constitutes space in particular ways; as differentiated, bordered areas of social relations and social infrastructures supporting particular kinds of economic and social activity, opportunity, investment and so on. Territories are arenas to be managed and governed, with the state and the boundaries of the nation state particularly important throughout the 20th Century (Harvey, 1982: 390; 404). Territories are filled with normative content; such as forms of identification. Interest in the idea of territory and processes of territorialisation emerged when attention turned to the assumption that political power was established around national boundaries by nation states, and that these boundaries also served to define societies as ‘nationally-bounded’. The unbundling of the relationship between territory and sovereignty since the 1980s has resulted in changing spatialities of statehood (Brenner, 2003), the changing basis of citizenship claims (Robertson, 2008), and forms of subjectivity. Territory, as a spatial form of organisation, can be read as absolute (a material thing, as in a human resource complex), as conceived (eg. a map of a region) and lived (eg. attachment as a Canadian). It is relative in that the movement within and across territories, for instance, will be different, dependent upon where and how one is located. It is relational in that it is not possible to understand particular territories without placing them in their past, present, or emergent futures.

‘Scale’ represents social life as structured in particular ways, in this case relationally, from the body to the local, national and global (Herod and Wright, 2002). This structuring of social life is viewed as operating at the level of the conceived and the material; in other words, that scales, such as the national or global are real enough, they are also powerful metaphors around which struggles take place to produce these social relations. Extending Lefebvre’s insights into the social production of space, Neil Smith (1990) has termed this the ‘social production of scale’ Work on scales, their recalibration and re/production, have helped generate insights into the making of regions (scale-making), the global, the reworking of the local, and strategic bypassing of the scales (as in scale jumping), and so on. Scales themselves may shift in importance as a result of processes that include new regionalisms, globalisation, and decentralisation. There have also been important critiques of scale advanced by writers like Marsden et al (2005); for the conceptual elasticity of the concept, and more importantly, the privileging of vertical understandings of socio-spatial processes, rather than vertical and horizontal. Marsden et al (2005: 420) are at pains to point out that the power of naming (as in representations of space) should not be confused with either perceived or lived spaces. This is an important point and emphasises the value of ensuring we keep these epistemologies distinct in our analysis.

‘Place’, on the other hand, is constituted out of spatialised social relations and the narratives about these relations. Places, like ‘my home’, or ‘my school’ only exist in relation to particular criteria (as in ‘my school’ draws upon criteria such as formal learning, teachers, and so on), and in that sense they are material, they are social constructions or produced (Hudson, 2001: 257), and they are lived. Massey argues that place emerges out of the fixing of particular meanings on space; it is the outcome of efforts to contain, immobilise, to claim as one’s own, to include and therefore exclude (1994: 5). “All attempts to institute horizons, to establish boundaries, to secure the identity of places, can in this sense be seen as attempts to stabilize the meaning of particular envelopes of space-time” (ibid: 5). Amin puts this relational argument a little differently; that place is “...where the local brings together different scales of practice/social action” (204: 38), and where meanings are constituted out of dwelling, of affinity, of performativity (Amin, 2004: 34). From the perspective of production, places as “...complex entities; they are ensembles of material objects, workers and firms, and systems of social relations embodying distinct cultures and multiple meanings, identities and practices” (Hudson, 2001: 255). Importantly, place should not be seen as only whole, coherent, bounded or closed, though they may well be (Hudson, 2001: 258) Rather, we should *also* see places as potentially open, discontinuous, relational and as internally diverse, as they are materialised out of the networks, scales and overlapping territories that constitute this space-time envelope (Allen et al, 1998: 55-56). For Hudson (2001: 258), the degree of closed-ness or open-ness is an empirical question rather than an *a priori* assertion.

More recently scholars, influenced by the work of Castells (1996), advanced a relational reading of space that “...works with the ontology of flow, connectivity and multiple expression” (Amin, 2004: 34). In this work social relations stretches horizontally across space (implicitly questioning scale – as in local to global – as the main organiser of place). The metaphor representing this idea is the ‘network’. The project is not to focus on spatial hierarchies, as is implied in the idea of scale, but on the transversal, the porous, nature of knots and clusters of social relations. The idea of ‘the network’ has become particularly appealing and powerful in thinking about interspatial interconnectivity – for instance in governance systems, inter-firm dependencies, communities of participants,

and so on. And while this way of conceiving space has a materiality about it, as we can see with, for instance, communities of internet game-players, the organisation of a firm, or a network of experts, it is a way of representing spatial organisation. Most importantly, however, the idea of the network is to press the temporality of spatial formations; as “temporary placements of ever moving material and immanent geographies, as ‘hauntings’ of things that have moved on but left their mark in situated moments in distanciated networks that cross a given place” (Amin, 2004: 34). The reason for pressing this way of reading (network versus scale and territory) is, for Amin a question of politics; it relates not only to the scope and reach of local political activity but also what is taken to count as political. This is a particularly important point for understanding current developments in education, particularly higher education, as local entities like universities, stretch their institutional fabrics across space.

For Shepherd, ‘positionality’ is a corrective to the fascination with networked relations which tend to overlook “...the asymmetric and path dependent ways in which futures of places depend on their interdependencies with other places” (2002: 308). Positionality within a network is dependent upon which network one participates in; it is emergent and contingent rather than pre-given; and describes how different entities are positioned with regard to one another in space/time. Positionality is relational, it involves power relations, and it is enacted in ways that tend to reproduce and/or challenge existing configurations. For Shepherd (2002: 319), the idea of positionality is critical in calling attention to how connections between people and places—such as the World Bank in Washington and the African economies, or members of a household--plays a role in the emergence of proximal and geographic inequalities. Similarly, drawing locales and their precapitalist forms of production into circuits of capitalist production (for instance, bringing precapitalist/premodern tribal relations in Samoa into capitalist colonial networks of relations) draws these actors into new social relations of power and inequality. Finally, the conditions for the possibility of place do not necessarily depend upon local initiative but, rather, with the interactions with distant places. For example, education provision in Cyprus is partly shaped by Cyprus’ relation to the European Commission, whilst Member States of the World Trade Organisation are differently positioned with regard to the centres of global power so that negotiating education sectors will be differently experienced as a result.

The importance of Jessop et al’s (2008) intervention is to advance an approach that overcomes the privileging of one spatial form of organisation over another – eg. scale over other spatialities; the result of what they argue are different turns that unfortunately display all of the signs of “...theoretical amnesia and exaggerated claims to conceptual innovation” (p. 389). To Jessop et al, it is important to see that these processes and practices as closely linked, and in many cases occurring simultaneously, and propose a way of reading these together. This is important, and clearly offers sets of readings of events that are not limited to one spatial form of organisation.

However, if we return to the richness and complexity of the spatial offered to us by Lefebvre, as the material, conceived *and* lived, it is the lived—in all of its intensity and potential unpredictability, that is most notably absent. This absence places a limit on not only how we view the link between space and subjectivities, as well as resistances and new inventive practices. A more far reaching, more illuminating and ultimately more powerful means of spatialising the sociology of education is to bring together the different epistemologies of Lefebvre, Harvey and Massey, to the structuring principles and fields of operation offered by place, territory, scale and so on.

Move 2: The Conceptual Grammar of the Sociology of Education

The question of how to lay out the conceptual grammar of the field is a particularly challenging one. One way might be to review the core texts in the sociology of education, to reveal the kinds of topics and issues that have been covered. Another, and one that I will pursue here, is to work at a particular level of abstraction so as to enable the possibility of translation across the different ontological and epistemological traditions that are brought to bear on the education and society relation, and then turn to key contemporary texts to reveal particular discussions, elaborations and theorisations. Dale's (2006) work on 'the education questions' is particularly valuable here. His project is to use these questions in order to find some common ground between different sociologies of education where, as he says; "...the nature and bases of different conceptions of education and its purposes, institutions and practices might first be made clearer and eventually lay the ground for the kind of productive dialogue that their mutual neglect and incomprehensibility has denied" (Dale, 2006: 190).

There are three levels of questions based on increasing levels of abstraction and focus. Level 1 focuses on the practice; level 2 on the politics of education, and level 3 on the outcomes of education. In opening up these three levels we can then begin to place key approaches, topics, issues and debates that have taken place over time, space and in relation to particular kinds of social relations and forms of social reproduction. These questions are specified in four ways:

1. *Who is taught what, how, by whom, where, when: for what stated purpose and with what justifications; under what (school/university classroom) circumstances and what conditions, and with what results.*
2. *How, by whom, and at what scale are these things problematised, determined, coordinated, governed, administered and managed?*
3. *In whose interests are these practices and politics carried out? What is the scope of 'education' and what are its relations with other sectors of the state, other scalar units and national society?*
4. *What are the individual, private, public, collective and community outcomes of education?*

We might now take each of the levels in turn, and allocate key indicative theories and concepts that currently characterise the sociology of education, in my case, in those Anglo-Saxon countries that share a common sociological literature, for instance, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. The point in doing this is to make clear I am not assuming that the specific content of the conceptual grammar is universal. Instead, I would argue that knowledges and the social institutions, processes and relations involved in the production of these knowledges and ways of being are historically, culturally, politically and socially particular.

In relation to *who is taught what, how, by whom, when, and where*, we immediately can see that learning opportunities are differentially experienced, and different kinds of learning acquired. This has been a major field of concern for sociologists, such as Bourdieu (1986) and his argument that various forms of capital (cultural, economic and social) are differently mobilised and realised through learning experiences in the home, in schools, and the wider society. Similarly Bernstein's (1990) work on pedagogic discourse and its relationship to class, codes and control links pedagogy to wider processes of social reproduction. There is a considerable literature on the ways in which social relations, such as gender, race, sexuality and old colonial relations (cf. Arnot and Reay, 2006;

Gillborn and Youdell, 2006; Smith, 2006) are produced through what is taught to whom, and where.

Concerning the questions of *how, by whom, and at what scale are these things problematised, determined, coordinated, governed, administered and managed*, and *in whose interests are these practices and politics carried out?* this is broadly the province of governance (cf. Dale, 1996). Sociological research around this question has concerned itself with the emergence of markets as a mechanism of coordination (cf. Gewirtz et al, 1995; Ball, et al 1996; Ball, 2004; Leven and Belfield, 2006), on the rise in importance of international organisations, such as the OECD, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation, in shaping education agendas within national states (Robertson, Bonal and Dale, 2002; Rizvi and Lingard, 2006), on the emergence of private companies in providing education services (cf. Mahony, Hextall and Menter, 2004; Hatcher, 2006; Ball, 2007), and how new economic sectors are being produced bringing education more tightly into the global economy (cf. Brown and Lauder, 2005; Guile, 2006; Kamat, Mir and Mathew, 2004).

Finally, in relation to the question about *outcomes* as a result of these projects and processes as they are mediated through education, we begin to see very clearly that particular identities are produced, families advantaged or excluded, classes constituted, genders reproduced, populations privileged and so on through education. Here concepts like social mobility, social inheritance, social stratification, social class, cultural consumption, citizenship, identity and community are facets of those wider social relations; the result of how knowledges, power and difference are also constituted through a multiplicity of differentiated education spaces.

Move 3: Spatialising the Sociology of Education

In this final section I want to reinforce the point I made in my introductory remarks; that the sociology of education is spatially rich in the metaphors used to name and understand social processes and relations, but analytically and theoretically weak in accounting for the difference that space makes. As a result, education spaces, for instance territories and networks of systems, schools, classrooms and so on, are seen as space in itself rather than having a social spatial character – as stretched out social relations. Adopting a critical spatial analytic of the kind I have outlined above, means taking seriously the following propositions in relation to the sociology of education. That:

- (i) social relations are *latent in space and* reproduced through systems like education;
- (ii) education spaces are a product,
- (iii) education spaces are *produced,*
- (iv) *education spaces are polymorphic;*
- (v) *education spaces are dynamic geometries of power and social relations, and*
- (vi) *education spaces and subjectivities are the outcome of a dialectical interaction,*

There are any number of possible routes through, and reworkings of, the sociology of education in relation to space, time and sociality. It should also be noted that the different levels of education questions are likely to be worked out using particular combinations of concepts from the spatial lexicon outlined above.

For instance, absolute and perceived education spaces, such as a school, are simultaneously territorial (with boundaries that include and exclude) and networked (connected territories or nodes). We can use the two different epistemologies advanced by Lefebvre and Harvey above, together with the different forms of spatial organisational outlined above, to generate a grid, as below with illustrative processes content.

Given the exigencies of length, I will only develop two examples from the education questions above to show what this might mean; first, ‘tracking’ students into different education groups, and second, processes of decentralisation/marketisation in education governance (see Tables 1 and 2). Typical organisational processes in which almost all schooling systems differentiate learners in some way in the education system are through spatial practices such as ‘grouping’, ‘tracking’ or ‘streaming’, or through the provision of different kinds of schooling experiences, such as private versus public schools, or vocational schools versus comprehensive schools.

	Spatial practice [perceived space]	Representations of space [conceived]	Spaces of representation [lived]
Absolute space	particular knowledges/ lessons delivered to ‘tracked’ student; classroom	class groups/ability/year levels/school types; school prospectus; school uniform;	aspiration; feelings of worth/lessness; belonging; withdrawal; resistance and rebellion
Relative space	different levels of student development; local school ecology; school mix (of social classes; cultural backgrounds)	‘ability’ as innate intelligence/ tracks and grades as reflecting capabilities; public-private school contrasts; inspection reports; failing/successful school	anxiety over resources need to produce competence; ‘nothing here for us-we always fail; reject schooling as ‘un-cool’
Relational space	School as a system of reproduction over time; performance in the education system	Re/production of failure; ‘meritocracy’; social stratification	being a competent learner; the working class ; class strategies such as voice, exit and choice; white flight

Table 1: “Tracking”: spatial stratification

Here we can see particular geometries of power at work; the outcome of the way in which the social relations of production are projected onto education spaces; at the level of systems, schools, classrooms, and groups. This system of spatially stratifying is a key mechanism of social reproduction. Space, as we can see in this example, is a medium and resource of power. This conception of education space—as thickened clusters of social relations legitimated by notions of ability/intelligence/learning capability—takes a material form. Children attend different classes and have different learning experiences. This spatial organisation of education space is also regulated/governed through systems of assessment and self management. It is a lived space, so that learners and teachers both feel, in palpable albeit different ways, the emotions that arise from discourses of aspiration, capability, achievement, responsibility, meritocracy, and so on.

	Spatial practice [perceived space]	Representations of space [conceived]	Spaces of representation [lived]
Absolute space	movement of responsibilities to new nodes outward and upward; downward; new sectors	local development plans; partnership plans; sub-contracting/outsourcing; school development plans; local visions; markets	anxieties over opportunities for choice; greater organisational responsibilities without power to affect necessary changes; surveillance; performativity
Relative space	Different geometries of governance relations that cut across scales; rescaling	local development, social capital, community expertise, partnership; public/private; third sector	differential choices; different inspection regimes; different feelings of involvement by wider community
Relational space	policy frameworks that operate at multiple nodes; competitiveness	global discourses of choice, markets, self management, entrepreneurialism; neo-liberal political project	desires of consumer; entrepreneur; flexible; anxiety about responsibility for one's future

Table 2: Decentralisation/markets: spatial governance

That lives to be lived in the future are shaped by this projected and deep penetration of the social relations of production onto education space, as workers in a system of capitalist social relations, illustrates the point Lefebvre and Harvey both make about the linkages between events and practices. In other words, the multiple epistemologies and modalities of space are deeply implicated in the making of pedagogic identities.

This second example focuses on the policy of 'decentralisation' and the rolling out of education markets; a powerful, neo-liberal discourse that has resulted in the relocation of education activity away from previously fixed, institutionalised centres to new reworked spaces of knowledge production with new geometries of social relations. In most cases the centres of power in the Westphalian state, the national state, has rescaled selective functions to different nodes in the scalar architecture of the global order. These scales have, in turn, been reworked to include new sets of logics – around efficiency, choice, local partnership, self-management, responsibility. More importantly, unpicking institutionalised social relations has enabled new non-state actors (particularly for-profit) into the reconstitution of education spaces. Much of the literature on decentralisation has tended to view the movement of power in a downward direction—to the local organisation/community. While this most certainly was the direction that some education activity has flowed, viewing the movement only in this direction, and in terms of the official discourse—decentralisation—would be to take at face value the spatial imaginary of the representation of space. The idea of scale—as opposed to decentralisation enables us to see quite what is at stake; the social production of scale and the reconstitution of social relations in a shifting spatial geometry of power and social relations. Using the concept of scale enables us to trace movements in multiple directions, as new nodes of power and rule are constructed or invigorated, struggled over and legitimated. In turn we are able to see the emergence of a new functional and scalar division of the labour of education space. Positionality matters in this case, as the social relations arising from market-based relations are dependent upon who and what is

included in the spatial organisation of choice. So, too, do networks, which work as means of protection against exclusions as well as mechanisms to ensure inclusion—like clubs. Spatialising state projects, such as ‘decentralisation’ and ‘markets’ raise significant issues for the spatiality of the sociology of education – anchored as it has been in a deep methodological nationalism and statism. This is despite the fact that the sites, scales, strategies and subjectivities for re/constituting and governing of education have been highly dependent upon re/projecting and re/working education spatial and social relations.

Conclusion

This paper can only begin to set out the necessary parameters, and possibilities for insights that might be realised, in a project of reworking the sociology of education in spatial terms. At one level, the idea that space matters in the sociology of education might be to state something that is—for want of a better word—all too obvious. Those involved in education, whether as teachers, learners or researchers of these processes are confronted with spatial metaphors all of the time. At another level, however, it continues to surprise me that the conceptual grammar in the sociology of education continues in a way that offers us a relatively banal reading of space; of the ‘all too obvious’ ways in which space matters—such as identifications with particular spaces, and so on. Whilst important, this is to understand only one of the spatial epistemologies through which we know and are constituted by the social. It is to therefore miss the very real, powerful and significant way in which the social relations within the multiplicity of overlapping education spaces are constantly being strategically spatially recalibrated, reorganised and reconstituted to produce a very different geometry of power. By continuing with a conceptual grammar in the sociology of education that is oriented toward modernity’s preoccupation with time and sociality, and not spatiality, means continuing with a set of concepts that are unable to grasp the full enormity of the changes that have been advanced under the rubric of globalisation, and the ways in which education space has been radically transformed. Clearly one important implication of spatialising the sociology of education is the challenge that follows from this; the development of a set of methodological/organisational categories that are able to take full account of the concerns of sociologists of education. Finally, I would argue that in spatialising the sociology of education we, in turn, enhance the possibilities of, as Lefebvre named —‘anOther’ space—emerging; an alternative, differently constituted, social space, constructed out of ideas about being and becoming, that might in turn mediate the full onslaught of the social relations of global capitalism.

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